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Artemis Fowl: Posthumanism For Teens

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Anna Bugajska*

ARTEMIS FOWL: POSTHUMANISM FOR TEENS

Abstract

The *Artemis Fowl* series (2001–2012) by Eoin Colfer is a surprising blend of a James-Bond-style thriller, a science-fiction novel and folklore, targeted at young adult audience. It features a teenage criminal mastermind, who decides to kidnap a fairy for ransom and thus repair his family's failing fortune. Doing so, he discovers that what people consider magic is in fact fairy technology. In spite of highly technical jargon in which the novel was written, the freshness of the treatment of the topic of fairies and the humorous narration won Colfer an instant success and a shower of awards (among others, shortlisted for the Whitbread Children's Book of the Year 2001).

However, somewhat in spite of the action-packed content, the strength and the attraction of the novels lies in their opening themselves to the problems which appear in the current discussion as a result of the advancements in science. Colfer presents for consideration such issues as cloning, experimenting on animals or genetic engineering. The juvenile quest to discover one's true self, coupled with bioethical and technoethical concerns, makes the series a powerful question about the place of human beings in the age of the rapid scientific development and about our identity. Embodying many of post- and transhuman concerns, it echoes such works as Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* or Hayles's *How We Became Posthuman*. For instance, in the posthuman world the body is essentially malleable: dependent on the mind and the willpower of an individual. It can be upgraded by transplantations and modifications, utilizing genetic engineering and the newest technologies. Colfer brings it to attention especially in the construction of such heroes as Opal Koboi, Butler and Artemis himself. Human enhancement breaches the boundaries of the "natural," provoking questions about its limitations. The author also undertakes the questions of androgyny and unclear gender roles, resulting from tampering with the traditional image of the body.

In the article, I would like to focus on the aspects of the cycles concerning the search for human identity, as the most prominent feature of the cycle. As a contemporary literature's answer to the current changes, the books should render a fairly accurate picture of the important questions of the present era.

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Keywords

posthumanism, transhumanism, bioethics, Fukuyama, Hayles, Colfer, Artemis Fowl



Introduction

Nick Bostrom, in the chapter that he contributed to *Transhumanist Reader* (2013), invites us to imagine ourselves as posthuman¹ beings: ones with enhanced lifespan, physical, cognitive and emotional capacities:

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... you feel stronger, more energetic, and more balanced. ... You also discover a greater clarity of mind. You can concentrate on difficult material more easily and it begins making sense to you. You start seeing connections that eluded you before. ... You can follow lines of thinking and intricate argumentation farther without losing your foothold. Your mind is able to recall facts, names, and concepts just when you need them. You are able to sprinkle your conversation with witty remarks and poignant anecdotes. ... Your experiences seem more vivid. When you listen to music you perceive layers of structure and a kind of musical logic to which you were previously oblivious; this gives you great joy. ... you feel a deeper warmth and affection for those you love, but you can still be upset and even angry on occasions where upset or anger is truly justified and constructive. ... Instead of spending four hours each day watching television, you may now prefer to play the saxophone in a jazz band and to have fun working on your first novel (Bostrom 2013: 59–60).

The portrait he paints is an ideal, to which transhumanism aspires, with the current state of science, however, not immediately achievable. The cult of perfection, though, that it epitomizes, finds its expression in the modern culture, particularly in young adult fiction. It has been pointed out that the immensely popular *Twilight* series (2005–2008), under the guise of gothic fantasy of a vegetarian vampire, sells this particular philosophy, which emerges from an almost obsessive focus on human health and ability enhancement, together with the pursuit

¹ In this article, I do not wish to use transhumanism and posthumanism interchangeably, although their areas of interest largely overlap (Birnbacher 2008: 95). In the following pages, posthumanism will be understood as an umbrella term for many concepts that arise in connection with the technological and scientific advancements (e.g. cloning, chimeras, but also androgyny, prosthetic body or protean personality). It entails the general question of what it means to be human (as posed by Francis Fukuyama in his seminal *Our Posthuman Future*, 2002). Transhumanism would be seen as a philosophy promoting breaching the boundaries of the “natural” in search of perfection and immortality (More 2013: 21, Waters 2006: 50).

of immortality, that characterizes the present-day developed societies. (Cherjovsky 2010). The novels targeted at young audiences undertake serious considerations of the current issues, like government surveillance (*The Hunger Games*, 2008–2010), social control (*Divergent*, 2011–2013), bioengineering (*Maximum Ride*, 2005–2012), etc. Among these, a unique place is held by an eight-volume bestselling cycle, *Artemis Fowl*. It was written in the years 2001–2012 by an Irish author Eoin Colfer (1965). In contradistinction to the usually neo-Victorian, dystopic, cyber- or steampunk conventions adopted by the mainstream juvenile literature, he attempted an unlikely marriage of a folk tale with science fiction. He reworks Irish leprechauns, i.e. fairies associated with the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, into a James Bond-style LEPrecon: Lower Elements Police reconnaissance service. Colfer's fairies (called the People), although still diminutive and cute, are presented as much more technologically advanced than humans (the Mud Men), they live longer and possess healing magic. To protect their secrets, they hide in underground cities of Haven and Atlantis, closely monitoring every move of men on the surface.

Their world, together with their secrets, however, is threatened with being exposed by a twelve-year-old child prodigy, Artemis Fowl. Through kidnapping, extortion, deception and theft, one by one he obtains fairy secrets, growing in the process beyond – even extraordinary – human being. What naturally could develop into a coming-of-age cycle, swerves into the direction of a transformation, calling into question human nature and individual identity in the age of the morphological freedom², mind uploads, bioengineering and hybronauts³. Necessarily, then, it inscribes itself very well in the posthumanistic debate about the validity of the experiments on the human body, the boundaries of the natural, and the effects of the above on the future of humanity.

In the following parts of this article I wish to discuss the elements of the cycle that are specifically expressive of posthuman questions. To this end, I would like to focus on three major areas that the books foreground. The first group of phenomena are tied to the concept of morphological freedom, advocated by the proponents of transhuman-

² “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” (More and Vita-More 2013: 93)

³ According to Laura Beloff, individuals enmeshed in one network with their environment, with the help of wearable technological enhancements. In the case of cyborgization, we talk about implants (e.g., chips), whereas hybronauts can remove the devices from their body (e.g. Google glasses) (Beloff 2013: 132, Hayles 1999: 115, More and Vita-More 2013: 106).

ism. This part of the analysis will address the intrusion of modern science and technology into the human body, and their consequences for individual identity. The second area concerns the search for immortality, tied to the dissociation of consciousness and the body, the concept of an upload and the problem of gender. In the third part focus would be put on the psychological makeup of the posthuman, with particular attention to the protean (multiplex) personality. As a result, it will be seen how juvenile fiction responds to the concerns of the Age of Technology.

“Unauthorized experiment”

Posthumanism sees the body as the “original prosthesis” (Hayles 1999: 3), which means that it is merely a tool for the host consciousness, and can be manipulated to achieve the ends of an individual. Logically, the prosthesis should be customized and answer particular needs, and it can be upgraded together with the appearance of technological novelties. It would also put the “owner” in the power position to the “shell” he or she inhabits. In fact, in such a view, gender – understood as determined by physical features of a human – becomes quite irrelevant. The human body would change with the changes in the identity, as it is expressive of the particular goals, targeted by the mind. Such a pragmatic view on reality is certainly expressed by Artemis, who – at the onset of his adventures – believes firmly that “aurum est potestas”: gold is power. And even though, as a result of his experiences, he seems to change a little, there are multiple times, when he manipulates “the People to his own ends” (Colfer 2003b: 240), and often it has to do with body modification.

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In Colfer’s world the relation of identity to body is ambiguous. On one hand, the author seems to uphold the opinion that the body should not be tampered with. Numerous protective measures in the book are based on the physical coding: retina scan, voice recognition, DNA swabs, etc., which confirms that who we are is largely based on our physical makeup. When Artemis wants to regain his C-Cube, a type of a super-smartphone based on fairy technology, he has to cut off Jon Spiro’s finger to pass through the security system. The finger is later reattached, but the action is seen as retrievable (Colfer 2003b: 247). Similarly, any physical changes entail immediate consequences for the characters’ selves.

A prominent example of those who went too far in their quest for transhuman perfection are Briar Cudgeon, an LEP officer, and Opal Koboï, a genius pixie inventor. Cudgeon, embittered by professional conflict, sought the cognitive enhancement through the use of drugs. As a result, “the tranquillizer had reacted badly with some banned mind-accelerating substances the former acting-commander had been experimenting with. Cudgeon was left with a forehead like melted tar, plus a droopy eye. Ugly and demoted, not a great combination” (Colfer 2003a: 77). In the case of Opal Koboï, we can observe a conscious attempt to transform from one being to another. She has her pointy ears operated upon to give them human shape. What is more, she implants in her brain a human pituitary gland to provoke the secretion of the growth hormone (Colfer 2005: 173–174). She even goes as far as extracting substances from various animals to enhance her magic (Colfer 2011a: 263, 270). All these attempts in the end cost her her sanity (Colfer 2012: 36) and her magic powers, which is especially well visible in the fourth book of the cycle, *Opal Deception* (Colfer 2005: 329).

On the other hand, the changes in identity must necessarily be reflected in the alterations of at least some parts of the body. Thus, Artemis’s father, a former criminal boss, loses his leg, when attempting honest trade, and has to fit himself with a prosthesis (Colfer 2003b: 80–81). Artemis himself, as he grows from a calculating rationalist to a globally-responsible, empathic man, earns a few body modifications. And although he does not seek them, he does not attempt to get rid of them, instinctively hoarding as much of the “fairness” as he can get. For instance, in *The Lost Colony*, where Artemis and his friend Holly Short of the LEP travel through a time-tunnel, first his fingers are switched, then he swaps an eye with Holly, and finally he steals some of the fairy magic, which grants him limited healing and regeneration powers. He also gains three years during the travel: in his own time he has to pose as a seventeen-year-old (Colfer 2007: 371).

Consequently, it would seem that some kind of enhancement would be necessary, when passing to the posthuman stage. However, bioengineering experiments, together with creating chimeras (crossing the species) and cloning, are banned, or at least strongly discouraged in Colfer’s novels. As Holly short puts it:

‘The body sensors are nice’, she said. ‘Very intuitive’.
 ‘It’s as close as it gets to being a bird’, said Foaly. ‘Unless you want to integrate?’
 ‘No thank you’, said Holly vehemently. She loved flying, but not enough to have an LEP surgeon sew a few implants into her cerebellum (Colfer 2011a: 25).

It has to be underlined that the powers that are usually attributed to the fairy folk are here mostly a result of advanced technology. Thus, Holly can fly thanks to the attached wings and can make herself invisible using cam foil. Colfer does promote the vision of a posthuman being as at least hybri-nautic, if not cyborgized. The characters in the novels are often fitted with detachable devices, like body sensors, an iris cam, eyeglasses with anti-shield filter or a gun in a prosthetic finger, but it does not change who they are. From the presentation of Mulch Diggums, a kleptomaniac dwarf, it is clear that mechanization of the body may be sometimes desirable (e.g. using skin pores as suction cups or detaching the jaw to swallow and process dirt while digging a tunnel). However, in dwarves this mechanization appeared as a result of natural evolution and it is an integral part of their bodies. The creation of bio-technological hybrids is better visible in technician Foaly's Critters or ARClights, based on living creatures.

Perhaps the ultimate tampering with the body as an image of self would be cloning. Even in the fairy world, creating a double through genetic engineering is imperfect and allows only for the construction of a soulless shell, which vital functions have to be assisted and maintained (Colfer 2005: 14, Colfer 2012: 12–13). Such an “unauthorized experiment” (Colfer 2012: 12) is performed first by Opal, enabling her escape from the psychiatric hospital, (Colfer 2005: 12–25) and later on – posthumously – by Artemis, whose original body got destroyed during his struggle with Opal and Berserkers (Colfer 2012: 292). However, when he inhabited the cloned body, it turned out that he lost his memories. Since they were explicitly stated to form his identity (Colfer 2003b: 289, Colfer 2005: 332), it can be concluded that such a modification would necessarily entail at least a partial loss of identity, and should not be sought.

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“Soul survivor”

From the previous section it is clear that in the posthuman world body modification and/or extension through the use of wearable technologies is something to be expected in everyday experience. Encountering such an extensive picture of the malleability of the physical sphere in juvenile fiction, rather than only hard speculative fiction, shows the degree to which the phenomenon has permeated our consciousness. Such a view entails further consequences: although personal identity remains under the influence of the body, in common opinion the latter has ceased to define such basic elements of psycho-

logical frame as gender. The choice of fifty one gender option offered nowadays by Facebook (Hebernack and Baldwin, 2014) is only a part of the phenomenon. What is in fact advocated is essential liberation from the “constraints” of the particular roles imposed by the physical sexual characteristics (Haraway 1991: 150, Rothblatt 2013: 460, Vita-More 2013: 120).

Colfer’s books never fail to underline the importance of gender equality, but – which is more relevant to the posthuman discussion – they go beyond simple criticism of sexist prejudice Holly Short experiences as an LEP officer. When she says in *The Lost Colony*, “We’ll always be a part of each other now” (Colfer 2007: 371), she does not simply mean that from then on she and Artemis would have each other’s eyeballs magically implanted in their eye-sockets. It signals a necessary transcendence of any – also gender – limitations, in the search of the wholeness of experience. The perfect harmony, the legacy of Enlightenment thought, resurfaces nowadays as homeostasis, which in the posthuman world involves also the equilibrium between yin and yang (Hughes 2013: 331–333, Vita-More 2013: 123–129).

By far the best example of androgyny in the books is Artemis himself. His intriguing name draws attention from the start, as it clearly evokes the female goddess of wisdom from the Greek mythology. What likely began as a pun on Colfer’s part grows to be a major element of the protagonist’s identity. The boy tries to explain that he inherited the name after his father, and that it puts him in the position of a hunter (Colfer 2003b: 267). However, this explanation is not very convincing. What it betrays, rather, is gender ambiguity of the teenager, allowing him to become a “master of two worlds” (Campbell 2004: 227). This impression is further strengthened by Colfer, through Artemis’s partial fusion with Holly and through introducing in the narrative Artemis’s female alter ego, Minerva Paradizo (Colfer 2007: 124–125).

Attaining the status of a mythical hero – if not a god – Artemis is able to retain the integrity of self even in separation from the body. During his time travels he resists disintegration of his identity, returning with only minor changes (Colfer 2007: 319, 357, 371). The concentration on individual selfhood in the absence of the body, by sheer willpower, is an exercise necessary to perform Artemis’s final exploit in *The Last Guardian*: for six months his disembodied self hovers around the spot of his death, waiting for his friends to grow his clone (Colfer 2012: 298, 300). His successful inhabiting the fabricated “shell” corresponds to the well-known idea of an upload: “the transfer of a human mind, memories, personality and “self” (whatever “self” is) to new high-performance substrates” (Prisco 2013: 342).

Granted, a clone is not yet a cybernetic construct, far from the traditional image of the body, but there are numerous other instances in the book, in which we witness a disembodied self as a “ghost in the machine.” For instance, Artemis at first meets Commander Root of the LEP as a voice only, Foaly gives Artemis’s C-Cube his personality and Opal teases Holly from the box on goblin Scalene’s chest (Colfer 2002: 108–110, Colfer 2003b: 252–257, Colfer 2005: 77). Usually, though, such a cybernetic “embodiment” is possible only through the transmission devices, and not through the actual downloading of self. Artemis’s resurrection remains the best example of a “soul survivor” (Colfer 2012: 267): posthuman life after death.

“Orion rising”

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Breaching the boundaries of the “natural” has profound consequences for the psyche of the characters. As could be seen from the above discussion, body enhancement may result in the development of dangerous psychosis (Opal, Cudgeon). Escaping time (like in the case of Artemis and Opal, in *The Time Paradox* and *The Lost Colony*) and death (Butler, Artemis, in *The Eternity Code* and *The Last Guardian*), does not leave one unaltered. When Butler in *The Eternity Code* wakes up from his cryogenic sleep, he finds himself fifteen years older and with implants in his chest (prominently Kevlar) (Colfer 2003b: 79, 84, Colfer 2011b: 99). Artemis’s clone is somewhat above fifteen, has six toes on his left foot and both blue – human – eyes (Colfer 2012: 305).

However, it is not only about bodily changes. The transformation in connection with embracing the posthumanist notions, and the conscious search for self upgrade, is invariably tied to psychological disturbances. As can be deciphered from the code, which runs through the pages of *The Atlantis Complex*, Artemis states: “I thought I knew everything. Now I think I know too much. This new knowledge, these compulsions are taking me over”⁴ (Colfer 2011b: 264–270). Through his continuous engagements with the fairies, the boy finds himself changing and developing a second personality. The beginnings of a personality split and the resulting unease are an important part of the narrative beginning with *The Arctic Incident*. Much more than just simple negotiating one’s identity during adolescence, it shows that entering the

⁴ Decoded from the message in Colfer’s Gnommish alphabet that runs throughout the book at the bottom of the pages.

world of seemingly endless possibilities, offered by science and technology, may be detrimental to one's personal integrity.

The culmination of Artemis's problems comes in two volumes, which succeed each other. In *The Time Paradox* we witness the teenager struggling against the aftermath of his stealing and integrating within himself a snippet of fairy magic:

Magic did not belong in Artemis's soul, and gave him lightning-bolt headaches whenever he used it. Though he was human, the fairy rules of magic held a certain sway over him. He was forced to chew motion-sickness tablets before entering a dwelling uninvited, and when the moon was full Artemis could often be found in the library, listening to music at maximum volume to drown out the voices in his head. The great commune of magical creatures. The fairies had powerful race memories and they surfaced like tidal wave of raw emotion, bringing migraines with them (Colfer 2011a: 17).

In the same volume the whole plot revolves around healing Artemis's mother, Angeline, who figures as the more spiritual and moral part of the boy's psyche. She is infected with Spelltropy, and later on possessed by Opal Koboi, both of which can result in her death. It turns out that human frame is not suited to containing fairy magic. Angeline is eventually saved, but the residue of Opal's possession lives in her as memories of the existence of fairies.

Artemis's condition, on the other hand, worsens, and in the next volume develops into Atlantis Complex, which "is a psychosis common among guilt-ridden criminals, first diagnosed by Dr. E. Dypess of the Atlantis Brainology Clinic. Other symptoms include obsessive behavior, paranoia, delusions, and in extreme cases multiple personality disorder" (Colfer 2011b: 30). Artemis does display OCD and he mistrusts even himself, eventually switching places with Orion, his inner double. The double, deprived of the boy's masterminding skills, behaves in the categories of a chivalric romance, far removed from the brutal reality of human-fairy strife. Artemis, meanwhile, is imprisoned in his own mind. And although finally he comes back to dominate his body and his mental faculties, the threat of Orion's return makes him submit to the psychiatric treatment in doctor J. Argon's clinic (Colfer 2011b: 318–320).

Another instance of the disruption of self as a result of combining human and fairy is Opal Koboi. Starting from *The Time Paradox*, there are three versions of Opal in the Lower Elements: the actual Opal, imprisoned in Atlantis jail, her younger self, obsessed with domination over time, and Nopal – a clone at J. Argon's clinic, which in *Opal Deception* was put there in lieu of the pixie. In apocalyptic *The Last Guardian*, the actual Opal acts on the theory that the death of the younger self would generate an enormous amount of energy, compa-

rable to a nuclear fissure. Thence, she arranges that her younger self is captured and killed, while she is transported to a nuclear reactor to help her contain the vast power.

The sour sickness was soon replaced by a fizzing excitement as she relished the notion of what she was to become.

Finally I am transforming. Emerging from my chrysalis as the most powerful creature on the planet. Nothing will stand in my way. ...

Opal thrashed inside her anti-rad suit, fighting the soft constraints of the foam, which blunted her movements. The pain spread through her nervous system, increasing in intensity from merely unbearable to unimaginable. Whatever slender threads of sanity Opal had left snapped like a brig's moorings in a hurricane. Opal felt her magic return to conquer the pain in what remained of her nerve endings. The mad and vengeful pixie fought to contain her own energy and not be destroyed utterly by her own power, even now being released as electrons shifted orbits and nuclei spontaneously split. Her body phase-shifted to pure golden energy, vaporizing the radiation suit and burning wormhole trails through the dissolving foam, ricocheting against the walls of the neutron chamber and back into Opal's ragged consciousness. Now, she thought. Now the rapture begins, as I remake myself in my own image. I am my own god.

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And, with only the power of her mind, Opal reassembled herself. Her appearance remained unchanged, for she was vain and believed herself to be perfect. But she opened and expanded her mind, allowing new powers to coat the bridges between her nerve cells, focusing on the ancient mantras of the dark arts so that her new magic could be used to bring her soldiers up from their resting place. Power like this was too much for one body, and she must excise it as soon as her escape was made, or her atoms would be shredded and swept away like windborne fireflies. Nails are hard to reassemble, she thought. I might have to sacrifice my fingernails and toenails (Colfer 2012: 59–61).

In this way, through the destruction of body and a part of self ("I am merely killing a memory", Colfer 2012: 36), Opal becomes a Quantum Being. The immediate consequences of her actions are disastrous for the world, since her inventions explode. She is also ready to unleash Armageddon on humans, stopped only with the help of soulless Nopal. Finally, she is killed by the very power she has woken and thought she masters: the leader of fairy ghosts, Oro (Colfer 2012: 288).

The question of split identity is addressed by posthumanism by referring to a concept from the transpersonal psychology: a protean (multiplex) personality (Bainbridge 2013: 141). It actually forwards multiple personalities as the answer to the complexity of experiences and the multifarious roles an individual has to fulfill. The fast-paced changes we have witnessed in last decades allowed to notice the demand for high adjustability and readiness to assume various perspectives and

roles. Shapeshifter Proteus would then be a good model for the modern man (Fukuyama 2002: 9, Shweder, 1994).

In Colfer's books both Artemis and Opal display such an adjustability. In fact, they relish the possibility to construct new selves. In addition to all the alterations to their bodies and minds, they invent pseudonyms to go on with their plans undisturbed. It is especially true about Artemis: for example, he poses as numerous academics, adopting names like Sir E. Brum, Malachy Pasteur or Emmesey Squire (Colfer 2005: 140, Colfer 2011a: 232, Colfer 2003b: 43). As far as Opal is concerned, she picks for her human self name Belinda Zito, even then consciously making herself larger than life – a “beautiful snake” in the garden. (Colfer 2005: 178). Her original name, Opal, is also telling, as it evokes the multicoloured light effect on the semi-precious stone, signalling many facets of personality.

For all these aliases, and the proliferation of selves in the narrative, it seems that such a process of self-invention does not directly affect integrity of an individual. He or she is “a willful eclectic” whose “integrity is defined by an ability to stay on the move between partial, incomplete and irreconcilable realities” (Shweder, 1994). As long as switching between Artemis and Orion is willed, psychological shapeshifting seems a preferred solution in the posthuman world.

Conclusions

As can be seen, *Artemis Fowl* cycle remains in compliance with the current posthumanist and transhumanist trends, which emerged as a result of technological development. They have so deeply ingrained themselves into our collective consciousness that they appear in young adult literature. The protagonist can be identified with by large audiences, judging from the copies sold (as of today, over twenty million worldwide, after *Eoin Colfer* website), and is expressive of the values of the growing generation. Today's teenagers, as can be concluded, are prepared to the life in the world abundant with technology, and may well be called “hybronauts.” Just like in the case of Colfer's characters, their identity is spread over multiple selves they create in virtual worlds and customized devices they use on the daily basis (tablets, smartphones, etc.). The challenge lies in the ability to retain integrity and redefine one's attitudes to the mind, body and soul. *Artemis Fowl* series addresses the problems connected with the identity formation in multiple ways, showing dangers and benefits of self-modification and enhancement. In this way, it is not only expressive of what is by now natural to young

people, but it also poses questions about the consequences of these “natural” actions. When Butler is on the verge of death, in a cryogenic coma, Artemis wants fairies to heal him. Foaly explains, concerned:

‘Artemis, if we agree to try this, I have no idea what the results would be. The effect on Butler’s body could be catastrophic, not to mention his mind. An operation of this kind has never been attempted on a human.’

‘I understand.’

‘Do you, Artemis? Do you really? Are you prepared to accept the consequences of this healing? There could be any number of unforeseeable problems. Whatever emerges from this pod is yours to care for. Will you accept this responsibility?’ (Colfer 2003b: 72).

This question may be reapplied to the search for the transhuman ideal, with its fit body, perfect mind, acute senses and emotions. As “unforeseeable problems” unfold in Colfer’s narrative, each reader has to answer it for himself.

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Anna Bugajska – Adiunkt przy Katedrze Interdyscyplinarnych Badań nad Językiem w Wyższej Szkole Europejskiej im. ks. Józefa Tischnera w Krakowie. W 2012 roku obroniła pracę doktorską na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim w Krakowie, której tematyka dotyczyła przemian wyobraźni w osiemnastowiecznej literaturze brytyjskiej. Prezentowała referaty i publikowała artykuły dotyczące powieści dziecięcej i młodzieżowej, fantastyki oraz literatury osiemnastowiecznej.

Abstrakt

Seria *Artemis Fowl* (2001–2012) autorstwa Eoina Colfera to ciekawa propozycja dla młodych czytelników będąca zaskakującym połączeniem elementów sensacyjnych rodem z filmów o Jamesie Bondzie, powieści science fiction i konwencji ludowej. Jej główny bohater to nastoletni przestępca-geniusz, który postanawia porwać dla okupu elficzkę, by w ten sposób odwrócić los swojej rodziny. Odkrywając świat wróżek, orientuje się, że to, co ludzie nazywają magią, jest w istocie niczym innym jak zaawansowaną technologią. Mimo mocno technicznego żargonu stosowanego przez pisarza, dzięki niezwykle świeżemu podejściu do tematyki baśniowej i prowadzeniu narracji w humorystyczny sposób, Colfer odniósł natychmiastowy sukces i otrzymał za swoje książki wiele prestiżowych nagród (m.in. Whitbread Children’s Book of the Year w 2001).

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I choć powieści te pełne są atrakcyjnej akcji, ich największa wartość wydaje się leżeć w sposobie, w jaki wpisują się one w aktualną dyskusję na tematy związane z postępem technologicznym, takie jak klonowanie, eksperymenty na zwierzętach czy inżynieria genetyczna. Młodzieńcze poszukiwanie własnej tożsamości w połączeniu z rozważaniami na temat bioetyki i najnowszych technologii, sprawiają, że seria skłania czytelników do rozważań na temat kondycji człowieka w epoce szybkiego rozwoju technologicznego. Podejmując liczne zagadnienia z zakresu transhumanizmu, książki Colfera nawiązują niejako do „A Cyborg Manifesto” Dony Haraway czy „How We Became Posthuman” N. Katherine Hayles. I tak, zgodnie z koncepcją postczłowieka, ciało podlega tu umysłowi oraz woli jednostki i jako takie może być ulepszane przy pomocy rozwiązań z zakresu transplantologii, genetycznych ulepszeń czy najnowszych technologii. U Colfera widać to wyraźnie w kreowaniu takich postaci jak Opal Kiboi, Butler czy sam Artemis. Ciągłe ulepszanie człowieka narusza granice wyznaczone przez naturę, skłaniając do refleksji na temat jej granic. Autor podejmuje też zagadnienia związane z androgynią i niejasnymi rolami płciowymi będącymi konsekwencją tak daleko posuniętego ingerowania w ludzkie ciało.

Słowa kluczowe

postczłowiek, transhumanizm, bioetyka, Fukuyama, Hayles, Colfer, Artemis Fowl