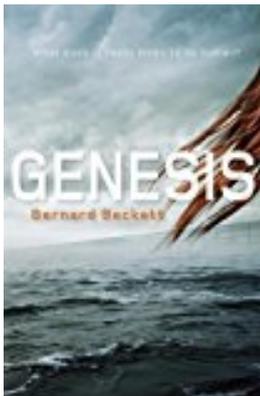


# [PDF] Genesis

## Bernard Beckett - pdf download free book

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### Books Details:

Title: Genesis  
Author: Bernard Beckett  
Released: 2009-05-07  
Language:  
Pages: 192  
ISBN: 1847247237  
ISBN13: 978-1847247230  
ASIN: 1847247237

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### Description:

: If robots began to self-evolve, learning to feel and create as we do, what traits would set humans apart--and help us survive? Beckett isn't the first to dramatize this question, and his *Genesis* pays subtle homage to his predecessors (including , , and ). But his near-future tale feels unique, and oddly credible. As the young historian Anax endures an examination by the Academy--an order of philosopher-rulers as imagined in Plato's --we're brought up quickly on a catastrophic backstory: accelerating climate change, dust storms, rising fear and fundamentalism, the Last War, and the rise of a new Plato, who builds an island republic and seals it behind a Great Sea Fence. Plagues decimate human populations outside, while the Republic's surveillance society (thick with shadows of , , and ) flourishes under the Orwellian motto "Forward towards the past"--until it falls to forces

led by the young rebel Adam Forde. The Academy interrogates Anax on Adam's period of imprisonment with the most advanced android of his time, and we witness their vicious sparring on the virtues of men and machines, the nature of consciousness, and what gives any life worth. It may not sound gripping, but *Genesis* reads like a thriller to the last word, propelled by the power of ideas longing to be unleashed. --*Mari Malcolm Amazon Exclusive: An Essay by Bernard Beckett, Author of Genesis*

When I tire of my computer it's considered quite acceptable, environmental issues aside, for me to bin it, bury it, or rip out its innards and convert the shell into a fish bowl. It is considered less acceptable for me to do any of these things to my still functioning cat. And that feels much as it should be.

Yet my computer routinely beats me at chess, while my cat struggles to use a cat door. Whatever we believe sets the animal apart from the machine, with each passing year it becomes harder to believe that processing power is the defining factor. And that's the apparently harmless thought at the heart of *Genesis*.

Our instincts cling to the mysticism of the life force, the *élan vital* that appears to animate the world of creatures and separate them from our machines. Instincts though are rarely enough. The modern understanding of evolution makes it easy to view life as little more (or less) than a trick of chemistry, and the harmless question takes on an edge.

The novelist though mustn't be content with simply exposing the edge. I am drawn to stories that tear at me. I like my reading to leave a little scar tissue and I aspire to create stories that might do the same. Just as we are sure that cats and computers are not just different things, but different kinds of things, so we quite naturally draw a line between a cat and human that feels inviolable. The life force may no longer be so puzzling, but surely the mystery of consciousness remains secure. Not everybody thinks so, and that provides the gap into which a story can be wedged.

This thought spent a good few years trapped inside my own consciousness. I knew that at the heart of the novel would sit a confrontation between a man and a machine. I knew humanity would be represented by a criminal, imprisoned both by the justice system and his own inflexible beliefs. I also knew the machine would be charming, irascible and provocative. What I didn't know was anything about the story in which this central conceit would be wrapped. I wrote a short play in which the prisoner was a psychopath and spent a couple of years trying on and off to develop that into a novel but it never worked. I needed a trick that would position the audience first with the human and then somehow twist that loyalty, ideally without them realising it was happening.

As is so often the case I didn't get to the final product small step at a time. Rather I tried, failed and turned away. And then, a couple of years later while distracting myself from another task I found the problem had solved itself offstage. Such are the strange workings of the mind.

(Photo © Bruce Foster)

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**From Publishers Weekly** Anax, the dedicated student historian at the center of Beckett's brutal dystopian novel, lives far in the future—the distant past events of the 21st century are taught in classrooms. The world of that era, we learn, was ravaged by plague and decay, the legacy of the Last War. Only the island Republic, situated near the bottom of the globe, remained stable and ordered, but at the cost of personal freedom. Anax, hoping her scholarly achievements will gain her entrance to the Academy, which rules her society, has extensively studied Adam Forde, a brilliant and

rebellious citizen of the Republic who fought for human dignity in the midst of a regimented, sterile society. To join the Academy's ranks, Anax undergoes a test before three examiners, and as the examination progresses, it becomes clear that her interpretations of Adam's life defy conventional thought and there may be more to Adam—and the Academy—than she had imagined. Though the trappings of Beckett's dystopian society feel perhaps too *Brave New World*, the rigorous narrative and crushing final twist bring a welcome freshness to a familiar setup. (Apr.)

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