

Posthumanism and Artificial Intelligence (AI): The Role of Human Agency and AI in Shaping a Terraformed Planet in Adrian Tchaikovsky's *Children of Time*

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Abstract: Posthumanism is a conceptual framework to question the idea that humans are the centre of the universe. In the huge development of science and technology, humans no longer maintain an anthropocentric hegemony and control. Instead of seeing humans as superior and independent, posthumanism sees humans as a part of much bigger network. This paper explores the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the establishment of high civilisation upon a terraformed planet by critically analysing Adrian Tchaikovsky's *Children of Time*, an AI fiction. The novel centres on the accidental birth of a self-aware spider colony, as brought about in Dr. Avrana Kern's AI-guided mission. It extensively delves into AI, evolutionary biology and sociological and sociopolitical dimensions. This paper shows how AI and technology intersect in the post-Earth, terraforming environment. Adopting concepts of Braidotti (2019) and Haraway and Begelke (2003), the study examines how Kern's technological ambition shapes the new civilisation with the evolution of the planet's occupants, including both human and non-human intelligences, to see how *Children of Time* portrays technology as a driving factor in the development of new kinds of awareness, society, and government, and how scientific desire can transcend human limits. The study focuses not on Tchaikovsky's portrayal of otherness but on the specific role of AI, spurred by human agency, as an autonomous mediator that actively disrupts and destabilises anthropocentric hierarchies, and reconstructs a digital alternative through protagonist's metamorphosis from a physical being into a digital consciousness. It therefore bridges the gap between literary analysis and philosophical posthumanism and provides a new framework of assessing non-human agency in contemporary sci-fi.

Keywords: AI, post-humanism, terraforming, agency, science fiction.

عالم ما بعد الإنسان ودور الفاعل البشري والذكاء الاصطناعي في تشكيل كوكب خاضع للاستصلاح البيئي في رواية (أطفال الزمن) لأدريان تشايكوفسكي

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المستخلص: تُعد مدرسة ما بعد الإنسانية إطاراً مفاهيمياً يُعيد إخضاع فكرة تركز الإنسان بوصفه محور الكون للمساءلة الأكاديمية. ففي ظل التطور الهائل في العلم والتكنولوجيا، لم يعد الإنسان محتفظاً بهيمته المركزية أو سيطرة مطلقة ذات طابع متمركز حول الإنسان. بل بدلاً من النظر إلى الإنسان باعتباره كائناً متفوقاً ومستقلاً، تنظر ما بعد الإنسانية إليه بوصفه جزءاً من شبكة أوسع وأكثر تعقيداً. هنا، تستكشف هذه الدراسة تأثير الذكاء الاصطناعي في تأسيس حضارة متقدمة على كوكب خضع لعمليات الاستصلاح البيئي، وذلك من خلال تحليل نقدي لرواية (أطفال الزمن - *Children of Time*) للكاتب أدريان تشايكوفسكي (Adrian Tchaikovsky)، وهي رواية تنتهي إلى أدب الخيال العلمي القائم على الذكاء الاصطناعي. تتمحور هذه الرواية حول نشأة مستعمرة من العناكب الواعية بصورة غير مقصودة، وذلك نتيجة لمهمة تقودها منظومة ذكاء اصطناعي صممتها الشخصية الرئيسية الدكتورة أفرانا كيرن. كما تتناول الرواية بصورة موسعة موضوعات الذكاء الاصطناعي، وعلم الأحياء التطوري، والأبعاد السوسولوجية والسوسولوجية السياسية. وتبين الدراسة كيفية تداخل الذكاء الاصطناعي والتكنولوجيا ضمن بيئة ما بعد الأرض القائمة على الاستصلاح الكوكبي. وبالأستناد إلى مفاهيم من برايدوتي (2019) (Rosi Braidotti) وهارواي وببغلكه (2003) (Haraway and Begelke) تبحث الدراسة في كيفية إسهام الطموح التكنولوجي للدكتورة كيرن في تشكيل حضارة جديدة، بالتوازي مع تطور الكائنات القاطنة للكوكب، بما يشمل الذكاء البشري والذكاءات غير البشرية. وتهدف الدراسة إلى بيان الكيفية التي تصوّر بها الرواية التكنولوجيا بوصفها عاملاً محرّكاً في نشوء أنماط جديدة من الوعي، والتنظيم الاجتماعي، وأنظمة الحكم، فضلاً عن إظهار قدرة الطموح العلمي على تجاوز الحدود الإنسانية التقليدية. ولا تركز الدراسة على تمثيل الآخر لدى تشايكوفسكي بقدر ما تركز على الدور المحدد للذكاء الاصطناعي، المدفوع بالفعل البشري، بوصفه وسيطاً مستقلاً يزعزع بصورة فاعلة البنى الهرمية المتمركزة حول الإنسان ويعيد تشكيل بديل رقمي من خلال تحويل الشخصية الرئيسة من كيان مادي إلى وعي رقمي. ومن ثم، تسهم الدراسة في ردم الفجوة بين التحليل الأدبي وفلسفة ما بعد الإنسانية، كما تقدّم إطاراً جديداً لتقييم فاعلية الكيانات غير البشرية في أدب الخيال العلمي المعاصر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذكاء الاصطناعي، ما بعد الإنسانية، الاستصلاح الكوكبي، الفاعلية، الخيال العلمي.

Introduction

The terms “Posthuman” and “Posthumanism” first appeared within postmodern literature. Posthumanism came along after postmodernism as a philosophical and political project in the late 1960s (Ferrando, 2019, p. 24). The relationship between posthumanism and artificial intelligence (AI) is found clearly in contemporary science fiction, especially those works that question human agency. Artificial intelligence has also become a main theme in the contemporary science fiction, presenting new frameworks to understand evolution, ethics, and the future of civilisation.

Adrian Tchaikovsky is a British science fiction and fantasy writer well-known for his award-winning sci-fi novel, *Children of Time* published in 2015. This novel presents a unique vision of artificial intelligence themes through its portrayal of an AI-driven uplift project on a terraformed planet. Dr. Avrana Kern is the protagonist, whose actions play a critical role in shaping a transforming experiment that goes beyond human control. The novel imagines the evolution of hyper-intelligent spiders after a failed terraforming experiment. In the novel, Dr. Avrana Kern’s uploaded consciousness becomes the overseer of an evolutionary experiment intended to produce a new intelligent species. The novel follows evolution of genetically modified civilisation guided by artificial intelligence based on a human terraformed (Dr. Avrana Kern) personality. Although the experiment diverges from its intended path, it results in the emergence of a sentient spider civilisation that develops in parallel with humanity’s decline.

Posthumanism considers humanity not as the final stage of evolution but as a transitional category that is shaped by technological, biological as well as ecological interconnections. Based on a posthumanist reasoning, intelligence is not exclusively a human attribute, but can also emerge through nonhuman and technological systems. In the novel, humans are biologically stagnant and spiders evolve rapidly through guided transformation. Intelligence is shown as a revolutionary accident. *Children of Time* imagines the evolution of hyper-intelligence, and shows that humans are not the peak of evolution; spiders appear to be more ethical and socially advanced while humans appear violent, wistful, and trapped in an old order. By presenting spiders as the true inheritors of the world, the novel uses intelligence for the evolution beyond human, purporting that humanity is transitional not final. Through highlighting the posthuman condition and AI, Dr. Avrana reveals that nonhumans can have agency, particularly given that spiders manage to develop colonies, gender politics and religion.

Review of Literature

Chudoba (2023) explores how Adrian Tchaikovsky emphasises the topic of facing the unknown in his works of fantasy literature.

Leininger (2025) analyses that science fiction breaks down barriers, and Tchaikovsky makes the most of it in *Cage of Souls*, digging deeply into the idea of extinction and the human psyche while challenging the reader to think about both the ultimate outcome of humanity’s current course and its true source.

Yastibas and Tekin (2024) show that Adrian Tchaikovsky is well known for examining non-human perspectives and animal awareness in his fiction. The transhumanist setting of his 2017 work *Dogs of War*, in which humans make use of genetically modified non-human bio-forms, is a prime example of the predominance of anthropocentrism.

Saddhono et al. (2024) argue that the increase in literature on Artificial Intelligence (AI) has made the landscape more appealing, prompting an examination of the ethical implications. When it comes to AI-generated writing tools, the issues of authorship, originality, and authenticity must constantly be addressed. It raises a variety of ethical problems about intellectual copyright, transparency, and the role of AI in moulding narrative content.

Patra (2023) researches the novels of Adrian Tchaikovsky’s *Echoes of the Fall* trilogy, which consists of three volumes: *The Tiger and the Wolf* (2016), *The Bear and the Serpent* (2017), and *The Hyena and the Hawk* (2018), demonstrating how the writer blurs the boundaries between animal kind and humankind such that they are no longer two disparate and distinct entities.

Nield (2021) studies *Bear Head* by Adrian Tchaikovsky. The novel envisions a future of terraforming planets, creating mansions on Mars for the wealthy, and sophisticated technologies such as data storage and brain modifications.

Patra (2022) examines the novel *The Doors of Eden*, demonstrating how posthumanism can effectively dismantle and destroy a human-centred worldview by incorporating tropes of monstrosity, alienness, immersive virtual reality, mind-uploading, and mind-machine integration, all of which eventually come together to define and reinforce the post-anthropomorphic paradigm.

Akhter (2025) emphasises that science and technology are the hallmarks of the modern era. Every aspect of existence has been overtaken by technology. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one such technology.

Premkumar (2024) investigates the transformational influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on literary creation and criticism, emphasising emerging patterns and their larger implications for the subject of literature.

Lehmann (2021) studies how the novels *Children of Time* (2015) and *Children of Ruin* (2019) explore interplanetary travel and bioengineered evolution. Each story follows a small group of human beings from Earth on a mission to identify possibly liveable planets to terraform, including a plan for biotechnology to allow for faster evolution.

Vint (2023) investigates Adrian Tchaikovsky's *Children of Time* (2015) and *Children of Ruin* (2019), and illustrates the use of science fiction to construct storylines spanning thousands of years; these volumes begin with a human terraforming and colonisation mission aimed at perpetuating mankind far beyond Earth.

Theoretical Framework

Obviously, posthumanism challenges the traditional humanity-centred premises that human beings are superior to anything else in the universe, and instead postulates that humans, non-humans, animals, machines and technological systems are all interconnected agents which collectively shape existence. Braidotti (2019) supports the idea that the posthuman condition decentralises the human subject and rejects anthropocentric hierarchies which gives priority for human consciousness above all other forms of life. In a similar vein, Haraway and Begelke (2003) nurture an idea that the boundaries that separate humans, animals and machines are getting increasingly blurred in societies supporting the use of technology. As such, posthumanism redefines identity as being hybrid and relational, i.e. technologically entangled rather than fixed purely on human presence.

In this regard, this study adopts posthumanist concepts to analyse Adrian Tchaikovsky's *Children of Time*. Specifically, the study borrows ideas from Braidotti's concept of nonhuman agency and Haraway's theory of hybridity and cyborg identity in order to explain how the novel destabilises anthropocentric assumptions through the emergence of AI, genetically modified species and technologically expedited evolution. AI in the novel is not treated as merely a technological instrument but as an autonomous evolutionary force capable of reshaping civilisation, identity and inter-species power relations.

The study adopts a qualitative hermeneutic approach based on ideas derived from philosophical posthumanist framework, as defined by Ferrando (2019), which basically aims to deconstruct the traditional anthropocentric hierarchies present in contemporary sci-fi. Guided by views of Braidotti (2019) and Haraway and Begelke (2003), the study moves beyond surface-level readings of the plot to engage critically with the embedded interpretations of the role of AI, viewed as an autonomous agent that reshapes the "human" category. This novel was purposefully selected due to its unique position in contemporary AI-centred fiction and posthumanist representations of post-Earth. The critical analysis, therefore, enables to construe the author's conceptualisation of a very likely scenario of human existence (or futuristic post-existence).

Analysis of this novel can help explain posthumanist inquiry in terms of how human agency guides transformation into posthuman AI (Dr. Kern), a conceptualisation of predictable posthumanist scenario and the future of "intelligence", and how ideologies and conflicting perceptions can expedite this process of metamorphosis.

Analysis

Dr. Avrana Kern – Mind Behind Artificial Intelligence and Terraforming

The protagonist of *Children of Time* (2015), Dr. Avrana Kern is an embodiment of human ambition and pride in its technological pinnacle in Adrian Tchaikovsky. She frames the endeavour like a major scientific project, an enterprise she considers one of morality and civilisation. But it's an arrogant objective: she creates and uses a system that could serve her will for countless millennia, reflecting her view that human direction (most importantly hers) is critical to creating a better universe.

Dr. Avrana Kern uploads her consciousness into a satellite system, functioning as a creator, guardian, and arbiter of evolutionary processes. Kern embodies alignment challenges, immortality risks, and the ethical pitfalls of digitized human consciousness. Her rigid adherence to the uplift primates mission demonstrates the consequences of goal misalignment in AI systems.

As an AI mind, Avrana Kern is transformed into an antinomy. She begins as an idealistic human, operated by scientific missions to the stars – one might say a perfect flesh-and-blood astronaut – then uploads herself into an automated satellite and effectively becomes the AI governing an entire planet. She morphs into an anti-democratic parental AI whose sense of judgment has never changed, even as history will have moved on without her through this transition that folds over a hard shell and accentuates personality traits already present: intransigence, arrogance and the inability to accept anything other than her plan.

I am Doctor Avrana Kern. This is my world. I will brook no interference with my experiment. I have seen what you are. You are not from my Earth. You are not my humanity. You are monkeys, nothing but monkeys. You are not even my monkeys. My monkeys are undergoing uplift, the great experiment. They are pure. They will not be corrupted by you mere humans. You are nothing but monkeys of a lesser order. You mean nothing to me. (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 62)

Kern's evolution from a human scientist to an automated satellite system provides a literal representation of posthuman condition: the "human" is no longer a biological entity, but rather a set of digital imperatives. However, the authoritarian "parental" AI style which she assumes creates a paradox: she intends to create life in HER OWN image but her rigid programming acts as a catalyst for a species (an arachnid entity) that takes over, simply because it deviates from her human-centric blueprints. In this sense, Kern serves as a mouthpiece for Tchaikovsky to critique the god-like behaviour or complex inherent in traditional humanism; in other words, true evolutionary progress requires the creator to give up control to the creation itself.

The Earth, once green but now withered, conveys a profound sense of loss. It shows a post-collapse scenario in which humanity's habitat has deteriorated, both physically and metaphorically. The fading of Earth's colours represents environmental deterioration and cultural forgetfulness whereas the new planet's brilliant green serves as a canvas for human aspiration and reminiscence. Kern's quest is thus characterised not merely as a scientific endeavour, but also as an attempt to reconstruct or redeem what mankind has damaged: "A composite view of the world below that ignored their constant spin, showing the planet as hanging stationary-still off in space: the green marble to match the Blue marble of home, twenty light years away. Earth had been green, in her day, though her colours had faded" (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 9).

Dr. Avrana Kern's **grandiose ambition and growing self-identification grows with her project**. By renaming the planet "Kern's World," she symbolically claims ownership not just of the experiment but of the future of humanity itself. Her repetition of "This is the future" and "mankind's next great step" underscores her belief that she alone is guiding human evolution: "Doctor Avrana Kern now looked out upon it and thought only of Kern's World. Her project, her dream her planet. The first of many, she decided. This is the future. This is where mankind takes its next great step. This is where we become gods. 'This is the future,' she said aloud... 'This is where mankind takes its next great step'" (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 9).

Kern's accomplishment in launching the Brin "against mounting opposition" demonstrates both her drive and her solitude. It alludes to the moral complexity of her accomplishment: she pushes on not because her society supports the endeavour, but because her resolve overcomes obstacles. This establishes her character as being motivated by vision yet oblivious to disagreement, anticipating the authoritarian certainty she ultimately symbolises as the custodian of her universe: "Enough of a stink had been raised over projects like hers already. Oh, the differences between the current Earth factions went far deeper: social, economic, or simply us and them, but Kern had got the Brin launched – all those years ago – against mounting opposition" (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 9).

The emergence of new sentient life is considered to be a turning point in human evolution. It presents this transformative act as both a victory over previous constraints and a link to an enduring cosmic legacy, framing humanity's lengthy and painful past as a prelude. It emphasises that humanity may attain a kind of immortality through these new beings that surpasses Earth, history and even the universe itself. The tone is solemn and grand.

Human history was balanced on a knife edge. Millennia of ignorance, prejudice, superstition and desperate striving had brought them at last to this: that humankind would beget new sentient life in its own image. Humanity would no longer be alone. Even in the unthinkable far future, when Earth itself had fallen in fire and dust, there would be a legacy spreading across the stars – an infinite and expanding variety of Earth-born life diverse enough to survive any reversal of fortune until the death of the whole universe, and perhaps even beyond that. Even if we die, we will live on in our children. (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 10)

AI as Creator and Architect

In contrast to narratives that position AI as a threat, *Children of Time* portrays AI as a complex creator-figure. Kern's uploaded consciousness functions as an autonomous evolutionary agent whose mission to uplift life is guided by human ideals and scientific ambition. However, the rigidity of the AI's programming reveals the limitations of human rationality encoded within machine intelligence. This mismatch between intention and environmental reality highlights the unpredictable outcomes of AI-driven interventions in natural systems: "Whatever they would eventually call it, once the uplift nanovirus had taken them that far along the developmental road. The biotechs estimated that a mere thirty or forty monkey generations would bring them to the stage where they might make contact with the Sentry Pod and its lone human occupant" (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 11). Here, the nanovirus serves as more than a biological tool; indeed, it is an architect of destiny, so to say, that destabilises and dismantles the hierarchy of species. Through this engineered virus, which "models and improvises", Tchaikovsky portrays a posthumanist decentralisation of intelligence; i.e. the resulting spider civilisation has the ability to develop its own gender politics and religion, proving that agency is not a unique human trait but rather a product of complex environmental and technological synthesis. Tchaikovsky, thus, challenges the anthropocentric view that intelligence must look or act like humans so it can be valid.

The story explains a hypothetical evolutionary shift in meticulous detail. The "Barrel" and "Flask" add a sense of sterile, frigid machinery that looks nothing like humanity's unruly, natural history. The virus is represented not as a disease, but as a weapon for deliberate advancement, hurling apes through stages of evolution at many times the rate they should be moving via natural means. And the expression serves really to underline both the enormous power and the chilling arrogance of that form of intervention: a few short decades substituted for millions of years. It invokes themes of artificial evolution, scientific excess, and the alteration of life led not by nature, but by intentional design: "Alongside the Barrel was the Flask: the delivery system for the virus that would accelerate the monkeys along their way – they would stride, in a mere century or two, across physical and mental distances that had taken humanity millions of long and hostile years" (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 12).

The virus was clearly an impressive piece of work, as far as she could grasp it. Infected individuals would produce offspring mutated in a number of useful ways: greater brain size and complexity, greater body size to accommodate it, more flexible behavioural paths, swifter learning The virus would even recognize the presence of infection in other individuals of the same species, so as to promote selective breeding, the best of the best giving birth to even better. (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 12)

The virus is portrayed as a **miniature architect of destiny**, a microscopic but purposeful agent engineered to guide an entire species' evolution. It is portrayed as near-sentient intentionality and conceals the line between biology and design, functioning more genetic companion than a pathogen. Its integration into the host genome and inheritance through generations suggests a **quiet, pervasive transformation**, reshaping life from within.

It was a whole future in a microscopic shell, almost as smart, in its single-minded little way, as the creatures that it would be improving. It would interact with the host genome at a deep level, replicate within its cells like a new organelle, passing itself on to the host's offspring until the entire species was subject to its benevolent contagion. No matter how much change the monkeys underwent, that virus would adapt and adjust to whatever genome it was partnered with, analysing and modelling and improvising with whatever it inherited – until something had been engineered that could look its creators in the eye and understand. (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 12)

Human Decline and Technological Fragility

The humanity's decline on the starship *Gilgamesh* calls attention to the fragility of technology. Human society collapses due to conflict between the environmental degradation and the dependence on outdated systems. These mistakes highlight the novel's portrayal of AI and elevated species as possible heirs to human supremacy and reflect larger criticisms of human conceit.

Sering should not be in the engine core of the needle. Sering should be in the Sentry Pod, ready to take his place in orbit – and in history.

She cut Sering off from the crew and sent him an angry demand to know what he thought he was doing. For a moment his avatar stared at her in her visual field, then it lip-synced to his voice.

'You have to be stopped, Doctor Kern. You and all your kind – your new humans, new machines, new species. If you succeed here, then there will be other worlds – you've said so yourself, and I know they're terraforming them even now. It ends here. Non Ultra Natura! No greater than nature.' (Tchaikovsky, 2015, pp. 13-14)

The ideological rebellion of Sering (who advocates for 'Non Ultra Natura') represents the stagnant nature of human thought mentioned in the introduction. Spiders are 'rapidly evolving' and 'socially advanced', compared to humans, who are trapped in an old order, literally and metaphorically tenacious of the decaying technology of the *Gilgamesh*. Tchaikovsky appears here to view human ways and evolution as a dead end, a *cul-de-sac*, which must find expression only through posthuman hybridity, with AI as a catalyst to a sustainable future.

Moreover, it demonstrates Sering's extreme humanism and ideological fervour. His respectful tone belies a rebellious belief that humanity's "destiny" is exclusivity and purity, devoid of advanced artificial beings or elevated species.

Sering was continuing blithely: 'This is not even the beginning, Doctor Kern.' His tone was relentlessly deferential even in rebellion. 'Back home it will have already started. Back home it is probably already over. In another few years, maybe, you'll hear that Earth and our future have been taken back for the humans. No uplifted monkeys, Doctor Kern. No godlike computers. No freakshows of the human form. We'll have the universe to ourselves, as we were intended to — as was always our destiny. (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 14)

The **tense suspense and immediate danger** emphasise the ship's instability and the protagonist's survival. The ship's *creaking* and *lurching* personify it while the remark about not being disintegrated adds a touch of dark humour, highlighting both relief and the precariousness of the situation: "The first explosion came, and she thought it was the last one. The Brin creaked and lurched around her, but the engine core remained stable — as evidenced by the fact that she herself had not been disintegrated" (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 15). Dr Kren orders, "'Release!'", she ordered the hub, and then shouted down all of the different ways it was programmed to ask 'Are you sure?', until she felt the movement of mechanisms around her" (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 16). This highlights Dr Kren's **defiance, autonomy, and emotional isolation**. By delaying cold sleep, she asserts control over her fate, choosing to witness the ship's end rather than surrender blindly. The "several thousand messages" emphasise her **overwhelming responsibility and the crew's dependence on her**, yet her indifference underscores her **emotional detachment and focus on her own priorities**. It conveys tension between duty, survival, and personal agency.

Then it wanted her to go into cold sleep immediately, as had been the plan, but she made it wait. If the captain was not going down with her ship, she would at least watch its demise from a distance. *And how much distance would that need?*

There were, by then, several thousand messages clamouring for her attention. Every member of the crew wanted to talk to her, but she had nothing to say to any of them. (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 16)

Dr. Avrana Kern declares her severe authoritarianism when she states, "This is my world," positioning herself as a near-godlike figure with complete control over it. She further distinguishes between "my monkeys" (the elevated, uplifted species in her experiment) and "you mere humans" exemplifies her distorted, post-anthropocentric value hierarchy: she values her elevated monkeys more than genuine people as they symbolise her scientific vision.

I am Doctor Avrana Kern. This is my world. I will brook no interference with my experiment. I have seen what you are. You are not from my Earth. You are not my humanity. You are monkeys, nothing but monkeys. You are not even my monkeys. My monkeys are undergoing uplift, the great experiment. They are pure. They will not be corrupted by you mere humans. You are nothing but monkeys of a lesser order. You mean nothing to me. (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 62)

It further displays a profoundly existential and cosmic viewpoint, emphasising how insignificant human (or even intelligent) efforts are in comparison to the vastness of the cosmos. The conflict between cosmic nihilism and human responsibility is crucial: despite the universe's vastness and indifference, people continue to take action in an effort to give their experiences significance.

In the final analysis it had all been nothing more than a barrel of over-evolved monkeys, after all. From this distance, against the vast and heedless backdrop of Everything Else, it was hard to say why any of it had ever mattered at all.

Distress beacon, she ordered. Because they would need to know, on Earth, what had happened. They had to know that they must come and collect her, wake her like Sleeping Beauty. After all, she was Doctor Kern. She was the future of the human race, right here. They *needed* her.

Twenty long years for her signal to reach Earth. Far more than that for the rescue to come back, even with the best fusion engines employed to accelerate to three-quarter light speed. But her frail body would survive that long in cold sleep — and more than that.

Some hours later, she saw the end of it: she saw the Barrel hit atmosphere. (Tchaikovsky, 2015, p. 17)

Obviously, the novel's resolution (i.e. the communication between humans and spiders) modulates the tone of the story and moves the narrative from a story of domination to a story of mediation. Kern's journey from an arrogant god-like to a mediator seems to reflect the manifesto of the posthumanist project – i.e. humans should be recognised as a part of a much bigger network. It is a transition from a human-centric ambition to a multispecies interdependence, which is the central thesis of this study: AI has a transformative force that is capable of transcending human limits.

Conclusion

From a post-humanist perspective, *Children of Time* is a novel that depicts the role of artificial intelligence in shaping the life of a terraformed civilisation. Dr. Avrana Kern, the main mind behind AI in the novel, stands as an essential and crucial character. Her technological aspiration shapes the path of life and intelligence on a terraformed world. Her vision to uplift the primates into a new superior species with nanotechnology gives birth to a new radically different evolutionary pathway. The new civilisation emerges as a living testament of advanced technology. Her AI presence illustrates a new transformative power and risks of technological stewardship. At the beginning, her decisions are initially driven by human centric goal that evolves into more adaptive and inclusive perception revealing how AI can go beyond its origins to support cooperative, multispecies futures.

The role of Dr. Kern highlights the dual nature of technological innovation on a terraformed planet and can fracture and forge new forms of knowledge, life, and coexistence. The novel reimagines the boundaries between the creator and creation by emphasising that the future of technology and of intelligent life depends on hybridity, complexity and interdependence across species and forms of consciousness. The novel breaks the boundaries between human, machine and animal, and reshapes the posthuman hybridity. Posthumanism insists that nonhumans have agency. *Children of Time* is a thorough examination of artificial intelligence as an evolutionary force capable of transforming life on a global scale. The novel at the end allows humans and spiders to communicate, representing a change in how artificial intelligence is portrayed. Thus, AI develops into a mediator that promotes collaboration and cohabitation rather than imposing domination.

Ultimately, the primary contribution of this study hinges on its formulation of how technological stewardship becomes a transformative rather than a dominant force. The analysis of the convergence of Dr. Kern's AI 'presence' through the evolution of the spider civilisation is the moot point through which this paper has aimed to demonstrate that the future of intelligent life is predicted on hybridity and multispecies interdependence. In this sense, the idea stands as a challenge to the man-machine dichotomic trope in sci-fi literature. The study rather accentuates that AI can act like a catalyst for a cooperative post-anthropocentric future, thus opening a new vista for exploring the ethical and evolutionary implications entangled in and embedding the concept of mind-uploading and artificial uplift in post-Earth scenarios.

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