



From Gamer to Blinkit: Posthuman Assemblages Foreseen by Cyberpunks

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Abstract

This article focuses on the portrayal of bodies in Neal Stephenson's novel *Snow Crash* from a posthuman perspective. Assemblage and Avatars in cyberpunks are figurations that visualise the possibilities of biological bodies in connection with embodiments that are termed as non-human in anthropocentric domains like empirical science. By analysing the multiple configurations and the flexibility of realising various relational entities in cyberpunks through the concept of Gilles Deleuze's assemblages and Gig Labour bodies new perspectives on the potential of bodies capable of producing various human-non-human realities are identified. This article attempts to critique the neocapital fragmentation of bodies through posthuman concepts of deontologising the biological static body to informational bits and virtual bodies that can be of great significance in contemporary consumerist culture.

Keywords: Assemblage, Gig labour, Posthuman, Avatar, Blinkit, BwO.

Introduction

Humanism and enlightenment agenda of western philosophy has considered body as a passive inert matter that shelters a transcendent rational mind. But new social situations and strategies of representations formulated by neo-capitalistic branding and cultural commodifications have produced radical subjects and discursive realisations regarding human body and its materialisation. Even then certain normatives regarding body and humanness underpin the identity and acceptance of body in every milieu. Along with that, the anthropocentric reduction of other than human bodies as non-human and non-living has denied non-human bodies their natural significance. While rationality is the Cartesian logic of human-non-human differentiation, reproduction and growth are the metaphysics of living things in empirical science. How does the contemporary human identity redefines the modes of signification when matter and its materiality enfold binary distinctions in humanistic discourses. This paper argues

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that Nel Stephenson's novel *Snow Crash* prefigures the posthuman labouring bodies of platform capitalism by depicting subjectivity as an assemblage of human, machinic, and informational flows that are simultaneously productive and extractive.

The essence of human body as a being-in-the world that deduced experiences of the world through the perceptions of a lived body was conceptualised by phenomenologist Merleau Ponty. His arguments in *Phenomenology of Perception* and *The Visible and the Invisible* could foreground body's connection with other body as a phenomenological 'grasp' that always presupposes a body for other. The lived body becomes a condition for perception in its everyday engagements with the world when it deduces experiences through sensory connections with the external objects and provides body as a given to be perceived by the other. This perceptual technology produced a phenomenological reduction of the world to the perceiver that always presupposed a world open to her (Li, 2015, p. 21-23). The other (object) is also an embedded body in a shared context of actions for us to perceive. Interaction with other occurs through mutual sharing of intentions through body's perceptions and actions as a being that is both affected and that affects. This phenomenological location of lived body brings in intercorporeality and haptics as a technological artefact of extension in the body's intentionality to the world as in a man-machine assemblage that is seen in cyberpunk novels. For Merleau Ponty there is both a conscious intentional engagement of the body with the world (sensible) and a pre-subject or preconscious-engagement of our body through sensory perception (sentient). Perceiving or touching the other also entails the possibility of being touched/perceived by the other (Ponty, 2011).

Biologists like Humberto Maturano and Francisco Varela viewed living bodies as systems of sensory motor connections that self organise and connect with environment (Humberto 9). Replication and autopoiesis, according to them are technologies of living organisms to create boundaries for their system from their environment (Hayles, 1999, p. 137). Body's perceptual technology is a system of continuous interactive and multiple systems of responses and adjustments. The autopoietic body's orientation towards the world encompasses this dynamic engagement through its synthesis and exchange of information, which, in turn produces its bodily relations with the environment. Hence cognition in autopoietic body is an embodied consciousness and thinking begins from body's interaction with environment and its ability to maintain its equilibrium. Bernard Steigler and Don Ihde formulated the philosophy that technology coevolves with human. While Steigler considered an exteriorisation of human memory through tools (Steigler, 1998, p. 212) Don Ihde argued for technology's intention that can create embodied and hermeneutic relations with man (Ihde, 1999, p. 65). All these concepts evidently posit that technology and human bodies are intertwined with each other. Different bodies use different technologies to interact with the environment.

The ideal body must therefore balance two contrary requirements: completeness and self-sufficiency. A body detached from all that was other than itself would be hopelessly incomplete, divorced from the means of its own sustainability. A body must complete itself in order to maintain itself; it must not remain as some detached fragment but must be united or coupled with a world, open to what is not merely itself. (Guillome, 2011, p. 16-17)

1. Posthuman Bodies in Science Fiction

Through imaginary possibilities of body becomings, Science Fiction and many postmodern works of fiction have drawn a posthuman terrain for body's openness to multiple subjectivities with respect to cybernetic systems, technological gadgets, and artificial beings. Science Fiction in particular opens possibilities for enhanced human, AI, Sentient humanoid robots and other

alternative possibilities of human interaction. The Cyberpunk's techno-surrealistic novum can be considered as the most innovative Science Fictional terrain that interrogated the Cartesian body mind dualism by bringing in figures of 'artificial' and upgraded bodies with implants in the lived space of human.

Figures are not representations or didactic illustrations, but rather material-semiotic nodes or knots in which diverse bodies and meanings co-shape one another. For me, figures have always been where the biological and the literary or artistic come together with all of the force of lived reality. My body itself is just such a figure, literally. (Haraway, 2009, p. 4)

In Science Fiction these figurations are formed when human bodies inform a phenomenological intentionality to their technological 'other' and assume ambiguous identities between their subjective and objective formulations as when bodies begin to use tools for articulating their identity. In the capitalist political economy of cyberpunk body's imbrication with technology has created either the idea of its enhancement using technological gadgets or a fear of repression of its abilities at the expense of a technological fetishism in order to trouble the norms of a perfect embodied body. The necropolitical consumerism in cyberpunks, for instance produced bodies of subjection that were simulated as hyperreal images or objectified as commodities in the market economy of capitalism. The technology of capitalism, neocapitalism and genetic engineering in the Science Fictional works of the twenty first century imagines the disciplining of the desires and effects of the body through a network of scientific practices and knowledge. Being the spectre of a virtual society human subjectivity is thus articulated through terms like "junks", "blips", "Terminal flesh" or "electronic bodies" that made technology agential of creating machine bodies with the "horror" of "cultural anxiety and contradictions" (Bukatman, 1993, p. 244). Postmodern views on body shared either this euphoria or the fear of body being challenged by the power of networking technology so that enhancement, transformation, reduction or integration of bodies to technology was discussed to understand the new putative subjectivities.

Cybernetic technology has produced generation of hyperreal images, cyborgs, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Artificial Life (AL), and robotics from man's intimate embrace of computer and communication media. They have created their own materialising processes that can be referred to as a 'becoming machine' in Science Fiction narratives. Rosi Braidotti, commenting on Gilles Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming machines as a "Posthuman ethico-ontology," summarises the process as the actualisation of "relational powers of a subject that is no longer cast in a dualistic frame, but bears a privileged bond with multiple others and merges with one's technologically mediated planetary environment" (Braidotti, 2013, p. 92). By creating human subjectivity through the thought models of machines, data, and machinic relations SF helps to accept the agency of technology in creating such a posthuman situation by retrieving the discussions of human embodiment in their paradigms. Katherine Hayles rightfully remarks that such attempts can transform the concept of bodies of liberal human into a Posthuman.

Embodiment makes it clear that thought is a much broader cognitive function depending for its specificities on the embodied form enacting it. This realization, with all its exfoliating implications, is so broad in its effects and so deep in its consequences that it is transforming the liberal subject, regarded as the model of the human since the Enlightenment into the Posthuman. (Hayles, 1999, p. xiv)

Theorists like Kapp and Gehlan consider technology as a projection of human body so that on explaining the shape and formation of gadgets, human bodies can well be understood

(Dalibert, 2014, p. 127). In such representations, technology becomes an appendage to the body that breaks bodies their organs to function in a particular context. As Smith observes, “Technology is an apparatus that has been extracted from the body like a ship leaving port. This, it seems to me is the basic point from which one has to start: technology is primarily corporeal, it is derived from the body. As such technology marks a first threshold of life” (2018, p. 34).

2. Human Assemblage and the Modern Day Gig Labour

The bodies become the locale for multiple subjectivity and subjection that are programmable in the capitalist society of Neal Stephenson’s classic Cyberpunk novel *Snow Crash*. The novel vividly anticipates today’s gig economy where shifting of jobs and temporary contract-based works become the survival mode of young generation. The economy controlled by Private corporations like uncle Enzo’s Cosa Nostra Pizza Company and other franchised organisations standardise ability and algorithmic driven work culture as the measuring index of a perfect living condition. The intense competitions and extractions of human physical and intellectual labour in platform-based labour markets are portrayed in the everyday movements and responses of characters like Hiro and YT. Hiro is a pizza courier, hacker, mercenary, intelligence broker, programmer and a video gamer. He constantly adapts his skills to the changing market demands. Guy Standing defines such underpaid working condition as the life of modern precariat class who “have no secure occupational identity; no occupational narrative they can give to their lives” (Standing, 2014)

Hiro faithfully reminds a modern day Swiggy or Blinkit delivery agent who is tracked by his route, name and the location of the buyer. His Deliverator body becomes a commodity that is forced to market itself through his skill of driving a car. It serves as an extension of his desires to reinforce his position as per the market value of the franchise Society. For precariat like Hiro the delivery speed determines value, reputation decides the opportunities, and optimization becomes currency. When he learns to manage the route maps of the digitally networked highways through his skill of driving, his hands and eyes coordinate with the car and its speed. It becomes a relational machinic assemblage that Stephenson commonly addresses Hiro as “car.” Hiro the punk becomes a micro-enterprise where his technological expertise changes to a collective, adaptable networked and evolvable system. Stephenson connects the whole deliverator technology with the “urban and architectural vernacular”– “language of movement” and binds it with the entropy of the rider’s nervousness (Buchanan, 2005, p. 20) and with the possible control of his time and distance. His act of driving equates with his engagement in a mapping of the urban landscapes through the route maps. Time compresses with the speed of travel and spaces like highways and malls diminishes in the author’s description of movements. The “temporary halts and the capture of Hiro’s car with quantum speed” make his body imperceptible with increase in speed. While critiquing on modern technology Paul Virillio considers speed as a machine that makes matter and space disappear (Kellner, 1999, p. 103). Such disappearance is also what Deleuze defines as ‘becoming’ of the speed that binds Hiro to the machine.

When Hiro drives, he steers erratically, artificially pumped muscles not fully under his control. The bimbo box surges and slows, surges and slows, because he is pumping the gas pedal, because holding it to the floor doesn’t seem to have any effect. (Stephenson, 2008, p.30)

It is interesting to note that the intensification of the speed is linked with the pull of an underpaid worker’s “having a life in line” that accelerates with the car’s potential energy to fire a “pound of bacon” into the “Asteroid Belt”. The entropy of thermodynamics connects with

the nervousness of Hiro and with the same cosmic energy of the universe. It is equally modulated by its random shifts reassuring random in the chaos of an inhuman social system. Bukatman (1993) rightly observes “The cyberspace cowboys are those veterans whose experience of technological fusion is literally ecstatic” (p. 172). His control of the car changes randomly like “overriding the warning buzzer” which finally “catapults into an empty backyard swimming pool”. It becomes a collective desire of movements, a chaos of American mobility (Stephenson, 2008, p. 2) in a highly competitive world.

The novel is productive when inferred through Gilles Deleuze’s essay *Postscript on the Societies of Control* (1992) published in the same year of *Snowcrash*. The society of Hiro is a control society where gig labour acts a technology of control for corporate enclaves. Government institutions that offer security, healthcare, legal protection and employment are replaced by dispersed private networks. The workers are continuously modulated through network of information across franchises, data networks, virtual spaces and corporations. Both the Protagonists Hiro the Pizza Deliverator and YT’ the Kourier agent become more inhuman when their bodies are described as systems of flows of data or money. The skilled/unskilled or coded/decoded bodies become the normative praxis of the corporates with their globalized brand driven programme of body’s capture and control. The body becomes a manipulative entry point for external agents when individuals monetize data, expertise and digital services foreshadowing modern day digital economy. Gadgets like uniforms, computers, skater heels, guns, and cars become body extensions and markers of exclusion and inclusion connecting them to the desiring machine of the capitalist.

Continuous surveillance, endless performance evaluation and networking are the major power mechanisms of Deleuzian control society, a flexible modulation of Foucault’s Disciplinary Society. The Deliverators are scanned and recorded in the cameras as a videotape that is used as a study material for the pizza management science students. The scanning of the body and its reproduction as lines or metrics of data as in a biometric code change the body into data fragments that can be stored and read by search engines like the contemporary scanning machines and biometrics. The characters learn to engage with this identity and its potential by affirming a virtual existence of all their movements in their lived space. Though it subjugates them to a technophobic capture, their discursive self moves as a hybrid identity- a prosthetic body, a virtual body known in digital space and an actual social being capable of many such becomings.

3. Metaverse and Immaterial Labour

According to Maurizio Lazzarato immaterial labour produces the informational and cultural content of a commodity in a Post-Fordist society. In *Snow Crash* the economic value of a person depends on decoding information, navigating databases and exchanging intelligence in a computer interface called Metaverse that itself becomes a company of immaterial labour. It becomes a collective intelligence of hackers, libraries, corporate networks and databases. Avatars are designed, maintained, marketed and consumed. It produces posthuman subjectivity, tastes, lifestyle, social relations and public opinions. In *metaverse* avatar become a lived body when users engage in their mundane interaction with videogames and virtual reality in a Multi User Domain (MUD). As Stephenson argues, “The people are pieces of softwares called avatars. They are the audio visual bodies that people use to communicate with each other in the Metaverse” (2008, pp. 35-36). Metaverse, brings out human’s visual and kinaesthetic potential of the user by combining eyes, hands, body movements, and sexuality with avatar bodies through the algorithm of artificial Intelligence. Stephenson appropriates the landscape of Metaverse into what can be identified as a posthuman space where human bodies, perception and cognitive patterns are differently connected to a computer generated reality.’

The Metaverse is a fictional structure” where human exists in an android experience in “a form that computers understand.

Hiro’s avatar appears in an interface that looks like a virtual boulevard between his eyes and the computer screen. The movement of the avatar bodies is actuated through a corresponding movement of the user’s eyes and hands. The visibility with respect to their virtual space and its similarity with outward spaces give the users a sense of being in the same place. The computer generated graphics and the avatar’s human behaviours and expressions make them an assemblage of a virtual body of the real. Hiro identifies Juanita his ex-lover from her avatar in the Metaverse, from the way she folds her hand and tosses her hair. Juanita herself designs avatar by watching real people’s faces.

The avatar assemblage also brings new body experiences while projecting bodies as pixels and data like bitmaps. It creates fragmented affects in bodies when bitmap of Snow Crash virus leads to a system crash and a mental break down for hackers like Da5id. Da5id’s avatar crashes when he looks at a bitmap in his laptop. “His eyes are not seeing anything. At first Hiro thinks his body is limp and relaxed. Getting closer, he sees that Da5id is taut and shivering, slick with perspiration” (p. 188). The sensory responses of the avatar are controlled by the system’s monitoring devices which the user interacts with. Ear phones and goggles create augmented perceptual experiences that change his actual spatial and physical experiences to a differential real. As an interstitial site between body and its technologically possible other, avatars take bodies beyond their usual configurations into distributed embodiments through digital mutations and networked flows.

Avatar assemblages also generate a desire in the users to escape the violence of the ‘ritualization’ of bodies of the society by providing models of body parts in online shopping sites. Branty and Clint for example, are body models available in online shopping sites. Body boundaries are easily merged into avatars of animals when they run upon each other. According to Christine Boyer, the desire underlying every systematic management of the body’s functions is “to annihilate the materiality of the body” and produce the organism “released from its physical restrictions, a body evacuated, devastated, disintegrated and disappearing” (Cavallaro). The virtual identity of people in Metaverse is linked with the avatar role they accept and hence bodies perform role plays unhinged of the binaries of sex/gender or nature/culture. Avatars also connect people from different time zones. Their actualisation in the dating apps of *Snow Crash* creates new networking groups with shared interests. Ng, though a disabled war survivor appears as a rich successful businessman in his posh office in the Metaverse. By navigating different spaces through other characters, bodies are abstracted into multiple becomings and when extended for actual interaction they could connect their hollow bodies to real life. It becomes a globalised network space where avatars simulates ‘moving in’ at the office, locating documents in folders, filing cabinets, finding free information in search engine libraries thus experiencing a globalised spatiality through the accessibility of internet. A virtualising of the nodal cities with an equally invisible bodies and the inclusion of public spaces like bars, clubs and hotels in a virtual reality together form Hiro’s escape routes to the information flows that folds the outside to the inside. The local scene of the punks with the streets covered with fan communities, music, bands and offices is experienced as an unbounded spatiality in metaverse. As a hacker Hiro could redefine this space by representing himself in various avatars.

4. Body Becomings and BwO

For Gilles Deleuze every assembled body is a creative process of production that emerges through a deterritorialization when the social apparatus is in inertia. It involves identifying a very flexible network of relations that is realised only through their connections.

An assemblage's identity is always precarious since other processes destabilize or decode it. The ontological status of any assemblage is that of a unique singular individual. Therefore its properties are not given; they are merely a potential when not exercised (Wezemaël, 2008, p. 173).

Wezemaël further explains "to de-territorialize means to free up the fixed connections, which contain an assemblage all the while exposing it to new organizations" (p. 174).

According to Manuel Delanda, Deleuzian assemblages can be "material or expressive." They can bring together a number of heterogeneous components that are joined by relations of exteriority and hence they can remain functionally independent in spite of their interdependent connections (Wezemaël, 2008, p. 175-76). Hiro's body "rides", "cuts off" and "zeroes", on the road constructing new subjectivity in the original body. Swiggy and Blinkit of contemporary urban life style actuate machinic assemblages in everyday life. The colours, the bimbo boxes, bikes and their apps in the user's phone actualise new body becomings.

YT' the heroine in her everyday movements on a skater with a spoon in her right hand and a barcode in her chest enable her body to embody the experience of both skating and pooning. Such becoming resonates differences through the body's ability to organise and connect with the gadgets. "Her RadiKS knight vision goggles darken strategically to cut the noxious glaring of the same, her pupils feel safe to remain wide open, scanning the road for signs of movement"(Stephenson, 2008, p. 28). While perceiving her body movements in the streets, the reader's attention is confined to her legs and to the branding of the spokes of her skater wheels. The body also organises its movements in conjunction with the speed of the wheels.

She glides from the dewy turf over the lip of the driveway without a bump picks up speed on the Crete surfs down its slope into the street [. . .] her poon's orbital plane is nearly vertical, it almost grinds on the twinkly suburban macadam on the forward limb of each orbit [. . .] she ducks under the security gate [. . .] she cuts between the two veering, blaring and screeching BMWs. (Stephenson, 2008, p. 28-32)

Unlike the natural body her body is equipped with sound detectors connected to various electronic self defence artefacts with a thousand volts of electrical power within her. She has a biological body under the cover of an electronic ware. The electric manacles, bundy stunner, liquid knuckles, and chemical flying wedge, all destratify the body further and connect it with several other networks of bodily manifestations.

Gilles Deleuze perfected this openness of the body through a theoretical explication of it in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and proposed that what is generally being defined as body is in fact the result of a singularity, the actualisation of specific events and forces. A capture of these forces can occur as in the 'coding' of a state or in any control societies that always use Oedipus complex or Cartesian duality as a way of structuring consciousness. Such bodies contextualised in the flow of capitalist societies through mutual interactions were defined by Deleuze and Guattari as BwO, rhizome and assemblage in their *Difference and Repetition*, *The Logic of Sense*, *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. The body's capability to produce itself through a complex network of other bodies and environments can also dismantle the notions regarding organs and their concepts of production. One can imagine how an amoeba is capable

of performing different functions like a higher order organism even if it does not have specified organs. According to Deleuze, the thought of dismantling the concept of an organised body provides openness to the way body is directed to the world.

Dismantling the organism has never meant killing yourself, but rather opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity, and territories and deterritorializations measured with the craft of a surveyor. (Deleuze, 2011, p. 160)

It is always a body where organs are distributed “in their intensive principles” “within a collectivity or multiplicity” inside an assemblage and according to machinic connections operating on a BwO (Deleuze, 2011). A schizo body for example is a BwO capable of thinking in multiple ways without a predetermined identity. The schizo body always wages its own active internal struggle against the organs, at the price of catatonia (p. 150). Deleuze offers BwO as a solution to the materialisation of bodies by power structures like capitalism, culture, racism etc. He concentrates on the production of thoughts and Deleuze seeks to reconfigure the thought of affects, sensation, and the libidinal and material economies of body other than Oedipal consciousness. By giving desire a body he drew a virtual body in a plane of immanence called the BwO whose nature itself is producing desire through a technology which he calls rhizome to connect and get connected. If bodies are to be explored, they should be approached from the perspective of ‘becoming,’ the BwO rather than being viewed as a bounded body. When bodies are treated as becomings then it is possible to see them as pre-subjective and creative capable of coexisting with another. The Symbiotic body is taken as an example (Deleuze, 2011).

In the novel an affective relation of the characters with technology through pleasure, surprise, curiosity, pain, and shock frees the body of its subjugation and creates entangled, mutually adaptive becomings as revealed in many instance in this novel. In *Snow Crash* Hiro’s affective relation with his computer begins as an erotic flow of pleasures to the technology of virtual reality that leads to an exploration of his body, brain, and the neuro-motor connections and its identification with his computer. His act of gaming in the virtual world named as Metaverse is equally complemented by his desire for experiencing sword fights through virtual movements as a Samurai avatar and by the freedom of socialising in the virtual anonymity. Hiro’s pride as a Samurai sword fighter in Metaverse is actuated when he becomes an efficient fighter in the real world. Avatar fashions an embodiment that shapes Hiro’s otherwise limited body to the ‘flows’ of technological gadgets in his everyday life.

Hiro’s avatar is so intense and addictive that his android identity is taken to the outside thus actualising as a BwO. Hiro is a Samurai sword fighter in the Metaverse. In the actual world others identify him as ‘Hiro Protagonist, Greatest sword fighter in the world’. His body reorganises to its avatar when he carries a Katana—the traditional sword used by Samurai—with him and performs sword fighting in the streets. In every heterogeneous assemblage, individuations can animalise the actuality of a presence. Samurai avatar is a particular individuation actualised when his body, kimono, and katana join together both in the outside and inside. Avatar assemblages provide a personal styling of bodies when they customise their avatars through make-ups and new body parts. Thus they provide voices for unrepresented bodies and challenge the logic of a perfect body.

The loss of physicality as well as its transformation into information pattern, according to Katherine Hayles, is a better state to exist in a cultural condition which challenges the authenticity of body (p. 36). When the subjects become users in the virtual space of cyberpunks

the changes from physical entities to cybernetic patterns are usually narrated as a bodily transcendence from embodiment to disembodiment in virtual personae of avatars.

In spite of the repeated attempts to erase all body signifiers there seems to be the reminders of an ideal body image built up by cultural stigma acting out in these virtual bodies. Thus there is a constant stabilizing and destabilizing of identities in avatar assemblages. The characters are conscious of their actual existence even when they are in Metaverse. While smoothing out the trauma of race, culture, and nationality in a virtual existence Hiro connects avatar with his actual body. While contemplating on the paradox of death or on the irrationality of his hollow body Hiro thinks about the flesh. When Hiro kills an avatar he describes it as an actual experience by relating it with its user's body. "At this moment, a Nipponese businessman somewhere, in a nice hotel in London or an office in Tokyo or even in the first-class lounge of the LATH, the Los Angeles/Tokyo Hypersonic, is sitting in front of his computer, red-faced and sweating, looking at the Black Sun Hall of Fame" (p. 88). But in the virtual world he knows that to die means to create a noise and to unplug the net connections. This cognitive deliberation with the avatar is what makes digital interaction a sustainable relational process in *Snow Crash*.

People who cultivate an awareness of what stands behind their screen personae are the ones most likely to succeed in using virtual experience for personal and social transformation. And the people who make the most of their lives on the screen are those who are capable of approaching it in a spirit of self-reflection. (Turkle, 2002, p.12)

Hiro sees the Metaverse through head mounted goggles and sounds from earphones that plug into his outer ears and connect to his computer. So it is an environment that he experiences within his visual perception. In Metaverse "body's movements and actions are virtualised in the real time of the computer where interaction takes place through a bodily immersion" (Hayles, 1999, p. 249). "The goggles throw a light smoky haze across his eyes and reflect a distorted wide angle view of a brilliantly lit boulevard that stretches off into an infinite blackness [. . .]" (p. 20). His relation to its hardware is a prosthetic incorporation and the computer becomes an everyday tool characterised as a "featureless black wedge" (21). As Merleau Ponty comments "Flesh not only serve as the exterior line of demarcation for the individual subject, but it serves as well the point or veil of the connection with the outside world" (Murray, 1999, p. 325).

The rationality of existence of such a place is explained through the descriptions of our sensual perception while navigating through its imaginary cityscape. He experienced the cities as geometrical shapes of the computer graphics. Hiro considers the hardware as his own body that another search engine named Logos had reminded him of a body that is yet to be realised inside the computer.

In the beginning the laptop clings to him in an erotic way and watching the movement of its camera was like visualising a strip tease." [. . .] The top surface of the computer is smooth except for a fisheye lens, a polished glass dome with a purplish optical coating. Whenever Hiro is using the machine, this lens emerges and clicks into place. Its base flushes with the surface of the computer" reminding him "of skirts, lingerie, outer labia and inner labia. (p. 23)

His physical connection with the machine through headphones and goggles was an opening of his body to its own desires, stripping off all its stratifications. Then he begins to perceive the 'space' created by electronic gadgets as an experience of reality. The virtual images of spatiality like boulevard, streets, offices, house etc. along with his experiences as an avatar appear as a re-enactment of movement in real spaces.

When his real body is matched by his avatar he incorporates his body with the virtual reality. Through an enhanced perception of his eyes and his spatial orientation counterbalanced by the movements Metaverse is generated by Hiro as well as the computer. Through his interaction he realises the boundedness of his visual perception and the fractal reality of a simulated space where he becomes a pov that the computer permits. “Reduced to a point, the pov is abstracted into a purely temporal entity with no spatial extension” (Hayles, 1999, p. 39). The electronic mirrors inside the computer sweeps the beam back and forth across the lenses of Hiro’s goggles and the image hangs in space in front of Hiro’s view of reality. When he changes the dimensions of space at a “resolution of 2 k pixels on a side it can be as sharp as the eye can perceive” (Stephenson, 2008, p. 24). The space becomes a Posthuman expression of transcendence when it emerges in Hiro’s visual space beyond the limits of his perception and the scale of his accessibility. This realisation of both the real and the virtual world is also the interface of Posthuman understanding. “[. . .] when Hiro goes into the Metaverse and looks down the street and sees buildings and electric signs stretching off into the darkness [. . .] he is actually staring at the graphic representations – the user interface – of a myriad different pieces of software that have been engineered by major corporations” (p. 25).

Conclusion

To conclude *Snow Crash* predicted the possibility of body as becoming through various small events of transformation, each one new, creative, and real in a neocapitalist society. But the very flexibility also makes the human body channels for surveillance, commodification and control. Though it offers a celebration of posthuman becoming it also critiques how late capitalism converts body’s openness into economic values. In Metaverse and cybernetic embodiments bodies are deterritorialized by data flows and reterritorialized through networked control. The cyberpunks offers an early literary critique of the labour regime that would later characterize platform capitalism and digital economy. However the faith in the potential of body as a space of creative experimentation destabilizes the boundaries between body, mind, technology and identity informing a posthuman body logic.

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