

## POSTHUMANISM AND THE ETHICS OF SUSTAINABILITY IN JEANETTE WINTERSON'S *THE STONE GODS*\*

*Jeanette Winterson'in The Stone Gods Eserindeki Posthümanizm Ve Sürdürülebilirlik Etiği*

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### Abstract

This research explores Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* in relation to posthumanism, within the context of the ethics of technology and sustainability. The novel intertwines love and the self with the environment and, in doing so, recognizes and begins to shift the anthropocentric gaze. Winterson's readers are urged to self-reflect and posthumanize their identity, which makes her arguments about the ethical stance toward the planet's health. The main characters' relationships with artificial life forms intricately permeate the boundaries of consciousness and emotion, advocating for compassion. Winterson's central argument advocates a shift from unilateral stewardship of the earth to interdependent, intentionally vulnerable sustainability. This research furthers the discourse on posthuman ethics by demonstrating how the novel illustrates the intersections between human and posthuman responsibilities in the unrelenting pursuit of justice and sustainability.

**Keywords:** Posthumanism, Sustainability, Ethics, Ecology, Identity.

### Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Jeanette Winterson'ın *The Stone Gods* adlı eserini posthümanist bir bakış açısıyla inceleyerek, teknolojik olarak donatılmış bir gelecekte sürdürülebilirliğin etik yansımalarını değerlendirmektir. İnsan ve insan olmayan varlıklar arasındaki etkileşime odaklanan eser, aşk, kimlik ve çevresel sorumluluk temalarını iç içe geçirerek çok katmanlı bir anlatı sunar. Anlatı, insanmerkezci bakış açısını sorgularken, geleneksel insan sınırlarının ötesinde daha kapsayıcı bir gerçeklik anlayışını destekler. Winterson'ın posthüman kimliklere dair sorgulamaları, okuyucuları insan olmayan varlıklar ve çevre ile ilişkilerini yeniden düşünmeye sevk eder; Böylece gezegensel iyilik haline yönelik kolektif bir etik tutumun gerekliliğine dikkat çeker. Yapay varlıklarla kurulan ilişkiler, farkındalık ve duygusal derinliğin karmaşıklığını vurgulayarak, empati kavramının yalnızca insan deneyimiyle sınırlı olmadığını öne sürer. Nihayetinde Winterson, dünyanın sorumlu birer koruyucusu olmanın anlamını yeniden düşünmeye çağırarak, karşılıklı bağlılığı ve ortak kırılganlıkları tanıyan sürdürülebilir bir birlikte yaşam anlayışını savunur. Bu

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çalışma, eserdeki insan ve posthüman sorumlulukların iç içe geçtiği, daha adil ve sürdürülebilir bir toplum arayışını resmetme biçimini ortaya koyarak, posthüman etik üzerine süregelen tartışmalara katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Posthümanizm, Sürdürülebilirlik, Etik, Ekoloji, Kimlik.

### **Introduction**

Rosi Braidotti, N. Katherine Hayles, and Donna Haraway are influential scholars who have significantly impacted how we consider the intertwined ethical dilemmas regarding life, sustainability, and the posthuman condition within posthumanism. As a theorist, Braidotti attempts to decenter anthropocentric meaning to advocate for a more complex and integrated life that goes beyond human life, especially beyond human beings. In *The Posthuman*, Braidotti elaborates on the notion of the posthuman subject and proposes fluid, more relational identities, stating that identity is intimately connected to, and therefore intertwined with, nature and technology.

Rosi Braidotti, in her work (2019), states that the posthuman subject is a dynamic entity, constantly evolving in interaction with the posthuman, and she makes a strong case for the shift from the modern to the postmodern. In her book *How We Became Posthuman*, Hayles states that the boundary between human and machine is increasingly indistinct. This is something that the criticisms attempt to reduce the human experience to mere data, thus embracing everything that life and its relationships entail. She addresses dualisms concerning gender, species, and identity by the figure of the "cyborg," and declares "we are all cyborgs now" (Haraway, 1991, p. 149).

Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* offers a great example of these posthumanist notions. Concurrent with the disintegrating ecological condition of our planet and new technologies, examining the ethics of our responsibilities in a world of profound interconnection, the novel visualizes the survival of Earth in the future when, as one of Billie's characters, she and her bond with Spike, an artificial being who engages with life. Winterson imagines with Spike an identity that can take on board the concepts of Braidotti's dynamic subjectivity. As Hayles states, to be human is to always be in a relation, which is a profound postulation of the need to posthumanize humanity, and this captures best Billie's emotional and philosophical growth in the complex journey she experiences, the need to surpass what has been socially and technologically constructed.

In her works, Winterson emphasizes that the fight for survival extends beyond humanity's mere existence and reshapes the desire to connect with the world into a commitment to encompass all forms of life. This change in focus, attitude, and approach to sustainability, which rests largely on coexistence with other species, is a fundamental posthumanist concept.

In her book *The Stone Gods*, Winterson analyzes the consequences of past actions and the basis for ethical engagement with present environmental issues. The theme of destruction and renewal in the novel seems to parallel Hayles's concerns about the imaginative adaptability and creative resources required to navigate the bewildering intricacies of a posthuman existence. The paradoxical world of extremes makes a strong

argument for the most sustainable vision possible, grounded in the realities of history and plausible projections of the future, and compels the characters and readers to reconcile with the history and the responsibilities they have shared and with the Earth. In the book, the relationship between the human characters and the inhuman shows the dissolution of boundaries that Haraway discusses, as in the case of Billie, who challenges conventional ideas of relations by forming real attachments to Spike. The challenges of defining sentience, emotion, and especially interspecies relations in relation to them prompt readers to ask: what does it truly mean to care for life that is not human?

The novel shows how posthumanist thought can impact the ethics of sustainability and interspecies relationships. Also, it is a unique study of posthumanism with the ethical problems of sustainability. The most life-affirming and interdisciplinary argument, framed within posthumanism, emerges from engaging with the foremost scholars in the field and their work on the identity-technology-ecology nexus. In this regard, this paper analyzes these works and demonstrates how Winterson's writing engages with contemporary discussions of ethics, identity, and ecology in the posthuman world.

### **Methodology**

This study adopts a qualitative literary research methodology based on close reading and textual analysis to examine Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* through the theoretical perspectives of posthumanism and posthuman ecocriticism. Rather than seeking empirical or quantitative evidence, the research investigates how literary language, characterization, symbolism, and narrative structure construct ethical understandings of technology, identity, and sustainability. Close reading is employed as the primary analytical method because it enables a detailed examination of the novel's representations of human and nonhuman relationships, ecological crisis, artificial intelligence, and posthuman subjectivity. By paying careful attention to recurring images, dialogue, metaphors, and narrative patterns, the study explores how Winterson's fiction raises philosophical questions about humanity's ethical responsibilities in an increasingly technological world.

The theoretical framework is informed primarily by the works of Rosi Braidotti, N. Katherine Hayles, and Donna Haraway, whose complementary approaches provide a comprehensive framework for interpreting the novel. Braidotti's concept of the posthuman subject serves as the principal framework for examining the novel's critique of anthropocentrism and its representation of relational identities that emerge through interactions among humans, technology, animals, and the environment (Braidotti, 2019). Hayles's theory of the posthuman contributes to the analysis of the blurred boundaries between humans and intelligent machines, particularly through the figure of Spike, whose emotional and intellectual capacities challenge traditional distinctions between biological and artificial life (Hayles, 1999). Haraway's concept of relationality and her critique of fixed species boundaries further support the examination of interspecies ethics, companionship, and coexistence, allowing the study to investigate how Winterson reimagines ethical responsibility beyond exclusively human concerns (Haraway, 1991).

The selection of *The Stone Gods* is informed by the novel's distinctive position within contemporary British literature as one of the most significant fictional explorations of posthuman ethics and environmental sustainability. Through its cyclical narrative structure, multiple temporal settings, and hybrid human-machine characters, the novel presents an interdisciplinary engagement with ecological collapse, technological development, artificial intelligence, and planetary responsibility. Unlike many dystopian narratives that portray technology solely as a source of destruction, Winterson critiques technological excess while proposing new forms of relational ethics grounded in interdependence, vulnerability, and shared responsibility. These characteristics make the novel particularly suitable for investigating contemporary posthuman debates concerning sustainability and ecological ethics.

The analysis focuses on four interconnected thematic areas that recur throughout the novel. First, it examines the construction of posthuman identity through the relationship between Billie and Spike, exploring how Winterson destabilizes conventional understandings of subjectivity. Second, it investigates representations of technology and artificial intelligence to demonstrate how the novel questions anthropocentric assumptions regarding consciousness, agency, and moral value. Third, the study analyzes ecological degradation, environmental collapse, and the recurring destruction of civilizations as narrative strategies that criticize unsustainable models of human progress. Finally, it explores the ethics of sustainability by examining how Winterson reconceptualizes responsibility as a relational practice that extends beyond human society to include technological beings, nonhuman life, and the planetary ecosystem.

108

Rather than treating posthumanism as a purely philosophical concept, this study employs it as an interpretive framework for analyzing the literary text. Consequently, theoretical discussions are integrated directly with textual analysis, allowing concepts proposed by Braidotti, Hayles, and Haraway to illuminate specific scenes, characters, and narrative developments within *The Stone Gods*. This approach enables the article to demonstrate how Winterson's novel functions not merely as a representation of posthuman ideas but also as a literary intervention in contemporary debates surrounding identity, technology, ecological responsibility, and the ethics of sustainability.

### **The Impact of Posthumanism on Identity and Ethics**

The outcomes of posthumanism on identity are as drastic as change can get. Individuality as we understand it is strongly challenged. In posthumanism, identity is fluid and developing rather than stagnant and taken for granted. In terms of technological advances in the body, Miah (2008) urges us to reconsider the boundaries of the human as such, musing that "progress in medical technology, such as changes and enhancements to the human body, push the limits of what it really means to be human" (p. 28). It is advances in technology that have led to this view, which pivots toward understanding identity as a process constructed and cyclically reconstructed through a matrix of factors (Miah, 2008).

Continuing from Miah, Bolter (2016) underscores the extent to which the integration of technology transforms our daily routines. He notes that current communication technologies are changing how we relate to and interact with one another (p. 1). At this

time, our “real world” “identities” are almost seamlessly “blended” with our “virtual” “identities” because social networking services allow individuals to express divergent and, at times, dissociated facets of themselves. Hence, the pervasive use of technology fosters tangled self-perceptions that are not easy to describe.

In relation to the above, Braidotti (2016) reminds us of the need to anchor the notion of identity to the prism of posthumanism, which describes identity as a tapestry. “As I said before, the definition of what it is to be human is never static; it is constantly changing, as a result of our relations with technology and other non-humans” (p. 13). For instance, the growing use of smartphones, AI, and other technological devices is changing social behavior and interaction at an accelerated pace. Therefore, it is easier to understand how our identities are situated within a web of technology, culture, and other people. Moreover, the notion of identity as a fluid construct raises important questions of ethics and power. Hayles’ interpretation of the posthuman can help us develop further Spike’s character in *The Stone Gods*. Spike is not simply an AI, since she develops empathy, attachment, and a sense of moral judgment; therefore, she destabilizes the relationship between biology and technology. Hayles (1999) argues that posthuman subjectivity will not eliminate embodiment; rather, it will reconfigure embodiment within a complex relationship among information, technology, and the material world. Winterson also presents Spike as an ethically significant being whose values are grounded not in biological humanity but in the ability to form meaningful connections. Winterson’s portrayal aligns with Braidotti (2019), who proposed that posthuman identity will be primarily relational and that networks of human, technological, and ecological interdependence are the means of creating identity.

109

Posthumanists study identity in a range of forms rather than viewing it as singular and unique. They instead postulate it as multiple, or indeed broken. This division reflects the realities we face in our society’s focus on technology. This particular element reinforces the importance of responsibility and the social consequences of technology in the shared environment. These consequences extend to the social web of relations and activities that go far beyond private concerns.

The anxiety concerning the ‘between’ position of technology and identity concerns its ‘real’ aspect. In the process of self and digital self-construction, how much scrutiny should we apply to the value of our avatars? This question matters in the contemporary context, when one’s image and identity are inflated above and beyond one’s self. The current state of being digital juxtaposes the self’s private truths with the public persona.

Reflections on posthumanism and the changes it brings to identity capture the complex interconnections of technology, culture and identity. The more we navigate through, and attempt to understand, the world in all its complexity, the more our notion of being human is likely to change. Equally crucial is the change posthumanism brings to our ethical reasoning, especially concerning the role of technology in human life.

According to MacCormack (2012), “posthumanism expands the ethics and embodiment discourse beyond the traditional ethical discussion sited only around human beings” (p. 42). Wolfe (2010) describes the importance of this shift in attitude toward the rights and moral obligations of evolved and artificial intelligence (AI) systems.

Braidotti (2019), an author on a posthuman world, a world technologically intertwined with ethics, explains that the interactions among all parts of the world must all be redefined. "The ethical change is needed because people are living more and more with non-humans and with technologies," she explains in emphatic detail (p. 16).

Moral actions and thoughts are not only confined to the actions of a person. One has to think about how a person's actions relate to other beings. As noted by Keeling and Lehman (2018), the authors seek to understand the implications of sociological technologies for the ethics of the post-human period. They claimed that the formation of advanced technologies like neural implants and other forms of genetic engineering must pay particular attention to the culture and governance of the society. Access to technology implants, distributed without order, can exacerbate present-day social inequities and requires consideration that extends beyond the individual to society and social ethics.

The evolution of technology and society calls for a re-evaluation of social ethics that must be responsive to change. It is also important to investigate the consequences of such changes for moral agency and decision-making. The most troubling aspect is how the notion of personal responsibility shifts when decision-making is handed over to artificial intelligence (AI) systems. The concept of moral responsibility assigned to the machine dismantles the traditional notion of responsibility. It is bound to introduce a different set of social expectations in the post-human period.

To grasp posthumanism and its ethics, we must analyze the systemic links between people, technology, and other entities. Understanding this ever-shifting reality requires examining the moral frameworks and social ideals we construct around these phenomena. In these dialogues, we must be ready to amend our ethical positions to account for the existence of a posthuman society.

Society, from a posthumanist perspective, illustrates how technology changes social arrangements. Badmington (2010) suggests that posthumanism captures the more complex reality that "human beings live alongside intelligent machines and bioengineered entities" (p. 376), thereby demonstrating change in the social fabric. The fusion of the animate and inanimate presents an enormous challenge to conventional socio-political constructs and power relations. Thought must be given to how these relations transform our understanding of society and our place in it, particularly as these relations deepen with the integration of technology.

Following Badmington, Braidotti (2019) believes that a posthuman civilization would need to develop new, non-anthropocentric types of societies. She states that these communities will include different ways of being and understanding existence (p. 34). This understanding fosters a sense of unity in diversity, based on a common identity that embraces all forms of being.

The bonds and interactions that connect us are also altered by technology. The impact of new technologies on communication and relationships is particularly pronounced, as noted by Bolter in 2016 (p. 25). For instance, new communication technologies have enabled the creation of virtual social networks around the globe that share information and ideas. Such innovations also create challenges; for instance, social

interaction through digital technology can replace in-person conversation, altering the sense of connection and belonging to a community.

Miah (2008) has addressed technological advancement and posthumanist ideas, including the claim that "the emergence of new technologies necessitates a rethinking of our social contracts" (p. 82). The incorporation of smart technologies and biotechnologically enhanced individuals requires new ethical consideration. For example, the question of bioengineered beings and their rights requires greater attention and the development of new ethical discourses to guide our actions in a complex world. These shifts then help us understand how we understand ourselves, the impact we have on ourselves and on society, and society's other global selves. Posthumanism's repercussions make one wonder about these shifts, so rationality, irrationality, and ethics are deeply in question. The society now starts discussing the changes and the changes now pose. The society's ethics in these shifts have a retrospective posthuman identity.

*The Stone Gods* explores this more vividly at the crossroads of identity and technology. The protagonist, Spike, an artificial creature, poses a relational and emotional posthuman problem. Winterson speaks about the Spike posthuman fabric of Winterson's World where "to be lonely is not at all the same as to be alone. That is fine, good, right, many ways desired. To be lonely is to be aware that, whatever you do, you can do this and you cannot do this, and you will not land anywhere." (Winterson 2007, p.100). To separate the person and the machine is to separate the angel and the devil. That is a total perversion of the whole story.

111

The novel uses ties to showcase the intricacies of identity formation and the ways technology shapes human reality. The protagonist's journeys in the story highlight the need to re-ethicize and re-examine relations with non-conventionally human experiences. Moreover, Sherryl Vint (2007) offers further evidence for this interpretation by highlighting how modern science fiction uses artificial beings not just as new technology to examine but also as important in terms of ideas of awareness, having bodies, and responsibility for what they do. Spike represents the posthuman because her existence raises questions about whether the source of moral agency should be considered biological humanity. Winterson presents technology not as dangerous to human identity but as a route to ethical subjectivity that can be developed through connecting with other people, caring about them, and recognizing shared vulnerability. Because of this, Spike does not serve as a replacement for humans but rather as a way to broaden the range of subjects considered ethical in posthuman thought.

Even so, the discourse of posthumanism still answers the how question of seeing ourselves as interdependent and what the limits of interdependence are in a hyper-technologized environment. There is a particular focus, especially in Winterson's narrative, on the interconnections among people, machines, and the broader environment, helping us redefine what it means to exist in a posthuman condition.

#### **An Analysis of Posthumanistic Features in Jeannette Winterson's *The Stone Gods***

Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* considers posthumanism through the prism of people and machines, nature and time. The novel, structured as interlinked narratives

sprawling across eons, addresses the folly of humankind's obsession with technology and dominion over nature, and posits that evolution, be it biological or artificial, is an infinite, looping cycle independent of human interference. In the first section, after the Orbus, an inhospitable and odoriferous home world, the protagonist discovers Planet Blue, an ancient analog of Earth. The Advancement Services, governments, and corporations pursue the sordid, unethical, and ecologically reckless conquest of the new orb, and the emphasis on technology-driven "progress" becomes a hallmark of civilization. The improvers are perplexed by the philosophy, and the narrator, Billie Crusoe, is a case in point. Bobbies, or Spike, one of the emerging Robo sapiens, by virtue of transgressing the human-machine divide, is, in the posthumanist discourse, devoid of the cold, rational proclivities characteristic of machines, as she possesses feelings and a passionate desire for liberation. The interrelation gives rise to the postulates of consciousness and agency as characteristic of the human essence.

The novel traverses various epochs. In the post-World War II dystopian world, the "Wreck" city of the future and the remnants of Easter Island are depicted simultaneously as "Civilization" collapses. Each section retells a parallel story. The cycle of violence, neglect of the environment, and learning from weak mistakes only to repeat them over and over again are the building blocks of the downfall of humanity. This repetition reshapes the posthumanist concept of the individual as an offshoot of a much older, nonhuman history rather than as a dominant ruler of the planet.

Posthumanism seeks to tear down and ultimately replace the human-centered focus of thought and, as such, reconfigures the idea of the self in relation to the overwhelming ecological danger and the planet's present-day condition. These ideas are deeply explored in the novel, whose writing beyond the boundaries forces the readers to rethink their ecological and nonhuman relations.

The first type of subject, with posthumanistic characteristics, and the human-nonhuman connection become self-evident in the fluidity of identity. Winterson says, "We are not the sum of our parts. This is too simplistic. We are the sum of our choices" (Winterson, 2007, p. 92). The idea is that the self is not possessed, but rather becomes in relation to the biosphere and the biotechnological world. This is similar to Rosi Braidotti's (2019) formulation on "the posthuman subject [which] is a dynamic entity... in relation to its surroundings" (p. 23). Therefore, in a post-dominant, technologically structured society, the interrelations between people and machines complicate the self and identity, suggesting that these relations are constitutive of one's subjectivity.

The story also questions the dependence on technology and how it could lead to unemployment. Spike, the Robo sapiens, gives voice to the saying, "Humans are becoming themselves obsolete... You do not seem to be feasible on Planet Blue" (Winterson, 2007, p. 50). This is a blunt statement against anthropocentrism. Spike's comment encourages readers to challenge traditional views of humanity and of how we function within technology and in human life. In contrast, Winterson makes Spike an ethical character who loves and cares, makes sacrifices, and has deep feelings. This portrayal closely reflects Wolfe's (2010) stance that posthumanism criticizes the anthropocentric notion of

humanity's dominant position in the ontological hierarchy but does not glorify technological advancement.

Within the narrative, Spike is depicted as possessing qualities historically attributed solely to humanity, whereas most human characters are portrayed as exhibiting ecological irresponsibility, violence, and indifference to moral matters. By working to reverse traditional ideas about our place as humans and to create new concepts of life, existence, intelligence, and humanity, *The Stone Gods* challenges human-centered notions of our importance and offers readers an opportunity to re-establish the ethical criteria by which life, intelligence, and personhood are valued. In this way, according to Winterson, what informs the development of our sense of ethical responsibility is not, for example, whether we are biologically human, but rather our ability to create meaningful and ethical relationships with both human and non-human others.

Winterson's reflective ponderings on the often-neglected subject of emotional attachment raise the question of attachment to non-human subjects. The human character Billie claims that the essence of being alone is: "Loneliness is not about being by yourself." That is okay, nice, right, and many ways wanted. Loneliness is about finding a landing place, or not." In this case, Winterson describes emotional radius and interspecies connection from a Harawayan angle of the ever-growing blurriness of human-nonhuman boundaries. The story causes the reader to wonder what sentience and empathy are. Billie's bond with Spike suggests that emotional connection, often thought to be a human characteristic, is not exclusive to humans. Donna Haraway's concept of relationality also highlights the importance of the relationship between Billie and Spike. Haraway (1991) claims that hybrid assemblages of identity can be formed without clear definitions of human versus machine and that these hybrid assemblages of identity will often be used to challenge the traditional boundaries between species. Relationality is demonstrated through Billie's growing emotional attachment to Spike and the notion that intimacy, care, and ethical responsibility are grounded in the ability to form meaningful relationships, rather than being tied to biological origins. In contrast to technology being depicted as a threat and external to humanity, Winterson presents the human-machine relationship as a site where the boundaries between nature and technology, self and other, and human and machine are continually destabilized. As such, both Billie and Spike represent Haraway's definition of relational existence, in which community or ethical responsibility arises from interconnectedness rather than from biological identity.

113

The novel also illustrates an intertwined connection between destruction and restoration. Winterson comments that a recurring world reminds readers of the need to preserve the environment and urges them to learn from the past (Winterson, 2007, p. 135). This repetition of cycles in a plot paradigm asks for a reconsideration of ethical obligations to the world, informed by Hayles (1999) on the posthuman condition and the stubbornness it entails in engaging with its complexities. The ecological devastation we see throughout the narrative parallels major strides in environmental science fiction over time. Murphy (2009) claims that many recent science fiction novels use environmental disaster to challenge our anthropocentric tendencies and envision new ways people can relate to their environment, including the earth as a whole. Winterson's narrative demonstrates this

concept through continual examples of the destruction of Planet Blue and Orbus: each time technological advancements are made without an accompanying responsibility for their ecological consequences, destruction occurs. Thus, the cyclical structure of Winterson's novel illustrates how ecological disaster can be used to comment on humanity's continual failure to learn from its past mistakes. Murphy's interpretation underscores the criticisms Winterson made: that environmental collapse is not just going to happen because of technology; it is happening because humans continue to stick with an anthropocentric model of development and "progressing". In the novel, the idea of sustainability is not only associated with the environment but also carries a moral responsibility grounded in the connections between humans and nonhumans in a posthuman society.

The discussion in *The Stone Gods* parallels the inquiry into the self and the ethical obligations of a hypertechnologically advanced society. Conversations concerning Spike's functionalities cause a contemplation on the fragility of human life: "Humans have given away all their power to a 'they'... You made a world without alternatives, and now it is dying..." (Winterson, 2007, p.19). This comment highlights the downside of technology advancing to the point where human control is lost, thus necessitating a critical examination of the boundaries that frame our lives.

As Winterson skillfully winds down, it is particularly interesting to me that she ends with a self-interrogation of the sort, if such and such happened, "What are you going to say?" and then, through the voice of her unnatural offspring, says, "That I am in the service of humankind..." (Winterson, 2007, p.20). This part counters the claim that humans are the elite of the elite by demonstrating the novel's primary focus of interconnectedness. The novel makes the reader feel a sense of ownership as a guardian of the Earth by encouraging them to reconsider their purpose.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this research have shown that *The Stone Gods* should not merely be considered a dystopian work of fiction centered on the theme of technological progress, but should be studied as a posthuman critique of anthropocentrism that develops a new model of identity and sustainability through a relational paradigm. When analyzed through the combined critical perspectives of Braidotti, Hayles, and Haraway, the research discovered that Winterson directly challenges the notion that humans occupy a privileged position within both ethical and ecological systems and provides the reader with the foundations that demonstrate that individual subjectivity arises from dynamic connections between humanity, machines, technology, and the natural world, rather than from fixed amounts of biological variation.

Another revelation most people may not notice is how Spike is much more than just technology or an AI. Her ability to respond emotionally, make ethical choices, and show empathy blurs the line between humans and machines. This supports the idea of a posthuman perspective, which Wolfe (2010) states rejects the idea of humans as a unique species. Spike's relationship with Billie continues to evolve in line with Haraway's concept of relational existence. They have a relationship in which ethical responsibility is based on their interdependence (connectedness) rather than on biological identity. Winterson creates

a new idea of personhood in this novel by showing that compassion, vulnerability, and the ability to make moral decisions are not limited to humanity alone.

The ecological vision depicted within the novel holds equivalent importance. The continual ruination of *Orbus* and *Planet Blue* provides evidence that environmental disaster need not necessarily result from technological advancement. Rather, the natural disasters occurring on this planet are a direct result of humanity's continual pursuit of anthropocentric modes of consumption and advancement. As Murphy notes in his analysis of ecological science fiction (2009), ecological disasters often challenge prevalent societal beliefs about human interaction with the natural environment. Winterson advances this critique by portraying ecological destruction as a moral mistake rather than merely an environmental disaster. Thus, sustainability is not merely about conserving the environment; it also emerges through the reconstruction of bonds among human beings, nonhuman beings, artificial life forms, and planets.

In addition, this reading builds on current research in literary studies on posthumanism. According to Vint (2007), the current science fiction genre offers a unique opportunity to examine themes such as embodiment, consciousness, and ethical subjectivity in ways that go beyond the traditional humanist concept of what it means to be human. The novel broadens the discussion by providing evidence that literature does more than describe theories of posthumanism; it also helps change the way we think about identity, our responsibility to technology, and how we live together on this planet. Because of this, Winterson's story is both critical and ethical, as it critiques the way we view things through our own human lens while also offering alternative possibilities grounded in joint responsibility, vulnerability, and reciprocity.

115

At the end of the day, the book basically says that for sustainability to really happen in the future, people will need to change how they see themselves interacting with nonhuman entities, rather than waiting for some new piece of technology to save them. As a result, what *The Stone Gods* has done is provide a new perspective on posthumanism, not as a means of celebrating technological development but as a critical lens through which humans may reinvent themselves in ways that foster coexistence, environmental justice, and planetary stewardship. By combining the topics of identity, artificial intelligence, ecological destruction, and relational ethics, Winterson has presented a powerful vision of a future in which survival requires relinquishing individualism and seeking forms of mutual existence.

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