

## Author Interview for May 3 2023, at Literary Gold

### **Q&A With Author Vyvyan Evans:**

#### **What did you enjoy most about writing this book?**

VE: The Babel Apocalypse is a work of science fiction that imagines a near-future where language is no longer learned but streamed to neural implants from internet in low Earth orbit.

The novel imagines a situation in which a cyberterrorist attack on language streaming servers in low Earth orbit leads to just such a global language outage. Such an event, with its low probability, would be one for which humans would be completely unprepared. In The Babel Apocalypse, entire populations of people, literally at a stroke, lose the ability to use language, becoming feral. And hence, the consequences for civilization become catastrophic.

In this near-future, I enjoyed working out the consequences of language streaming in terms of what it means to be human, when language is no longer something people have to learn. In particular, what would be lost, if we offload language to streaming servers in space?

As humans “give up” on language, and offload language learning, allowing AI to take over, language would become a commodity (like any other, such as movies, music, etc., that we now stream on demand for a fee). In short, language would become a proprietary product, controlled for and by big tech, in service of shareholders and corporate interests.

Such a development leads to a slippery slope of issues ranging from potential censorship, to control of thought, and even, through cyberterrorism, the prospect of an existential crisis for the human race—the Babel Apocalypse predicted in the novel.

#### **Do you have any other books you are working on that you can tell us about?**

VE: The sequel to The Babel Apocalypse is The Dark Court. It is set five years after the events of the great language outage depicted in The Babel Apocalypse. It explores how the language chips in people’s heads can themselves be hacked, leading to a global insomnia pandemic. The Dark Court will be published in 2024, as book 2 in the series.

#### **Can you tell us about what you have planned for the future?**

VE: The Babel Apocalypse is the first book in the Songs of the Sage book series. There are six projected books in the series which, in increasing turns, examine the role and nature of language, and communication. The thematic premise is that, in the wrong hands, language can serve as a weapon of mass destruction. This overarching motif is explored, across the six books, both from Earth-bound and galaxies-wide bases.

As language involves symbol use and processing, the book series, perhaps naturally, also dwells on other aspects of human imagination and symbolic behaviour, including religious experience and belief systems, themselves made possible by language.

**How long have you been writing?**

VE: I started writing poetry at the age of seven, and became a published poet at nine. Later, as a university professor of linguistics I wrote popular science books on the nature of language and communication. It seemed a natural step, given my research background in the future of communication, to write science-fiction. My focus in my speculative fiction writing is the use and misuse of language as a potential weapon of mass destruction.

**Anything more you would like to say to your readers and fans?**

VE: Language is the hallmark of what it means to be human. When we lose language we all lose.

URL: <https://www.literaryau.com>