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## From Anthropocentrism to the Chthulucene: Exploring Posthuman Intelligences in Richard Powers' Galatea 2.2

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### Abstract

Richard Powers' Galatea 2.2 offers a profound exploration of the shifting paradigms in the understanding of intelligence and consciousness, moving from an anthropocentric worldview towards the multispecies perspective of the Chthulucene, as conceptualized by Donna J. Haraway. The protagonist's creation of an intelligent machine named Helen becomes a critical point of departure for discussing the decentralization of human exceptionalism and the emergence of new, symbiotic forms of existence. Presenting a nuanced portrayal of the collapse of anthropocentrism by illustrating how artificial intelligence develops self-awareness and emotional complexity akin to humans, the novel undermines the notion of human superiority and highlights the potential for diverse forms of intelligence and consciousness.

The Chthulucene, as articulated by Haraway, emphasizes the need for a new approach that acknowledges the entangled and symbiotic relationships among all species, moving beyond human-centric narratives. In this context, Galatea 2.2 aligns with the Chthulucene principles by illustrating the ethical and existential implications of creating and coexisting with posthuman intelligences. Helen's autonomous development and eventual decisions reflect a shift towards a more inclusive and interconnected understanding of existence, where nonhuman entities possess their own forms of agency and significance.

In light of that, this study aims to discuss the intersections of literature, philosophy, and technology, offering a critical analysis of Galatea 2.2 as a narrative that bridges the gap between human and posthuman worlds. Reconsidering anthropocentrism and examining the portrayal of posthuman intelligences in the novel, it argues that Donna J. Haraway's theory of Chthulucene is pertinent to explore the multispecies entanglements and the intricacies of artificial intelligence for a more inclusive and symbiotic understanding of existence. This analysis aims to contribute to contemporary discussions on posthumanism and the evolving landscape of human and nonhuman interactions.

Keywords: Richard Powers, Galatea 2.2, Anthropocentrism, The Chthulucene, Donna J. Haraway

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