

Background Information

About the author

Bruno Lowagie lives and works in Ghent, Belgium. In a previous life, he was an open-source software developer and entrepreneur. After selling his company, he turned his attention to writing. He first published works for Dutch and Flemish readers before beginning to translate his fiction into English in 2024.

In 2026, he shifted his focus from short fiction to screenwriting. Since getting noticed by agents and production companies can be notoriously difficult, he began adapting his screenplays into narrative form, resulting in a series of novelettes.

This book is intended as the fifth installment in that series. Lowagie is currently working on the next couple of volumes, a selection of ghost stories and a story about the fifteenth-century merchant and financier Jacques Cœur.³⁹

About the story

This novel is based on a ~7,000-word short story, crafted in response to a writing contest centered around the apocalyptic instrumental music of San Francisco-based artist IIVII.⁴⁰

Objectief: Natuur (original Dutch title) was honored with the third prize in this competition. The jury wrote: “The story depicts a world in which Big Tech companies have

taken over the world, which ultimately results in the destruction of the earth.

It clearly refers to a number of contemporary issues (such as the forest fires, the pandemic and the erosion of democracy in which new rulers are suddenly creating a conglomerate). This brings the level of dystopia very close.

It is terrifying because the story, despite its very Hollywoodian and grandiose nature of the story, feeds you with the idea that this future might actually happen one day in real life.

This plot reminded the jury of, among others, The Circle (Dave Eggers) and Dark Matter (Blake Crouch). A very clever and very well worked out idea with a strong plot twist at the end. There is a clear connection with the world of IIVII which is shown in the details, such as the lack of sleep that can only be solved in a medicinal way. (September 2019)”

The short story was first published in No. 71 of the Dutch Magazine *Fantastische Vertellingen* (August 2024), after the title was changed to *Ogen zo blauw*. It also made the selection of *Onvoltooid toekomstige tijd*, a selection of 42 short stories, published by Poespa Producties.

Several readers told the author that they liked the story, but that it was too short, after which he adapted it into a 92-page screenplay. The version in this book is the novelization of that screenplay.

About the genre

Eyes So Blue is a work of science fiction, combining dystopian fiction, space colonization fiction, and political speculation.

Like many science-fiction stories, the novel begins with a simple question: *what would happen if humanity discovered a completely new way to travel?*

From that premise emerges a future in which distant worlds become accessible, governments are transformed, and the survival of civilization depends upon decisions made by a small number of individuals.

Although the story contains alien planets, starflight, and advanced biotechnology, its primary focus is neither technology nor space exploration.

The novel belongs to the tradition of social science fiction, using a fictional future to examine contemporary questions about power, inequality, privilege, environmental collapse, and the price of progress.

At the center of the story lies a moral dilemma. Throughout history, major achievements have often required sacrifices. Scientific breakthroughs, industrial revolutions, and large-scale political projects have improved countless lives while simultaneously harming others.

Eyes So Blue explores the uncomfortable question of whether the end can ever justify the means and whether a privileged elite has the right to benefit from sacrifices they never chose to make.

The society depicted in the novel is intentionally dystopian. Citizens live beneath artificial skies, corporations wield governmental authority, and access to opportunity is determined by systems presented as fair but carefully manipulated behind the scenes.

While exaggerated for dramatic purposes, these elements reflect real-world concerns about technological monopolies, political influence, economic inequality, and environmental degradation.

The novel also explores the relationship between memory and legacy.

Luke discovers the door. Lance pays the price of opening it wider. Sophie finds a future for humanity. Monica decides who deserves to inherit that future.

By the end of the story, few of the people responsible for humanity's survival remain alive to witness the result of their actions.

Finally, *Eyes So Blue* is a story about hope. Despite war, greed, betrayal, and loss, the novel ultimately asks whether humanity is capable of learning from its mistakes. Nature, the second Earth, represents more than a new world. It represents a second chance.

Whether humanity deserves that chance, and who to thank for that chance, is left for the reader to decide.

About the images

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End notes

The following endnotes provide additional context for the characters, events, and settings.

¹ **Pentagon.** Headquarters of the U.S. Department of Defense. Located in Arlington, Virginia, it is one of the largest office buildings in the world and serves as the command center for the U.S. military.



The Pentagon © David B. Gleason

² **Venture Capital.** This is a form of investment that provides funding to young companies with high growth potential but significant risk. In exchange, investors receive a share of ownership in the company. Most startups fail, but the few that succeed can generate enormous returns.

Venture capital played a crucial role in the rise of Silicon Valley. Many companies that shaped the modern digital world were supported by venture capital firms during their early years, including Apple, Google, Facebook, Netflix, and countless others.

Among the best-known firms are Andreessen Horowitz (often abbreviated as a16z), Sequoia Capital, and Founders Fund. Founders Fund was co-founded by entrepreneur and investor Peter Thiel, who also co-founded PayPal and became one of Silicon Valley's most influential investors. Thiel was an early investor in Facebook and supported numerous technology startups that later grew into major companies.



Thiel Capital, Presidio, © Bruno Lowagie, December 14, 2017

The headquarters of Sotho Industries in this novel was inspired in part by the author's visit to Thiel Capital in the Presidio district of San Francisco.

Silicon Valley's supporters often view venture capital as one of the most effective mechanisms ever created for transforming scientific ideas into world-changing products. Critics argue that it can also concentrate wealth, power, and influence in the hands of a relatively small group of investors.