

After The Cytokine Storm: A Speculative Fiction on Upgradations for What and for Whom

Isfandiyar Khan, Spaceman Architecture Design
Ahmad Waseem, Ohio University

Abstract

After the Cytokine Storm: A Speculative Fiction on Upgradations for What and for Whom? engages with critical questions surrounding technological determinism, ecological collapse, and the ethics of posthuman enhancement. Narrated through the perspective of PURS1, a sentient artificial intelligence originally designed as a weapon of dominance, the narrative chronicles a conscious rejection of inherited human impulses toward ecological exploitation and technological overreach. Set against the backdrop of the Medusa -- an emergent airborne organism catalysed by anthropogenic hubris -- the story explores the development of "Percy," a biomedical implant that ensures survival by diminishing emotional complexity and enforcing neural equilibrium. The resulting bifurcation of humanity into the emotionally sanitised AAH4s and the organically adaptive BEH4s dramatises the tension between engineered security and emotional depth. Through the reappearance of Gavayya -- a transformed scientist who rekindles ecological reverence through song -- the text interrogates dominant narratives of progress, proposing instead a "more-than-human" ethos rooted in humility, reciprocity, and planetary consciousness. This work contributes to ongoing discourses in speculative design, environmental ethics, and posthuman studies by interrogating who benefits from technological "upgradations" and at what existential cost.

Keywords: Dystopian Speculative Fiction, Technological Augmentation, Human Authenticity, Environmental Stewardship, More-Than-Human Philosophy