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Postmodern Deconstruction of Grand Narratives in Post-Cyberpunk Fiction through Thematic Analysis

Abstract:

The issue of identity and its representation is a constant phenomenon since the advent of humanity. Progressive waves of technological advancement in information technology have made the contemporary culture bombastic and dynamic, due to which identity and its representation have become complex. Identity and representation are no more inert; rather, they have become fluid and arbitrary phenomenon. Postmodernist literature does not only represent life and its related issue but also simultaneously deconstructs them to the core; hence there remain no center/margin dichotomies. This study is an analysis of different themes under the theoretical framework of Deconstruction of Metanarratives (1984) and Cybernetics (1948). The method of analysis is Deconstruction by Derrida (1967), from which the tool of intertextuality has helped the researchers to answer the research questions. Analysis of various themes such as Artificial Intelligence, Techno/Globalization, Cyborg, and Posthuman conclude that transition of identity is a repetitive facet of today's individual. Hence, there are no grand narratives of representations. Different identities such as race, gender, religion, human/machine, natural/artificial, physical/nonphysical, real/virtual, life/death have become contestable. This research proves that the deconstruction of metanarratives has given vent to the mini narratives.

Key Words: Identity, Artificial Intelligence, Globalization, Posthuman, Metanarratives

Phonological Reduction, Verbal Clitics, Complex Predicate, Postpositional Phrase, Pashto

Introduction

After World War II, the postindustrial capitalist society underwent a lot of alternations, specifically in technology. The present age of information technology has produced far-reaching consequences of technology on human life. It has changed our definitions of the world we live in and about ourselves. The advent of technology has produced multiple technological goods such as military weapons, medical equipment that also include prosthetic devices, cellular phones, microwaves, computers, laptops, smartphones and the most crucial World Wide Web. It has given birth to “reproductions or abstractions---images, advertisements, information, memories, styles, simulated experiences, and copies of original experiences” (McCaffery, 1991, p. 4).

The result of such a vast level of advancement is the expansion of advertisement, information and media industries, through ‘replicable commodities’ like TV, VCR, projectors, CDs, cameras, computers, fax machines and instacams. Human life is surrounded by these interpenetrated commodities, which produce virtual realities daily and hourly. It has damaged our sense of real and illusion, Debord (2002) has called these new virtual/life experiences as the ‘society of the spectacle’; for Baubricard (1994), it is the ‘procession of simulacra’ while, for Jameson (1991) and many other Postmodernist theorists, it is ‘hyperreality’. It has even deconstructed the previously considered basics of differentiation through which individuals used to understand and

Define themselves and the world around them. The Postmodern world is no longer categorized into male/female, artificial/real, originality/duplication, life/death, organic/inorganic, animate/inanimate,

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human/animal and man/machine static identities ([McCaffery, 1991, p. 4-6](#)). Identities in contemporary times are as disposable as any other commodities of life.

The outcome of the Cyberpunk subgenre in Science Fiction is equivalent to rock music in the mid of 1970s, the time when punk music emerged and crudely deconstructed popular music. At the same time, Cyberpunk writers started to produce altered kind of Science Fiction, which drifted away from the hard Science Fiction genre and coped with the world outside. The cyberpunk genre not only began to get motivated from other literary genres, but it also influenced many Postmodernist writers, most prominent among them are Burroughs, DeLillo, Ballard and Jaffe. According to [Hollinger \(1991\)](#), if Science Fiction is a genre that foregrounds human deeds in the backdrop of technology, then the blurring of once predefined boundaries makes cyberpunk literature relevant to Postmodernist literature for the present information-oriented society. The cyberpunk genre is an “analysis of Postmodern *identification* of human and machine” ([Hollinger, 1991, p. 205](#)).

Post-cyberpunk, on the other hand, is a subgenre of Cyberpunk literature that got momentum during and after the 1990s. It is then the most contemporary form not only of Science Fiction but also of Postmodernist literature. Post-cyberpunk does not only represent the issues of the modern man and society, but it also deconstructs the grand narrative of identity and representation that used to control the individuals, institutions, societies and cultures. The following novels are selected as representatives of the Post-cyberpunk genre: *The Windup Girl* (2009) by Paolo [Bacigalupi](#), *Makers* (2009) by Cory [Doctorow](#), *Accelerando* (2005) by Charles Stross and *The Rapture of the Nerds* (2012) by Cory Doctorow and Charles Stross

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This study is based on the Post-cyberpunk literature in order to represent the deconstruction of metanarratives through different above-mentioned themes. As mentioned above the technological progress has altered the ontology of being a human in the era of information technology; thus, this study aims to critically discuss the issues of identity and representation through an analysis of different themes. The researchers have developed a theoretical framework of Deconstruction of Metanarratives as defined by [Lyotard \(1984\)](#) and Cybernetics by Weiner (1948). Whereas the method of analysis is Deconstruction by [Derrida \(1967\)](#), from which intertextuality is used as a tool of analysis in order to deconstruct the Metanarratives of identity and representation. Deconstruction is a mode of reading and challenging the predefined elucidation of discourse. It talks about binary opposition, logocentrism, intertextuality and difference. The application of deconstruction as a method involves multiple reading of the text in order to deconstruct the grand narratives. Therefore, intertextuality and themes are taken as the tools of analysis.

Literature Review

Following a review of related literature is based upon the area and theories selected by the researchers for analysis:

[Wiener \(1948\)](#) has defined ‘Cybernetics’ as a novel science. His purpose was to explain that “... the entire field of control and communication theory, whether in the machine or in the animal, by the name *Cybernetics*” is through a continuous flow of information ([Wiener, p.11](#)). Cybernetics is derived from the Greek word ‘kybernetes’, which is equal to ‘governor’; it implies a sense of ‘steersman’; thus, Cybernetics may be termed as a ‘science of steersmanship’ ([Pickering, 2010, p. 3](#)). [Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* \(1987\)](#) argued that cybernetic science is a ‘nomad science’. The royal sciences are modern that work as a component of a stable social and political order, while with regard to Deleuze and Guattari, nomad science is “one which wanders in from the steppes to undermine stability”. Thus, Cybernetics is a postmodern science that dissolves stability ([Pickering, 2010, p. 11](#)). The non-modern ontology of Cybernetics suggests a performative comprehension of brain, mind and self-altered phenomenon. This non-modern ontology subverts the difference between people and things; a good example of such an ontological paradigm is a cyborg—a

cybernetic organism. This ontology has challenged the modern distinction between human/nonhuman and man/animal (Pickering, 2010). According to Hayles (1999), the narrative text is significant to articulate posthuman, artificial intelligence and cyborg as technical, cultural concepts. Such narratives deal with virtual bodies as forms of subversion, for in the words of Lyotard (1984), postmodernism is incredulity towards metanarratives. The deconstruction and subversion of metanarratives suggest that the literary text does much more than project the cultural and technological implication of scientific theories. Reading literary texts along with scientific theories provides vent to novelty and interdisciplinary aptitude (Hayles, 1999).

The depiction of Cybernetics themes first emerged in Science Fiction literary narratives during the 1950s from Wolfe's *Limbo* (1952). His novels suggest that how unstable the constructions of reality are. His work portrays the Cybernetics themes as he can comprehend that Cybernetics deconstructs the ontological basis of human. He has also depicted in his novels the Cybernetics themes that can deconstruct social constructs such as race, gender and sexuality (Hayles, 1999). The Cybernetics themes like cyborg are floating signifiers. "Our best machines are made of sunshine; they are all light and clean because they are nothing, but signals, electromagnetic waves, a section of a spectrum, and these machines are eminently portable, mobile ..." (Haraway, 1991, p. 153). A cyborg, according to Haraway (1991), subverts gender as it is a creature of the post-gender world, and it has no connections to the seductions of organic wholeness. "Gender, race, or class consciousness is an achievement forced on us by the terrible historical experience of the contradictory social realities of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism" (Haraway, 1991, p. 155). Some of the Cybernetic notions that are frequently used in the Cyberpunk/post-cyberpunk narratives as themes are: Artificial Intelligence, Singularity, Cyberspace, Hypercasualization, Genetic Modification, Nanotechnology, Posthuman and Cyborg.

Many writers have used the term postmodernism in the 1950s and 1960s but the concept of postmodernism thoroughly developed in the mid of 1970s. Since then, the Postmodernist phenomenon continues to exist in diverse social and cultural disciplines such as education, philosophy, art and architecture, film and literary studies. Connor (1997) has argued that "With the appearance of Jean-François Lyotard's *La Condition Postmoderne* in 1979, and its translation into English in 1984, ... there no longer seemed room for disagreement that postmodernism and postmodernity had come to stay" (Connor, 1997, p. 6). Definitely, with such success, postmodernism has sustained a lot of controversies, whatsoever postmodernism adequately represents the contemporary culture. "Postmodern theory is an attempt to understand a media-saturated society" (Strinati, 1995, p. 211-212). It is such a culture where playfulness is at work. Through virtual reality and computer graphics, people are able to practice every kind of reality that seems to be more real than real experiences.

Metanarratives are all such concepts that claim to have universal truth and knowledge, such as religion, art, science and modernism. The Postmodernist stance is sceptical of all kinds of metanarratives, and it surges that they are disintegrated and have lost their legitimacy and validity in the information-oriented current society (Strinati, 1995). The Postmodern theory suggests that fixed meanings have been subsumed by a series of representations that have floating signifiers, which has turned the real into hyperreal. Postmodernism is not a movement rather; it is a condition, a predicament that is suggestive of competing definition and intentions. Due to hybridity and fragmentation, the postmodern culture holds no static center. This decentered perspective has empowered the margin or ex-centric such as class, gender, sex, ethnicity or race to take eminence as culture is not a homogenous monolith, hence 'culture' has become the 'cultures' (Hutcheon, 1998, p. 12).

Guattari and Deleuze (1983) have suggested that postmodernism dismantles the beliefs in identity, representations, foundations, unity and hierarchy. Deleuze and Guattari's notion of 'absorption of artificialization' that occurs at every echelon of society is instrumental in the deconstruction and reconstruction of identities. "The real is not impossible; it is more and more artificial" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1993, p. 34). While for Baudrillard (1994) and Eco (1986), postmodernism is a culmination of simulations and hyper-reality, respectively, due to the progress in technology and media. For Jameson (1991), the notion of

implosion is reification; he has defined reification as the conversion of social relationship into inert objects and things. Although Jameson is much concerned with the commodification of multinational capitalism still his ideology is similar to Baudrillard's loss of reality.

According to [Lyotard \(1984\)](#), postmodernism is not a break from modernity; rather, it is a rewriting of modernity. It is the representation of the unrepresentable. Lyotard is best known for his resistance against metanarratives western politics, aesthetics, and philosophy. He argues that the little narratives resist such totalization of cultural representation; hence, they should take the place of metanarratives, for they encourage difference. The implicit epistemological claim of a metanarrative is to put an end to narration by revealing the meaning of narratives. Meta or grand narratives manage a return to the center, the origin of meaning; hence, they are against the Postmodernist stance. The cultural representations are distinctive; therefore, they cannot be placed under uniformity. The mini-narratives are in a series one comes after the other so that none of the narratives becomes a master narrative in the field of language elements. This is what Lyotard referred to in the *Postmodern Condition* (1984); the mini-narratives germinate 'paralogy'; hence consensus is never attained.

One of the most notable advancement in postmodernism during the 1980s is the enhanced distinction in Science Fiction, especially its subgenre, Cyberpunk, with regard to the works of writers such as Gibson, Sterling, Shirley and Bear. The emergence of cyberpunk as a representative genre is basically due to the shift in postmodernism that is a shift from organic to cybernetic forms of discourse. There are no genuine sources of identity as there are no dependable metanarratives in the Postmodern shift; therefore, individuals are supposed to rely on the mini-narratives ([Strinati, 1995](#)). In the light of the transhumanist stance, the human identity exists in mind. This cognitive aspect of identity is affiliated with the realm of virtual reality ([Waters, 2006](#)).

A comprehensive survey of literature review has enabled the researchers to identify the gaps and utilize them according to the conceptual framework for the analysis of selected novels. Thus, this research concentrates on highlighting the socio-cultural constructions of identity and representation in Post-cyberpunk literature. Although a lot of work has been done on the genres, Cyberpunk and Post-cyberpunk related to the transformation of gender, race, class, religion and age yet the selected Post-cyberpunk novels are not thematically analyzed as such before. This research revolves around the following questions that are established after identifying the gaps in the discussed literature:

How do the selected themes influence identity in multiple perspectives?

How does the analysis of themes prove that Post-cyberpunk is a form of Postmodernist literature?

Identity and Representation in the Milieu OF Multifarious Themes

As mentioned above, the critical discussion is based upon various themes from the following selected Post-cyberpunk novels: *The Windup Girl* (2009) by Paolo [Bacigalupi](#), *Makers* (2009) by Cory Doctorow, *Accelerando* (2005) by Charles Stross and *The Rapture of the Nerds* (2012) by Cory Doctorow and Charles Stross. It is exclusively an analysis of themes (cybernetic and social) that is representative of multiple identities. The method of this study is deconstruction as defined by [Derrida \(1967\)](#), from which themes and intertextuality are adopted as the tools of analysis. The interrelated themes of the above-mentioned novels lead towards intertextual element not only within the genre but also relates to the social aspects. The selection of themes is grounded on both the cybernetic and social contexts. The significant themes from the selected Post-cyberpunk novels are genetic modification, post-humanity, artificial intelligence, capitalism, hyper casualization, and techno/globalization. Parallel to these cybernetic and social themes is the subversion of Metanarratives of identity and representations.

Artificial Intelligence

The theme of Artificial Intelligence in *Accelerando* has initially introduced through Aineko the cat or an emulation of a cat who is a robotic cat and has more powers than humans. "... Aineko wasn't a cat. Aineko

was an incarnate intelligence, confined within a succession of catlike bodies that became increasingly realistic over time, and equipped with processing power to support a neural stimulation that grew rapidly with each upgrade” (p. 406). Aineko is intelligent and is capable of manipulating and playing with Manfred and his family. According to Aineko “Besides, you humans keep pets, too. But you were fun to play with” (p. 412). The subversion of humans is also represented in the following words by Aineko when it wants to get rid of its animal (cat) simulation and leave Manfred’s family ‘Humans: such a brilliant model of emotional self-awareness,’ Aineko says with a theatrical sigh... (p. 412). *The Rapture of the Nerds* is also technology-based like rest of the Post-cyberpunk novels. The theme of AI plays a prominent part in this information technology oriented novel. The evocative of AI in this novel is Teapot. The character of Teapot or the Djinni is more or less similar to Aineko in *Accelerando*. Though it is not as grand as the character of Aineko yet, it is an AI that has the power upon Huw to manipulate him while helping him in cyberspace. In Libya, the Teapot tried to hoodwink Huw by informing the Tech Jury about his location for the purpose to capture him for being a biohazard. “...yells his djinni. ‘He is over here! Don’t let him get away this time!’ With a sense of horror, Huw realizes that the little snitch is jumping up and down and pointing at *him*” (p. 77). The theme of AI presents the deconstruction of natural/artificial, man/machine and human/animal dichotomies. It exemplifies the subversion of a grand narrative that claims to be permanent.

Posthuman/Transhuman and the Cyborg

Posthumanity is one of the most central themes of *Accelerando*; most of the characters in the novel are posthumans, and the plot is based on post-humanity that leads to other themes and subthemes. The notions of cyborg, transhuman and borg are also related to post-humanity that serve to highlight the issues of representation and identity. The very idea of posthuman deconstructs the humans as it points towards a kind of generation that is beyond human or far from human. Right from the beginning of the discourse, it is made clear that these characters have both the exocortex and metacortex, so they are symbols and metaphors that connote the subversion of the metanarrative of human identity. It is clear from Manfred’s character that post-humanity in his case is based upon the metacortex that functions through his glasses and controls him and his mind. “The young posthuman intelligence over whose Cartesian theatre he presides sings urgently to him while he slumbers” (Stross, p. 16). Manfred depicts a lucid post-humanity; he is the mega human, the protagonist around whom the saga revolves. He is projected as passing through various phases from transhuman to posthuman. When he has been described as the owner of the glasses stolen by Jack, his post-humanity is brought into focus. “Their owner is a posthuman genius loci of the net, an agalmic entrepreneur turned policy wonk, specializing in the politics of AI emancipation” (p. 78). In *Accelerando*, out of every ten humans, eight are part of the posthuman transformation. The kind of post-humanity Amber and others are threatened of is waiting to catch them where the organic physical identity gets deconstructed into nonphysical inorganic entities through the ‘Vile Offspring’. The Vile Offspring connotes a negative element of post-humanity. According to Amber, “This solar system isn’t going to be habitable for longer, and we need to emigrate... before the Vile Offspring decide to reprocess us into computronium” (p. 328).

The discourse of *The Rapture of the Nerds* represents a contrast between the posthumans (mostly termed as the transhumans in the novel) and the humans categorized as hominids. The term ‘hominid’ used for humans connotes the subversion of humans because it labels humans as an ancient and obsolete species that is on the verge of extinction or has almost extinct. The novel welcomes a singularity oriented twenty-first century. The theme of post-humanity gets momentum in the passages where the posthumans are prevalent while humans are discarded that is exemplified through the following lines, “The splintery meta consciousness of the solar system has largely sworn off its pre-posthuman cousins dirtside, but its minds sometimes wander nostalgically...” (p. 18). The transhumanity represented in the novel is a global phenomenon from Wales to Libya and South Carolina transhumans are there to take over the humans. Even the law enforcing agencies are representative of the deconstruction of human. Same is the case with the Libyan law institution as delineated through Dr. Rosa Giuliani during the Tech Jury session. “... I could conduct this hearing in the strict

accordance within the bounds of international law as laid down by the Hague Tribunal on Transhuman Manifestations and Magic”(p. 48). Whereas, the characters like Bonnie, Sandra, Adrian, Bishop, Sam, Dad and Huw’s parents and later Huw as well are the posthumans or transhumans. Individually and collectively these characters render a subversion of humans and represent various manifestations of subverted reality and identity whether religious, political, economic or social.

The transhumans are mostly genetically modified and have prosthetic implants while they live on the earth whereas in the simspace they acquire a distinctive posthumanity that lead them beyond the dichotomy of time/place, embodiment/disembodiment and real/virtual phenomenon. If they have the choice to be transformed and transcend mortality, and physical bondage then why should they remain obsolete humans? “... when they could be ascendant and immortal, if only someone would offer them the choice”(p. 148). The question of posthumanity is attached to the construct of reality if real is subversive then humans can either be posthumans or transhumans. The posthumanity is a crucial and controversial portent to deconstruct many physical notions. At the same time the human/posthuman controversy focuses the point that whether the presage of virtuality can thoroughly replace the material reality. The character of Bonnie is very significant it is through her that the notion of gender and human is deconstructed. She is a transgender and a posthuman. Her persona decenters the human identity as merely material embodiment in the following lines, “... she’s an unabashed transhuman on a meatvacation. She’s got the unobtainium in her bones, the eyes that can see into the infrared and detect environmental toxins.... Her body doesn’t just work, it *performs*” (p. 339).

The Windup Girl is a cyborg narrative for one of the main characters Emiko is a cyborg. She has been genetically engineered and produced through a test tube therefore the Thais considered the windups unnatural and soulless beings. Though she is not human still she is not a soulless creature or a devil rather she is a cybernetic organism a revolutionary technological being and most probably the future human. Being a cyborg she is instrumental in the subversion of various grand narratives such as natural/artificial and organic/inorganic. The Japanese created the windups as their helpers and tools, “The Japanese were practical. An old population needed young workers in all their varieties, and if they came from test tubes and grew in creches, this was no sin” (40). Thus, instead of been born the windups are grown in creches that subvert the natural/artificial controversy. Emiko is designed and patterned, and the behavioral traits are engineered in her DNA instead of learning these traits from her surroundings. “She was built well. Trained well. Knew the ways of pillow companion, secretary, translator and observer ...” (p. 113). *The Windup Girl* tells a cyborg tale and suggests a new kind of humanity more adaptable and disciplined than the one inhabiting the earth. The epilogue suggests a cyborg future, a world of windups created through a strand of Emiko’s hair for which she may be termed as the Eve of a new version of humanity. To quote Gibbons, “A strand of your hair would do. You cannot be changed, but your children—in genetic terms, of not physical ones—they can be made fertile, a part of the natural world” (p. 386). Emiko’s character dismantles the metanarrative human through the subversion of man/machine and human/animal distinctions.

Genetic Modification

Analogous to the themes of artificial intelligence and post-humanity runs the theme of genetic modification and prosthetic that is also affiliated with the subversion of metanarrative identities. Almost all of the characters in *Accelerando* are genetically modified that make them apt representatives of transhumans, posthumans and cyborgs. The theme of genetic modification is prominently visible through Manfred, Annette, Amber, Boris and Sirhan, while the rest of the characters also contributes to decenter human, natural, organic or real phenomenon. Manfred has gone through a lot of prosthetics, which has transformed him from human to transhuman and eventually, he turns out to be a posthuman. His disability to relate to the surroundings and even to his own self without the prosthetics attached to him renders him dependent upon the artificial, fake, inorganic or inhuman. His metacortex is, in fact, Manfred; without that, he is unable to recognize himself and his work.

Amber is also an example of a genetically modified being, although she is not as modified as the rest of the children due to Pamela's traditional thinking for Pamela belongs to the PTC school of thought (Parent for traditional Children). Amber is connected to the theme of genetic modification as she is born with neural implants that are as natural as her lungs or fingers. For Manfred, natural is subordinate to artificial, "If there's one thing that Manfred really can't cope with, it's the idea that nature knows best ..." (p. 42). His philosophy decenters nature for him originality or being organic is naïve when there are plenty of options to transform, modify or even transcend. In the current age of postmodernism, there is nothing exclusively natural or original.

Genetic modification is the very essence of *The Rapture of the Nerds*, for the novel incorporates this theme in diverse situations and scenarios related to the natural/artificial and organic/inorganic occurrences. Mostly the characters are genetically modified. Sandra Lal, Bonnie, Doc and Rosa are some of the examples among plenty. Bonnie is a true manifestation of genetic modification s/he decenters the difference between natural/artificial and male/female as s/he combines the both. Bonnie has been defined as a "... a medium-height joe, metabolism pegged somewhere in his mid-thirties, bald, with the unnaturally stringy build that comes from overusing a calorie-restriction implant... apart from his figure that might be natural" (p. 14). Then the scene in which the cow milk is genetically transformed into blue ice cubes dismantles the organic/inorganic parameters of the representation. The food tends to be so much genetically modified that a technophobe like Huw finds it difficult to get natural food while travelling. "And it's not just a matter of accepting that when he's travelling, natural organic wholefoods are rare enough that he'll have to subsist in synthetic slop" (p. 24).

The *Makers* epitomizes the theme of genetic modification through the issue of fatkins as they suffer from obesity, for which they have to go through a series of fatkins treatment that constitutes of many phases of which stem cells and genomic are one. When Suzanne went to Russia after meeting the new slim and trim Lester for the purpose to document and blog the fatkins treatment there, she met Geoff, who was into the fatkins business, so he provided Suzanne with firsthand knowledge. She came to know that it is not "... just weight loss but gene therapy, too, and voodoo stem-cell stuff and advanced prostheses and even some crazy performance-enhancement stuff ..." (p. 116). Apart from fatkins, the biohackers Perry met in Madison also represent the theme of genetic modification. Madison used to be one of the six places where stem cells were legally researched the biohacker were the spiritual posterity of that time. They were genetically modified as one of them had gills while another glowed in the dark. "The biohackers gave him the willies. One had gills. One glowed in the dark. One was orange and claimed to photosynthesize" (153). A hint of genetically modified food in the epilogue on which Suzanne's recent writing was based is another example of genetic modification, such as Lester briefed Perry about it. "Molecular gastronomy—food hackers who use centrifuges to clarify their consommé. She says she's never eaten better. Last week it was some kid who'd written a genetic algorithm to evolve custom printable molecules that can bridge two unharmonious flavors to make them taste good together ..." (401). The above-mentioned examples of genetic modification are succinct to decenter the gulf between natural/artificial and organic/inorganic representations.

Genetic engineering is the backbone of the novel *The Windup Girl* that makes genetic modification a central theme of the novel as the subgenre Biopunk is all about the biological technology and transformations. The novel displays a multidimensional use of genetic engineering from animals to plants. It projects a narrative of gene hacking and gene ripping through multinational calorie companies working in Southeast Asia for the purpose to explore and exploit the hidden seedbanks of Thailand. Central to the theme of genetic modification are windups like Emiko, genetically engineered animals like megodont, and fruits like ngaw. "Anderson turns the fruit in hand, studying it. It's more like a gaudy sea anemone or a furry puffer fish than a fruit. Coarse green tendrils protrude from all sides, tickling his palm" (p. 1). Ngaw like the Thia eggplants and chiles is another gene hacking success but the ngaw is unique because it is produced from Thailand's own resources of ancient seedbanks. "The ngaw is different. The ngaw doesn't come from the Midwest. The Thai Kingdom is clever where others are not" (p. 4).

Another apropos example of genetic modification is the megodont as genetically engineered they dismantle the binaries between organic/inorganic. The megodont are huge elephant type animals who are designed and built solely for the purpose to windup the huge kink-springs for creating energy that is the only source of energy left in the world. In order to work day and night in the kink-spring factories the animals are bound to serve but not free to fight. Their genes are patterned in such a manner that even though they tend to get out of control and fight still their genetic structure does not allow them to become violent. “The megodont is up on his hind legs, swaying. The beast’s four tusks have been sawn off for safety, but it is still a monster, fifteen feet at the shoulder, ten tons of muscle and rage, balanced on its hind legs” (19). Emiko the ‘windup girl’ or the ‘New Person’ is another marvel of genetic engineering. She has been transplanted from her native habitat instead of being born like natural humans. Just like the megodonts the windups are also programmed and built for the purpose to serve yet they are a mark of revolutionary biotechnology that is instrumental in the deconstruction of many metanarratives. “The crèche in which she was created and trained had no illusion about the many uses a New Person might be put to, even a refined one” (41). Thus, all the above-mentioned examples of genetic modification propose the subversion of grand narratives of identity and representation. These mini-narratives are vigorous and have the potential to dismantle the metanarratives, which denotes that stable parameters to judge identity have become obsolete.

Capitalism and Hypercasualization

The themes of capitalism and hypercasualization are interrelated with one another; they represent a combination of cybernetic and social aspects of the present-day techno-culture, which is one of the exclusive characteristics of Post-cyberpunk Literature. These themes dismantle the economy, cultural imperialism and global capitalism. The destabilization of the money-based economy is projected time and again in the text with the subversion of money as defined in *Accelerando* “money is a symptom of poverty” (p. 8). Manfred’s character is a metaphor to deconstruct capitalism, “... Macx is an economic saboteur bent on wrecking the underpinning of capitalism ...” (p. 8). As said by Manfred, “I’m here to make it (economy) obsolete” (p. 60). The discourse further dismantles cultural imperialism and multinational corporations; these companies only render useless competition that raises the consumer’s culture. “Markets are wasteful: They allow competition, much of which is thrown on the scrap heap” (p. 63). The more there is the growth of cultural imperialism and multinational corporations, the marginal value of money would decrease, to quote Gianni, “the more you have, the less it means to you” (p. 63). Therefore, the idea for Manfred is to make money obsolete that is dismantled as a grand narrative.

Related to the subversion of money base economics or economics 1.0 is the subtheme of hyper casualization. The term hyper casualization refers to the decline of full-time employment and its replacement with low paid short-term contract-based jobs due to the rise of globalization and information technology in the economy. It is one of the prominent themes of the genre Post-cyberpunk, and in *Accelerando*, it runs parallel with other social intertextual aspects. This kind of economic shift is quite common in the USA and UK that has been dismantled by Stross in *Accelerando*. The multinational culture and technological drift that promote hyper casualization are deconstructed in these lines, “Your companies need no human beings, and this is a good thing...” (p. 63). The theme of hyper casualization is also depicted through the subplot of Jack and his mother, who used to work in a call center and has brought up Jack alone as a single parent, but due to technological progress, she became the victim of hyper casualization. “Humans aren’t needed on the end of a phone anymore. Now she works in a drop-in business shop,...but humans aren’t in demand for shelf stacking either, these days” (p. 76). The metanarrative of global capitalism and technological progress are decentered as “... there are limits to human progress—but not to progress itself” and “Capitalism doesn’t have a lot to say about workers whose skills are obsolete, other than that they should invest wisely while they’re earning and maybe retain” (p. 308). While to capitalize or invest in economics 2.0, one has to become posthuman, augmented human or a metahuman. The apprehension and concern with economy is a distinctive feature of *Accelerando* that makes it an apt Post-cyberpunk narrative. Throughout the discourse the idea propagated by

Stross is that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' economic models despite of their revision and alternations are no longer pertinent in a society that has become posthuman and is transforming rapidly. Thus, the economic singularity economics 2.0 and post singularity economics 3.0 are there to dismantle the economics 1.0 that in turn subvert capitalism, cultural imperialism and global capitalism.

The Rapture of the Nerds depicts a capitalist society of a world that has altered social representations, which has left the material reality far behind. The society in the novel is technology oriented where it is difficult for the manual workers to sustain their livelihood as expressed through Huw's character who is a potter but his art and labor are useless for the high tech culture. Singularity has made life incomprehensible and the unruly technologies emulsified the whole systems of culture, industry and religion. The economy is fallen down and the cities are deserted of any kind of progress and development for the consumer's culture of capitalism has spent the world's resources. The depiction of the airport after Huw reached Libya speaks of the disruptive effects of capitalism, "The airport is a deserted dump—literally deserted ... the death of the gas-guzzling airline industry has left the airport with maintenance budget of a rural cross-country bus stop" (p. 29-30).

Hypercasualization is also characterized through Marriott the very symbol of capitalism and imperialism that has shackled the economy of the world through brand and trademark mania. The subversion of such capitalist culture is suggested by Teapot according to him the 'Western imperialist monopolization of trademarks' has made commercialism and consumer based economy a current currency. He further explains that "... the People's Marriott where the depredations of servile labor have been eliminated in favor of automated conveniences ..." (p. 34). The replacement of manual workers by robots or machine is exemplified when Huw was going towards his room in Marriot.

Capitalism and hypercasualization are the most commonly occurring themes in *Makers*. These themes project the consumer culture wherein the manufacturing and distribution of goods is for the material extraction. Deflation of economy due to IT and a trend towards the New Work related to invention suggests a remodelling of the economy. The question that Doctorow raises through the subversion of consumerism and capitalism is that does reinvent, making, or reconstruction of old discarded technology can re-craft capitalism along with the regeneration of societies reducing the augmented trend towards consumerism and commercialization. Capitalism is generally understood as an economic system where the private sectors regulate the property for their own interest or benefits. The *Makers* deconstructs capitalism through the representation of a consumer-based economy. The main agent of consumerism and commercialization is represented through Disney Imagineering and through entrepreneurs and executive class like Kettlewell, Tjan and Sammy, respectively. The stuttering pillars of the economy and decline of business is represented through the dead shopping malls like Wal-Mart. The novel represents a fall in the hegemony of capitalism through Lester and Perry's New Work, specifically through the ride that stands as a rival of Disneyland along with its theme parks.

The reference to Disney as a main component of consumer culture is made more vivid by death Wait in the quoted lines, "Now in the era of the ride, could see how dumb this was. How thin and shallow and commercial. Why should they have to pay some giant evil corporation to convene their community?" (p. 290). Overflow of consumerism creates a vicious circle that may lead to greed and unhealthy competition among individuals to compete with one another. The discourse of *Makers* has targeted the same notions of capitalism and consumer culture. Companies like Duracell and Kodac, and their merging into one unit as Kodacell characterize capitalism and the fall of the economy that needs to be revived through novelty and transformation. Thus, to satisfy the needs of consumer culture, innovation and change are the keys to progress, whereas clinging to the obsolete representations has closed the gates to marketing and business. Entrepreneurs like Kettlewell are the agents of the capitalist class, and through his character, Doctorow has subverted capitalism. "Buying the company was pure Kettlewell: shrewd, weird, and ethical in a twisted way" (p. 9).

Just like capitalism, hyper casualization is also an epitome of *Makers*. Hypercasualization decenters the hierarchy of multinational corporations and the privatization of business that leads to venture capitalism and

increases the decline of manual labor that causes the failure of the economy and rise of consumerism. Hypercasualization is introduced at the beginning, where Kettlewell has merged Duracell and Kodak into Kodacell that has jeopardized the jobs of many workers. "... Kettlewell was firing a company's worth full of people, but he was also saving the company itself... the ones who'd taken advantage of the company stock-buying plan would find their pensions augmented by whatever this new scheme could rake in" (p. 11). The theme of hyper casualization is highlighted when the workers started to protest for their lost jobs. The unionized laborers of Kodak and Duracell discharged into the hall they have slogans demanding their rights. "Suzanne closed her computer's lid and snatched a leaflet out of the air. WHAT ABOUT US? It began and talked about the workers who'd been at Kodak and Duracell for twenty, thirty, even forty years, who had been conspicuously absent from Kettlewell's stated plans to date" (p. 14).

Globalization/Techno-Globalization

Globalization and Techno-globalization not only dismantle the metanarratives of identity and representation but also characterize the present-day techno-globalized world. The term globalization refers to international assimilation that rises from transactional and exchangeable opinions, ideas and views of the world's culture. Globalization is a panorama of shared human experiences for a collective aim towards a better world, while techno-globalization refers to the collective use of technology by humans throughout the world. People of different cultures, communities and countries are linked together through global technological progress that has made the world a global village. The frequent use of information technologies such as cell phones and the internet has culminated in a high tech culture that has facilitated communication. Globalization/techno-globalization is an important aspect of technology-oriented advanced society that influences individuals and society in numerous ways. Some of these influences are discussed below through the selected Post-cyberpunk novels.

The *Accelerando* projects various categories of globalization like economic and political globalization, cultural and technological globalization. Through the depiction of various kinds of globalization, the novel has also decentered race. The racial subversion is delineated through the portrayal of distinctive characters that belong to different parts of the world, such as Annette is European, Gianni is an Italian, Sadeq is Iranian, Su Ang is Chinese, while Amber and Manfred are Americans. These distinctive characters of *Accelerando* decenter the racial stereotypes based upon the concept of the orient and the occident. In the first part of the novel, Stross has randomly represented one of the tourists, an Iranian woman "wearing a backless leather minidress and a nearly transparent scarf" (p. 45). This modernized depiction of Iranian woman dismantles the stereotype image of an Iranian or a Muslim woman observing the veil. The character of Gianni Vittoria subverts both political and economic globalization as he is an Italian foreign minister and a former professor of Marxist economics. Sameena is another global character whose persona defies racism; she is portrayed as wearing a sari that denotes she is an Indian or a South Asian. In the last part of the novel, the description of Ashura (tenth day of Muharram) refers to cultural globalization. "It is Ashura, the tenth day of Muharram, according to a real-time clock still tuned to the pace of a different era: the one thousand, three hundred and fortieth anniversary of the martyrdom of the Third Imam, the Sayyid ash Shuhada" (p. 219). The reference from Ashura extends towards the socio-political and religious delineation and subversion of the Iranian Revolution brought about by Imam Khomeini. While the techno-globalization is evident throughout the discourse from characters to the plot of the novel, technology is pervasive. The society and culture in the Post-cyberpunk narratives are high tech and super modernized due to the legitimization of technology.

Post-cyberpunk literature is not restricted to socio-technological representation; it has a perspective that is universal and global. The theme of globalization, as mentioned earlier, apart from indicating the global phenomenon, subverts the racial binaries, which speaks of a global world that is connected through social or technological ties. The *Rapture of the Nerds* vividly represents globalization/techno-globalization through its universal characters and globalized themes. From Asia, Europe to America, the novel speaks of a globalized

world, characters like Sandr Lal, Huw Jones, Dr Dagbjort, Rosa Giuliani, and others tell a global narrative, which dismantles the racial identity. The AI Teapot also subvert race as it can speak different languages that are being spoken around the world simultaneously; it connotes techno-globalization. “He waits a moment while the teapots chatter translations from all over the room. Huw hears Arabic, Farsi, Hindi, Spanish, French, English, and American” (Doctorow and Stross 36). While the plot of the novel is vast and varied, the narrative travels from Wales to Libya and then to Charleston that suggests the subversion of nation-states and propagates the notion of a techno-global village.

Following the trends of Post-cyberpunk, the *Makers* is also rich in the delineation of globalization, especially social, economic and techno globalization. Globalization is manifested in many ways in the novel. It is one of the prominent themes of the discourse; it represents global characters while the plot of the novel also revolves around a global world manifesting the deconstruction of race, creed and nation-states. The novel starts with a scene from Silicon Valley, California, and then the plot engrosses the entire globe from Asia to Europe. From the beginning, the novel represents a techno-globalized economy through the scene where Perry is showing Suzanne, a Linux computer made in India. “The solder is too precise to be done by hand—that’s because it’s from India. If it was from Cambodia, you’d see all kinds of wobble in the solder: that means that tiny, clever hands were used to create it ...” (p. 22-23). The global economy is further characterized by different multinational corporations and companies running their business in the global market. Tjan uses to work for a company in Russia before he came to America, “And I ran a company for a while, doing import-export from emerging-economy states in the former Soviet bloc” (p. 43). Another element of the techno-global market is the trade of technology among nations of the world, specifically the Middle East and some Asian countries trading from the US. This is signified in the passage where Tjan, Kettlewell and Suzanne are in a conversation about the jets Kodak has, and they are no more in much use. “Kodak had eight of them, and Duracell had five. We’ve been trying to sell them all off, but no one wants a used jet these days, not even Saudi princes or Colombian drug lords” (p. 65). The cabbie, a young African guy Perry met in Madison, is another fitting symbol. He told Perry that he is from Gulu, Uganda, as the country is suffering from a civil war, so he came to Madison for work. His story represents the global politics and the poor economic plight of underdeveloped countries. “His accent was light but exotic, the African rolling of the r’s, the British-sounding vowels shifts” (p. 235).

Moreover, the travelling of major characters from one continent to another for the purpose of work exemplifies the subversion of nationalism and projects transnationalism that dismantles the geographical boundaries. Suzanne recalls her childhood travelling from one place to another due to her father’s business engagements. “My dad was in import-export, and we use to travelled a lot, all over Asia and then the former Soviets” (p. 44). The spread of New Work from one state to another and the international business related to obesity characterize the techno-globalization that connotes a technology-oriented transforming the global world. Thus, the novel incorporates and manifests globalization with almost all of its characteristics.

Like the rest of the novels, *The Windup Girl* also represents globalization; although the novel basically deals with Southeast Asia yet, it projects a global arena of characters from Asia, Europe and America. Anderson Lake is American, Richard Carlyle represents Europe, Emiko and Yashimoto are Japanese, Hock Seng is a Malay Chinese while Jaidee, Kanya, Akkarat, Parcha and Somdet are all Thais. Such a grand collection of globalized characters not only subverts race but also suggests the notion of transnationalism. The characters like Anderson, Raleigh and Carlyle are transnational citizens who have travelled vast and wide for their business. “Raleigh hasn’t lived this long in the Kingdom without developing a certain paranoia of his own. Anderson smiles slightly, glancing up at Hock Seng. The two would make a fine pair: two uprooted souls, two men far from their homelands, each of them surviving by their wits and paranoia ...” (p. 19). The Muslim Chinese, like Hafiz and his son Mohammad who use to work for Hock Seng, subvert race. Apart from the characters, the plot of the novel also represents globalization by global trade throughout the world. From gene

ripping policies to politics, the discourse suggests the notion of a global village where even a Kingdom like Bangkok is not excluded from the clutches of global politics and business.

Findings

The analysis of different themes of selected Post-cyberpunk novels has represented the subversion of various metanarratives of identity and representation. The themes and intertextuality as tools of deconstruction have characterized the social and technological aspects of society and culture that has boosted the idea that society and technology or scientific progress are not two detached and isolated parts of any culture or civilization. Since time immemorial, technology, no matter in what form, is a significant part of that particular culture and civilization. As the stone age is marked by the invention of fire (the form of technology at that time), fifteen century is famous for the printing press, eighteen and nineteen centuries are marked by the inventions of the steam engine and railway tracks, respectively, the twentieth century is known for the space technology and jet age. Similarly, the twenty-first century has marked the advent of information technology that is in systematic progress and is becoming more advanced day by day. Thus, the impact of Post-cyberpunk literature is enhanced due to the fact that it is representative of the present-day technology and technological progress in the form of narratives (movies, novels, manga, anime) that depict a techno-social culture around the globe for the literature of any time and period is representative of that age. The findings of the above analysis have exemplified that Post-cyberpunk is a genre of Postmodernist literature, which has given a new critical and analytical angle to literary studies.

The deconstruction of social and cybernetic themes has also proposed a subversion of metanarratives and transition of identity. The different themes such as posthuman, cyborg, transhuman, artificial intelligence, capitalism, hypercasualization, genetic modification, globalization and techno-globalization subvert the grand narratives of identity and representation. These themes represent various scenarios through which the binaries are decentered, and hybrid precincts are constructed to subvert every representation of identity. Hence, none of the representations proved to be static or permanent; rather, identity is projected as flickering and fluctuating. So whether it is a man or machine, the transformation of identity is perpetual neither the man remains in the centre nor the machine rather, a combination of both is propagated due to the pervasiveness of technology. The themes have dismantled the power structures; they negate the grandness of any narrative and propagate mini-narratives. Any kind of power narrative that propels control and supremacy is dismantled by the selected cybernetic and social themes. They exemplify the problematic representations of identity. Gender, race, religion, nation-states, consumerism and commercialism, cultural imperialism, technology, and many more metanarratives are subverted through these multifarious themes. These themes also connect the technological with the social; thus, they are the embodiments that expose the Post-cyberpunk quality of representing the technology and society as counterparts.

Conclusion

The research has achieved its target to provide sound indications and evidences that contemporary society has transformed to the extent that none of the representations of identity is solid or static. It has aptly projected the Deconstruction of Metanarratives; furthermore, it has advocated hybrid representations of identity. These representations are neither centralized nor marginalized; instead, they generate paralogy and give vent to the mini-narratives. The flow of mini-narratives does not allow any narrative to become grand. The analysis has also sustained that identity has become a flickering and liquid phenomenon with no static representation. This research has established the fact that the metanarratives of identity and representation are deconstructed and subverted by the mini-narratives, which has provided innovative and unique representations to identity by dismantling the center/margin binaries due to Cybernetic invasion. The study has further strengthened the

notion that the present technologies and future technological progress have the potential and capacity to transform and alter human societies at the global level. The study concludes that change and transformation is the essence of postmodern world rejection to change means end of identity; identity is multidimensional; hence it has numerous transforming representations.

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