



Fragmented Worlds, Hybrid Bodies: 'New Weird' Narration and Posthuman Realities in Jeff VanderMeer's *Dead Astronauts*

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Abstract

The current environmental crisis that has gripped the world has not only affected the ecological balance of the planet but has also changed the geopolitical and socio-economic dynamics of power, forcing us to rethink the impact of this change at a global scale. While the ecological discourse is being fine-tuned to accommodate a practical, solution-oriented approach to the problems of environmental change the *representation* of that discourse within literary and narrative spaces is also important to create, expand, and critique the foundations of ecocritical philosophy. VanderMeer uses the framework of the 'New Weird' to decentralise the human core of ecocritical narratives and depict the posthuman realities of the current ecological scenario. In this paper, I will situate VanderMeer's *Dead Astronauts* (2019) within this ecological discourse of representing nonhuman and posthuman subjectivities, and study how the author bends linguistic structures, typographical conventions, and narrative constructs to establish the ecological space as a networked, osmotic space that is kept active through interactions across species boundaries. I will study the use of 'weird' as an aesthetic and affective category that can be used to debunk the anthropocentric biases inherent in ecological narratives. The primary research questions which this chapter will deal with is how does Jeff VanderMeer's *Dead Astronauts* (2019) use the narrative techniques, structural framework, and linguistic oddities of 'New Weird' genre to represent alternative posthuman realities? In order to answer this research question, I will deal with the idea of breaking the species boundary using the metaphor of contamination and contagion.

Keywords: New Weird, Posthuman Realities, Ecological Discourse, Anthropocene, More-than-human Subjectivities.