THE LOSS OF THE 'REAL' IN NIKESH SHUKLA'S *MEATSPACE*: A STUDY OF CONSTRUCTED HALLUCINATIONS

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ISLAMABAD

JULY, 2019

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M. A., University of Punjab Lahore, 2007

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF PHILSOPHY

In English (Literature)

To

FACULTY OF ENGLISH STUDIES

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES, ISLAMABAD

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES   FACULTY OF LANGUAGES

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Thesis Title: The Loss of the 'Real' in Nikesh Shukla's *Meatspace*: A Study of Constructed Hallucinations

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Master of Philosophy
Degree name in full

English Linguistics or Literature
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Candidate of **Master of Philosophy** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **The Loss of the 'Real' in Nikesh Shukla's** ***Meatspace*****: A Study of Constructed Hallucinations** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

Thesis Title: The Loss Of the 'Real' in Nikesh Shukla's *Meatspace*: A Study of Constructed Hallucinations

This research has attempted to highlight the issue of reality and its representation in postmodern literature as well as culture. The contemporary advancement in technology and hyperreal culture of postmodern age has made 'reality' an intricate phenomenon, that is not fixed; rather, it has become fluid and arbitrary. Literature, as it has been defined since ages as mirror to life, gives expression to human experiences through the delineation of life. Literature in the postmodernist sense has become a credible source of the delineation of the construction and subversion of socio-cultural erections that has demolished the Metanarratives by bringing mininarratives into centre. Reality in postmodern age is represented through its simulated representations by media and cyberspace. Baudrillard and Gibson are of the view that postmodernism has dismantled the fact/fiction distinction by deconstruction and reconstruction of 'reality' through its multiple simulated layers. Jean Baudrillard's theory of Hyperreality and William Gibson's theoretical concept of Cyberspace has made postmodernism an object which can be witnessed in the form of Information Technology, technological commodities, images from pop culture, media, and advertisement. Both theoretical perspectives have defined 'reality' as techno-oriented phenomenon that is perceived through its simulated representations by media and cyberspace. The human/cyber interface involved in the phenomenon of cyberspace blends physical world and virtual world and subsequently blurs distinction between the two which is the same aspect of postmodern culture that Baudrillard terms as 'hyperreality'. In our postmodern era, this simulated 'reality' has become a recurring feature of human life. The postmodern genre Cyberpunk represents the present-day technology-oriented societies and spotlights the issues of reality and its representation in virtual realms of cyberspace. In the light of these theoretical concepts, this research stands on textual analysis of the selected postmodern novel of Nikesh Shukla, *Meatspace* (2014). The textual analysis has projected that the world of technological innovations has produced novelty as well as complexity in everyday life of postmodern individuals. It has also sped up the subversion of metanarratives into mininarratives. In postmodernist context, there are no more absolute, static, and unique concepts of 'reality'. 'Reality' is simulated through abstract representations in postmodern hyperreal culture which has mashed-up human/machine, physical/cyber, natural/artificial, real/virtual and made them the blur dichotomies. This research highlights that in our digital age, these opposite factors are intertwined else in a way that the individuals find it difficult to differentiate between fact and fiction, real and virtual, reality and hallucination. So, the primary lens that has been used in this study is hyperreality. Encompassing postmodern pop culture present in the novel, the research makes a study of hallucinations constructed by postmodern characters of the novel in digital realms of cyberspace.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Very humble gratitude to Allah Almighty who gave me the potential to perform this task. I dedicate this work to my beloved parents whose inspiration, affection, encouragement, and support made this project possible for me. No words can be gathered, no expression framed to show the profundity and amount of their love and support. I pray countless blessings of Allah Almighty, in this world and in the world hereafter, for my parents whose support and inspiration always made me pull my chin up and cross my fingers to strive for and achieve success.

Amen.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The current study aims to highlight the issue of reality and its representation in the postmodern literature. It deals with two basic concerns. Firstly, it analyses the hyperreal world of cyberspace and highlights the probability of the construction of hallucination and the loss of the real under this hyperreality. Secondly, it studies thoe socio-technological cultural factors that seem to be operant in construction of reality and its representation in postmodern hyperreal culture. So, the primary lens of this study is the postmodern hyperreality that has been discussed under the light of theoretical concepts of Baudrillard given in his 1981 treatise *Simulacra and Simulation* and William Gibson's conception of cyberspace given in his 1984 narrative *Neuromancer*.

The current era of information technology has made society and culture much complex due to speedy advancement in information technology. The advancement in computers and media has given rise to the development of a 'virtual' or 'hyper' reality. This phenomenon has left the concept of 'reality' more complex than ever before. The advent of technology in our era has produced multiple technological commodities such as TV, cellular phones, laptops, computers, smart apps, and the most crucial World Wide Web. These products are globally used in postmodern cultures to provide communication services and to represent the ongoing reality in the physical world. Since, it is reality of the physical world that has been represented through these technological commodities; this is the 'fact' part of this phenomenon. And as reality is represented in form of simulated abstract images through these products, this is the technology-oriented fiction part of this phenomenon. Thus, fact and fiction are the constituent ingredients of reality represented by media, cyberspace, and simulated images of postmodern culture. Baudrillard (French sociologist, philosopher, and cultural theorist) defines it as 'precession of simulacra' and 'hyperreality'. Gibson (Canadian-American speculative fiction writer) terms it as 'cyberspace' (the virtual reality of internet). This phenomenon of simulated 'reality'

has deconstructed our previous thoughts and reconstructed our views about ourselves and the world we live in.

Hyperreality is the theoretical concept given by Jean Baudrillard in his philosophical treatise *Simulacra and Simulations* where he explores real/virtual, concrete/ abstract, and fact/fiction dichotomies in postmodern context and concludes that postmodern cultures consist of blur boundaries between these distinctions. This blurring of boundaries between fact and fiction is termed as hyperreality by Baudrillard. He argues in his essay that postmodern cultural structures are saturated with these hyperreal images and abstractions from media, advertisement, and pop culture. Hence their constructed hyperreality is the dynamic ingredient of postmodern societies. Based on his postmodern cultural analysis, he extends to call the whole America even a mere hyperreality in his 1986 book *America*.

The phenomenon of real represented by media and cyberspace through simulated images and abstractions has smashed our sense of distinction between real and fiction. The abstract representation of real is first detached from reality of physical world and then from its preceding copies. Ultimately, it is not the real; rather, hyperreal that has been represented by these representations. The postmodern societies are saturated with such simulated images produced by technology and technology-oriented commodities. The postmodern individuals are so much accustomed to see reality through these representations that they consequently outline their reality based on their comprehension of real as represented by media and cyberspace. These abstract representations are the dynamic part of their day to day lives. Their minds are constantly soaked in these abstractions and representations and they carry on absorbing reality through its representation by these commodities. Ultimately, it is not the reality of the physical world that constitute their conception of the real. Rather, their real is one that has been represented by media, cyberspace, advertisement, and pop culture.

The delineation of contemporary advancement in the world of internet in contemporary literature has given rise to the concepts of postmodern hyperreality, cyberspace as well as rise and evolvement of Cyberpunk genre. The Cyberpunk Literature started by the end of 1970s and the beginning of 1980s. This genre of

literature represents fusion of technology in human life, society, and culture. Cyberpunk genre evolved out of Hard Science Fiction when Science Fiction started representing the fusion of technology into human lives and culture and represented this social and global metamorphosis in literature. 'Cyberpunk is a product of the Eighties milieu………but its roots are deeply sunk in the sixty-years tradition of modern popular SF' (Sterling, *Preface to Mirrorshades*). 'It serves to be the point of mutation and transformation when Cyberpunk genre began to evolve within Science Fiction to communicate with the outside world (McCaffery 11-13)'.

Cyberpunk genre slightly differs from Science Fiction genre as in Science Fiction technology is seen as alien product introduced in human life which may gain positive or negative reception. Cyberpunk genre represents the fusion of technology in human life where cyberspace, technology and technological commodities become an environment despite an alien commodity or the brave new world seen by society. "In Cyberpunk genre, technology is in fact the culture where the fusion of man and machine is an aspect of everyday life" (Cavallaro 41).

Cyberpunk genre is contemporary and global. It delineates human experiences with technology. In contemporary postmodern life, cyberspace is our frequently visited place and cyber-technology is the widely used commodity all around the world. The availability of World Wide Web to everyone makes each human a dynamic cyberpunk. We switch our home screens on frequent intervals each day and access our online networks frequently where cultural, regional, and geographical boundaries disappear. We step into a global interface with media and cyberspace each moment of our daily life and intensive usage of high broadband makes every individual around the world a potential cyberpunk these days. To Elias's words, 'Cyberpunk is everywhere, because we all use and think cyberpunk (Elias 4)' in the form of devices like cellular phones, laptops, videogames, internet, TV, VCR etc. Cyberpunk genre encompasses these contemporary, global, and virtual experiences.

Reality is a social construct that gets changed along with metamorphosis in social, cultural, institutional, and theoretical parameters. The metanarratives of truth and reality were based on scientific truth, logic, and reason in the era of modernism. Postmodernism, however, questions these metanarratives and Lyotard in his 1979 book

The Postmodern Condition defines postmodernism as an 'incredulity to metanarratives'. Having dismantled the status quo metanarratives of reality, postmodern man constructs his subjective truth/ reality based on his personal experiences. His interaction with the hyperreal culture surrounding him and the reality represented by hyperreal representations form the dynamic part of his experiences. The Cyberpunk genre is the apt representative of this social metamorphosis. It puts into question the stereotype cultural notions of reality and depicts reality and its representation in media and technology-oriented global world.

Nikesh Shukla's Cyberpunk narrative *Meatspace* (2014) represents technology-oriented culture of contemporary digital age. The characters in this novel stand bold against the metanarratives of status quo reality and develop their subjective realities. Their interaction   with   cyberspace and hyperreal pop culture surrounding them outline this reality. This study highlights the probability of the construction of hallucination by the postmodern net surfers in the backdrop of the hyperreality of cyberspace and postmodern hyperreal culture. It also investigates those cultural factors that seem to be operant in construction of reality and its representation in the postmodern culture.

1.2 Context of the Problem

In technologically progressing contemporary society, Cyberpunk is a dynamic source that produces fiction, be it narratives or films, which portrays our relationship with technological   commodities   and   subsequent   technology-oriented   hyperreal environment. Nikesh Shukla's Cyberpunk narrative *Meatspace* addresses this relationship and delineates human experiences with the hyperreal world of cyberspace and postmodern hyperreal social culture. This study came out of the curiosity to measure the impacts of cyberspace on human comprehension and critical sensibility. The textual analysis of the narrative puts to view that cyberspace is likely to construct a world of hallucination for the surfer's perception; the surfer may dissociate his/her critical sensibility in virtual realm and may drift towards construction of hallucination and the loss of the 'real'.

1.3 Delimitation

This research is delimited to the textual analysis of 'reality' and its representation in the selected novel *Meatspace* by Nikesh Shukla. There are many perspectives in this novel out of which only the 'reality' constructs and its representations are focused and evaluated. The technological and social mechanics that are discussed and analyzed in this research as agents of construction of 'reality' and its representation also have ample scope as individual researches.

1.4 Focus of Research

This research examines the issue of 'reality' and its representation in Nikesh Shukla's Cyberpunk narrative *Meatspace* through a textual analysis of the novel. The textual analysis conduces to prove that Cyberpunk Literature as well as the theoretical perspective 'postmodern hyperreality' are the appropriate representatives of present-day society that is characterized by flowing, arbitrary, capricious and inconsistent representations of 'reality'; represented by hyperreal culture of simulations, images and pompous advertisement.

This research also attempts to question and investigate those multifarious mechanisms that are involved in the subversion of 'reality' and its representations in present day hyperreal culture. The study highlights the impacts of this hyperreality on human comprehension. A review of the available literature substantiates that Cyberpunk Literature delineates phenomenon concerning individual/cyber interface as well as fusion of bio[human] and technology. This research analyses postmodern genre Cyberpunk from a perspective different than traditional stances. Despite traditional romanticizing of cyberspace where awestruck technology adds wonderful marvels to human life i.e. Cyborg and Posthumanism, this research pinpoints the vulnerabilities of virtual realm. It digs into postmodern cultural ingredients of media, advertisement, hyperreal abstract simulations and cyberspace and studies them as genesis of the development of postmodern hyperreal culture. This thesis tries to justify that Cyberpunk Literature is contemporary and valid mirror to present day technology-oriented society. The motifs and lingual aspects discussed and analyzed in Chapters Four try to represent the social relevance of Cyberpunk Literature and its

prevalence in the contemporary life as well as put to view a collage of ingredients of postmodern culture that represent reality in postmodern societies. This reality is nothing else but a kind of hyperreality which is a trippy stuff and contemporary era puts challenges to comprehend this phenomenon critically and wisely.

1.5 Thesis Statement

The selected narrative seems to be engaged with issue of reality and its representation in postmodern hyperreal culture. This study aims to highlight the probability of the construction of hallucination of postmodern man under the hyperreality of cyberspace. It also studies the development of subjective reality of postmodern characters in the background of postmodern hyperreal culture and tries to examine those socio-technological aspects that seem to be operant in the construction of this reality through the textual analysis of the selected text.

1.6 Research Objectives

This research is introduced to achieve the below-listed objectives:

- To examine the postmodern cultural aspects that are operant in construction of reality and its representation
- To examine the effects of cyberspace and postmodern hyperreal culture on human sensibility and individuals' perception of truth and reality
- To highlight the probability of the construction of hallucination and loss of the real under hyperreality of cyberspace
- To explore how far Nikesh Shukla's Cyberpunk narrative *Meatspace* represents the issue of reality and its representation in postmodern culture

1.7 Research Questions
This study focuses on following questions:

- What are the social, cultural, and institutional   factors that are   operant in construction of reality and its representation in the   postmodern hyperreal culture?

- How does the hyperreality of the postmodern culture and cyberspace is likely to affect human perception of the real?
- How does Meatspace explore the postmodern net surfers' construction of 'hallucination' and subsequent loss of the 'real' under the hyperreality of cyberspace?
- How does issue of reality and its representation in postmodern hyperreal culture becomes an integral part of the postmodern culture selected Cyberpunk narrative *Meatspace* by Nikesh Shukla?

1.8 Significance of Study

Cyberpunk genre is the apt representative of contemporary postmodern hyperreal culture and society. Study in this field has much scope. Though ample critical work has already been done on the perspective of postmodern genre 'Cyberpunk'; yet this study is unique in the way that it breaks away with scholastic tendency to romanticize Cyberspace; the way perspectives of Posthumanism and Cyborg do. It deals with 'reality' crises in Cyberpunk narrative *Meatspace* and highlights the probability of the construction of hallucination in virtual realms of cyberspace and postmodern hyperreal culture. The significance of the research lies in the exploration of the vulnerabilities underlying the hyperreality of cyberspace as well as postmodern culture of abstractions and simulations. It also implores that how this hyperreal culture dismantles the metanarratives of 'reality' and replaces them with mininarratives of 'reality' and that how reality in contemporary postmodern culture is constructed and represented through simulated phenomena of cyberspace, media, and hyperreal images of global pop culture. The research draws a conclusion that it is not the excessive usage; rather, a critical and sensible usage of cyberspace and social media that makes it pragmatic. So, to avail ourselves of these technological developments of the postmodern age, the users need to see through a critical lens while using them.

The rationale of this project is to fill the gap by analyzing the prevailing hyperreality and by highlighting the constructed hallucinations in the selected fiction. This study also pinpoints those social and cultural factors that resonate and represent reality in the contemporary hyperreal culture.

1.9 Rationale of the Project

Postmodernism looks for the loss of the real. The postmodern man does not find fixed conception of the 'real'. The primary reason behind this 'reality crises' is the prevalence of the culture of simulations which has been defined as 'hyperreality' by Baudrillard. There is a flood of simulations of the real in postmodern culture and human is not able to figure out constant single conception of the 'real'. Since reality is represented by hyperreal simulations of media and cyberspace in postmodern culture, a deep understanding of this reality representation is an important challenge of the contemporary postmodern culture.

Baudrillard has elaborated this prevalence of hyperreality in postmodern culture in his essay *Simulacra and Simulation* which provides a pretty fair ground to understand this reality crises. Cyberspace is defined as 'consensual hallucination' by William Gibson in his novel *Neuromancer*. This abstract consensual hallucination has been much romanticized in Cyberpunk Genre. The perspectives of 'cyborg' and 'posthumanism' in Cyberpunk fiction romanticize cyberspace and its possible marvels. All these postmodern philosophical approaches and fictional works of Cyberpunk genre have been employed to depict the simulated representations of 'reality' in postmodern cultures. But, in one way or the other, they overlap the vulnerabilities of cyberspace and its probability to construct a world of likely illusions in the surfers' mind. Breaking with tendency to romanticize wonders and capacities of cyberspace, this project has highlighted the impacts of the hyperreality of cyberspace on human comprehension in a systematic way in order to find one of the major causes of the postmodern 'reality crises' which is the, constructed hallucinations of cyberspace and then to identify how this constructed hallucination leads to the loss of the real when one loses grip on one's critical sensibility of rational mind. This project highlights the importance and need to have critical lens while using cyberspace to make it a pragmatic usage. This difference of the approach gives a distinction to this research.

1.10 Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters that are organized as under:

Chapter One deals with the introduction and context of the problem that is followed by the focus of research. This chapter also introduces the research objectives, questions, delimitation, thesis statement, rationale as well as the significance of research. The last part of this chapter depicts chapter breakdown that vividly projects the complete dissertation in an order.

Chapter Two consists of comprehensive review of related literature. This chapter is further divided into many sub-sections. It comprises available literature on Cyberpunk genre and underlying theoretical perspectives: cyberspace and hyperreality It also has related articles and various critical and fictional works of Cybernetics and Postmodern novelists that delineate hyperreality.

Chapter Three comprises detailed discussion on the theoretical framework, research approach and research method used for analysis.

Chapter Four consists of the critical analysis of the selected novel. This chapter is further divided into three parts to address three research questions. Part A deals with subversion of metanarratives of reality and highlights mininarratives of subjective reality developed by characters under analysis. Part B discusses characters' construction of hallucination and the loss of the real under hyperreality of postmodern culture depicted in the novel. Part C analyses those multifarious technology-oriented factors in postmodern culture that are involved in construction of reality and its representation in contemporary culture.

Chapter Five gives a conclusion to critical discussion and puts forth the findings of the research. This study also proposes suggestions and recommendations.

CHALPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

A vast body of literature is available on science and technology and their applications to the various disciplines of life. Since the current century is the age of technology and it has penetrated all the disciplines of life. The field of art and literature is not an exception to it and there exists a huge discussion on the implication of the ideas of Science and Technology in this field. This study investigates the concept of hyperreality and cyberspace in the light of postmodernism. This chapter tries to find out the research gaps in the already available literature in this context. This research has taken into consideration Nikesh Shukla's narrative *Meatspace* which delineates the impact of internet on the characters' lives of loneliness. The characters are in direct interaction with two spaces; physical world and the transcendental world of internet (Cyberspace). The chapter has also taken into consideration some factual works from the physical world so that to measure the impact of cyberspace on the individuals. This literature review is qualitative in nature and based on the accumulation of the facts and fiction that enrich the focal point of this research.

This chapter has been divided in many sub-parts for the sake of convenience and better understanding. The first part of the chapter has highlighted postmodernism and its major concepts like hyperreality, cyberspace and cyberpunk fiction which are the primary theoretical concepts of this study. The next part has taken into consideration the existence of hyperreality in the world of facts and fiction. I have also discussed the prevalence of hyperreality in different cyberpunk narratives as well as movies. This discussion is narrowed down to the rationale of chosen concepts from postmodernism for the selected text so that to formulate a good theoretical framework in the next chapter for the analysis of the selected text. It also puts to view that how my study is relevant to the already existing literature. This chapter also has reviews of the selected narrative *Meatspace*.

2.2 Postmodernism

Postmodernism is a theoretical concept which comes into existence in the mid of twentieth century. A postmodern critic explores the themes, tendencies, and the implications of these theoretical concepts to the individuals in the literary works. Postmodernism also works on the loss of centrality. A postmodern man does not find any center after losing his ideological anchor; he is in gravity of free space. Hence the concept of truth or 'reality' in postmodern context is a kind of fluid concept.

The roots of postmodernism lie in modernism. The concept of modernism according to German sociologist and philosopher, Jurgen Habermas (as discussed by Peter Barry in *Beginning Theory*) comes from the Age of Enlightenment (83). This movement sprouts from the mid seventeenth century and dates to the mid twentieth century. It was the age of reason and logic. Barry's *Beginning Theory* (1992) says:

> Such ideas are expressed or embodied in the philosophy of Kant in Germany, Voltaire and Diderot in France, and Locke and Hume in Britain. In Britain the term 'The Age of Reason' was used (till recently) to designate the same period. The so-called Enlightenment 'project' is the fostering of this belief that a break with tradition, blind habit, and slavish obedience to religious precepts and prohibitions, coupled with the application of reason and logic [by the disinterested individual] can bring about a solution to the problems of society. This outlook is what Habermas means by 'modernity. (83)

Modernism has its genesis in the Enlightenment movement. Basic principles of Enlightenment are rationalism, materialism, and reductionism which refer to the scientific truth of reality, material observation of reality, and integration of whole to part and analysis of the part for the validity of whole respectively. Thus, reality in Enlightenment movement/ modernism relies on logic, reason, and scientific truth. Despite relying on non-material sources of truth/ reality i.e. religion or revelation, the modernism prefers to observe and measure truth/ reality.

In their article *Psychiatry, Postmodernism and Postnormal Science* for *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, Richard Laugharne and Jonathan Laugharne discuss principles of modernism, "To understand the world we must reduce the whole to

measurable components, and so come up with theories to explain reality. That which cannot be measured cannot be proven and so its validity is questionable" (207). This modern conception of truth/ reality has its basis in the philosophies and experiments of modern thinkers and scientists like Bacon, Descartes, Galileo, Newton, Copernicus, Kant, and Hume. It presents a fair model of reality that is based on scientific principles of logic, reason, observation and findings and it is open for verification to anyone who wants to testify the observations of others. It is not only transparent but also accountable. Hence truth/ reality in modernism is one that can be measured and verified. It relies on science and logic. The fundamental belief during this era was rationalism. There was faith in progress and people relied profoundly on scientific tools to arrive at 'an absolute truth' or 'reality'. It was an age of experimentation where knowledge was arrived at just through measurable credible tools like geometry, painting, and experiments. Such knowledge was regarded as intrinsically good and the only credible 'truth' or 'reality'. As technology and other scientific developments became more sophisticated and complex to understand in modern age, the layperson relied on the interpretation of 'reality' given by the specialist.

Postmodernism questions this outlook of reality. Nietzsche in his 1976 book *The Portable Nietzsche* gives his critique on the Enlightenment concept of truth/ reality. He argues that the outcome of rejection to transcendent being giving us absolute truth/ reality, the result is a world consisting of fragments of truth. No two occurrences and observations of 'reality' can be same. And the result is we compose concepts to bring these fragments of reality to a unifying whole whereas these concepts deny any possibility of the multiplicity of reality. Hence, to combine these concepts to comprehend the reality is nothing more than 'illusion'. Claiming truth/ reality to be individual and arbitrary, he concludes that this meticulous effort of modernists to define 'reality' is nothing but illusion. Reality to his opinion is mere function of language. He writes in his book *The Portable Nietzsche*:

> What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms and anthropomorphisms—in short a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical and obligatory to a people; truths are

illusions of which one has forgotten that this is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins. (46-47)

Postmodernism questions the authority of metanarratives too. Barry's *Beginning Theory* refers to Metanarrative as, "These 'metanarratives' ['super-narratives'], which purport to explain and reassure, are really illusions, fostered in order to smother difference, opposition, and plurality" (84). This elaboration of Metanarratives illustrates that for a postmodern man such Grand Narratives are nothing more than illusions. That is why Lyotard has called postmodernism an "incredulity" towards Grand Narratives.

In his critique on authorization of metanarratives (absolute explanation of reality), Lyotard has argued in his book *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) that postmodernism is characterized with collapse of metanarratives and their replacement by mininarratives. Hence there is disillusionment with the absolute 'big narratives' given by science, philosophy, religion and by politics to explain 'reality'. He regards the 'philosophical pragmatism' and 'logical positivism' of modern philosophers and scientists as an act of legitimation, "What was considered at the end of the nineteenth century to be a loss of legitimacy and a fall into philosophical 'pragmatism' or 'logical positivism' was only an episode from which knowledge has recovered by including within scientific discourse the discourse on the validation of statements held to be laws' (54,55). He regards modern science and philosophy an effort to legitimize the preplanned power structures. He names modern philosophy and science as continuation of metanarratives. He associates such grand truths (metanarratives) with efforts to establish power structures in society and treats such efforts with suspicion, "Scientists, technicians and instruments are purchased not to find truth but to augment power" (46). He argues that scientists and philosophers don't search 'truth' but they try to validate power structures through their philosophies and theories, "The question now asked... is no longer "Is it true?" but "What use is it?" ... "Is it saleable?" ... "Is it efficient?" (51). His argument in this book highlights the political and commercial purpose of the truth/reality presented by these theorists and scientists. This is a seminal book which puts a question mark on the validity of modern

outlook of truth/reality and announces a rejection to all metanarratives. This rejection is continued as well as celebrated by the postmodern theorists and writers. Thus, reality is a kind of debatable and skeptic concept in postmodern context.

To understand the essence of postmodernism, it is important to understand the postmodern conception of 'language' too. Having deconstructed the concept of the presence of a stable reality, Postmodernism has revolutionized the concept of language too. Modernism took language as a rational, translucent tool that represents reality and the activities of   mind. According to the Modernists view, language is representative of all that our mind thinks and identifies things as. Here, signifier always points to the signified. According to the postmodern philosophies of structuralism and poststructuralism, however, a signifier has no absolute fixed signified. Thus, language is an arbitrary and flowing phenomenon which does not refer to any fixed real in postmodernism. Lyotard in his book *The Postmodern Condition* argues that language is a fluid phenomenon which carries on varying along with its 'pragmatics' (9). Pragmatics refer to change in interpretation of 'referent', the sign, along with change in its context.

In the light of the above-mentioned theoretical perspectives of postmodern theorists, it can be argued that 'reality' is a subjective phenomenon for any postmodern man. The postmodern individual does not accept any transcendental, fixed, absolute, and objective   truth/ reality. Also, advancement in technology and its massive fusion in all spheres of life has deep impact on comprehension of postmodern man. In this context, the French writer, Jean Baudrillard, is worth mentioning who gives his concept of simulations that sheds light on the concept of 'hyperreality' in his works *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981).

2.3 Hyperreality

The French philosopher, photographer, cultural theorist, and political commentator, Baudrillard, was much interested in the study of media, technology, and their impacts on daily life. Primarily, he was a structuralist who wanted to explore the relationship between reality, symbols, and contemporary social culture and to identify the boundary between reality and imagination. The theoretical perspective 'hyperreality' given by

philosopher Jean Baudrillard in his paper *Simulation and Simulacra* (1981), can be defined as the inability to differentiate between what is real and what is merely a simulation of the real, a contemporary issue prevailing in present day technologically advanced, postmodern society. This hyperreality is primarily caused by saturation of images, signs, and simulations in postmodern culture. It is fundamental to understand Baudrillard's concept of 'sign value' for the better understanding of his theoretical perspective of 'hyperreality'

In his works *The System of Objects* (1968, 1996) and *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1981), Baudrillard develops his theory of 'sign value' that is seminal to his theory of 'hyperreality'. He gives his cultural critique of post-industrial societies in these works. Baudrillard uses an eclectic Marxian conceptual apparatus here. Marxists regard wage/labor as the initial factor and consumption as the subsequent phenomenon. Whereas, Baudrillard thinks vice-versa and focusses on the latter. He thinks that consumption has priority over labor in postindustrial societies where consumption is generated through advertisement. He interprets consumption as, "an activity consisting of the systematic manipulation of signs" (Baudrillard 1996, 219). He regards consumption as major factor for production. The advertisement charges the objects with aura of prestige and status. This sign value of the object is manipulated upon the consumer through irresistible engagement of the consumer in consumption of objects as well as inducement to demand for production. The engagement of consumers is a way of engaging oneself in the consumption to differentiate oneself from the others through the usage of commodities that assign prestige to the user. Thus, production in such societies is not done based on labor factor rather to meet the demand of the consumer which is produced through advertisement. The advertisement of commodities engages the consumers in a rigorous effort to participate in the consumption engaging actively and differentiating oneself from others in consumer society. It is in this book that we find the seed of his sign-value theory where he hints that it is not physical object that is consumed; rather, 'the idea of the relationship' is consumed:

> So, what is consummated and consumed is never the object but the relationship itself, signified yet absent, simultaneously induced, and excluded; it is the idea of the relationship that is consumed in the series of objects that displays it. Here

we discover, in its most extreme expression, the formal logic of the commodity as analysed by Marx: just as needs, feelings, culture, knowledge—in short, all the properly human faculties are integrated as commodities. (Baudrillard 1996, 219)

This idea is further developed in his work *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1981) where he has attempted to do structuralist analysis of consumption in postindustrial societies. Structuralism is the theory of language that posits that sign, symbols and words gain their meaning not from their positive content rather from having difference from other symbols and signs. According to structuralism, we acquire language in such a system where words find their meanings on the basis on their difference from other words. Baudrillard applies structuralism to commodities in post-industrial societies in this work. He argues that in such societies, commodities begin to gain their value not from their positive content; nor based on how useful they are; rather, on the basis that how they are different from other commodities. And doing this, these commodities establish hierarchy of status and assign prestige to their consumers. It is because of that the brand name differentiates this commodity from the cheaper commodities and places this commodity at the top of the hierarchy of objects. Baudrillard argues that, "Consumption does not arise from an objective need of the consumer, a final intention of the subject towards the object; rather, there is social production, in a system of exchange, of a material of differences ,a code of significations and invidious (statuaire) values (75)". We want to buy these products not out of the dire need to be fulfilled but to assign ourselves the prestigious sign the commodity can assign to our persona. Here object (commodity) supersedes the subject (human consumer), abstract (advertisement of product) supersedes the concrete (commodity), imagination (the exaggerated sign-value of the product produced by advertisement and brand hierarchy) supersedes the reality (use-value of the product). On the premise of this analysis, Baudrillard adds his concepts of 'sign value' and 'symbolic value' to the Marxian value framework: Value(value that commodity gains from the labor pertaining to its production), exchange value (value that commodity gains on being sold in the market) and use-value (how useful the commodity is).

Baudrillard comes to conclusion in this book that sign-value supersedes the Marxian commodity framework in post-industrial society.

The analysis of the contemporary postmodern culture had been the life time project of Jean Baudrillard. He has attempted to interpret postmodern culture in different books and philosophical treatises. In his earlier works in 1960s to 1980s he has given the concept of Sign Value. Sign Value pertains to the value of the simulated image not on the basis of the object that the image is representing; rather, sign value is based on the abstract message that the image is having where abstract representation of the image supersedes the object it represents. This idea of sign value ripens fully in his 1981 philosophical treatise *Simulacra and Simulation* where he declares the whole postmodern culture to be saturated with such signs; ultimately constructing a culture consisting of total simulacrum. In the same context, he comments the whole America to be mere hyperreality in his 1986 book *America.*

In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Jean Baudrillard commences his argument by describing Jorge Luis Borges's one paragraph short story "*On Exactitude in Science*" (1946). In the story, Borges imagines an empire which gets the perfection in cartography. The cartographers make a map on precise 1:1 scale to represent the actual territory. The map covers the entire territory of the empire and gives a cent percent clear information about the geographical locations the map has been referring to. With the passage of time, when the map begins to erode and territory undergoes geographical changes, there is no more one-to-one link between the 'sign' (map) and the 'signified' (territory). Now 'some shreds' of the map are 'still discernible in the desert' that represent 'the metaphysical beauty of this ruined abstraction testifying to a pride equal to the Empire' (Baudrillard 1). He regards this representation as 'second-order simulacra' where sign misrepresents the real. He describes the remnant status of this representation as 'double ends by being confused with the real' (Baudrillard 1).

Baudrillard repeats the same allegory in the context of contemporary postmodern culture. He says in our case all we are left with is the 'maps' (simulations) like this where we have more and more copies and no originals, "….as the most beautiful allegory of simulation, this fable has now come full circle for us' (1). He analyses the present-day status of simulations and argues that every simulation is now

copy of another simulation where we have lost all originals, "Today, abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (1).

This argument of Baudrillard sheds light on the blurring of historical difference between appearance and reality in contemporary culture where 'real' is understood through the system of signs; the broader sense of an object functioning as a referent for another image or representation. Baudrillard argues, "It is no longer a question of either maps or territories. Something has disappeared: the sovereign difference, between one and the other, that constituted the charm of abstraction" (2). In contemporary postmodern culture, in our case, the map precedes the territory and we can no longer distinguish the map and its referent. Baudrillard is of the view that present day situation is the 'precession of simulacra' where charm of abstraction has left no real to be simulated; rather every simulation is the repetition of another earlier simulation. Hence, the society has stepped into a hyperreality where 'simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or a reality: a hyperreal….' (1).

He regards the contemporary culture an amalgamation of such simulations 'the simulacrum'. His argument is based on the fact that in our postmodern culture, we are so much accustomed to see the reality through its simulated representations by media, cyberspace and advertisement that, despite on the basis of reality of real physical world, we outline our reality based on its representation by these simulations. This reality is analyzed by him as hyperreality; a mixture of real and simulated where the boundaries between the two evaporate. Baudrillard writes, "It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours. The desert of the real itself" (1).

Thus, Baudrillard's concluding argument in this treatise is that the representation of reality through simulations generated by media, cyberspace and advertisement ultimately ends into hyperreality. This is primarily caused by over and over simulation of the real. Its result is that signs no longer refer to real objects and events. Rather they are reiteration of preceding simulations and thus whole society

consists of a magnitude of signs 'simulacrum'. Hyperreality is the ultimate state where there is no referential to the real. In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard concludes:

> Such would be the successive phases of the image: it is the reflection of a basic reality, it masks and perverts a basic reality, it masks the absence of a basic reality, it bears no relation to any reality whatever: it is its own pure simulacrum. In the first case, the image is a good appearance - representation is of the sacramental order. In the second, it is an evil appearance - it is of the order of maleficence. In the third, it plays at being an appearance - it is of the order of sorcery. In the fourth, it is no longer of the order of appearances, but of simulation. (6)

Baudrillard compares contemporary postmodern culture with fourth stage of simulation where it has no relation to any reality: it is its own pure simulacrum. Thus, in the light of Baudrillard's concepts, the ultimate reality in postmodern culture is that which is the constructed or which is invented. In this context, Baudrillard's concept of "Disney Land" can be compared to real America as there is no real material difference between the two and this is primarily because of hyperreality. Baudrillard has applied his theoretical concept of hyperreality in his 1986 book *America* where he analyses the cultural structure of present America.

Roberto in his essay *Baudrillard: Work and Hyperreality* writes, "Without minding criticisms against his style of expression and the concepts that he invented, Baudrillard tried to demonstrate how today's culture is the result of a constructed reality or "hyperreality" (Roberto 3). He is of the opinion that the continuous extension of signs and structure of domination demands the establishment of information networks and a technological system which substantially changes contemporary rationality, thought and action. He attributes such change to media intoxication, which has generated the loss of identity references, which are made servants of a technological feudalism that has no other purpose except its own self-perpetuation.

The blurring of real and fiction under hyperreality is also addressed by Tal Danai in his paper "*Hyperrealism and Conceptual Art. What You See is What You Get?*". Describing extensively, he writes, "If we accept that 'the Real is not Real' in

Hyperrealism, and that the assumed reality of it cannot be comfortably characterized as Surrealism, then how is it different and how does it come about? While the difference between 'Realism' (as in real life) in Hyperrealistic works and that in Surrealistic works may be simplified as the difference between a clearly imaginary and 'unrealistic' (in its most common laymen's sense) reality on the Surrealist side, and the 'almost real' or 'could be real' or even outright 'Real' (in the same laymen's sense) on the Hyperrealist side, the making of the latter is of a much more elusive   nature." (2). It has also been described as an extension of Photorealism.

Norman B. Macintosh in his article *Accounting as Simulacrum and Hyperreality: Perspectives on Income and Capital* defines briefly simulacra as, "simulacrum is a sign, image, model, pretense, or shadowy likeness of something else" (Macintosh 2). On the other hand, he defines hyperreality as, "Hyperreality refers to the current condition of postmodernity where simulacra are no longer associated with any real referent and where signs, images, and models circulate, detached from any real material objects or romantic ideals" (Macintosh 2).

Mark Nunes wrote an article in 1995 under the title *Jean Baudrillard in Cyberspace: Internet, Virtuality and Postmodernity* which sheds light on the contextualization of Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality in the post internet world and says, "For Baudrillard, the shift from the real to the hyperreal occurs when representation gives way to simulation. One could argue that we are standing at the brink of such a moment, marked primarily by the emerging presence of a virtual world" (2). This means that the current century is the age of digital mechanism and the reality has been distorted by the arrival of the modern technology and hence it has led to the hyperreality.

2.4 Hyperreality in the World of Facts and Fiction

In the real world of facts, theme-based shopping malls and parks are a few examples of the prevalence of hyperreality in it. Entering these places, the customer steps into another world that is neither through and through fact nor merely fiction. Rather, it is the amalgamation of the two where stark boundaries between the two are invisible. Everyday, millions of customers visit these places and the success and popularity of the

place lies on the achievement that how far the architect, the brands, the cuisine and the joyland grab the customer and that how far one forgets to commemorate that the place is not reality ,rather, hyperreality. The customers also, based on their buy ability, become the part of this fantasy/ hyperreality. To enumerate a few, Disneyland (Paris and California), Disneyworld (Florida), Villagio (Qatar) are a few examples of such places. The countries around the globe are flooded with such hyperreal settings. Samewise, synthetic ice rinks in many shopping malls in Pakistan i.e. Emporium Mall, Lahore; Safa Gold Mall, Islamabad etc. are based on hyperreal settings where nature is artificially constructed and customized for the hyperreal place. Cinemas with 3D to 7D settings, 3D to 7 D helmets and goggles are some other examples of hyperreality at developed and higher degree. The media, TV, films, virtual games, cellular phones, simulated images, the cartoons, media hypes, the products resonant with media-produced hypes and much more are examples of hyperreality involved in our everyday factual life. Postmodern literature, Cyberpunk narratives and movies fictionalize this cultural embedding of technology as well as working of hyperreality in human life.

The postmodern literature is flooded with such works which question the very essence of reality. Baudrillard in his work *America* (1986) analyses the social culture of the country America in the light of his theoretical perspective hyperreality. Keeping in view the saturation of hyperreal simulations in the whole structure of American society, he discusses that "America is neither dream nor reality. It is a hyperreality. It is a hyperreality because it is a utopia which has behaved from the very beginning as though it were already achieved. Everything here is real and pragmatic, and yet it is all the stuff of dreams too" (28). He argues in that it is probable that America could be truth for Americans themselves because they are part of this simulacrum and hence have no sense of simulation.

Baudrillard sees America in his work *America* with the eyes of a traveler and pens down his experiences in this society. He prefers to visit the forest and villages of America to go through this society in physical world than getting an idea through media. He argues that, "The point is not to write the sociology or psychology of the car, the point is to drive. That way you learn more about this society than all academia could ever tell you… Drive ten thousand miles across America and you will know more about

the country than all the institutes of sociology and political science put together" (54-55). He comments that he knew the America; the one and that how it was presented by media before his actual visit to downtown jungles and villages of this country. He analyses that in present culture, it's the hyperreal version of the whole social phenomenon that represents the reality in today's America, "It is Disneyland that is authentic here! The cinema and TV are America's reality! The freeways, the Safeways, the skylines, speed, and deserts---these are America, not the galleries, churches, and culture… To see and feel America, you have to have had for at least one moment in some downtown jungle……..." (104). He interprets the representations of America by TV, Cinema and hyperreal settings of malls and developments as divorced from reality. He regards such simulated representations as hyperreality which are like the space mentioned in his essay *Simulacra and Simulation*, "……. a space whose curvature is no longer that of the real, nor that of truth, the era of simulation is intrigued by liquidation of all referentials" (2).

He observes the absence of reality behind the running images of the shared existence of Americans. He comments that when you meet people in this society, they certainly pass you smile. But this smile is neither out of courtesy nor an effort to charm you, 'This smile signifies only the need to smile' (33). He defines this smile as 'the smile of immunity, the smile of advertisement, the smile to portray that this country is good, this nation is happy, prosperous and liberal…...we are the best' (33). He considers the smile of the entire American nation a hyperreality:

> It is also Reagan's smile---the culmination of the self-satisfaction of the entire American nation---which is on the way to becoming the sole principle of government… Give your emptiness and indifference to others, light up your face with the zero degree of joy and pleasure, smile, smile, smile… Americans may have no identity, but they do have wonderful teeth. (34)

The hollowness beneath this smile refers to the absence of reality behind the present-day cultural gestures and symbols of hyperreal America.

He observes this absence of the reality behind all running symbols of American cultural structure. He analyses the intoxication of postmodern media as involved behind the making of these symbols as hypes in the postmodern society:

> The slogan of a new form of advertising activity, of autistic performance, a pure and empty form, a challenge to one's own self that has replaced the Promethean ecstasy of competition, effort, and success. The New York Marathon has become a sort of international symbol of such fetishistic performance, of the mania for an empty victory, the joy engendered by a feat that is of no consequence… The moon landing is the same kind of thing: 'We did it!' The event was ultimately not really so surprising; it was an event pre-programmed into the course of science and progress. We did it. But it has not revived the millenarian dream of conquering space. In a sense, it has exhausted it. (20,21)

Richard Powers wrote a novel *Gain* in 1998 which delineates the prevalence of hyperreality in contemporary postmodern America encompassing 170 years of US capitalism epitomized by single corporation: Clare International. The story of Clare International Company is intertwined with the story of a Midwestern single mom, Laura Bodey, who ends up to struggle with cancer most likely caused by the same company's malfeasance. The Clare International was initially established as a small project of local soap making set up established by three Clare brothers in 1830s. The novel encompasses the 170 years history of the company. The company begins with producing organic soap and ends up to multiple processed commodities using the established sign of the Clare Company; a well-known international brand famous for its herbal products. The novel also encompasses metamorphosis in marketing mechanics and modes of advertisement in USA. During its 170 years history, the company begins from organic production of soaps and ends up to usage of the hyperreal sign of the organic productions international brand, whereas, the company is now producing multiple products using multiple processed ways to multiply its booming profits.

Along with this, intercepts the story of Laura Bodey, a competent, plant-loving single parent of two teenagers who plays the role of merchandise as well as consumer of the agricultural commodities produced by the Clare International. She runs her reality

office to sale the so-called organic products produced by the Clare International when company expands its business to her town. The candle-and-soap products set up begins in Boston in the 1830s by three Clare brothers. The company first builds its reputation based on its medicinal soap, the secret ingredient of which comes from a root given to the youngest Clare on a surveying expedition to the South Seas. Thus, the company begins its capital history from the production of commodity based on natural, organic ingredients. Prosperity boosts up when the company is chosen as a soap supplier to the Army. The business carries on being developed on and on. The ever-expanding company moves into home, industrial, and agricultural commodities. By the turn of the century, Clare Soap and Chemical choses Laura Bodey's town Lacewood, Illinois, as the site for the sale of its Agricultural Products group. Since now, the choice of consumers is influenced by postmodern hyperreal advertisement by media and the multinational corporations and their products are the hypes of the day in this area. Laura Bodey handles the homebuyers of the Clare Company's agricultural products and, herself, is the consumer of the same. After being diagnosed with ovarian cancer, however, she begins to become aware of reports concerning widespread industrial pollution by Lacewood's corporate benefactor. Surgery and chemotherapy fail to cure the cancer. But as she grows weaker, Laura resists to join a class-action suit against The Clare International refusing to believe that any of the company products under her usage could have done this to her. Thus, the novel encompasses the corporate history of the brand; its journey from reality to hyperreality as well as impacts of this hyperreality on the immediate consumer.

2.5 Cyberpunk Fiction

The current century is the century of technological marvels and their penetration in all spheres of life. In literature, the sun-genre of Science Fiction: Cyberpunk Fiction, evolves out of the encompassment of these technological developments and their impacts on human lives and culture. The narrative under analysis in this research, *Meatspace*, belongs to the same genre. In 1980s, Cyberpunk became a broadly recognized term for the expression of technological fabrication in music, media, and fiction. Its sociological source can be traced in crackers, hackers, and phreaks subculture associated with computers. Herlander Elias in his book *Cyberpunk 2.0:*

Fiction and Contemporary refers to Bruce Sterling's *Mirrorshades* to cite the origins of Cyberpunk Literature, "The work of the cyberpunks is paralleled throughout the Eighties pop culture: in rock video; in the hacker underground; in the jarring street tech of hip-hop and scratch music; in the synthesizer rock of London and Tokyo. This phenomenon, this dynamic, has a global range; cyberpunk is its literary incarnation (Bruce Sterling in *Mirrorshades*)– *The Cyberpunk Anthology* (1986b)" (Elias 9). This genre of literature delineates the embedding of technology in human life, society, and culture. Blending 'techno' and 'punk' subcultures, Cyberpunk represents human experiences in post-industrial information-oriented society.

The term cyberpunk is used to refer to this genre, the writers of this genre as well as to the netizen characters who use information technology in their day-to-day lives. By the end of eighties and beginning of nineties, the technological commodities were used in all spheres of life and were part of social environment all over the globe. Cyberpunks were the very first age band for whom technology in type of commodities like TV, digital watches, cellular phones, laptops, video games, and associate degreed satellite dishes was not an alien paradigm. In those years, the Scientific and Technological giants were no more brand-new introductions to human life and culture, rather part of their day-to-day lives, "Eighties tech sticks to the skin, responds to the touch: the personal computer, the Sony Walkman, the portable telephone, the soft contact lens…… (Sterling *Preface to Mirrorshades*)".

With the passage of time, the cyberpunks plunged into deep realms of cyberspace. They not only aspired for technological developments but also embraced extended nightmares stepping into deep and deep complexities of cyberspace. They were swamped with a spark to use technology for the development of human living and, therefore, strived to utilize it for utmost services. Stepping forward, this technology turned into software and then stepped ahead to multinational showgrounds of media, advertisement, and market competition. The cyberspace got massified within blinking of eyes with portable digital devices at all around usage as well as internet became global hub for masses all around the world. There was rising market competition and advertisement through glossy media byproducts. Cyberpunk genre encompasses these experiences of the cyberpunks. Therefore, it can be said that Cyberpunk genre became

a vital movement within Postmodernism because of its characteristic to capsize representations and represent a world of multinational capitalism.

2.6 Cyberspace

William Gibson is accredited to invent the term cyberspace. Cyberspace addresses the relationship of information technology with media, postmodern pop culture and computation technologies. William Gibson defines cyberspace in his well-known narrative *Neuromancer* (1984):

> Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts. . . A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding. . . (65)

This definition of Gibson suggests abstract, virtual, transient, and fantastic nature of cyberspace. He compares cyberspace with city lights receding which suggests its characteristics of being transitory, fluid, and fantastic phenomenon. It is the huge cluster of abstract data; a consensual hallucination shared by millions of people everyday…. this expression suggests the comprehensive establishment of the virtual world by its users and their belief in dynamics of this virtuality. As it is taken as dynamic comprehensively, it is significant part of postmodern social structure.

Cyberspace is the abstract world based on constructed virtuality and a dynamic part of physical world in postmodern societies. The blend of real and virtual can be seen in form of multiple technological commodities like TV, laptops, cell phones, cinema, video games, computer assisted set ups etc. This blending of real and virtual is exactly like Baudrillard's theoretical concept of hyperreality which stands for the blending of fact and fiction where boundaries between the two are evaporated. Hayles in her book *How we Became Posthuman*: *Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* (1999) gives strategic definition of 'virtuality', "Virtuality is the cultural perception that material objects are interpreted by information patterns. The definition plays off the duality at the heart of the condition of virtuality…. materiality on the one hand,

information on the other. Normally virtuality is associated with computer simulations" (13,14). She further elaborates that, "Virtual reality technologies are fascinating because they make visually immediate the perception that a world of information exists parallel to the "real" world, the former intersecting the latter at many points and in many ways" (14). In this context, she gives example of the virtual game Ping-Pong in which the player swings the paddle that is wired into computer and computer calculating the momentum of paddle decides where the image of ball on the computer screen will hit. Hence, the player plays partly in real life (RL) and partly in virtual reality (VR). (14). It can be argued that in cyberspace the boundaries between the real and fictitious are evaporated. There lies a hyperreality in the virtuality of cyberspace.

She further argues that in postmodern culture, with the embedding of information technology in the whole environment, reality of the real physical world is perceived through virtuality of cyberspace, " ….in the late twentieth century, all material objects are interpenetrated by flows of information from DNA code to the global reach of World Wide Web (14). Thus, there lies a reality transition in postmodern age in which reality is perceived through reality and its representation done by media…. cyberspace being one of its channels. Cyber technology dismantles the concept of real as a fixed phenomenon. The real is now prone to be rebuilt repeatedly, "In the history of cybernetics, ideas were merely made up out of whole cloth. Rather, they were fabricated in a pattern of overlapping replication and innovation, a pattern that I call "seriation" (14)". The expression 'seriation' in cyberspace refers to over and over simulation which ultimately ends in the world very much like the pattern Baudrillard terms as 'simulacrum'.

2.7 Cyberspace, Hyperreality and Cyberpunk Fiction

William Gibson's 1984 novel *Neuromancer* is the quintessential text of cyberpunk fiction. It is the story of a 'cowboy' named Case who uses his computer to commit information crimes in the matrix. His character represents the physical connection between human brain and computer hardware which steers his consciousness to the landscape of the matrix where he thinks and acts in the background of virtual reality. Gibson introduces his famous terms 'matrix' and 'cyberspace' in this novel which stand for the abstract world of internet based on virtuality.

This work established some key concepts like of cyberpunk literature and film. i.e. *Matrix*, Cyberspace. Artificial Intelligence, Cyborg etc. This concept was later adopted by Wachowskis   in their 1999 movies: *The Matrix* and   in its 2003 sequels *The Matrix Reloaded* and   *The Matrix Revolutions. Matrix* is the transcendental world of virtual reality. He defined cyberspace in this work as 'a consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators' around the globe. The consensual dominant cultural institution of virtual reality is the pedestal of the concept of 'cyberspace'. Its blending of virtual and real and its penetration in all spheres of life in postmodern culture is the same as the principles of theoretical perspective of hyperreality given by Baudrillard. Thus, cyberspace is nothing else but the hyperreal world of virtual reality prevalent in postmodern culture with its deep impacts on human lives as well as comprehension of individuals of themselves and the world they are living in.

The narrative *Neuromancer* projects hyperreality of cyberspace and its impacts on the main character, Case, who gets confused to distinguish the realities of his identities in meatspace and the matrix respectively. Dea Anugrah Santoso and Mamik Tri Wedawati wrote a paper *Hyperreal Identity in William Gibson's Neuromancer* published in the journal *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* in December,2019. They discuss in their article that Gibson's *Neuromancer* delineates the contemporary world where technology has become part of everyday life of people. Novel depicts technological marvels and technological dependency of human beings where human and technology are intertwined in an intricate way. They highlight the hyperreality prevailing in the novel and subsequent identity crises in the character, Case:

> Gibson develops a cast of character, Case, who experiences major changes in his own identity throughout the novel. Gibson ultimately shows that in a technologically dependent society, a person's identity is an evolving construct that is wholly dependent on the technology that it embraces. However, the technological development has caused the emergence of hyperreality. Hyperreality blurs the boundaries between the real and the fake. In the novel,

hyperreality appears when technology has succeeded to create the simulated virtual identity in the novel's characters. (70)

Thus, the cyberpunk narratives depict such impacts of the virtual and hyperreal realms of cyberspace on human mind. This perspective is the parallel trajectory with the current study where I have tried to study the impact of cyberspace on the lonely lives of postmodern characters.

Cyberpunk Fiction   is getting much momentum in the American film making industry too. Drawing on the themes and plots of those works of literature categorized under this subgenre of Science fiction, Cyberpunk, cinema has significantly flourished in the United States. The films like *Blade Runner* (1982), *Total Recall* (1990) and *The Matrix* (1999) and in Japan anime films such as *Akira* (1988) and *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) are a few examples. These movies project the hyperreal worlds where distinction between the real physical world and the virtual world is blurred. Inspired by the cyberpunk narratives of Philip K. Dick and William Gibson, film makers have attempted to produce a range of dark, thought-provoking SF films dealing with classic noir themes such as amnesia, doppelgangers, femme fatales, psychopathic criminality, mystery, and murder most foul etc. These films makers have tried explore and film the shadowy worlds of digital realms where the boundaries between the real and the computer-generated are lost.

The Cyberpunk Fiction writers have tried to delineate the wonders in human lives that technological marvels can do. In this context, the concepts of Cyborg and Post-humanism are worth mentioning. Cyborg is compressed from of "cybernetic organism". It delineates fusion of bio [human and other living organisms] and technology and the new specie cyborg is updated marvelously in its function and capacities because of this technological fusion. Haraway in her essay *Cyborg Manifesto* (1984) defines cyborg as "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of a machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as creature of fiction" (149). The film *Inception* was written and directed by Christopher Nolan in 2010 who took eight years to write such a complex technological marvel. This film deals with the theme of Cyborg where owing to have technology under command the human characters are shown in a capacity to penetrate others minds and dreams as well as carve and mold them through

technological fusion into their bodies. Dom Cobb, Arthur, and their group use technology to enter others minds and steal their ideas as well incept target ideas into them. In the closing scene of the movie, Cobb is seen confused to believe that whether he is living in real life or virtual life right now which is mainly caused due to his excessive engagement with technology.

Cyberpunk Fiction also deals with the theme of Posthumanism. Posthumanism seeks to develop and make available technologies to eliminate aging, enable immortality and greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities, to achieve a "posthuman future" where technology is deployed to accomplish human tasks at the place of human beings. R. B. Chougule in his article *Cyborgs as Posthuman Species in Cyberpunk Science Fiction* defines Cyborgs as, "Cyborg is a point of transition from humanism to posthumanism. It is a body made of glass. It is three dimensional being replete with curves, protrusions, and indentations corresponding to the humanoid form" (1). The novel Do *Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) by Philip K Dick is one of the pioneers of Cyberpunk genre which deals with theme of dynamic and autonomous status of technology in human society. This theme was later filmed in movie *Blade Runner* in 1982. In this narrative as well as in the movie, the androids are denied to be given status of living phenomenon and are forced to be slaves, hence they struggle for getting their autonomous status in human society. In movie *The Matrix* the theme of posthumanism is dealt with higher degree of imagination as well as romantic tendency towards technological developments. In this movie, the humanoids are deployed in human lives to perform human tasks. The conflict occurs in 2090 when a humanoid kills its human owner and claims to be in a legal position to be spared from any sort of punishment as he did so in his self-defense. After a long war, the humanoids establish a simulated world of their own; Zero One to continue with their independent living. Dealing with various episodes of higher and higher degrees of posthumanism, the plot depicts romantic marvels of technological developments in year 2199 where androids supersede human beings in power and capacities and suck human energies through technological plugging into them for their survival in the newer simulated world of their own; The Matrix. Cyberspace of

Cyberpunk produces a new space of realities enriched with technological manifestation where technology is in a capacity to perform unbelievable marvels.

2.8 Rationale of Hallucination Under Hyperreality of Cyberspace

In the discussion above it has been determined that in the light of cyborg and posthumanism concepts of cyberpunk fiction, the human body can be converted to work like machine through technological fusion in cyberpunk narratives. This is the romantic present as well as future vision of cyberspace imagined fantastically by the cyberpunk writers and researches. The current study breaks with this romantic tendency and tries to highlight the vulnerabilities of the hyperreal world of cyberspace. So, the other facet of cyberspace is that it also takes the human mind into gripping fix of the realities of cyberspace where one becomes the part of a virtual reality and is likely to lose his consciousness of the realities of his real world around him. Warwick and his co-writers in their paper *The Application of Implant Technology for Cybernetic Systems* says, "Meanwhile a human whose nervous system is linked to a computer not only puts forward their individuality for serious questioning but also, when the computer is part of a network or at least connected to a network, allows their autonomy to be compromised" (2). This means that the individual, who is indulged in the technology, loses his autonomy and power over him/herself and becomes a slave to the devices and hence; his relation with his physical world is lost. So, this mergence with cyberspace introduces new considerations, a connection with a different universe or possibly encompassed in the phrase by Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulation*, "It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours. The desert of the real itself" (1).

Cyberpunk genre deals with protagonists who are often nothing more than partly human and partly machine. It is noticeable that in the film *The Matrix* how the humans are fully connected to a cyber world in which their bodily functions are all mechanically catered for whilst they inhabit a world of total simulacra; an acute hyperreality. This is another facet of the spectrum where the real world is totally replaced by virtual reality. *The Matrix* is of course a romantic vision of the future that seems perhaps an unlikely trajectory for current research and vision. The current research breaks away with romantic tendency to romanticize cyberspace and its marvels

and wonders that information technology can do in future. This study attempts to explore the issue of reality crises under the hyperreality of cyberspace and highlights the probability of the construction of illusions under this hyperreality. It happens when man is all lost in the virtual realities of cyberspace and his consciousness of the realities of the real world around him is lost or at least dimmed. Being over-occupied with cyberspace, the user is likely to push the realities of the real world to the margins and develop new realities totally based on the reality of cyberspace and this is what happens in the case of characters under study.

2.9 Construction of Hallucination Under Hyperreality of Cyberspace

William Gibson uses the term 'hallucination' to define cyberspace in his novel *Neuromancer*. Hallucination is an experience involving the apparent perception of something not present. It is not something based on reality; rather, it is merely the perception of the presence of something which does not exist. In the case of postmodern characters of the narrative under study, hallucination takes place on conceptual level. They develop such illusions and thoughts which do not exist in the world of internet and cyberspace in not in a capacity to meet with their expectations from it. Being over-indulged in the world of internet, they construct illusions that cyberspace will solve their such and these problems in their real lives in real physical world. But reality of the real life and capacities of information technology reduce their expectations to mere illusions and by the end of the narrative, they figure out their respective hallucinations connected with virtual world.

William Gibson in his cyberpunk narrative *Neuromancer* (1984) has defined cyberspace as, "A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation……" (65). Virtual reality of cyberspace based on this 'consensual hallucination' is the dynamic part of postmodern cultural structures around the globe where information technology is embedded in all spheres of life and is an inseparable part of everyday reality. The current age of technology has brought a kind of hyperreality of cyberspace into limelight in a way that its realities has become our real spheres. We see the real as it is represented by its simulations by media and cyberspace. These simulations are copies of copies and are likely to be detached from and even totally divorced from the 'real' in physical world. This phenomenon of 'real'

in postmodern context is defined as 'simulacrum' by Baudrillard in his philosophical treatise *Simulacra and Simulation*. The fix into this simulacrum is likely to cause a kind of disconnectivity in the human minds from their physical world surroundings. This digital world of simulacra can impose itself, like the shreds of the map in Baudrillard's discourse, upon our 'reality'. In postmodern era, it has in fact become our 'reality' or more correctly our hyperreality. For what now is 'real'? Where are the boundaries? These are certain questions which the current project has taken into consideration.

2.10 Reviews of *Meatspace*

The narrative *Meatspace* encompasses the experiences of postmodern characters in the hyperreal world of cyberspace and its impacts on their comprehension. The hero of the selected narrative named, Kitab 1 is concerned about his cyber life than his real life. He spends most of time by being busy with his social network. The greater the number of hits, interactions and 'likes', the more validated he feels. Kitab 1 is like many people that we know in real life who are lost in their hyperreal world. This is a recently published narrative and there exists an availability of least research work on it. Thus, some reviews of *Meatspace* as well as author's interview about the narrative are given here to refer to author's inspiration and intention in its writing and the views of the other readers about this narrative.

Mahvesh Murad published her review of the novel in *Dawn* newspaper and she writes, "I spoke to Shukla earlier this year when he visited Karachi for the Karachi Literature Festival, and again more recently about where *Meatspace* came from. "The book started in three places," he said. "The first was being asked to write a short story about social media for BBC Radio 4. I wrote something about deleting my mum's Facebook account when she died and how that digital footprint seemed more indelible than her soul, which saddened me. … The second was, when joking with my mate Rob about getting a tattoo to make him look smarter (he has full-sleeve tattoos), we Googled bow-tie tattoos. The first person in Google image search was a scary doppelgänger for Rob. Really, really scarily Rob alike. Within seconds, we had found his website, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn … and was surprised by how easy all that was to find. The third inciting incident … was in 2010, when the second Nikesh Shukla in the world signed up for a Facebook account … I sent him a questionnaire to see how alike we

were. He never replied" (Murad, Dawn). Thus, the narrative is inspired from author's personal experiences with cyberspace. Theme of the concreteness of cyberspace and indelible prints of online simulacrum of individuals go long in the novel also.

Shukla gives Kerry Hudson's critical review of *Meatspace* in 2014 edition of the book, "As a fellow writer/ internet addict/human being, *Meatspace* really touched (and chilled) me. It is not just a brilliant story in itself but really a front-runner in terms of examining how our relationship with the internet is impacting our real lives". He has also added James Smythe's review on his work, "*Meatspace* is, simply, one of the finest novels I have ever read about modern life and modern living, terrifying, beautiful, hilarious and powerful; about how loose we are with ourselves and our personas when we step online; about how technology moves faster than us, and will drag us in its wake if we only let it; and about friendship, love and family…….It's so achingly relevant to whatever zeitgeist we're currently undergoing that it's almost like reading through an instagram filter. Douglas Coupland, Junot Diaz, Chuck Palahniuk and Jennifer Egan: stick them in a blender, and out comes this amazing new novel by one of UK's most distinct voices". Thus, *Meatspace* is a contemporary cyberpunk narrative that delineates human experiences with technology. These reviews on the selected narrative and literature review in this chapter has helped me to outline the rationale of this study.

2.11 Conclusion

The review of literature paves the way for the questions which I have raised in my study. It also finds the research gap in the already available researches and provides the ground and connectivity to my research. The theoretical framework and methodology have been discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The theoretical framework used for this research is eclectic in approach. It takes into consideration various aspects of postmodernism like dismantling of metanarratives, hyperreality, cyberspace, and cyberpunk fiction and tries to study the lives of postmodern character under analysis in the light of these postmodern philosophic thoughts. Lyotard defines postmodernism as an 'incredulity to metanarratives' that means that postmodern man does not believe in any transcendental objective truths. There is no absolute truth in the postmodern context. The postmodern man has mininarratives of his own and his notions of truth/ reality are quite subjective. On the other hand, the rapid technological developments in postmodern age and their excessive usage in all spheres of life have deep impact on human comprehension in our era. These developments have given a totally changed outlook to reality and its representation in postmodern age. Real is now represented through technological commodities like TV, VCR, cellular phones, cyberspace, advertisement, and media etc. This representation of real through simulation affects postmodern man's notions of reality in an unconscious and unnoticed way. The depiction of this social metamorphosis in literature has given rise to the concepts of hyperreality and cyberspace as well as evolvement of the sub-genre of Science Fiction under the title "Cyberpunk Literature". These postmodern theoretical aspects form the theoretical framework of this study. Cyberpunk literature depicts human experiences with cyberspace. The characters under analysis in this study are in the fix of the total involvement in the hyperreal world of cyberspace. Cyberspace has replaced their real physical world in the way that they are unconscious to the realities of real physical world and all lost in the virtual realities of cyberspace. The reality of real physical world has been replaced by a reality which is virtually constructed and hence is no more than an illusion.

Thus, the project has taken into consideration the postmodernism, hyperreality and cyberpunk fiction and has attempted to identify the impacts of these facets of the postmodern world on human perception. The characters are in face to face with two kinds of worlds. The one, the real physical world to which they belong; the other is the

transcendental virtual world of hyperreality where the real world has gone into the background. They are in the fix where they cannot differentiate between these two worlds. The idea in this project which appeals to me is to find out those illusions of the characters that characters build under the hyperreality of cyberspace.

3.1 Underlying Theories of the Study

Postmodernism comes into discussion in the last decades of twentieth century. More than being a systematic theory, it is a way of 'seeing' to define and identify the diverse complex characteristics of 20th Century. Hence, it consists of various literary perspectives. Coupled with many other diversities of the era, postmodernism explores the themes of truth and reality under the backdrop of postmodern technological developments, post-industrial cultural metamorphosis, speedy rise of capitalism, change in modes of advertisement, and subsequent culture of simulations. In this context, Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality is worth-mentioning and has been chosen as primary theoretic lens for this study which looks for the evaporation of boundaries between real and fiction and, hence, depicts reality crises in postmodern context.

Postmodern theoretical lens also takes into consideration the fragments which means that there is no absolute truth as well as there is loss of centrality. It is an eclectic approach which does not believe in any grand transcendental objective truth/ reality. Rather, reality is a subjective conception of individuals. The literature which has been produced during the postmodern era also breaks with the singularity of the 'real'. The characters which are depicted in the literature also work on the same notions of disbelief or in another case, they are left for the discussion so that to pin point the impacts of the era on these characters.

The flux of such thoughts comes from the modern age which in turn comes into existence later to the age of logic and reason. The age of logic believed in reason and stopped blind following of the values and norms. Then the modern age comes which started lamenting such lack of attachment to the prior values while the postmodern thoughts started celebrating these opinions. Since they are not lamenting it is a kind of feeding their philosophical thoughts. This has led to a kind of floating condition of postmodern man who is in a gravity of free space and his reality is a subjective

phenomenon based on his subjective experiences and thoughts. This study selects the area 'Cyberpunk Genre' and takes under consideration Lyotard's theoretical perspectives of the dismantling of metanarratives and Baudrillard's hyperreality and William Gibson's concept of cyberspace from postmodern theoretical perspectives to analyze the theme of reality crises in the lives of postmodern characters in the selected narrative *Meatspace.*

The seed of postmodernism lies in dismantling of the metanarratives. The postmodernists consider the metanarratives as 'an illusion'. Lyotard in his book *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) defines postmodernity as an 'incredulity to metanarratives'. This gesture questions the assumption of the earlier periods based on objective notions of reality which are more than an illusion for the postmodernists. The literature and critical investigation based on postmodern thoughts question the authority of these assumptions and hence lead to the lack of singular truth or in another words it leads to the notions of subjective mininarratives of reality which is the significant portion of postmodern thoughts.

The most significant part of postmodernism is hyperreality. In postmodern culture, due to the speedy advancement in technology and its penetration into all spheres of life, the reality of the physical world has been distorted by culture of pompous images and simulations. The real in real physical world has been left far behind and is replaced by its various representations and simulations by technological commodities like TV, VCR, android phones, internet, laptops etc. The postmodern man develops his notions of subjective reality based on his experiences with these simulations and his comprehension of the 'real' as represented by these simulations through media, advertisement, pop culture images and cyberspace. The postmodern individuals are accustomed to see real through these simulated representations. The relationship of real and the imagined becomes ultimately so close that it evaporates the difference between the two which leads to hyperreality. The real thing goes into background and it is replaced by imagined one which takes the individuals into state of mind where he cannot assume the replacement of the realities of real physical world by hyperrealities of cyberspace and media.

Baudrillard in his theoretical essay *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) reflects on postmodern condition of reality as represented by media and other contemporary simulations, "Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreality" (1). Hyperreality refers to the current condition of postmodernity where simulacra are no longer associated with any real referent and where signs, images, and models circulate detached from any real material objects or romantic ideals. This notion of postmodernism has been taken into consideration as the part of theoretical framework for this project. This notion liquefies   the distinction between the real and simulation. This again refers to contemporary notions of reality that reality is perceived by postmodern man as and how it is represented by media, cyberspace, and other postmodern simulations.

The theoretical framework of this project has also taken into consideration the cyberpunk literature which is the major area of this study. This literature looks for the overshadowing of the reality by the arrival of the digital age. The use of technology and abstract and fluid characteristics of the virtuality of the cyberspace in cyberpunk genre lead to the evaporation of the boundaries between the reality and the imagination in the plots of this narrative. The postmodern world has lost the physical presence and has been replaced by the transcendental world of internet, advertisement, and technology. Many of the Cyberpunk novels and movies delineate such an intoxicating hyperreal world of virtual reality and technological actions and marvels that the intoxicated mind of the reader/viewer becomes prone to be unconscious to its hyperreality and may take it more concrete than the concrete real physical world around them. This digital world of simulacra can impose itself, like the shreds of the map in Baudrillard's discourse, upon our 'reality'. In postmodern era, our lives are so much soaked in these hyperreal representations of reality, that the 'real' represented by them has now, in fact, become our 'reality' or more correctly our hyperreality. For what now is 'real'? Where are the boundaries? When and how did the character switch from one world to the other? Which part of his self noticed this transition? These are certain questions which the current project has taken into consideration.

William Gibson defines cyberspace as 'a consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators' (65) in his 1984 novel *Neuromancer*. This definition of Gibson highlights the dominant place of cyberspace in postmodern cultural structures as this phenomenon is shared by 'billions of legitimate operators' daily around the globe. The words 'consensual hallucination' highlight the constructed nature of cyberspace as well as they infer that this constructed virtuality is a sort of hallucination that has been taken as 'real' through the consensus of the users. Thus, the virtual reality has a dynamic impact on the mindset of postmodern net surfers and has deep and dynamic impact on their thoughts and their conception of reality. Cyberpunk genre deals with protagonists who are often nothing more than partly human and partly machines. The lonely protagonist is set against intoxicating world of constructed virtuality where he, like Prometheus, dives deep down in virtually constructed hyperreal realms and there he experiences things out of the box of stereotype culture, values, and conception of the 'real'. This virtual/real dichotomy of postmodern net surfer is the very essence of this project. Thus, this project has taken into consideration the individual's engagement with the devices and the internet where the physical world goes into the background. Characters drift from the realities of the physical world around them while they are busy with the devices. This engagement with the hyperreal world of cyberspace takes them into an isolation from other individuals around them from the real world and their minds become increasingly absorbed in the constructed world of virtual reality. Under this fix, they construct certain illusion and hence lose the reality in real physical world; a loss that takes place under the hyperreality of cyberspace.

The theoretical framework which paves the way for the analysis of the selected text is the manifestation of these technological innovations. On the one hand, there is the physical world while on the other hand there is the reality represented by hyperreal world cyberspace and other postmodern simulations. This reality representation is a kind of world of abstractions and imagination and is likely to be detached and even totally divorced from the real in physical world. But as this reality representation is the operant phenomenon of the postmodern culture, the reality that it represents is taken as 'real' which is likely to cause a reality crisis in the thoughts of postmodern characters. This world of imagination takes the individuals into a contemplation of illusions which

works for them as a real world. Thus, it widens the bridge between the real and the imagined and hence, they move away from reality to the imagination and create a world of illusions which is the prime objective of this project.

Such manifestation of the technology which is likely to lead to the constructed illusions exerts on   netizen surfers the need to have a critical sensibility of mind while using cyberspace. This is such an intoxicating world of hyperreality that it falls like 'the deserts of the real' over the users and they may not be able to come out of the clutches of the technology as well as may not be easily outline the difference between reality and hyperreality. So, this mergence with cyberspace introduces new considerations, a connection with a different universe or possibly encompassed in the phrase from *Simulacra and Simulation*, "It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours. The desert of the real itself" (Baudrillard 1).

3.2 Theorizing the Focal Point

The above section of the chapter highlights that the project has taken into consideration the major concepts from the postmodern tendencies, especially hyperreality and cyberspace as the theoretical approach to the selected narrative that belongs to the Cyberpunk Genre. These thoughts are primarily associated with Baudrillard who gave concept of hyperreality in *Simulacra and Simulation* and William Gibson who gave the concept of cyberspace in his debut cyberpunk narrative *Neuromancer*. These concepts come from the postmodern world where technology and virtual world has replaced the real. Man has lost his center and he does not find any ideological anchor to associate himself with. This is not the matter of a philosophical mind; rather, every average person suffers from the same state of mind. The characters under analysis in this study have been taken as representatives of the postmodern culture and serve to be an apparatus to examine the issue of reality and its representation in postmodern culture. The selected text projects the very same fundamental question where the characters are in the fix of the hyperreal world of cyberspace and postmodern culture surrounding them and they undergo 'reality crises' under this hyperreality.

Such a fusion of the technology with the physical world has brought a havoc to the human life. Apparently, it seems like that owing to have technology under command man has a connection to the far-off places and the world has been changed into a global village where interactions are just a click away. But the situation is upside down if one were to look at the other side of the picture. He has lost his connectivity with his surroundings and the people around him being over-absorbed in cyberspace. This engagement with the hyperreal world of cyberspace is so intoxicating that, like in case of characters under analysis in this study, it's likely to make one unconscious to realities of the real physical world and the user is likely to develop illusions if he/she is not using the critical sensibility of his/her rational mind in his interface with technology. The literature which has been produced in the postmodern era in this context, Cyberpunk Genre, has highlighted such kind of the dark sides of the cyber world and the selected text is one of them.

3.3 Defining Constructed Hallucination and the Loss of Real

Oxford Webster dictionary defines hallucination as, "An experience involving the apparent perception of something not present". Thus, hallucination is not something based on real, rather, it is just the perception of the presence of something which does not actually exist. In the narrative under study, hallucination takes place at conceptual level. Under this hallucination, characters develop such concepts under the hyperreality of cyberspace and connect such expectations from cyberspace which are nothing more than illusions. Hence, their illusions signify nothing but the loss of the 'real' in the backdrop of the hyperreality of cyberspace.

William Gibson, in his novel *Neuromancer,* defines cyberspace as 'a consensual hallucination' which highlights the constructed nature of the virtual reality of cyberspace that is 'experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators' (65). Since this hallucination/ virtual reality is 'consensual' and 'shared daily by billions of legitimate operators', it signifies its operant position in postmodern cultures around the globe. Thus, the world of internet and the age of technology has taken the individuals to a state of mind where the reality does not exist. In other words, it has produced a hyperreality which has replaced the physical world. The interesting thing about the transcendental world of cyberspace is that its reality representation is so intoxicating

that it does not let the netizen surfer understand the difference between the two worlds and ,hence, it ultimately leads to the construction of hallucination as well as the loss of the real.

3.4 Research Method

This research uses textual analysis as the primary technique to analyze the 'reality crises' existing in the narrative. This method as a data gathering process; a methodology for those researchers who want to study that how members of the culture or the subculture under study make a sense of who they are and how they make a sense of the world surrounding them. A researcher may select to apply a textual analysis when considering questions like, what is the meaning of this text? How this text is related with its context? How is it related with already existing works in the related area? etc. In the fields of literature, media studies, mass com, sociology, and cultural studies, it is a tool for researchers to collect information about how other human beings characterized or documented in the 'text' under analysis make 'a sense of the world' they are living in. Gabriele Griffin in his book *Research Methods for English Studies* has compiled essays on research methods in English studies. In Chapter 9 of this book, he gives Catherine Belsey's essay *Textual Analysis as a Research Method*. Belsey writes in this essay, 'textual analysis is indispensable to research in cultural criticism, where cultural criticism includes English, cultural history and cultural studies, as well as any other discipline that focuses on texts or seeks to understand the inscription of culture in its artefacts' (160). This study also a kind of cultural criticism as it attempts to examine an important concern of postmodern culture: the issue of 'reality and its representation' in postmodern culture. Keeping in view Belsey's opinion that 'textual analysis is indispensable to research in cultural criticism' (160), I have chosen textual analysis as my research method. Textual analysis of the narrative under study is done to examine the issue of 'reality' and its representations in postmodern culture.

Alan McKee also, in his book *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide*, regards textual analysis as the appropriate method to do cultural analysis. McKee writes, "We interpret texts (films, television programmes, magazines, advertisements, clothes, graffiti, and so on) in order to try and obtain a sense of the ways in which, in particular

cultures at particular times, people make sense of the world around them' (1). His expression 'particular cultures at particular times' focuses the importance of context of the text. The text under analysis is the product of postmodern culture as well postmodern man is its consumer. I have interpreted the text in hand in the light of my understanding of the contemporary postmodern hyperreal culture.

Thus, the project has been focused on the textual analysis of the selected text and Belsey is of the opinion that it sets the agenda. Textual analysis provides the road map by itself for the analysis of the text. This study attempts to analyze the issue of reality and its representations in postmodern culture. The characters under analysis are taken as representatives of postmodern culture. The textual analysis is applied to analyze the mind setup of the characters, their language, their actions, their motives, their interaction with other characters, and their sense making of the world surrounding them. McKee is of the opinion that textual analysis involves understanding of content, rhetoric and pictures in the text to comprehend the life depicted in the text under analysis, 'Performing textual analysis, then, is an attempt to gather information about sense-making practices' (14).This study has taken into concentration the explorations of the paragraphs projecting hyperreality, major incidents pertaining to the prevalence of hyperreality and its impacts on the fictional characters. These incidents and situations in the selected text also have been explored in the light of the description of the phenomenon of hyperreality and virtual world of cyberspace given by main theorists and the other authors in the form of fictions.

McKee elaborates in *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide* his encompassment of the word 'text'. He writes in this book, "What is a text? If textual analysis involves analyzing texts, then – what exactly is a text? Answer: whenever we produce an interpretation of something's meaning – a book, television programme, film, magazine, T-shirt or kilt, piece of furniture or ornament – we treat it as a text. A text is something that we make meaning from" (4). McKee's concluding words; 'Text is something that we make meaning of' (4), refer to different objects that can be taken as 'text' in textual analysis to interpret meanings out of. And 'text' in the case of present study is the 'book' *Meatspace*. Though by listing 'a book, television programme, film, magazine,

T-shirt or kilt, piece of furniture or ornament', McKee means different other objects which can be taken as 'text' for textual analysis. Having inspiration from McKee's list, I have applied McKee's understanding of 'text' in a little different way in my study. I have closely studied such objects in my text and have tried to examine their dynamic significance in postmodern culture. I have also analyzed the significance of these technology-oriented objects in the lives and mind setup of the characters under analysis. For this purpose, the dynamic role of the technological commodities like laptops, cell phones, cyberspace, entertainment media, and different social media apps in the lives and thought process of characters is analyzed. Characters' interaction with these commodities and their interface with technological manifestations and hyperreal simulations produced by these commodities is analyzed to examine the effects of technology-oriented culture on characters' thoughts and understanding of life.

One of the approaches to the textual analysis is rhetorical criticism which helps to dig out the persuasive messages hidden in the text. Belsey in her essay *Textual Analysis as a Research Method* argues for this practice of the textual analysis through an illustration. She attempts to understand persuasive messages within the text *Tranquin and Lucretia* (a painting); considering exhausting possible interpretations of the cues in the text to understand persuasive messages. (160-163). McKee also prefers this practice within textual analysis and finds it to be feasible way of 'sense making', 'Performing textual analysis, then, is an attempt to gather information about sense-making practices – not only in cultures radically different from our own, but also within our own nations' (14). Thus, in my textual analysis, not only that motifs are analyzed and themes are interpreted but also language and images are interpreted in detail to interpret the cues and examine impacts of the hyperreality of cyberspace on characters. Characters' language and specially their usage of social media texting language as formal language; their coinage of new words with morphemes from cyberspace depict a lot about the effects of cyberspace in their lives. McKee advocates both 'content criticism' and 'rhetoric criticism' that, "It allows us to see how similar or different the sense-making practices that different people use can be. And it is also possible that this can allow us to better understand the sense-making cultures in which we ourselves live by seeing their limitations, and possible alternatives to them" (14). It also helps to understand the

historical, social and the cultural context. Furthermore, it gives an opportunity to evaluate the society. The approaches of McKee and Belsey towards textual analysis are much suitable for the analysis of the postmodern culture in the selected narrative as the ways (discussed above) provide much space to carry this research to draw a sound conclusion. Since my project is mostly interpretive and exploratory in nature.

McKee explains in this book, "What is textual analysis? When we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text" (1). The expression 'educated guess' gives weightage to the 'reflection of the reader' regarding likely interpretations of the text. Text and textual analysis, in postmodern criticism, is much more than author's intended meanings. It is an open-ended object in the hand of the reader who tries to interpret it in various possible ways. In research terms "reflection means interpreting one's own interpretation, looking at one's own perspectives from other's perspectives and turning a self-critical eye into one's own authority as interpreter" (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000: vii). The proposition of subjective and objective analysis of any text is an issue of entangled nature and Terry Eagleton refers to American author E. D. Hirshe Jr. to resolve the issue. He has given heed in his book *Validity in Interpretation* (1967) to the author's intended meaning and the meanings which come from the analysis of the readers. He does not deny the author's intention nor the meaning which is obtained by the readers. It indicates that there is much space for personal interpretation and analysis.

Qualitative approach to the analysis of the literary text in the light of the opinion of the above-mentioned writers best suits my study as it goes with ample cultural analysis in the text. As qualitative research is mostly associated with the understanding of the human behavior form the researcher's point of view or whatever that is researched, so I have tried to make this approach much elastic and eclectic in nature so that to incorporate maximum of the characteristics of the qualitative research and cultural analysis.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

PART A

POSTMODERN ISSUE OF REALITY AND ITS REPRESENTATION

Belsey, in her essay *Textual Analysis as a Research Method,* is of the opinion that 'textual analysis is indispensable to research in cultural criticism, where cultural criticism includes English, cultural history and cultural studies, as well as any other discipline that focuses on texts or seeks to understand the inscription of culture in its artefacts' (160). This study is the cultural analysis of the postmodern society with major focus on the issue of reality and its representation in postmodern culture. The textual analysis of the explicit and implicit meanings of the incidents and lingual aspects in the narrative under discussion manifests reality and its representation in postmodern culture. *Meatspace* puts in question the stereotype cultural notions of reality. It depicts reality and its representations in a media and technology-oriented global world. This part of the analysis explores and expands that how reality is subverted in postmodern culture and how issue of reality and its representation forms a significant theme and concern of Cyberpunk genre and postmodern theoretical dimension 'hyperreality'.

Meatspace brings cyberspace in the centre and pushes human beings and physical world to the margins which is the very essence of the subversion of reality. This subversion dismantles the set notions of reality and replaces them with subjective reality constructed by the individual character in the backdrop of cyberspace as well as postmodern hyperreal culture. The characters in *Meatspace* stand bold against stereotype metanarratives of the reality of physical world. They serve to be postmodern mininarratives that dismantle status quo metanarratives of reality and its representation. They construct their subjective reality in the background of virtual reality of cyberspace and postmodern hyperreal culture. Moreover, this subjective reality and these images of 'virtual reality' are not static. Rather, they carry on fluctuating with each human-cyber interface. Hence, the mininarratives of reality these characters construct in the backdrop of postmodern hyperreality are not only abstract but also fluid and carry on fluctuating each moment. This fluctuating manifestation of reality is the same

postmodern cultural metamorphosis that is discussed by Baudrillard in his essay *Simulacra and Simulation* in the words, "By crossing into a space whose curvature is no longer that of the real, nor that of truth, the era of simulation is intrigued by liquidation of all referentials" (2).

Dodge and Kitchin in their book *Mapping Cyberspace* write about the fusion of technology in human lives in contemporary age, 'These technological realms are so much integrated into our lives that they seem us our 'real space' (21). The lives of the characters in *Meatspace* is are also constantly soaked in the hyperreal world of cyberspace. For these characters the constructed virtual realm is more concrete than the real physical world. The world of internet has omnipresence for them. It grabs them round the clock and all they are concerned about is to check out notifications, compose attractive tweets, instagram documentaries of their daily life activities and develop blogs to enhance their fan following. They are over-occupied with the hyperreal world of cyberspace which drifts them away from realities of physical world. Pushing realities and human relationships in real physical world to the rear, they prefer their online interactions and the virtual world of cyberspace.

Kitab 1 is an unsuccessful writer. He prefers cyberspace to the physical world. His preferred world constitutes his subjective reality. He is always involved in different online activities. The novel opens with the line that represents the dynamic concern of Kitab1's life, 'The first and last thing I do everyday is see what strangers are saying about me' (1). In the opening scene, Kitab1 pulls his laptop from the other end of his bed and starts checking different notifications. This handy location of laptop connotes Kitab1's 24/7 engagement of mind with virtual world.

He has a Google calendar alert that tells him his daily online schedules. He checks his Facebook, Amazon, Twitter notifications and emails and gives much time to all these activities. The time he spends on different notifications suggests that social media is the most bothered reality of his life. Interestingly, Kitab 1's usage of language as well as his response to real life people also suggest his over-occupation with virtual world.

He uses word 'actual human' (1) to refer Kitab 2 and Rach. Kitab 1's response to their messages shows that real life people are least bothered by him. "The only other 2 messages from actual humans are a friend request from the one other person with my name on Facebook, which I ignore when I see the next one is from Rach: an email letting people know her new address. I wonder why she wants me to have this information" (1, 2). He gets engaged in other online activities. The way Kitab1 ignores real life people around him and prefers different other online activities and interactions represents the subversion of his reality. He pushes the real life and real human beings to the margins and abstract world of virtual reality is the very centre of his attention.

Kitab 1 is consistently absorbed in cyberspace and leaves real life relationships far behind. His girlfriend Rach breaks up with him because he is never mentally present with her the time, he is physically present with her, "One of our main arguments was her 'Black Ops' aversion to technology..........you had to be present with her. And bloody hell, that was hard" (13). This helplessness to divert his attention back from cyberspace to his real-world relationships suggests that he has left relationships in real world to the rear of his concerns. The abstract world of cyberspace is the very centre of his consideration.

He ignores his father even when he is busy with his online interactions. He thinks that his online persona is more loved by his interactions than his real being cared by his relationships. While he is online, he is helpless to divert his attention back from cyberspace to meatspace. His online activities keep on drifting him away from his real-life relationships. Kitab1's father, Rasesh, shares his story of Friday Night with a lady. He has just given his anecdote. Meanwhile, Kitab1 receives a Facebook message and his attention is diverted to his cyberspace community, "The anecdote boils down to, I went to this bar and it was full of people half of my age and the beer was expensive ....I stop him mid-story so I can check my phone, which has chimed with a Facebook message" (27). Rasesh feels ignored and complains about that, "What is on that phone all the time?' Kitab 1 replies, "Nothing...Just messages from the world, telling me they love me" (27). This feeling of love by interactions in the abstract virtual world is more concrete and important for Kitab 1 than the need of his time and attention for his real-life relationship; his father.

Over-indulgence in cyberspace plays a vital role in the constitution of his thoughts. Virtual world constitutes his subjective reality. Cyberspace is the prime motivation behind his actions. Kitab1 had been living a life of long inertia regarding women after his break up with Rach. The cyberspace is the very medium that stirs his inertia. He wakes up in the early morning, checks his emails and notifications from different social media apps. He finds no interactions there. He clicks on his Tumblr and finds no notifications there. Then he reads that of someone whom he is following. The lady had documented 'nape of her neck for 365 days, documenting it from normal to love-bitten and so on' (31). Kitab 1 narrates its impact on himself, "The photos, all fleshy white nondescript stretches of skin are hypnotic and the day-by-day nature of Tumblr gives me a forward-thrust in my own inertia" (31). There lies a mash-up of his real-life affairs with reality and its representation by cyberspace. It represents his hyperreality. Rach, his break-up with her and subsequent sensuous inertia are his real-life problems. Consciously or unconsciously, he counteracts his real-life pain through solace from virtual world. The way his mind mashes his break up pain and the hyperreal Tumblr and the working of subsequent stirring of emotions blurs the distinction between the two worlds and represents his hyperreality. It also represents his subversion of reality where real life (issue of break up) is superseded by virtual world (solace from virtual world).

This phenomenon of virtual reality studs up his emotions. While making breakfast next morning, Kitab 1 stares at the bathroom on the other side of the kitchen window with a desire to see someone with pink flesh under shower in desperate search of solace to his sensuousness. Again, he gives solace to his stud up feelings through the abstract world of virtual reality watching 'American sitcoms and dramas to keep me company till I fall asleep' (31). This company given by virtuality of cyberspace represents subversion of his reality where reality of cyberspace topples the realities of physical world. The issue of break up and subsequent stress in real life is sufficiently enough catered by the virtual reality of cyberspace. This gesture represents the postmodern subversion of metanarratives of reality where reality of the abstract world of cyberspace supersedes the reality of physical world.

Kitab 1 is also undergoing unsuccessful period in his writing career. One of his books is already in the market with no significant response from the readers. The other is on his desktop and it looks like he does not hope much applause and recognition for the second one. He needs to investigate the reasons of his failure as a writer and counter plan to achieve success through serious and practical initiatives. Under his subversion of reality and having belief in the concreteness of cyberspace and simulated images of postmodern pop culture, he devises strategies for his success using channel of cyberspace.

He plans to get an attractive textual image, 'Everyday, I write the book', tattooed on his arm. He believes that this tattoo will give him swag of being erudite, will be source of his inspiration for creative writing as well as will increase his fan following. He has high expectations from the tattoo, "Tomorrow I will show strangers and loved ones and I will say, oh yes, it's because I write. It is an aide memoire to always be thinking about literature. It's a kick in the teeth reminder that I am a writer" (44). These words shed light on his thoughts which constitute his subjective reality. The abstract image of tattoo is much dynamic and vital in his comprehension of the world around him.

He considers his tattoo analogous to the realities of virtual world, "In a world of digital interactions, endless tweets, Facebook haikus, ebooks, I'm taking a stand for the analogue world. I am feeling the writing on my arm, my writing arm and that's how I will write, with the knowledge that I have etched out of my statement of intent on my own skin (40). This comparison suggests the dynamic place of the world of cyberspace in his thoughts and in the development of his subjective reality. He takes stand for his tattoo. He thinks that it is highly significant like all these phenomena of virtual realities of cyberspace. He thinks that it is significant enough to make a mark like them.

His mind beholds this abstract image as concrete, "What's more meatspace than having something tattooed on the meat of you? Everyday, I write the book. (40). He holds this reality that his tattoo is as real; as concrete and as significant as the world of cyberspace, "It's there for ever, it's permanent. You can't throw it away. You can't dispose of it. You can't delete it. You can't cache it. It exists. When every word typed on Google is recorded on a server somewhere, this is the most important statement of

them all, the physical manifestation'" (40-41). These words demonstrate the place of cyberspace and images of postmodern culture in the construction of his reality. These gestures show the subversion of his reality where the abstract reality of virtual world and postmodern pop cultural images become concrete and the centre and the real physical world is pushed to margins. His words sound like proverbs of postmodern age same like Elias mentions in his book *Cyberpunk 2.0 Fiction and Contemporary* (2009) that "…. all the new trends [now] are cyberpunk axioms reminiscences" (4).

He uses cyberspace to increase his number of followers and readers. His friend, Aziz, strengthens his opinion in this context, "..........Aziz would tell me 'The more friends and followers you have, the more interactions you create. It's all about interactions'" (51). He is so much absorbed in the world of cyberspace that it looks like his real space. The real world and real-world relationships are left far behind in his obsession with cyberspace. His relationships look like oppression to him. He has no interest in his immediate family; his father, his friends as well as his extended relatives. He ignores them in real life as well as on different social media apps. He avoids his family on Facebook, 'I very rarely go on Facebook. It's become a quagmire of familial oppression' (52). His girlfriend, Rach, complains about his over-indulgence with the cyberspace, 'I hate how you're never in the room with me. Even when you're in the room, you're just on that bloody phone making lazy self-obsessed quips about nothing' (14). Ignoring her complain, he prefers online interactions to the real-life relationships. 'It's just fun, this big online conversation' 'what about our conversation? I' m in the room'. 'I just think it's amazing, having this global audience to interact with' (14).

All these gestures of Kitab 1 delineate subversion of his reality. He pushes real life and real-life relationships to the margins and abstract world of virtual reality is the very centre of his attention and all his activities. It represents his subversion of reality; from physical world to hyperreal world of cyberspace.

Kitab 2 is a young student of IT from India. He also has an equal tendency towards excessive usage of cyberspace. He lives, thinks, and plans in the backdrop of cyberspace. His plans, his motivations and his activities revolve around the world of internet. All he is concerned with and is aspired from is the world of cyberspace. In compact, cyberspace is the very factor that constitutes his subjective reality.

His educational career is the real-world reality of his life. His father is an eminent and   hardworking professor of electrical engineering at Bangalore University. His father had a dream to teach at Imperial College in London. Keeping in view that Kitab 2 is good at computer and coding, the father drops his personal dream   and decides to make Kitab 2 apply for Masters in some good university in UK. His sound educational and professional career is the expectation   of his father as well as the reality of his life.

Being over-occupied with virtual world, he pushes the real life and real-world human beings to the margins and cyberspace is the very centre of his activities and thoughts. He goes through Kitab1's simulacrum on Facebook, Amazon, Instagram and blogs. He develops   a fancy for Kitab1's life and is impressed by the   simulated versions of Kitab1's persona in cyber world, 'I thought, you're a dude. And you seemed like a nice guy from Twitter, from your Facebook, from your blog—I thought he will look after me. We're brothers' (175). Constructing his subjective reality in the backdrop of cyberspace, he develops this aspiration that he will travel to London, meet Kitab1 and Kitab 1 will look after him and help him to fix all his real-life issues.

Pushing realities of the real physical world to the rear, he carries on getting increasingly indulged in the world of cyberspace. The physical concrete reality of the life of Kitab 2 is his educational career. His father gets him a computer and internet to facilitate him in his studies. But all he avails from internet is that he plays games all the time. "My dad made me study. Then he got internet in the house and made me study. All the time, I was playing computer games" (106).

He holds disagreement with his father regarding his professional career. His father wants him to study electrical engineering whereas he dreams to be a software writer of video games. "I have a very strict father, dude. I have to do what he tells me. Video games...... dude. He thinks they are a waste of time with no money. He doesn't realize how much money you get for good games" (172, 173). This gesture of Kitab 2 delineates that he constructs his subjective reality based on his interaction with cyberspace. His father and his expectations from Kitab 2 are left far behind while he steers in the realms of cyberspace.

Kitab2 is over-occupied with playing videogames. He pushes his physical world affairs to the rear of his consciousness. He fails to submit his research paper in time as he was busy in playing video games. He even misses his mother's cremation ceremony as he was busy in playing video game and was about to finish the game *Assassin's Creed*. He fails to submit his application for admission to UK University as he was busy playing video game. 'I forgot to submit my application online in time. I was playing *Call of Duty* on the day and missed the deadline by, like, 15 minutes. Can you believe it, Dude? Only 15 minutes!' (174).

Kitab 2 hides this fact from his father that he couldn't get admission in UK University and doesn't have any study visa. Kitab2's father manages his air ticket and gives him some money which he has to supplement with money he will earn from some part time job there in UK to meet his needs. Kitab 2 hides his anxiety from his father as he believes that his father is not good at stress management. 'He doesn't handle disappointment well. He once set fire to my Xbox, dude. While I was playing it. I'd nearly finished *Assassin's Creed'* (176). Eventually, he reaches UK but he has no place to live in and no sources to meet his living.

This is not his father whom he consults in this quagmire of tough circumstances. He tries to manage his anxiety over perplexed situation and circumstances through Google search engines. He tries to hack iTunes so that he may sell the codes online but fails. He tries to hack PayPal so that he could PayPal himself some money but in vain. While Googling himself in this panic situation, he finds Kitab1. He feels happy on going through that Kitab 1 lives in London, the place where his air travel will end in chaos. This idea pops up in his mind that Kitab 1 is the right solution to quagmire of his present issues. "It was like fate.... My other [Kitab 1] lives where I'm going. I thought you could show me the world" (175).

There lies an increasing development of hyperreality. This is the reality of virtual world that carries on steering him in his real life. His interaction with cyberspace sets his aspirations. On reaching his dreamland, UK, he tells Kitab 1 about his dreams which he expects to be fulfilled in UK. "'I've travelled so far.' He looks at his hands. 'I don't know anybody and I'm scared. I have never been on plane before. I like computer games. My daddy is very strict. I .... have never worn jeans. I want to kiss a

girl? Have you kissed a girl? I don't drink alcohol but I drank bhang lassi once. I was sick on my cleaner. Please' (84). He wants to update his life according to global and virtual lifestyles. He wants all the freedom and luxuries that London life can give him. Cyberspace is the very channel which exposes the prospects of London life for him and there, he develops fancy for it. There occurs his reality transition. He leaves the ground concrete realities of the physical world at the rear of his consciousness and develops his reality based on virtual phenomenon. He travels from India to UK keeping belief on the credibility of this reality transition.

He holds belief in this subjective reality that he constructs amidst virtual realm. He is pretty sure that Kitab1 will make his issues fixed in London. While he leaves India, other than a suitcase with a few clothes, the only commodity that he is having with him is his laptop. It suggests the importance of its usage in his life as well as his high over-indulgence into cyberspace, 'Please, look, I only have one suitcase and my laptop. I have nowhere to go. We are brothers by name. Come on' (86).

His craze for video games and his belief in the concreteness of abstract online simulacrum of Kitab 1 drift him away from his physical world, real world relationships and serious assignments of his life. He tries to find solution to his real-life issues from the world of cyberspace. It suggests his hyperreality where he mashes up realities of his real life with the abstract virtuality of cyberspace else in a way that there are no clear margins between the two. Around the plot, there lies a continuous toppling of physical world by the abstract simulations of postmodern age. Kitab2 is more convinced by abstract phenomenon of video games. The craze for video games lies in the centre and he pushes his career, his relationships in his real life, his father's aspirations regarding Kitab 2's educational and professional career and his father's instructions to the margins. It represents subversion of metanarratives of stereotype notions of reality and development of mininarratives of reality based on his interaction with virtuality of video games as well as cyberspace.

This toppling of metanarratives of reality and development of hyperreality is common among all the characters in this narrative. Cyberspace supersedes human relationships and realities of real physical life in the life of Kitab1's father too. Rasesh spends a life of delusions to counteract the painful realities of his life. He copes with

his pain through over-indulgence in social media, alcohol, meetings, and dinners with online interactions etc.

Kitab 1 and Rasesh both try to escape from real life pain. Kitab 1 shares his feelings when he visits his father's home, "I came home because I wanted to feel the comfort of being home. It feels like a shrine. I feel nothing. I've made a mistake. I need to leave" (101). Kitab 1 tries to avoid painful facet of his father's personality as well as killing solitude of his life. He chooses to live with his friend Aziz and Kitab1's father is left with only choice to live in solitude at his home where he is always lost in the painful memories of his late family.

Kitab1's father tries online interactions with ladies for his company and to get solace in his solitary depressed life. "He finds friends of friends, divorcees or widows who want to be taken out for dinner and a dance and he uses them for company. He pays to take them out and they give him company" (24). Thus, he fills the gap of real-life relationships through online interactions. This gesture suggests his subversion where the real-life issues and relationships are pushed to margins and cyberspace is the very centre of his activities. He deconstructs his reality and reconstructs it in the background of cyberspace.

The reality of his physical world life is that he is an isolate individual with pangs of his late family. The situation is embittered by the fact that his son, Kitab1, is also living a life over-occupied with virtual world. He chooses to live with his friend Aziz and his online interactions. Eventually, Rasesh is left with the option to live in cyberspace and with his online interactions. He fixes his solitude (his real physical world issue) through online interaction with ladies (virtual reality of cyberspace). He relies heavily on this solace which he tries to get from virtual world. The nature of his online interactions represents his development of hyperreality as there is no concrete reality behind his online interaction with ladies. He remains isolate same like before. His online relationships prove nothing but temporary anesthesia and tantalizing hallucination.

Rasesh loves his son and wants to see him successful in his life. Since cyberspace and the reality, it represents is the preferred spectrum for these characters.

He uses medium of cyberspace for all the running issues of his life. He tries to be closer to his son choosing channel of cyberspace. Rasesh joins different social media apps to keep in touch with his son. He joins Facebook with different aspirations among which the major one is that he wants to keep in touch with his son there. "'Dad do we have to talk about Facebook?' 'Come on, Kitab-san. I joined the Face Book because it's the only time I see you'" (26).

Cyberspace is the dynamic part of his life. When he meets his son or calls him, 80 % of his conversation is based on cyberspace stuff. He wants to ask him about the usage of different social media apps; discuss his online interactions with ladies, suggest his son the prospects of his fame as a writer using channel of cyberspace etc. He also tags him in his interactions with ladies to keep his online and offline family life in the loop. The reality of abstract virtual world is more concrete for him. In order to make his son cope with his issue of unsuccessful writing career, he consults cyberspace. Though he is new to cyberspace, yet he tries his best to suggest him solution from virtual realm. He suggests him to use Wikipedia for his self-promotion:

> 'I do not like this. I have realised I am not being a father to you. I am being a friend. A father would see that his son is suffering from writer's block. I found this site called Wikipedia and I started reading about writer's block. Have you heard of Wikipedia?' 'yes, Dad.' 'you should get on it. I looked you up. You don't have a Wikipedia?' 'I will get on it' 'Did you know JK Rowling had writer's block?' 'No, I didn't.' 'Well she did. And she has her book in Tescos.' 'Thanks, Dad'. (178)

Not only this, the cyberspace also dismantles relationships between human beings. These characters push real world relationships to the margins and online interactions are increasingly near and dear to them. There lies an over and over toppling of cyberspace over meatspace in this narrative. Rasesh tries to discuss the ongoing issues of Kitab 1's life with him but Kitab 1 slightly changes the topic to cyberspace. "'I am here for you, son. You can talk to me about anything. I will listen.' I deflect immediately and ask him about his latest dates and his latest stock triumphs and failures. Mostly failures---we are in a double dip recession" (178).

The narrative brings the isolation of human lives in contemporary era to the surface. The characters counteract their loneliness through their engagement with cyberspace. In his busy life with his online interactions, Kitab1's father has 2/7 days for friends, family and women in real physical world. 'It is Friday night (my dad's usual slot for me—Friday for children and friends, Saturday for ladies) and I am sitting in our favourite Indian restaurant waiting for him to arrive'. Apart from these short visits, Kitab1's father contacts him to discuss his issues with cyberspace as he is new to this technology. Sometimes, he consults Kitab 1 to share his online affairs with ladies. Only this much is the family interaction that is present in Ktab1's life. Kitab1's mother is dead. Number of his siblings is not mentioned. His father commemorates them as his late family which infers that none of his siblings are alive. Among them, Kitab misses his brother, Aziz, much desperately. He has been living a life of acute loneliness.

Aziz is his brother and his only company in meatspace, "If it wasn't for Aziz, I probably wouldn't talk to anyone apart from online" (4). His interior temperament is always sad. In a situation, Aziz cuddles with him and they hump each other's body in a friendly fight. Kitab1 feels so, "'He falls off me laughing. I allow myself a smile'" (5). The words 'allow myself' are highly significant. They represent his passive smile and his internal sadness. They also cry the need of the warmth of real-world relationships in his life. After a little cuddling Aziz tells him while leaving the room, 'I'll send you some pop culture gifs to keep you company' (5). This gesture of Aziz demonstrates the subversion of human relationships in postmodern culture. The hyperreal images like gifs replace human relationship.

As Kitab1 is isolate, he desperately needs Aziz's company. Kitab 1 doesn't feel good on this idea because he doesn't want Aziz's absence in his life, "My stomach churns at the thought of Aziz leaving.................I cover my nose and mouth with my hands so Aziz can't see I am frowning" (32, 33). Kitab 1 tries hard to make Aziz drop his idea of travelling to USA. Being driven by the online persona of Teddy Baker and his bow tie tattoo, Aziz is crazy to meet Teddy Baker and to show him matching bow-tie tattoo on his body. Aziz tells Kitab 1 about his craze for the tattoo and his idea to meet Teddy Baker, "Buddy, it's the one. It's the one of ones. It's the one most toppermost of the poppermost. I want it. I want to turn up at Teddy Baker's yard with

a matching tattoo pulling the same shit-eating grin and I want to film his reaction. Wanna be my cameraman?" (33).

This hankering of Aziz lying towards his online pursuit for his doppelganger and its preference over his real-life company, Kitab1, represents the toppling of virtual world reality over reality of physical world. The real-life relationship is pushed to the margin and online pursuit is the centre of Aziz's consideration, "I need to get out of flat more, man. I have babysat you enough. Time for Aziz to get back on the adventure train. So, guess what? I booked a trip out to go find him. I'm going to New York. The dream, Kit. The dream is happening. I'm going to bloody New York" (32). Leaving Kiab 1 alone, he chooses to travel to USA to seek online persona of Teddy Baker in real life.

Same dislocation of human relationships and relocation of cyberspace at the place of human relationships exists there in the life of Kitab 1's father, Rasesh. Rasesh is an isolate individual. After the death of his wife, he has been staying with her memories. To feel the feelings of his wife being alive with him, he eats the same food, watches same movies, dresses up in the same style and listens same music as they used to do together. Somehow, his working life mitigates his pain in the way that it keeps him busy. But after his retirement from his workplace, the warehouse, he finds his isolation hard to cope with. "Then he retired and quickly realized how much of a social animal he is" (24).

Kitab 1 is the only alive family member of Rasesh. And even this single one prefers to live with his friend, Aziz. Rasesh has been living with the memories of his late family. Whenever Kitab1 visits him at his home, he is found drunk and sank in his old memories. There are two selves of him which are both poles apart. He is acutely panic and all lost in memories when he is at his home. He is a full boom party boy when he is out with ladies. "'I don't know where my life is going', my dad says. Whenever he's home' he's low, talking about ending it all. When he's out, he is the life of party. This is the opposite of who he is when he visits. This is the him I avoid'" (101). Kitab 1 avoids painful side of his father. Living in home with the realities of his life, Rasesh undergoes pains of his life. He counteracts these pains with alcohol and his online interactions with ladies and by planning outing with them.

He is so isolate that there is none at his home to keep him away from excessive and harmful usage of wine. He has pasted a card in his cabinet to make him alert from overtaking of alcohol, 'Remember to no longer drown your sorrows in a bottle' (29). This card placed in his cupboard cries the need of human voices in his life.

Kitab 1 is fine with the fact that his father is ignorant of some aspects of his circumstances which he thinks are not his father's cup of tea, "Dad is rarely keen to know what's going with me, and that's fine because half of it he wouldn't be interested in (emails about things that don't emerge; short stories for magazines he'll never read; ideas for self-promotion) and the other half is not for his ears (my lack of earrings, my lack of social or sex life, my lack of consistent happy mental state) (28)". Kitab 1 is least interested in sharing his issues with his father. There lies a lack of proper and effective communication between Rasesh and Kitab 1. The space left by is occupied by cyberspace.

Kitab1's father calls him to discuss some problem and he suggests him to consult internet. "My phone rings and it's my dad. 'Hey pops,' I say aggressively, trying to hurry him off the phone...... 'You busy?' 'Yes, I am'. 'Too busy for your old man? What you doing?' 'Being busy,' I say high-pitched like a teenager. 'Fine, I'll go. Just quickly, Kitab-san- I've got the girl who loves Mexican food. I want your recommendations.' Kitab 1 replies, 'Try the internet, Dad' (197). Kitab1 is heading to meet Kitab 2 when his father calls him. His reply to his father's call delineates that in his busy life with his online interactions, he lacks time for his real-life relationship; his father. Eventually, his father is left with the option of cyberspace. 'Okay, ... I guess I can look online. How are you kiddo?' 'I've got to go pops,' I say, and I hang up the phone.' (197). This conversation between the two sheds light on dislocation of the place of human relationships in postmodern society where human relationships in physical world are toppled by online interactions in their lives.

Kitab 2 has only one family member, his father. Even these two are living a life in aloof from each other. There is no interaction between the two. Kitab 2's father has a busy life with his profession. He is unaware of the activities and circumstances of his son. Kitab 2 spends his lonely life amidst cyberspace where online interactions and abstract world of video games replace real life concerns and relationships. He is all

lost in the life of cyberspace and cyberspace is the phenomenon that is motive behind his actions, defines his   ambitions, outlines his aims of life, and shape his subjective realities.

Loneliness is the factor behind this subversion. It happens in acute loneliness that Kitab 2 gets overindulged in video games. He tells Kitab 1 that it was the time when his mother had already dead. His father was all busy in writing his book. Their cleaner and cook used to manage their home stuff. There was least interaction between him and his father. "….my mummy died of breast cancer.... I couldn't concentrate on anything. .... we both just lived in our flat. He in one room and me in another...... I didn't leave my room, dude. I just played video games, talked to sexy girls on Facebook. I'd go online and play *Call of Duty* with all these American college boys and pretend I was a big shot football player from Harvard" (173). It happens under over-occupation with virtual world that Kitab 2 constructs fancy for Kitab 1's life in UK and makes goal of his life to settle in London and be video games software writer there, "'I want to design computer games one day,' he said firmly. ...'you play a lot of computer games?' 'All the time, man. I am master at *Call of Duty*'" (91). He is so much absorbed in the deep realms of cyberspace that he is not ready to hear or follow his father. Kitab 1 asks him about his failure to get admission in UK university, "'Wait, your dad booked your flights a month before you came and still you missed the deadline for applications?'. He replies, 'Listen may. I'm a busy guy, okay? I can't just drop everything for my dad when he needs it'" (175). His reply suggests the subversion in human relationships where relationships in physical world are superseded by cyberspace.

This subversion in human relationships is common in this novel. The characters in this narrative are from split families, living isolate lives, having plenty of online social interactions   and lacking real life company of relationships. They counteract their isolation through engagement   with postmodern technological commodities and cyberspace. Cara, another character from the novel, prefers to live away from her family and runs behind her online pursuits for her company. She holds skype dinners for her online company to extract the joy of life, "Cara lives 45 minutes away by tube but doesn't meet up unless it's on Skype. She does this thing called Skype Dinners, where you cook some food and eat together online. It's supposed to be like a dinner party'

(10). Her behavior represents dismantling of status quo bonding of human relationships in real life. Relationships in physical world are superseded by online interactions.

Over all, there lies a dismantling of metanarratives of reality based on logical and scientific comprehension of the physical world. These metanarratives of reality are toppled by mininarratives of reality based on individuals' development of subjective truth and reality based on their human-cyber interfaces and their interaction with hyperreal postmodern culture surrounding them. Since, there exists an interweaving of characters' real life in physical world and their virtual life in cyberspace. There exists an increasing hyperreality in the novel where boundaries between the two worlds have been evaporated. Under this hyperreality, the characters leave the realities of their physical world and life to the rear and develop subjective reality in the backdrop of cyberspace and postmodern hyperreal culture. Just as the reality and its representation by cyberspace is abstract, fluid, inconsistent and transient; same are the characteristics of the subjective truth/ reality of these characters. The reality that they construct is also fluid and inconsistent. Around the development of plot, they are seen grappling with their comprehension of truth and reality in this context.

PART B

LOSS OF REAL AND CONSTRUCTION OF HALLUCINATION

The previous part of analysis sheds light on characters' subversion of reality in the backdrop of postmodern cyberspace. This chapter discusses hyperreality of cyberspace and postmodern culture and analyses probability of the loss of the real reality and construction of hallucination under this hyperreality. Lyotard has defined postmodernism as an 'incredulity to metanarratives. Baudrillard extends to define it as 'precession of simulacra' which means that exhausting process of over and over simulations mutilates reality and makes it difficult to distinguish between real and simulated. Baudrillard defines it as 'hyperreality'. The narrative under analysis seems to be engaged with these predominant notions of reality in postmodern culture. There lies an accelerated development of hyperreality in this novel which leads the characters to lose contact with reality and develop hallucination under this hyperreality. Belsey writes in her essay *Textual Analysis as a Research Method* that , 'textual analysis is indispensable to research in cultural criticism, where cultural criticism includes English, cultural history and cultural studies, as well as any other discipline that focuses on texts or seeks to understand the inscription of culture in its artefacts' (160). Thus, content analysis and rhetoric criticism are done in this section to understand postmodern culture existing in the narrative.

Meatspace projects the human perception in the hyperreal world of cyberspace. It delineates that critical sensibility of human mind can be shattered in this hyperreal world and the surfers are likely to lose their contact with reality and construct hallucination in this virtual realm. It happens when individual is all lost in the cyber realms and drifts far away from realities of real life. The characters Kitab 1, Kitab 2 and Kitab 1's father, Rasesh, all have tendency to live under hallucination. This hallucination is apparent from analysis of their offline personalities as well as online personas. In this part of the analysis, I have analyzed the hyperreality prevailing in the lives of these postmodern characters, characters'' development of hallucination under

this hyperreality and the loss of the real reality in their lives. Since, these characters are taken as representatives of postmodern culture in this study, their hyperreality and hallucination represents probability of this phenomenon in the postmodern culture. This study is the textual analysis of the narrative, I have taken under analysis the extracts depicting hyperreality; exploration of the major incidents causing hallucination as their consequences as well as interpreted lingual aspects i.e. images, symbols, and language for this purpose.

The novel projects massively increasing influx of users from all classes and all age bands into the hyperreal world of cyberspace. The characters prefer to interact in cyberspace than to meet in real life. The world of cyberspace is so captivating that it pushes the consciousness to the physical world to the rear. It has been embedded into their lives so deeply that they see the physical world through the representation of the world done by cyberspace. While Kitab 1 is online, Kitab 2 tries to deflect Kitab 1's attention from cyberspace to the consciousness of Kitab 2's physical presence with him but his effort goes in vain. "Why can't you put that much effort into a conversation with me? Especially when you're checking your phone every few minutes. Telling people where you are. Talking about the stupid things I say" (171). Kitab 1 replies, "I 'like' more Facebook things – pictures of people's children, sarcastic political opinions and motivational quotes. I'm engaging in my friend's lives" (192). The simulated version of the online friends, of the world and the people supersede the physical world around him. He interacts with the physical world through its simulated versions in the cyberspace. This tendency is common among all the characters; Kitab 1 be an example of it. This flux emanates a hyperreality in the lives of the characters.

Under this flux, characters are increasingly absorbed in cyberspace. Be it their relationship with other human beings or their relationship to the world around them, they see each phenomenon through the lens of cyberspace. Kitab 1 links himself to the world via cyberspace. "I link my Twitter and Facebook to some YouTube music videos I like. Just so I can feel like I've engaged in the world" (192).

Not only that he wants to be engaged in the lives of people via cyberspace, he also wants the world around him to be engaged in his life via cyberspace. Kitab 1 says, "'I've said more about my state of mind with the videos I choose than just saying, on

Twitter: 'I miss Aziz and I wish this doppelganger would fuck off and that wasn't my dick.' Somewhere in this vanity is genuine desire to communicate with the people who follow me. But on my terms. Where the things I rate create a demonstrative illusion of what I'm like as a person. In my head, this is exactly the message I wish to send out about social media me.' (192). This is his online simulacrum that he is continuously busy to maintain and develop and it is exactly what he wants the world to know.

This deep desire of Kitab 1 to compose online persona of himself represents the common tendency of postmodern age. These postmodern characters can have online intimacies but do not want to afford the burden of real-life relationships. Kitab 1 outlines the type of relationship he can afford with Kitab 2:

> Guilt has made me think I will add Kitab 2 on Facebook after all. We can be electronic friends and when he has his own life here with his own space and his own friends, we can moot a drink that will never happen. My way of apologising for abandoning him when he passed out is to add him on Facebook so we can be electronic friends. This is the barest minimum of friendship now. It's a peace offering though. (126)

Thus, the reality of the world is replaced with the simulated representations of reality in cyberspace and the later mentioned one is operant in the culture. The postmodern characters are so much used to the reality and its representation by cyberspace that it appears them to be their real space.

Now, the nature of the world of cyberspace is doubtlessly curated, simulated, and hyperreal. Kitab 1 tells Kitab 2 that how carefully he trims and curates his online simulacrum, "The mistake you're making,' I'd whine, 'is just because I'm a prolific tweeter, it's not like I'm giving 100% of my personality out to the world. I think long and hard about those quips and opinions. They're carefully curated.' (171).

However, there lies an irresistible captivity of cyberspace to be get engaged into it. Though Kitab 1 knows that online simulations of others personas are fictitious, yet he cannot resist it, " I trawl Facebook for what's happening with my supposed 'real friends', they have been out to places and taken photos of what they had to eat and drink. Who knows if they really did, or perhaps these are stock photos? I 'like' a random

selection, just to keep a presence. (12). These comments of Kitab 1 are very significant regarding the scenario of postmodern society. He knows the lies people stitch in their online simulations, yet there is an irresistible desire to read online simulations of others to keep a company. We all know the fictitious nature of the cyberspace, yet we are so much accustomed to it that somewhere somehow, we start interpreting the real world around us through the representation of this world by cyberspace. this creeping shift is the phenomenon that this study engages with.

This gesture of linking with the physical world through the virtual world of cyberspace mashes up the real physical world and the virtual world of cyberspace. it blurs the distinction between the two and spins hyperreality. Aziz's character also the sort of hyperreal life we are living in. Kitab 1 discusses the personality traits of Aziz with Hayley:

> 'He sounds fun. 'He is and he isn't. I mean he is obsessed with looking as cool as possible. He has this.... this inbuilt necessity to read blogs, tweets, Tumblrs and magazines to find out exactly what's the next hype. Aziz's website favourites, his bookmarks and his RSS feeds are filled with images of coats, t-shirts, shoes, bands, comic strips, words of the day and new takes on acronyms so he could imbibe, constantly, absolutely everything, simultaneously. He could be into a band and declare them all sell-out in the same afternoon. He will stop everything to go and hunt the vintage and charity shops around us for a new hat or cut of shirt that harks back to whatever trend is coming back in fashion………… Every band he likes is a band you won't have heard of'. (155)

The postmodern technologies, media and cyberspace seem to produce this obsession for looking as cool as possible. The postmodern character wants to follow the latest hypes. For this purpose, he follows the simulated representations of these latest fashions. He is involved in this interaction with cyberspace in a twofold way. He finds latest trends from the cyberspace as well as his online simulated persona produces and represents these hypes. This kind of frequent and intensive human-cyber interfaces are that we are all involved in in our postmodern culture.

Aziz travels from UK to USA to meet with his doppelganger, Teddy Baker, in meatspace. the inspiration of this venture begins from simulated persona of teddy baker in cyberspace. When Aziz has put on the costume of spy and is heading to meet him, physical world surrounding and his stream of thought about cyberspace projects the kind of day to day hyperreality we are all involved in our postmodern culture: I bought the raincoat and a trilby and I got on the tube, sorry the subway, and started acting the spy. I look proper gangsta. Well, proper spy-sta. People were taking pictures of me with their camera phones. People were taking pictures of me with their camera phones. Like I was a spectacle. No one dared ask me what the fuck I thought I was doing but they took photos. Probably tweet them or Facebook them…. like, another NYC nutjob. But they didn't talk to me. I started wondering to myself …. how many photos are we in the background of? Look at all those photos tagged of you on Facebook ……there's about 700-1000 of them, right? Because you love the look of your face. Look at all the people in the crowd. Imagine some of them had mutual friends with you. That would be a true world wide web. Think of all those photos of Aziz online right now that I don't even know about' (76). Seeing the world around him under the filters of cyberspace.

This streaking of the reality and its representation by cyberspace is so intensively involved in our day-to-day lives in postmodern era that somewhere we shift from real to hyperreal stance of mind in a creeping and unnoticed way. we carry on losing our connection with the real world and the hyperreality of virtual world carries on dominating our actions, our thoughts, our motives, our comprehension, our relationships, our approach to life and our surrounding and ultimately our reality and our truth. Under this stance of hyperreality, these characters lose their real-life realities and construct hallucination.

This tendency is common in the characters of Kitab 1, Kitab2 and Rasesh who are taken as representatives of postmodern culture in this study. Online and offline lives of characters represent this hallucination. A close study of this hallucination illustrates that it sprouts out of characters'' interaction with hyperreality of the culture.

There are some images in the novel that suggest that Kitab 1's personality is prone to construction of hallucination. 'Chutneys' is a paradoxical image. It represents Kitab1's hatred for white culture's domination over his Indian culture as well as his

hallucination. "I hate chutneys. They're a painful white condiment, a colonial response to the spicy Indian pickle" (2). Kitab1 hates chutneys. But under his hallucination, he adores them. Chutneys become his post–break up adorable remnants which give him solace. Actually, his girlfriend, Rach, used to like chutneys and these chutneys and their aroma gives him feeling of Rach's presence in his apartment as well as life, 'When she'd first moved out, I spent a drunken night spooning onion chutney into my mouth because that was the closest I could get to what she tasted like'(2). This image of chutney and Kitab1's gesture suggest that his personality is prone to develop hallucination.

'Quiltina' is another significant image which suggests that Kitab1's personality is prone to live under hallucination. "I sleep with my quilt rolled and bunched up into the sausage of human body. She's my bedtime girlfriend now I'm newly single. I call her Quiltina" (4). He takes his quilt as his new girlfriend that is having aroma of Rach.

After his break up, he had been in bed for ten consecutive nights. He chilled four beers and after that he shouted a lot about Rach. He gives himself this comfort that now he was in a better position because there was no more beloved in his life. "I was never up for getting in trouble now I was single' (3). This gesture also represents his tendency to develop hallucination to get comfort.

Kitab 1 uses medium of cyberspace to mitigate his painful situation in real life. He counteracts his real-life issues through his engagement with different social media activities. He is habitual of composing tweets; rather, I must say 'fake' and 'absurd' tweets. He entertains the idea to tweet something. "I click out my emails and think of things to tweet. I've got nothing to say" (Pg3). Although there is nothing to tweet about, Kitab 1 creates a situation to compose an attractive tweet which may find maximum likes and comments. He tweets: "Feet hurt. Too much bogling last night. #boglingrelatedinjuries" (3). This tweet suggests his hyperreality as there is no reality behind abstract sign of tweet. He composes this tweet to divert his attention from his break-up pain and to get engaged in tweets and retweets by his online community.

Annika Blau in her article *Social Media and the Hyperreal* gives her thoughtful views on the place of online simulacrums in contemporary culture and that how

carefully we curate them. She writes, 'The way that people act towards us in the real world is influenced and determined by their interactions with our simulacrums in the virtual world. So, as we see, our simulacrum not just represents, but *determines* our actual, real-world selves. This is trippy stuff……. Our online profiles present a cultivated and preferred simulation of ourselves.' (Web).

Nikesh Shukla wrote an article on Vice.com titled as *Why I sent a Lamb Chop into Space* and he mentioned in that article, "The main theme of *Meatspace* is the lies that we tell ourselves and others in modern social media-obsessed universe" (Vice.com).

In this narrative, Kitab 1, Kitab 2, Aziz and Rasesh all produce their online simulacrums to tell the world their what's ups in their real lives. The study of these online simulacrums demonstrates that somewhere under this careful curation of online simulation characters lose contact with real world reality and step into world of hallucination in a much unnoticed way.

The stitch of lies in curation of online simulacrum and hyperreal nature of cyberspace as well as postmodern culture surrounding him, in a trippy way, slip him into the world of hallucination. He remains unconscious of this hallucination until the occurrence of his epiphany where he comes in terms with meatspace and goes through each issue of his life on realistic basis. Under his hallucination, the abstract image of tattoo is much dynamic and concrete. He believes that it will give him an attractive look of a busy writer and will increase his fan following, "I feel bloody alive, I think to myself. I was skeptical at first but now it's here and it's done and it's indelible, I feel like a fucking rock star, and I'm already a writer. What more could I want? This is definitely going to make my life change; I think to myself. There is no way it cannot" (44). The expressions 'definitely going to change my life' and 'there is no way it cannot' represent his strong belief in the potential of the tattoo and the miracles that he believes that it can do in his career and prosperity. With the development of plot, this expectation proves nothing but hallucination as he does not get any success in his writing career based on the dynamics of this image of postmodern pop culture 'the tattoo'.

He attaches the same potential to the world of cyberspace too. Kitab1 uses abstract world of cyberspace for the publicity of his book, 'hey guys, if any of you are in the Luton area, I'm reading from my book tomorrow' (26). Aziz strengthens his expectations, '.........Aziz, who encouraged me to be numbers whore to help spread the word about my work' (51). He believes that online promotion of his work will increase the number of his sold books and his fan following. This expectation is his subjective reality that he constructs in the world of cyberspace. With the development of plot, it proves to be nothing but his hallucination as he finds no success in his writing career based on mere online publicity unless he overhauls his writing career in meatspace with serious practical initiatives.

Kitab1 holds opinion that social media increases our sociability as well as fan following. He uses the medium of cyberspace to increase number of his followers. Mitch asks him the reason to use Facebook, 'Why have an account?'. He replies, 'Because my family might be the only people who ever buy my book' (52). It infers his expectation that use of Facebook will increase his followers. This aspiration is the reason behind his excessive usage of cyberspace. It proves to be nothing but hallucination. He gets no success under its basis. It, actually, drags him away from realities of physical world as well as his real-world relationships. It makes him over-occupied with cyberspace and cyberspace interactions. Under the hyperreality of cyberspace, the consciousness of his mind to the realities of physical world carries on dwindling down. He steers far away from realities of his real life and real-life relationships under this hyperreality and hallucination.

He scarcely discusses his issues with his dad. All he relies upon is the world of cyberspace. Following conversation between Kitab 1 and his father sheds light on the fact that virtual world has taken the place of real-life relationships in his life. Kitab 1's father tries hard to discuss issues of his son's life but all Kitab 1 is indulged in is the irresistible hyperreal world of cyberspace. Rasesh offers him drink but he refuses politely and is indulged in hyperreal world of television, "…. 'want a drink with me? My treat, kiddo.' 'No. I just want to watch something crap on television and go to bed. I've been out too much recently.'" (252). Rasesh changes the topic and retries to get attention of his son. But again, it goes futile, "'Fine. So... what's your new book about?'

'I don't know, Dad. Not yet'. 'Maybe you should write about a writer. Write about a writer doing things out of his comfort zone.' 'Sound like a cliché I fire up my laptop. I wonder what I've missed online' (252). In his consciousness to that what he missed online; he is unconscious of what he has been missing online. Rasesh's gesture in reply is very loving and cute when he re-retries to catch his son's attention. There lies love mixed with pain of unrequited love under this gesture, "'Well, if you haven't got any other ideas, I will give you that for free. Just dedicate your book to me for a change'. 'Thanks, Dad'" (252). In this conversation, there lies an indifferent response of Kitab 1 to his father who has been trying hard to get involved in his son's issues. On the other hand, all Kitab 1 shows is an indifferent hearing to his father's conversation with him. All he is focused on is that he is curious to know what he has missed online. Pushing real life relationships in real life aside, he is over-occupied and obsessed with virtual world. He holds high reliance on it.

Kitab 1 is invited in a book reading party at a bar in Shoreditch where the writers are asked to read their favourite anecdote. He is extremely happy. His morale is very high the day he is going to attend this book reading party. He cherishes his dreams about exceeding number of fans and customers. The tattoo on his arm revitalizes him and boosts his expectations, "'I'm walking down my high street and I allow myself to feel good. I never feel good. I never allow myself to enjoy anything. If something feels good, I worry about it going wrong or the next thing to go wrong. The worst thing I can do is feel optimistic…………. But today, I allow myself to feel good. Everything about this day smells of possibility and chance'" (63). He builds his subjective reality in the background of cyberspace. According to his reality, the day is imbued with 'possibility and chance'. He hopes that his online followers will reach the venue to applaud him. He has high expectations from his tattoo too. He decides to wear t-shirt to make his tattoo visible to the   public. While Kitab 1 is called on the stage, he removes his coat on the way to stage, "'I've removed my coat on the way to the stage and people can see the hint of tattoo coming out of my sleeve and I feel like dynamite'" (70). Here lies his hallucination as well as hyperreality. According to his subjective reality, the abstract image of tattoo is concrete and dynamic. He thinks that the tattoo will give him fame and the number of his followers and customers will be increased.

Here, he loses his connection with physical world and its reality. The ground reality is that Kitab 1 lacks confidence and complacency in public speaking. "I hate talking in public. I don't ever dare look out at the audience. That would make me realize they were there. I can't let myself know they're there" (69). In reality, he needs to overcome this coyness   and develop his confidence in public speaking. He also needs to choose the impressive extract to read to grab the attention of the public. But under his hallucination, he relies heavily on the hyperreal image of postmodern pop culture 'tattoo'. This reliance proves nothing but hallucination.

When he reads the extract, he realizes that not only that   he had selected unimpressive content to read but also, he could not perform it well in front of   the public. "As soon as I start reading the story, I realise I've made a mistake. I second-guess how funny I think my anecdote is and rush the set-ups to jokes meaning the punch lines don't make any sense. It feels like I'm up there for 20 minutes longer than I am and the lights are burning hotter as I mosey on down the cul-de-sac of my words. I finish and have to say 'thanks very much, good night' to elicit any reaction from the audience. They applaud politely" (70). No significant number   of Kitab1's online followers reaches the venue except a few regular book lovers. This ground reality goes opposite to Kitab 1's expectations from the tattoo and cyberspace which he develops under his hyperreality amidst cyberspace.

The most crucial episode regarding the irony of Kitab 1's aspirations from cyberspace is that when Kitab2   enters in his life and exploits his personal space using medium of Cyberspace. All goes contrary to his hopes. Not only that his aspirations from cyberspace prove to be hallucination but also his captivating simulacrum, his prolific status updates and live locations entangle him in the unwanted circumstances in the form of Kitab 2's entry in his life. Again, this fact adds to his disillusionment.

After the book reading is over at the pub in Shoreditch, Kitab1 encounters the unwanted surprise of Kitab2's entry in his life. Kitab1 recalls that he had seen this face somewhere online. His mind catches the memory of Kitab 2's Facebook profile picture when Kitab2 carried on sending him frequent friend requests. He is amazed on seeing him in front of him and tries to believe that he is there. "'I'm Kitab....' he says, 'he is still stretching out his hand. Is he real? I shake my head and he's still here, staring at

me, grinning wildly, like he is so happy to have found me. 'We meet in meatspace, dude, he says and thrusts his hand out'" (72, 73). Here lies the hallucination of Kitab 2 as well as ironic consequences of Kitab 1's high expectations attached with cyberspace. Kitab 2, expecting Kitab 1 to settle him in his dreamland; UK, travels from India to UK and approaches Kitab1 following his physical presence using channel of cyberspace, '..........your website and Twitter said you would be here tonight' (82).

Kitab 1 was expecting increase in his readers and followers. For this purpose, he makes an intensive usage of cyberspace. Since, he achieves no success in his writing career. This fact infers that his expectations from cyberspace are nothing but hallucination. Contrary to his expectations, he encounters Kitab 2 who follows him all the way from India to UK following him in cyberspace. Kitab 2 exploits his personal space and brings a series of ridiculous situations for him. All these incidents demonstrate Kitab 2's hallucination and Kitab 1's disillusionment.

Soon Kitab 1 realizes that Kitab 2 has no place to live there in UK and he expect that Kitab 1 should to be his host. Kitab1 resists it first. On repeated insistence of Kitab2, he agrees on it assuming it to be temporary situation. But later, he realizes that Kitab2 had no solution to his survival in UK except sympathetic support of a host. Living 24/7 in cyberspace and being away from the ground realities of his life, Kitab 2 had constructed this hallucination that Kitab 1 will be the very host who will do this favour to make him adjust in UK. Kitab2 becomes a forced guest at Kitab1's place at a time when Kitab1, himself, is undergoing period of unsuccessful professional career as a writer. He is managing his day to day living on the limited money he gets from his mother's inheritance. Kitab2   becomes a parasite to   Kitab 1 for his daily living which Kitab 1 affords unwillingly and unavoidably. The situation goes totally opposite to Kitab 1's expectations from cyberspace.

Apart from being forced   host of Kitab 2, Kitab 1 undergoes a series of unwanted silly things from the behalf of Kitab2. Kitab 2 is impressed with Kitab 1's lifestyle as he has perceived from his online simulacrum. Being over-indulgence in cyberspace, he makes the life of Kitab 1 an ideal in his mind. He wants to enjoy a life like Kitab 1 whatsoever. This is the height of Kitab 2's hallucination and obsession for a life like Kitab 1 that he pretends to be Kitab 1 even in front of him. During a trip

through train, Kitab1 and Kitab2 happen to see a lady reading Kitab1's book. The first time in his life, Kitab 1 experiences this most-awaited moment, "'Dude, it's your book.' 'I know, man. It's cool. It happens.' 'This is exciting dude.' 'Bro, I know.' Be cool, I think. Let me enjoy the moment. This is a first. This is a legendary moment. Please just shush and let it sink in, awash on top of us" (111). Kitab1 is just lost in his thoughts to feel the enjoyment of the moment. Very bluntly, Kitab 2 claims that book to be his and himself to be Kitab 1. 'That's my book!' he shouts. 'I wrote that' (112).

Not only this, he hacks Kitab1's social media accounts to assume and enjoy Kitab1's online persona which he had fancied so long. The most alarming activities that he does are that he makes use of Kitab1's atm card for his payments. He steals Kitab 1's passport and claims that it belongs to him. He exploits Kitab1's personal space in real as well as virtual world. He hacks his Twitter and Facebook accounts. Using Kitab 1's online identity, he attends Kitab 1's reading parties and claims to be him. Wearing Kitab1's online simulacrum, the most crucial activity that Kitab 2 does is that he uploads such a porn pic on Kitab1's Twitter account that it ruins Kitab 1's online fame. When Kitab 1 demands explanation of this act, he gives silly reply that he did it out of love and wanted to help him to increase his fan following. "I was trying to help. You're sad. You're failing dude. You're nothing. You can't even sign books in the public. I want to help you. Because you're me. I love you." (170). The words 'you're me' represent Kitab 2's hallucination. His silly acts also represent disillusionment of Kitab1's hallucination from cyberspace and consequences of his insensible usage of cyberspace. In reality, it ruins his online fame as well as affects his writing career.

Cyberspace is the backdrop of all these events. Cyberspace is the very source that lets Kitab2 know the physical presence of Kitab1. Cyberspace is the vey venue where Kitab2 constructs his hallucination and finds Kitab1 his idol, 'Dude, you're my idol' (92). Cyberspace is the very realm where Kitab 2 constructs his hallucination, 'I thought he will look after me. We're brothers' (175). Cyberspace is the very place where Kitab 2 hacks Kitab1's online persona and projects to be his own. Cyberspace is the very place where Kitab 2 exploits Kitab1's personal space and ruins his online reputation. Contrary to Kitab1's constructed hallucination for increase in number of followers and sold books, the excessive and careless usage of cyberspace brings ironic

and unwanted consequences in from of Kitab 2 for him. The way Kitab 2 succeeds in stealing Kitab 1's online persona, it not only shatters Kitab 1's hallucination connected with cyberspace but also questions the credibility and concreteness of the reality of cyberspace which Kitab 1 had always   relied upon.

The credibility and concreteness of online simulacrum of Kitab1   is questioned when Kitab 2 hacks his Facebook and Twitter accounts and when Kitab 2   uploads Kitab 1's picture   on personal profile dp and poses to be real kitab1. It brings a perplexed situation for Kitab 1 and mutilates his identity in virtual as well as physical realms, 'but this, this isn't right. I'm an individual. I'm myself. I'm the only me. So, for him to do this is, it counts as identity theft. People could be searching for me and finding him. He could be putting up all kinds of   rubbish on his timeline, in my name. I'm the only me (127). This action of Kitab 2 puts a question mark on reality and representation done by cyberspace. It also brings identity and reality crises in the life of Kitab 1, 'So, if he's intent on stealing my online persona and my official administrative one, who the fuck will I be in this scenario?' (194). This identity and reality crises substantiate that reality and its representation done by hyperreal world of cyberspace is flickering, fluid, transient and unreliable in nature. The transience of Kitab 1's online simulacrum delineates the unreliability of the reality that virtual world constructs.

Kitab 2 develops hallucination under the hyperreality in cyberspace. It is not the reality of physical world that has been steering him in his life. He knows nothing about Kitab 1 in the physical world. All info about Kitab 1 that he has is the information taken from the world of cyberspace. It suggests the pedestal of his reality lies on cyberspace. He goes through Kitab 1's social media accounts and makes a sketch of his personality and lifestyle. Keeping in view the online simulacrum of Kitab 1, he constructs this subjective reality that Kitab 1 will be his mentor in London and will help him to settle there, "I thought, you're a dude. And you seemed like a nice guy from Twitter, from your book, from your blog---I thought he'll look after me. We're brothers." (175).

Virtual reality of cyberspace is the background of subjective reality of Kitab 2. His belief in the concreteness of the abstract online simulated persona of Kitab 1 is the basis of this subjective reality which proves to be his hallucination along the development of plot. Though Kitab1's online simulacrum is the abstract reality of

virtual world, yet Kitab 2 takes it as concrete and moves from India to UK relying on his reality.

In the hyperreal world of cyberspace, he carries on developing his truths. He holds fancy for the video games and is so much absorbed in the hyperreal world of video games that he distracts from his studies and makes video games to be his future professional career. Coupled with travelling to London, he constructs this hallucination amidst cyberspace that he will get settled in London utilizing his skills in video games, "London's the best city in the world and it needs coders. I can do so much. All I have to do is find these people [his online interactions] and I'll find a job. I don't need university. I can work for a year then apply next year' (175). Under his subversion, he comprehends the realities of virtual world as more and more concrete. He moves on and on in this flow. He strengthens his desire to become a professional coder of video games. Relying on the world of cyberspace, he thinks that all he needs to do is to move to London and rest will be fixed by his online interactions. His subjective reality tilts him away from his tasks in physical world i.e. his admission in some good university, his educational and professional career etc.

He is moving in the physical world keeping the realities of the world of cyberspace in his consideration. There lies a fusion of the two worlds where the distinction between the two has been evaporated. In words of Baudrillard, he is under hyperreality. He has never seen Kitab1, never met him, never even got online reply from him, yet he believes that Kitab 1 (the abstract persona) is the concrete and reliable solution to his problems. He assumes without meeting Kitab 1 in the physical world that he will be the very person who will get him job in UK. "I thought, I could just come here with my CV and may be meet you and see if you could help me find a job. I don't want to do electrical engineering like my dad. I want to write computer games, dude" (172). This belief in the abstract simulacrum of Kitab 1 and abstract phenomenon of video games represent Kitab 2's hyperreality.

The subsequent events in the narrative reduce his subjective reality to hallucination. His expectations from Kitab1 prove nothing but hallucination. When he reaches London and meets Kitab 1, it's otherwise. Kitab 1 tries to avoid him in every possible way. It takes him long to develop a little sympathy for Kitab 2. And again,

after that development of sympathy, he can't do much for him to make him adjust in UK. He deserts Kitab 2 on his circumstances while standing in Queen Mary University when he realizes that Kitab 2 had never got any admission in that university and will eventually become a burden on his life. He leaves that place in very creepy way. When Kitab 2 is hospitalized after getting serious injuries, Kitab 1 receives a call from hospital as he was noted as   next of kin by Kitab 2. He visits Kitab 2 in hospital. He feels sympathy with Kitab 2 when Kitab2 shares his life facts with him, 'Maybe I feel kinship for the fact that we're both mourning mums and we're namesakes' (177). Still he cannot do much for Kitab 2 to make him cope with his issues. All Kitab 2 has to do is to cater with   his problems at his own. This ground reality substantiates that his aspirations from the abstract world of internet were just hallucination.

In contemporary postmodern society, the abstract reality of virtual realms is the part and parcel of everyday life. There is no boundary between reality in physical world and fictitious world of cyberspace. Annika Blau in her article *Social Media and the Hyperreal* discusses significance of the dynamic place of virtual world in the construction of reality these days. She quotes the example of reality TV shows and gives her opinion that how these hyperreal shows sprout out of the reality in real physical world as well as induce it. She argues:

> Take Reality TV. It purports to represent real people in shows like *The Real Housewives* and *My Supersweet Sixteen*. But at the same time, Americans get their idea of what signifies success and wealth from these very shows. So, while those shows represent the lifestyles and appearances of wealthy, successful people, they also *determine* the lifestyles and appearances of wealthy, successful people, who take their fashion and lifestyle cues from television. *My Supersweet Sixteen* might represent   the preexisting tradition of lavish sixteenth birthday parties, but it also reinforces the tradition of lavish sixteenth birthday parties, making it a far more entrenched custom then it would have been without the show. (Web)

She argues that these hyperreal shows sprout out of the pre-existing reality in the postmodern culture as well as reinforce it. Same is the case with these characters of *Meatspace*. Virtual reality of cyberspace plays the dynamic role in the construction of

his reality. It shapes his mind, affects his thoughts, sets his hopes, and molds his expectations and future aspirations. He constructs his conception of ideal life and ideal lifestyle. Being impressed with online simulacrum of Kitab 1, he wants to be like Kitab1 and enjoy a life like his, 'Dude, you are like my idol'....'look at you. All this freedom. All these things' (91). He leaves the ground realities of real physical world far behind and gets more and more absorbed in virtuality, "I don't like bread, or jazz. I like video games. I hate my dad. He's a pod" (94).

He carries on developing his thoughts around cyberspace. He tells Kitab1 that he loves girls, he loves the blonde ones, black ones, brown-haired, Indian ones but those he loves the most are redheaded ones. He asks him whether he has slept with any of them. This is height of his hallucination that he expects that if Kitab1 says yes, same can be his lot, "Please tell me ...I mean you're my doppelganger. If you can, maybe I can" (94). This is his acute hallucination and hyperreality where he spins his subjective reality around   Kitab 1's online persona.

His fancy for the life of Kitab 1 is so high that he wants to adopt cent percent persona of Kitab1. He observes the whole lifestyle of Kitab 1 through his online simulacrum. He idealizes to   live a life of freedom just like his idol, Kitab1, "……. here I can do whatever I want to. I can eat in that chicken shop all day if I want to. Maybe in London, I will become non-veg like you. Maybe in London, I can write books and have a flat with alcohol in the fridge and a big television. This is it; this is my future. I can feel it. I love it here. I don't ever want to go back.' (113). Under this hyperreality and hallucination, he steers far away from the realities of physical world. His subjective reality amidst cyberspace carries on steering him ahead and he holds it tight, "Look at this place, dude. It is so real. It is the London. I was promised" (113). The online simulated representation of London life is the background that gave him this   promise. His reality constructed in virtual realm supersedes the realities of real physical world, "'My dad was worried there would be no Indians. But look at all these shops. And look at you [Kitab1], my best friend in London. Another Indian. I am home away from home"' (113).

Under his hallucination, he is obsessed to put himself in Kitab1's persona and be him in real life as well as virtual world of cyberspace. He deletes his pic from his fb

profile and uploads that of Kitab 1 to enjoy online persona of Kitab 1. He tries, imagines, and poses to be Kitab 1 in every possible way. When Kitab 1 deserts him in his university in a helpless situation, he writes him:

Dude,

Uncool. I thought we were going to be friends. I only wanted to be like my namesake, dude. You are the coolest, dude. But today, that was uncool, dude.

Xoxo The Real Kitab (128)

The words 'the real kitab' represent his acute hallucination that he claims to be real Kitab 1 even in front of Kitab 1. There lies an increasing development of hallucination and hyperreality in the character of Kitab 2. Not only that he wears Kitab1's online persona but also he assumes and asserts to be real Kitab 1 in the real physical world. He wants to claim his social identity to be Kitab1 and enjoy that fame he fancies through the perception of Kitab 1's online simulacrum. At public places, even in front of Kitab 1, he receives the appreciation of the readers and gives autographs too.

He also steals Kitab 2's passport to use his identity, "Was stealing my online identity not enough? Seriously, Kitab, this is serious shit. I could report you. You stole my passport. What were you going to do with it? (198)". Kitab 2, after some lame excuses, discloses the reason, "It's easier to find a job and an apartment with a British passport,' he finally says quieter (199)". By hook or crook, all that Kitab 2 wants from the world is to have a life in UK exactly like online simulacrum of Kitab 1. Kitab 1 constantly avoids him but he is persistent to convince Kitab 1 to let him use his personal space so that he can enjoy Kitab 1's persona in real as well as virtual life. "Dude you need to say what's on your mind. I'll tell you what's on my mind. Here's what I' m thinking. I like you. I want to be friends because we're the same person. I want your life (200)". Kitab l tries to convince him in a logical and realistic   way that he is under illusion but Kitab 2 is persistent on his subjective reality that he has constructed under his hyperreality:

'I'm here because you wouldn't be my friend,' he whines loudly............. 'Why would I?' I say, my voice rising. 'You just click "accept" on Facebook. It's

easy.' 'Kitab, man, you're delusional.' Neither of us say anything for a few seconds. 'We've got nothing.'

'But I like you. And I love London. And I love your life. I want your life, Dude. I want to be like you. You have such a cool life. You live in London. You go out. You meet girls. It's awesome'. (199)

Kitab 1's father, Rasesh, also lives under hallucination. The analysis of his hallucination brings hyperreal world of cyberspace as one of the venues to the surface where he constructs his hallucination. His isolate home and his late family members are his pain. He tries to avoid this pain using different types of anesthesia like alcohol, online interactions with ladies, parties and dinners with his online. He avoids reality, "'He told me once, 'I try to drink enough so I don't dream. Because my family is in my dream all the time. I don't want to see them. I don't want to see what I have lost.' He lived on vodka and whisky, and takeaway food'" (29).

Rasesh chooses cyberspace to divert his attention from the reality of his pain as well as to fix issue of his life. He counteracts loneliness through his online interactions with ladies to give him company. "He finds friends of friends, divorcees or widows who want to be taken out for dinner and a dance and he uses them for company. He pays to take them out and they give him company" (24). The reality of this solution is nothing but hallucination as the comfort those ladies give is quite temporary as well as fake and transient. They prove not more than temporary anesthesia. This fictitious nature of the solution represents his hyperreality as there is no concrete reality behind these interactions and online simulations.

He also tries to fix issues of his son's unsuccessful writing career and lack of communication between them using channel of cyberspace. He tries to be in loop with his son through online interaction and suggests him solution from cyberspace to meet with his unsuccessful career. Since, in reality, neither of the issues is fixed, this solution proves nothing but hallucination. Kitab 1's writing career remains unsuccessful like before. There lies gap in the relationship between thee father and the son unless they try to solve it in meatspace on basis of reality. The fruitlessness of his efforts in

cyberspace substantiates that his subjective reality constructed based on reality and its representation by cyberspace is no more than hallucination.

He finally reconciles with meatspace and analyses that his shoe pinches here that he has been trying social media and virtual reality of cyberspace to mitigate his pains. He also starts a new beginning in his relationship with his son and tries to be closer with him with reality basis initiatives. He makes his son realize his love, "'You know, I love you son. I may not show it and I may be preoccupied with my own life, but you know I love you, kiddo. 'I know' (253)". He tries to make his son share his issues with him and tries to find solution to his problems based on reality.

He analyses his issue that he has been under hallucination because he has not accepted the reality of death and has tried to overcome it with social media activities:

> 'Death, it forces us together in a way that isn't natural. If they [his late family] were around, we wouldn't be meeting up and talking about sex parties and social lives, you know? But we are forced to because we're scared of death driving a wedge. I love you. That's all you need to know.' 'I miss Aziz.' 'Me too, Dad.' 'I need Aziz around. I feel formless without him.' 'Come home soon. I miss you. Maybe we can watch cricket'. (253)

Kitab cries after this call and tweets. "@Kitab: 'I should have listened to my dad in life. Maybe I'd have been punched in the face less'" (253).

The character of Aziz and Aziz's blog 'aZIZWILLKILLYOU' comprises almost half of the novel. One main plot in the narrative is that of all the characters'' journey into deep realms of cyberspace. The other parallel plot is that of Aziz's blog. The writer slices the narrative in a way that every alternate chapter consists of one episode of Aziz's blog. This much magnitude of the labor of writer's pen suggests the importance and significance of Aziz's character as well as Aziz's blog in this narrative.

Aziz is Kitab1 's brother. He is the only close company of Kitab1 in the physical world and Kitab 1 never wants him to go away from him. He travels from London to USA to maintain his blog. Aziz gets this idea in cyberspace when he catches the persona of his doppelganger, Teddy Baker, while net surfing. Aziz thinks that his joint ventures with Teddy Baker will be pretty good material for his online blogging, "I

need to populate my blog with content. I did that one post and then nothing for months. I'm stagnant before I start. I just need something to write about. A proper adventure. And tracking my doppelganger down might be it. I mean it's better than what I was thinking of doing...." (32). Leaving Kitab 1 alone, he finally decides to travel to USA to document   his blog and to make the world know his what's up and his lifestyle. Thus, his action is motivated   by as well as   planned for cyberspace.

Cyberspace is the source of   information and motivation behind his venture. In his blog episode 'aZIZ WILL KILL YOU EPISODE 6', Aziz shares the details that how he was on the way to chase Teddy Baker. Cyberspace is the medium that he uses to find physical location of his pursuit, Teddy Baker. Aziz gets to know   that Teddy Baker was going to meet @ justiceforpigs at a bar and he reached there to follow him. He also   gets to know about   the physical presence of Teddy Baker from his tweets, "When I got back to my hotel, I saw that Teddy Baker had tweeted that he just got home. And with the geo-positioning of his synced Twitter account, I saw that the street he lives in was 2 blocks from the bar we were just in. I lay down in my bed and start planning how to meet him tomorrow morning. I'm doing it. Get ready my people." (78)

Aziz is seen enthusiastically active in his real life to maintain the popularity of his online blog. Motivated by the desire to maintain his blog with adventurous what's ups, he is active in meatspace to collect material for cyberspace. His real life and online life seem to be intertwined. There exists an increasing hyperreality where the boundaries between two worlds are evaporated. He gets dressed like a spy. The cyberpunk, Aziz, is highly adventurous and focused on his mission:

> Let me back up a bit cos I know you like all the details. I was on my way to check out these two dudes Teddy Baker and @justiceforpigs meeting up, from afar, from like the table in the corner, so I headed to a thrift store to get a hat and a raincoat. Why? I was on spy mission. I needed to look like spy. I bought a newspaper and cut 2 holes out of the cover for my eyes to peer through mysteriously. All I needed now was the mystery man spy outfit". (74)

Through his blog, he creates a world within world which is highly 3-dimensional. He gives minute details of objects and actions. He maintains suspense and thrill in the blog to keep his followers' interest in it.

He maintains the readers' curiosity for   blog through his adventurous actions. All he is bothered about is the interest and curiosity of his followers, "It wasn't even warm out family. It was freezing. But I did this for you" (96). He joins Teddy Baker and his fellow, Bob. They fight for righteousness. They become hero in a train and receive applause of the passengers by replacing the train driver and rescuing the passengers as well as a baby who is stuck under the train. They are hit in the train but still they survive. They rescue the baby and hand over him to the police. In the creation of all these incidents, the sole concern of Aziz is to feed the sense of curiosity of his followers. "We were being shot at Dudes! Aaaaand that's enough for today's blog. Tension, tension, tension.... I am the master of tension" (189). Thus, in the hyperreal world of cyberspace, Aziz concretizes his adventurous blog with vivid, lively, and minute details.

While composing his blog on adventures with Teddy Baker, he imagines and creates a lot. He writes much in the blog that never   happened. There are some logical loopholes in the incidents mentioned in the blog which hint its invented nature. In episode 12 of blog, when Aziz is hit at, a follower Gustave Grime comments, "Kill yourself. Now" (211) [to prove the reality that he is really hit at]. Aziz defends the invented killing and then tries to divert attention of followers, aZIZWILLKILLYOU: I think you're all missing the point. I was shot at! That not cool enough? (212). There lies no logical connection that they are shot at but still carry on with their adventures. No bleeding, no hospitalization is there. There is electric shock below the train and they succeed to rescue the child stuck below the train. The Detective Alverton tells him all the details of the investigation about missing child which is always kept in secrecy in real world. All these logical loopholes hint the invented nature of the blog.

Aziz's online persona on different social media apps represents the simulacrum of his identity. Aziz comments on his idea of blogging, "I don't hate twitter. I've just got too much game for Twitter. Who cares about breakfasts and live-tweeting reality television? I just want people to read my blog. This is a writing thing" (48). These

textual lines represent his simulacrum where there lies a series of online simulations of Aziz's persona. One online persona is that on twitter; the other on reality television and another on upcoming blog which will be again not constant rather will carry on fluctuating. Hence, there is fluid nature of online simulations of his persona which represent the transient and fluid nature of reality and its representation in cyberspace.

Baudrillard in his theoretical essay *Simulacra and Simulation* discusses that contemporary postmodern society, with all its technology and technological commodities is comprised mainly of the hyperreality, "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality" (1). Baudrillard strongly suggests that over and over simulation in our postmodern culture has made the reality strongly distracted, and ultimately transfixed upon meaningless hyperreal signs. He says, "It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real" (2). His discussion mainly questions the presence of reality behind the simulation.

The same exhausting process of over and over simulation also exists in this narrative which divorces the sign from the reality. The virtual reality of cyberspace depicted in the novel is not constant. Rather a fluid and fluctuating phenomenon. Third last chapter of the narrative titled 'History:<Folder Empty>' is the biggest surprise for the readers. It discloses that Aziz's blog is, actually, an acute degree hyperreality and hallucination developed by Kitab 1. Aziz died in an accident much before the happenings of the whole plot of the narrative. Kitab 1's narration about Aziz hints that he died fifteen years back to the plot, "Losing Aziz was something I didn't ever really get over. It seemed like he should just be there. Like he had realized his dream and gone to New York for 15 years and was just there. It didn't feel real that he didn't exist" (281).

Kitab 1 digitizes Aziz for the publicity of his first novel as well as to feel the feelings of Aziz being alive. Kitab 1 confesses in front of his new girlfriend, Hayley, and his father that he had maintained the blog aZIZWILLKILLYOU for the publicity and promotion of his book , " I wrote a blog, as him, to promote the book coming out, on the insistence of my publisher, imagining who he would now be. What he would look like. What our relationship would be" (280).

Kitab 1's book comprises experiences of Aziz and himself coming-of-age. It was about their teenage, " a fictionalised memoir of me and Aziz growing up without a mother, taking care of our dad and getting jobs to help pay bills, the capers we used to get up to, how we relied on getting into scrapes together to get by , how we rinsed each other all the time, how Aziz looked after me, saved me from beatings from older kids, how we were against the world " (279). Kitab 1 imagines that how their life could be now and writes the blog of Aziz wearing simulation of Aziz for the sake of advertisement of his book.

Aziz's blog written by Kitab 1 demonstrates the nature of advertisement in postmodern age where advertisement mutilates reality through the exhausting process of simulation and ultimately divorces is from reality. Keeping in view the trends of the age, Kitab 1 uses the channel of cyberspace for the publicity and advertisement of his book. He does so following   the insistence of his publishers:

> At the same time my publisher was insistent I help out on as much publicity as I could. This was the life now. The connected   author. Gone were the days of hammering your fists down on a typewriter in isolation with a bottle of some Glen or some Jim for company. Now, it meant blogs, tweets, Instagrams, videos, Spotify playlists, book trailers, email interviews – my entire life as content to promote thinly-veiled fiction.   While they got me reviews in broadsheets, I tackled the community aspect of the connected writer, and nothing was sacred then. If I could write about it on the internet and get those delicious, addictive interactions, I did. (282)

These textual lines are highly significant. Kitab 1's comments shed light on the metamorphosis advertisement these days. The authors are straightaway connected with their readers now through cyberspace interactions. Advertisement is done through social media using different apps. Thus, the nature of his advertisement is hyperreal where interactions in cyberspace are highly delicious and interactive.

Kitab 1's inability to accept the reality of Aziz's death as well as the hyperreal world of cyberspace cause his construction of hallucination that Aziz is alive. He commemorates how they used to create adventurous stories about them as 'heroes vs

gangsters' when Aziz was alive. Aziz used to dictate these stories and Kitab 1 used to write them on Dad's computer. Kitab 1 collects those exercise patches he used to write along with Aziz and composes them as his book, "I made stuff up. I filled in blanks. I fictionalised it. I made everything a hyperreal version of what happened. Because that is what I and Aziz would do. We used to make up stories, adventures ……he'd dictate me and I would type them on Dad's computer. We had a story about Aziz going on holiday to New York, his ultimate dream..." (280). Kitab 1 is unable to accept reality of Aziz's death, "he never got to go' (280). He lives in the feelings that Aziz is alive. He writes book and then maintains Aziz's blog in the same context. While writing his blog, he imagines that Aziz is alive and is dictating him in his writing process, " When I sat down to write that blog, the him now, who Aziz was now, it was like he was standing over my shoulder, pacing the room, throwing his hands about, dictating it to me" (281).

This blog writing starts from advertisement and under the hyperreality of cyberspace, turns into Kitab 1's hallucination. Kitab 1 attaches the sense of posterity to the hyperreal world of cyberspace. Under his hyperreality and hallucination, it looks like concrete to him which can supersede the reality of meatspace that Aziz is dead. The cyberspace, in his opinion, is potent enough to create the reality that Aziz is alive.

William Gibson in his interview interviewed by Coupland recorded on the opening night of the 2012 seminar sheds light on cultural comprehension of individuals in postmodern age. He argues that "What makes us human is our ability to recognize patterns, and to externalize forms of synthetic memory that preserve those recognized patterns" (Web, Interview, 2012). He further discusses that in postmodern age internet and other communication technologies has replaced that 'human memory' through which individuals used to recognize patterns within culture and conceptualize   reality around them before the advent of these technological commodities in modern and postmodern age. He concludes that, 'these technologies function as a "global instantaneous memory prosthesis" and aspire to a transparency of experience whereby distinctions between the "virtual" and the "real" are thoroughly dissolved' (Web, Interview, 2012). Nikesh Shukla also writes, "The mystery, the power of imagination's all gone now we can search for whatever we want" (226).

Kiab 1 regrets that there is only one alive voice of his brother Aziz in the world of cyberspace. He recalls the memory that how Aziz and he made their email ids and Aziz sent him test email. Kitab 1 regrets there is only image of his brother's representation in the world of virtual reality, "The only email he'd ever sent me. The only communication. The only representation of his voice I had" (283). He misses the presence of his brother in the virtual world. He believes that one can construct the entire world on the basis of its digital representation in cyberspace, " Now we live in communications, missives, tweets, statutes, emails, likes, aggregated search filters, recommended videos, round robins, listicles, sparrowface, duck lips, selfies, event invites, texts and I had none of these from my brother. None to remember what kind of person he was, only the barest fringes of my memory. You can construct entire people out of everything they've ever done digitally. But not Aziz. I only had that email (283). The expression 'but not Aziz' represents his idea of the possibility of the construction of Aziz's persona being alive through cyberspace. This is the contemporary shift from 'human memory' to the 'global prosthesis of the memory of the virtual world' that Gibson discusses in his interview.

Kitab 1 regrets that Aziz lived in pre-social media days and was not digitally alive. He deserved to be alive. That's why Kitab 1 digitizes the blog to give him posterity, ".... he should be able to exist electronically. He pre-dates social media, he never lived to make his mark and fuck it, he deserved it, he deserved to make his mark......he deserved to live forever, tweeting, and blogging and Instagramming. Not me. Him. Because he was doing all that, it meant he was back in meatspace.' (284). Through his blog, he preserves his brother in cyberspace. His words 'it meant he was back in meatspace' (284) represent his hallucination under this hyperreality.

Under his hyperreality and hallucination, not only that he imagines Aziz being alive while he writes the blog but also, he visualizes him alive in his real physical world which demonstrate his hallucination. In an incident in the novel, he hears a window smash and finds Aziz sleeping in his bedroom. It happens under his hallucination as there exists no Aziz in the reality of meatspace, "……there is no broken glass. There isn't a smashed window. It's empty, as I left it. I turn to Aziz's room. The door's closed. Which is strange. I didn't close it before. I hold the handle and close my

eyes………then I burst into the room. The curtains are closed. There's a lump in the bed. 'Fuck off, I'm jetlagged. We'll talk later.' It's Aziz mumbling……. 'Sorry' I say. I turn around as I close the door. 'My brother,' I whisper. 'He's asleep' (267).

Under his hallucination, he constructs that Aziz is alive and has gone to USA to meet his doppelganger, Teddy Baker. He is in touch with Aziz through the channel of cyberspace. Aziz writes on his blog and Kitab 1 reads it and comments on it.   Aziz meets him repeatedly in meatspace under the visual hallucination of Kitab 1. Kitab 1's conversation with Aziz in toilet is another textual instance in this context. When Kitab 1 's father asks him, 'Why is there a blog called aZIZWILLKILLYOU?' ......Kitab beta, you retweeted a blog you said was written by Aziz. What's it?" (275) . To avoid the situation, he goes in toilet. There, he sees Aziz leaning on the edge of the bath. They hold a longer conversation in which Aziz convinces Kitab 1 to reconcile with his life and get out of pain of Aziz being dead. '"What's shaking, bro?' I look up. 'Aziz is leaning on the edge of the bath'. 'When did you get back?' I say, trying not to show my happiness that he's back. 'That doesn't matter. Thanks for retweeting my blog. I got quite a few hits. 'No worries,' *I* say. 'How was your trip?' 'Listen', Aziz says, 'That's why I am interrupting your toilet time. I need to tell you something.' 'What?' 'I'm moving out. I'm moving to America. Teddy Baker and I are going into business together.' (276). In this conversation, Aziz also coaxes   him to stop crying out of the pain that Aziz has departed , '"I've known you since you were born and yet I've never seen you cry more than you have in the last 3 months. You didn't even cry when Mum dies.' Aziz leans down my eyeline." (277). This presence of Aziz is in toilet and his conversation is   just Kitab 1's hallucination. He is not there at all. Kitab 1 cannot overcome his grief that Aziz is dead and hence keeps him alive in his thoughts. He tells Aziz, 'You can't go. I need you.' (277). Aziz tells him the right style to keep his memories, 'You don't need me. Just remember me. Just remember how fucking awesome I am.' .... 'you know why not. Just.......remember. In that brain. Remember me. Don't be me. Remember me. Memory is important, Kit.' (277). This conversation is all that happens under Kitab 1's hallucination that Aziz is present there in toilet.

Aziz started his blog for the publicity of his book. But in the hyperreal world of cyberspace, he carries on drifting away from his relationships in real life and realities of the physical world. Aziz tells Rach about the reason of blogging, 'I was just trying to make a name for myself.' (278). She makes him realize what he was losing in this process, 'Yeah, but at the expense of everyone around you. In real life....' (278). His father also makes him realize and accept that Aziz is dead and he should accept this reality, 'He's dead. I have accepted this. Why not you?' (278). He makes him realize what he was losing, 'Kit, please ...it was you and that book and those updates. But you have gone too far this time. What are you doing to your dad?' (278). Kitab 1's father tries to make Kitab 1 realize that he is under hallucination. In his hyperreality, he is drifted away from his real-life relationships among which the most important is that of his father. He complains him that being with all those cyberspace interactions, he has been ignoring his father for whom the whole world is Kitab 1, "This other Kitab, Aziz, this new girl- they get your attention, your interactions. What do I get? One dinner a week? Come on, beta. There's only you and me. Let's make a change." (287). Kitab confesses his hallucination in front of them, ".... I didn't question it because if I did, he would leave and I'd lose my brother again. And it's only now, telling my dad and my ex-girlfriend and my new girlfriend this that I realise I've tricked myself into believing he was here" (284).

By the very end of novel, Kitab 1 changes his approach regarding usage of cyberspace. He maintains a balance as well as breach between meatspace and cyberspace. He overcomes his loss of 'reality' in virtual realm with new realistic and practical resolutions in his real physical life. "I choose meatspace. I start waking up early, eating properly, spending a minimum of 4 hours a day out of my flat. I allow myself an hour of internet 3 times a day. I build a routine, something I've sorely lacked. I find a job copywriting for an ad firm near me. They let me work from home. I get up early each morning and I sit at my desk and write for 3 hours before I have to be at work" (289).

The novel ends by the reconciliation of delusional characters with realities of the physical world. Kitab goes back to India to resume his studies. Kitab 1 and Rasesh build rapport between themselves in meatspace. Rasesh asks Kitab 1 'talk to me' (287)

regarding all his worries. He asks him to delete that blog and live in realities of the real world. Rasesh asks Kitab 1 to share all his issues and he will be there to listen all the times. Bothe Kitab 1 and Rasesh analyze their construction of hallucination in the hyperreal realms of cyberspace. Rasesh realizes, "But I realise I am not innocent in this. This is my fault as much as yours. I should be more of a father and less of a friend." (286). Kitab 1 replies, 'No Dad, I should be more of an adult' (286). The last chapter of the narrative is too short but too significant. It's this much:

Aziz Vs the True Death

< Sorry, the blog you were looking for does not exist. However, the name aZIZWILLKILLYOU is available to register!> (292)

This deletion of blog suggests Kitab 1's realization of his hallucination in cyberspace as well as his connection with the reality of meatspace.

PART C

SOCIO-TECHNOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTS OF REALITY

'If the purpose of novel is to make sense of how we live now, Nikesh Shukla's *Meatspace* fulfils that promise'.   (Niven Govindero)

This part of the analysis explores those multifarious socio-technological mechanics that I think are involved in the construction of reality and its representation in postmodern culture. Since this study takes the characters from the selected narrative as representatives of postmodern hyperreal culture. I have analyzed the factors that seem to affect the development of their subjective realities for this purpose.

Alan McKee in his book *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide* writes, "What is textual analysis? When we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text. We interpret texts (films, television programmes, magazines, advertisements, clothes, graffiti, and so on) in order to try and obtain a sense of the ways in which, in particular cultures at particular times, people make sense of the world around them (1). In the light of McKee's views, this study attempts to do textual analysis of the text under study to analyze the issue of reality and its representations in postmodern culture. The characters under analysis are taken as representatives of postmodern culture. The textual analysis is applied on the characters; their language, their actions, their motives, their interaction with other characters, and their sense making of the world surrounding them.

McKee argues in his book, "And, importantly, by seeing the variety of ways in which it is possible to interpret reality, we also understand our own cultures better because we start to see the limitations and advantages of our own sense-making practices' (1). In the light of McKee's views, likely interpretations of text are done to analyze the sense making practices of the fictional characters in the text to come to the findings that how technological manifestations like entertainment media, cyberspace, social media etc. affect the comprehension of those who consume and digest them in postmodern societies.

In this study, the characters of *Meatspace* are taken as representatives of postmodern society. Their tendencies represent postmodern cultural tendencies around the globe. The novel depicts an increasing flux of human beings into cyberspace. There lies an overall propensity of the society to usage of cyberspace and different social media apps by all the classes and by all the age bands. Kitab 1 comments on the increasing tendency of his family towards usage of Facebook, "My cousins and aunts and uncles all signed up to Facebook en masse, so they could turn online into one endless family reunion. I've met 20% of them. And 20% of them I see less than once a year" (9,10). Kitab 1's comment that he has met 20 % of them and same proportion he sees less than a year represents the general aloof of people from each in the real life in postmodern age of endless connections in cyberspace. Aziz tells Kitab 1, "This isn't 2001 when only weirdos and perverts and *Dungeons and Dragons* were online. Everyone is online now. Normal people. Secretaries and estate agents. And quantity surveyors. Who's more normal than a quantity surveyor?' (32). This comment of Aziz deconstructs the older association of cyberspace with people from the field of IT, media or a few social freaks and reconstructs the association where cyberspace has become an environment shared by the whole society where everyone is a significant cyberpunk.

This increasing tendency towards usage of cyberspace is common not only in youth band but also among the older generation too. Kitab 1 narrates, "My cousins signed up in the first wave and were slowly joined by aunts and uncles. Now, they interact with me because we're a family …." (10). Kitab 1's father and Rach's mother represent the older band who is equally involved in cyberspace. Rach's mother comments 'lolx' on every post. Kitab 1's father comments on his Facebook posts and status in a way as if he were writing a letter. 'When he first signed up to Facebook, as a way of keeping tabs on all the women he fancied in his life, he didn't understand how to phrase sarcasm nor that if he left a comment on my status update, everyone could see it. He used to sign off with 'lots of love, your dad' thinking that each comment was like a letter or email (25,26). This is ironic that Rach deserts Kitab 1 due to his tendency towards excessive usage of internet and after a few months she, herself, is there with her fb account and status updates. Another character, Cara, loves to interact with people online despite meeting in real life, "Cara lives 45 minutes away by tube but doesn't

meet up unless it's on Skype. She does this thing called Skype Dinners, where you cook some food and eat together online" (10).

For these characters, online interactions with the people unknown in physical world are more important and concrete than their relationships in their real lives. Kitab 1 tells about his family, 'Meanwhile my family rule Facebook. It has become their standard method of communication. (49). There lies increased interest of the characters in online interactions and avoidance to relationships in real life. Kitab 1 avoids his real-life relationships on Facebook, 'I got more discerning when the influx of my family arrived. When Dad joined up, and started adding middle-aged females and tagging me..........I actively started looking at other sites my family hadn't adopted. I love Vine [Cyberspace] (49). Kitab 1's preference to unknown people on social media and avoidance of real physical world relationship demonstrate the subversion of relationships in postmodern   age where real physical world relationships are superseded by online interactions with unknown people. This gesture suggests that it is not the reality of physical world that is bothered by the character. Rather, it is constructed reality of virtual world that is more concrete and important for him. Kitab 1's gesture: "I actively started looking at other sites my family hadn't adopted' hints customer's capitalism in postmodern age. The customer's demand induces the production of new updated versions of commodities in postmodern age. This status of the product as 'latest and updated version of commodity' is again transitory as it is soon superseded by newer version to meet with customer's demand and to maintain the producer's rhythm of increasing profits. Hence the reality which these apps produce is also transitory, abstract, fluid, and unreliable. Kitab 1's transit from one app to the other demonstrates that his cyber world simulacrum is not only abstract but also transient, fluctuating and fluid.

Mitch comments on the contemporary postmodern cultural scenario. 'Connections used to be important. Now it's all selfies and sandwiches on twitter………….. Associations have some weird cultural capital now' (53). The cultural capital which Mitch mentions here is Cyberspace which is hub of all interactions. Thus, the real-life relationships between human beings are superseded by online interaction in the virtual world. So, is the case with their realities. They do not

construct their realities in the background of physical world. Rather, they construct their truths in the background of the world of cyberspace. Kitab 1 constructs his reality in cyberspace which is, actually, his hyperreality and it proves to be hallucination by the end of the narrative. Kitab 2 develops his hallucination for travelling to UK and be a successful video games writer there. Rasesh uses cyberspace to cope with issues of his loneliness and to keep pace with his son who is all absorbed in the hyperreal world of cyberspace. Thus, cyberspace is the background of these characters' understanding of themselves, their relationships, and the world around them.

In postmodern society depicted in the novel, reality and its representation by cyberspace is dominant. It has been operational in the whole community in their day-to-day life affairs and business dealings. When Kitab 2 misuses Kitab 1's pics and social media account, it's the reality represented by cyberspace that has been taken as truth by the people. Though Kitab 1 is not involved behind all these activities in the reality of physical world. Yet, it is the reality represented by virtual world that has shaped the public opinion about him. The real reality in the real physical world has been smashed and lost somewhere below the over and over simulations of Kitab 1's online persona. On the basis of kitab1's online repute, he has been denied to contribute his short story to an art gallery, " I've been asked to no longer contribute a short story to an installation at a gallery ......as my inappropriate online behaviour makes me less than family friendly" (139).

Herlander Elias in his book *Cyberpunk 2.0 Fiction and Contemporary* (2009) gives his reflection on the present-day postmodern culture. He argues that in contemporary postmodern society, global media is the part of environment. Postmodern youth band thinks in a horizontal structure despite the vertical one; the way old generations used to do. He writes:

> Never in our time has media become an environment instead of a tool. Any teenager now grows up surrounded by MP3 music technology, YouTube video communities and "googles" everything on search engines. Kids don't think any more in a root-like vertical structure as the previous generations did. All the new trends are cyberpunk axioms reminiscences: such as network building, advertising in digital media, GPS mobile enhanced devices, guerilla art going

digital, and even Photoshop based street art like the Space Invaders stickers collection which is now seen all over the world's famous capital's corners. (Elias 4)

The British daily newspaper *The Guardian* gave its review of *Meatspace* , 'Like Douglas Coupland's *Generation X,* this novel captures a cultural moment'. The narrative under analysis projects the resembling social and cultural scenario as depicted by Elias in his work. It encompasses contemporary postmodern global and digital culture. The mind platter of these characters is not influenced by vertical root-like traditional cultural structure in which ancestors and the cultural traditions, set of values, customs and religious beliefs transmitted by ancestors used to be   the lighthouse. This lighthouse used to lead individuals in their ontological queries about being, human relationships, world around them and the conception of truth and reality. These metanarratives of reality are now superseded by the fragmented mininarratives represented by media, postmodern hyperreal culture, global and virtual phenomenon of cyberspace, and technology and technological commodities. These technological commodities and enterprises carve reality now through multifarious process of simulations, demonstrations, and representations. In this narrative, there lies a horizontal structure of contemporary rootless postmodern hyperreal culture where media, technology, cyberspace, and global pop culture shape the mind platter of the postmodern characters.

The novel under study is rife with heap of arguments in this context. Interestingly, the style of the writer also suggests the same. Each chapter begins with title consisting of 'Google History' which suggests that narration under mainly consists of human-cyber interface. Thus, cyberspace is the major phenomenon that has dynamic impact on the minds of the characters. In each chapter, human beings are busy with technology and technological devices and this phenomenon constitutes their realities.

Aziz says, "We are modern men……. We have every answer at our fingers" (18,19). When he is heading to USA in pursuit of his doppelganger in cyberspace to have adventurous stunts with him and to develop his blog, he is quite confident about the reality of his journey. All his reliance lies on the information collected from cyberspace. Kitab 1 does not want him to go to USA and he tries to plant doubt in

Aziz's mind that maybe he won't be able to meet his doppelganger, Teddy Baker. Aziz replies quite confidently, "'I Googled him, I found his Facebook, his Twitter, his Foursquare and his LinkedIn. I know where he works right now. I can see where he checks in on Foursquare or just follow his Twitter. Mate, I will find the guy. All I have to do is turn my wi-fi on'" (55). Aziz's response demonstrates that his reality lies on the pedestal of cyberspace. Having availability of internet, he regards himself resourceful enough to follow his truth developed in virtuality of cyberspace. He is confident that he has answers to all the queries just a click away. All he needs is to turn wi-fi on and Google it. His gesture represents his disconnectivity with the status qu notions of reality based on the reality of physical world and his subscription to the reality of cyberspace. Despite thinking in a traditional way, he thinks in horizontal way where cyberspace and hyperreal culture surrounding him shape his reality.

Kitab 2 also spins his reality around the world of cyberspace. This is not the influence of his father that constitutes his subjective reality. Rather, this is his interaction with virtual world of video games and cyberspace that influence his thoughts and outlines his truth, 'I like computer games. My daddy is very strict……' (84). He develops his fancy for Kitab 1's life in London under his interaction with the virtual world of cyberspace, "I use Facebook. I wanted to interact with you. We have the same name" (83). Kitab 2 is impressed by the online simulacrum of Kitab 1. As Kitab 1 is his namesake, he thinks that both are same like each other. He holds fascination for his life and wants to enjoy a life like his, 'We are alike,' he says. I am you. You are me. I want to see your life. Show me London, Kitab. Please' (84).

It is not the father or father's instructions that influence the mind of Kitab 2 in the spinning of his subjective reality. The world of cyberspace and video games is operant in his reality construction. Kitab 2 thinks that his father is a 'Pudu' and he is unable to understand his issues or suggest him something worthwhile, "'I mean I don't like bread, or jazz. I like video games. I hate my dad. He's a pudu….' When Kitab 2 says pudu, his neck oscillates violently; it looks like it might snap" (94). These are not his father's suggestions that affect him when he devises his future plans. Rather it is the abstract world of cyberspace and video games that is source of his inspiration and motivation in his planning for future. Thus, his subjective reality is specified by

cyberspace. Constituting his future in the background of the virtual world of video games, he tells Kitab 1 that he is a great coder and his ambition is to become a software writer of video games. "I am a great coder, man. I can do all the codes. I have the facility to work as a coder on database systems. I trained at the best technical college……I don't want to do electrical engineering like my Dad. I want to write computer games, dude" (172). The last sentence in this textual extract deconstructs the ancestors as mentors and reconstructs the cyberspace as their successor which supersedes these traditional status qu reality and, in the words of Baudrillard, forms new political dominance of the sign 'cyberspace' in postmodern society.

When Kitab 1 feels sympathy with Kitab2, he meditates their respective circumstances in these words, "He [Kitab 2] is incapable and wet. And I am depressed and able to utilize Google to solve any problem" (106). Kitab 1's comment on availability of Google and his capacity to use it for the solution of all problems signifies the place of cyberspace and its dynamics in his life. It is not the reality of the physical world that is absolute truth for him. Rather, it is the reality of the cyberspace that is the dominant metanarratives of the postmodern character.

These are not the ancestors and other human relationships in real life that have influence on his minds. Rather, his interaction with cyberspace outline his subjective reality. Kitab 1 gives a shoulder-shrugged indifference to Vedic Bhashas of his uncle on Facebook, "I check my interactions. Today's motivational Vedic message from my uncle is: "If you have never eaten rice with your hands, how can you know the taste of the earth on your lips?' I delete it from my Facebook wall........ I refresh my Facebook feed. The Vedic message has reappeared. Even though I deleted it. It refuses to go away.... I delete my uncle from my Facebook account" (125). This gesture represents his dismantling of the traditional status qu mind set of the ancestors.

These characters disenfranchise themselves from regional and physical cultural realms and subscribe themselves to global and virtual cultural realms. Their interaction with media and cyberspace gives them exposure to these cultures. They are least influenced by their respective regional cultures and more influenced by global cultures. These are the new binaries of postmodern cultural scenario. Thus, global, and virtual cultural realms have dominant influence on their conceptions of truth and reality. They

aspire to update themselves according to global cultures and prefer to live a life amidst these global cultural hubs i.e. UK and USA. Kitab 1 feels envious of his life in London and despises Kitab 2's life in India. Kitab 2 wants to go to UK at any cost and wants to stay there even at any risk. Aziz travels from UK to USA to enjoy colorful life of that cosmopolitan global cultural hub; USA.

Kitab 1 is an Indian and settled in UK. Kitab 1 receives friend request by Kitab 2. Seeing profile dp of his ancestral and regional cultural mate, Kitab 2, he is not much impressed because the guy is much Indian looking, "I was immediately disappointed that my namesake was so Indian-looking (3)". When Kitab 1 meets Kitab 2 in physical world, he despises the guy from his native culture and his third world citizen looks. The background behind this gesture is his mental subscription to the global pop culture of digital age. This global and virtual culture is the factor operant in his reality construction where he dissociates himself from his regional cultural threads. Though Kitab 1 is Indian but he hates his culture mate from his ancestor's region, "Kitab 2 is very stereotypically Indian. Like all the semi-racist questions that pop up when you Google 'why are Indian men.......' Indian. He is wearing leather sandals and has the bum fluff spray of a moustache on his top lip. A film of hair oil has collected in his side parting.' (81). In a stream of thoughts, Kitab1 imagines Kitab 2 to be his Indian version and prefers this version of himself that is very much British. 'If he is mirror of me in an alternate universe, then I need to remain firmly in this one. I need to establish a fine balance between him and me, one that dictates that I do not know this white tiger at all" (81). These comments demonstrate his least interest in his regional culture and his affiliation with his global culture.

Same virtual and global culture of cyberspace is operant in the reality construction of Kitab 2. Kitab 2 wants to move to UK and enjoy life there. He is not interested in his life in India. He is exposed to perceive this global and virtual culture through the channel of cyberspace. In this context, he holds fancy for the pop culture and colorful life in UK. He wants to go there at any cost. He does not have admission in UK and has no place to live there. Yet his fancy for life in London is so strong that he wants to go there even at risk. He beseeches Kitab 1:

'We are alike,' he says. I am you. You are me. I want to see your life. Show me London, Kitab. Please. I've travelled so far.' He looks at his hands. 'I don't know anybody and I'm scared. I have never been on plane before. I like computer games. My daddy is very strict. I .... have never worn jeans. I want to kiss a girl? Have you kissed a girl? I don't drink alcohol but I drank bhang lassi once. I was sick on my cleaner. Please'. (84)

It suggests that it is not his regional culture and real life in physical world that has dominant influence on his thoughts. Rather, global, and virtual realms of cyberspace are operant in his reality construction.

When Kitab2 meets Kitab 1, he asks him some questions which Kitab 2 assumes will create a familiarity between   them. "'Do you think we're alike?' 'I don't know,' I say. 'Do you like computer games?' 'They are okay' I reply. Kitab 2 looks sad. 'Do you like *Friends*? 'The sitcom?' he nods...... 'What about pizza? What's your favourite topping?' 'I don't know. Pepperoni?' (83). Kitab 2 uses the images of global pop culture; the pizza, video games, sitcom *Friends* etc. to create rapport between them. It infers the domination of these symbols on the constitution of his reality. The global interactions of media and cyberspace constitute these images as dominant symbols of the British culture of Kitab 1 that he is living in. in this context, Kitab 2 further constructs his truth that since Kitab 1 also likes the sitcom   *Friends* like him , they are same like each other, 'We're the same. We have the same name. We both like *Friends*' (86). This reality proves to be his hallucination though.

Hyperreal images from the postmodern culture also resonate the reality of these characters. Tattoos are the simulated trends of postmodern pop culture. Both Kitab1 and Aziz are extremely crazy to get the most attractive image tattooed on their respective bodies. Their craze signifies the reality that they attach with the tattoo. Aziz expresses his desire to get a tattoo in a highly emotional tone, "'I'm definitely the kind of crazy motherfucker who needs a crazy motherfucker tattoo to make him look like a crazy motherfucker'" (16). Kitab 1 also wants the most appealing tattoo of the world tattooed on his body. He picks and drops many an option and finally chooses to get this appealing sentence tattooed on his forearm: "Everyday I write the book" (35). Both Aziz and Kitab 1 believe in the reality of the tattoo. Aziz writes in his blog, "I should

get a random word like 'sparrow' or 'erudite' tattooed on my bicep as a talking point…. Flex your biceps and wait for the enquiries to pour in' (16,17). It infers that the abstract simulated image of tattoo has concrete reality in his conception. It can portray his personality traits, can communicate with the people in his surrounding, can induce questions by the people, can resonate his social identity and can add to his swag and personality projection. It is his association of truth and reality with the bow-tie tattoo that makes him travel from UK to USA and maintains episodes of his blog.   Aziz also suggests Kitab 1 to 'Facebook it [tattoo], tweet it, Instagram it' (49). Both hold   the opinion that it   will eventually increase Kitab 1's fan following and enhance the number of his book readers and quantity of sold books.   Kitab 1 thinks about the realities resonated by his forearm tattoo (Everyday I write the book), "……And it's a good tune, I'll say. People will inevitably ask; do you like that song by Elvis Costello and I'll say it's one of my favourites. Depending   who   they are. I'll say it was my mom's favourite' (44)

Reality and its representation by the abstract of cyberspace is more concrete for these characters than the physical world. It gives them   sense of solidity and they think that it preserves reality in a never fading way. Aziz insists Kitab 1 to follow him when he will record his blog, "If I blog about the trip, do you promise to read it? .... So, you can follow my adventures" (48). He attaches the sense of solidity and posterity with his blog. He tells Kitab 1, "I packed your camera, for the posterity.... How else can I document my lifestyle? No one would believe me otherwise" (54). His words suggest the importance of the reality represented by online simulations in the postmodern age. When Aziz's blog turns to be Kitab 1's creation, again its projects Kitab 1's attachment of the sense of reality and posterity with virtual reality. He says, "You can construct entire people out of everything they've ever one digitally. But not Aziz. I only had that email………. The only communication. The only representation of his voice I had. (283). Kitab 1 gives the reason of the blog writing to give Aziz a digital presence in the reality of cyberspace.

Media also has its impact on the thoughts of these characters. There are many references of images from entertainment media in their conversation which demonstrate the impact of media on their thoughts, ideas, and constitution of reality. Kitab 1, under

his drunk condition, compares himself and Aziz with characters from media, 'I was standing on our sofa, clutching two jars of chutney , while Aziz held my leg like he was Princess Leia on the cover of the *Star Wars* poster, and I was Luke Skywalker.' (5, 6). The way he feels themselves to be like these characters from movie *Star Wars* suggests that media and its images have deep impact not only on his conscious mind but also has its deep penetration into his unconscious. Under his drunk condition, Kitab 1 shouts out of frenzy, 'I am the golden god!...........I am the golden god of literature. I am the golden god of this front room. I am the golden god of fucking chutneys' (6).

The phrase "I am the golden god" represents the effect of the world of media on his mind. These words were spontaneously shouted by the real-world vocalist Robert Plant during his photo shoot in a balcony when he suddenly caught the sight of a huge billboard to his right advertising the release of new album by his band Led Zeppelin. The phrase was later used by Cameron Crowe also in his film *"Almost Famous"*. In this movie, his character, Russell Hammond, is having smooth guitar skills. He gets tired of being a member of his band Stillwater as he feels that the band is pressing down his talented self. Keeping belief in go solo, he does risky things like acrobatics Feats. This phrase is spoken by him in one of the scenes in this movie where Russell Hammond jumps down from his friends' roof yelling, 'I am a golden god'. Kitab 1 also thinks himself to be golden god of literature under his frenzy. This reference from media suggests the effect of media on his mind and thoughts.

Media is another agent of construction of reality in the postmodern society depicted in novel. It has a deep impact on the minds of the characters, shapes their ideas, molds their thoughts, and thus constructs their respective subjective realities. Kitab 1 gets a line, Everyday I write the book, from Elvis Costello's song tattooed on his forearm. This textual image from media is much concrete and real for him and he thinks that it will give him an impression of being erudite in public; it will attract his fans and increase his fan following; it will give him swag of a creative author and will become a kind of his social identity. He says, "In a world of digital interactions, endless tweets, Facebook haikus, eBooks, I am taking a stand for the analogue world. I am feeling the writing on my arm, my writing arm and that's how I will write, with the knowledge I have etched out my statement of intent on my own skin" (40). The words 'taking a

stand for the analogue world' suggest the intricate process of the reality construction of postmodern man where the phenomenon of cyberspace as well as images from digital world of media go hand in hand in individual's thought process and reality construction. Kitab 1 regards the simulated image of tattoo as analogous to digital interactions, endless tweets, Facebook, and eBooks. He thinks that this image is as significant and dynamic as the other perspectives of cyberspace are. This analogy suggests the significant and strong place of the images from media in his reality construction. He reflects on the concreteness of his tattoo, "What's more meatspace than having something tattooed on the meat of you? Everyday, I write the book. It's there forever, it's permanent. You can't throw it away. You can't dispose of it. You can't delete it. You can't cache it. It exists. When every word typed on Google is recorded on a server somewhere, this is the most important statement of them all, the physical manifestation' (40, 41). He compares the permanent physical manifestation of his tattoo with the permanent memory of google servers which suggests the impact of cyberspace, media, and simulated images of postmodern culture on his thoughts. The dynamic significance, the credibility, the reliance that Kitab 1 attaches with this line from media projects that media is one of the major factors that outline his reality. Constructing his subjective truth in this context, he tells Aziz that how he will react publicly when people will ask him about these lines from Elvis Costello's song, "…. And it's a good tune, I'll say. People will inevitably ask; do you like that song by Elvis Costello and I'll say it's one of my favourites. Depending who they are, I'll say it was my mom's favourite" (44). He constructs his reality that these words from media will shape his public identity.

When Aziz googles info about the man with bow tie tattoo, he goes through his fb profile. He gets to know that his name is Teddy Baker; he lives in Brooklyn, USA; he likes *The Wire*. As he likes the movie *The Wire*, he sounds him adventurous as well as wicked. The image *The Wire* refers to an American movie written by author and former police reporter, David Simon. It is based on theme of illegal drug trade and seaport system. As the profile holder, Teddy Baker, likes this movie, Aziz constructs his reality based on the reality representation by the media that Teddy Baker is perfect match for him to be his partner in his adventures in USA.

Same is the case with Kitab 2. Kitab 2 tries to create an intimacy between himself and Kitab 1 using questions about media. He asks Kitab 1, "Kitab do you watch films?" (86). Kitab 1 doesn't want this intimacy because he wants to avoid burden of Kitab 2's expenses in UK. He replies in the language of movies, "…. this is the start of a film that ends badly. I am going to have to say no" (86). This conversation between the two highlights the place of media in the shaping of their thoughts and ideas. Later, when Kitab 2 gets to know that Kitab 1 likes the sitcom *Friends*, he develops his reality based on this sameness between the two in context of media. Kitab2 thinks that since Kitab 1 also likes the sitcom *Friends* like him, they are same like each other, 'We're the same. We have the same name. We both like *Friends*' (86). Kitab 2's opinion represents media being involved in his reality construction.

Not only this, the images from media are also stimulators behind many of these characters' actions. Kitab 2 thinks about the idea of buying some drugs and be highly cool like 'Kumar from the Harold and Kumar Films' (162). His fancy for the character Kumar comes from media. It prompts him to initiate the venture of getting weeds which leads him to hospital, "Feeling alone and with no one around to tell him off, he wanted to try some weed so he could be like Kumar from the Harold and Kumar films. 'I love that film' he slurs. 'That guy gets so high.' (162). This reference to the character, Kumar, from American stoner comedy film series *Harold & Kumar* demonstrates that these characters from media have significant importance in shaping the views and stimulations for actions of Kitab 2. Being motivated by character of Kumar, he searches best place to buy some drugs online but he does not find any. He recalls his father's instruction that once he warned him to be away from the place King's Cross because in 1960s this place had been filled with drugs and prostitutes. He ignores his father's instructions and is yielded to his stimulation from media. He moves ahead to King's Cross to fetch some drugs. His behavior suggests that it is not father's instruction which shape his truth. Rather his interaction with media shapes it.

He roams in the area King's Cross in search of some weeds. A blonde woman offers him help to purchase weeds. He follows her up past the station to the canal where a short man was waiting for him. The man turns to be a looter. He grabs his money when he takes it out to purchase the weeds. He also makes him deprived of all his

stuff. He hits him badly and Kitab 2 ultimately wakes up in hospital with piece of his glasses pierced in his retina and wounded cheeks. The physical reality of his life is that, now, he is in most pathetic condition; helpless, penniless, made deprived of all stuff he needs and critically injured, "All his clothes , paperwork, computer, his bootleg copy of *Assassin's Creed III* ...they're all gone" (163). But under the impact of the reality representation by media and media intoxication, he feels himself to be highly cool like Harold and Kumar, "'I'm in London, dude. I gots to get high,' he says. '*I want to get hi-iiiigh*,' he sings, and laughs. 'I'm high now', he whispers'" (163). His anesthetic response to pain represents strong influence of media on his subjective reality.

There lies the amalgamation of media and internet in the construction of subjective reality of Kitab 2 when he shares his aspiration regarding Britain girls with Kitab 1. He says, ' I want to go to those sex parties they have in London, where you wear masks……………I have seen it on the internet ………Everyone wears masks and you can stick it wherever you want. And the girls all look like Ross's wife from *Friends*. It'll be cool dude" (202,203). However, Kitab 2's experience hints the absence of reality behind these media and cyberspace resonated realities of postmodern culture. Kitab 1 asks him, "Do you do internet dating?" And Kitab 1 reflects his experience, "I tried it once. I didn't get anywhere. Aziz told me I should. He said it's like a meat market for casual sex with ugly people or boring silence dates with quiet people who are funnier online than in real life. I didn't meet anyone though" (202).

Aziz writes the description of interrogation room when they are caught by police. He elaborates it through its reality representation by media. He writes, "Examination Room 2 was exactly how anyone who has seen a film with the scene in an examination room/ interrogation room would imagine it…." (219). While chasing Teddy Baker in the real world, Aziz uses knowledge of the realities of the world as he perceives from the reality and its representation by media. He writes the details in his blog that how he followed Teddy Baker, " Now, the guy's freelance graphic designer or something so I assumed he'd be working from home all day BUT everyone in New York goes out for every meal, of this much we can be sure, isn't that what *Seinfeld* and *Friends* and *Sex and the City* have told us?" (96). The last sentence in his argument

very clearly demonstrates the effects of media in the construction of reality by postmodern man.

It is the reality of media that stigma of terrorism is attached with Pakistanis and Indians around the globe. Teddy Baker tells Aziz about the ancestral regions of his parents, "My dad's from New York, upstate. My mom, she is from Pakistan' (245). Aziz mediates certain apprehensions regarding Teddy Baker, "All these nut scenarios passed through my head as I watched the flicker of various chat shows on the mute television in my hotel room. What if his Pakistani mother actually recruited him for a terrorism thing and that's why I should stay away…." (246, 247).   Bob is Teddy Baker's friend. Bob, Aziz, and Teddy Baker are partners in their adventurous stunts Aziz blogs about. When Bob gets to know about Aziz's Indian origin, he tries to be careful about him and thrusts a disdain for his presence in their company. He tries to forge physical assault on Aziz and Aziz asks Teddy Baker about the reason behind this gesture. Teddy Baker tells Aziz, "'Bob's mum…. her cleaner died on 9/11'" (262). Now, it is the reality constructed by media that Asians, particularly Indians, Afghans and Pakistanis, were involved behind the 9/11 incident of terrorism. This is hilarious that when Aziz discusses the details of Bob's hatred, there appears no solid reality behind this gesture of Bob, "'His mum's cleaner. Fuck me, that's tenuous. North tower?' 'No, heart attack. On 9/11. A couple of years ago.' 'So, what's his problem?' Teddy Baker shrugged" (262, 263). In the same context, Detective Alverton calls Aziz 'Osama Bin Potter' (219) when Aziz and Teddy Baker rescue the white baby from train accident.

Technology fused with imagination; dragons, tattoos, gifs, hyperreal simulations, and online intimacies in digital age are the trends of the postmodern culture depicted in the novel. These are the established images of reality and its representation in the postmodern culture depicted in the novel. They get applause and reception in the society. Kitab 1 writes on real life experiences of Aziz and himself coming to age. His book marks no considerable success. Hayley writes about the interactions between men and women in digital age and her book finds huge success. Their books came out at the same time but both have a huge difference of public applause and reception. "People want her attention all the time because her book was funny and cutting about

male/female relations in a digital age………She has approximately 3 times as many Twitter followers as me" (9). Hayley's book suggests trends of the age. The hyperreal content and images rule over the stories based on reality. Later, Kitab 1 also tries to write a book with Hayley's partnership using gifs only, "We're trying to write out the plot of *Midnight's Children* using only gifs. So far, we're only on Chapter 2" (12). It suggests that hyperreal images of cyberspace and techno-oriented simulations are the content that is in hype in the society.

Media not only constitutes the reality of these characters; it also affects the realities of day-to-day life in postmodern culture. It affects literature of the era in the way that form supersedes the content. The success of the work of literature is determined by its adaptability by media or by chance of good luck adoption by media. Any piece of fiction, though with weird content, that is adapted by media is successful. Kitab 1 shares the link of his novel on his status. His father's comment   on his status suggests the trend of the age, "You should make something that can be adapted into a film. Maybe I will read it then" (26). When the film version of book *The Girl with A Dragon Tattoo* comes out, Kitab 1 recalls   his father's comment on his status   two years ago, "I read this *Girl with A Dragon Tattoo* book in 3 days. I have not read your book. What does that tell you, son?' (26). This comment of Rasesh demonstrates the intricacies of media in realties of real world in postmodern age.

The above-mentioned socio-technological aspects of the society are various factors which seem to amalgamate in an intricate process to shape the reality of postmodern man. Thus, cyberspace, technology, technological commodities, media, simulated images of   global and virtual pop culture are the agents of construction of reality in postmodern society depicted in the novel.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Summary

The selected narrative sheds light on the issue of reality and its representation in postmodern society. Reality in postmodern hyperreal culture is represented by media, cyberspace, advertisement abstract simulations. This simulated nature of reality and its representation creates a hyperreal environment. Living in such sort of environment, the postmodern man outlines his subjective reality based on his comprehension of reality as represented by these hyperreal representations of postmodern culture. The novel under study *Meatspace* depicts the prevalence of hyperreality in postmodern age as well as its probable effects on the receiver's perception. This thesis highlights the probability of the construction of hallucination and loss of the 'real' likely to occur under hyperreality. The analysis of the novel highlights that the hyperreal world of cyberspace is likely to cause dissociation of the critical sensibility of the surfer and one may construct a world of hallucination amidst these virtual realms.

The first part of analysis deals with first question of this research. It addresses the issue of the subversion in notions of reality in postmodern hyperreal culture. It analyses that how reality of physical world is distorted as well as superseded by hyperreal representations of reality by cyberspace, media, and hyperreal images in postmodern societies. The analysis in this chapter highlights this postmodern tendency. The characters put the physical world to the margins and is cyberspace and its reality representation is the centre of their comprehension. This subversion is the very essence of the toppling of metanarratives of reality in postmodern hyperreal culture where cyberspace and its reality representation supersede the physical world and its realities.

On the other hand, the second part of Chapter 4 highlights characteristics of the virtual reality that it is abstract, fluid, inconsistent, unreliable, and illusive in nature. This part of the study highlights the probability of the construction of hallucination by postmodern net surfers under the hyperreality of cyberspace. The close analysis of their illusions demonstrates that it all happens when they construct their subjective realities

totally based on its representation in cyberspace forgetting its hyperreal nature and are totally disconnected with reality in real physical world.

The third part of Chapter 4 investigates the factors that I think are involved in the reality construction in postmodern age. It analyses the effects of media, pop culture, cyberspace, advertisement, technology, and technological commodities on characters' perception of the 'real' and finds above-mentioned technology-oriented factors to be as agents of the construction of reality in contemporary postmodern culture. They integrate to form a hyperreal postmodern culture based on abstractions and simulations. This part also discusses the illusive nature of this hyperreal culture and hence the reality that is constructs is also likely to construct illusions.

Information technology has changed the whole scenario of connections and communications in postmodern society. This abstract phenomenon has superseded previous conceptions of reality and nature of human relationships. It superseded previous technological commodities even. The portable technological devices, the abstract software, and electronic messages as well as updated apps of social media has given an entirely new shape to communications as well as relationships in our era. The physical nature of commodities as well as physical presence of human beings are subverted to abstractions and simulations in postmodern digital age. The compressed software and social media apps have superseded the technological commodities like landline telephones and even cell phones and replaced them with abstract interactions on social media apps like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. The physical presence of the sender and the receiver of information is not necessary in today's digital age. It reduces the physical world relationships to abstract digital world interactions. Thus, the reality of real physical world has undergone major metamorphosis from real to virtual world of cyberspace. Over all, the postmodern culture is flooded with these simulations and they play a dynamic role in representation of reality as well as in formation of the working notions and conception of reality. These simulations are abstract, fluid, and inconsistent. Thus, the reality that they construct is also abstract, inconsistent, and unreliable.

The cyberpunk genre is significant and contemporary. It puts to view human/cyber interfaces. It encompasses the saturation of technology in society where

technology becomes an environment. It delineates human experiences in the face of technology. This thesis takes Cyberpunk narrative *Meatspace* by Nikesh Shukla as an epitome of contemporary postmodern society. The characters in this novel are taken as representatives of postmodern society. The analysis of their experiences highlights the condition of postmodern man in postmodern hyperreal culture.

The characters under analysis represent the condition of postmodern man in the background of hyperreality. These characters represent the subversion of metanarratives of reality. They subvert the grand narratives of reality based on logic, reason and traditional values transmitted by ancestors and their culture. They reconstruct their subjective reality in the backdrop of postmodern hyperreal culture. Cyberspace is their frequently visited realm and major factor of their reality construction. These are isolated characters in their real lives and they fill the gap of their isolation through their online   activities and interactions. Their over occupation with online interaction supersedes the real-world relationships as well as real world realities. They think that online interactions enhance their sociability but close analysis of their online interactions accredits that they are 'alone together' in their virtual interactions. Being over-occupied with cyberspace, they carry on drifting away from reality of meatspace and construct their subjective realities based on reality and its representation in cyberspace. Their behaviours infer that abstract world of cyberspace is more concrete for them than the physical world. On basis of this subversion, they are caught in a fix amidst cyberspace where they construct their reality based on constructed virtuality of cyberspace. This reality proves to be hallucination with the development of plot.

The analysis of the reality construction by characters Kitab 1, Kitab 2, Kitab 1's father, and Aziz is done in this context. Kitab 1 thinks that his online followers will increase his fan following in his writing career. But his writing career remains unsuccessful like before. He maintains Aziz's blog for the advertisement of his book as well as to create a feeling through blog that Aziz is alive. This reality of cyberspace drifts him away from the 'reality' in real life. It represents his hallucination. It also sinks him in the hyperreal world where he loses his connection with realities of physical world. His excessive usage of cyberspace brings him nothing but unwanted

consequences in the form of Kitab 2's unwanted intrusion in his life. Kitab 2 exploits his personal space in many ways and hence pushes his life to shocking circumstances.

Kitab 2 also lives 24/7 in cyberspace. He constructs his reality in   the virtual world of cyberspace and video games. He likes online simulacrum of Kitab 1's online persona and wants to have a life like his. He   plays video games all the time and the world of video games drags him away from the real life. He misses important concerns of his real life like his admission in UK University and to attend his family properly. The most crucial overlapping is that he forgets to attend his mother's funeral ceremony while he was playing video game. He drifts away from his career as electrical engineer and targets to become a videogames software developer which he never achieves. He travels from India to UK believing his constructed reality in cyberspace that Kitab 1 will make him fix all his issues in UK which never happens.

Kitab 1's father tries to use medium of cyberspace to reduce his isolation. Though he remains isolate like before. He also uses the channel of cyberspace to reduce distance between him and his son which never occurs. He uses the channel of cyberspace to suggest his son the tips to deal with his unsuccessful writing career which remains fruitless.

Aziz's blog is also hyperreal and illusive. Kitab 1 maintains this blog taking hyperreality of cyberspace to be his concrete reality and believing that blog will keep his brother alive in the world of cyberspace which he thinks is more indelible than his soul. This blog turns to be Kitab 1's hallucination and hyperreality. This fact reduces the blog to mere absurdity. The absurdity of this reality transition made by characters in virtual world of cyberspace reduces their subjective realities to be mere illusions. Characters drift away from the realities of real life as well as real life relationships in the hyperreal world of cyberspace. The illusive nature of constructed reality of cyberspace puts to view the loss of real in cyberspace.

The last part of analysis examines the factors that are operant representations of reality in the postmodern culture. It analyses that postmodern technology, technological commodities, cyberspace, media, and simulated images of pop culture outline the reality of postmodern man. These factors are involved in shaping the mind and thoughts

of the postmodern characters under the analysis. The intricate process of the amalgamation of these factors in the development of the subjective reality of postmodern characters and their subsequent illusions highlight the probability of the loss of the real in cyberspace and postmodern hyperreal culture.

In postmodern age, it is not the question of the availability of technology that is an issue. Rather, sensible usage of technological commodities is the critical question. The study has highlighted an important issue of postmodern literature and culture: the issue of reality and its representation in postmodern culture. Pointing out vulnerabilities of the hyperreal culture of cyberspace, the research draws a conclusion that a critical and sensible usage of these technological commodities is the challenge that our postmodern culture gives us. Hence to avail the technological commodities in a productive way and understand the hyperreal phenomenon of cyberspace, the users need to have a critical lens while using them.

5.2 Contribution of the Study

This study applies postmodern hyperreality as the primary lens for the textual analysis of the selected cyberpunk narrative *Meatspace*. This research is eclectic in nature as it uses the apparatus of triangulation of three theoretical dimensions: postmodernism, hyperreality and cyberspace. It also uses intertextuality as its analytic tool. This research deals with issue of reality and its representation in postmodern hyperreal culture. It bisects the hyperreality prevailing in postmodern culture and investigates its impacts on the lonely lives of individuals. It puts to view that how media, cyberspace and simulated images of postmodern culture represent reality in postmodern culture which is hyperreality. This study is expected to add in the existing understanding of contemporary postmodern society. It also highlights the importance of Cyberpunk Literature as contemporary literary genre that depicts the implications of technology in society. This study is a contribution to deeper understanding of postmodern hyperreal culture which plays a significant role in the comprehension of postmodern man. Nikesh Shukla's *Meatspace* highlights the prime issue of construction of hallucination and loss of reality in cyberspace that is pin pointed by this thesis. Thus, the contribution of this study is twofold. On the one hand, it analyses impacts of hyperreality on human perception. On the other hand, it analyses those factors in postmodern culture that are

operant in the construction of this hyperreality. This study would inspire the future researchers to inquire the impacts of Information Technology on human beings, societies, language, and   cultures.

5.3 Recommendations

This research has taken into consideration the issue of reality and its representation in postmodern hyperreal culture. It makes textual analysis of the narrative and analyses the constructed hallucinations and the loss of the real under the lens of postmodern hyperreality and cyberspace. It recommends the future researchers to experiment with language.   As said by McLuhan and Foucault the change of language means transformation of society. The narrative represents the change of language from literary and formal to technology-oriented and language of social media texting used as formal language of literary text. Kitab 1 tells Hayley, 'Yeah, definitely, DM me'. 'Or we could phone each other like it's 1995' (87). DM is social media jargon and it is used as formal language in their conversation as well as the language of literary text by the writer. The critical discourse analysis of this line also represents the metamorphosis of culture from 1995 to present day where advent of social media has superseded telephones. This change in language is also evident from conversation between Kitab 1 and his father, "What is a ROFL? I have not come across this'. 'Dad, don't you worry our language is changing? That we're as concerned with how to socialize with people digitally as much as physically? That language is dying? That everyone is using these bullshit words to mean new things they don't?" (27). This change in language is significant   theme in the novel which future scholars can opt for their study. There is much scope for future researches to make a Critical Discourse Analysis of the novel to interpret various themes of postmodern culture encompassed in the plot. During my study, I also came across with themes of post-colonialism, racism, broken family structures, and alienation of postmodern man. I suggest these perspectives for the future studies on this work.

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