

Slow Lives and Broken Promises: Anticipatory Infrastructure and Biopolitics in *A Thousand Blues*

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Abstract This paper examines the Korean novel *A Thousand Blues* by Seon-ran Cheon through the lens of anticipatory infrastructures, focusing on how these infrastructures shape anticipations of the future while unevenly distributing life and value. Infrastructure is understood not merely as a technical system but as a socio-political apparatus that offers promises about the future and reshapes present life. It mediates affective states such as hope, trust, and anxiety, while determining which lives are supported and which are rendered expendable. The horseracing industry in *A Thousand Blues* exemplifies an anticipatory infrastructure that prioritizes speed, efficiency, and safety. Within this system, injured or slow racehorses are euthanized, and humanoid AI jockeys devoid of emotions are treated as replaceable components. Drawing on the concept of biopolitics, this paper argues that this infrastructure functions as a mechanism that classifies, manages, and selectively eliminates lives according to their compatibility with projected futures. The novel reveals that the promised future of technological advancement is not universally accessible but unevenly and selectively distributed. "Slow life" does not exist outside this projected future, but rather manifests within it as evidence of its exclusionary logic. Ultimately, *A Thousand Blues* exposes how infrastructures that claim to secure a better future instead produce ethical inequalities by determining which lives are allowed to endure.

Keywords anticipatory infrastructures; biopolitics; slow life; promise of infrastructure; ethical inequality

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Introduction

Modern life has been shaped through the construction of civic infrastructures for habitation, transportation, and communication. Infrastructure structures our lives while mediating various social relations, providing a framework that defines the possibilities and limitations of movement (Mari Korpela 113). Generally, infrastructure has been understood as physical structures such as roads, ports, and railways. In today's context, however, where climate change, automation, artificial intelligence, and digital technologies permeate everyday life, infrastructure resists reduction to a simple technical facility or material foundation. Roads, bridges, communication networks, and energy systems are designed with specific expectations in mind, reshaping current ways of life to reach that future.

Infrastructure is broadly understood as the material and organizational foundation that makes modern life possible; a socio-political apparatus, deeply entangled with social conditions and values, rather than a neutral technical system (Stephen Slota and Geoffrey Bowker 529-554). Perspectives that view infrastructure as a physical structure have tended to approach it from an instrumentalist standpoint, focusing primarily on its maintenance, repair, and innovation. In contrast, humanities scholars theorize infrastructure through attributes such as agency, performativity, and dynamism. Recent scholarship in anthropology and Science and Technology Studies (STS) has drawn attention to these qualities, conceptualizing infrastructure as a social and political apparatus that produces and sustains promises about the future. This line of inquiry foregrounds the understanding that infrastructure is a technical and organizational device that invisibly structures the fabric of society.

Infrastructure also invites us to ask not only what it enables, but what kinds of futures it makes imaginable as "possible." The concept of anticipatory infrastructures extends the understanding of infrastructure as "things that support other things" (Brian Larkin 329). It encourages us to think of anticipatory infrastructures as "things" that enable visions or imaginaries of possible futures (Sarah Pink 3).

This perspective suggests the possibility of reading literary texts as sites for infrastructural analysis (Claire Pelgrims and Jinhyoung Lee 2-3). The Korean novel *A Thousand Blues* by Seon-ran Cheon narratively demonstrates how systems transform alongside technological advancement, and how the futures promised by infrastructure are realized at the level of concrete, lived experience. At the same time, the novel reveals that such futures do not arrive equally for all lives—for

some, they are unattainable from the outset.

The horseracing system depicted in *A Thousand Blues* is an infrastructure designed to prioritize speed, efficiency, and human safety by producing and supplying humanoid jockeys. In doing so, it imagines a future shaped by the proliferation of AI that surpasses or substitutes for human beings.

This critical inquiry can also be read through the lens of biopolitics. Biopolitics draws attention to the way power operates not merely by suppressing life, but by managing, classifying, and optimizing it. In this process, power selects which lives are to be protected and which are to be excluded (Michel Foucault 145-147). From this perspective, the AI jockeys in *A Thousand Blues* can be understood as both an anticipatory infrastructure and a biopolitical apparatus that distributes the value and viability of life in the name of the future. This paper aims to analyze how promises about the future are organized in ways that protect certain lives while excluding others.

Research Trends and Analytical Shifts in *A Thousand Blues*

Published in 2020, *A Thousand Blues* is a science-fiction novel that portrays a future society in which human and non-human beings interact. In a broad sense, science fiction can be understood as a genre that deals with futures in which scientific and technological achievements function as significant drivers of narrative development (Dongshin Lee 72), and *A Thousand Blues* faithfully embodies this definition.

Set in 2035, the novel unfolds around a racehorse named “Today” facing euthanasia; a humanoid jockey named “Collie” who was born with human-like qualities due to a manufacturing error; a young woman, “Yeonjae,” who has abandoned her dream of becoming a robotics researcher due to family circumstances; and Yeonjae’s older sister, “Eunhye,” who is unable to walk. Other characters include Yeonjae and Eunhye’s mother “Bogyeong,” Yeonjae’s friend “Jisu,” racetrack manager “Minju,” and veterinarian “Bokhee.”

Collie, a humanoid jockey endowed with cognitive and learning abilities, deliberately falls off Today during a race in order to spare the horse the agony of running at maximum speed on his rapidly degenerating joints. Unable to race any longer, the horse awaits euthanasia, while Collie, extensively damaged in the fall, faces the threat of being discarded. However, Yeonjae, who has a deep interest in robotics, takes Collie home and repairs him, after which Collie lives with her family. Assisted by her high school friend Jisu, who offers to obtain the parts needed to repair Collie, Yeonjae prepares for a robot-building competition.

Meanwhile, Eunhye, who has a keen interest in horses, grows attached to Today

through conversations with veterinarian Bokhee and journalist Seojin. Together, Eunhye, Yeonjae, and others manage, against all odds, to secure one final race for Today, even though he is worn down by years of running for human entertainment. Knowing that Today is happiest when running, Collie gives the horse one last moment of joy, and then deliberately falls again, this time shattering into pieces.

A Thousand Blues, which explores solidarity and care across different species, adopts a multistranded narrative structure rather than an omniscient perspective, revealing a single set of events through the intersecting viewpoints of Collie, Yeonjae, Bogyong, Eunhye, and others. This narrative mode illuminates the impact of technology and institutions on individual lives through their diverse perspectives, and further demonstrates that the futures promised by infrastructure and technological advancement are not experienced uniformly. Owing to these narrative characteristics, *A Thousand Blues* has generated a wide range of theoretical readings, and existing scholarship on the novel has primarily centered on the reconstitution of human and non-human relationships, posthuman ethics, and questions of technology and subjectivity.

Existing scholarship on *A Thousand Blues* has primarily analyzed the reconstitution of human and non-human relationships through the frameworks of posthuman theory and the philosophy of technology. A significant body of research focuses on the possibilities of ethical solidarity and coexistence among humans, animals, and machines, evaluating the novel as a text that proposes an alternative model of humanity and a community ethics for the posthuman era. Studies drawing on Simondon's philosophy of technology emphasize the technical ensemble between technological objects and humans, as well as transindividual solidarity, interpreting the relationship between the AI jockey and the racehorse as a site of ethical possibility that transcends technological alienation. Meanwhile, studies applying Haraway's concept of "becoming-with" or Derrida's ethics of hospitality reposition non-human beings not as the other but as relational subjects, shedding light on the ethics of interspecies coexistence and care. Additionally, comparative studies across different periods situate *A Thousand Blues* as a case that demonstrates a shift in posthuman imagination within 2020s Korean science fiction, namely, a movement

away from transcendence and domination toward coexistence and care.¹

As this overview suggests, existing studies have largely addressed the ethical relationships and affective solidarity between human and non-human beings; however, analysis of the institutional conditions under which such relationships are formed and sustained—namely, the structure through which the horseracing industry and the AI jockey system operate—has remained relatively limited. The rules of the racehorse industry, the practice of euthanasia, and the institutionalization of values such as efficiency and safety in order to organize the future are not foregrounded, but are instead treated primarily as background.

In response, this study builds on existing readings while shifting the analytical focus from the ethics of relationships to the mechanisms by which infrastructure promises and distributes futures. It does so by conceptualizing the racehorse industry and the AI jockey system in *A Thousand Blues* as anticipatory infrastructures. Where prior scholarship has attended to the ethics of human-non-human relations and the possibilities of coexistence, this study directs its attention to the institutional conditions that enable or constrain such relations in the first place. In particular, insofar as the horseracing industry and the AI jockey system classify and manage life according to criteria of speed, safety, and efficiency, this paper seeks to understand them as a biopolitical order.

The Promise of Infrastructure and Biopolitics: The Operation of the AI Jockey Racing System

Infrastructure extends beyond material facilities such as roads and factories; it

1 Sola Chin, "A Study of Boundary Dismantle of Korean SF: Based on Kim Boyoung, Kim, Choyeop, Cheon Seonran," *The Journal of Literary Creative Writing*, vol. 21, no. 3, 2022, pp. 75-95; Ae-soon Choi, "A Comparative Study of Posthuman Beings in 1970s and 2020s South Korean Science Fiction: Kim Cheong-gi's *Robot Taekwon V* and Chun Seon-ran's *A Thousand blue*," *Journal of Shimhoon*, vol. 6, 2025, pp. 141-171; Yesoul Choi, "The Aesthetics of Hospitality and Teaching Hospitality through Sci-fi: Focusing on *A Thousand Blue* by Cheon Seonran," *Korean Language and Literature Education*, vol. 49, 2024, pp. 195-229; Sun Young Jin, "SF Bildungsroman and Human-NonHuman Ensemble: Focusing on Cheon Seon-ran's *A Thousand Blue*," *The Journal of Korean Fiction Research*, vol. 87, 2022, pp. 541-567; Hyeonjeong Kim, "Technical Alienation and Transindividual Solidarity in the Posthuman Era: A Focus on Cheon Seon-ran's *A Thousand Blues*," *Journal of Humanities*, vol. 40, 2026, pp. 265-293; Ra-hyeon Kong, "A Study on the 'Becoming-with' of Human and Non-human in SF: Focusing on Cheon Seon-ran's *A Thousand Blue*," *The Journal of Modern Literary Theory*, vol. 95, 2024, pp. 111-139; Heyjine Oh, "Reflections on human existence through humanoids: The Search for Coexistence Beyond Species, Focusing on Works by Chun Seon-ran and Kim Young-ha," *Journal of The Society of Korean Language and Literature*, vol. 101, 2025, pp. 305-329.

is where power, affect, memory, and community intersect, and it is an apparatus that forms and sustains social order. The concept of infrastructure functions as a keyword that both constitutes the foundations of modern society and illuminates the invisible structures through which social relations and the distribution of power are revealed. Infrastructure is inherently future-oriented, as its very planning presupposes a process of imagining and anticipating the changes that will follow its construction. Infrastructure is therefore a political and social apparatus that produces and organizes promises about the future, extending well beyond its technical and material dimensions. Insofar as infrastructure mediates future imaginings and expectations such as development, modernity, stability, and citizenship, it is also connected to the operation of power that organizes and manages life. In particular, the horseracing industry infrastructure depicted in *A Thousand Blues* functions as a biopolitical apparatus that manages and selects life in the service of a future in which safety and efficiency are guaranteed.

In this sense, infrastructure is not “already complete”; rather, it is always organized around a future yet to arrive, and is therefore continuously reconstituted. That is, despite the imperfections of the present, infrastructure is perpetually maintained and expanded through the promise that it will “soon bring about a better life.” For this reason, infrastructure generates political and affective effects regardless of what functions it actually performs, and plays a role in organizing people’s endurance and hope (Nikhil Anand et al.). At the same time, when such promises remain unfulfilled, they give rise to affects such as disappointment, confusion, and cynicism (Peter Adey et al. 11).

Recent infrastructure studies have drawn attention to the way infrastructure not only performs material and institutional functions, but also operates as an affective environment that organizes people’s emotions, expectations, and anxieties. Bosworth conceptualizes this as “affective infrastructure,” noting that infrastructure enables social order and political consensus by generating and sustaining particular emotions (54-72). From this perspective, infrastructure at once promises a future and constructs the affective conditions that lead people to trust in it and to endure present inconveniences and sacrifices. In other words, the promise of infrastructure is embodied through affect, and is sustained by organizing a sense of trust in safety and anxiety toward risk. Such infrastructure operates as a hybrid apparatus in which technology, institutions, and affect are entangled.

The concept of the “promise of infrastructure” offers important theoretical insights for understanding the racehorse industry infrastructure in *A Thousand Blues*. The novel, which won the Grand Prize at the 2019 Korean Science Fiction

Awards, opens with the story of Today, a racehorse whose euthanasia has been confirmed because it can no longer run, and Collie, an AI jockey facing disposal due to damage to its lower body. In order to revive a stagnating horseracing industry, the racetrack undertakes a sweeping system overhaul, introducing lightweight and replaceable humanoid jockeys in place of human riders. The humanoid jockeys are designed to be discarded upon sustaining damage, and their introduction is justified through the values of ensuring human safety and improving operational efficiency.

Today and Collie are beings created through custom production for use in horseracing. In this light, Today's euthanasia and Collie's disposal can be read not as the mere extinction of individual beings, but as the outcome of a biopolitical judgment that institutionally terminates lives no longer capable of contributing to the system's efficiency and speed. The system, despite its stated commitment to preserving life, renders only certain lives protectable, while positioning others as beings that may be expended or discarded.

What was needed was a new kind of jockey—smaller and lighter than a human, one whose fall would carry no risk to life. The android jockeys were far lighter than humans, owing to their average height of 150 centimeters and bodies composed of carbon fiber. Soft joints designed to absorb the impact of a galloping horse. Arms crafted longer than the torso so they could stroke the horses' necks. Different colored helmets to distinguish one jockey from another. Since their very existence had been designed for the purpose of riding horses, a jockey that fell and broke was simply disposed of, and before long, a new one would appear in its place. (Seon-ran Cheon 69)

Before leaving the racetrack and being named "Collie" by Yeonjae, the jockey humanoid is referred to as C-27. The room assigned to a jockey humanoid standing 150 centimeters tall and weighing 40 kilograms—"a space just large enough for one adult to crouch" (Cheon 7)—constitutes the entirety of the humanoid's living quarters. This space, in which an adult cannot lie down or sit with legs extended, would be intolerable for a human, yet it is assigned to the non-human humanoid as a matter of course. Mass-produced, the jockey humanoid is evaluated as a functionally efficient being in terms of "speed," "space," "time," and "safety." Created for the pleasure represented by "greater speed" (Cheon 134), these beings reveal an ontological crisis through the sensation of being "confined" in a narrow space.

Meanwhile, the racehorse Today develops arthritis as a consequence of

running up to 90 kilometers per hour during every race. This relationship invites a reconsideration of the dynamic between the racehorse Today and the humanoid jockey C-27—not from an anthropocentric perspective, but from a post-human vantage point from which humans are absent. Although the humanoid robot jockey is a being specialized to perform only the functions optimized for horse racing, it is through human error and contingency that Collie comes to be endowed with the capacity for thought:

In 2035, components manufactured in the United States, China, and Japan were assembled, and Collie was born in Daejeon, South Korea. What set Collie apart from other jockey humanoids, however, was that during the final stage of production, a software chip had been inserted by mistake. The chip had fallen out of the bag of a research student who had been walking the production line to write a report—a chip loaded with cognitive and learning capabilities, intended for a learning humanoid still under development, not for a humanoid designed for use in horse racing. (Cheon 11)

In *A Thousand Blues*, the humanoid jockey is presented as a being designed not to feel emotions. This is not the result of technical limitation, but rather a reflection of the conditions demanded by the infrastructure of the horseracing industry. While emotion opens the possibility of ethical intervention, such as compassion and responsibility, it is also regarded as an uncertainty to be managed within an automated system that operates around the values of “safety” and “efficiency.” The elimination of emotion can thus be understood not merely as a technical choice, but as a techno-ethical judgment aimed at excluding uncertainty in order to maintain predictability and efficiency, and as a biopolitical operation that treats emotion as an object of management. The humanoid jockey is thereby positioned as a technical medium capable of executing the act of riding and racing without emotion.

The elimination of emotion in the humanoid jockey is closely connected to the affect demanded by the racehorse industry infrastructure. By removing emotion, the horseracing industry infrastructure minimizes anxiety about risk while reinforcing trust in high speed and stable operation. This further raises questions about the ethical status of humanoid robots. In *A Thousand Blues*, Collie is a being with the potential to sense, learn, and form relationships—far exceeding the role of a tool. Yet the horseracing industry infrastructure regards these beings solely as means of functional execution, treating their capacity for emotion and judgment as uncertainties to be eliminated. This demonstrates that the design of the humanoid

itself, rather than being a technical matter, constitutes an ethical judgment about which capacities are to be permitted and which are to be deleted.

However, this logic of infrastructure is destabilized when a chip developed for a learning humanoid is mistakenly inserted into jockey humanoid C-27. On the day Collie first works with the horse Today, the AI jockey pats the horse's neck in imitation of the racetrack manager's gesture, forming a bond through the exchange, and observes the sky and clouds while reaching for language to express what it perceives in the natural world. These emotional responses are regarded as a malfunction, a deviation from the logic of "safety" and "efficiency" demanded by the horseracing industry infrastructure. The AI jockey's emotions, then, are not a function permitted by the system, but the accidental surfacing of a capacity that the infrastructure had excluded. This narrative configuration reveals that emotion is treated not as a property inherent to humans or living beings, but as an element that infrastructure must eliminate or control in order to sustain a particular future.

The racehorse industry infrastructure in *A Thousand Blues*, as examined in this chapter, exemplifies a form of infrastructure justified by its promise of a future defined by "safety" and "efficiency." This infrastructure operates as a system of judgment that selects which lives are deemed fit for the future—one that exceeds its function as a technical foundation for horse racing. Both the racehorse and the jockey humanoid are designed to realize this promise, while elements such as slowness, damage, and emotion are excluded as dangerous or unnecessary. Yet the moment Collie gazes at the sky, shows affection to the racehorse, and begins to form a relationship, the promise of this infrastructure begins to show its cracks. These cracks serve as a point of departure for understanding how "slow life"—which will be examined in the following chapter—is excluded within the promise of infrastructure. Ultimately, *A Thousand Blues* can be understood as a text that narratively demonstrates what is protected and what is sacrificed in the process of realizing infrastructure's promise, revealing that the future is never promised in neutral terms.

Slow Lives and Deferred Futures: The Unequal Distribution of Promises

The humanoid jockey system, oriented toward speed, safety, and efficiency, automatically regards anything that runs "slowly" as a target for elimination. The narrative remark that "people cheered for high speed and yearned for it" (Cheon 37) presents speed as both an object of desire and a form of power. Expressions such as "speed fast enough to overtake" (Cheon 35) and "the thrill of speed like racing" (Cheon 53) reveal speed as a value that condenses human greed and

competition. Beings unable to withstand this speed are weeded out and eliminated. Today, the racehorse whose aching joints prevent it from running fast enough, once commanded a price in the hundreds of millions, but is now a “slow life”—a subject for expulsion and euthanasia.

The “slow life” referred to here does not simply mean being physically slow. Rather, it denotes bodies and rhythms of life that fail to conform to the temporality of an infrastructure designed around the criteria of speed, efficiency, and safety—lives that are consequently classified as dangerous or inefficient. Such exclusion is the outcome of a biopolitical judgment—irreducible to mere functional choice—that determines which lives are worthy of protection. Speed, in this framework, operates as a norm by which the suitability of slow lives for the future is determined. Zhenzhao Nie’s concept of “ethical order” (Zhenzhao Nie 193) offers a productive framework for understanding this exclusion. If literature serves to reveal how ethical relationships and moral order are formed, transformed, and evaluated, then the category of “slow life” in *A Thousand Blues* can be understood as the product of an infrastructurally organized ethical order. Slow lives are positioned outside the sphere of moral consideration, revealing how infrastructural systems reconfigure not only economic or technological value, but also the ethical status of life itself.

This logic recurs throughout the novel, extending far beyond the racetrack. Yeonjae’s narrative begins with her losing her part-time job at a convenience store due to the arrival of “Betty,” a service humanoid. “Strin” replaces municipal sanitation workers, and “Polly,” a security humanoid, takes the place of more than twenty police officers, who are subsequently laid off. “Darpa,” a soft robot designed for disaster rescue,¹ substitutes for firefighters, and Bogyong’s mother, who had worked as a bank teller, is also pushed into retirement amid the wave of humanoid proliferation. All of the humanoids that appear in the novel are designed to be faster, more reliable, and tireless compared to humans, and their introduction is justified through the language of “rationality” and “efficiency.” Just as Today becomes a candidate for euthanasia on the grounds that it can no longer run, human beings too are cast out of social necessity the moment they fail to adapt to the rhythm of efficiency. Through the proliferation of humanoids, *A Thousand Blues* demonstrates how infrastructure centered on efficiency structurally excludes slow lives.

The case of Eunhye, Yeonjae’s older sister, further reveals that this exclusion also operates at the level of physical infrastructure. Eunhye, who suffers from polio, must rely on a wheelchair for mobility. Yet the very equipment that enables

1 Soft robots are constructed from flexible or elastic materials, allowing them to navigate environments that rigid robots cannot.

her mobility becomes another cause of constraint, preventing her from freely accessing buses, subways, sidewalks, and staircases. Eunhye's doctor "simply says that whenever Eunhye is ready, they can make her new legs from biocompatible materials that replicate the human skeletal and joint structure" (Cheon 81), but the surgery is uninsured and thus prohibitively expensive. For Bogyeong, a mother who must make ends meet on her late husband's life-insurance payout, biocompatible prosthetic legs are beyond her means.

Eunhye thought that if the world would just treat her a little more like everyone else, she wouldn't need to become a cyborg. What she needed more than a mechanical leg attachment surgery costing tens of millions of won was a gentle ramp to reach the sidewalk, a lift to enter a shop, a generously long pedestrian signal at a crosswalk, and the safety of being able to board a bus or subway without anyone's help. Not a humanoid to push her wheelchair, and not a pair of cyborg legs. But for that to happen, the world would have to change far too much. From the perspective of the majority, it was easier to simply place the burden on one person and be done with it. (Cheon 97)

As this illustrates, the benefits of technological advancement are not distributed equally to all. Physical infrastructures such as sidewalks, traffic signals, and transportation systems are likewise designed around a particular kind of body, and for Eunhye, a person with a disability, they operate as conditions of deficiency and delay. Forced to use a wheelchair for economic reasons, Eunhye feels that she has been "thoroughly erased in the course of technological development" (Cheon 221). When her friend Juwon returns from what she had claimed was emigration but was in fact a trip to the United States to receive lens implant surgery, Eunhye feels that she alone has been left behind, displaced from a world that has moved on without her.

Eunhye's case demonstrates that biopolitics does not apply solely to racehorses or humanoids, but operates differentially within the human body as well, according to standards of normalcy and mobility. Infrastructure promises advancement for all, yet in practice certain groups reap its benefits while others remain in states of delay, deficiency, and exclusion.

In this context, infrastructure operates not as a foundation that guarantees equality, but as an apparatus that temporally defers and justifies inequality. The promise is suspended into the future, and present inequalities become something to be endured and awaited under the pretext of "development yet to arrive." Eunhye's

case demonstrates that infrastructure can function as both an enabler of movement and a source of restriction.

The infrastructure in *A Thousand Blues* promises a future of safety and efficiency, yet for slow lives that promise remains a future yet to come, and deficiency and exclusion are justified as part of a “process of development” toward the future. In this way, the horseracing industry infrastructure operates as an anticipatory infrastructure insofar as it pre-positions present criteria of judgment on the premise of a future yet to arrive, and selects current lives according to their fitness for that future.

Conclusion

The horseracing industry depicted in *A Thousand Blues* is presented as an infrastructural system that organizes present lives and relationships on the premise of a promise about the future. The horseracing industry and the humanoid jockey system in the novel prioritize speed and predictability as their foremost values in service of a future defined by fast and stable race operations. Yet the novel makes clear that this infrastructural promise is never realized equally for all. The narratives of Today, a racehorse unable to sustain high speed, of human workers excluded because they cannot adapt to the rhythm of efficiency, and of Eunhye, a disabled woman alienated from accessible infrastructure, reveal the process by which the future is selectively distributed. Infrastructure designed around safety and efficiency judges slowness, damage, and emotion as dangers or defects; as a result, slow lives are positioned not as subjects of protection, but as beings that may be eliminated or indefinitely deferred.

In particular, the contrast between the humanoid jockey designed with emotion removed and C-27/Collie, who possesses emotion thanks to an accidental error, sharply illuminates the cracks in infrastructure's promise. Emotion has the potential to halt the exhaustion of life, yet the horseracing industry infrastructure treats it as an uncertainty to be excluded. Ultimately, *A Thousand Blues* demonstrates that the way infrastructure promises the future is itself a process of selecting which lives can be included in that future, and can be read as a text that invites us to reflect on how the future is unequally organized beneath the surface of technological advancement.

The horseracing industry and the humanoid jockey system in *A Thousand Blues* manage and optimize life under the banner of safety and efficiency, yet in that process, slow and damaged lives and beings possessed of unpredictable emotions are excluded or deferred. In this sense, the work goes beyond the problem of anticipatory infrastructure to critically expose a biopolitical order that selects the

value and viability of life under the promise of a better future. *A Thousand Blues* can therefore be read not as a text about technological advancement, but as one that raises an ethical question: which lives are permitted to be included in the future. At the same time, by presenting not only the racehorse but also the humanoid robot as beings that are exhausted and discarded within a system of efficiency and speed, the novel extends its inquiry to the question of what ethical status we ought to assign to the existence of AI.

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