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REDEFINING BOUNDARIES BETWEEN HUMAN AND NONHUMAN IN *THE STONE GODS* BY JEANETTE WINTERSON

Introduction

The Stone Gods (2007) by Jeanette Winterson is a novel difficult to classify as belonging to one literary genre, as it combines sci-fi, dystopia, and traits of a post-apocalyptic story. It is also marked by its striking postmodern quality, as the author includes literary techniques such as intertextuality and metafiction, which largely highlight the circular aspect of the novel. Julie Ellam argues that "*The Stone Gods* is better described as a set of 'novellas-in-a-novel'" (220). The book is divided into four parts, each of them telling the recurring love story between two protagonists—Billie Crusoe and Spike—in various settings as each part explores the same storyline but in alternative realities.

This article focuses on the depiction of the human-nonhuman relationship between Billie and Spike as presented in the first part of the novel in the chapter entitled "Planet Blue." I argue that the technologization of the society and the procedure of genetic manipulations in the novel can be seen as a representation of transhumanist thought aimed at human enhancement, especially extending the human lifespan. The goal of this article is to illustrate how the novel erases the dichotomy between human and technological

nonhuman and how this human/nonhuman encounter influences the concept of the human. Posthumanist thought provides the background for the article through the commentary of posthumanist thinkers such as Rosi Braidotti and Francesca Ferrando.

Transhumanism and the Creation of Genetically Fixed Society

The transhumanist stance is most visible in the idea of *ageless* society introduced in the first part of the novel through the procedure of Genetic Fixing. The procedure as such is not described but the readers find out that it relies on the premise of *fixing* the genotype in order to repress the aging process of the cells; as a result, citizens of planet Orbus have the possibility to *fix* their age to remain permanently the same. Genetic Fixing can be viewed as a representation of one of the key points of transhumanist thought discussed through the selection of ideas typically associated with the movement. Luna Dolezal argues that the view of enhancement as the pursuit of improvement of human condition also connects transhumanism strongly to the Enlightenment (313). This connection enforces the human-centred vision of the world, which is manifested through its desideratum advocating for human enhancement and prolonging human lifespan. Among major supporters of age defying processes is Robert Ettigner—a physicist and the author of the book *The Prospect of Immortality*—and Saul Kent, the founder of Life Extension Foundation. The first attempt at compiling the transhumanist claims was made by Natasha Vita-More in "The Transhumanist Manifesto" (1983, 1st version). Therein, Vita-More advocates for "Life extension & expansion," claiming that "[t]ranshumanism is the first philosophy and worldview to publicly proclaim the need to eradicate disease and to advocate for longevity and ageless thinking." The belief that the aging process can be defeated is echoed by other declarations and manifestos of the movement. In "A Letter to Mother Nature", first delivered in by Max More in his keynote address in 1999 at EXTRO-4 Conference in Berkley and later

published in *The Transhumanist Reader* (2013), More repeats his wife's claim and presents it as the first amendment:

> Amendment No. 1. We will no longer tolerate the tyranny of aging and death. Through genetic alterations, cellular manipulations, synthetic organs, and any necessary means, we will endow ourselves with enduring vitality and remove our expiration date. We will each decide for ourselves how long we shall live. (More 450)

Finally, *The Transhumanist Declaration* (2012)—the product of efforts and cooperation of many transhumanist thinkers—also lays the foundation of the movement by preaching the extension of life as one of the key points:

> 8. We favor morphological freedom—the right to modify and enhance one's body, cognition, and emotions. This freedom includes the right to use or not to use techniques and technologies to extend life, preserve the self through cryonics, uploading, and other means, and to choose further modifications and enhancements. (55)

The matter of defying the aging process reoccurs throughout the years and has been reflected on by the transhumanists and futurists, representatives of philosophy, literature, biology, and technology. Winterson imagines humanity overcoming this threshold as the problem of age in *The Stone Gods* is eliminated—the age of an individual can be fixed, the breeding takes place outside of womb and the genetics are mastered. Thus, the civilisation on Orbus can be viewed as a representation of the society which achieved "morphological freedom" pursued by the transhumanists. The invention of Genetic Fixing challenges the category of the *human*. Ironically, the procedure leads people into sexual perversion: while women want to be fixed as increasingly younger, men feel attracted to minors. As Robo *sapiens* Spike ventures to prove in her conversation with Billie, due to many enhancements, determining the difference between human and nonhuman becomes increasingly more difficult and challenging (Winterson 77–79). In the article I will be exploring the erosion of those boundaries.

However, as the gulf between Billie and Spike begins to dwindle, the novel shifts its focus from abovementioned technological and biotechnological

upgrades to interspecies connection between the two characters who serve as representatives of, respectively, human and technological other. By moving the human away from the centre of interest and altering the focus to their relation with the technological other instead, the novel gains a new perspective and presents this human-nonhuman entanglement through the posthumanist lens. Unlike transhumanism, posthumanism is viewed as much more inclusive and open. It advocates for the acknowledgment of human and nonhuman marginalised subjects who are not default beneficiaries of technological advancements and distances itself from a human-centred narrative which assumes a heterosexual, white male as a figure representative of human species. In his definition of posthumanism, Cary Wolfe points out that the humanistic roots present in transhumanism clearly distinguish it from posthumanism (356). He underlines the difficulty of establishing boundaries between human and nonhuman:

> not only is the line between human and non-human impossible to definitively draw with regard to the binding together of neurophysiology, cognitive states and symbolic behaviours, the line between 'inside' and 'outside', 'brain' and 'mind', is also impossible to draw definitively. (358)

Another point of difference between two perspectives highlighted by Wolfe is their approach to widely understood question of finitude—the unavoidable end of all the beings and relationships with human inventions:

> not just the finitude that obtains in our being bound to other forms of embodied life that live and die as we do, that are shaped by the same processes that shape us, but also the finitude of our relationship to the tools, languages, codes, maps and semiotic systems that make the world cognitively available to us in the first place. (358)

Thus, unlike transhumanism, posthumanism renders the dichotomy between humans and nonhumans irrelevant—or even non-existent—and refutes the idea of immortality in favour of accepting death as the inescapable part of existence. I argue that these two aspects of posthumanism can be found in Winterson's novel and, in attempt to analyse them, I apply the framework

provided by posthumanist philosophers, Rosi Braidotti and Francesca Ferrando.

Human and Nonhuman Entanglement

The novel contextualizes the outcomes of enhancement within the broader posthumanist framework by juxtaposing the enhanced human being to the technological nonhuman and the planet. It not only raises the question of how *human* are the enhanced human beings on Orbus, but also what distinguishes the enhanced society from the Robo *sapiens* (an intelligent humanoid.) During the quest to Planet Blue, Robo *sapiens* Spike argues that the distinction between robots and humans is negotiable and difficult to establish. The obsession with physical beauty and politics of enhancement is juxtaposed with Robo *sapiens'* own outlook on physicality. As a humanoid, Spike represents the Harawayan idea of a post-gender cyborg. Despite her very much sexualized female appearance, she perceives "gender" as something with which she herself does not identify nor does she showcase any specific preference for a male or female partner. This theme is further developed by the ever-changing gender of Billie and Spike and stretched to the human-nonhuman transformation. Such a use of *gender fluidity* sparks a comparison between *The Stone Gods* and Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* as both texts reject the ideas of being limited by gender or perceiving gender as an ultimate definition of the self. Furthermore, just like in *Orlando*, the circularity of *The Stone Gods'* narrative, resembling the lifecycles of nature, also enforces the need to reject the binary human/nonhuman, male/female categorization.

The entanglement of the human with the nonhuman is further highlighted by the environmental landscape, its relevance to human life, and the influence humans have on it. As Caracciolo argues, the human individual is deeply embedded in the reality which is nonhuman:

> The image of the circle pervades the novel, at multiple levels: diegetic, temporal, and thematic. But only the metaphorical paranarrative reveals

> the deep significance of this circularity: it holds a mirror up to Winterson's fluidly circular metaphysics, in which the human, embodied subject seeps into, and is at the same time shaped by, the nonhuman realities of geology and the cosmos. (233)

While seemingly the focus of the novel might be the collapse of human civilisation and it might seem human-centred, as Caracciolo points out, Winterson positions the timelines of characters within a much broader time scale of a planet, something which seems excluded from the transhumanist contemplations.

As it has been mentioned earlier, humans on Orbus were subjected to a wide variety of enhancements to achieve age fixing, such as cloning, breeding outside the human body and genetic modification. Therefore, the society of Orbus can be viewed as an example showcasing the humans which successfully transitioned into the posthumans. Those alteration to the genetic body of the human are pointed out by Spike in her argument with Billie and Pink as she tries to establish the difference between the human and herself—Robo *sapiens*:

> 'Every human being in the Central Power has been enhanced, genetically modified and DNA-screened. Some have been cloned. Most were born outside the womb. A human being now is not what a human being was even a hundred years ago. So what is a human being?' (77)

This transition altered the human to such an extent that, at this point, the border between human and nonhuman seems purely conventional. Spike undermines the understanding of the "human" as a concrete taxonomy of being and her comment echoes the classical debate between Plato and Diogenes concerned with the definition of a man.

Spike continues to challenge the distinction between the humans and her nonhuman self by stating that even without any enhancements the body of the human "is in a constantly changing state" (77–78). Ferrando highlights this exact evolutionary aspect of DNA in her book *The Art of Being Posthuman*:

> Not only does it self-replicate, but also it is constantly changing, in the processes of mutations, epigenetic expressions and horizontal gene transfers (...) Mutations can be approached as techniques of evolution,

> resulting not necessarily from errors but also out of knowledge of the self as (p)art of the environment, manifesting specific changes in choice and interpretation. (57–58)

To encapsulate the "essence" of what it means to be a human, which Spike seeks in the debate, proves a futile task. As Ferrando argues further: "DNA is not a static "thing" that can be essentialized; it is an embodied process in the here and now" (66). The argument on this everchanging state of a human being, brought up by Spike, parallels the ship of Theseus paradox. The paradox provokes a philosophical debate whether the ship which has all the parts substituted by identical parts remains the same ship. It also relates to the dilemma faced by transhumanist thinkers who argue whether mind uploading would be a process that allows to transmit what it is that is considered a human. A posthumanist philosopher Katherine Hayles criticizes such a presumption expressed by Hans Moravec:

> How, I asked myself, was it possible for someone of Moravec's obvious intelligence to believe that mind could be separated from body? Even assuming such a separation was possible, how could anyone think that consciousness in an entirely different medium would remain unchanged, as if it had no connection with embodiment? Shocked into awareness, I began noticing he was far from alone. (1)

The argument oftentimes used against the transhumanist logic as mind uploading relates to the constantly changing state of a human being, which implies that the human nature is impossible to "capture."

However, the debate concerns not only the physical aspect of DNA and genetic manipulations. To prove that Homo sapiens and Robo *sapiens* are different, Billie (the protagonist) and Pink (fellow passenger) argue that the ability to experience emotions is something distinguishing humans from technological nonhumans. However, Spike finds the argument insufficient, and Billie further explains that the key feature of being a human is sensitivity:

> 'So your definition of a human being is in the capacity to experience emotion?' asked Spike.
> 'How much emotion? The more sensitive a person is, the more human they are?'

> 'Well, yes,' I said. 'Insensitive, unfeeling people are at the low end of human—not animal, more android'. (78)

Spike's wish is, perhaps, not only to define the boundary between human and nonhuman, but also to defy it. In her attempt to prove the lack of logical arguments which would support the supposed uniqueness of the human, Spike echoes the posthumanist wish to promote an inclusive approach towards all beings. As exemplified by the exchange between Spike and Billie quoted earlier, Spike critically deconstructs any possible definition that would contain "human" as a closed category by demonstrating that any supposedly absolute distinction may, in fact, be placed along a diverse spectrum. Ferrando, however, believes that it is the "posthuman awareness" which would allow an even deeper insight into defining human being in the world:

> Existential posthumanism proclaims the final deconstruction of the absolute "self/other" dichotomy: such a deconstruction is not a destruction. Posthuman awareness leads to a state which may transcend the human in *toto*, in a condition which exceeds and precedes humanhood as a historical construction. (187)

Spike exhibits this posthuman consciousness, especially when she questions the anthropocentric approach to the practice of categorising all beings. Robo *sapiens* downplays the superiority of human species through pointing out its destructive impact on the environment and the planet, proving that human emotionality and empathy do not necessarily translate into love and care towards the environment. During the dispute, Robo *sapiens* lectures Billie and Pink about the fallacy of the human-centred approach, which resulted in the depletion of natural resources and the collapse of the planet. Even the robot, which is itself a direct creation of the system, critiques the politics of the Central Power focused only on the enhancement of humans and the pursuit of technological advancement in order to facilitate comfort to the society: "'There are many kinds of life,' said Spike, mildly. 'Humans always assumed that theirs was the only kind that mattered. That's how you destroyed your planet'" (79). Tomasz Dobrogoszcz views the environmental abuse presented in the novel as

"a legacy of the patriarchally modelled culture," (17) and describes *The Stone Gods* as "a highly gendered narrative" (13). Technological pursuits in the novel, which can be seen through the creation of omnipresent technological upgrades, humanoid robots and genetic enhancements, are, in fact, not driven by innovative and creative urge but by the lust for power: "*The Stone Gods* articulates the destructive potential of masculinist technocracy, emphasizing pernicious effects brought about by abuses of technology which are, in essence, caused by the urge to satisfy typically male desires for domination and control" (Dobrogoszcz 17). The centrality of transhumanism and the focus on self-enhancement and defying the aging process, as the novel forecasts, result not only in the destruction of the planet and the extinction of species, but also in the endangerment of the human species itself. Ferrando highlights the pressing need to embrace the entanglement with technology as the only way to avoid destructive generalizations: "The human/machine dichotomy must be deconstructed in full awareness to avoid perpetuating ultimate essentializations—resulting in social oppressions, ecological devastations and, more extensively, existential obfuscations" (115).

The novel criticizes human perception of the world from the superior position in the hierarchy of living beings, the ultimate ignorance of diminishing differences between homo sapiens and Robo *sapiens* in the aftermath of the genetic modifications pictures humans as a narcissistic species confident of their higher status. The refusal to acknowledge the reality and repercussions of human actions becomes a downfall leading to a never-ending loop of human-induced disasters. The blind elevation of mankind makes it impossible for people on Orbus to imagine that Robo *sapiens* is the next stage in the human evolution, something which will outlive the posthuman man: "'I am a Robo sapiens,' said Spike, 'and perhaps it will be us, and not you, who are the future of the world'" (78). Spike justifies her claim by not only mentioning the self-destruction of humans, but, most importantly, highlighting the fact that Robo *sapiens* surpasses the human and can be seen as a successor in the posthuman

world: "'That was once true,' said Spike. 'It isn't true any more. We are solar-powered and self-repairing. We are intelligent and nonaggressive. You could learn from us'" (79). Spike undermines the preconception that robots are inferior to humans, thus demonstrating that the technological advancement shifted the dynamic between humans and nonhumans in terms of not only intelligence but also endurance.

Technology: Limitation or Transcendence?

The ignorance of the binary way of teaching-learning experience brought up by Spike exemplifies human detachment from everything nonhuman. The refusal to acknowledge the entanglement with technology, which is ever-present on Orbus and also a vital part of its inhabitants, manifests itself through Gene Fixing. This entanglement with technology is so permanent that life without technology—or with less technology—is rendered impossible for the humankind, as they have completely lost the ability to survive in an environmental landscape deprived of technological advancement:

> 'Humans are rendering themselves obsolete,' said Spike. 'Successive generations of deskilling mean that you can no longer fend for yourselves in the way that you once could. You rely on technicians and robots. It is not thought that anyone in the Central Power could survive unassisted on Planet Blue. Pink, do you know how to plant potatoes?' (78)

Human dependence on technology makes them unable to free themselves from the system. Therefore, this relationship does not reflect the positive entanglement proposed by Ferrando, but instead embodies an unhealthy dependency that narrows the capacity for humanity to overcome their limitations and survive. Thus, the concept of going back to nature is rendered impossible. As the novel sarcastically notices, the technology, as opposed to nature, is so omnipresent that there are special organisations that have to raise money not to maintain but to create "strips of wild." Even dogs on Orbus are robots with the option to turn the barking sound off: "Robo *sapiens* is

evolving—*Homo sapiens* is an endangered species. It doesn't feel like it to you now but you have destroyed your planet, and it is not clear to me that you will be viable on Planet Blue'" (79). Spike argues that, in an absurd way, technological growth, which was supposed to bring humanity further and create more advanced society, resulted in the creation of an after-human species—Robo *sapiens*, as the human lost the position of hegemony or self-sufficiency in the world.

The ignorance of human connection with the nonhuman is not only limited to technology, but stretches even further to the environment, the planet and other species. The society on Orbus exists but ignores the fact that they occupy the planet. During her conversation with Billie, Robo *sapiens* Spike points out to the fact that, despite their genetic affinity, humans "feel no kinship" with apes, a tendency which is compared to the possibility of developing such relations with the robots (34). This observation aligns with Braidotti's postulate to create a more inclusive categorisation encapsulating the connectedness and entanglement of all beings existing in the world: "the proper subject of the posthuman convergence is not 'Man', but a new collective subject, a 'we-are-(all)-in-this-together-but-we-are-not-one-and the-same' kind of subject" (2019: 54). This glimpse of this collective subject can be seen in the chapter "Planet Blue" where Billie and Spike develop a romantic and sexual relationship with their sexual act highlighting, in a literal sense, the idea of becoming one. Considering the gender of both characters, even though Spike rejects the gender category, Dobrogoszcz views the relationship between the two characters as a response to the male-dominated society: "Billie's attraction to Spike is largely rooted in the robot's antagonistic relation to the patriarchal culture of colonial conquest and capitalist technocracy in which the woman resides" (19). The love that develops between the two characters becomes a glimmer of hope in the novel and symbolises the act of resistance to patriarchy since the romance is not only homosexual but also interspecies. Hence, it can be stated that, through engaging in a relationship with Spike, Billie rejects

human/nonhuman categorisation and prejudice, showing the human capability for openness. Their relationship becomes "the intervention" in the destructive cycle of human defeat:

> The novel also problematizes the patriarchal binaries as these characters find fulfillment in a homoerotic zone: love is offered as a solution to all the sickening patriarchal binaries, and, ironically, it is offered to them not by their fellow citizens but either by the robots or a noble savage. (Birlik & Taskesen 71)

Spike re-establishes the lost kinship between humans and nonhumans, which might seem counter-intuitive on the surface, as usually the development of technology is blamed for the human detachment from nature.

However, Braidotti argues that at the core of technology lies the sense of connectedness: "Contemporary machines are no metaphors, but they are engines or devices that both capture and process forces and energies, facilitating interrelations, multiple connections and assemblages. They stand for radical relationality and delight as well as productivity" (2013: 92). The philosopher also finds similarity between humans and animals existing in technological and natural landscape respectively: "The merger of the human with the technological results in a new transversal compound, a new kind of eco-sophical unity, not unlike the symbiotic relationship between the animal and its planetary habitat" (92). Billie discovers that she is not only physically attracted to Spike but also has developed feelings for her. The strength of the connection established between Billie and Spike prompts Billie to follow her heart in a spontaneous decision to abandon the rest of the crew travelling to the colony and stay with Spike. The novel attempts to illustrate that love transcends the human/nonhuman categorization. Billie's reckless decision to stay and put her life in danger in order to spend more time with her beloved proves that love truly is an intervention even when the world is about to end. Although both characters die by the end of the chapter, the author leaves readers with the promise of another story: "This is one story. There will be

another" (113). Thus, the cycle of life and death continues and propels the novel.

Dismantling, Recycling, Death and Rebirth

The novel reintroduces the concept of death and presents it as a recycling. At the beginning of the novel, during a live broadcast interview between Spike and Billie, Billie asks Spike about the prospect of her being destructed:

> 'How do you feel about being dismantled? It's a kind of death, isn't it?' 'I think of it as recycling, which is what Nature does all the time. The natural world is abundant and extravagant, but nothing is wasted. The only waste in the Cosmos comes from human beings.' (37)

Thus, the act of dismantling is viewed not only as a representation of death for the technological nonhuman, but, most importantly, it is also perceived by the Robo *sapiens* as the reinventive act. By the end of the chapter, Spike has to dismantle herself in order to save energy; in the end, as she dies in Billie's arms, only her head remains. This particular perception of death as a form of recycling not only brings the individual back to the collective, but also serves as a reminder of equality in the face of death: "Death (...) is the becoming-imperceptible of the nomadic subject and as such it is part of the cycles of becomings, yet another form of interconnectedness, a vital relationship that links one with other, multiple forces" (Braidotti 2006: 147). The application of Braidotti's framework makes it possible to view parts of the novels and their ending in death of the characters as a process of becoming a part of the nonhuman world. This is also the message of the story—the characters who die are reborn, recycled to life. The novel, therefore, challenges the very idea of Genetic Fixing which can be seen as the realisation of immortality proclaimed by the transhumanists. The powerful reintroduction of death as a form of recycling introduces a posthumanist perspective to the technologised vision of the future through emphasising the belonging of humans to the ecosystem. Therefore, the argument about the ever-changing DNA made by Ferrando bears

a resemblance to the way that lifecycle is present in both human and nonhuman existence:

> How can life and death coexist? In order to answer this question, let's bring two simple examples, by mentioning that all the cells in the human body are constantly dying and regenerating—cells in the epidermis, for instance, last about a week. Another example can be found in our daily compost of vegetable scraps, which will decompose and break down into organic humus (that is, rich soil). (108)

Posthumanism and its vision of recycling represents the possibility of closeness and unity with nature and the planet, while transhumanism with its technological advancement is presented as furthering the separation between the two. Braidotti draws attention to the importance of realizing this *connectedness* between all human and nonhuman beings:

> Relationality extends through the multiple ecologies that constitute us. Such webs of connections and negotiation engender a sense of familiarity with the world and foreground the simple fact that we are ecosophical entities, that is to say ecologically interlinked through the multiple interconnections we share within the nature—culture continuum. The posthuman subject may be internally fractured, but is also technologically mediated and globally interlinked. (2019: 47–48)

It adds to the problematic idea whether technology can bring the society closer or further apart as the metaphor of death, seen as the reintroduction to the natural cycle of life, is expressed by a humanoid robot and not a human. The Robo *sapiens* Spike, thus, perceives death as a concept which is more planetary-related rather than human-centred. Such perspective allows her to escape the human fear of death and enter a nature-culture continuum which extends beyond one person's lifespan. As Johns-Putra (186–187) notices, there is a seminal contrast in the novel between repetition and intervention. Winterson applies in her novel the motive of eternal return of recurring patterns of history caught in an infinite loop allowing death and life to become a continuum instead of opposites. The love shared between Billy and Spike transgressing human/nonhuman boundary is presented as the intervention which might break the cycle of human destruction.

Conclusions

Despite its transhumanistic premise, the main message of the novel seems to be rooted in posthumanist thought. Transhumanism in the novel manifests itself through both the invention of Robo *sapiens* as well as the existence of genetic enhancement, illustrating a possible next stage in the evolution from human to posthuman. The main problem presented in the rhetoric of transhumanism is its superior placement and fixation on the human being rejecting the nonhuman, here present in the form of Earth as well as technological other. The invention of Genetic Fixing is aimed at helping the society to remain ageless without considering the repercussions of such a decision on the environment. Meanwhile, the creation of Robo *sapiens* serves the purpose of not only improving human life but also utilizing the humanoid for the purpose of sexual pleasure. Those examples illustrate the supreme position of the human perpetuated by the transhumanism, which, in consequence, draws the boundary between the human and the other. The novel, however, attempts to show the fallacy in this way of thinking as it ultimately leads to the downfall of the civilisation. *The Stone Gods* realizes Braidotti's "Ethics of Becoming Imperceptible" as it attempts to present death as a new form of becoming, divorced from transhumanistic dream of immortality. The relationship which transgresses the species proves the posthumanist necessity for human openness to others. As Spike and Billie fall in love, they establish the connection transcending the transhumanist rise of humans above all nonhumans. Technology in *The Stone Gods*, represented by Robo *sapiens* Spike, becomes an illustration of Braidotti's idea of relationality and Ferrando's rejection of human/machine dichotomy as it reveals the depth and potential lying in the entanglement with the nonhuman and reintroduces the idea of death as recycling, which establishes the human—nonhuman bond even more deeply.

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Abstract

The article discusses the human—nonhuman relationship in *The Stone Gods* (2007) by Jeanette Winterson. The goal of the article is to show how the novel questions the boundary between the human and the nonhuman—Billie and a Robo *sapiens*—Spike. The article applies transhumanist and posthumanist theory while acknowledging the elements distinguishing both from each other. Its main argument is that genetic augmentation in the form of Genetic Fixing and widespread technologization of life can be viewed as a representation of the transhumanist ideology, while the entanglement between the characters unravels the posthumanist message of the novel, which negotiates the dichotomy between human and nonhuman.