Postmodernism and Science Fiction: A Confluence

Munther Mohd. Habib[a], [a]Department of English Language, Literature and Translation, Zarqa University, Zarqa, Jordan.

There is close link between postmodernism and science fiction. Postmodernism offers a new approach for studying science fiction. Postmodernism emphasises the disappearance of boundaries between the artificial and natural, and reality and imagination, in the culture. Science fiction is a postmodern genre in which the boundary between the artificial and the natural is collapsed. Both postmodernism and science fiction concentrate on the drastic change in human life brought by the technology and media. Hyper-reality, simulation and post-industrial society are at the centre of both postmodernism and science fiction. The postmodern critics like Jean Baudrillard, Lyotard, and Donna Haraway turn to science fiction and consider it as a major form for representing the postmodern condition. Postmodernism has been discussed and defined again and again by these critics. Science fiction has an advantage over other genres of literature, in that it depicts the effect of science, technology and new economies of information technology. Postmodernism also concentrates on the influence of simulation and information technology on the world since World War II. The present research paper traces the influence of postmodernism on science fiction and the development of science fiction.

Key words: *Postmodernism, Science fiction, hyper-reality, simulation, information technology.*

Introduction

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed fresh debate over past issues, arguments and debates. Technological development, growth in the use of media and computers, and progress in science are the marked features of the late twentieth century. The twentieth century also witnessed two world wars and yet countless civil rights all over the world. The progress in telecommunication, computer and media make the period more complex and complicated. The scientific and technological has helped to form new organs like android, artificial intelligence and robots. The use of computer chips, and implants become recurrent

features of post-industrial society. As a result the life span of human beings is extended. Man begins to identify himself with machine. The human being starts to question the existence of God and reality. Plurality becomes the hallmark of postmodernism. The boundary between reality and artificiality, natural and artificial, high and low, human and machine is blurred. Currency loses its value and information becomes a commodity for sale. The simulacra and hyper-reality, and the death of grand narrative are some of the major features of postmodernism.

Postmodernism is difficult to define as it encompasses various meanings, shades, moods and attitudes. With the death of meta-narratives as declared by Lyotard, critics attempt to define postmodernism in different ways. Postmodern critics attempt to focus on marginalized voices using macro narratives. The new narrative technique concentrates on gender issues, and diasporic and local identities. The role of scientific thought also plays an important role in the construction of identities in present day society. Postmodern literature captures post-industrial society, and post-industrial society is very dear to cyberpunk. Post-industrial society is defined by its relation to technology. Cyberpunk is studied in its relation to postmodernism. And cyberpunk is a recent form of science fiction. In this sense science fiction and postmodernism are close to each other, in a relationship of interconnection: "postmodernism derives its unique status from its revolutionary technology which has single-handedly shattered the ontological and epistemological bases of Western civilization" (Tiziana Terranova 78). Postmodern science fiction including cyberpunk articulating vividly the most salient features of our lives, as these lives are transformed and redefined by technology (McCaffery 16). Cyberpunk science fiction is interested in the aesthetic of postmodernism. The present research paper attempts to study the relationship between science fiction, postmodernism and technology. The study also highlights the role of scientific thought in post-industrial society.

Science Fiction: Definition and Essence

Hugo Gernsback coined the term 'science fiction' in 1923. Science Fiction (SF or Sci. Fi.) is defined in different ways by different critics, as it incorporates a wide range of themes and subgenres. Brian Aldiss defines it thus: "Science fiction is the search for a definition of mankind and his status in the universe which will stand in our advanced but confused state of knowledge and is characteristically cast in the Gothic or Post-gothic mode" (Aldiss 6). It is a literary investigation into the relationship between technology and humanity. The effect of science and technology on the life of human beings, and the latter's urge to employ technology to overpower the world and vice versa are the most important concerns of science fiction. The aim of science fiction is to bring awareness among human beings regarding the dangers posed by science and technology. George Mann brings out this aspect of science fiction in his definition:

SF is a form of fantastic literature that attempt to portray, in rational and realistic terms future times and environments that are different from our own. It will nevertheless show an awareness of the concerns of the times in which it is written and provide implicit commenting on contemporary society, exploring the effects material and psychological that any new technologies may have upon it. Any further changes that take place in this society, as well as any extrapolated future events or occurrences, will have their basis in measured and considered theory, scientific or otherwise. SF authors will use their strange and imaginative environments as a testing ground for new ideas, considering in full the implications of any notion they propose (George Mann 6).

Thus modern science fiction depicts near future. It is about the devastating effect of science and technology on the life of human beings. The mingling of fantasy and reality is a major concern of sci. fi. It has a narrative framework of beginning, middle and an end, and this distinguishes between the past, present and future. However, this chronological framework is disappeared with the arrival of H. G. Wells and many others. Human beings are capable of understanding divine, terrible and incomprehensible things, and this capacity makes human beings create narratives of any shape, that make human time out of the raw temporality of the physical universe.

Science Fiction and Modernism

Mary Shelley was considered the first Sci. Fi. author, writing *Frankenstein* in the nineteenth century. Shelley used the technological and scientific knowledge of her time as the basis of her novel. She used a current knowledge of science to render her demon plausible and credible. John Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1863) is considered the first modern form of Sci. Fi. The book depicts a chemist and mineralogist, Professor Von Hardwigg and his nephew Harry's quest for a subterranean world inhabited by prehistoric monsters. Using scientific methods Professor Hardwigg attempts to find the basis of the subterranean world. Verne was not satisfied with the creation of fantastic worlds. He insisted on realism and produced novels like *From the Earth to the Moon* and *The Mysterious Island*. H. G. Wells also wrote science fiction novels following Verne. His *Time Machine* is real science fiction. It proposes a device, based on a scientific theory that will see its character transported forward through time to various stages in the existence of man. His novel was based on current evolutionary theory and portrayed future humanity as two distinct species. The novel is taken as scientific speculation on the Victorian society of Wells' own time.

Postmodern Science Fiction

Postmodernism is characterized not by the reduction and exhaustion of temporal imagination but by its explosive and malignant growth. The modern grand narrative is replaced by the mini–narrative, and it freed narratives from the shackle of a single dominant time shape. Science fiction is also not limited to one time but incorporates both the temporal and spatial, to present fragmented and disintegrated postmodern culture. Currie writes about postmodern narratives: "Postmodernism is not about the death of narrative but about the fission of 'grand narratives into little narratives'" (Currie 107). Jameson also saw postmodern narrative inventiveness as a substitute for historical praxis: "the making up of unreal is a substitute for the making of the real one" (Jameson 156). Postmodern narrative analyses testifies to the new and emerging chronotopes. Science fiction portrays beautifully the new and emerging chronotopes. Numbers of critics see the convergence of postmodernism and science fiction: "Cyberpunk science fiction can thus be seen in this systemic perspective, as SF which derives certain of its elements from postmodernist mainstream fiction which itself has, in its turn, already been 'science-fictionalized' to some greater or lesser degree" (Brian McHale 229).

Science Fiction captures the essence of post-industrial society. It also provides an insight into the technologically mediated aspects of postmodern experience. Postmodernism is marked by plurality, intense fragmentation, diversion and indirection. Media have shaken the very foundation of postmodern culture and gives a new direction to reality. Jean Baudrillard describes how the relationship between the real and simulacra has undergone a sea change in contemporary society. Now the very concept of a true copy is thrown to the wind. Models and simulacra have become reality. In postmodern media and consumer society, everything becomes an image, a sign, a spectacle, a transaesthetic, transpolitical, and transsexual. Science fiction provides this new concept of reality:

it is not about a parallel universe, a double universe, or even a possible universe - neither possible, impossible, neither real nor unreal: *hyperreal* - it is universe of simulation, which is something else altogether. And not because Dick speaks specifically of simulacra **-** science fiction has always done so, but it played on the double, on doubling or redoubling, either artificial or imaginary, whereas here the double has disappeared, there is no longer a double, one is always already in the other world, which is no longer other, without a mirror, a projection, or a Utopia that can reflect it (Baudrillard 125).

Jameson sees science fiction novels as postmodern, not only in the way in it presentation of the reality of the image, but also by carrying within itself the very cybernetic technology which is the marker of postmodernity. Science fiction does not merely respond to specific scientific advances, but its inner logic of science is also seen in its narrative. The science fiction author is not just satisfied with the presentation of advances in science and

technology, but predicts the danger posed by science and technology. Science fiction appeals to postmodern sensibility. Postmodernism is concerned with the nature of the world we live in and of the alternative, possible world that surrounds this one as a halo of virtuality. Like postmodernism, science fiction is concerned with the projection and elaboration of alternative fictional worlds.

In short science fiction is the best form for the revelation of postmodern culture. It captures post-industrial society and culture. Science fiction written after the 1980s reflects on Virtual Reality, computer networks, Artificial Intelligences, Cyborgs, and Androids. It represents society interested in technology as a new experience. Posthuman species are at the centre of the new science fiction. Science fiction is a postmodern genre, in that it "disrupts the boundaries between nature and technology to understand the meaning of this emphasis on technology and technological resilience" (Tiziana Terranova 1996: 24). Postmodern science fiction overthrows the distinction between high and popular literature. Postmodernism explains both the premature birth of SF and its long vegetation in the generic ghetto. Postmodern texts absorb "materials from SF texts that have already been postmodernised to some degree through contact with mainstream postmodern poetics" (McHale 1992, 229). It is interesting to see how far SF and postmodern texts converge and become a confluence. Most cyberpunk science fiction novels are postmodern, in that they combine in them gritty noir style and a thematic focus on virtual reality and computer technology. Stylistically SF texts are transparent. They employ a matter-of-fact discourse that Roland Barthes called "writing degree zero": a "transparent form of speech … a style of absence", which is simultaneously "an absence of style" (Barthes 77). SF adjures itself and is self-reflexive. It draws attention to itself. The language of SF is instrumental. It erases its own distinctive quality, to function as a means to an end.

Cyberpunk Confluence of Postmodernism and Science Fiction

Cyberpunk is a fine example of generic cross-pollination of postmodernism and science fiction. Cyberpunk is a 1980s form of science fiction represented by William Gibson, Rudy Rucker, Bruce Sterling, Pat Cadigan and many others. William Gibson is the first novelist to write novels on virtual reality and computer technology. His "Sprawl Trilogy" is the most accomplished and well-known expression of cyberpunk SF. It comprises *Neuromancer* (1984)*, Count Zero* (1986) and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* (1988). The first novel entitled *Neuromancer* (1984) is the first to focus on the notion of cyberspace, virtual reality, Artificial Intelligence, cyborgs, "posthumanactants", the human-computer interface etc. Set in the near future, *Neuromancer* is a postmodern novel in its use of narrative technique and focus on the theme of virtual reality. The novel starts in Chiba City, a section of Tokyo. Chiba City is notorious for illegal biotechnological implants. It combines the various genres like detective fiction, choir novel, both hard and soft science fiction, video games, and cyberpunk etc. The

title of the novel is the name of the Artificial Intelligence who appointed its better half Wintermute to steal Dixie Flatline, software to connect in to the network, or "jack in". The protagonist is a young hacker, Case, who is neurologically crippled due to his involvement in illegal dealings in cyberspace. However, Case is treated with a special chemical substance that makes him unable to jack in. He is appointed by Wintermute through the razor girl Molly who rescued him from his unfortunate position. Molly is a tough, techno-enhanced woman hired by Wintermute, an AI construct, to unite it with its other half called Neuromancer. Tessier-Ashpool creates these two AI constructs that clone themselves to reproduce. Case is entrusted with the work of visiting a space colony called Freeside where he has to hack his way into the main computer at the Tessier-Ashpool villa and free Neuromancer. The protagonist Case lives in the seemingly dirty downtrodden enclaves of great cities past. He has been working as a cowboy, a rustler; one of the best in the Sprawl. He has the capacity to plug his mind into cyberspace and navigate the vast network of the world's computers. Though Case and Molly belong to low culture, they work for the mega-corporations run by the greedy multinational corporations, international mafia, and powerful tycoons. Like postmodern novels, cyberpunk science fiction breaks the distinction between high and low, real and artificial etc. Though hackers are well known for the cynicism, they care about their own financial interest. Mega-corporations are working to overpower the world. The rich family of Tessier-Ashpool wants to wield power over the universe using the AI constructs. The family makes laws and hires bandits when necessary. The postmodern critic Fredric Jameson sees this paranoid element as essential part of cyberpunk SF.

The fragmentation of subjectivity and the man-machine interface is also the most important part of cyberpunk and postmodern literature. The identity of the hacker, Case is fragmented when his software is inserted in the brain of Molly in order to jack in. He senses Molly's emotions but cannot behave like Molly. He has lost his identity as a hacker. The techno-body of Molly and Case is an essential part of industrial society. William Gibson, Rudy Rucker and Pat Cadigan uphold the beauty and necessity of the tech-body in their works. William Gibson in his novel *Neuromancer* tries to locate the moment of transition between the organic, natural past and the technological, hybrid nature in the near future. Case's lung is crippled and is saved by Cyborg called Molly by recruiting him for the Wintermute who saves the life of Case by replacing his lungs. There is a widespread use of cosmetic surgery, artificial hearts, drugs, and in vitro fertilization, to modify individual consciousness. Case has lost his individual consciousness when his mind is implanted in Molly during their task of cracking software.

The distinction between a partly technological body and a post-biological body is a most important theme in post humanism, and postmodern novel and cyberpunk SF articulates post humanism. Gibson introduces both functional and postclassical cyborgs. Case's body is modified through functional alternations to his body using biochip implants, prosthetic

additions mediated by myoelectric coupling, and redesigned, upgraded senses. Gibson places his main character, Case, in a surrounding where the atmosphere has deteriorated, and society has "mutated into black markets involved in nerve-splicing, and microbionics" (Gibson 1984, 19). Case can penetrate any computer's security system and can steal anything for a price. He hijacks information or steals it from magnetic safes: "…One of the best in the sprawl. He'd been trained by the best, by McCoy Pauley and Bobby Quine, legends in the biz. He'd operated on an almost permanent adrenaline high, a by-product of youth and proficiency, jacked into a custom cyberspace deck that projected his disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination that was the matrix. A thief he had worked for the other, wealthier thieves, employers who provided the exotic software required to penetrate the bright walls of corporate systems, opening windows into rich fields of data" (Gibson 1984, 11-12).

Molly is one of the first cyberbabes. Molly's eye sockets are sealed with surgically inset mirror shades, "ten double-edged, four centimetre scalpel blades (in) housing beneath (her) burgundy nails" (Gibson 1984, 25). She also carries "a fair amount of silicon in her head" (Gibson 1984, 34). By fusing man and machine, Gibson not only questions the role of technology in contemporary society; Molly's body is invaded by invisible technologies. She has razors in her nails. The human-machine interface is seen in the creation of the characters like Molly, Case and Dixie-Flatline. Every character in *Neuromancer* is wired and connected to the machine. The hacker Case lives in a sort of symbiosis with his computer console – a gateway to the disembodied pleasures of cyberspace. The cyber feminist character and cyborg, Molly has been surgically altered for physical optimality. Her eyes are covered by artificial sewn-in dark glasses and her nervous system has been modified to enhance her strength. Dixie-Flatline is a software construct replicating the consciousness of a human being. Thus, almost all human characters are either artistically or structurally altered in *Neuromancer* which makes the novel postmodern.

The distinction between real and copy of real is blurred, and virtual reality plays a most important role in postmodern culture. The opening of Gibson's *Neuromancer* sets the tone of virtual reality for the novel: "The sky above the port was colour of television, tuned to a dead channel" (Gibson, 1984, 09). The novel is rooted in technology and cyberspace. Neil Easter Brook writes about the opening of the *Neuromancer*: "The famous opening line compares the (natural) sky to a (contrived) technology in an idealization of enlightenment mechanistic metaphor by implicitly positing technology as primary that grounds upon which nature is to be understood" (Brook 382). William Gibson is the first novelist to portray cyberspace reality. He gives the meaning of the term cyberspace in his novel *Neuromancer*:

Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts…A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable

complexity. Lines of light ranged in the non-space of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city of lights, receding... (Gibson 1984, 67).

William Gibson depicts the parallel universe which is quite different from the universe depicted by modernists. Virtual reality, made up of the information of the world, becomes important for the postmodern novelists like William Gibson. With *Neuromancer*, Gibson has brought us into the Information Age with his depiction of the matrix, a consensual hallucination. He coins the term "cyberspace" to describe a virtual world composed of pure data. He has presented a gritty post-industrial vision of a possible global future. He places importance on the influences of multi-national corporations, especially the electronics, medical, and entertainment industries. In this novel Gibson shows a degree of intimacy with the real world. Both aliens in real worlds and those in virtual worlds go hand in hand. He has created a future in which the human world is based on trends that can be seen today. This is the core of cyberpunk. Cyberpunk Science Fiction is about the dehumanizing effect of technology. Unlike his predecessors, Gibson has provided a dark vision of the future inhabited by artificial intelligences, orbital resort islands, virtual reality, and technology infecting every part of life including brain and drug addiction. William Gibson is the founder of the genre called Cyberpunk Science Fiction, in the sense that he has created a future in which globalization plays a vital role and has brought a polluted, anarchic hell. His novel *Neuromancer* won the science-fiction "triple crown"; the Nebula Award, the Phillip K Dick Award, and the Hugo Award. It portrays a post-apocalyptic future dominated by multinational corporations, genetic engineering and virtual reality. In this novel he has presented today's burning issues such as urban sprawl, the decline of the American economic empire, and the culture of hackers and the internet.

William Gibson employs a mode of narration in which technology (cyberspace) and nature are indivisible. According to Bukatman, cyberspace "establishes the impossibility of a 'real' space existing apart from its electric analogue" (Bukatman 148). The novel *Neuromancer* uses the interior and exterior landscapes to lead the reader to an understanding of the interface between the virtual and the real. Both aliens in the real world and those in the virtual worlds go hand in hand in the novel. The protagonist Case, cyborg Molly and Wintermute from the real world, and the Artificial Intelligence construct Neuromancer are working together in their own ways in order to achieve their end. Wintermute through Armitage hires Molly, who recruits Case to crack anti-virus software in Dixie-Flatline. In fact, Necromancer uses Wintermute for the task because the AI Neuromancer wants to unite with its better half in order to become omnipotent.

The postmodern novel portrays post-industrial society where information plays vital role. Gibson's *Neuromancer* is set in post-industrial society. The protagonist Case is hired by Wintermute to steal information about Dixie-Flatline – an advanced technological machine:

"Hardwired ROM cassette replicating a dead man's skills, obsessions, knee jerk responses" (Gibson 1984 20). As a computer hacker, Case makes his living by breaking into security systems. Both Molly and Case are working for Wintermute to penetrate the Sense/Net headquarters in BAMA. Both of them are linked by the broadcast network. Wintermute's quest for its other half represents the universal quest for harmony, wholeness and perfection. However, perfection is unattainable as it is seen in Wintermute's failure to unite with Neuromancer. Thus, Gibson's *Neuromancer* portrays the postmodern condition in which multinational corporations control global economies.

The postmodern identification of man with machine is a recurrent theme of Rudy Rucker's *Ware Tetralogy*. A mathematician-cum-cyberpunk science fiction author, Rudy Rucker excels in depicting virtual reality, simulation, overlapping of human organs and technology in his novels like *Software* and *Wetware*. The human organism is adapted, enhanced and preserved by technologies that invade and take over the body. Vat grown flesh, the custom neurosurgery that enhances reflexes Niken eye replacements to improve vision, behind-the-ear carbon sockets for Microsoft, and tooth bud transplants to give humans the incisors of large carnivores, blur the distinction between what is human and what is not. In this world of blurred boundaries, not only do the humans become machinelike, but the reverse also happens: machines takes on human qualities.

As a postmodern cyberpunk novelist, Rudy Rucker has acquired mastery in blending high-tech with low life. His novel *Software* and *Wetware* portray the postmodern and post-industrial society where cyborgs and the technological body are worshipped. Donna Haraway uses the term "cyborg" for the woman-machine interface: "I am making an argument for the cyborg as a fiction mapping our social and bodily reality and as an imaginative resource suggesting some very fruitful couplings" (Rudy Rucker 2004, 8). The relationship between human body and technology is typically seen as postmodern. Rudy Rucker's novels demonstrate the breakdown of boundaries between artificial and real, natural and technological, human organ and machine – the very centre of the postmodernist thought of Baudrillard. Steven Best and Douglas Kellner write in relation to the merging of human and technology:

A growing number of theorists contend that the age of humanism is over and that we are morphing into a new 'post humanist' condition….With the eruption of new forms of media culture, the internet and cyberspace, transgenic species, cloning, frozen embryos, in vitro fertilization, and nanomachines built from atoms, the reality principle of modernity and all Western culture has been irrevocably altered. Together, science and technology are undermining firm boundaries between reality/unreality, natural/artificial, organic/inorganic, biology/technology, human/machine, and the born/the made….We're becoming 'smart' and more human-like (Steven Best and Douglas Kellner 199).

Rudy Rucker succeeds in transferring a human brain into a software construct, in his novels *Software* and *Wetware*. In his interview, Rucker has given information about the novel *Software*:

There are two main ideas in *Software*. The first is that we could build some robots which are capable of 'reproducing' by building copies of themselves. And if we set a bunch of these robots loose on the moon, evolution could take over, and the self-reproducing robots could evolve to become intelligent and 'conscious' as humans are. The intelligent robots are called 'boppers'….The second idea in *Software* is that if we had intelligent robots, it might be possible to extract the 'software' of a human being's personality and copy this onto a robot body (Nozomi Ohmori 2).

Rudy Rucker excels in depicting posthuman cybernetic organisms in his novel titled *Software*. Scientist Cobb Anderson has created a self-evolutionary robot on the moon and transferred his software into a live robot. The human mind is downloaded and transferred into the live robot. The old scientist Cobb Anderson succeeds in transferring the human mind. The same robot uses its capacity to evolve produces a series of "boppers" on the moon. The boppers attempt to steal the human software, to become God or a Semi-God. The novelist has introduced a new technologically evolved species called boppers living on the Moon. The live robot assumes the shape and body of Cobb Anderson and comes on the Earth to steal the human software. Here we cannot distinguish the real Cobb Anderson from the hyper-real Cobb Anderson. In trying to sketch the shape of a changing world, Jean Baudrillard has suggested that the real is increasingly being replaced by what he terms the "hyperreal", a "model of a real without origin or reality." Thus we find ourselves, he argues, living in "an age of simulation" (Jean Baudrillard 166-167), wherein maps take precedence over territories, copies become prized above originals and doubles abound, draining away all sense of identity. The boppers attempt to lure humans on the Earth and transfer all human software into the machine in order to evolve technologically enhanced species. Bruce Sterling attributes this attempt of Boppers as central to cyberpunk science fiction and post-industrial society:

Certain central themes spring up repeatedly in cyberpunk – the theme of body invasion, prosthetic limbs, implanted circuitry, cosmetic surgery, generic alteration, the even more powerful theme of mind invasion, brain-computer interfaces, artificial intelligence, neurochemistry, techniques radically redefining the nature of humanity, the nature of the self (Bruce Sterling xiii).

The mixture and mingling of man and machine is the characteristic feature of postmodernism and cyberpunk science fiction. We are unable to see where the machine begins and man ends,

and where the man begins and machine ends. This kind of post humanism is a cyborg philosophy. Rudy Rucker appropriated the label in *Software* and *Wetware*, two short novels based on roboticist Hans Moravec's proposal for the post-biological age (Moravec 1988, 16). The machine, particularly computers, are becoming more and more human whereas human beings are becoming more and more cyborgs – cybernetic organism of science fiction. In *Wetware* boppers are coming on the Earth and humans are also going on the Moon to have economic exchanges. The boppers offer help to humans on the moon in machine language:

> "You buy uranium?"
> "Got mercury?"
> "Sell your fingers?"
> "Moon King relics?"
> "Chip market tip sheet?"
> "Home cooked food?"
> "Set up factory?"
> "DNA death code?" (Rudy Rucker 56-57).

Postmodernism places more importance on information. When Cobb and Sta-Hi offer money to a bopper on the moon, the later replies that "Money is so dull…I prefer a surprise gift. A complex information" (Rudy Rucker 57). Both humans and machines are using one another for becoming immortal and perfect. However, perfection is unattainable as warned by Rudy Rucker in his novels.

Thus, Rudy Rucker's cyberpunk SF novel *Software* is postmodern in its treatment of the sad effect of technology on human life, and in its use of machine language, and dealing with a plurality of subjects etc. Rudy Rucker is concerned with artificial intelligence, artificial life, the role of evolution in information systems, the idea of the cyborg and prostheses, virtual reality, hyper-reality and the ever changing structure of society. His novel *Software* confirms characteristic features of cyberpunk science fiction and postmodernism.

In short, postmodernism is seen as the description of late modernity, particularly Jean Baudrillard's Simulation and Simulacra upon which cyberpunk science fiction is drawn. Cyberpunk science fiction manages to actualize or literalize what in postmodernist poetics normally appears as a metaphor at the level of language, structure or the material medium. It is not just simply a disintegration of the fictional worlds of cyberpunk and postmodern fiction; it includes "phenomena embodying and illustrating the problematics of selfhood: human-machine symbiosis, artificial intelligence, biologically engineered alter egos, and so on (Brian McHale Elements, 159). Thus cyberpunk science fiction is typical of cybernetic culture and postmodern theory. The postmodern hyperreal is a theory that actualizes in the works of William Gibson, Rudy Rucker, Pat Cadigan and many other cyberpunk science

fiction writers. According to Fredric Jameson pastiche is the dominant mode of postmodernist fiction. Both postmodern and cyberpunk argue for the surface of the representational reality, beneath which there is no deeper truth. As a result both deploy the heterogeneous styles and carnivalesque conjunctions of different discourses. With the advent of cybernetics, the nature of reality, subjectivity and consciousness are also changed. Cyborg is *the* postmodern creation and cyborgs abound in cyberpunk science fiction. Donna Haraway writes about cyborgs:

A cyborg is a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction. Social reality is lived social relations, our most important political construction, a world changing fiction … Liberation rests on the construction of the consciousness, the imaginative apprehension, of oppression, and so of possibility. The cyborg is a matter of fiction and lived experience that changes what counts as women's experience in the late twentieth century. This is a struggle over life and death, but the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion (Donna Haraway 149).

The traditional identity of man and woman is thrown away in cyberpunk science fiction. The cybernetic avatars are assumed both by man and woman and thus reject traditional dichotomies of male and female. Both postmodernism and cyberpunks' science fiction succeed in portraying the culture of late capitalism, such that there can be no longer any distinction or analytical gap between the representation and the world being represented. Thus, both postmodernism and cyberpunk science fiction are seen as commingling and as a confluence. Cyberpunk science fiction expresses what is postmodernism and postmodernism gives birth to cyberpunk science fiction.

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