

Abstract for “Posthuman Encounters: Desires, Fears, and the Uncanny”
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Desiring AI in Jeanette Winterson’s Fiction

Jeanette Winterson’s novels *The Stone Gods* (2007) and *Frankissstein* (2019) negotiate the human engagement with posthuman existence and artificial intelligence, both tracing it back to the late eighteenth (in *The Stone Gods*) and the early nineteenth centuries (in *Frankissstein*) and speculatively casting it forward into different dystopian versions of the future. In my paper, I will first argue that the two novels focus on the notion of desire in order to explore the boundaries between humans and posthumans/AIs. The texts challenge their human characters – as well as their readers – to reflect upon the defining markers of human existence. They do so by conceptualizing their posthuman/AIs characters as uncanny objects *and* agents of intellectual, emotional and sexual desire. In the second part of my paper, I will discuss the ideological framework that determines the history of human-posthuman/AI desire which the novels establish. In this history, the existence of AI is the inevitable consequence of patriarchal heteronormativity. As I will show, it is not the posthumans/AIs that are the ‘others’ in *The Stone Gods* and in *Frankissstein*, but the human characters who do not conform to the norms enforced by patriarchy.