

LANGUAGE BEYOND THE HUMAN: NEOLOGISMS, CODE, AND POSTHUMAN EXPRESSION IN CYBERPUNK WORLDS

Sujatha M.

Assistant Professor of English,

Shrimathi Devkunvar Nanalal Bhatt Vaishnav College for Women, Chrompet, Chennai.

Dr. K. SivaShankari

Associate Professor of English,

Shrimathi Devkunvar Nanalal Bhatt Vaishnav College for Women, Chrompet, Chennai.

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Abstract

The science fiction genre is traditionally a place where linguistic innovation can be explored, especially in the cyberpunk genre, in which language itself is considered a location of posthuman experimentation. Neologisms, coded languages, and hybrid languages are actively used by authors who want to express the combination of human, machine, and digital cultures. In this paper, we will discuss the role of language in cyberpunk as something that works not only as a tool of narrative but also as an indicator of posthuman subjectivity and social change. The study concentrates on linguistic play to discuss how power structures, technological imaginaries and cultural concerns about the limits of the human are encoded in works like Neal Stephenson, Snow Crash and Pat Cadigan, Synners. Snow Crash brings about a viral linguistic program that disrupts the consciousness itself, and exaggerates the frailty of human thinking in a posthuman era. Instead, Synners offers the world of code, consciousness, and art merging and introduces new registers of expression that erase the boundary between biological and digital creativity. Through examination of these texts, the paper will provide that cyberpunk language does not just stop at conventional communication but expresses posthuman speech, this is a new linguistic ecology in which humans, machines, and codes co-construct meaning. Finally, the paper explains that speculative linguistics is the core component of cyberpunk as both the literary tool and philosophical question of what it would mean to speak outside of the human.

Keywords: Posthumanism, Cyberpunk, Neologisms, Code and Language, Speculative Linguistics

Introduction

The cyberpunk literature has not just been a genre of dystopia futures, but a cultural and intellectual laboratory where the issues of technology, identity and language are tried and redefined over and over. It does not only have imaginative space but the imaginary futuristic space is where the frontiers of being human are put to the test in the technologically saturated world by the writers. These spaces themselves are spaces of transformation of communication, which to a great extent moves beyond the traditional, human boundaries and is in reaction to the growing strength of digital networks, artificial intelligence and new embodiments. Cyberpunk is not an expression of technology per se, but rather a dramatisation of the way in which technologies systems are altering the circumstances of expression, subjectivity, as well as social interaction itself.

Cyberpunk offers a natural ally to posthumanism that condemns the humanist privilege of the autonomous subject, that reorganizes the subjectivity and expression.

The idea behind posthuman turn is entanglement rather than individuality, hybridity rather than purity and relationality rather than separation. Cyberspace linguistic worlds are such a manifestation of this shift as they do not assume any language to be a non-opaque medium of human thought; instead, language is a contested territory where humans and nonhumans come into conflict with one another.

In this light, language in cyberpunk is not descriptive in any specific way, but transfigurative and transformative. It has the potential to mediate the way in which characters are open to reality, the way in which societies are constituted as well as the ways of forming identities in technologically mediated circumstances. The cultural clues include neologisms, slang and digital code, which suggest, on the one hand, the adjustment to the new circumstances, and on the other hand, to the resistance against the already established power arrangements. It is these inventions of language that become markers of posthuman identity; it is worth noting that communication is never neutral but it is composed of networks of politics, culture and technology.

Cyberpunk linguistic play is also adapted to mirror the technological changes that happened during the late twentieth century and the early twenty-first century where the world had been turned into a global network with artificial intelligence and biotechnology altering the everyday life. Even in posthuman condition words are the embodiment of the anxieties and even the possibilities thereof. They subscribe to fears of a loss of autonomy and agency and are also being suggestive of nascent forms of creativity, communion, and cultural renewal.

In the context of this paper, the two texts are the influential texts of cyberpunk such as *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson (1992) and *Snow Crash* by Pat Cadigan (1991) in order to discuss the functionality of language beyond the human in posthuman futures. Linguistic innovation that has been used in both novels is not applied as a garland but as a significant tool of dramatisation of the subjectivity, changes in cognition and culture. The mind is brought to be weak in *Snow Crash*, the linguistic is brought forward as a viral code that can even interfere with the consciousness itself. In its turn, Synners highlights generative opportunities of code and art, and creates an image of a future in which the human mind and digital machines merge with each other.

Taken together, these works of writing portray that speculative linguistics is an instrument that aids in imagining a future where no one will have communication as the only human activity. Rather, it is a decentralized procedure that integrates biological, digital and hybrid actors. Cyberpunk demonstrates that the future of communication is not what human beings say, but what transpires when they, the machines and codes jointly produce meaning in worlds they inhabit, but which are also interwoven.

Posthumanism and Language

Cyberpunk fiction has never been confined to the projections of the more conservative dystopian fiction, and has been a rich platform on which to discuss the interface of technology, identity, and language.

They are fictional worlds, yet these fictional worlds are not simply those futuristic scenery, as they first appear: these are highly populated areas in which the very structure of human life is challenged, shaken, and redesigned.

The messages in cyberspunk fiction constantly transcend the human conventional boundaries that are mediated by networks, electronic systems and artificial intelligence that complicates and extends the human capability. The genre delves into the deeper aspects in which technology systems, between the cyberspace networks to neural interfaces bind down not only the social arrangement and cultural activities, but even objects of subjectivity and self-conception. Similarly, cyberpunk fiction can also be described as a futuristic commentary on the integration of humans and technology since it provides the vision of the future in which the delimiting of the human being is not absolute or definite. Cyberpunk anxiety can be linked to the theory of posthumanism that has the impact of destabilizing the status quo of the autonomous human subject. Academic thinkers, such as Donna Haraway (1985), N. Katherine Hayles (1999) and Rosi Braidotti (2013) have emphasized posthuman thought as fluid, hybrid and relational in challenging humanist assumptions of agency, rationality and personal integrity. The cyberpunk posthumanist ideals are frequently carried out in the context of negotiating language where the human, machine and code interaction generate novel way of thinking and self. Language has ceased to be descriptive, it is performative, constitutive and even transformational, it determines how characters perceive reality, how they relate to other living beings, how they manoeuvre through technologically congested societies. Neologisms, slang, and code, which are multifunctional, are the usual suspects of cyberpunk linguistics. They are the symptoms of the cultural adjustment and self-constitution in the hectic worlds that not only bear witness to the emergence of posthuman subjectivity but also express fears of the society towards technology. The usage of the cybernetic languages or language hyphenates can, as an example, indicate the destabilization of the dominant social orders and the anthropocentric paradigms. This is not just the language innovation concerning the posthuman worlds, they do this by experimenting with new modes of thinking, perceiving and interacting beyond the traditional borders which human beings possess. The symptoms of Cyberpunk Linguistic playfulness also have symptomatic characteristics of the more profound technological and cultural revolution of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The arrival of internet, digital communication, artificial intelligence and biotechnology has underscored the reality that human expression is being mediated more by nonhuman systems. In turn, cyberpunk writers have responded by coining vocabularies that describe the horror of human obsolescence and the possibilities of the hybrid lifestyles. The threat and the opportunity of language in these fictions is that it will ruin thought, social organization, however, it is the door to creativity, invention, and cultural change.

Trying to consider what part of language outside the human being plays in speculative world of literature, this essay explores two of the most radical works of the cyberpunk genre: *Snow Crash* (1992) by Neal Stephenson and *Synners* (1991) by Pat Cadigan.

In *Snow Crash*, Stephenson imagines language as a virus that can program human consciousness as a combination of myth, code and thought to as much of a system as it exposes the plasticity of the human mind in the posthuman era, *Synners* gives the vision of the thoughts of code and language as fertile and freedom giving, the translation of mind to creative output is provided by neural interfaces and networks of computers. In both instances, posthuman worlds are not a communicative tool but a living force, which uses language. These books together combine, to cipher dual power of language in cyberpunk to dishearten and to create, to undermine and to create. They show that posthuman worlds are not just human communicative, but a process between biological and digital as well as hybrid actor. Examining these works will point out in this essay the primacy of speculative linguistics to fantasies of posthuman futures: not necessarily a product of new realities, language is an engine whereby new modes of being, thinking, and existence are produced. And lastly, language experimentation of cyberpunk is an offered paradigm to understand the human, machine, and code as a meaning in the worlds where human boundaries are increasingly negotiated and permeated.

Viral Linguistics in Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash*

Neal Stephenson is the author of one of the most language-ambitious cyberpunk novels called *Snow Crash*. The simplest of them is the concept of language virus, simple code capable of infecting the human mind. In his interpretation of myth of the Tower of Babel along with Sumerian language, Stephenson recreates language as a means of control and posthuman alteration. The drug in the novel and a computer virus *Snow Crash* travels in the virtual real world and real world. Its dual character portrays the way the language itself is capable of demolishing the barriers between the flesh and code. Hiro Protagonist, the lead character in the novel discovers that the ancient Sumerian is some sort of a coding language to the brain that renders human beings vulnerable to brain viruses. This is an aspect of the story that brings out as dramatic the idea that language is not a neutral concept: it is a system that entails material implications on thinking and action. When relating language to the biological programming, Stephenson creates a posthuman world where human consciousness would be hackable as computer code. The novel thus is a reflector of the reality that there is a unity of information and embodiment as opined by Hayles. Moreover, such stylistic neologisms as Stephenson employs are a Metaverse, gargoyles and franchise-organized quasi-national entity (FOQNE) and this gives a vocabulary that is suggestive of new socio-political circumstances. They are not the imaginative obiteries but hypothetical linguistic devices which provoke the reader to go into a posthuman space where the old categories of nation, body and self are no longer applicable.

Code, Creativity, and Subjectivity in Pat Cadigan's *Synners*

A non-human language vision is described in *Synners* by Pat Cadigan, but in a different but a complementary way. This anti-experimental union of art and code and consciousness in this novel brings about new posthuman forms of expression. The plot is built on the idea of the so-called synners who can directly translate the mental imagery into the digital one. It breaks up the wall separating inner imagination and outer code and creative process in itself is a posthuman act. The digital networks and their relationship with human subjectivity is what Cadigan concentrates on. Once the characters introduce their neural systems to the cyberspace, they discover that code and thought are synonymous. Language in this case is shifted to the neural images and coded messages other than the verbal communication. Unlike *Snow Crash* which dwells upon the risk of the linguistic infection, *Synners* dwells upon the emancipatory promise of the posthuman expression. Code is not only an organization of control but also an art kind of control, resistance and cultural reinvention. Cadigan employs her characters to envision a posthuman world where an identity is made by humans via machine systems and she says that language in posthuman conditions can be creative, playful and emancipatory. *Synners* describes the change in the culture in the form of neologisms; the terms deckers, simsense, jacking in and others. They portray the way in which language is changed to articulate hybrid versions of reality and form some shared vocabularies to perceive that which crosses humanist categories.

Comparative Insights

In the company of *Snow Crash* and *Snow Crash Synners* explain the duality of language in the posthuman environment: on the one hand, it can be a shackle, and on the other hand, it can liberate one. Stephenson warns of the fluidity of human thought to linguistic manipulation, when Cadigan sees the possibilities of integration created by merging art and code. These two works highlight the language invention of neologisms, slang and code by cyberpunk writers in order to remake subjectivity. The language is not stagnant in the texts, it is dynamic, viral, and creative. It institutionalizes the cultural phobias of surveillance and control as well as identity and it liberates the possibilities of imagining new forms of living. The posthuman futures no longer have communication of only human type. It is disseminated along with machines, networks, and hybrid entities. Speaking is decentric and the biological and digital order is transformed into an emergent ecology, which is not human property.

Conclusion

The language experimentalism of the cyberpunk literature characterizes the profound complicity of the cultural change with language and the posthuman identity. As one has seen by focusing more on *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson and *Synners* by Pat Cadigan, there is far more to language in cyberpunk than representation can offer. It is made propulsive, mobile and a viral agent, one that is capable of repelling consciousness and of creative code reconstitution on perception and a tool of speculation with the help of which other subjectivities and types of social organization can be imagined.

It is not only a reflection of the posthuman realities but is participating in the procedures of their creation, in the simulation of the interactions between the human cognition on the one hand and digital systems and the hybridized forms of existence on the other. In *Snow Crash*, Stephenson emphasizes that the human cognition is prone to the linguistic and information system and he utilizes the language as a tool that can derail the human mind and can affect perception.

It is a concept that highlights the frailty of the traditional humanist understandings of selfhood in the terms of new technological systems, which is why it has much in common with posthumanist critiques of autonomy and centrality. Comparatively, the language used in *Synners* by Cadigan is generative and liberatory and is combined with code, neural interfaces and art with an aim of creating new registers of posthuman communication. Language in this case becomes a space, which accumulates creativity, identity and the co-operation between machines and humans and offers a vision of posthuman subjectivity which is participatory, hybrid and networked. Taken together, these texts prove that cyberpunk transforms language into a laboratory where the human periphery is put under constant challenge and violation. In this respect, even speculative linguistics as such is not merely a literary device but also a philosophical and ethical question of what it is like to be in and to talk in a posthuman world. The connotations of the cyberpunk are quite topical because digital networks, artificial intelligence, and biotechnologies are increasingly playing a bigger role in the mediation of the contemporary life. These tales provide the essential paradigms of thinking, speaking and creating beyond the human, and in the posthuman futures, the utterance of the language in itself is a place of power and an agent of possibility.

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