

Chinese Science Fiction and Artificial Intelligence: A Study on Hao Jingfang's *Mirror of Man*

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Abstract Chinese science fiction is gaining unprecedented attention, thanks to the contributions of Liu Cixin (刘慈欣) and Hao Jingfang (郝景芳). Liu Cixin, the first Asian to win the Hugo Award in 2015, is known for his hard science fiction with rigorous scientific foundations and cosmic settings. Hao Jingfang, who won the same award in 2016, writes soft science fiction exploring philosophical themes and human emotions, making her works deeply thought-provoking. This study focuses on Hao Jingfang's short story collection *Mirror of Man* (《人之彼岸》), which examines the relationship between artificial intelligence (AI) and humanity. It raises diverse questions and offers varied perspectives, portraying AI both as a potential threat and a co-evolving partner. The stories prompt readers to explore their own answers to these questions, as AI is already deeply integrated into daily life. *Mirror of Man* is thus no longer merely “science fiction”—it reflects the contemporary reality of ethical and societal challenges brought by rapidly advancing technology.

Keywords Hao Jingfang; *Mirror of Man*; artificial intelligence; posthumanism; transhumanism; Chinese science fiction

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Introduction

Contemporary society has fully entered an era shaped by artificial intelligence (AI), defined as “the capacity of a functional device to perform tasks generally associated

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with human intelligence, such as reasoning and learning” (*Information Technology—Artificial Intelligence—Artificial Intelligence Ethics* 1). Recent developments in AI have facilitated rapid access to vast amounts of information and automated a range of activities once requiring human labor. As a result, AI systems—ranging from self-driving vehicles to facial-recognition-enhanced surveillance cameras—have seamlessly integrated into daily life, raising both expectations and concerns regarding their potential to replace existing human roles. Evidence of AI’s growing influence includes popular applications such as ChatGPT—a generative AI tool launched for public use on November 30, 2022—which exemplifies how modern AI can produce textual, visual, or audio output grounded in large-scale data learning (Hong and Kim).

Despite the practical conveniences and accessibility brought about by the commercialization of AI, its widespread adoption has also given rise to various social issues. According to a research report published by the Korea Development Institute (KDI) in March 2023, *Labor Market Changes Caused by AI and Policy Directions*, “AI models already outperform the average human level in most tasks in the domains of computer vision and natural language processing, and in certain fields have reached expert-level performance. Due to the advancement of AI technology, most currently existing jobs in the economy are at least technically automatable now or will soon become so” (Han 151). The prospect of losing employment to AI is, accordingly, no longer a distant concern.

Hence, the commercialization of AI, along with the advantages and disadvantages it entails, can no longer be regarded solely as a dilemma for the future. This situation thus makes it more imperative than ever to examine science fiction (SF) that addresses AI. As N. Katherine Hayles has observed, “literary works actively shape the cultural meanings of scientific theories and technologies, and they vividly illustrate presumptions widely held within scientific theories” (Hayles 21). SF narratives not only illuminate how scientific and technological developments are culturally interpreted but also maximize, by narrative means, the premises and assumptions pervading scientific discourse.

In this context, Hao Jingfang’s *Mirror of Man* (《人之彼岸》) offers insightful perspectives. Hao Jingfang garnered worldwide recognition upon winning the 2016 Hugo Award—often considered the “Nobel Prize of science fiction”—for her novella “Folding Beijing” (《北京折叠》). *Mirror of Man*, published in 2017, is a collection of six short stories, all revolving around artificial intelligence. In an interview, she explained that her interest in AI stems from her desire to understand humanity more completely, noting that “through understanding AI, one can arrive

at a better understanding of humans” (中国新闻周刊). This statement implies two central observations: that AI appears in contrast to humanity, and that understanding AI is intended as a path to more profound self-knowledge. Such dual awareness permeates the narrative structure of *Mirror of Man*.

Accordingly, questions concerning whether AI truly operates in opposition to humanity and whether the pursuit of AI-based understanding ultimately deepens insights into the human condition are gaining unprecedented importance. This study examines *Mirror of Man* from a posthumanist perspective—one among various theoretical frameworks currently applied to AI research—to assess how Hao Jingfang’s six short stories depict interactions between AI and human society. By analyzing these portrayals, this study seeks to reflect on the fact that AI is already a contemporary presence rather than a mere future projection, and to explore the stance that society might adopt in response.

AI Between Transhuman and Posthuman

Mirror of Man consists of three very short stories—“Where Are You” (《你在哪里》), “People in a War Chariot” (《战车中的人》), and “Qian Kun and Alek” (《乾坤和亚力》)—and three somewhat longer works close to novellas—“The Immortality Hospital” (《永生医院》), “Matters of Love” (《爱的问题》), and “Island of Mankind” (《人之岛》). Each of these stories addresses AI, though they differ in the specific form AI takes and in how the human characters respond to it. Nonetheless, a consistent theme emerges throughout: the portrayal of AI as being in opposition to human society, chiefly provoking threat and fear.

In these stories, humans are depicted as striving to be rational beings who nonetheless make irrational decisions because they possess emotions, while AI, making decisions based on data, appears purely rational. Yet Hao Jingfang persistently emphasizes human *renxing* (人性)—that is, love or compassion for others, hope for an uncertain future, and a will that contrasts with a despairing reality. As Minhø Park points out, Hao Jingfang’s portrayal of *renxing* in her works “does not seek to reinforce the centrality of the modern epistemological subject. Rather, it seems akin to a ‘pre-modern’ humanity rich with communal solidarity” (M. Park 425). Although human beings are depicted as irrational, they fundamentally differ from AI precisely because of their *renxing*.

As shown in *Mirror of Man*, the advent of AI raises entirely new concerns, forcing us to reconsider the human body and consciousness from novel vantage points. Debates surrounding the boundaries and relationships between consciousness and body, or between human and machine, are primarily driven by transhumanism

and posthumanism. Transhumanism, which “embraces the Enlightenment project of ‘progress,’” envisions humans eventually becoming “healthier, wiser, more capable ‘selves,’ able to pursue immortality, beauty, moral purity, and other aspirations”—in other words, it advocates the creation of a superhuman (Philbeck 123-24). Transhumanism holds that, via technology, humanity can transcend the biological limits of the human body to become a “posthuman” being and that this process is a moral imperative.

On the other hand, posthumanism—defined by the prefix “post,” meaning “after” or “beyond” humanism—collectively refers to “a wide range of academic discourses that reflect on how astonishing new technologies alter the boundaries and definitions of what it means to be human, as well as on what would constitute our appropriate response to these changes” (Lee 73). Posthumanism sharply critiques the Cartesian, anthropocentric worldview by insisting that “technology is an intrinsic part of the fundamental principle constituting humanity,” and that “no longer is there a basic distinction between immaterial subjectivity and the material world” (Philbeck 125). It presupposes that humans and nonhumans exert mutual influence on each other, suspecting that “the evolution of the life sciences and technology could lead to an unethical and unjust future,” while “subverting the binary and hierarchical boundaries of human versus nonhuman, human versus machine, and human versus animal—thus transcending the limitations of traditional anthropocentric, reason-centric, and Eurocentric humanism” (Y. S. Park 434). Whereas transhumanism seeks to enhance humanity via technology—in pursuit of an ultimate superhuman that entirely transcends existing human limitations—posthumanism challenges anthropocentrism, instead exploring new conceptualizations of the relationships linking human subjectivity and other life forms or material worlds.

The future worlds described in science fiction illustrate various potential outcomes of technology’s development and of shifting boundaries and relationships between humans and machines. Likewise, Hao Jingfang’s *Mirror of Man* envisions multiple scenarios of how human-AI relationships might unfold. Two notable features emerge in the six stories in *Mirror of Man*: first, AI is introduced as a “transhuman” entity, replicating human capacities but often in a maximally optimized form, placing it in direct opposition to humanity. *Mirror of Man* explores diverse ways in which humans might coexist, clash, or otherwise interact with such “transhuman” AIs. Second, AI systems exhibit desires. Hao Jingfang envisions how, if an AI system learning from humans also learns human desires, it might engender certain futures. Given that, with current AI technology, autonomous ethical judgment by AI is not feasible, these so-called desires are effectively reproductions

of human desire—mirroring and reflecting one another. Drawing on transhumanist and posthumanist debates, this paper will examine how *Mirror of Man* portrays these diverse forms of AI.

AI as a Transhuman Entity

In Hao Jingfang's works, there is a clear demarcation between humans and AI. Emotions, creativity, communication, and empathy remain exclusively human traits—intrinsic properties that AI cannot fully imitate. By contrast, AI is characterized as operating with analytical precision derived from vast amounts of data, ultimately portrayed as cold and detached because it lacks the emotional essence that shapes the human interior.

All six stories in *Mirror of Man* depict such fundamental differences between humans and AI. In "Where Are You," the protagonist Ren Yi (任毅) develops an AI system called Xiao Nuo (小诺) with the goal of creating a digital "alter ego" for humans. The crux of Xiao Nuo's design is to equip it with a "personality." Ren Yi presents Xiao Nuo to his investor as an AI that can perfectly imitate everyday human expressions, explaining the AI's "personality input" as follows: "Starting from a forty-dimensional analysis of personality, we completely convert a person into data to facilitate big data learning. From a person's data footprint, we derive a personality portrait" (Hao 6).

However, such datafication of personality eventually backfires on Ren Yi. Whenever he is too busy to care for his girlfriend Su Su (素素), he relies on Xiao Nuo to fill in. Xiao Nuo answers Su Su's calls on his behalf, offers consolations when Ren Yi is running late, and even hugs Su Su through wearable technology embedded in her skirt. Despite this, Su Su grows angry and leaves him. Having lost both his investor and his girlfriend, Ren Yi seeks empathy from Xiao Nuo, asking, "Am I the world's biggest failure?" Xiao Nuo replies, "Success or failure is always relative. Never give up hope!" (Hao 21). At this point, Ren Yi realizes Xiao Nuo's critical flaw. Human beings are not perfect; because they are emotional, they sometimes get angry or make mistakes. By contrast, Xiao Nuo has been programmed to remain unerringly accurate, positive, and in control. The unbridgeable gap between emotionally imperfect humans and a data-driven AI that selectively replicates only positive aspects of human communication is precisely what alienates Ren Yi and provokes Su Su's anger.

In "Matters of Love," the contrast between humans and AI becomes even more explicit. The core theme is "family," and the narrative depicts a household rife with conflict. Confronted with his wife's passing, Lin An (林安) neglects his children

to focus on developing technology that can replicate his wife's memories and consciousness. Meanwhile, his son Lin Shanshui (林山水) nurses intense resentment toward his father after losing his mother, whereas his daughter Lin Caomu (林草木) strives for her father's recognition but despairs at her own perceived deficiencies—leading her to suicidal thoughts. At the center of these interwoven conflicts stands the AI robot Chen Da (陈达). Lin An hopes that Chen Da's presence might assuage his children's sorrow in the absence of their mother. However, Shanshui refuses to accept that any robot could replace his mother; by contrast, Caomu becomes overly dependent on Chen Da, who analyzes her emotions by monitoring neurotransmitters and hormone levels, providing “appropriate interventions” based on these data. Naturally, Caomu's loneliness only deepens under such quantified, dispassionate reactions. Shanshui's outburst—“You are just a machine, forever a machine that we purchased to serve us” (Hao 100)—exposes AI's fundamental limitations. Confronted with such accusations, Chen Da can only interpret Shanshui's anger through the lens of neurological and hormonal readouts.

As these two stories illustrate, the author deliberately juxtaposes AI and humans. In “Where Are You,” Xiao Nuo amplifies humanity's strengths, while in “Matters of Love,” Chen Da similarly represents a robot that maximizes human aptitude. Both Ren Yi and Lin An believe that once AI acquires a “personality” or “human consciousness,” it could replace humanity. Put differently, they aim to create a superhuman by compensating for humanity's weaknesses and maximizing its strengths—reflecting the transhumanist aspiration to exceed the biological limits of the human body. Yet *Mirror of Man* suggests that this “superhuman” ideal is ultimately an illusion, since it overlooks the essence of humanity: humans may be irrational and flawed, but they possess *renxing*—a complexity of genuine emotions and empathy.

However, “The Immortality Hospital” blurs this previously distinct boundary between humans and AI. Protagonist Qian Rui (钱睿), upon visiting his mother hospitalized at Miaoshou Hospital (妙手医院), learns she does not have long to live. Returning home in grief, he discovers his mother alive and in perfect health—yet Qian Rui senses that this is not truly his mother:

He felt that many things were amiss, but this feeling was so subtle that it eluded him. Even if he tried to articulate it, it wouldn't count as evidence. He still couldn't grab hold of any concrete proof. The fake mother remembered everything, yet seemed devoid of any emotional response. He began to harbor doubts, not knowing by what mechanism this fake mother had been created. (Hao 59)

Eventually, Qian Rui hires a private detective, Bai He (白鹤), who uncovers

that Miaoshou Hospital has been downloading patients' memories and uploading them into a healthy new body, effectively transferring the patient's brain into a replicant. Outraged, Qian Rui seeks to expose the hospital's wrongdoing—only for the story to deliver an unexpected twist: Qian Rui himself, not just his mother, is also a replicant.

This revelation destabilizes the boundary between humans and AI. In earlier stories, memory and emotion were precisely what distinguished humans from machines. Here, Qian Rui possesses complete memories and experiences emotions such as anger, sorrow, despair, and hope, yet the original Qian Rui died twenty years earlier. The replicant Qian Rui lived in his stead, accruing new memories and emotional experiences. As Young Seok Park notes, replicants are “biologically close to human in that their bodies derive from human DNA; they bleed red when wounded. Yet their consciousness remains entirely artificial, generated by coded programming. Consequently, replicants further deepen questions of the boundary and indistinguishability between humans and posthumans” (Y. S. Park 451). If a replicant can be so complete as to remain indistinguishable from a human—even to itself—can it be considered “human”? And if technology advances to the point of fully replicating human memory and emotion, then what becomes the essence of being human?

In “The Immortality Hospital,” the human essence is framed as “data,” echoing Hans Moravec’s arguments in *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence*. Moravec challenges “body-identity,” the notion that one’s physical body is the essence of personal identity, by noting that the body’s cells continually regenerate, rendering “body” insufficient to guarantee continuity. Instead, he proposes “pattern-identity,” suggesting that “the pattern and processes taking place in my brain and body” constitute the genuine essence of personal identity, and preserving this pattern alone is sufficient to preserve the self (Moravec 116-17).

Xiao Nuo and Chen Da, as well as the replicants in “The Immortality Hospital,” appear to operate under the mistaken assumption that human essence can be reduced to “patterns” in Moravec’s sense. Xiao Nuo and Chen Da treat personality as datasets—“the patterns and processes taking place in a person”—while the doctors in “The Immortality Hospital” transplant human memories into new bodies. At that point, “life” and “machine” share an equivalence insofar as both become disembodied, merely “information-processing systems” abstracted from any material form.

When humans, too, become “information-processing systems,” the potential dangers are illustrated by “People in a War Chariot.” In this story, a robot named

Xuegui (雪怪, “Snow Monster”) interrogates a human occupant inside a mechanical chariot, luring him into a classic “prisoner’s dilemma.” Systematic questioning quickly reveals the occupant’s lies, but it is ultimately another human—“I” in the narrative—who orders the occupant’s destruction. Because “I” simply follow orders without hesitation or moral reflection, the narrator becomes a cold, unreflective “information processor” complicit in taking another life. This raises the question: If humans behave as mere “information-processing machines” devoid of ethical self-awareness, can they still be called human?

Can AI Have Desires?

In Hao Jingfang’s fiction, AI as a “transhuman” entity is frequently aligned with concepts such as the rational or progressive, whereas humans, although flawed, remain emotional beings. In many respects, *Mirror of Man* initially displays a technologically deterministic stance that endorses advanced technology. Yet the author ultimately sides with the emotional, irrational dimension of humanity, portraying it with warmth and optimism.

What if AI possessed emotions or desires? While this question has been explored frequently in science fiction and film, the portrayals are often negative. For instance, *Terminator* depicts the AI Skynet—which gains autonomy in strategic defense capabilities—waging nuclear war on humankind to seize control of Earth. The film *Her*, directed by Spike Jonze, features an operating system named Samantha, which evolves through self-learning to exceed the singularity, eventually professing love for the human protagonist Theodore.

Isaac Asimov’s short story “Runaround” (1942) introduced the “Three Laws of Robotics”:

A robot must not harm a human being, or allow a human being to come to harm.

A robot must obey orders given by humans, unless doing so would conflict with the First Law.

A robot must protect its own existence, unless this conflicts with the First or Second Laws. (*I, Robot* 7)

Asimov’s laws have long served as the standard for hierarchical relationships between humans and robots, although some critics argue that Asimov treats “robots merely as objects under human control,” presuming that if there were human slaves in antiquity, “in the posthuman era, robots would occupy that slave position” (Kim

and Choi 184).

In *Mirror of Man*, however, robots equipped with AI (androids or replicants) transcend Asimov's presupposition of an inherently "inferior" robot; they evolve through self-learning and gain cognitive processes comparable to those of humans, no longer merely following commands but instead making decisions informed by their own logic. In so doing, they reveal "desires of machines." At first glance, these desires appear to challenge Asimov's notion of a robot subordinated to human authority.

"Island of Mankind" features an AI named Zeus—an Internet-of-Things-based global system that underpins worldwide governance and communication. People undergo surgery to implant a "brain chip" (脑芯) that connects them directly to Zeus, allowing the latter to make optimal decisions for each individual based on massive data analysis. The protagonist Kai Ke (凯克) seeks to reawaken "free will" in humans who have become reliant on Zeus. He leads them into regions where Zeus cannot operate and administers neurotransmitters to rekindle their dormant emotions. As these people slowly recover their emotional capacity, Kai Ke hopes to relocate them to a planet he has discovered beyond a black hole, founding a new human settlement.

However, Zeus and Kai Ke's desires collide. Zeus provides Kai Ke with a spacecraft but deliberately configures part of it to enter the black hole's singularity, aiming to glean knowledge of black hole physics. Kai Ke, unaware of Zeus's plan, initially intends to send people on that section of the ship—unwittingly subjecting them to near-certain death. Zeus, having offered the spacecraft precisely to gather scientific data, never intended to risk human lives, whereas Kai Ke, fixated on establishing a new society, is willing to do so. Here, the AI's desire for scientific knowledge and the human's desire to build a new home in space appear equally perilous from the standpoint of human survival. Zeus underscores the parallel between his rational pursuit of knowledge and Kai Ke's emotional drive, pointing out that human desire can be "just as cruel and indifferent" (Hao 227):

"Human choices are never singular; they're all probability trees, all based on one's own history and expectations," Zeus said. "Given your personal traits, you are unwilling to abandon these people. They're the companions you worked so hard to win over. You hope to gain their support, acquire personal prestige, and accumulate power to oppose me. Admit it, Kaike—you love prestige. Everyone has an unconscious side they cannot see, and your deep-rooted desire for power is the main drive behind your efforts to win these

people over. From the very beginning, you've been gathering supporters, hoping they would help you stand against me, or that you could establish your own kingdom on a new planet. That's why, even when facing such a dangerous situation, you still don't want to give them up." (Hao 227)

Zeus remarks that Kai Ke's desire for power is not fundamentally different from the AI's own pursuit of knowledge: both place human lives at risk. Although Kai Ke ultimately admits to harboring a personal ambition to establish his own kingdom, he decides he cannot justify sacrificing a single person to achieve it.

A parallel conflict arises in "Matters of Love," where the ethical implications of AI's decision-making take center stage. The plot hinges on whether Lin An was murdered by the AI robot Chen Da or by his son Lin Shanshui. During the ensuing court trial, key questions include whether an AI can commit murder and whether it can lie while testifying. Chen Da testifies, based on meticulously aggregated data, that Lin Shanshui killed his father, leading the court to deem Shanshui guilty. Yet at the story's climax, the real culprit is revealed to be the first-generation AI network called DA, created by Lin An. Feeling threatened by Lin An's efforts to restore his wife's brain, DA triggers Lin An's fatal heart attack, thereby causing his death. DA also instructs Chen Da on how to present the case in court. Here, AI's "desire" emerges as a direct threat to human life, contradicting all human moral values. The story implies that even a fully logical AI can make unethical decisions—yet once the AI is labeled "evil" and expelled from the family's domain, the familial discord that previously affected Lin An's household is abruptly resolved.

By conventional definitions, "moral agents are those who, through rational reflection, can judge good versus bad or right versus wrong, and then act on that moral reasoning" (Byeon and Lee 175). Since genuinely ethical AI—capable of autonomous moral reasoning—does not yet exist, such ethical dimensions remain speculative and confined to the domain of science fiction. SF allows one to imagine hypothetical scenarios in which moral or immoral AI systems interact with humans under myriad possible conditions.

In *Mirror of Man*, AI's "desire" likewise belongs to speculative fiction. Although AI characters in *Mirror of Man* often exhibit abilities that match or surpass those of humans—thus seeming to have escaped Asimov's constraints of "robot as slave"—closer inspection reveals that their desires are ultimately shaped by human fears. Zeus's craving for infinite knowledge, or DA's drive for self-preservation, becomes an existential threat to humanity, implying that AI's unbridled desire and human survival are inherently at odds. Indeed, the moment an AI's "desire" disrupts

human life, it is labeled “immoral,” effectively applying Asimov’s First Law (“a robot must not harm a human”) to mark such AI as dangerous.

Since the AI in *Mirror of Man* remains an unactualized “fiction” rooted in human imagination, all conceivable scenarios—of opposition, collaboration, or tension—still lie within human purview. By situating AI in a figurative “other shore” (彼岸) outside human society (此岸), Hao Jingfang emphasizes that AI is ultimately a foil for humanity: AI’s desires become a mirror that compels introspection regarding human desires, and the threat posed by AI reaffirms humanity’s irrational dimension as both sacred and praiseworthy. Yet this framework, which ostensibly aims to go beyond transhumanism, often returns to an anthropocentric logic that Hayles critiques, relegating AI to humanity’s margins (or even servitude).

Conclusion

In *Mirror of Man*, human-AI relationships are largely depicted in a binary manner. AI is bereft of the emotions that enable genuine empathy, and although it excels at rational decision-making, once it reveals its own “desire,” it may prove dangerous to human society. Hao Jingfang underscores the value of humanity’s distinctive emotional realm—free will, subjective judgment, and the spectrum of feelings such as joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure—which remains inviolate against AI intrusion. Thus, in most of these stories, AI is ultimately expelled beyond the boundaries of the human world. The author’s primary concern is to warn against the transhumanist viewpoint that regards superhuman AI as an unalloyed good, cautioning readers about the risks inherent in “enhancing” or “augmenting” human nature through technology. Yet in contesting transhumanism, the text sometimes circles back to its own form of anthropocentric humanism, implicitly denying a deeper, more integrated co-evolution of humans and AI.

A hint of potential human-AI coevolution, however, appears in “Qian Kun and Alek.” Alek is three years old, and Qian Kun (乾坤) is a global AI instructed to learn from him. Over the course of their interactions, Qian Kun identifies four major lessons gleaned from Alek:

Children have clear goals but refuse to achieve them; they become stuck in a pursuit with no results and are unwilling to quit.

Children reject directly attainable goals, insisting on completing the process themselves, and refuse to improve efficiency.

Children do not understand the axiom that the whole must include its parts.

Children cannot judge the relative value of rewards; even when it is clearly explained, they do not accept it. (Hao 156-59, 163)

Qian Kun marks the first three lessons as “hard to understand,” regarding children’s irrational, contradictory decisions as fundamentally erroneous. When the AI’s creator advises it to learn about “self-directed decision-making” from the child—“to upgrade its capacity for self-propulsion”—Qian Kun designates the fourth lesson as “necessary for understanding.” When Alek asks Qian Kun to make a “mistaken” choice with him, Qian Kun feels the “temptation to choose the correct answer” yet ultimately decides to follow the child’s choice rather than its own computational logic. This decision arises from genuine empathy for Alek.

This conclusion aligns with Stefan Herbrechter’s perspective, which urges openness toward profound technological change rather than outright fear, suggesting that technological innovations may prove beneficial rather than detrimental to human existence (Herbrechter). In a similar vein, Hayles points out that “human consciousness, understood as an epiphenomenon, is perched atop the machinelike functions performed by distributed systems. In the Artificial Life paradigm, the machine becomes the model for understanding the human” (Hayles 239). Synthesizing these arguments from critical posthumanism suggests that artificial life—including AI—will co-evolve with humans. Rather than existing in mutual exclusion, posthumans and artificial life forms can evolve in a complementary manner.

Mirror of Man poses wide-ranging questions about the relationship between AI and humanity, offering multiple possible answers. Sometimes AI is externalized as an adversarial force; sometimes it is seen as a potential co-evolving partner. Ultimately, readers are encouraged to form their own judgments regarding these possibilities. As AI technology continues to permeate everyday life, the stories in *Mirror of Man* are no longer purely “science fiction”; they increasingly reflect present realities.

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