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Climate Change: A Loss of Humanity

There is significant correlation between human activity and climate change. Although climate change has existed as long as Earth has, humans have decided that we can control climate change and shape it to our will. Humans are extraordinary creatures that have all have one fatal flaw in common. We allow our lack of humanity to cloud our judgement on the consequence of our actions. This renders us blind to the negative impacts on the environment we have caused. *“Life after all, is inevitably fatal” (The Windup Girl, Ch.28)*. This quote reminds us in the end humans all end up in the same state, dead. It is what we do while we are alive and the impact on the world we leave is what truly counts. Nature is something we cannot control; however, we can affect it in certain ways. Over the years there has been overwhelming evidence that points to human activity as a major contributor to negative changes in environment. We have raised carbon emissions which damage the protective ozone layer, adding numerous species to the ever-growing endangered species list and permanently altered ecosystems. Human beings benefit from nature. It is in the food we eat and air we breathe. Nature is vital to human life. *The Windup Girl* by Paolo Bacigalupi and *A Parable of the Sower* by Octavia E. Butler are good examples of how the Earth’s climate could change drastically in the future. The irreversible damages to the environment are caused by human greed, corruption and the fall of civilization. This essay will explore the idea that the lack of humanity among human beings has a negative impact on climate change.

“He wonders if human nature ever really changes” (*The Windup Girl*, Ch.5). As a collective, the human race is powerful and can cause change rapidly. In *A Parable of the Sower* civilization has fallen and every one is in “survival mode”. Fires rage across the land, most of them created by humans that lost their humanity to a drug called Pyro. Lauren, the protagonist in the novel, sets out on an adventure to restore humanity in the world. Resources have been drained by inconsiderate human greed and lack of foresight for the future. *A Parable of the Sower* shows us that the human innate instinct to survive by any means kicks in when the world falls apart. A flaw in human nature is that our survival rarely extends beyond ourselves and those we care about. In the novel Lauren serves as a reminder that in order for the human race to continue we have to think about the bigger picture, the environment, and what impact every single person has on it.

The Windup Girl takes place in Thailand where corruption is around every corner and we are presented with a society that continues to run on consumerism. Bacigalupi explores the balances of survival. Through the lens of four different characters from different classes and race Bacigalupi shows us what life could be like an economy that is threatened by disease and corruption and yet is also dependent on other countries to evolve. Each character has their own definition of survival. This begs the question of what is the definition of survival, of living? Is there truly a difference or are both these concepts just subjective to the individual themselves. One may think that on an individual level their greed and incessant consumption does not make a difference. However, when the majority of individuals in the world are doing the same thing the impact becomes largely significant. In *The Windup Girl* Thailand has isolated itself from the rest of the world but in the end opens its doors and lets the world back in. This shows us that, although we are usually unaware of this, we rely on each other for support and prosperity. Alone

there is only so much one can accomplish, together sustainability and survival becomes more plausible.

Civilization is broken down into a hierarchy. The government is at the top. Beneath the government are the representatives of the government that ensure control among the civilians. The civilians themselves are on the lowest on this food chain. In *The Windup Girl* the economy is strictly controlled by the government which employs the “Environmental Ministry” to keep Thailand and its citizens safe. The ministry is the reason Thailand has survived when other countries have failed to flourish among the diseases and famine. In the book the new form of consumerism is a technology called “gene ripping”. Nothing is natural anymore and scientists have to create food and energy in a lab. Energy is the most coveted commodity in that world and because of that humans have lost their humanity to corruption. No one cares anymore about the squalor they live in or concern themselves with repairing the damaged environment. Their lack of humanity has ultimately led to the degradation of the environment.

A collective of individuals can inspire change to occur. In *The Parable of the Sower* many humans destroy the already wasted climate by setting fires for pleasure. They do this when they take the drug Pyro and use it as a means to escape the already dark horrible place reality has become. In *The Windup Girl*, one of the characters exemplifies human greed and the innate instinct to survive no matter what. Hock Seng is a Malaysian refugee. His only goal is to go build his own wealth and hoard it. Hock Seng does not care about the environment, he disregards anything that is not beneficial to him. There are many like him in the book and they continue to consume more energy without thinking about the overall consequence of their actions. Hock Seng’s journey through *The Windup Girl* is interesting to navigate because in the end we glimpse his humanity that has been seemingly buried under his paranoia and selfish greed. His humanity

shows through when he takes interest in the well being and survival of a young girl that worked in the factory with him. Hock Seng is an example of the fact that in order for our humanity to remain present within ourselves we need another human to interact with to sustain it. In isolation we forget our humanity.

“All things are transient” (The Windup Girl, Ch. 17). Human activity generally has a negative impact on the climate. Since everything consumes energy in some form and humans consume more energy than they need we end up producing waste that is unnecessary and harmful to the environment. I think on a global scale that is something the human race does not understand yet. *A Parable of the Sower* and *The Windup Girl* shows us how the lack of humanity among individuals, economies and nations has a negative impact on the environment. Sometimes countries fail to realize that they depend on one another for survival and success. There is always the thought that one can go at it alone and they can, but for only so long and only up to a certain point. Money is a shortcut, an excuse, a bandaid to cover up the problems which leaves them to fester so we can delude ourselves into thinking that they will fix themselves. I think we fail to realize that no other problems can be fixed if there is no longer a healthy climate to fix them in. There is currently a vicious cycle of life happening. Consumerism is leading to a depletion of resources rapidly and that will only ensue more human selfishness to not be limited by that limitation. We disregard the environment because we do not realize that an important part of the key to survival is having a world to live in.

