Postmodernist and Cybernetics Deconstruction of Identity and Representation: A Socio-Cognitive Analysis of Post-cyberpunk Literature through Accelerando

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Abstract

The advancement in culture has made 'Identity' and its representation a complex phenomenon that is not static rather it has become more fluid and arbitrary. Literature has always given vent to human experiences through the depiction of life. Literature in the Postmodernist sense has become a valid source of production and subversion of socio-cultural constructions that has dismantled the Metanarratives by bringing Mininarratives into the center. Postmodernism has dismantled the center/margin distinction by deconstruction and reconstruction of identity through multiple simulations. The theory of Cybernetics has in fact made Postmodernism an object in the real sense to be witnessed in the form of Artificial Intelligence, Information Technology, Cyborg and Posthuman. The transition of Identity has become a repetitive aspect of an individual's life. The Post-cyberpunk novel Accelerando (2005) by Charles Stross represents the contemporary technology-oriented societies and focuses the issues of identity and representation. The Socio-Cognitive analysis (van Dijk, 2008) has projected that the world of technological innovation has produced complexity and novelty in everyday life and has speed up the subversion of the Metanarratives into Mininarratives. Hence, identities are simulated and represented in unique perspectives, which has made race, gender, religion, human/machine, natural/artificial, physical/nonphysical, real/virtual, life/death contestable and fluid phenomena, thus none of the identities remain authentic in the arena of cybernetic realism. The findings of the research have highlighted the deconstruction of various power structures based upon the socio-cultural parameters of representations. The power structures that use to provide vent to the Metanarratives of control whether through gender, religion and race etc. are no longer acceptable in the Postmodernist perspective.

Keywords*: Identity, Representation, Deconstruction, Cybernetics, Post-cyberpunk*

1. Introduction

Identity in the Postmodernist perspective is a liquid phenomenon that is in constant subversion while the representations of identity are in rapid transformations. Digital culture has made identity terminal and identities appear as flickering on the computer screens incarnated in multiple representations. Bukatman (1993) a cultural theorist has rightly termed identity as a terminal phenomenon. In the Post-cyberpunk novels technology in invisible not in the sense that it has vanished but the invisibility of technology suggests that it has become one with society, which has blurred the binaries between technology and culture. Same is the case with the technological enhancement of twenty-first century that is aptly represented in the Post-cyberpunk Literature. Various manifestations of identity and representation in the electronic age of information technology are addressed and critically discussed by many authors.

Bukatman (1993) has suggested that Science Fiction genre (Cyberpunk) is the true representative of Postmodernist cultural crisis that does not recognizes any solid objective paradigm. To the contrary, it narrates and reveals opaqueness produced by technology in the contemporary culture. Jameson (1991) has also acknowledged that Cyberpunk is the ultimate literary representative of Postmodernism and late capitalism. Bukatman (1993) has stressed the relevance of Cyberpunk Literature according to him, "Science Fiction offered (and continues to offer) an alternative mode of representation, one more adequate to its era" (p.7). Identity according to Castells (2010) is a "… process by which a social actor recognizes itself and constructs meaning primarily on the basis of a given cultural attribute or set of attributes, to the exclusion of a broader reference to other social structures" (p. 22). According to Buadrillard (1994) Postmodernism is suggestive of floating identities.

1.1. A Three-Dimensional Perspective of Analysis

This research explores the conditions of identity and representation in the perspective of information technology. Post-cyberpunk Literature is rampant with the display of unique and innovative technologies that have become pervasive, and are part of human life, culture and society. The most common types of these technologies are genetic modification, virtual reality or cyberspace, cloning, nanotechnology and artificial intelligence. This study endeavors to explore that how different phenomena such as gender, class, race, age, body, death and life, man, animal and machine are deconstructed to represent manifold identities associated with these so-called static portents. Hence, to find out the answers for these queries a triangulation of three theories; Postmodernist deconstruction of Metanarratives (1984), Cybernetics (1948) and the theory of Identity Transition (1993) is conducted in order to analyze the selected Post-cyberpunk novel *Accelerando* (2005).

The core of these above-mentioned theories is to seek the issues of identity and representation from three perspectives. The first perspective of analysis is to critically explore the various characters as symbols and metaphors. The focus is to highlight that how these characters dismantle the Metanarratives of identity and representation with the tools of van Dijk's (2008) Socio-Cognitive Method such as semantic, lexical and rhetorical devices. The analysis of passages and lines is carried out in order to critically discuss that how the grand narratives are subverted to denote novel ontologies of identity and representation. The second angle is to verify the deconstruction through the notions of Cybernetics such as Artificial Intelligence, Posthuman and Cyborg while, the third perspective is to represent and analyze the issues of identity and representation through the theory of Identity Transition.

In the backdrop of Cybernetics, Metanarrative and Identity Transition the purpose is to highlight the real/virtual dichotomy and then to deconstruct this clash. As the issues of identity are multidimensional therefore, this research is also interdisciplinary in order to make it more substantial it has used triangulation at the theoretical level that provides the ground for its interdisciplinary nature. As a multidisciplinary approach this research uncurtails technology, society, individuals and socio-technological progress.

The historical perspective of Science Fiction Literature from Cyberpunk to Post- cyberpunk is discussed in the literature review in order to authenticate that Post-cyberpunk Literature is a contemporary subgenre of Science Fiction Literature as well as of Postmodernist Literature. This

research seeks to find answers for the following research queries through the selected Post-cyberpunk novel: How coherent Post-cyberpunk is in the delineation of the connection between current society and technology? How contemporary society and culture became technology oriented and how information technology became pervasive to the core? How do issues of representation and identity form an integral part of *Accelerando* (Post-cyberpunk)? How the representations of identity are continuously deconstructed in *Accelerando* to negate the Metanarratives and centralized the Mininarratives?

2. Literature Review

The Cyberpunk narratives make ample use of information technology termed as informatics. Informatics has changed the modes of signification and has transformed fixed signifiers into flickering signifiers due to sudden and unexpected transformations and alterations that have equally influenced representation and identity (Hayles, 1999, p.30). Foster (2005) has revealed a change that Cyberpunk has underwent from a literary movement into a multimedia society. Information technology has provided flexible representations of identities like gender and race that were previously considered static. Foster (2005) discusses that Cyberpunk Literature has projected an intimacy with technology in a positive manner and subverted the negativity attached to scientific/technological invasion. Kurzweil (1999) specifically deals with artificial intelligence. He has depicted the future (2020), in which automatic personas will be our teachers, friends, lovers and companions and there will be a "new form of intelligence on earth" (p.18). Dery (1996) has anticipated a hybrid being, posthuman who may or may not be our natural descendant. He has also presented the idea that mind will soon be transported into some other dimension through the internet, hence it will 'escape velocity' due to the advancement of cybernetic technology. Dewdney (1998) has projected the idea that the difference between man and machine will dismantle because of the modifications in people due to technology.

2.1. Deconstructed and Reconstructed Identities in Post-cyberpunk

The Cyberpunk genre is indeed a cultural evolution it has witnessed the evolution and appearance of cyberpunks into a new breed through electronic information. This new breed wants to decentralized, demilitarize, depoliticize, secularize and globalize the world. The Cyberpunk heroes were sole individuals seldom active in the socio-cultural process while the Cyberpunk depicted an apocalyptic future. The Post-cyberpunk heroes on the contrary are central members of the society apart from being alienated loners. They contribute in the progress of society as they play various roles, hold careers and have responsibilities and commitments like families and friends. They live in a technology-oriented society governed by computerized communications. The alternation of themes and characters from Cyberpunk to Post-cyberpunk novels has also transformed Science Fiction Literature from hard Science Fiction into contemporary and social.

Huereca (2010) has proposed a vision that Post-cyberpunk genre is more social in the depiction of contemporary societal issues such as reproduction, feminism, patriarchy, social evolution, biopolitics, familial structures, capitalism and education with regard to Stephenson's novel *The Diamond Age* (1995). Post-cyberpunk Literature deconstructs the purpose and meaning of social classification and dismantles the importance of conventional rules. It is the most representative literary and Science Fiction genre as it highlights the technological issues along with philosophical paradigms. Altintas (2006) has based his research on four Post-cyberpunk movies; *Gattaca* (1997), *Code 46* (2003), *Girl from Monday* (2005) and *The Island* (2005). The researcher has

analyzed that Cyberpunk depicts an order less chaotic society where as in Post-cyberpunk the order has been revived and chaos is reduced by a centralized power based on cyber technologies (Altintas iii). Another important feature of Post-cyberpunk Literature is singularity that is analyzed by Raulerson (2013). Raulerson (2013) has traced the aspirations and involvement of late-twenty first techno-culture that has emerged in Post-cyberpunk narratives of Doctorow, Stross, Sterling and Stephenson.

The Post-cyberpunk genre combines the traits of Cybernetics, Postmodernism, and many socio-cultural constructions, a characteristic that has transformed it into an interdisciplinary genre. The Cybernetics themes that Post-cyberpunk Literature frequently displays are cyborg, posthuman, transhuman, artificial intelligence, singularity, nanotechnology and many more. Simultaneously, it depicts Postmodernist themes such as, subversion of center/margin binaries, hybridity, magical realism, pastiche, collage, commodification, globalization, multinationalism and so on. The depiction of all such currently prevalent aspects of society makes Post-cyberpunk Literature a literary and contemporary genre.

2.2. The Everyday Culture is a Post-cyberpunk Culture
Culture is a mediating process that provides communication and performs the role of a mediator between different realities. The theories of culture are often divergent in terms to define what culture actually is. In the contemporary culture the transformation of everyday life is based on many interrelated factors most significant of them is the rupture of modernity that has consequently reduced the importance of modernist conceptions of identity represented in the form of class, race, gender and occupation. Second factor is the pervasiveness of media and cultural industries that has shifted the role of social identity (Bennett, 2005, p. 1-3).

The crisis of our everyday culture is the crisis of identity. Post-cyberpunk genre is an apt representative of everyday culture. It portrays the complex scenarios of media culture with its fluid and liquid identities, "Science Fiction offered (and continues to offer) an alternative mode of representation, one more adequate to its era …" (Bukatman, 1993, p. 7). Human computer interface exists between the body and space while the rise of communication and information technologies has blurred the physical boundaries through the pervasive computers. Contemporary culture has turned out to be what Debord (2002) has suggested, a vast accrual of spectacles, everything that used to live is now merely a representation. The spectacle is not just a collection of images or a kind of visual deception produced by media technologies rather it has become a social relation mediated through images, simultaneously it has turned into the society itself. The essence of our everyday culture is that "reality emerges within the spectacle, and the spectacle is real" (Debord, 2002, p. 8). From philosophy to religion everything has turned into a material reconstruction of the spectacle.

2.3. Cybernetics
Wiener (1948) defined 'Cybernetics' as a new 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 continues flow of information (p.11). Cybernetics is derived from a 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). Cybernetics is an intellectual interdisciplinary approach that encompasses various crucial theories and ideas.

The Cyberpunk/Post-cyberpunk narratives are based on a presumption that an analysis of human neural system can lead to the formulation of simulated intelligences that may acquire self-awareness with a passage of time. The most common example of such a simulation is a computer. Another very prominent aspect of Cybernetics is 'cyborg' that has gained a much greater scope in Post/Cyberpunk, which is not essentially related to artificial intelligence. A cyborg or cybernetic organism does not necessarily need to have cybernetic implants but a person possessing a wooden or a metal leg can be a cyborg.

Literary texts are highly significant for they articulate the narrowly focused scientific theories. The literary texts are not just passive mediums they also shape the technological means and contextualize culture and science. The literary texts imply that "culture circulates through science no less than science circulates through culture" (Hayles, 1999, p.21). The role of narrative 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. Similarly, the construct of virtuality deconstructs the metanarrative of human as an embodied entity.

2.4. Identities in the Postmodernist Perspective

The Science Fiction like Postmodernism brings in close encounters and confrontation of diverse worlds, the reader reconstructs the confrontation between the real, predictable and the practical world. Science Fiction and Postmodernist fiction travels on parallel yet independent tracks. The Postmodern narratives preferably adapt the temporal dislocation instead of spatial from the Science Fiction. Just as the Postmodernist fiction has scrounged the ontological patterns from Science Fiction similarly Science Fiction also borrows from Postmodernism (McHale, 1987).

Postmodernism does not only bring about basic alternations in the social fabric but it is also crucial to produce transformations in the identity. It has brought a shift from grounded social identities to a position of new fluid identities. The Postmodernist identity crisis centers around three paradigms, one view is that this identity crisis has weakened the sense of self in an individual as one feels alienated from the traditional social bound that use to shape his cultural existence. While another school of thought argues that the Postmodernism has not weakened the self rather it has unshackled the individual from the confines of class, gender and status. Therefore, the individual is empowered to construct his own identity. According to Bauman (1997) in a postmodern world "… identities can be adopted and discarded like a change of costume" (p. 88). Another group of critics hold the notion that in Postmodern premises identities are neither firmly bound by pre-determined structures nor are they totally free, floating and arbitrary (Bennett, 2005). The representation and interpretation of identity is a major issue in Postmodernist debates.

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 Mininarratives. In the light of the transhumanist stance, the human identity exists in the mind. This cognitive aspect of identity is affiliated with the realm of virtual reality (Waters, 2006, p. 51). In the arena of virtual reality, data is manipulated, to fabricate or disguise the constructs such as, age, sex, gender, nationality and ethnicity that enhance the concept of plastic identity of Postmodernism. The identity in Postmodernist era has become a matter of free choice, "postmodern identity is crucially about the

individual choosing his or her identity, choosing this freely – but choosing alone and without guidance" (Webster, 2002, p. 37).

3. Significance of Research
This research aims to explore the issues of identity and representation in *Accelerando* (2005) a Post-cyberpunk novel. It contributes to the existing knowledge as it aspires to develop a perspective that Post-cyberpunk Literature is not merely hard Science Fiction or virtual reality rather it is genuine and contemporary because of the depiction of social and cultural aspects. Even the specific themes of Cybernetics, such as artificial intelligence, transhumanism, cyborg etc., are also the representatives of the contemporary society due to the transformation of individuals into cyborgs. The modern human is not only a citizen of geographical area rather he is also a netizen of virtual reality (cyberspace), therefore, the Metanarratives that used to represent stable identities are lost in a state of plurality and subjectivity created by the Mininarratives. The selected novel represents the issues of identity crisis and the transition of identity due to technological progress. Hence, through this novel the importance of Post-cyberpunk is focused.

4. Delimitations:
Although different researches are conducted on the novel *Accelerando* (2005) this study is delimited to the analysis of five main characters in order to seek the deconstruction of Metanarrative of identity and representation.

5. Theoretical Framework
This study is based on Post-modernist Metanarratives and Cybernetics. It uses triangulation at the theoretical level though there are different types of triangulation. The researchers have used theoretical triangulation of Postmodernism, Cybernetics and the theory of Identity Transition. The first theory of triangulation is the deconstruction of Metanarratives as described by Lyotard (1984) from Postmodernism. The second line of triangulation is aspects of Cybernetics (1948); Artificial Intelligence, Posthuman, and Cyborg. The third angle is the theory of Identity Transition as defined by Bukatman (1993).

Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition*: *A Report on Knowledge* (1984) has defined Postmodern as "incredulity toward metanarratives" (p. xxiv). The spread of globalization and capitalism along with rapid advancements in science and technology has subverted the Metanarratives of 'speculation and emancipation' (p. 31). The deconstruction of Metanarratives has left the individuals with the Mininarratives.

Identity in the age of information technology according to Bukatman (1993) has become terminal and simulated. He suggests that previously static markers of identity have been subverted to project new knowledge and ideas about the self, society, mind, body, human, machine, real and fake. Bukatman (1993) further explains that it has become complicated to separate human from the technology, which has produced a cultural crisis of identity through electronically defined reality. Therefore, the Postmodernist discourse has given vent to vital ontological questions with regard to the status of the human.

The cybernetic inventions have transformed society and culture due to continuous innovations. According to Weiner (1948), Cybernetics is a combination of 'cyber' and 'body' it integrates technology and the human body in such a way that technological augmentations boost the human

performance (p. 116). Cybernetics has made human evolution obsolete as cybernetic implants consume technology to create something more than human, the posthuman or the cyborg.

As this research is interdisciplinary, therefore, it requires an integrative and multifaceted methodology so that a collaborative analysis should centralize the essence of research that is to show the deconstruction of Metanarratives of identity and representation. The lexical, connotative, semantic and rhetorical (symbols and metaphors) tools of Socio-Cognitive Approach (van Dijk, 2008) have supported the theoretical triangulation in order to reveal the deconstruction of metanarratives and center/margin dichotomy and bring into focus the issues of identity and representation.

6. The Accelerated Subversion of Metanarratives of Identity and Representation in *Accelerando*

Accelerando (2005) written by Charles Stross is a collection of nine short stories that are divided into three parts it tells the story of the three generations of Manfred Macx and his family. It projects the history of Manfred's family during a singularity that also includes pre and post singularity, which has affected the lives of the characters. Coated with amplified technology the novel also speaks of sociocultural issues such as, gender roles, race, religion, social relations, life and death. The characters in *Accelerando* include both the human and nonhuman entities. This serves to be a source of subversion in a way that one of the most important characters in the novel is 'Aineko', who is a robotic or AI cat. Aineko is significant enough to mold and influence the lives of the human characters. Nonetheless, it brings the animal or machine in the center and pushes the man towards the margin, which is the very essence of subversion. The characters in the novel are mainly metacortics or exocortics, which challenge the existing social framework because they subvert the representation of human identity as a notion of embodiment or organic being. These characters mostly dismantle the Metanarratives of gender, race, religion, and man/machine/animal, embodied/disembodied, organic/inorganic, and virtual/real dichotomies. They bring the margin into the center and stand bold against the Metanarratives of static identities that were previously considered to be permanent and everlasting. Hence, they serve to be the Mininarratives of identity and representation that are instrumental in the subversion of Metanarratives.

Aineko, the cat among the foremost characters of *Accelerando* is most influential to decenter many Metanarratives. Aineko is a Japanese word that simply means a 'pet cat' "Manfred drops in a hotel and suite, unpacks his Aineko, plugs in a fresh set of cells to charge …" (p. 9). Ainko observes and studies the humans and is much sage than any human entity. Aineko plays a significant role to subvert the dichotomy between man/machine, natural/artificial, organic/inorganic and human/animal representations. It is related to the aspect of artificial intelligence and serves to bring the artificial, inorganic, machine and the animal into the center while it pushes back the Metanarratives human and man, organic and natural towards the margin.

Aineko is a late Sony model and is fully upgraded, and it is much more than merely a pet robotic cat because it has been called 'AI Neko' (AI cat). Though it is a robotic cat yet it has adopted a behavior more like an animal. Aineko is stubborn and it behaves arrogantly, it seems more like a pet owner than a pet. It has its own mood swings and is not willing to provide the desired information about Manfred to Annette after he has lost his glasses and memory cache. "When did

you last see your father?' Aineko turns its head away from her and concentrates on washing the inside of its left leg ...'Go away,' it says, 'I'm busy" (p. 83-84). Aineko behaves more real than the natural cat, simultaneously it subverts the physical representative of identity as an embodiment phenomenon and projects the notion of disembodiment. Its physical body is transformed and replaced thrice and with every hardware upgrade the cat behaves more realistically rather organically. "This is its third body, and it's getting more realistically uncooperative with every hardware upgrade. Sooner or later it's going to demand a litter tray and start throwing up on carpet" (p. 84).

In the second part of the novel Aineko's character is fully projected as an AI who is capable to subvert and decenter the dichotomy between organic/inorganic and human/animal notions. In the third and final part of the discourse Sirhan projects the cat's superhuman aptitudes that further reveal the relation of Aineko with the theme of man/machine and human/animal subversion. It also decenters the representation of identity in terms of virtual and real parameters. "What I mean is, Aineko is a human-equivalent, or better, artificial intelligence. Why do you think she keeps a cat's body?'… 'Because humans always underestimate anything that's small, furry and cute …" (p. 313). One of the most significant themes related with Aineko is the subversion of death as a Metanarrative. Following quoted lines from the last chapter 'Survivor' has justified the deconstruction of death by Aineko. It is projected through the conversation going between Manni, Sirhan's son and Pamela his great grandmother. "You're dead, aren't you?' he asks…. 'I'm as dead as you are.' She gives him a wintry smile. 'Nobody stays dead these days, at least of all people who know Aineko." (p. 394). Subversion of gender is evident in the phrases and sentences where the cat is sometimes referred as she and the very next moment as he. The dual use of pronouns proves that Aineko is one of the major characters that serve to highlight the issues of gender subversion. Then there is its own choice to be called as a she cat just to subvert the stereo type of gender, "A ginger-and-brown cat—who has chosen to be female, just to mess with the heads of those people who think all ginger cats are male ..." (p. 157).

Pamela, a control freak is a female character who is a representative figure of gender subversion. Her role is that of a dominating female she is termed as Manfred's dominatrix, "His fiancée and sometimes dominatrix Pamela threw him over six months ago, for reasons he has never been quite clear on" (p.9). Her headstrong nature is evident from the lines when she says to Manfred that she is concerned to take out the income tax money, which she claimed Manfred owns to the government. She has been portrayed as an icon of feminine beauty by Stross, even this female aspect reveals a power that shifts from the male to female, hence decentering the center/margin parameters of gender roles. Pamela's dominating attitude like a male is evident in the lines uttered by Manfred, "She's challenging him again, always trying to own him" (p. 20).

Annette is another strong female character who dismantles the gender discrimination she is an employee of Arianespace and is introduced to Manfred by Gianni. Since her advent in the novel she is of paramount importance for the theme of gender subversion. Although she is quite different in terms of her individual traits than Pamela yet she is like her in the representation of gender issues. She also has a control over Manfred just like Pamela. "Annette drives a steamroller seduction through Manfred's plans for the weekend.… She sits him at the breakfast bar while she tidies away his luggage, then makes him close his eyes and swallow two dubious-tasting capsules" (p. 50). Annette's choice of attire too represents her as a male that serves to be a symbol of gender

subversion. "Still dressing in the last-century retro mode that confused him the first time they met, she looks like a Kennedy – era Secret Service man: cropped bleached crew cut like an angry albino hedgehog, pale blue contact lenses, black tie, narrow lapels" (p. 43-44). The scene where Annette and Manfred were dressed oppositely serves to be a metaphor for gender subversion. Manfred was shown wearing a female dress while Annette was dressed in a tuxedo, which symbolizes their shifted gender roles and also depicts Annette's control over Manfred. "Then she leads him into her bedroom and tells him to exactly what she wants to wear, and she puts on her own clothes, … Annette in a tuxedo and Manfred in a blond wig, red silk off-the-shoulder gown, and high heels" (p. 51).

The most significant character that represents the identity crisis is Manfred Macx, his character intertwines many representations of identity and highlights the subversion of static identities rendering them fluid and flickering. Therefore, his character is affiliated with different social and cybernetic phenomena such as artificial intelligence, singularity, transhuman, posthuman and gender subversion. The delineation of his character subverts the center/margin dichotomies between organic/inorganic, life/death, real/virtual, male/female, mind/body, embodiment/disembodiment and also human/animal parameters. He is introduced to the readers as an entrepreneur and a cyber-nerd whose aim of life is to make people rich before the physical world transforms into a Matrioshka brain, and humanity in the physical form comes to a constant halt. "Anyway, humans will be obsolete as economic units within a couple more decades. All I want to do is make everybody rich beyond their wildest dreams before that happens" (p. 61).

Manfred is linked with the significant theme of gender subversion due to his relation with the two women, Pamela and Annette. Both of them are capable to control him and have an inevitable power upon him that makes him vulnerable towards them. The subversion of power and control is exemplified through Manfred who is capable to transform the world by making people rich and subverting the world's economy. To the contrary he himself is powerless in front of two women. He is a computer genius and is almost a posthuman much more intelligent than other humans still he lacks control over the two females who are powerful enough to manipulate him accordingly. "Starting with the occlusive cocooning of his upbringing and continuing through all his adult relationships, he's been effectively—voluntarily—dominated by his partners" (p. 65).

Like other characters Manfred also has an exocortex and a metacortex that relates him to the theme of posthumanity. The issue of identity is further highlighted in the third chapter 'Tourist' where Manfred's glasses (a cyberware) and memory cache has been stolen by a teenager, Jack. Hence, Manfred he is unable to recall his identity and the task for which he went to Edinburgh. He is in a kind of trance unable to relate himself to the situation. "*Who am I*? he wonders. 'I'm Manfred,' he says with a sense of stunned wonder…." (p. 75). Glasses or 'Cartesian theatre' is in fact Manfred in the real sense. They are a symbol to represent the dichotomy between organic/inorganic and man/machine issues of identity. They are also a symbol to project the theme of artificial intelligence. Both Manfred and the glasses are useless without each other they work with a mutual corporation. They decenter the man/machine and organic/inorganic differences that creates a mid-zone or hybrid identity of posthuman where man and machine work together to make perfection. Manfred is a metaphor for the subversion of physical body as a Metanarrative of human identity that intensifies the separation between mind and body. The following sentence by

Pamela validates the contrast of mind and body with regard to Manfred. "Meat and mind, Manny. Meat, and mind. You're not interested in meat, are you? Just mind" (p. 33).

Manfred also serves to be a metaphor for the subversion of the Metanarrative of death. It is through his character that life gains the center in the dichotomy between life and death. "In Manfred's case, death is not only potentially reversible, but almost inevitably" (p. 383). Therefore, whether he is in a phase of transhumanity or posthumanity, reconstructed and reassembled in the form of various copies in the virtual life or gets resurrected and cloned as Manni his great grandson, life is perpetuated continuously throughout his persona. Manfred has himself very aptly explained his countless identities in the last part 'Survivor', "How many of me are there?" (p. 407).

Dr. Sadeq Khurasani is also one of the critical characters whose analysis has brought forth the representation of religious and racial issues. He is not only an important character related to the technological context of the discourse but he also relates the cyber with the social. His character is a subversion of the stereotypes related to Muslim clerics for he is not only a theologian and a religious scholar but also a technology-oriented individual who can virtually orbit around the Mars. Sadeq is as familiar with the use of information technology as any other character of the novel. He is of a liberal mind than normally Muslim clerics are considered to be. When Amber talked to him virtually through the screen, he is everything but not the kind of 'ayatollah' she assumes him to be, thus it breaks or subverts a stereotype of Islamic ecclesiastics. "She stares at him. He looks nothing like her conception of an ayatollah—whatever an ayatollah is—elderly, black-robed, vindictively fundamentalist" (p. 143). Apart from the social context like rest of the other characters he is also linked to the technological context related to real/virtual, embodied/disembodied and organic/inorganic issue. His religious and cultural ethnicity affiliates him with the deconstruction of race as a grand narrative for he subverts the racial representation of identity. Most significantly he is a symbol to deconstruct the dichotomy between Iran and USA. His marriage with Amber connotes the subversion of Iran/USA contradiction.

6.1. Critical Discussion

A Socio-Cognitive analysis of five different characters has projected the deconstruction of grand narratives of identity and representation. Analysis of the characters indorsed that none of these characters have any kind of permanent representation of identity. Rather these characters simultaneously represent and decenter hierarchy or power structure. Nonetheless, they represent stereotypes yet at the same time they break these stereotype versions of humanity and represent distinctive Mininarratives of identity. These characters are symbols as well as metaphors that connote the subversion of the Metanarratives and strengthen the notion that identity is a liquid phenomenon, if remains stagnant it is bound to be polluted. Variation or transformation of identity is a process of evolution that must go on for the survival of humanity no matter in what material or nonmaterial form. Thus, identity is a floating and fluctuating occurrence with a variety of representations.

The above analysis of characters has exemplified that gender, race, class, cast, creed, religion and cultural differences are not the parameters to judge and classify humanity. They also display a subversion of power and control through the alternations in roles. The deconstruction of dichotomies such as real/virtual, natural/artificial, male/female, man/machine and human/animal

through the characters stress on the essence of technological development that has transformed and is continue to modify the grand narratives of representation and identity. The questions related to technological progress and subversion of the grand narratives of identity and representation were surely answered. These answers lead to the conclusion that technological advancement specifically progress of information technology in the field of artificial intelligence has globally transformed the societies and cultures. Technological progress has altered the very ontology of a human. The transformation of individual and society is not final and conclusive as the deconstruction of metanarratives of identity has suggested that none of the representations are solid or static.

The study also confirmed that Post-cyberpunk Literature is an apt representative of the contemporary technology-oriented society. For the question like the complete transformation of humanity from humans to posthumans or cyborgs, time may provide the best solution for as far the alternation of individuals and societies is concerned the signs are on the wall for a totally transformed world. Some may regard them merely as Science Fiction fantasies but the researches and progress going on the in fields of genetic engineering, artificial intelligence and molecular nanotechnology has given vent to cloning, genetically modified food, artificial rain and super intelligent computers, consequently the virtual has become more real than the reality. They are the signposts of a transformed world. The pacemakers, artificial limbs and bones, transplants and plastic surgeries, and many other currently active transformations in medical science and genetic engineering have made us to ponder upon the situation of the world that is no more entirely natural, organic and real rather it has become a combination of the binaries. The world we live in now is both, natural/artificial, organic/inorganic and real/virtual. Similarly, the humans if not completely cyborgs or posthumans are on the verge to subsume into posthumanity through technological advancement that is their own culmination.

7. Conclusion

A Socio-Cognitive analysis of *Accelerando* has verified the Postmodernist slogan 'incredulity toward metanarratives' that suggests the deconstruction of metanarratives and subversion of binaries. The analysis has advocated hybrid representations of identity that could neither be centralized nor be marginalized in predefined notions of signification. Similarly, in the backdrop of Cybernetics identity is exposed as a transient and liquid phenomenon with multidimensional representations. Thus, whether it is a human, transhuman, posthuman or a cyborg the embodiment is transitory. The real/virtual, natural/artificial, man/machine, human/animal and organic/inorganic all the dichotomies get decentered and none of them is there to remain perpetually in the center. Nonetheless, identity is terminal and stimulated with flickering and fluctuating representation without boundaries. The theory of Identity Transition by Bukatman has also validated the fluctuating nature of identity in the laps of information technology. The transient nature of identity subverts many grand narratives that propagate power base relations and represent a hierarchy base society. With the deconstruction of metanarratives there is no center that claims to be grand and perpetual. Thus, within the parameters of Mininarratives there is no power structure that can claim permanence and resistance against deconstruction.

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