

# Cyborgian Virtual: Hybrid Subjectivity in William Gibson's *The Peripheral*

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## Abstract

The purpose of the research is to analyze how the cyborgian theories of virtual subjectivity, dromology, enfolded materialism, aesthetics of disappearance, hybridity and metamorphic becoming are employed by modern technology to create humanoid. Gibson's *The Peripheral* delineates multiple subjectivities as well as challenges of virtual creatures through tracing the life of Flynn, the major protagonist. We are to grasp humanoid's beyond human 'nature', or 'character', or 'being', or 'transitive identity' in a way that corresponds with other human beings. The research portrays the subjective sense of being-in-the-virtual-world and analyzes the humanoid's development in the form of a cyborgian human simulation. Donna Haraway, Paul Virilio and Rosi Braidotti are the selected theorists introducing the theory of the research; cyborg; an umbrella term referring to cybernetic organisms. Cyborgian literary theory focuses on the author who identifies the fictional subject as a new creature, which is partly inorganic and partly machine, to demonstrate that technology does not need to be dehumanizing; rather, it acts as a re-humanizing force to claim agency over our subjectivity. The peculiar thematic characteristics of the novel as an epitome of cyborg narrative, including non-linear apocalyptic time traveling narrative, fragmentation of subjectivity, formation of transhumans and constructed humanoids, are analyzed.

## Keywords

Aesthetics of Disappearance; Becoming; Cyborg Hybridity; Enfolded Materialism; Metamorphose; Virtual Subjectivity.

## 1. Introduction

Technology, since its emergence, has raised controversial arguments in human life. It has transformed man's life and fate in many aspects. Narratives of cyberspace by William Gibson (b.1948) and description of a widespread interconnected digital technology have gained more attention in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The idea of scientific narratives led literary fiction writers and theorists to focus on scientific language in the area of cyborg technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The cyborg describes a human being whose physiological functions are enhanced by artificial means such as biochemical or electronic modifications to the body. Haraway in "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1985) writes:

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Cyborg is a cybernetic 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 .... We are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. (2-8)

Cyborg is used as the interdisciplinary theoretical framework of the present research as it can reveal the virtual facets and facts of the bio-literary context.

Gibson is a prominent American – Canadian writer known for his virtual narratives. The *Internet*, when Gibson first conceived it, is a place that we all leave the world and go there. Gibson coined the term ‘Cyberspace’, and described it as the creation of a computerized network in a world filled with artificially intelligent beings. Virtual reality is a cybernetic world so that a person can interact within an artificial three-dimensional environment using some virtual devices. It is significant to find out the impacts of cyborg experience on the identity formation of the main characters and the way they are reconnected to reality and processes of virtuality. Consequently, the purpose of the research is to trace how the cyborgian virtual-hybrid subjectivity creates virtual humanoid and human identity?

## **2. Literature Review**

Although *The Peripheral* is a very insightful novel, it is still considered an under-researched area. *The Peripheral* has logically been examined through cyborgian hypothetical frameworks and the causes for the hybrid characters are analyzed through this critical standpoint. In 2018, Tarapata asserts Gibson’s narratives contain untapped potential to re-think non-normative virtual bodies offering a new view on the author who is known for coining ‘Cyberspace.’ Tarapata studies human cloning and military quantum in Gibson’s novel are indicative of the impact of modern technologies on man’s life. In 2016, Miller scrutinizes Gibson's idea of cyberspace in *The Peripheral*. Miller situates Gibson as a major figure in science fiction history and traces how cyberspace aesthetically affected scientific literature, exhibiting the Virilian view of the aesthetics of disappearance in *The Peripheral*. Miller studies Gibson’s term of ‘Cyberspace’ that avoid distant futures imagining technological developments that might lie just around the corner. Miller illustrates how the virtual theory of the ‘aesthetics of disappearance’ has affected on Gibson’s novel, signaling another radical change in cyborg technology.

Soy in his work entitled “Cyberpunk Fiction: The Works of William Gibson” (2012) explains Gibson’s novel that combines technological progressions with human subjects to produce fictional machinated creatures. Soy illustrates that cyberspace reflects the virtual characters and events in *The Peripheral* affected by current technological mechanisms (AI machine cloud and human clones). Barooah (2011) explicates the

common thematic world of aliens and fantasies in *The Peripheral*. Barooah argues some theoretical elements of the cyborg technology in relevance to amalgamation of humans/machines in cyberspace. Barooah analyzes artificial intelligence, implants, cyborgs, and machines in biotechnological age. Additionally, Carubia in his journal paper entitled "Haraway on the Maps" (2019) studies Haraway's work "A Cyborg Manifesto" that presents cyborgian theories. Carubia integrates cyborgian theories through the disjointed boundaries between science fiction and social reality, human and animal, self and other, and organism and machine.

Grebowicz and Merrick (2019) situate Haraway's fictional practices as forms of cyborg methodology and recognize her passionate engagement with 'nature-cultures' as the theoretical core driving her work. Kellner (2013) explains the question that constitutes a sustained reflection on the origins and effects of the key technologies on the human species. Kellner discusses that Virilio's vision of technology is overdetermined by his extreme concentration on war, military technology, technologies of representation, and vision machine, driving him to technophobic standpoints on technology. The research is unique because it is different from the research reviewed here. *The Peripheral* is analyzed through cyborgian theoretical framework and the reasons for the virtual-hybridized subjects are recognized through this critical lens.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

#### **3.1. An Overview of Cyborg Theories**

This section presents Donna Haraway's view (b.1944) that the cyborgian subject is unable to control the event as it occurred; the sequence of virtual events is disrupted; and only the disjointed images are preserved. Haraway's explanations refer to the possibility of virtual life even for characters who have undergone the overwhelming experience of cyborg. Hybridity is a melding of animal, technology, and human components, and it includes primates, humans, and cyborgs. Haraway in "Science Fiction, Speculative Fabulation, String Figures, So Far" (2013) believes that "primates exiting at the boundaries of hopes and interests are wonderful subjects with whom to explore the permeability of walls, the reconstitution of boundaries, and the distaste for endless socially enforced dualisms" (7). Cyborg disturbs the borderline between humans/animals by presenting trans-genetic organisms. Contemporary scientific fiction deals with cyborgs and portrays creatures, animals, and machines populating the world. It is observed that cyborg is the integration of science and literature introducing a new rudiment of technology in relation to the hybridity of human/animal, human/machine and animal/machine. Cyborg is a new virtual mechanical man, or automaton, insect, or animal, or humanoid making the reader confront other worlds in technological language.

The cyborgian prosthesis describes virtual events; however, it relates to the science of creating artificial body parts. Virtual people happen within the virtual environment in future research studies. Haraway in *Modest Witness* (1997) believes that cyborg literature has prompted many writers to “observe a future of fiction-writing through Biotech and InfoTech, with the translatability between flesh and data or between genetic codes and computer codes” (246). Technology and speed transform human body into a cyborg by making it a part of cyberspace. Haraway in "A Cyborg Manifesto" writes, "the machine is us, our processes, an aspect of our embodiment" (14). Cyborgian technology transforms human body, human subjectivity, and human identity. Technological developments help transition toward a new human to transcend the limitations of human life. Cyborg is a newly born baby of post-modern era with different radical nature and transitive identity affecting many fields during the past decades. It depends on the futurological events, and changes the electronic and virtual games, videos, art, fiction and cinematic movies in the cybernetic world to develop the machinated beings, human clones, decentered subjects, and artificial intelligences.

### **3. 2. Virtual Subjectivity and Identity in Bio-Narratives**

It seems that the technological narratives are the non-oedipal (prosthetic and genetic) and oedipal (past and eugenic) stories to analyze human conditions in the cyborg literature. Through myth of cyborg, we have to take responsibility of our subjective experiences. Cyborg extends human capacities. For the research, cyborg is an ontological hybrid creature. Cyborg is a tool with which individuals can copy their subjectivity in an act of specificity and agency. Technology is a postponement of what it means to be human and not a denial of it. Cyborg subjectivity is a radical theory to our relationship with technology and gives us the space to readdress all boundaries in our lives, as Haraway in "A Cyborg Manifesto" asserts: “The myth of cyborg is an invitation to become more than human, and liberate ourselves from the matrices of domination that seek to convert life into information. Cyborg is responsible for its subjective agency. Cyborg is not united but it has a wholeness celebrated in an act of joyful comparison and the invocation of subjective meaning” (9-11). It is argued that cyborg subjectivity does not need any human conceptualization and domination in the post-modern era. Virtual subjectivity plays in spite of itself or its own wholeness. The Virilian view of decentered subjectivity is the result of modernity, technology, and humans’ alienation from himself and the surrounding world. Virtual-hybrid subjectivity is related to cyborg technology as transgressor of the restrictions of human life and transformer of the human body into a cyborg by bringing it under the influence of the main integrated common theories: Haraway’s *subjectivity*; Virilio’s *decentered subjectivity*; and Braidotti’s *nomadic subjectivity*.

Technology is prosthetic; therefore, it does not show a vital part of human identity in the present time. Haraway refers to biotechnology that overshadows the human subjectivity under the techno-scientific developments. There exists a current relationship between the humans and technological advances because the more technology develops, the more human being alters into a new amalgamation of man and machine. Cyborg technology shifts human subjectivity into decentered-ness and changes the perspectives about life and opens up a new paradigm to understand the *self*. Man's subjectivity is affected with fast growth of modern technology.

The present research scrutinizes scientific and technological narratives to show how the integration of science and literature creates human virtual subjectivity and fragmented identity. Haraway in "A Cyborg Manifesto" claims: "[cyborg] marks out a self-consciously constructed space that cannot affirm the capacity to act on the basis of natural identification, but on the basis of conscious coalition, of affinity, and of political kinship" (156). For this purpose, the cyborg is metaphorically responsible for both our fragmented identities and our social reality. Fragmented identity relates to the different aspects of cyborg such as political, cultural and literary ones embedded in modern world. Haraway in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women* (1991) writes: "Cyborg depends on the connectivity and even solidarity with animals and machines" (151). It is revealed that technology changes the condition of human life and builds cyborgian identity in *The Peripheral*. Human existence is overextended by the use of technology, but human *identity* is transitive and fluid. By blurring essential polarities between *self* and *other* and merging monsters, insects and machines into cyborgs, Gibson produces the new cyborgian creatures with different nature and identity. Technology stuck to the aim of reaching a utopian vision. However, those developments reflect the cyborgian aspects of humanity bringing *otherness* among the seemingly globalized humans and destroying this hope. In *When Species Meet* (2008), Haraway is against the principle of human conceptualization in different forms: "her hopefulness of human species deconstructs the borders between human and animals, and self and others. Human and tamed animals are coevolved significant others to each other in asymmetrical ways" (124). *Otherness* is created out of *self* by cyborg hybridity. The *hybridized otherness* in the nomadic subjects is achieved by the technological tools added to their lives, making them cyborgs and aiming to get to ultimate form in dehumanizing a process of becoming subjects.

### 3. 3. The Aesthetics of Disappearance

In *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* (2009), Paul Virilio believes the production of art in his theory of dromology. Virilio concentrates on the view of perception, depending on the state of subject's consciousness shaped by speed through its nonappearance: the gaps,

glitches, and speed bumps defining it. The nature of the aesthetics of disappearance is to show the emergence of virtual immateriality through technologies of vision and war and the disappearance of materiality in the age of information technology.

Dromology is concerned with the speed phenomenon, transforming both the mind and body of human being. In cyborg technology, the ways speed changes human's view towards life and his political views are called dromology. Virilio studies the annihilation of place and appearance that happens by the effacement of the classic notion of time and the enormous shift, especially in the art and art forms. Man's view is changed, and art has had an inevitable influence on this vision. The humanistic aesthetics is transferred due to his viewpoint towards the surrounding environment.

Virtuality replaces social reality and demolishes its notion, discussing that the virtual discourse is going to dominate. Virilio scrutinizes the notion of virtuality via his insistence on the aesthetics of disappearance, but as a shadowing shape of reality. The objective of virtual world is to participate in the cyborg world. In the theoretical framework of cyborg technology, (because of technological advancements and speed) the virtual characters are ceasing to be actual subjects and going to become virtual humanoids, signaling the Virilian concept of the aesthetics of disappearance. Virtuality is a simulating experience similar to the real world or different from it.

The appearance of net and prosthetic forces results in the dominance of virtual devices in modern world. Human life dominated by speed with consequence that time and light become the key ideas of the epoch. Therefore, there is an essential shift from warfare based on the principles of space to the one based on movement and time. The recent improvements reinforce the dominance of the latter elements that are invisible and immaterial. All the cyborgian features of the aesthetics of disappearance (net, speed, war and time) are to show how they are the main columns to create an ideal machine out of a man, without any form of humanity.

### **3. 4. Nomadic Affectivities and Metaphoric Becoming**

The term 'metamorphoses' coined by Franz Kafka (1883-1924), which is theoretically related to cyborgian transformation. Braidotti writes that our desire is "not to know who we are," but "what we want to become" (*Metamorphoses* 2). Braidotti, Virilio and Haraway interrogate structural transformations of shattered nomadic subjectivity in the technological world. *Metamorphoses* counts on the biotechnology and the recurrent obsession with the flesh in the age of techno – sciences and techno – bodies. The amalgamations of human/animal and insect/machine are the representations of cyborg hybridization metamorphosed and transformed into new becoming subjects.

Nomadic affectivity refers to cyborg technology that blurs essential divisions between self and other, and it is a kind of hybridity which merges cyborgs, monsters, insects, and machines into a human method to what Braidotti calls it “the embodied [nomadic] subject” (“Affirming the Affirmative” 3). The cyborg is against any universalization of human subjectivity and human nature in technology. Braidotti in “A Theoretical Framework for the Critical Post-humanities” (2018) asserts that “the human subjects are the productive fields of transdisciplinary knowledge” (67). It is observed that Haraway, like Braidotti, maintains that cyborg subjectivity is not restricted to certain individuals; however, it happens in the hybridization of boundaries between male/female, white/black and present/past that replaces the binaries. The human subject performs as an embodied, embedded, nomadic, and cyborgian entity, which is referring to the mind – body continuum that relates to the embrainment of the body, coming from the interface of nature-culture continuum and embodiment of the mind depends on nature-cultural and human-animal bonding. Braidotti studies that “the subject not only exists as a force among forces, but refers to the various interrelations between subjects. These subjective processes are externally oriented and extensively more humanized in the [cyborg] world” (*Nomadic Subjects*12). It is studied that a non-unitary nomadic virtual subject happens in a wide sense of interconnection between self and others that eliminates the existence of self-centered individualism. It is a nomadic philosophy of multiple belongings to *self* and *others* that does not have any unitary identity. Braidotti asserts “identity involves in the internal complexities of a subject for the sake of social conventions” (*Nomadic Subjects*13). Like Virilio, Braidotti believes that high speed of technological advances creates the different flows of subjective transformations in biotechnology. Braidotti believes disturbing of the borderlines between the humans/animals and humans/machines made reproductive technologies emerge in the recent years. The nomadic affectivity replaces the centrality of subjectivity and transforms it into the Virilian idea of decentered subjectivity due to its constant transition. The integrated theories of hybrid subjectivity, decentered subjectivity, and nomadic subjectivity are applicable to Gibson’s *The Peripheral* due to three reasons: first, there are some Harawayan machine-like subjects, robots and artificial intelligences similar to mechanical humans; second, the Braidottian animals, insects, fliers, humanoids, and cyborgs are transformed into the nomadic subjects; and third, the Virilian virtual subjects (Flynn and Burton) and the peripheral subjects (Conner and Leon) are hybridized in the modern technology.

Braidotti stresses on the key images and mergers of animal, cyborg, and machine that define their efficiency for mapping change and ensuing lines of becoming. She uses

cartography, which is part of *Becoming*, to relate to the record of what we are ceasing to be and what we are in the process of *Becoming*. It shows an intensive shift in becoming. It reconnects to the virtual dimensions of past experiences which get recomposed as an action in the present. This virtual world is after and before us, both past and future, in a process of differentiation and becoming. Concepts are current in a constant present which never fully corresponds with a present moment, but goes on becoming and yearning towards the virtual world. Braidotti, like Haraway, concentrates on the projects of defining what 'we' could become as a bio-species and a set of technologically interconnected material cultures. As a figuration, the transhuman is both situational and partial, offering a bio-species through which we can capture the complexity of ongoing processes of subject-formation. The humanoid is a figuration carried out by a specific cartographic reading of present virtual conditions that put into the collective task of constructing new subjects of knowledge. All human and non-human entities are nomadic subjects in perpetual motion. On the one hand, in the present motion, we have a multifaceted effect and the sharp awareness of what we are ceasing to be an actual species (the end of the actual); on the other, the perception of what we are in the process of becoming (the actualization of the virtual). Consequently, both phenomena contradictorily occur at once, in a non-linear time-continuum or non-pejorative ways. Braidotti in "A Theoretical Framework for the Critical Post-humanities" (2013) writes: "There is aim to track the multiple and diversified ways in which we are becoming and knowing subjects, as 'otherwise other' than the binary oppositions posited by classical 'Man'" (9). Braidotti in *Metamorphoses* (2002) points to the enfleshed materialism connected to the philosophy of *Becoming*. 'Enfleshed materialism' is an enfleshed sort of memory rendering the capability of lasting new materialism, but it is radical. Enfleshed materialisms are the fleshes of bodily materialism perceived through the situated knowledge and mind's structures, presenting the semiotic ideas. Braidotti shows that enfleshed materialism does not relate to the body's biological structure, but refers to multifaceted interaction of social and representative forces: "it is the complex interplay of constructed social and symbolic forces. Enfleshed materialism envisages the body through intensities, flows, movements and affects. The nomadic affectivity becomes a process of intersecting forces and spatial connections – a becoming body" ("Affirming the Affirmative" 21-22). The embodiment of subject and body becomes the biological form of biotechnology which depicts the immaterial art in the virtual environment. Braidotti presents it as a radical sense of materialism which is "the embodied structure of human subjectivity" (*Metamorphoses* 158). Enfleshed materialisms are the fleshes of bodily materialism perceived through the situated knowledge and mind's structures,

presenting the semiotic ideas. The nomadic affectivity becomes a process of interrelating forces and multi-dimensional connections, presenting a becoming subject. Braidotti in *Metamorphoses* (2002) writes that “our desire is not to know who we are, but what we want to become” (2). *Metamorphoses* counts on the biotechnology and current obsession with the flesh in the age of techno – sciences and techno – bodies. Braidotti integrates key representations of animal, insect, cyborg, and machine to map change and trace lines of *Becoming*. Braidotti claims that “a theory of *Becoming* is a modern figuration in seeking to think the difference of materialism and transformation in non-negative and non-pejorative terms” (2-3). The amalgamations of human/animal and insect/machine are the representations of cyborg hybridization metamorphosed into new *Becoming* subjects.

#### 4. Discussion

##### 4. 1. Virtual Subjectivity and Identity in *The Peripheral*

Cyborgian subjects are shattered, and depended on corresponding issues emerging with the idea of an alternative identity in virtual world. Gibson in *The Peripheral* (2014) scrutinizes the technological subjectivity to show how the individual experience and social constructions are altered in the postmodern era.

The main characters are Flynne and Burton. Flynne lives in London in 2032. She spends her time indulging in VR video games called sims. One day, Flynne and her brother beta test a new sim that introduces them a futurological world. When Flynne temporarily takes Burton’s place, she observes something that seems like a murder. Gibson illustrates the interface of the human beings and machinated technologies causes the creation of cyborgian characters (Flynnne and Burton) in virtual spaces. Some are like ironic figures struggling with a capitalist structure, and some follow an embodying’s world which is the *kleptocracy* (‘rule by thieves’).

The word peripheral refers to any type of additional device created for generating the wealthy in the world of bio-capitalism. The peripherals are all technological devices (drones) existing only to be controlled by cloud AI procedures. An artificial intelligence makes automate complex tasks in cloud computing and improves system performance. Cloud computing makes available the computing resources. AI modeling duplicates human intelligence. Gibson pictures the dystopian future, which is not just one future but two while one of them is the future of the other future. Through cyborg biotechnology, Gibson’s dystopian futures remain for the virtual characters struggling against an oppressive system that seeks to subdue them. In cyborgian bio-capital, Gibson metaphorically highlights the way how human bodies are globally connected to the financial and economic realities.

The purpose of Gibson is not to show the extinction of human characters, but he refers to the growth of technology that overshadows the subjectivity of human under the techno-scientific developments. Therefore, there exists a circular relationship between the human being and technological advances, as the more technology develops, the more human being is altered into a new incorporation of man and machine. Technology changes the perspective about life and the surrounding world; hence, human comes to a new understanding of the self. In cyborg technology, once the copy becomes similar to the original, originality loses its value. Wilf Netherton (a problematic publicist) and Daedra West (a performance artist) as a hybridized copied version of human/machine and says: "Her head was perfectly still, eyes unblinking. He imagined her ego swimming up behind them, to peer at him suspiciously, something eel – like, larval, transparently boned ... and she smiled. Reflexive pleasure of the thing behind her eyes" (*The Peripheral* 12). Daedra is capable of passing through solid matter along with her male companion and responsible for the disappearance of the patchers. She is depicted through Netherton's eyes as a version of the schizoid android. Daedra embraces the kleptocratic system of her time and dominates its wealth and social status. She is not similar to a rational machine, but she heeds to the whole oppressive system that is the result of the rational survival of the fittest, and most privileged, in the disasters of the jackpot. In this way, the kleptocratic system of Gibson's 22<sup>nd</sup> century enacts a dehumanizing schizoid belief.

It seems that human beings are developed by various technologies and metamorphosed trans humans, that is, patchers, AI, robots and assemblers who seem like cyborgian non-human others, Plato's copy of real humans, de-augmented humans, and mechanical humans. These transhumans interact with the fictional world from a narrative position of metaphorical cyborgs. Flynn acts ironically in cyborgian narrative and tries to struggle against incorporation to an oppressive system they cannot escape. The Harawayan subjects like Daedra and Netherton are schizoid androids made into machine-like beings by their entangling with the system that has created their humanoid.

In chapter ten, "The Maenads' Crush", Netherton sees Rainey as a cyborgian creature: "He imagined her, stretched on a couch in her elongated Toronto apartment... She'd be wearing a headband to trick her nervous system into believing the rented peripheral's movements were hers in a dream" (*The Peripheral* 243). Virtual subjectivity refers to the decentered subjects such as Rainey and Daedra. There is a moment of a head scratcher: "They didn't think about Flynn's brother, but the haptics glitches him" (*The Peripheral* 1). The haptics relate to a transplant that Flynn's virtual soldier brother, Burton, was given while aiding a military force. Virilio in *Speed and Politics* (2007) illustrates "the

technological innovation made modern war and military actions possible” (9). The haptics implant virtual character, Burton, in the military ceramic robots named the Michikoids and artificial intelligences so that they can turn into destroying machines: “The haptics said it was like phantom limb, ghosts of the tattoos he’d worn in the war, put there .... An alcoholic uncle lived there when they were, veteran of other war.... Airstream, 1977. He showed her ones on eBay looked like blunt rifle slugs. The uncle goops this one over with white foam to stop it leaking. Leon said saved it from pickers” (*The Peripheral* 1). This quotation shows Gibson’s ideas of humanoids and trans-characters (Leon and Burton), network site (*eBay*), virtual military actions in the self-transformative condition. The haptics wear phantom limb like virtual ghosts, but their bodies transformed into cyborg creatures like decentered characters.

Virilio posits the type of infinite velocity where bodies disappear in an unthinkable stretching over space and time. Dromology is the principal element of technology’s growth. His technological ideas are intermingled with the Darwinian theory of evolution. The evolution of man happens through the technological changes, and the idea he steps towards becoming a form of cyborg. Therefore, the Darwinian evolution of virtual subjects (Flynn and Jimmy) and the Virilian development of technology make the amalgamation of the machines and humans create the cyborgian humanoids. Under the influence of Virilio, Gibson in chapter 17 entitled ‘Cottonwood’ emphasizes on the hybridized creatures and machinated humans like Flynn and Jimmy: “She could see herself on the gray gravel in front of Jimmy’s, and the tall cottonwoods on either side and she was talking to a boy who was half a machine, like a centaur made out of a motorcycle...” (*The Peripheral* 233). Gibson depicts the effacement of the human physical bodies and replaces them with cyborgian creatures and genetic robots by mixing the machines and organisms: “Even the Michikoids – ceramic robots can morph into killing machines with unnerving spider-like eyes. This ain’t just another sim” (*The Peripheral* 7). Gibson shows that the evolution and re-humanization of modern man happen through the technological changes, and the idea he moves towards becoming an innovative form of cyborg in the surrounding environment.

Cyborgian nomadic subjects are partly organic and partly inorganic to show that cyborg biotechnology does not need to be dehumanizing; rather, it requires the re-humanizing forces to indicate agency over their human nomadic subjectivity. Through myth of cyborg, Gibson presents virtual subjectivity by reflecting the hybridity of physical and non-physical. Burton calls Flynn as “two souls becoming one” (*The Peripheral* 2), and this joining can be felt like Donne’s two lovers in a hybridized soul. The mixed soul is aesthetically similar to a fictional creature depicting the Harawayan

other in the hallucinatory consensual world of cyborg. Gibson traces the military events and constructs a new experience of narrating about the decay of physical body. Haraway claims: “the objective of virtual worlds is to continue participating in the cyborg world and gaining more experience” (“A Cyborg Manifesto” 29). Flynnne wears the virtual reality receiver for the first time before whisking off to London in the 22<sup>nd</sup> century, and she connects to the immersive technology instead of writing up an instruction manual for explaining about futuristic technology like time machine: “She shuts her eyes, she counts to ten, she opens her eyes and boom. Flynnne is somewhere else and the viewer flows right through her” (*The Peripheral* 133). Flynnne becomes an application of a shadowy decentered subject inspired by the Virilian theory of dromology in the apocalyptic world. She acts as a guise and controls everything. Gibson portrays the Harawayan machine-like humanoids (Burton and Leon) although they have not completely lost their human qualities yet. Flynnne is hybridized with human quality and genetic organisms; therefore, that human feature has not disappeared completely. Gibson portrays the notion of a non-unitary and multifaceted subjectivity proposed to relate to the subjective sense of being-in-the-virtual-world. From Haraway’s standpoint, Gibson’s subjects lose their autonomous position and become the semiotic, transformative, and self-transformative subjects; for this purpose, Gibson creates the fragmented identity of the characters, presenting partly human identity (soul) and partly mechanical identity. It is not identity that the traditional writers seek to establish and generate difference – as the metaphysics tries to prove – but the opposite is the case (cyborg bio-identity) relating to the hybridity of humans/animals, humans/machines, and animals/machines.

#### **4. 2. The Aesthetics of Disappearance in *The Peripheral***

The contemporary advances strengthen the dominance of the virtual elements and devices that are immaterial in cybernetic world. The aesthetics of disappearance refers to the world of appearances which provides ground for the world of disappearances, and identity becomes virtual and transitive. Virilio in *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* (1991) asserts:

The net result of the emergence of these prosthetic forces is the dominance of virtual reality and the disappearance of materiality, of identities, of space as a definite place to be, of perception as contact with material reality, including the body. Invisibility of power is equal to its visibility so that it can be dematerialized in light of growing dominance of new technologies. Virtualization leads to a loss of geographical space. There is a growing immateriality because objects are replaced by trajectories and courses. (29-30)

Hence, there are the dominations of time over space and of virtual reality over materiality in the virtual environment. The Virilian dromology takes over. Art becomes virtual and de-material. It is revealed that the dominance of net and war makes the human characters, material objects and place disappeared. In London, some virtual events such as alien attack, great war and pandemic diseases happen, which are the results of technology's progression, and make human bodies vanished. In *The Peripheral* (2014), the natural catastrophes foreshadow the more horrifying for real life: global warming, and nuclear weapons, phenomena distributed in virtual spaces. There is a series of climactic events recognized as the Jackpots: "No comets crashing, nothing you could call a nuclear war. Just everything else, tangled in the changing climate: droughts, crop failures, collapse of key species, diseases were never quite the one big pandemic to be historical events. The jackpots are androgenic, or caused by human, and unending" (*The Peripheral* 320). The condition of shattered subjects gets worse and worse because of the inevitable events – including *droughts, crop failures, and collapse of key species* – that occurred. The decentered subjects move through time when all the virtual signs of time obliterated: seasons, crops, and migrations. London is devastated, and its virtual streets has filled with genetically modified individuals.

The jackpot relates to a flow of global catastrophes that wipes out the human race, along with an ingenious take on time travel that allows digital communication – including information technology, virtualization, and telepresence – across alternate timelines. The future characters are so-called "the Jackpots," leaving the world in the hands of cruel elites, plutocrats, and celebrities. Jackpot is a word for the apocalyptic world which makes Netherton's life strange. All the people are disappeared, and the apocalyptical world leaves a few people who survived via extreme development of technology. This expression is used by Gibson in the chapter twelve: "And they're dead?" she'd asked. 'A long time ago?' 'Before the jackpot.' 'It's new. Something to do with quantum tunneling.' 'How far back can they go?' '2023,' earliest" (*The Peripheral* 184). The main apocalyptical event occurs when Flynnne is employed to experiment a drone in what she is told to be a video gamer, viewing a murder committed in the presence and future of Netherton. Flynnne helps Netherton solve the murder case. In turn, he supports her to assassinate the corrupted president in the presence of Flynnne. The critical antagonists are drawn as evils turned the future of London into a kleptocracy assisted by the arch-villain, rogue 'Gulf klept', 'fifth son', and Al-Habib: "The corpse of Al-Habib,' she said, 'if it weren't touched in the attack, but rather lay where it fell. The protocols of a low-orbit American attack system.' 'Why?' asked Netherton" (*The Peripheral* 67). By using the prosthetic events, Gibson creates the cyborgian nomadic immaterial characters, such as Aelita, Al-Habib and Daedra, who are transformed into humanoids and become virtual evils in the dominance of cybernetic world.

The appearance of prosthetic forces results in both the dominance of virtual reality and disappearance of materiality. The two futures show how different stages of technology are virtualized, perceptual-ized and presented, as Gibson claims: “so well fitted to our [virtual] capacities as to become invisible in use” (*The Peripheral* 66). Gibson does not treat of the different senses, such as visual, tactual, or other sensations; rather, he regards them as invisible and immaterial objects in the surrounding environment. This means that his emphasis is on explanations of how we are able to have the constant perceptions of the virtual realities that we need for avoidance of physical actions in our everyday lives. The author supports his view that the perception of virtual reality is not something assembled or computed by the brain from visual perceptions; rather, in the light of Virilio, it is something like transparency, virtuality and telepresence can be grasped through the virtual peripherals (Daedra and Leon). However, with the dominance of aesthetics of disappearance, his virtualization and telepresence rely on the network and vision machine: the patchers, the Jackpots, video games, and filters. Gibson shows the pseudo images of humanoids that have been misplaced with the unreal believes, robots, and avatar bodies considered to be real: the artificial and immaterial objects, assemblers, and peripherals. The peripherals are the Harawayan machine-like ghosts used to operate as virtual vehicles to copy original people and create the Virilian decentered subjects and the Braidottian nomadic characters.

Ultimately, Gibson illustrates the nomadic characters as virtual facts and acknowledges the sensory experiences, but he treats them as by-cyborgian products of perception rather than physiological receptors. In other words, his novel is neither an experimental findings of sensory threshold nor the sensory projectory areas of the brain in peripheral nerves; rather, it has quite another mission (peripheral vision) which is often neglected. It shows that cyborgian technology make virtual livings (Lev, Aelita, Daedra, Hamed, Sir Henry grip, Flynn and Netherton) possible in the humanistic disappearance.

#### **4. 3. Nomadic Affectivities and Metaphoric Becoming in *The Peripheral***

The Braidottian metamorphosed form becomes fluid as the protean and shape – shifting nomadic subjects who can reside in the cyborgian space and time. The metamorphosed trans-human subjects are the so-called ‘patchers’ (*The Peripheral* 6) who altered their biological make-up with decorative cancer growths and extra genitalia of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century. Netherton says: ‘[the patchers] are post-human filth’ (*The Peripheral* 6). For this purpose, Gibson makes them dehumanized and dematerialized in a disgusting way and presents the extensive modifications of becoming bodies. Gibson explains London with its transhuman habitants and embodied subjects infected with “endemic health issues of

which they are not yet aware” (*The Peripheral* 468). The peripheral is an enfleshed avatar and a human cloning. By means of a headset, Flynnne operates as a peripheral in Wilf’s present to identify Daedra’s murderer in a party. Gibson pictures the enfleshed avatars that they become semi-human genetic robots to be taken by the decentered characters. In the 22<sup>nd</sup> century, an embodiment is metamorphosed in bio-text: “Netherton’s client Daedra is a celebrity artist whose performances consist of tattooing her skin live and marketing each piece as an artifact” (*The Peripheral* 450). The present research shows that through a metaphoric becoming Daedra’s body is metamorphosed into a transhuman body suggesting the lack of human self. The nomadic characters like Flynnne and Netherton become a process of intersecting forces – becoming subjects. Gibson portrays a multiplicity of biological codes and bio-molecular assemblers to create non-unitary and metamorphosed subjects: “‘We’re getting by using assemblers as pollinators.’ Virgil asked. ‘Molecular assemblers.’ ‘I thought it was supposed to change everything,’ Verity said. ‘We were in our real singularity,’ Rainey said” (*The Peripheral* 96). There are the non-human life forms and the enfleshed virtual subjects capable of reconfiguring matters via the genetic robots and the artificial intelligences.

The research shows a continual interaction of the human material body with immaterial and biological constructions that are the non-normative standards in societal criteria. The Braidottian enfleshed bodies of Flynnne, Netherton, and Conner are envisaged via intensities, movements, and affects that they fade away from material representation. Gibson metaphorically refers to the world of appearances which gives a way to the world of disappearances, and identity becomes virtual and transitive: “extinctions, for Ash, a nonhuman matter, and a more emotional one than the 80-percent loss in human population” (*The Peripheral* 96). The peripherals are life forms minus consciousness, and they do not depend on matching DNA composition. They have virtual life when taken over by a human body. A biological body of Conner becomes metamorphosed. Conner uses virtual power to take over a peripheral and faces a series of prosthetic events based on future peripheral technology.

A genetic assembling biotechnology signals a new experience in the cyborgian study. *The Peripheral* shows the emergence of Internet and prosthetic forces results in ascending of virtual and biological reality, vanishing of materiality, identities, and place in relation to material reality. Flynnne and Netherton are two seemingly ordinary humanoids of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century with their technological eyes, walking through a virtual wall: “‘We’re protean’. ‘protein?’ ‘without fixed form’. He waved his hand through the wall, a demonstration” (*The Peripheral* 455). The protean relates to the stem cells of collective transhuman subjects, which modifies population’s genomes. “we” in the phrase ‘we’re

*protein*' seems to be contacted to embodied subjects: peripheral schizoid features, performing as a collection of interrelated nomadic subjects that touches the structure of multiple subjectivity. Braidotti in "Affirming the Affirmative" exclaims, "'we', enlarges the sense of collective subjectivity to non-human agents" (10). The characters like Netherton and Flynne are ceasing to be the actual human subjects, but they are becoming the virtual subjects in a non-unitary and non-pejerotive way. While the peripherals appear semi-hybrid virtual humans, they gain some human characteristics operated by real humans. Netherton points to Flynne in her peripheral alterations: "the peripheral's body language ... its face became not hers but somehow her" (*The Peripheral* 179). The novel underscores the central views of human existence and non-existence where the peripheral being is not the procession but an embodiment of human quality. Gibson embraces the embodiment of virtual character as a central feature of cyborg existence and creates the transhuman characters, Conner and Flynne, who become humanoid. Genetic and biological modifications and intersecting forces make the human characters metamorphosed, producing cyborgian subjects without any autonomous identity. The present research shows that Flynne, Leon, Burton, Netherton and Conner are ceasing to be the actual human subjects, but they are becoming the Harawayan schizoid hybridized subjects, the Braidottian nomadic subjects, and the Virilian decentered subjects, referring to the term 'we' which is enlarging the sense of non-normative collective subjectivity to non-human agents.

## **5. Conclusion**

The present research attempted to identify the virtual – hybrid world through the cyborgian study and present technology that transcends the human Live's restrictions and transforms the human body into a cyborg by making it a fictional creature or humanoid under the influence of three main theorists: a) Haraway's theory of cyborg subjectivity, b) Virilio's theory of decentered subjectivity, and c) Braidotti's theory of nomadic subjectivity. Although they have some different ideas in relation to cyborg, their common theory is virtual subjectivity (humanoid). Haraway claims that the virtual reality refers to peripheral schizoid features, artificial intelligences, hybridized subjects, and cyborgs. By the emergence of net and the dominance of aesthetics of disappearance, Virlio introduces decentered subjects shattered in the modern age of technology, speed and virtuality. Braidotti emphasizes an embodiment of nomadic subjects, a collection of interrelated non-unitary subjects, a radical sense of en fleshed materialism, and a metamorphic becoming of body.

*The Peripheral* was analyzed using the cyborgian techniques such as hybridized subjects which differentiate the *self/subjectivity* from other humans through making

virtual worlds. The cyborgian other of Gibson's subjects is achieved by the technological devices added to the transhuman lives, making them cyborgs in a dehumanizing process of becoming subject. The research explored that all the transhuman subjects are machinated characters in shadowy humanoid figures. Under the influence of the high speed of technological development, the concepts of cyborgian *subjectivity/hybridity* portrayed through the cyborgian characters: Flynne and Netherton; the nomadic subjects of 'Patchers' and 'Jackpots' are non-human machines, bio-assemblers, and genetic robots presented the non-unitary subjectivity; and, the haptics implant Burton in the military robots (the Michikoids) turned into destructive machines. The hybridized virtual subjects are the copy of the original actual characters because their originality disappeared.

The research presented the non-normative subjects like Leon, Macon and Ash refer to the disappearance of actual human characters and the appearance of actual virtual subjects, which are creating the virtual images of the peripherals and human cloning and becoming *humanoids* in the virtual (net) environment. It was observed that the identity of Gibson's characters is fragmented because the complexities of cyborg subjectivity remained and relied on an alternative identity. The cyborg virtual – hybrid subjectivity performs as a force among intersecting forces to make human more humanized; therefore, cyborg hybrid technology transforms human subjectivity into decentered-ness and changes the viewpoints about life and opens up a new paradigm to grasp the *self*.

Hence, the research suggests that future research on cyborg biotechnology include the experiences of bio-fiction writers. As long as the experiences of these writers remain invisible, the bio-narratives grounded on the notion that cyborg is a choice (will influence the different fields) involving readers in the artistic – scientific contexts.

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