

**MORPHING SUBJECTIVITIES, SHIFTING  
AGENCIES: A METAMODERN PERSPECTIVE  
ON AMERICAN SCIENCE FICTION**

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Metamodern Perspective on American Science Fiction**

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## ABSTRACT

### **Morphing Subjectivities, Shifting Agencies: A Metamodern Perspective on American Science Fiction**

This study investigates human subjectivity and its manifestation from a metamodern perspective in the American science fiction digital series *Orphan Black* and its graphic novel adaptation. Keeping in line with the metamodern view, this thesis conceptualizes the said human subjectivity as an oscillation between two extremes inherent in the spectrum of self. This constant alternation results in an entity that is an amalgam of both positions. It yet does not have the characteristics of either of them, occupying a place that is not a place in the physical and spatial sense of the word. The continuous sway gives the subject the freedom to transcend the boundaries otherwise inherent in the two polarities, resulting in a multi-dimensional manifestation of self that can morph as and when required. The study also makes use of transmedia storytelling as an additional prong in the theoretical framework to comment on the form and medium of the selected texts and discusses how these play a key role in allowing the subjectivity to manifest multiply. To achieve its goal, the study employs textual analysis under the qualitative paradigm to analyze the selected works. The notion of multiple subjectivity is projected as human cloning in *Orphan Black* and, in doing so, the works reflect the multi-faceted nature of an individual in the contemporary digital age. The study explores how this multiplicity, and its consequences manifest and aims to develop an understanding of this natural order in the metamodernist world.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION .....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	viii
DEDICATION .....	x
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Locating <i>Orphan Black</i> in the Tradition of Modern Science Fiction .....	8
1.2. Key Terms .....	21
1.3. Delimitation.....	24
1.4. Thesis Statement.....	27
1.5. Research Questions .....	27
1.6. Research Plan .....	27
1.7. Significance of the Study .....	29
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	32
2.1. Introduction .....	32
(I).....	32
2.2. Subject and Subjectivity .....	32
2.2.1. The Era of Enlightenment: On Origins of the Subject.....	34
2.2.2. Situating the Subject: On the Subject being a self-interpretative Being .....	44
(II).....	67
2.3. Transmedia Storytelling .....	67
2.3.1. Establishing the Origins of Transmedia Storytelling .....	67
2.3.2. Transmedia Storytelling: Features, Techniques, and Methodologies .....	73
2.3.3. Transmedia Storytelling: Alternate Terms and Recent Developments .....	77
(III).....	81
2.4. Research on <i>Orphan Black</i> .....	81
CHAPTER 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	96
3.1. Introduction .....	96
(I).....	97
3.2. Metamodernism.....	103
3.3. Transmedia Storytelling .....	105
(II).....	111
3.4. Textual Analysis .....	113
CHAPTER 4 OSCILLATION AND MULTIPLE SUBJECTIVITIES IN <i>ORPHAN BLACK</i> .....	119
4.1. Introduction .....	119
4.3. Multiple Subjective Positions.....	124
CHAPTER 5 THE SPECTRUM OF SELF IN <i>ORPHAN BLACK</i> .....	135
5.1. Introduction .....	135
5.2. Simultaneity and Paradox.....	137
CHAPTER 6 TRANSCENDENCE OF SELF AND ATOPOS IN <i>ORPHAN BLACK</i> .....	155
6.1. Introduction .....	155
6.2. Defining Trajectory .....	157
6.3. Defining Transcendence.....	158
6.4. Defining Atopos .....	159
6.5. Erasure of Boundaries .....	163
6.6. Reconstruction.....	180

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION.....	186
7.1. Recommendations for Further Research.....	191
Works Cited .....	194

## TABLE OF FIGURES

Fig. 1.....	140
Fig. 2.....	140
Fig. 3.....	141
Fig. 4.....	142
Fig. 5.....	145
Fig. 6.....	146
Fig. 7.....	146
Fig. 8.....	147
Fig. 9.....	175
Fig. 10.....	176
Fig. 11.....	177
Fig. 12.....	178



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## **DEDICATION**

*Dedicated to the source of life itself: to the women in my life, resilient and  
passionate warriors.*

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

*[Y] ou've arrived too late, we're already beyond postmodernism, it's dead, dead, and gone, don't you know, it's been buried, where have you been.*

— Raymond Federman, *Aunt Rachel's Fur*

In this research project, I attempt to explore the notion of human subjectivity concerning the contemporary theoretical advancement of thought and how it is portrayed in the cultural productions of the present times. For this, I have chosen to examine both the TV series and the adapted graphic novel version of the science fiction series *Orphan Black*. Both versions are selected as graphic novels provide supplemental material for the story's development and, therefore, account for the overall understanding of the characters. I intend to discuss the dynamic nature of the subject in the selected texts and what allows it to manifest in a way that is characteristically different and unique compared to how subjects are presented and discussed generally. The contemporary theoretical perspective of metamodernism discusses subjects as multi-faceted beings, and all these dimensions of an individual make up the sense of self. This phenomenon allows the subject to transcend the usual boundaries in which the subject generally functions and, in doing so, occupies a space different from the usual understanding of the term. In my thesis, I argue that this multi-dimensional manifestation of subjectivity is achieved through the angle of human cloning in the selected texts, both TV and graphic novel series, and allows the audience to view the said manifestation in a way that other productions and genres do not. I employ the method of textual analysis to explore the notion of subjectivity; the theoretical lens is tailored by merging metamodernism and transmedia storytelling as the text is multi-faceted. Therefore, in the first chapter of my dissertation, I try to situate metamodernism as a school of thought and, in doing so, pave the way for the discussion of science fiction as a genre in which I further locate the selected texts. After that, key terms are introduced, making it easier to pose the research questions and further elaborate on the significance of the study.

*Orphan Black* deals with contemporary issues of ethics and morality and what it means to be human in the modern world. With human cloning at its center, the series explores the questions of agency, subjectivity, and identity in a way that is recent and has significance in answering how a human being functions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The quote by Federman aptly describes what I felt when I watched the series, as I could not, with my limited understanding of the development in literary theory, answer or place the characters and how their subjectivity manifested under the broader realm of the existing theoretical domain, namely (post)modernism. This inability to place the said characters and the anxieties that they dealt with prompted me to explore further. It is then that I came across the terms hypermodernism (Ronnie Lippens 2000), pseudomodernism/digimodernism (Alan Kirby 2006), complexism (Phillip Galanter 2008), altermodernism (Nicholas Bourriaud 2009), auto-modernism (Robert Samuels 2009), supermodernism (Marc Auge 2009), post-postmodernism (Jeffrey Nealon 2012), and/or New Sincerity (Adam Kelly 2016)<sup>1</sup>. Collectively, all these theorists have suggested what McHale points out in a sub-heading to one of his chapters in *The Cambridge Introduction to PostModernism*: "Post-postmodernism, At last?" (175) where he discusses many possibilities of naming the current era:

Trivial in itself, the act of naming is nevertheless crucial to the branding of a cultural development, which in turn helps set the agenda for further development or reflection. Something like *a-name-that-period* sweepstakes has sprung up, mainly involving the affixing of an appropriate prefix to the term modernism: *neo-*, *meta-*, *pseudo-*, *semi-*, *alter-*, and so on. (175- 76)

From Federman to McHale, it becomes evident that postmodernism is no longer equipped with the tools necessary to explore the current issues of the development of digital technology and how it

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the terms, see the works of authors such as Lippens as he discusses hypermodernism in *ChaoHybrids* (2000) and Galanter, who mentions complexism in *Complexism and the Role of Contemporary Art* (2008). Also, see Kirby (2009) as he explains Digimodernism. Similarly, in 2009, Auge elaborates on the notion of supermodernity in *Non-Places: Introduction to SuperModernity*. It is also noteworthy to mention Samuels, who explains the concepts further in *Automodernity: Autonomy and Automation after Postmodernity* in 2009. Britain discusses altermodernism in a similar vein in an exhibition curated by Nicolas Bourriaud in 2009. Also, see Nealon (2012), where he elaborates on what lies after post-postmodernism. Moreover, Kelly (2016) discusses these ideas in *The New Sincerity*.

gives rise to the multiplicity of human agency, as shown in *Orphan Black*. Keeping this in mind, it becomes of utmost importance to see and understand the nature of human subjects in the light of the new developments in literary and cultural theory. When I stated that postmodernism is not equipped with the tools that could cater to exploring contemporary issues, I considered the three reasons that Nick Bentley, Nick Hubble, and Leigh Wilson gave in 2015 for the end of the postmodern era. They propose 1) that "in a purely chronological sense, then perhaps the events of 9/11 can be seen as a representative historic marker", 2) that perhaps postmodernism has come to "its limits in a philosophical sense," and 3) that the era has reached "its ends and means as a set of cultural practices" (14-15). I agree with the second and third points, and going by these reasons, it becomes evident that human beings have entered an era beyond postmodernism, which has its own cultural practices and needs newer and/or at least different philosophical approaches to deal with these said practices.

However, the first point, which deals with the chronological development and placement of the post-postmodern era, is debatable as the terms (post-postmodernism, altermodernism, digimodernism); specifically, metamodernism was being used in the 1970s and 80s, which as is known were the eras of postmodernism; but theorists had already been discussing what lies ahead in terms of cultural philosophy. However, although there were talks about what the future is and what seems to lie ahead, none of the stated terms answered how and why postmodernism came to an end and what the differences are between postmodernism and these newly suggested terms, which Noah Bunnell explains in his article in the following words:

that none of them (the terms given above) adequately describe deviations from the postmodern condition, and none have been able to gain traction in the academic community, let alone become part of mainstream usage. Whatever movement will take postmodernism's place must *incorporate old and new, modernism and postmodernism, irony, and sincerity.*  
(3)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> My italics: this corresponds with how Vermeulen and van den Akker define metamodernism. See the next section for an elaborate discussion on the idea. Moreover, Okediji's arguments in the coming paragraphs also resonate with this idea

He further argues that postmodernism as a cultural and philosophical movement did not seem to answer the questions that it posed and was "a dead end, pessimistic, and morally and intellectually bankrupt." It was not until the theorists and critics started using the term metamodernism that things became a little clear as far as the future was concerned. Metamodernism, as a word, appeared somewhere in the 1970s, 1975, to be exact, by Mas'ud Zavarzadeh, in his article *The Apocalyptic Fact and the Eclipse of Fiction in Recent American Prose Narratives*, where he used the term to describe the cultural aesthetics and practices prevalent in American prose narratives since 1950s. This would mean that the term dates back to the early 1970s, when people were trying to understand and come to terms with postmodernism, highlighting the end of postmodernism and signifying the beginning of an era of post-postmodernism. By 1999, the term metamodernism came to the forefront as a term that would be used to describe the gap inherent between modernism and postmodernism, taking a position that would require the subject to be both modern and postmodern and also none, simultaneously: a position of neither both nor or; this resonates with the arguments of Bunnell as discussed above.

McHale discusses Charles Jencks and his (Jencks') insistence on adopting a "late modernist" (176) style for architecture in this vein and also mentions a British critic, Owen Hatherley, who opposes Jencks' idea of late modernism and characterizes the architecture of the "'New Labour' era as pseudo-modernism" (176), which highlights the usage of the variety of terms being adapted and or adopted in an attempt to classify the cultural development after the 2000s. In a similar strain, McHale engages in a debate regarding the literary works of 2005 onwards and tries to categorize them under the label of "post-postmodernism" (171). The works include Pamuk's *Istanbul* (2005), Danielewski's *Only Revolutions* (2006), and Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010), among others. These works and other literary and cultural developments can be categorized under labels such as cosmodernism, as proposed by Moraru (for everything that came after 1989), or as altermodernism, put forward by Bourriaud (2009), who initially used the term for contemporary art but then later the term expanded to be used for literary texts as well.

This brings the discussion to the 21st century, which has seen up till now a variety of terms being used for art, literature, film, and TV, developed after the apparent demise of postmodernism as a cultural paradigm and philosophy, out of which the most commonly referred to term is metamodernism which, in 2014, James and Seshagiri proposed specifically for literature produced in the 21st century including writers like Ian McEwan, Tom McCarthy, Zadie Smith, Kazuo Ishiguro,

Michael Ondaatje and many others (87). In a 2017 web article by Seth Abramson, it becomes evident how much hype the term metamodernism has gained since its first usage in 1975. The term, according to Abramson, is widely used:

It's a word academics periodically used throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, but it's only lately become the sort of thing regularly discussed on popular websites like 4chan, Reddit, and Twitter. It even pops up with some frequency on major media; in the past year we've seen the words "metamodernism" or "metamodernist" appear in places like GQ, The Atlantic, The Guardian, The London Evening Standard, The Sydney Morning Herald, and (repeatedly) right here on The Huffington Post. (n.p)

Moreover, in 2017, many artists and celebrities identified as metamodernist, including but not limited to the American film producer, screenwriter, and director Wes Anderson, the British singer Hannah Diamond, the American actor Shia LaBeouf, the American singer/songwriter Lana Del Ray and others.; bringing to the limelight the idea that the term is, in fact, used to refer to a cultural philosophy, signifying and reinforcing the idea mentioned above. The extensive discourse regarding a cultural philosophy surpassing postmodernism motivated me to examine *Orphan Black* within a contemporary framework: the characters are dealing with anxieties of the technologically enhanced and developed world, making them complex in terms of their agency and subjectivity. Considering that the term (metamodernism) is being used this widely to talk about literature, music, films, architecture, and art of the 21st century, it ought to have had some defining features which would distinguish it both from modernism and postmodernism, which is where the seminal publication of Robin van dan Akker and Timotheus Vermeulen *Notes on Metamodernism* (2010) makes its contribution.

In 2010, Robin van den Akker and Timotheus Vermeulen introduced the notion that the era characterized by postmodern abundance, pastiche, and parataxis has concluded (56), giving way to what they term a "structure of feeling" (57) they label as metamodern. This conceptual framework, they argue, involves a dynamic interplay between the optimism of modernism and the skepticism of postmodernism, resulting in a state of being they define as metamodern. This state implies a constant fluctuation between the poles of (post)modernist ideologies and beyond, suggesting a fluidity where subjects navigate a realm of both-and rather than either-or. For Vermeulen and van den Akker, this



"structure of feeling" is defined by a continuous fluctuation between a traditional modernist dedication and a distinctly postmodern detachment (57). Epistemologically, they align this structure with Kant's negative idealism, contrasting with the positive idealism associated with Hegel, which characterizes both modernism and postmodernism. Unlike these ideologies, metamodernism rejects the notion of history's end, a belief derived from Hegelian Telos. While postmodernists asserted that history had concluded with the attainment of Telos, others argued that its purpose was unattainable, leading to the conclusion that history had reached its end regardless. However, metamodernism embraces a middle ground, oscillating between these extremes, acknowledging the absence of a definitive historical purpose while paradoxically pursuing its discovery, echoing Kant's negative idealism.

Ontologically, metamodernism navigates a spectrum encompassing both modernism and postmodernism. Akker and Vermeulen state that it "oscillates between a modern enthusiasm and a postmodern irony, between hope and melancholy, between naiveté and knowingness, empathy and apathy, unity and plurality, totality and fragmentation, purity, and ambiguity" (67). This oscillation characterizes the metamodern subject's negotiation between these paradigms, rejecting an either-or stance in favor of perpetual movement. The metamodern condition involves constant shifting between various dichotomies such as 'enthusiasm' and 'irony,' 'hope' and 'melancholy,' 'unity' and 'plurality,' among others, all while acknowledging the elusive nature of truth. This perpetual motion means the subject never fully adopts the characteristics of either pole, constantly swinging between them. Akker and Vermeulen caution against viewing this oscillation as a balanced state; rather, it resembles a pendulum swinging between numerous poles (68).

Similar to a pendulum ceaselessly swinging between two poles, the subject remains in perpetual motion amidst "innumerable" positions (68) and polarities. In this infinite array, individuals adapt and adopt subjective positions based on their immediate needs, a phenomenon Seth Abramson terms as multiple subjectivities. This concept reflects the ability of individuals in the metamodern era to inhabit numerous or even limitless subjective categories. They can consciously choose to temporarily relinquish one position and embrace another. This awareness extends to recognizing not only one's own multiplicity of positions but also those of others. Furthermore, relinquishing a subjective category underscores the importance of 'sharing subjectivities' with individuals who differ from oneself. Abramson aptly illustrates this through examples of online

interactions, where people align with like-minded individuals regardless of differences in race, ethnicity, gender, age, or culture, thus transcending subjective biases to stand in solidarity with others.

After discussing the ontology and epistemology of the metamodern, it becomes clear that it adopts a ‘neither-both dynamic,’ which has been described in the beginning as well. To explain this dynamic of neither being (post) modern and being both simultaneously, Akker and Vermeulen use the term metaxis, which Plato first gave to talk about the in-between-ness of consciousness and existence. Later, this ideology was also reinforced by the German philosopher Eric Voegelin, who was so impressed by Plato’s use of the term ‘metaxy’ that he transformed his own argument about the consciousness of being around this term, which literally translates from Greek into English as ‘between.’ Rhodes quotes Voegelin in his article:

From my first contact with such works as the *Cloud of Unknowing*, to my more recent understanding of the mystical problem . . . the great issue [has been] not to stop at what may be called classical mysticism, but to restore the problem of the Metaxy for society and history. (2)

Voegelin used the term extensively to establish an argument between God and mortal, between life and death, between mortality and immortality, between truth and untruth, between sense and senselessness, and similar dichotomies. Akker and Vermeulen use the term in concluding their essay *Notes on Metamodernism* on the idea that the metamodern condition is that of “atopic metaxis” (76), signifying that the subject is in between the two (or infinite) states/ polarities/ positions and ends up being in a place (topos) which is no place (atopos): transcending the boundary of self/ subject-hood. The theorists Vermeulen and van den Akker put forth three areas of significant concern after addressing and trying to categorize the characteristics of metamodern. The three concerns are that the metamodern subject insists a) on deliberately being out of time, b) on consciously being out of space/place, and c) on the possibility of transcendence of time and place, knowing fully well that this displacement of time and place is something that is not possible, “thus, if the modern suggests a temporal ordering, and the postmodern implies a spatial disordering, then the metamodern should be understood as a spacetime that is both---neither ordered and disordered” (76). It is now essential to explain what science fiction is and the relevance of choosing it as a genre. The following sub-section

will, therefore, build the argument regarding the notion mentioned above, locate the selected text within the genre, and set the tone for the present study.

### **1.1. Locating *Orphan Black* in the Tradition of Modern Science Fiction**

In this section, I first attempt to define and characterize science fiction and afterward try to situate the selected text within the said genre. It can be argued that the term comprises two distinct concepts of ‘science’ and ‘fiction.’ Still, it is essential to understand what these two terms mean and how the meaning shifts and makes room for the sense of both terms when the merger of the terms is considered. *Oxford English Dictionary* defines ‘science’ as “the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment.” The dictionary defines fiction as “literature in the form of prose, especially novels, which describes imaginary events and people.” Now, as per these definitions, three things become evident: 1) science fiction would have to deal with “imaginary events and people,” but it still has to be a(n) “intellectual and practical activity” that allows the writers and readers to use rationale and logic to make sense of what is being presented in the form of literature. 2) The resulting literature would be a “systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world,” which, combined with point 1, becomes paradoxical as it was discussed that the literature would deal with ‘imagined’ worlds, but it is necessary to see where this imagination is rooted in and what gives rise to the creation of these worlds; namely the structures and behaviors of the already existing physical and natural world.

This entails that science fiction would take from the existing world but build imaginative contexts in which the characters move and take the plot further. This gives rise to the third point that to create such literature, the writers would have to rely on their 3) “observation and experiment”: observation of the natural and physical world as it exists around the authors and experimentation as linked to the process of writing itself which aims to make this natural and physical world appear fictional to its readers.

Hence, combining the understanding of these two terms, it can be said that science fiction deals with writing that attempts to make the ordinary seem extraordinary. It endeavors to include the state of human development within its narratives so that the result appeals to the reader’s rational mind. Still, they understand that it is merely a comment on humankind's present state of affairs. This

becomes interesting because the ideas of creation and innovation are inevitably linked to the notion of science. These characteristics must be part of the narratives when defining science fiction. In this way, the genre becomes imbued with the ideals of creation, invention, and revolution, which allows the writers to resort to scientific and technological advancements of the era in which they are writing and present a picture of the now as they see it or speculate about what is in store for humanity by discussing things in the near or far future. This is made possible as is done in other types of fiction by distancing the reader from the world created in the narrative. The writers would distinguish the world of the narrative from the actual world (that they borrow from) by using imagination, and the result is something fantastical with underlying meanings for its audience.

If I now define science fiction as stated in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it will become easier to grasp its essence; the definition says that science fiction is “fiction based on imagined future, scientific or technological advances, and major social or environmental changes, frequently portraying space or time travel and life on other planets.” The definition has all the elements discussed above, namely imagination, fiction, and scientific and technological advances, including but not limited to space travel, interplanetary flights, time travel, and /or environmental issues. Now, considering that it is fiction, it becomes easier for the writers to discuss matters of such seriousness as they distance the audience from the direct ramifications of their constructed plots and narratives. However, at the same time, these narratives provide material for dealing with and or describing grave matters, which eventually make way for these fictional worlds into the actual world, making the genre speculative in its nature, to say the least.

Here, I will discuss ten definitions of science fiction given by literary critics and scholars to make a case for selecting the genre and illustrate that *Orphan Black* falls under this category. To start with this, science fiction, as Brian Aldiss defines it in *Trillion Year Spree* (1988), is “the search for a definition of mankind and his status in the universe which will stand in our advanced but confused state of knowledge (science) and is characteristically cast in the Gothic or post-Gothic mode” (26). This definition brings to the forefront two things for me: the origins of science fiction as a genre and what Aldiss calls ‘the search for a definition of mankind and his status.’ According to this definition, science fiction has its roots in gothic fiction, which would entail going back to Mary Shelley’s work *Frankenstein* (1818), which Aldiss believes to be the beginning of science fiction in many ways. Gothic stories usually have specific characteristics, including a dark setting like far-

away castles, dungeons, eerie passageways, and the use of ghosts and supernatural phenomena. The characters have to deal with this ever-present sense of desolation. *Frankenstein*, a tale of a scientist creating a monster, is not hard to place in the gothic category as it invokes absolute terror in its audience. Since gothic has its underpinnings in romance, merging romance with myth, darkness, and eerie settings gave rise to gothic or dark romantic literature. Science fiction developing out of gothic is easy to understand since it merges the scientific factor as an essential component of the narratives in addition to the eerie and dark atmosphere already inherent in gothic.

*Frankenstein* does this too, and Aldiss's assertion in *Billion Year Spree* that "science fiction was born from the Gothic mode, is hardly free of it now. Nor is the distance between the two modes great. The Gothic emphasis was on the distant and the unearthly" (18) rings true because same is the case with science fiction as far as the emphasis is concerned. The tale of a scientist creating a monster in a far-off castle and then abandoning it, of course, would be a contestant for the beginning of the genre of science fiction as it deals with the elements of creation and the use of scientific technology to manufacture this creature; and in doing so paves the way for the future writers like H. G. Wells to explore further the possibilities of creating and inventing techniques for manufacturing creatures as in *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) or with creating techniques for inter-planetary flights as in *The War of the Worlds* (1898); giving way to the origins of science fiction as a genre.

*The Island of Doctor Moreau* is significant here as *Orphan Black* refers to the book in the context of 'creating' human clones and how they then become the property of the creator, as is seen in the book itself in terms of the organisms the doctor creates using his scientific expertise. Intertextuality is one of the significant features of science fiction, and it helps the readers and audiences to understand one work in the context of another; it can be seen in *Orphan Black* with respect to Wells's work. This feature of intertextuality will be discussed in detail by the end of this subsection and in Chapter 4 in relation to *Orphan Black*. According to the definition, the second thing is the search for the meaning of humankind and its status in the universe, which now becomes a matter of sheer simplicity considering science fiction's devotion to the exploration and understanding of humankind in the face of unfamiliar and strange settings. This comes in line with the above discussion on distancing the reader and yet borrowing from the actual physical and natural world, resulting in a setting that is far too imaginative to be considered real but lends an air of speculation to the genre itself. In this way, science fiction is a search for a definition of humankind

as humans keep evolving with their ever-changing discoveries of science, technology, and industry, paving the way for the human subject to adjust and adapt according to the needs of the time. This factor leads to humankind's status in the universe, and I believe it is also as evolving as time itself, considering that the status has to be discussed or gauged in relation to the discoveries of the time and contemporary humans have come a long way from where they stood before. Science fiction, being speculative, helps explore this status and its consequences by discussing far-off places and alternate universes.

This brings the discussion to the second definition of science fiction, which is given by Hugo Gernsback, which also focuses on the instructive aspect of science fiction. The definition states that science fiction is “a charming romance interwoven with scientific fact and prophetic vision.” Now, this definition is also in line with the gothic origins as it employs the terms ‘charming’ and ‘romance’ but also ‘scientific fact’ and ‘prophetic vision,’ which enables the readers to understand that science fiction would be fiction dealing with all three aspects simultaneously, highlighting its prophetic or speculative quality but not undermining the inspiration it takes from the scientific developments of the time period the fiction is produced in because the definition incorporates the term ‘fact’ as well. Developing the argument further, Edward James, in his book *Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (1994), is seen quoting Gernsback's following words:

Not only is science fiction an idea of tremendous import, but it is to be an important factor in making the world a better place to live in, through educating the public about the possibilities of science and the influence of science on life. . . If every man, woman, boy and girl could be induced to read science fiction right along, there would certainly be a great resulting benefit to the community. . . Science fiction would make people happier, give them a broader understanding of the world, make them more tolerant. (8-9)

Here, it may be seen that not only does Gernsback focus on science fiction being a charming romance imbued with scientific fact, but he also regards the genre to be instructive in nature in terms of understanding life and the actual world in a better way. This aligns with how I initiated the discourse on science fiction borrowing from the real world to help the audience make sense of and grapple with the ideas that are yet to become a part of their realities. Science and invention also go together, and the advancements discussed in science fiction do become part of human reality in one

way or the other. Writings influenced by these definitions made their way into Hugo Gernsback's pioneering American pulp magazine for science fiction called *Amazing Stories*<sup>3</sup>, which came out in the 1920s and included tales that were charming romances suffused with scientific inventions and futuristic visions. Gernsback emphasizes educating the readers with these tales and is credited with having coined the term 'science fiction' as well.<sup>4</sup>

Discussing the notions of alternate universes, prophetic visions, scientific facts, and defamiliarization of settings, it becomes inevitable to discuss John Campbell, who, in 1948, described science fiction to be dealing "with all places in the Universe, and all times in Eternity, so the literature of the here-and-now is, truly, a subset of science fiction." With this definition describing what science fiction deals with, it is clear that Campbell believed science fiction to be an umbrella term that could encompass almost anything and everything (of course, as long as it comes in the domain of what has been discussed above). It also brings to the forefront the ideas of time travel, space travel, fantastical worlds, other-worldly creatures, and others. by using the phrases 'all places in the Universe' and 'all times in Eternity.'

Therefore, when tales with futuristic elements appear in the mainstream, they can be categorized as science fiction mainly because of what they are dealing with. In doing so, the texts prepare the audiences for the possibility of the existence of these alternate or futuristic worlds, justifying the last part of the definition, which states that 'the literature of the here-and-now is, truly, a subset of science fiction.'

The defining features of the genre include a sense of melancholy, dreary surroundings, and the protagonist's dilemma. No doubt, all of these features combined give a ghastly appearance and feel to the story/work, but this is the requirement of science fiction, and this is precisely how it combines charm, romance, awe, terror, and foresight. As a genre, science fiction discusses issues of the now and paves the way for looking into the future. It is abreast of all the technological advancements and takes from real life to construct its narratives. It can be observed in the definition given by Darko Suvin in

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<sup>3</sup> Other magazines included *All-Story Magazine* (1905-1920), *The Thrill Book* (1919), *Weird Tales* (1923-54), *Astounding Science Fiction* (1930-1960), etc. Still, these were not exclusive when it came to publishing sci-fi content. Gernsback's *Amazing Stories* (1926) was, and hence is, considered the first magazine entirely devoted to science fiction.

<sup>4</sup> The term came out of 'scientifiction,' abbreviated as stf and pronounced as stef. The term referred to stories Gernsback described as charming romance infused with scientific facts and prophetic vision. Also, see Attebery in *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (2006). Wythoff (2016) explains this in detail in *The Perversity of Things: Hugo Gernsback on Media, Tinkering, and Scientifiction*,

1972, who asserts that science fiction is “a literary genre or verbal construct whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment” (375). Here again, it can be seen that Suvin stresses the notions of estrangement and cognition, resonating with the ideas discussed in the definitions by Gernsback and Aldiss. This can be explained in the sense that both cognition and estrangement are required features of science fiction, and the absence of one might make it difficult for a work to fall under the said category.

Estrangement can be understood as defamiliarizing or making the ordinary seem extraordinary by distancing the readers or audience from the subject being discussed. This is what Gernsback calls a combination of charm, romance, and scientific fact, or what Aldiss defines as the subject appealing to the audience’s rational mind in the search for the status of humankind. The notion of cognition is interesting as it aligns with Gernsback’s concept of ‘scientific fact’ and how writers must borrow from the now to create a plausible and possible futuristic setting. The resulting narrative then appeals to the cognitive ability of the audience in a way that they can see it as fiction but still can relate to and take away the message of the text. Suvin also mentions an ‘imaginative framework alternative to author’s empirical environment,’ which reinforces the use of imagination, charm, romance, and Gothic underpinnings of the genre as detailed by Gernsback and Aldiss. It also reaffirms the understanding of what science fiction deals with in terms of content and subject: a narrative that explores the human condition in the context of scientific discoveries and technological advancements, simultaneously constructing the characters in a universe that is different from the real or actual world, allowing the narrative to discuss grave, serious, and somber issues easily for the audience is distanced from the fictional world because of the text’s reliance of imaginative and fantastical elements. Cognition, as a term, also involves a sense that compels the audience to logically and rationally understand the narrative, the constructed world, and its inhabitants and, overall, develop a sense of the text produced under the category of science fiction.

Whereas estrangement, as already discussed, would make this understanding easier because it uses the elements of alienation and defamiliarization. If science fiction, as a genre, only had to do with either of these concepts, the result would be a text that is too real and factual to be considered fiction or a text that is too fictional to be able to relate to and hence would not be different from the genre of fantasy. Therefore, Suvin emphasizes the co-existence of both terms, paving the way for a narrative that



aids in understanding the human condition and allows the audience to observe, challenge, and resist the structures prevalent in the real world. The idea that something appeals to human cognition also provides for the existence of the phenomena, technological advancements, and inventions shown in science fiction texts, a significant difference between the fantasy and science fiction genres. This has been explained above, where Gernsback's educational aspect of science fiction is discussed and how he believes that interaction with science fiction would help people formulate a better understanding of the world they inhabit. This happens because science fiction plays with the possibility and plausibility of a phenomenon and details the workings of an interplanetary flight. So, science fiction would not only mention that a character is moving from one planet to another, but details on 'how' such a feat is accomplished are made part of the narrative; hence the appeal to the cognitive, intellectual side of human beings while maintaining the aspect of it being a work of fiction. In this way, the human mind can be prompted to think about ways to travel to other planets, making the genre speculative in its very nature. That being said, it does not mean that science fiction would take from the real world in terms of what advancements have been made regarding space travel. Still, it would rationalize the representation of such a travel by providing details for the audience to make sense of it within the fictional world. Nevertheless, at the same time, these details have to be logically connected, allowing the characters to accomplish a feat without making the claims self-contradictory, which would make the things improbable and then impossible for the audience to believe in. This would mean that science fiction as a genre would depend on or be validated by what Suvin calls "the cognitive logic" (379) of the method employed to discuss scientific discoveries and advancements. The truth of the science and discoveries would then depend on how well explained the assertion is within the fictional world.

In his work, *Structuralist Fabulation*, Robert Scholes formulates an argument based on science fiction and elaborates how relevant and significant the genre is because it allows the audience to 'confront' the real world. He says it is "fiction that offers us a world clearly and radically discontinuous from the one we know yet returns to confront that known world in some cognitive way" (2). In this way, science fiction becomes distinguishable from fantasy as it is not escapist in its essence but allows the audience to ponder over the workings of the world, justifying the combination of 'cognition' and 'estrangement' or 'charm' and 'scientific fact.' The paradox in the definition is evident as, on the one hand, he proposes that science fiction presents a world that is 'discontinuous' from the one that the audience is familiar with, but on the other hand, it allows the audience to reach the real world through the seemingly discontinuous one, incorporating the use of logic and reason.

This is precisely what Suvin has termed as a merger of estrangement and cognition; Scholes puts forth a more fluid idea of a movement from discontinuity to its opposite and vice versa. This makes for engaging texts, forcing the audience to think outside of their domains of existence and delve into what science fiction offers them: a chance to question and speculate the direction of humankind. This double-fold concern of technological and evolutionary development makes the subject matter of science fiction diverse and richly complex regarding human beings coming to terms with their ever-changing surroundings. Placed in direct conflict with nature, technology, environment, and/or alien creatures, human subjectivity and agency become widely discussed in science fiction.

Patrick Parrinder introduces science fiction as a highly "self-conscious genre" with symbiotic ties to how it is written (1). Keeping this in mind, *Orphan Black* emerges as a self-conscious series within the broader genre of science fiction, with its narrative structure serving as a deliberate and reflective source of engagement with the ethical and moral ramifications of cloning technology. The term "self-conscious" takes on significance as the creators and the narrative itself demonstrate a heightened awareness of genre conventions, themes, and implications woven into the story. Central to this awareness is the narrative choice to have one actor, Tatiana Maslany, portray multiple clones, each with distinct personalities, backgrounds, and storylines. This intentional deviation challenges traditional storytelling norms, showcasing the conscious effort of the series to comment on and engage with classic science fiction themes, particularly those related to identity, agency, and autonomy within the context of cloning. The genre-blurring elements and incorporation of various genres, including thriller, drama, and conspiracy, further exemplify this notion of self-awareness, as it defies strict categorization and embraces the flexibility inherent in science fiction storytelling. The complexity of the narrative structure itself becomes a form of meta-commentary, inviting viewers to reflect not only on the character-driven drama but also on the intricacies of storytelling within the genre of science fiction.

In the similar vein, Samuel Delany, as quoted in Parrinder (19) defines science fiction not in terms of content but as a particular type of discourse—a "word machine" with specific literary structures. *Orphan Black* exemplifies this perspective through meticulous storytelling and narrative structures as explained in detail above, aligning with the emphasis on form as a defining feature of the genre. This is important for my study because it focuses on the transmedial nature of the narrative emphasizing the role the form plays in helping the audience understand the numerous

subjective positions of the characters and the resulting agency.

Krishan Kumar discusses science fiction within the context of utopias, and argues that science fiction, particularly in its portrayal of utopian and dystopian societies, serves as a platform for exploring and critiquing contemporary social and political issues (170). He opines that science fiction as a genre often presents imagined futures or alternative realities, utilizing scientific and technological advancements as key elements in its narratives. This is in line with *Orphan Black* as well since through its discussion of human cloning, the goal is to critique the notion of cloning, and the ethical dilemmas associated with it. Moreover, the themes that the TV series explores with regards to gender, performativity, and representation of identity politics etc., all serve as commentary on the issues pertinent to these areas.

Robert Heinlein defines science fiction by stating that it involves the projection of new sciences and extrapolation of known facts to create "a new framework, a new situation for human action" (17), *Orphan Black* explores the consequences of scientific advancements and technological developments. The series envisions a world where cloning technology is not just a scientific concept but a reality, contributing to the genre's role in envisioning future possibilities. Heinlein's emphasis on projecting new sciences and extrapolating known facts is reflected in the series, where the consequences of cloning are explored within the framework of realistic speculation about possible future events.

John Campbell's perspective, which identifies science fiction as a genre characterized by prophetic speculation (103-4) is also helpful in locating *Orphan Black* in the genre of science fiction. The series grounds its speculative elements in a thorough understanding of the real world, past, and present, emphasizing the consequences of cloning and genetic manipulation. This connection underscores the commitment of the series to the view that science fiction should be firmly rooted in the real world, despite its speculative nature.

Joanna Russ's exploration of the aesthetics of science fiction emphasizes its didactic nature and unique characteristics (113), and it aligns with the narrative approach of *Orphan Black*. Joanna Russ's contention that traditional literary criticism may fall short when applied to science fiction stems from her recognition of the unique characteristics and goals of the science fiction genre (112-13). Unlike conventional literature, science fiction often operates within speculative and futuristic

frameworks, engaging with themes and ideas that extend beyond the boundaries of everyday life.

Science fiction, according to Russ, is about human concerns (118) and serves not only as a form of entertainment but also as a means of exploring and dissecting complex ideas related to science, technology, society, and morality. This places an additional burden on critics to engage with the scientific and philosophical underpinnings of the genre. *Orphan Black* resonates with Russ's viewpoint by presenting a thought-provoking storyline that delves into the ethical implications of cloning technology. The series goes beyond traditional literary tropes, prompting viewers to grapple with intricate scientific concepts and moral quandaries. Russ's contention suggests that effective criticism of science fiction requires an understanding and appreciation of the genre's didactic nature—its capacity to teach, provoke thought, and explore hypothetical scenarios.

The definitions provide for the possibility of combination, which in turn makes room for the slippage of content from one genre to another, resulting in a field that does not have to talk about one or the other to be considered science fiction. The genre can discuss diverse topics, making it so vast in terms of its mediums as well. Film and TV also saw an increase in sci-fi content as the genre gained popularity. It is not surprising that the rise of Western sci-fi TV and film is parallel to the rise of the concepts of self, identity, and subjectivity, as described in academia by Freud, Foucault, and Nietzsche, as it was during the 1960s and 70s films like *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* (1961), *The Last Man on Earth* (1964), *The Omega Man* (1971), *Zardoz* (1974), *A Boy and His Dog* (1975), *Damnation Alley* (1977), and others emerged which dealt with the notions of survival and how human life is marred with an apocalyptic idea, wherein, it is portrayed that human beings are precariously close to their own termination. This trope of apocalypticism and its consequences is further enhanced when the genre moves down the lane, blurring the boundaries that the definitions set out to create between fantasy and fiction. The posthuman subjects, such as cyborgs, robots, and technologically advanced environments, all once discussed in the fictitious contexts of previously famous science fiction, are now the realities that today's human beings find themselves surrounded by. Taking this into account, it can be seen how post-apocalyptic fiction would then spring from this genre of science fiction. It has all the characteristics mentioned above plus the fact that the world is ending because of a war, an alien invasion, a pandemic, and others, which forces the character(s) to encounter a once familiar world in an extraordinary, eerie, and challenging manner, reinforcing the points of estrangement and defamiliarization. Due to the speculative nature of the genre and the

ever-evolving nature of the field of science, the problems or issues once limited to science fiction have found their way into the contemporary world, and people have actually to deal with those in their real lives. Because of this aspect, human beings (protagonists or otherwise) are seen adapting to their new environments and trying to survive despite their bleak circumstances.

In recent years, especially after 9/11, the content of American science fiction has changed. It is more concerned with the traumatic spectacles of invasion, anxieties concerning terrorism, the war on terror, and alien invasions with tropes and metaphors of terrorist attacks (D. Higgins 1). Moreover, the content has shifted from inter-planetary flights to more recent and urgent issues of Earth invasion, ethical and moral issues concerning scientific and technological advancements, and what humans or post-human subjects tend to do in the face of these crises. Nevertheless, being science fiction, the genre is ever speculative, helps place the crises of the contemporary world in context, and provides the audience with a description and insight into such grave matters. The content has become more accurate and relatable as people in the contemporary world are living in a technologically advanced world. They have to deal with survival issues in the face of constant invasion, and it does not only have to be in the form of aliens. The science fiction of the 9/11 era also deals with the idea that humans are living in a world where they are “victims of their own society and culture, colonized by vast networks of artificial simulacra, justified in their desire to break through to something more authentic” (D. Higgins 1). This concern about artificiality, simulations, and hyper-realities makes the content of today’s sci-fi texts all the more urgent and significant. With the advancements in technology, human beings have created different digital worlds and identities for themselves, ones which are replete with images of what could be real or images that have replaced the real world. With the postmodernist ideas of multiple truths, multiple realities, and simulacra, it is not difficult to comprehend works of fiction like *Gattaca* (1997), *The Matrix*, *The Truman Show* (1998), and *Minority Report* (2002). Surrounded by images, humans struggle to find a way out and reach somewhere real. This struggle with the digital selves, images, simulacra, hyperrealities and how they have taken over the real world gives rise to the concept of posthumanism where, according to Jon Baldwin, “the human, in this posthuman scenario, becomes a prosthesis to technology and information systems” (19). The humanness of the species is left behind as the species desires to break through to something more authentic; more authentic than the images surrounding them or more authentic than themselves? This seems to be the concern of the contemporary human being, and to do so, break through that is, human beings have developed certain mechanisms wherein they create and

manufacture other entities to retain their humanness. It is a complex phenomenon as the manufactured entities, whether cyborgs, robots, clones, or AI systems, all exhibit certain human qualities to make interaction with them seem real and immersive. In this way, human beings go in circles, and instead of breaking through or out of these images of themselves, they are trapped in this domain of virtual and hyper-realities. Therefore, being human is not limited to only the human species and has transcended the boundary of what was once restricted to human beings. Rosi Braidotti, in 2013, asserts this by putting forth the idea that this post-human condition “urges us to think critically and creatively about who and what we are actually in the process of becoming” (11).

Contemporary sci-fi TV series, films, comic books, and graphic novels, including but not limited to *Almost Human* (2013), *Sense8* (2015), *Westworld* (2016), *Colony* (2016), *Altered Carbon* (2018), and others, deal with the similar notions of exploring the post-human agency and how to come to terms with what we are becoming, as Braidotti explains. Taking this into account, if I try and link this discussion to the beginning of this sub-section, it comes to the forefront that science fiction, indeed, is a vast discipline and is not only limited to gothic, pulp, and/or stories of scientific evolution. In the present scenario, it encompasses genres like biology, biotechnology, physics, mathematics, philosophy, politics, culture, ethics, chemistry, anthropology, history, and many more: this is because science fiction aims to explore, describe, and speculate the direction in which humankind is headed. The matters under discussion become urgent, serious, and relevant to the times the texts are produced and help in what Gernsback called making sense of the world. There are points in which the given definitions overlap, which have also been explained in detail and shed light on the diversity of the genre and what it deals with. However, the definitions also agree on a difference between what was (is) categorized as fantasy, real, and/or fiction, which, according to the new and recent developments in the genre, does not seem to be the case because science fiction in the contemporary world deals with everything that concerns human development and technological advancement; resulting in a genre that is not necessarily defined as something separate from the real or fantastical worlds. In this way, the genre becomes concerned with the evolutionary aspect of humankind and, in turn, itself. In the context of the contemporary world and the development of science fiction, it has also been discussed by Sheryl Vint and Mark Bould in *The Routledge Concise History of American Science Fiction*, where they highlight that science fiction as a distinct genre "is disappearing, its images diffusing into contemporary culture and the boundaries that once kept it 'pure' and 'separate' eroding" (183). This would entail that the interdisciplinary nature of fields in the

contemporary world makes it difficult to see science fiction in its entirety without any influence from other fields, such as academics, culture, and/or philosophy. What can be concluded from these definitions is that science fiction does not have to deal with only the notions of time travel, space travel, and or the creation of alternate universes. Still, it also has to deal with humankind's present condition and status and where the authors, scientists, philosophers, and/or academicians see it going.

Since the story of the clones spans over and through different mediums, namely digital TV series, and graphic novels, the element of transmedia storytelling also comes into play when the audience tries to make sense of the character's (metamodernist) pursuit of seeking the truth which they never expect to find situating the story into the theoretical domain of metamodernism as I perceive it. Moreover, transmedia storytelling brings into focus not only the notions of intertextuality as described briefly above but also helps to establish a world where "integral parts of fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple channels to create a unified and coordinated entertainment experience" (Henry Jenkins qtd. in Freeman and Gambarato 1). It is not surprising to see that the contemporary art of storytelling considers multiple mediums for one fictional narrative to make sense because human beings today live in multiple dimensions and domains in the aftermath of (post)modernism. On the one hand, it can be seen that science fiction in recent times can easily be categorized as interstitial fiction, with its content slipping from one genre to another, and on the other hand, the act of storytelling itself has developed into transmedia storytelling, which has inevitably resulted in characters that cannot or would not function in one set spectrum or boundary.

*Orphan Black* as a text relies heavily on intertextuality in terms of its reference to not only *The Island of Doctor Moreau* but also to Darwin's *Origin of the Species* with concepts of survival of the fittest. Moreover, the series also refers to Greek mythology to explain the development of the clones and the names chosen for the respective projects. In this way, the selected text makes sense in a broader domain of knowledge. It prompts the audience to look at the development of the science fiction genre outside and within the constructed narrative and its world. The laws, methods, and description of cloning and how it is achieved make the narrative engaging and appeal to a vast audience with a knowledge of science, biotechnology, law, philosophy, and/or history. Intertextuality allows for looking at one work of fiction in relation to other works. Also, it highlights where the genre (science fiction) stands today with regard to the previous developments (in both fiction and

reality), hence serving a two-fold purpose.

## 1.2. Key Terms

In the following paragraphs, three key terms are explained briefly to ensure that the basic concepts employed in the thesis are properly contextualized.

**Multiple subjectivities** can be understood as the distinct positions that a subject can occupy in the metamodern world, and in doing so, the subject attains a position in which it has the characteristics of both (post) modern and, simultaneously, has none of the features of any (Akker and Vermeulen 67- 8). The theory suggests that the subject in the metamodern world negotiates between the modern and the postmodern but does not adopt an either-or approach. This is so because the subject is always taking new and different positions at all times, which the theorists, at one point, describe as being an oscillation between modern sincerity and postmodern irony (62).

**Metaxis**, on the other hand, is derived from Plato's preposition "metaxy," which translates into "between" (62). The notion of metaxis would thus entail a position of in-between-ness for the metamodern subject. It would signify the subject's inherent nature of oscillation 'between' two (and/or more) extremes, the extremes being the subjective positions. Akker and Vermeulen take the concept further and assert that in moving from one place to another and occupying various positions of agency (multiple subjective positions), the metamodern subject can transcend from both extremes, occupying a place that is not a place in the physical sense of the word, which they define as 'atopic metaxis' (76).

This explanation puts forth the notion that the subject would constantly be in motion, never really stopping at either polarity to take its complete characteristics; before it attempts to do just that, its very nature would compel it to change positions: oscillating back or assuming a new one. The subject can occupy any of these positions and even let go of a position as and when required, hence the use of 'morphing' in the title. My research, then, takes a metamodernist perspective to describe the numerous subjective positions taken by the characters in *Orphan Black* and see how the notion of subjectivity has changed in the metamodern world. I aim to explore the idea of metaxis and multiple subjectivities in the said science fiction digital series *Orphan Black*. John Fawcett and Graeme Manson, director, and screenwriter, respectively created the series. It is produced by Temple Street



Productions in association with Bell Media Space and BBC America. Conversely, the graphic novels are mainly written by series creators John Fawcett and Graeme Manson, with occasional help from several co-authors.<sup>5</sup> Different artists and colorists like Cat Staggs, Alan Quah, Szymon Kudranski, Matt Lopes, Andrew Elder, and others provide the artwork for the graphic novels. All the issues have been published and released by IDW Publishing.<sup>6</sup>

It is also imperative to discuss the phenomenon of **Reverse Adaptation** here as the TV series is the basis for graphic novels, and not the other way around. This helps understand the use of transmedia storytelling in the theoretical framework to analyze the selected texts. The traditional idea of adaptation involves a shift of medium for a text and is usually from a book to a screen, whether film or TV. On the other hand, the term reverse adaptation is the opposite of this traditional way of adapting work for different mediums. It involves the book shape of the text to emerge last, entailing that the film or TV representation exists before the book form and hence is referred to as reverse adaptation. For the present study, I intend to use the term in a similar meaning as the graphic novels for *Orphan Black* came after the TV series and are inspired by the established characters and fictional world. Here, the connection with transmedia storytelling becomes more evident since the selected storyworld is being discussed across different mediums. It is also imperative to state that TV series do not necessarily contribute to understanding graphic novels and vice versa, making both forms stand-alone. The connection, however, cannot be denied as both the mediums contribute towards the overall understanding of the narrative of the story world and complement one another to a great extent. Murphy (2016) explains this by asserting that reverse adaptations motivate the authors on a creative level, and the success of these adaptations is not directly dependent on the mother ship or mother artifact (the one that existed before and inspired the adaptation) as the authors intend to create a stand-alone work (85). There still is a dearth of academic scholarship on the idea of reverse adaptation and situating the present study as focusing on such an adaptation as the selected text requires some precedence.

To my knowledge, the closest is Kelly Thompson's article (2013), in which she discusses the possibility of comic books coming last compared to coming first and what such adaptations can

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<sup>5</sup> See Fawcett and Graeme's *The Clone Club* (5 issues) and *Helsinki* (5 issues). Also, see Kennedy's *Deviations* (5 issues).

<sup>6</sup> Founded in 1999, IDW started as an award-winning publisher of comic books, graphic novels, and trade paperbacks, based in San Diego, California, and has grown into a fully integrated media company that now includes IDW Games, IDW Entertainment, Top Shelf Productions, and the San Diego Comic Art Gallery. For more information, visit <https://www.idwpublishing.com/>

offer. She refers to such adaptations as reverse adaptations, which is how I have used the term for my study. Moreover, Anabelle Murphy (2016) uses the term in her thesis on Creative Writing, where she explores the phenomenon with reference to adapting her unproduced script into a novel. My usage of the term is a bit different from Murphy's as in her Prologue and Introduction, she stresses the idea of her script being 'unproduced' and the audience unfamiliar with it. The success of one, here, is not dependent on the other (7, 1). However, with *Orphan Black*, the TV series had a lot of fan following before it was reverse-adapted into a graphic novel series. Hence, it can be said that the success of graphic novels is somewhat dependent on the mother artifact, the TV series.

Louisa Stein has written extensively about fan culture and media adaptation. In *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2014), she investigates how fans interact with and reinterpret media texts using various types of adaptation, such as fan literature, fan films, and fan art. Stein's work also explores the concept of reverse adaptation, in which fan-created content generates new versions of the original text in many mediums.

In the similar vein, the work of Matt Hills is significant. In *Fan Cultures* (2002), he investigates how fan communities actively contribute to the adaptation process by creating their own creative works based on existing literature. Hills also addresses the impact of television adaptations on fan identities and cultural practices, emphasizing the mutually beneficial interaction between television creators and audiences. Linda Hutcheon, in *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), presents a thorough framework for viewing adaptation as a process of change and reinterpretation rather than simple imitation. She highlights the value of intertextuality and the negotiation of meaning between source and adapted texts. Similarly, while Rita Felski is most recognized for her work in literary studies, her idea of "post-critical reading" outlined in *The Limits of Critique* (2015) can also be used to understand television adaptation. Felski suggests that instead of approaching adaptations with a critical lens focused solely on fidelity or deviation from the source material, readers and/or viewers should engage with adaptations in a more open and exploratory manner, appreciating the various ways in which texts are reimagined across different mediums.

Janet McCabe's study focuses on the concept of reverse adaptation, specifically in the context of film-to-novel adaptations. In her book *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text* (2010), she analyzes how cinema adaptations can inspire novelizations, in which writers modify the script to

create a novel. McCabe explores how adaptations can cross different mediums and create new iterations that deepen our comprehension of the original text.

This form of reverse adaptation adapted for *Orphan Black* also helps in understanding the technique of transmedia storytelling, as briefly described earlier (more in Chapter 3). The said form allows the fictional story world to exist across multiple platforms. It offers depth, breadth, and length to the narrative with multiple entry points and various sites for engagement. Reverse adaptation does this in the case of the selected text as well; it allows the audience to access the text from several positions, and in doing so, they can see how the narrative is built with a systematic branching and extension of the story world (Parody 213). Because of the nature of the selected text, approaching it would require an understanding of the workings of transmedia storytelling and how popular it is in the contemporary world. It is essential to understand that adaptation is not a simple replication of the said story world, narrative, and/or characters in another medium; it has to do with remaking, reimagining, and remediating the form into another medium, ensuring the creation of authentic and new worlds which at times allow for a better understanding of the original.

### **1.3. Delimitation**

This study is specifically confined to the examination of the digital series *Orphan Black* and its initial adaptation into graphic novels, Series 1, consisting of five issues published in 2015. The study is delimited to the five major clones in the series, Sarah, Beth, Cosima, Rachel, and Alison. The selected graphic novels are also based on individual stories of these five clones. The analysis aims to draw conclusions exclusively from these two primary mediums. The digital series spans five seasons with ten 45-minute episodes each, while the reverse adaptation in Series 1 is presented in five issues, each delineating distinct storylines for individual clones.

The decision to select *Orphan Black* for this study is grounded in two key factors. Firstly, the content of the TV series and graphic novels explores the theme of human cloning and its consequences. The representation of human cloning prompts active engagement from the viewer/reader in discerning differences between characters and understanding their varied positions in diverse situations. This representation serves as a compelling foundation for investigating human subjectivity within the metamodern context, where individuals occupy multiple positions of agency, defying easy classification as modern or postmodern.

Secondly, the classification of *Orphan Black* within the science fiction genre contributes to its selection. The study considers the work novel for academic exploration, as this particular perspective has not been extensively analyzed. The reverse adaptation of the graphic novels, being based on the TV series, adds an intriguing dimension to the research, particularly within the emerging field of TV and graphic novel studies in Pakistan. The interconnection between TV and literature, both striving to realistically represent human experience, becomes noteworthy, especially in the context of science fiction predicting future societal developments. The selected work offers an opportunity to analyze the positions that the human subject occupies within the fictional realm of *Orphan Black*.

The chosen series revolves around the character Sarah Manning, a British woman who assumes the identity of Elizabeth Childs, a police officer, after witnessing Childs' suicide. The narrative unfolds as Manning discovers that she is not the sole individual resembling Childs; several other women exist, all products of human cloning. All the clones are the property of Project LEDA which is run by an organization called Dyad Institute. In the context of the television series *Orphan Black*, LEDA, Dyad, and Neolution are central elements of the intricate and suspenseful narrative. LEDA refers to a secret experimental cloning project that gave rise to a group of genetically identical women, including the main protagonist, Sarah Manning. Dyad is a powerful and enigmatic biotechnology corporation deeply entwined with the clandestine activities surrounding the clones. The organization plays a pivotal role in the series, conducting scientific experiments and orchestrating manipulative agendas. Neolution, on the other hand, represents an extremist transhumanist movement with ties to Dyad, advocating for self-directed evolution through genetic modification and technological enhancements. Together, LEDA, Dyad, and Neolution form the complex backdrop against which the clones navigate a web of conspiracies, ethical dilemmas, and personal struggles throughout the gripping storyline of *Orphan Black*.

The television series and graphic novels provide an exhaustive and self-contained narrative universe that serves as a comprehensive source for understanding subjectivity within the context of metamodernism. The decision to exclude other mediums is not a dismissal of their importance but rather a strategic choice to maintain a clear focus on the primary and official channels of storytelling. In terms of investigation, the present thesis focused on the notion of subjectivity and how it manifests as human cloning within the selected series. While wikis, podcasts, fanfics, and other user-generated content play a significant role in fostering a vibrant fan community and extending the narrative beyond

the official mediums, the exclusion of these sources from the thesis is intentional. The decision is guided by the need for a focused and rigorous examination of the core textual materials—the TV series and graphic novels. By limiting the scope to these established and canonized mediums, the research maintains a methodological rigor necessary for in-depth analysis.

Theoretically, the understanding of metamodern subjectivity is adapted from Vermeulen and Akker, and the selected texts are analyzed from the perspective of metamodernism and its several tenets, delineated further in the chapters of analysis. The analytical approach adopted in this study follows Belsey's method of textual analysis, emphasizing the textual nature of the investigation and incorporating visuals as integral components of the text. The selected texts are scrutinized in the light of metamodernism and transmedia storytelling; the details of which are explained in Chapter 3.

The deliberate exclusion of Audience Theory in this study is a methodological choice rooted in the narrative intricacies of *Orphan Black*. Unlike conventional media studies that emphasize audience reception and interpretation, this research aligns with Belsey's textual analysis method, which places the researcher in the role of an active interpreter rather than focusing solely on how viewers perceive and receive the text. Given the metamodern landscape of *Orphan Black*, characterized by intentional disruptions in narrative conventions and fluid identities, a reliance on Audience Theory would limit the scope of analysis. Belsey's approach, with its emphasis on the researcher's engagement and interpretative involvement, proves more apt in navigating the complexities of subjectivity within this specific cultural phenomenon.

In adherence to Belsey's comprehensive framework of textual analysis, this study deliberately refrains from isolating and dissecting elements such as costumes, sounds, lights, and architecture as independent entities. Instead, it embraces these components as integral facets of the overarching textual fabric within *Orphan Black*. Belsey's approach advocates for a holistic understanding of the text, acknowledging that every visual and auditory element contributes synergistically to the richness of the narrative.

By adopting Belsey's lens, this study recognizes that costumes become more than just visual adornments; they become symbolic representations that intertwine with the narrative's thematic complexities. Similarly, sounds, lights, and architecture are not isolated technical aspects but integral components that influence the overall tone and meaning of the text. By opting for Belsey's approach,

which seamlessly integrates semiotic considerations without necessitating a separate framework, the study maintains a focused and efficient exploration of the metamodernist features within *Orphan Black*.

#### **1.4. Thesis Statement**

The metamodern subject is explorable in a state of metaxis, occupying numerous positions and consequently transcending the otherwise inherent extremes of self. Given this notion, the clones in the transmedial sci-fi narrative *Orphan Black* experience multiple (metamodern) subjective positions and simultaneously wield the agency to transcend the boundaries of self.

#### **1.5. Research Questions**

The present study intends to shed light on the notion of subjectivity in the metamodern era by focusing on the selected texts, the television series, and graphic novels. For that purpose, the following three questions are designed to control the line of the argument and comment on the nature of the said subject.

Q1. In what ways do the characters in *Orphan Black* manifest their subjectivities?

Q2. How do the characters' subjectivities link with the spectrum of self in the selected work(s)?

Q3. How do the clone characters transcend the inherent boundary of self in the selected text(s)?

#### **1.6. Research Plan**

This dissertation is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter situates the study in the fields of metamodernism and science fiction. The basic idea is introducing the work and establishing a rationale for choosing the selected texts. Moreover, a context regarding metamodernism as a school of thought is detailed in the light of the previous schools of thought and cultural movements, namely

modernism and postmodernism. In addition, the research questions for the present study are given, establishing a focus for the project. The chapter also includes subsections on delimiting the focus of the research and a brief overview of why and how the study is significant. The second chapter reviews related literature in three subsections focusing on subjectivity, transmedia storytelling, and *Orphan Black*. The focus is to trace the development of thought review available material on the said fields and, in the end, highlight the gap that the present study aims to fill.

The third chapter is based on establishing a theoretical foundation for the study, and in doing so, metamodernism and transmedia storytelling are discussed in detail with regard to the theorists that the present study intends to use. Moreover, a separate section discusses textual analysis as a research method incorporated into the study and outlines the steps for the analysis. The fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters comprise the study's analysis, dealing with the three research questions outlined in the first chapter. I use six metamodern features to answer the research questions, and each chapter of the analysis uses two theoretical concepts to build the argument and address the questions.

The first analysis chapter analyzes *Orphan Black* by tracing the concepts of oscillation and the as-if mindset to explore the morphing nature of the subject, the second chapter explores the notion spectrum of self, incorporating the features of simultaneity and paradox, and the third chapter of the analysis focuses on metaxis and atopus, and the consequences of the atopic metaxis, the transcendence, by making use of the metamodern features of dissolution of boundaries and reconstruction. The theorists discuss these notions with reference to how they define metamodernism as a structure of feeling and shed light on the cultural development and the direction the thought has taken. The present study makes use of metamodernism as a reading prop to highlight the nature of the subject under discussion, the clones, and explore what it means to be an aware subject in the current times with reference to the cultural development of thought on humans and other subjects. The work, therefore, is an attempt to define and decipher the ways in which the subject from the selected texts can be looked at from a metamodernist perspective and how science fiction as a genre allows for such a subject to exist in the first place. Moreover, the present study comments on the form that the narrative takes and how that transmedial form is the reason that the morphing subject emerges and is able to transition not only between poles but also between mediums. The selected texts are analyzed keeping in mind the framework and the previously conducted research on the topics being dealt with. The last and seventh chapter concludes the present study. Important findings

of all the analysis chapters are included with a commentary, and a section recommending areas of study for future research is added towards the end of the last chapter.

## 1.7. Significance of the Study

The study is significant because in conducting the literature review for it, I did not come across any research on *Orphan Black* from the perspective of metamodernism in Pakistan or otherwise. The thesis studies subjectivity in the selected television and graphic novel series from the theoretical perspective of metamodernism. It focuses on the portrayal of the manifestation of multiple subjectivities in the form of clones in the selected texts and argues that the clones end up occupying multiple positions of agency in the fictional realm of *Orphan Black*. This analysis gives an overarching view of how human subjectivity can be studied in a digital contemporary era. Most of the studies reviewed for the thesis focus on several thematic areas in *Orphan Black* such as gender, performativity, rebellion, patriarchy and others, the present study takes a different stance and analyses the concepts of human agency and subjectivity from a metamodernist philosophical perspective by making use of the notions of atopia, metaxis, simultaneity, paradox, and reconstruction, to name a few.

The framework for the said analysis is derived from the fields of both metamodernism and transmedia storytelling. This addition of a second prong also makes the study different since here the focus is also on the form of the narrative and how that allows for the subjects to exist and function in these multiple positions of agency. The drillable and spreadable nature of the narrative and the portrayal of clones through one actor creates a medium through which exploring the subjectivity becomes all the more fascinating since this representation makes use of several narrative strategies to make the portrayal complete. These differences in both the approach and the content of analysis make the present study novel in its analysis, hence making it significant. I acknowledge the possibility of many future studies that would focus on the same issues from the same theoretical standpoints, and my saying that I have not come across any study (as of yet) that does what my study attempts to do, is coming from a place of knowledge that has allowed me this perspective, but also that it would not always remain so.

Culturally, the study is significant as Pakistan, a country in the Global South, is affected by



the cultural shift(s) in the Global North and would soon experience the similar in terms of human subjectivity if it is not experiencing it already. It would not be wrong to say that the country is already accepting digital influence, considering the number of people interacting on social media, using smartphones, and having access to television. Granted that the majority of the audience does not watch sci-fi TV series, films, read graphic novels, and/or understand it in terms of the effect it has on understanding subjective positions, but the people who do relate more with the Western culture, norms, and traditions, instead of their own culture and its values; reinforcing the argument of occupying numberless subjective positions as and when required.

Furthermore, the study, although based on fiction, throws light on the fact that fiction is deep-rooted in reality and expresses the major concerns of the period in which it is produced. In my thesis, these concerns are primarily regarding the implications and consequences of the multiplicity of human subjectivity. This exploration leads to a discussion in the real world because science fiction, as a genre, is speculative. In this perspective, the research becomes significant and relevant to the contemporary crises that the human subject is facing in the present times. Metamodern fiction, as explained before, tends to oscillate between modern sincerity and postmodern skepticism, lending a way forward to explore and discuss issues that, in the postmodern world, were only deemed to be issues of concern in fictional contexts. In this age of post-truths, it becomes highly significant to cater to the problems that postmodernism only seeks to critique as these issues have now become a part of reality, including but not limited to the multiplicity of self, and that too, in an age where the images have replaced reality so much so that people are living in a constant state of disconnectivity. In this way, the fiction of today's age differs from that of modern or postmodern times as it does not seem to engage in debates about meaninglessness in one's life. Metamodern fiction embraces this meaninglessness and still tries to look for a way out, engaging in the discourses of resistance against oppressive systems. In this way, Metamodern fiction would look at the fact that the quest for meaning is not something that should be considered futile, as was the case in postmodern fiction. This comes in line with what Vermeulen and van den Akker describe in their essay, which is that metamodernism "consciously commits itself to an impossible possibility" and hence creates room for "as-if" thinking (60).

Keeping in line with the argument, my thesis attempts to answer these concerns with regard to *Orphan Black* and build on the findings to see where the human subject stands in the contemporary

world and what some of the possibilities for it to move forward. Moreover, the thesis is significant because metamodernism is still a developing field. Although many scholars have contributed to the understanding of the contemporary crises and anxieties regarding the human subject, a lot still needs to be discussed. In analyzing the said text, my study also contributes towards an understanding of the elements of not only the genre of science fiction but also the metamodern school of thought specifically pertaining to the issue of human subjectivity as evident in the selected texts. In the next chapter, I review the sources relevant to my study and point out the gap that the project intends to fill.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Introduction

The purpose of the literature review is to contextualize the research within the broader areas of investigation and find gaps in the existing critical sources, which can later create room for intervention. In this chapter, I try to situate my research in the previously established work and see how it aligns with the claims of the body of research. The relevant sources are reviewed with a specific focus on three fundamental areas of my study: metamodernism, transmedia storytelling, and science fiction as a genre focusing on *Orphan Black* and the research already available on it. I have, thus, divided this chapter into the following three sections:

- Subject and Subjectivity
- Transmedia Storytelling
- Research on *Orphan Black*

Considering that the present research focuses on the position of the subject in the light of metamodernism, it becomes imperative to first talk about subject, subjectivity, and identity, tracing its position with reference to both modernism and postmodernism as that is what gives rise to the metamodern subject.

#### (I)

#### 2.2. Subject and Subjectivity

The first section of my literature review revolves around the discussion and conversation around what a subject is in modernism and postmodernism, paving the way for the metamodern subject to

emerge. The idea is to situate the present study in the debate around what constitutes a subject and how a postmodern subject differs and/or evolves from the modern one; this allows the researcher to discuss the features and characteristics of a subject from a metamodernist perspective. The previously conducted research aims to bring forth the theoretical and philosophical notions of what constitutes a subject and highlight it in fictional narratives, setting the stage for the present study.

The history and development of the subject are traced from the era of enlightenment to contemporary times with a specific purpose to ground my research and establish a forum to bring forth metamodernism and what it says about the nature of the subject. This discussion is carried out in light of what the movements say about the notions of subject(s), identity, and subjectivity. The primary purpose is to allow for a pattern to emerge, making it easier to talk about metamodernism as a philosophy functioning as a center for the present study.

Moreover, it would be instructive to mention here that literary and cultural studies are mostly situated in the writer's own understanding of the phenomenon. Likewise, the detail regarding the position of the subject in modernism, postmodernism, and consequently metamodernism is based on the Western ideals (specifically Euro-centric and, to an extent, American) prevalent in the field of academics in my country. This includes but is not limited to the understanding of theory in general and these movements in particular. Also, considering that this study comes under the label of English Literature, my understanding of these movements stems from studying English literature, theory, history, culture, and philosophy, along with a limited knowledge of media studies. Therefore, what follows is an account of my own understanding of these movements derived from reviewing literature in the said field and as mentioned above, through previously gained knowledge and education. To reiterate, the discussion is specifically focused on what the movements say about the subject to build a ground for the argument that the present study focuses on. Over the last three decades or so, scholarly pursuits in the domains of cultural and literary studies have converged upon one specific conceptualization concerning subjectivity: the rejection of subjectivity as one complete self-contained entity that exists in the world as a manifestation of its own individual essence. The studies also pinpoint this representation of subjectivity and how it develops further, starting with the era of Enlightenment.

### 2.2.1. The Era of Enlightenment: On Origins of the Subject

From the late 17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the age of enlightenment focused on reason and logic as a source of looking at the world and legitimizing that worldview. The philosophical movement covers myriad developments in politics, art, literature, science, and personal sensibility. The era was marked by a significant increase in questioning orthodox ideals, whether in religion or science, focusing more on rationalism, reductionism, and empirical scientific method, among many others. I will now focus on the ideas of four major philosophers and their arguments on individuality and subjectivity, starting from Descartes and tracing the thought to Rousseau and Kant, and then, for a critique on the ideals of Enlightenment, Heidegger. This helps establish a debate that will further make the discussion on subjectivity understandable with reference to the modern and postmodern points of view.

Rene Descartes, in 1637, wrote his famous *Discourse on Method* in which he coined the dictum ‘cogito, ergo sum’ translated into English as ‘I think; therefore I am.’ He argued that a knowledge of self was necessary for understanding God and, consequently, the world or vice versa. His dictum ‘I think, therefore I am’ establishes the foundation of modern Western thought where to seek objective truth, one has to rely on reason, logic, and principles of observation. This is evident from the first part of his statement Cogito and how he focuses his attention on this notion of I: all meaning, and knowledge is to be considered with reference to this I. This means that the mere existence of an individual and the resulting ideals of individuality are not to be taken for granted; like everything else, this also has to pass the test of the methodic doubt. Descartes argued that the notion of individuality cannot be taken as something obvious; in doing so, the very notion of individuality becomes a contestable one where faith and religion alone cannot prove its existence. His aim was to challenge everything by throwing it into doubt and believing only what survived and could be verified through his principles. It is interesting to note in his work that this fundamental understanding of self, of ‘I,’ would lead human beings to understand the world and their place in it. Although his aim was to reflect and strengthen his belief in God, the answer lay in coming to terms with self. This line of argument is considered the beginning of understanding the place of human beings with reference to the world; it all starts with ‘I.’ In other words, without such a definition, it might be challenging to reach this level of understanding that we have today. The notion that we depend on this understanding of our own selves in order to make sense of the world is not something that comes as a surprise, but it does tell us about the importance of Cartesian philosophy and how

much contemporary thinkers and scholars rely on Descartes and his work.

Another important thing that comes to the forefront with reference to Descartes' dictum is the significance of the conscious processes of thought that enable an individual to seek a general awareness of their surroundings. This kind of awareness comes through reason and logic and helps not only in perceiving ourselves but also the world. Cogito, as a word, is derived from the Latin 'cogitare,' which includes the sense of being aware of the processes of thinking or being aware of your own experience as 'a conscious being.' Descartes describes this as: "I am a real being and really exist; but what sort of being? As I said, a conscious being" (69).

For different schools of thought, consciousness means different things, but as per my understanding of Descartes' dictum and his line of argument, being conscious entails that one is aware of not only their general surroundings and their place in the world but also their own selves, as the latter understanding makes the former possible. This is a highly debated issue in philosophy, and especially with the Freudian development and division of the human mind into categories, including the unconscious, it becomes difficult to pinpoint where this awareness of individuals' own experiences originates from, but for the sake of argument and understanding of Descartes' dictum from the point of view of the Enlightenment (and Descartes, himself), it comes to intellect and rational thought. For the thinkers of Enlightenment, reason and logic alone allowed human beings to differentiate between something human and something that is not. Nick Mansfield explains this as:

In Descartes, therefore, we find together two principles that Enlightenment thought has both emphasised and adored: firstly, the image of the self as the ground of all knowledge and experience of the world (*before I am anything, I am I*) and secondly, the self as defined by the rational faculties it can use to order the world (*I make sense*). (26)

The fundamental difference from the metamodern contemporary thought on self that I observe here is the general understanding of self in relation to other entities and the world.

The thought has somehow moved away from I am I, or I make sense to something more relational in nature; the subject makes sense or exists because of its relation to other things, allowing for the existence and multifaceted nature of the self. This is so because the metamodern school of thought argues for how an individual can relate to certain things at a certain time, and that does not

stop them from engaging or relating to other things at certain other times. This shift and movement are continuous and cater to defining the nature of the subject in contemporary thought. All the dimensions of self combine to make up a comprehensive understanding of self, which is inherently different from the I am I approach. I intend to discuss this with reference to the clones in *Orphan Black* and how understanding clones is essentially trying to understand facets of an individual.

In 1782, in his famous autobiographical work *Confessions*, Rousseau emphasized the distinctiveness and sovereignty of the individual and their experiences, which defined them in a way that made them unique from others. He achieves this quality of being distinct by writing about his own self in a completely unapologetic and uninhibited manner and by reflecting on his individual experiences to attain this sense of awareness that an individual and their experiences are worth writing and consequently reading and then reflecting upon.

The essence of Rousseau's work is in the attention he gives to his individual experiences and takes his readers with him on a journey where he unveils his thoughts, and in doing so, allows the reader to comprehend how his work is held together by this unity of emotion and feeling with which he discusses his most intimate opinions. With reference to the era of enlightenment, Rousseau's work becomes a hallmark for celebrating individuality and the difference that comes with it, emphasizing the importance of the individual subject as a being whose existence is based on its being distinct from all other beings. For instance, at the beginning of *Confessions*, he states, as if a disclaimer:

I have resolved on an enterprise which has no precedent, and which, once complete, will have no imitator. My purpose is to display to my kind a portrait in every way true to nature, and the man I shall portray will be myself. Simply myself. I know my own heart and understand my fellow man. But I am made unlike anyone I have ever met; I will even venture to say that I am like no one in the whole world. I may be no better, but at least I am different. Whether Nature did well or ill in breaking the mould in which she formed me, is a question that can only be resolved after the reading of my book. (17)

Here, it is evident that Rousseau wants to discuss his own self: "the man I shall portray will be myself" and states three times that he is different from others: 1) "...But I am made unlike any one I have ever met", 2) "I am like no one in the whole world", and 3) "I may be no better, but at least I am different". The reader does not find any traces of discomfort, shame, or apology in these

statements; in fact, they are all declarative, stating loud and clear that his individual experiences and feelings merit a discussion, and he is going to venture ahead and provide it. He feels proud that he is “at least different” from his fellow beings, and that is the quality that stands out the most. This uniqueness makes his life an object fit for this lengthy discussion that he then embarks upon. It is interesting to note that in his work, it is this feeling of being distinct based on his own individual experiences that hold the work together: not battles, not historical events, not major discoveries, not victories and losses, but what he, as an individual felt and experienced. In doing so, he talks about everything without any reservation and provides his readers with an undistorted “portrait,” as he claims at the beginning of his work.

The notion that he, as a subject, is sufficient to write about is something that furthers the development of the subject and individual with reference to their experiences. It is crucial to notice that with this thought, the subject evolved into a being that is constructed, and their experiences, feelings, desires, and outlook shapes them into someone who is different from others, so much so that Rousseau believes that nature must have broken the “mould in which she formed me.” Here, two things come to the forefront: how nature created the individual and how their own experiences shaped that creation into something they become over the course of their life.

This pinpoints the role of society and culture, the pressures that come with them, and how the individual is forced to change because of them. Rousseau believes that the natural form of the individual is free of these pressures and concerns; it is only when humankind loses focus and the sense of their true potential that they allow themselves to be transformed into lesser beings affected by the pressures mentioned above. He believes that human beings have given into the unnatural demands of social status, religion, desire, and ambition and, in doing so, have lost their true potential. To gain perfection and peace, he argues that human beings must struggle to regain their natural status, which would liberate them from all suffering caused by these socio-cultural pressures. In his work, it can be seen that he reaches this conclusion by immersing himself in nature and maintaining a distance from the world in general; it is on a walk in a forest that this realization dawns upon him:

[...] by comparing man as he had made himself with man as he is by nature, I showed him in his pretended perfection the true source of his misery. Exalted by these sublime meditations,



my soul soared towards the Divinity; and from that height I looked down on my fellow men pursuing the blind path of their prejudices, of their errors, of their misfortunes and their crimes. (362)

He highlights the “misfortunes” and “crimes” that prevent humankind from transcending the boundary of self and keep them occupied in worldly affairs. He came to this point by acknowledging the existence of the subject in its natural form and its true potential, hence the urge to achieve that “Divine” status and “look down on my fellow men.” This spiritual rebirth and the consequent physical and mental reawakening allow the readers to see the position of the individual, the significance with which he writes about the individual experiences, and the emphasis he puts on comparison and the resulting difference and uniqueness. This notion of an individual as a complete, dynamic being full of potential but yet ensnared in worldly “errors” and “crimes” is still a prevalent debate with reference to the subject in contemporary times. To move past this and beyond these entrapments is the purpose of the individual, but ‘how’ to go about it is contested upon; however, for Rousseau, the answer was clear: uninhibited expression of individuality resulting from the rejection of social pressures.

Usually, terms like "cultural paradigm," "cultural philosophy," "structure of feeling," and "system of logic" are used to refer to the metamodern thought and indicate that metamodernism, like any other school of thought, is a particular way of looking at the world, particularly one's own self. The difference in metamodern thought emerges in not looking at the self as distinct from others. This is in contrast to what has been said with reference to Rousseau. Metamodern thought considers dialogue and aims for a more collaborative view of self compared to just looking at how individual experiences shape the individual self. While highlighting areas of agreement between opposing viewpoints that might result in productive group action on a range of topics, the metamodern conversation does not ignore distinctions between parties and ideas. Instead, metamodernism embraces the concept of multiple subjectivities, which holds that not only can we find ourselves in an infinite number of categories at once, but we also briefly share subjectivities with others who may appear to be vastly different from us. This, again, is in direct contrast to what Rousseau discusses in relation to the unique nature of self. I aim to utilize the concept of multiple subjectivities throughout my analysis with reference to the clones in *Orphan Black*.

Immanuel Kant, in *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), puts forth an idea by way of explanation of Descartes' dictum "I think, therefore I am," where it is argued that the conscious is the essential and defining feature or faculty of the self. This work endeavors to portray what it is about individuals that permit them to know the world. For Kant, we should mention some straightforward observable fact or impression of general surroundings before we do anything. We turn these perceptions into portrayals as they enter our minds and become things to contemplate. They take the form of mental images that we connect together to make sense of the world. Every single portrayal a person makes of the world, as indicated by Kant, from the most basic tactile insight to the most perplexing equation, is perceived to be grounded in the 'I' that he sees. Before anything is seen and perceived from the surroundings, something should be set up to do the seeing, making the perception possible. We do not open each perception or proclamation with the expression 'I think,' particularly when we just address ourselves. However, even though it is implicit, any attempt to deal with and make sense of the world comes across as an arduous task and is unthinkable without it being directed through the 'I' (152). Crossing this threshold of understanding then becomes imperative for Kant in terms of perceiving the world.

Since every one of our encounters is associated with this reasoning rational self, they all appear to be taking place for a single entity in terms of perception and viewing the world; in other words, the experiences make sense because they are all perceived by a single entity. This, for Kant, is the defining feature of being conscious: a single being, the "I," puts all the pieces together. He states:

The thought that the representations given in intuition one and all belong to me, is therefore equivalent to the thought that I unite them in one self-consciousness . . . I call them one and all my representations, and so apprehend them as constituting one intuition.' (154)

This notion of there being a single entity and being conscious of it is what Kant talks about in his arguments for being self-conscious. He puts forth this simple claim that before the self is engaged in anything, simple or complex, it has to realize that it exists as a unity and that through this realization and knowledge, the world makes any sense to the self. This awareness of the self makes the perception of the world possible. It is imperative to point out here that this self-awareness is different than what Rousseau calls being self-sufficient (as that entails that the experiences of the self are

worthy of being discussed) and what he refers to as a natural perfect self (for that is something he argues that humankind should aim for). This self-awareness begins and ends with the ability of the self to think and perceive its own self as a single unity through which the world makes sense. This is so because, according to Kant, philosophy, religion, culture, society, and civilization can be thought of in empirical terms only if the self is capable of thinking about itself first. The attitude, mindset, and approaches towards these and other things exist only with reference to the self: the self connects all that is present in the world to its own self, formulating these opinions and/or impulses that drive and shape us. The coming together of the pieces of information is necessary for understanding the world; the self makes these connections possible via thought:

I am conscious to myself *a priori* of a necessary synthesis of representations to be entitled the original synthetic unity of apperception under which all representations that are given to me must stand, but under which they have also first to be brought by means of a synthesis. (171)

It is evident, then, that for Kant, these representations must blend and undergo a process of “synthesis” with the “original synthetic unity”: the subjective self that actively grasps the ideas and images perceived through the outside world and then combines them to make sense of the world. This synthesis and combination are possible through the actively involved and self-aware notion of ‘I,’ a fundamental faculty allowing us to have a relationship with the world in the first place. Kant’s ‘I’ allows for the sense of individuality to be formed, which, in turn, allows oneself to be different from others and their ‘I’s.’ The conscious self, aware, can synthesize the information attained through the senses and process it into something concrete and meaningful. This means that subjectivity for Kant involves this sense of active involvement of an entity, which then makes way for action and/or judgment, and it comes through establishing a connection with the world. The synthesis allows for such a blended sense of selfhood to appear, which is both aware of and involved in the said synthesis. It is more than what can be referred to as simply personality or identity because of the ability to connect and process information, images, and “representations” into a unified, meaningful whole.

Though metamodernism also encourages synthesis, there is a difference in how that synthesis is approached within contemporary thought, and that is the point of intervention when it comes to developing an understanding of the metamodern subject. Within metamodern thought, the synthesis

is made possible by oscillation. From a metamodernist perspective, a subject is said to "oscillate" between opposing states of feeling, being, and thought, it is almost as if people are pendulums swinging between vastly dissimilar subjectivities, as Vermeulen and van den Akker propose in *Notes on Metamodernism*. Metamodernist interpretations place more emphasis on simultaneity, or the notion that the metamodern self occupies each position simultaneously rather than shifting between them. This exact simultaneity is what gives metamodern juxtapositions their paradoxical quality. I intend to utilize these concepts to build my argument while analyzing the selected texts.

In *Being and Time*, published in 1926, Martin Heidegger argued that starting from Descartes and moving to other Enlightenment thinkers, the subject is defined as a self-aware entity that is considered necessary for describing the journey of human beings in this world: the journey and passage being dependent on the fundamental notion of experience made possible with this self-aware entity: the subject. Heidegger, however, goes deep and focuses his attention on the underlying *nature* of the being and puts forth the questions regarding the meaning of existence. He opined that philosophers previously only dealt with questions of subjectivity in terms of rationale, reason, or logic, the human soul, the attempt to transcend to the level of the Divine, and the idea of perception and understanding the world in relation to self. In doing so, the question regarding the nature of 'who we are' or that 'we are' in the first place was neglected, and to Heidegger, that has to be answered before one moves to establish that the subject exists in relation to other things. Understanding that 'we are' is the first step to establishing that the subject exists and grasping the subject's position in the world:

In the course of this history, certain distinctive domains of Being have come into view and have served as the primary guides for subsequent problematics: the *ego cogito* [I think] of Descartes, the subject, the 'I,' reason, spirit, person. But these all remain uninterrogated as to their Being and its structure, in accordance with the thoroughgoing way in which the question of Being has been neglected. (44)

Using technical, theoretical terms, Heidegger proposes two lines of inquiry: one concerned with the ontical and the other with the ontological differences in how the notion of the subject (the Being) has been addressed in Western philosophy, traditionally speaking. Heidegger argues that the nature of the Being was usually forgotten in traditional Western thought as philosophers busied themselves

with answering questions regarding the Being as being a *being*, separate from other entities, and relying on experiences to perceive and make sense of the surroundings in which it exists. Therefore, the ontical debate is concerned with merely factual information about entities, and the ontological debate tries to answer how these entities can be taken as entities. He says this can be proved by looking at the notions of perception of ideas, a will to act as in the subject's active involvement in the act of perception and meaning-making, or a simple distinction between the perfect soul and the human version of it. All this points to the very crucial concern that the nature of being is left unanswered, and Heidegger believes that all the previously mentioned ways of defining the subject then seem artificial and very selective in their approaches without even looking beneath the surface of what it means to exist. In this way, he believes that the ontological domain has not been given any thought; he states that "an ontic knowledge can never alone direct itself 'to' the objects, because without the ontological... it can have no possible Whereto" (57).

Heidegger's focus on the mere existence of the Being entails that he did not understand this being in relation to the world in a way that previous philosophers did: with the belief that the world exists as an external factor with which the subject and its internal essence have to connect to formulate meaning. He believes that the Being itself is the fundamental aspect of human life, and nothing else can be more important than understanding the idea that we exist and we 'are.' Once this understanding is formulated, only then, other concepts come to the surface or would matter as it is through this Being that experiences are formed. 'Dasein' is the German term he uses in *Being and Time* to describe this notion of the Being he discusses and defines it as simply 'being-there' (27), loosely referred to as existence. He attempts to explain the subject's place within the world in terms of the subject itself rather than relying on artificial and separate constructs used by thinkers before him. He brings forth an exciting argument regarding Dasein and its existence; Dasein exists *within the world* and is not separate from it any way. Heidegger calls it "Being-in-the-world" and explains this connection as:

Being-in is not a 'property' which Dasein sometimes has and sometimes does not have, and *without* which it could *be* just as well as it could be with it. It is not the case that man 'is' and then has, by way of an extra, a relationship-of-Being towards the 'world'—a world with which he provides himself occasionally. Dasein is never 'proximally' an entity which is, so to speak, free from Being-in, but which sometimes has the inclination to take up a 'relationship'

towards the world. Taking up relationships towards the world is possible only because Dasein, as Being- in-the-world, is as it is. This state of Being does not arise just *because* some entity is present-at- hand outside of Dasein and meets up with it. Such an entity can ‘meet up with’ Dasein only in so far as it can, of its own accord, show itself within a *world*. (28)

The passage makes it quite clear that the subject does not exist in a way that needs to be defined in relation to the “present-at-hand” entities in the world. The world is not a foreign entity with which the Being has to establish a connection: the fact that we ‘are’ is something that unites us with the world, and experiencing that existence is how the subject can be defined.

Rethinking subjectivity in this manner is entirely different from the Enlightenment thinkers, which is why Heidegger, and his contributions are crucial to contemporary thought on defining the subject and understanding subjectivity. His critique of Descartes and the traditional Western philosophy has taken the development of the subject to a new level. Modern and postmodern thinkers take his work into account while trying to pinpoint what a subject is and how the notion of subjectivity can be understood and situated in a myriad of ways with reference to contemporary culture. Therefore, his point of view regarding the role of the Enlightenment in furthering the thought on subjectivity also informs my understanding of the idea. In addition to his contribution to the thought, contemporary culture and how it defines the subject are pertinent to my study and the analysis of the selected science fiction text. The speculative nature of the genre and the overall development in technology also play a vital role in understanding the type of subject that emerges with the rise in metamodern thought. According to my understanding, the gap here is discussing the nature of the (post)human subject (considering that *Orphan Black* deals with clones). The notions of juxtaposition and paradox help situate the subject within the dominant cultural paradigm. Although Heidegger’s way of looking at being helps immensely, contemporary advancement still paves the way for the actual placement of the subject.

So far, what has been discussed about the subject pertains to the basic ideology, and what brings the discussion together is the focus on the idea of self-interpretation and how that helps the subject make this connection with either itself, others, or the world, in general. In all these cases, the subject is an entity that is defined by this ability to self-interpret, being aware of its own self and the consequent relationships that branch out of it. This element of self-interpretation is something that

helps in understanding the nature of human beings and how they have these readily available modes and sources to interpret and understand themselves and their surroundings. This has been discussed previously with Heidegger's notion of Dasein and even before that, in the works of Rousseau, where he emphasized self-awareness in terms of personality and the ability to formulate a thought when it comes to Descartes.

### **2.2.2. Situating the Subject: On the Subject being a self-interpretative Being**

Having established some basics on the notion of understanding the subject, this section now focuses on establishing a categorization of thought on the subject into divisions pertaining to the premodern, modern, and post-modern eras. The sensibilities of the said eras help establish a debate, making it easier to situate the metamodern thought into Charles Taylor, in his seminal work *Sources of the Self* (1989), also emphasizes the idea when he states:

We are selves only in that certain issues matter for us. What I am as a self, my identity, is essentially defined by the way things have significance for me. And as has been widely discussed, these things have significance for me, and the issue of my identity is worked out, only through a language of interpretation which I have come to accept as a valid articulation of these issues. To ask what a person is, in abstraction from his or her self-interpretations, is to ask a fundamentally misguided question, one to which there couldn't in principle be an answer. (47)

The question, then, is how these “things (that) have significance for me” change from one person to another, one culture to another, from one gender to another, or, more broadly speaking, from one era to another. By this formula, for the debate at hand, a subject, then, is (would be) defined as something that is of significance to it, considering that the present study is trying to situate it chronologically speaking, so to say, these “things” cover what was held significant in a particular era with reference to the subject. It can be the notion of religion and faith and how subjects are defined with respect to the dichotomy of goodness or evil and others. It can be the notion of personality in terms of psychological and scientific advancement into the idea of self and mind (for instance, Freud's work regarding the unconscious or Lacan's work concerning language, etc.), or it can be the notion of the capitalist consumer culture that allows for the subject to be defined by the assumption of multiplicity rather than the traditional singularity. What becomes significant for the subject to

answer questions of “What I am as a self, my identity...” relies on what matters to us as subjects and how we respond to those matters of significance. Another thing that Taylor puts forth in the earlier quote is that it becomes impossible to ask questions related to self, subjectivity, and identity without any connection to the said matters of significance. If this were to happen, the self would be taken just as another object of study, which defies the very nature of the self.

Using Taylor's model, Svend Brinkmann, in one of his articles, *Character, Personality, and Identity: On Historical Aspects of Human Subjectivity*, outlines specific significant changes in the history of how subjectivity as a notion has been dealt with, especially with reference to how it is conceptualized and, also its enactment. I intend to use the chronological categories of pre-modern, modern, and postmodern eras as that logically makes sense but add to the debate by discussing the metamodern understanding of subject and subjectivity. Taylor's understanding of human beings informs all that he discusses as self-interpreting creatures where it can be said that a subject cannot be understood objectively in relation to the objects that exist in the world or objectively from the perspective of an outsider because a subject, in its essence, is a being that interprets itself before it interprets anything else. However, these interpretations of the self are grounded culturally and emphasize that human experience is generally supposed to have an interpretive structure. This brings forth another critical point: These self-interpretations cannot be entirely personal and private, existing without any outside influence, but are not only embedded but grounded in what Taylor calls society's social practices (63). This allows for a dialectical relationship to emerge between these social practices and self-interpretations.

This line of argument makes it evident that a person's self-interpretations branch out of the contents of their culture and society (social practices), making the social imaginary possible. Taylor refers to this notion of social imaginary as “the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are usually met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations” (23). Now, this brings forth the idea that other entities are involved when it comes to making sense of the individual's self. This includes people getting together, people having certain expectations of a certain individual, their social code, and the norms that provide the foundation for all of this to exist in the first place. This notion of social imaginary then makes room for only certain kinds of self-interpretations because it would be difficult for a subject to think outside of this social imaginary. As



evident from the quotation, the social imaginary emerges from shared beliefs and practices, allowing only particular kinds of interpretations to come forth and preventing all others. Taylor argues that the social imaginary is how people ‘imagine’ their social surroundings to be, and it is expressed via images, legends, and stories and does not necessarily have a theoretical aspect to it, hence informing the subject’s self-interpretations.

This idea of social imaginary appears to be limiting in that with the development of societies, a variety of other material and technological aspects became a part of the social discourse. Furthering Taylor’s concept, Langman also adds those with the domain of the social imaginary. Langman refers to these advancements as “technologies of information” from *Subject to Citizen to Consumer* (2003) and studies the subject and the notion of subjectivity in relation to these information technologies. According to him, it is these technologies of information that have evolved over time from pre-modern to modern and then to postmodern times.

With reference to Western thought, in pre-modern times, it was the dependence on religious scriptures such as the Bible that allowed the subjects to be formed in a very traditional sense of being subjected to the laws and principles put forth by the word of God; this entailed that the subjects be loyal and of a good character to ensure that they are following the scripture and understand themselves with reference to what God had asked of them and laid for them in terms of commands and guidelines. The focus was on morality, and everything was defined in relation to that. In this way, briefly speaking, the pre-modern era focused on the character (Brinkman 2010) and asked Who-questions regarding subjectivity while keeping God as the reference point. So, the simple Who are you? question would be answered with reference to the Creator, and from there, the subject would try to make sense of themselves and the world.

With industrial and scientific developments, the focus has moved from religion to reason, and science has also changed the perspective of defining the subject. With the rise of the workforce and increasing literacy, the subject would be someone who is an efficient citizen and relies on the knowledge provided to them by nation-states for their progression. In this situation, the subject would develop as an individual with a stable sense of self and specific properties that distinguish him from others in society. The subject would have this sense of agency, allowing it to act on its own, make informed decisions, and chart a path for itself. These developments made way for personality

development, and the modern era became the era concerned with personality (Brinkmann 2010). The go-to question related to personality here, at this time, is a What-question, as in, What am I? and the simple answer would yield a subject that is perceived as isolated from the larger social context and stands alone with something to offer and to be studied in relation to other personalities and with this emerged the need for individual expressionism and a focus on individual's own experiences about themselves and the world. Postmodern times, with the backdrop of the wars and other significant social, cultural, and political changes, saw the emergence of the capitalist consumer culture, affecting how the subject is seen and interpreted. Brinkmann calls this a culture of identity and puts forth the idea that the subject is seen as a consuming entity (78), highlighting the change in the technologies of transformation. This commodification of the individual is expressed in Bauman's work as well, who states:

The life of a consumer, the consuming life, is not about acquiring and possessing. It is not even about getting rid of what was been acquired the day before yesterday and proudly paraded a day later. It is instead, first and foremost, about *being on the move*. (98)

Here, the subject is seen struggling to find a place to occupy and then define itself in accordance with that position. But, with constantly "being on the move," it is observed that the influx of information is such that the subject is constantly struggling and moving, making it challenging to find a set of characteristics different from the personality-oriented culture of modern times, where a subject was understood in relation to its attributes. Here, the question of subjectivity again changes from a What-question to a Who-question with an emphasis on Who am I? and concerns itself with the problematic and ever-changing nature of identities with reference to the consumer culture of postmodern times. This struggle of the postmodern condition is expressed by this focus on identity and a change in the subject trying to situate itself with the changing communities. The consumer culture does not allow the subject to be still and creates this constant need for more because the culture thrives on the individuals' need to want more. If it did not create that need and/or cater to it, the culture itself would suffer from the economic standpoint, and hence, it becomes imperative that this need be fueled and fed constantly. Slater talks about it too when he says that the consumer culture "associated satisfaction with economic stagnation: there must be no end to needs . . . (It) requires our needs both to be insatiable and yet always to look to commodities for their satisfaction" (qtd. in Brinkmann 78). In such a society, being a subject or identifying as one becomes highly

problematic because the subjects inevitably turn into commodities. Being constantly on the move changes the subject's position invariably, thus making it next to impossible to answer Who am I? question that Brinkmann poses with reference to the postmodern era, as one cannot be one thing if one is shifting and transforming with the ever-changing technologies of information.

Postmodernism and modernism share several fundamentally opposing foundational principles, as postmodernism was a direct reaction to modernism. For instance, while postmodernism rejected the concept of universal truth in favor of the idea that meaning and truth are always "contingent" subjective values, modernism posited at least the potential of universal truth (albeit always in a state of movement or flux). Metamodernism posits and the fundamental point of departure from Taylor and others is that the first principles of modernism and postmodernism need not be understood as being in conflict with one another; metamodernism contends that they can both be active simultaneously within a single person or group of people. The present study, therefore, takes this into account, which is in line with what Vermeulen and van den Akker state regarding the poles that the metamodern self negotiates between. The selected text and the portrayal of clones are analyzed from these perspectives of negotiation and collaboration in the chapters of analysis.

. It can be seen from this discussion on premodern, modern, and postmodern thought that these movements brought with them a particular kind of understanding concerning the notions of subject and subjectivity, which furthers the debate into establishing a clear sense of the history, development, and representation of what Brinkmann calls the culture of character, culture of personality, and culture of identity (Brinkmann 2010) with reference to pre-modern, modern, and postmodern eras; and that is what follows from this point onward. Simultaneously, a comment on the nature of the subject in relation to metamodern thought is also given to highlight the gap that the present study intends to fill.

Taylor suggested that "we are selves only in that certain issues matter to us;" keeping that in mind, it can be said that certain issues, ideas, and concepts matter to a particular type of people or institutions, and it is only because of that that such notions often emerge in history. Similarly, it can be argued that the importance of character as a concept was quite meaningful in old cultures such as the Greek culture of war, which consequently made way for Greek philosophy to revolve around

virtue ethics and morality. Here, it is essential to mention that the focus on a moral character or a virtuous character made it possible for the thinkers to reflect deeply on the notion of character, and theorists like MacIntyre refer to this by stating that in Greek philosophy, all ethics were supposed to be virtue ethics (37) with a strong emphasis on character and its development. It is also interesting to mention here that the Greek word for ‘character’ is ‘ethos,’ which is where ‘ethics’ as a word comes from. For Romans, the focus was also on character, and Cicero defined the Latin word ‘moralis’ as ‘pertaining to character’ (38). The word itself originated from the Greek word ‘ethikos.’

It is obvious that for both Greeks and Romans, an individual's character was the most important thing and allowed them to behave in a certain way. This ‘certain way’ of how people behaved was again grounded in the moral philosophies of Aristotle, Plato, and other similar thinkers; it is known that their philosophies concern themselves with characters and ethics, and Brinkmann calls this “characterology” (7) in an Aristotelian sense. Another thing that comes forth from this discussion on morals and ethics is that the individual in question did not get to decide (of their own volition) that a certain way is good and desirable; this was predetermined for them by the unchanging ideals of good and bad as ordained by the higher powers (divine or otherwise such as the aristocracy) and the philosophies also promoted the ideas. Plato and Aristotle do it as well with their notions of ideal worlds of absolute truths and forms, what constitutes the essence of an individual with a good character. In this way, one was considered a good person if they adhered to the rules and regulations ordained by the higher powers and tried to perform their duty efficiently. Besides this, it was considered that humans have a specific purpose to fulfill in this universe, and one would only be successful if they remained good. And this categorization of goods went back to the notion of ethos and character. Therefore, the difference between an essentially good and/or an essentially bad individual was the difference of character. Ethics, then, was considered a field of study that would help people achieve their natural purpose and transform them into beings who realize their complete potential (38). People would learn these traits through formal education and also through shared belief systems and ideologies. These ancient cultures were then cultures that concerned themselves with character and its transformation.

Similarly, the whole cultural ethos can be observed with Christianity, again with a particular reference to the development rather than the betterment of character. This idea has been explored with works like Rieff's *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (1965), Baumann's *From Pilgrim to Tourist*

– or a *Short History of Identity* (1996), and Brinkmann’s *Character, Personality, and Identity* (2010), where they highlight the premodern conception of human subjectivity with the archetype of a pilgrim. The idea is that the pilgrim moves towards a set goal with the agenda to transform himself and achieve the purpose and meaning in this ordained task, which would help him gain a higher sense of achievement. Undertaking this kind of challenging task requires strength of character, and that is where agency originated, which, in turn, helps in understanding the notion of the subject, rooted in a culture of character. According to Brinkmann (2010), if it were difficult for the subject to live up to the expectations of these ideals of character, moral therapy or moral treatment would be used to ensure that human subjects were formed properly and would improve by following a methodical approach (71); this was essentially considered to be a cure and was practiced widely with a particularly set agenda (71). In pre-modern times, the Church was tasked with this duty to ensure transformation and improvement of character in individuals. Rieff referred to this tendency of the premodern times as a “commitment therapy” (68), where an individual is committed to society’s shared standards, which drives his moral treatment. This goes in line with the motif of a pilgrim, which is set to achieve certain goals that are prescribed to him. In doing so, the pilgrim goes through this transformation of character required to achieve the said goals: the patient for the moral therapy is like that: struggling to undergo a transformation of character to fit into a character that society deems fit.

It was later, of course, that psychotherapy and advancements in psychology emerged on the scene, but before that, character and its transformation were the lenses through which the notion of the subject was understood. Freud’s approaches to understanding the individual were more analytical and aimed to study and treat the overall personality. Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, & Tipton (1985) claim that psychoanalysis as a method was designed to help people come to terms with living in a world where social ties were becoming fragile, which was in direct contrast to the premodern culture where people were living in a world of shared beliefs and customs and that was their binding force that also helped defined subjectivity, in terms of character. Therefore, with Freud’s practices and techniques for psychotherapy and psychoanalysis (developed around the late 1900s), it can be seen that there was a shift from this dominant culture of character to a more modern culture of personality (Brinkman 73).

Before moving to Freud and his contribution, it is imperative to mention that in contrast to

both modernism and postmodernism, metamodernism looks at the subject as an entity prone to oscillation (Akker and Vermeulen 8). The metamodern subject moves back and forth between the modern and postmodern sensibilities of self and establishes itself as an aware and reflective subject, continuously swaying between modern sincerity and postmodern irony (10). The defining trait of this subject becomes its ever-fluctuating nature which allows for it to take traits from both modernism and postmodernism, not settling in one particular place. In this way, the subject in the metamodern age attempts to answer the When-and-where questions in relation to its position and how it makes sense of not only itself but the world.

Moving the debate back to Freud, the discussion on the subject in the 20<sup>th</sup> century cannot be complete without the contributions of Freud, especially with reference to his work on psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, which, as mentioned earlier, was an attempt to analyze an individual's personality. These developments came about because of the anxiety that came with the changing structure of the world, and as Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, and Tipton (1985) mentioned in their work *Habits of the Heart*, social ties were becoming fragile. In this situation, the subject struggled with its position in the world, and this struggle yielded a fracture, a split, a divide, or separation in what is and what ought to be: a departure from the focus on the character where individuals dealt with this pressure of arriving at a version of themselves which was accepted by the social order. Now, with the split, the struggle was to understand that there is this side to the self, which is trying to develop a sense of belonging, and in doing that, the individual's personality undergoes a change. The subject comes to realize that the attraction to the seemingly irrational impulses is natural; the pull of dark desires, the resulting distrust of the self to not give in to these impulses, the constant fear of not belonging and the consequent isolation, the pressure to present a composed, held together version of self, the resulting hysteria, and madness because of it; all was real and contributed in the subject's anxiety of its place in the world. This split signals what Freud would call the unconscious mind, which has the power to drive the conscious mind and becomes a source of motivation for the individual to act in a certain way, allowing for a particular expression of an individual's personality. Before this psychological development, the case was such that an individual was supposed to behave in a certain way (as discussed in the previous sub-section) without coming to terms with the fact that a rift could exist in the mind itself. This split, then, made its way into the writings of the time as well, starting somewhere, for instance, with Shelly's *Frankenstein* (1818) and moving to Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), where the subjects seem to be in constant

struggle with their own selves and end up giving in to the darker side, a transformation of the subject from this rational conscious being in control of itself to this irrational double who unconsciously is attracted to the malice of the darker side. The pull is so strong that this transformation results in the consequent annihilation of both sides. These kinds of representations and the debate surrounding them were then, in apparent contrast to what Descartes or Kant thought about the rational side of the subject; the subject of the modern times was seen to give in to the impulses of the unconscious, which resulted in the fracture and the split mentioned above. Previously, in premodern times, the idea was that the subject was this rational being who existed because of this realization of logic and reason. These ideas were contested with the advent of modern times, which brought with it a self that had both conscious and unconscious sides and was seen to give in to the longings of the darker side.

This transformation, or rather a shift, called for introspection, which was not a usual practice in the premodern times as the goal was to journey towards a higher power, and the strength of character was the only thing that subjects aspired and worked towards. This was the natural way of things, and challenging this order was unheard of as subjects were defined in relation to their social order. In modern times, however, a self-examination of sorts was seen, and the subjects were to look inside themselves to achieve a sense of meaning or purpose; this can be seen in Rousseau's writings as well (the opening passage of his *Confessions* is discussed at the beginning of this chapter) where he focuses on the expression of personality, his uniqueness, and what makes him different from others. The journey he discusses is a man's journey to himself. If this approach is simply compared with Augustine's writings, the difference is clear: Augustine focused on the man's journey towards God and what characteristics he must have to live up to the expectations of the Divine (Cary 46), whereas Rousseau focuses on the man himself. This departure is significant, and the modern era witnessed the scientific disenchantment of the world (Brinkmann 73). With Rousseau's writings, this self-reliance and in-depth analysis of one's own self emerged as a new social order, paving the way for this modern concentration on personality.

If this concept is linked with the scientific development of practices and techniques to study personality and to come up with ways to treat or improve personality, a shift can be seen which allowed for the notion of personality to lose its moral connotations (with reference to the premodern concept of character) and emerge as a medicalized, measurable entity which could be studied,

analyzed, and improved. The modern era saw a standardization of this ability to measure an individual's personality and come to terms with certain quantifiable traits that would help define and set that individual apart from others. This standardization is in line with the modern industrial and impersonal social order where social relationships relied on impersonal connections pertaining to duties one is assigned within an organization and others, as evidenced by Durkheim's work on organic solidarity or Tönnies' concept of *gesellschaft* (in the modern societies); making room for an individual to look inside themselves because subjects were no longer defined by their relationships to one another or the social order in general and this demanded that one had qualities within oneself to be distinct (Brinkmann 76). Therefore, one had to acquire traits and attributes pertaining to personal development and improvement, and the culture of personality emerged.

This emergence, as discussed before, came with tools and methods to study, analyze, and measure these personality traits, and this was in line with the culture of standardization; it was believed that human subjects were similar, and what made them distinct was this reliance on some traits that existed within an individual. Methods and tests (such as Jung Typology Test, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, McCrea and Costa's Five-Factor Model, Goldberg's International Personality Item Pool, and others. (qtd. In Brinkmann 74), were designed and were extremely popular to gain insight into the workings of a personality. The primary agenda here was to measure personality traits independent of social surroundings and understand the subject in relation to fixed parameters found within themselves. The reliance on analyzing personalities was so much so that according to Ward (2002), Robert Woodworth developed a personality test in 1917 to screen Americans enlisting for World War I; in contemporary times, personality tests are used everywhere from school admissions to counseling to determining career opportunities (126).

In his article, Brinkmann proposes that this reliance on measuring personalities would yield answers to the what-you-are question and leave the who-you-are question completely unanswered (78). The preoccupation with standardization can be seen everywhere in the modern era, whether it is education or mass production (Paterson, in 2006, is seen quoting the Henry Ford dictum stating that people could have the car in any color they want, as long as it was black (61)); and new institutions based on scientific advancements, technological advancements, and urbanization. Using Taylor's terminology, this new social imaginary comprised notions of secularization, individualism, bureaucracy, instrumental rationality, and others. It also gave rise to contemporary social issues such



as alienation, isolation, disintegration, and a resulting sense of meaninglessness. This large industrial social order driven by the above ideals was entirely different from the previous premodern, well-knit, closer social structure focused on personal relationships. However, this larger, urbanized social structure with its focus on personality is still different than the romanticized version of Rousseau's individualism (that is where the modern idea goes back to) and brings forth this idea that this emphasis on personality and the culture that emerges from it is far from a homogenous body of ideas. Yet, both agree as far as the attention to the fundamentals of individualism is concerned. Different schools of thought in psychology have emerged in relation to studying this notion of individualism and what constitutes the modern fascination with personality.

In the modern era, the subject was seen as a construct different from how Rousseau imagined it to be: a naturally occurring autonomous and free individual who had to realize their potential to achieve fulfillment in terms of their energies, faculties, and talents. The modern era, with the Freudian psychoanalytic approach, viewed the subject as a construct in relation to concepts of sex, gender, and relationships with parents and families. For Freud, these would shape the unconscious mind and determine certain qualities and traits an individual could/would have. Later on, with a critique of Freud's work, the modern era saw a shift in this process of construction of the subject. With Lacan and his theories emphasizing the use of language in relation to Saussure's concepts of signifiers and signifieds, the subject assumed a position in terms of the language it used to establish its very existence.

Along with Saussure, Lacan's work was highly influenced by the development of thought on semiotics and structuralism as distinct schools of thought used widely to make sense of the world, its cultures, and its reliance on structures. Works of Barthes and Levis-Strauss are highly influential in the fields of structuralism and semiotics and help further understand human behavior in the light of structuralist models. Moreover, the works of Wittgenstein, where he developed the notion of the "language game," and Heidegger's contribution to identifying language are considered central to understanding Being and its interactions with the world and others. Lacan, using all these developments in understanding the human subject and notions of subjectivity, established the iconic notion of the unconscious mind being structured as language and hence further the thought that language existed before anything and everything else and the human subject had to come to terms with this unthinking assumption and then, situate itself in the world within that already existing field

of knowledge. Lacan, therefore, becomes influential in pinpointing an essential fact in understanding subjectivity (Mansfield 53). What started with Freud's analytical approach to studying the human mind and personality made way for this unrelenting and persistent claim that language occupies a central place in establishing and making sense of the human subject. The subject we see has moved from an autonomous being to someone who has to make a place for itself and is constructed in relation to and because of language.

Mentioning language and its pivotal position, it becomes imperative to talk about Foucault and his philosophy on discourses and power. For Foucault, the human subject exists in stark contrast to how Rousseau proposed its existence: a naturally occurring autonomous self that can realize his potential by becoming self-aware and aiming to attain his natural position; the only thing stopping them are the ideals of the corrupted world which have this immense power to lure the subjects. Foucault disputes this model of the subject coming first and the power coming afterward and puts forth the idea that human subjects exist and are constructed through these discourses on power. He argues that the subject and what makes it individual from others, the distinct elements, so to speak, are all materials of power. It is through the subjects that power finds its expression. It is not something that exists outside of the subject; in fact, it is something that drives us as individuals. Foucault writes it as:

The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike, and in so doing subdues or crushes individuals. . . The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle. (98)

According to him, what makes the subject an effective 'vehicle' for the articulation of power is the very fact that the subject perceives itself to be free of it and as a naturally occurring entity (as proposed by Rousseau). This shows that Foucault's model is in opposition to that of Rousseau and supports the notion of the construction of the subject, similar to other thinkers mentioned previously from the modern era, who think of the subject in terms of a construct. Foucault's ideas on power discourses are influenced by what Nietzsche refers to in his works as interdependence and

interaction between language and power and how this contact actually becomes the reason for the creation of the subject. The modern turn of the subject directed to itself entirely focuses on traits that make the subject different and unique, but at the same time, this turn within makes the subject susceptible to power and asks the subject to continuously assess its desires, longings, and predispositions. This self-awareness is also what Kant talked about in terms of being self-conscious, and Hegel (as quoted in Mansfield) also furthers the thought by arguing that self-consciousness is the purpose and form of human history and also its destiny (56).

Power, in its raw form, of course, existed even in the premodern times; it was through power that the aristocratic governments controlled their citizens; this was mostly done through the use of faith and religion and has been discussed in the previous sub-section, with reference to the reliance on good character that was imposed on to the subjects. However, in the modern era, society saw a rapid change with a rise in industrialization, urbanization, and scientific and technological developments, making it difficult for the subject to remain as it was in the premodern times. It shifted and transformed into the modern subject capable of introspection and contributed to the creation of the states, institutions, organizations, bureaucracies, and others, giving rise to a new social order where, of course, how power enacted on individuals also changed and took new shapes. The means of self-interpretation also shifted from the unrelenting focus on character to a more thorough analysis of self. The ever-changing nature of power and social order gave rise to new forms of societies that saw significant changes in how the subject was perceived and analyzed. After the modern era, postmodern times saw a turn to a more capitalist consumer culture where the subject is seen struggling for its identity.

This is different than how the metamodern subject manifests, and Raoul Eshelman discusses this new kind of subject, emphasizing that it establishes itself in the face of all the disruptive forces that exist and emerges out as an entity that stands its ground in an act of belief (Eshelman 23). In doing so, the metamodern subject revives the possibility of creating an opportunity for identification (previously rendered impossible in the postmodern era but a defining feature of the modern age), asserting selfhood, and allowing for a possibility for affection to exist. All of this, however, is done in a self-reflective manner where the subject is aware of its oscillation between modern and postmodern sensibilities and does not allow for naiveté to exist (23). These points are used while analyzing the clones from *Orphan Black* and, indeed, point out a gap that emerges within modern

thought and how the metamodern debate gives a different direction to the discussion of the contemporary subject.

Connecting the discussion back to the postmodern era, it is observed that there has been a significant change in the manner the social order, the social imaginary, and the social relationships are perceived and how they, in turn, affect the shift that the construction of the subject has consequently seen. In pre-modern times, the subject was taken as a product of nature and had to act under the Divine will or per the orders the ruling nobility gave. The subject had to have a certain character to succeed; if not, the subject should struggle to achieve that moral goodness and strength of character. With modern times, this way of looking at the character shifted, and a new kind of subject emerged: a subject that was not naturally occurring and had to resort to its own self to come up with the traits or attributes that would set it apart from others; a quest which helped in the emergence of personality and with it, various ways to study and analyze the said personality. The era also saw a change in the social order, and larger, more structured, new organizations and institutions appeared on the scene. This rapid industrialization made way for fractured selves, fragile social ties, and a disintegrated sense of social imaginary. With the ever-changing nature of the social order, the modern era brought with it a realization that the traditional way of looking at the world is outdated; with the changing world, a change in the lens through which to view it was inevitable. New cultural, philosophical, political, and social principles were devised in light of the advancements in science, technology, industry, and others. And a quest to achieve something more was launched.

This, as mentioned earlier, obviously changed the outlook on the notion of subject and what was required of it: now the subject was defined in terms of personality and was in search of a greater truth that would help fill the void that was conveniently left by replacing tradition, faith, and religion, with new ideals of modernism. The search carried on, and the modern subject found itself lodged in a world with this inherent sense of meaninglessness; the values and traditions collapsed in the name of modernity, and the subject developed a split, a fracture, and experienced isolation in the new industrialized social imaginary. The subject's quest for meaning and a foundation to establish an anchor continued with the modern era. However, with the ever-changing nature of the social order, especially in the backdrop of WWI and WWII, political and social upheavals, the rise of capitalist consumer culture, the advent of the internet, and developments in technology and science,

the world stepped into the era of postmodernism. With so much happening, the defining element of the social imaginary becomes change; it is fluid, unpredictable, and flexible. In the postmodern era, the quest to find meaning appears meaningless, and the project does not merit completion; it is shattered into pieces, which is what the age is known for. The subject is always defined in relation to the time period, and here, too, the subject mirrors the traits of the era and becomes fluid. This allows the Who-am-I question that Brinkmann poses to emerge, and the subject as if to answer, keeps changing forms, becoming elusive, and resists any definition. It is evident then that the subject is struggling to establish an identity, and this struggle is something of a saving grace, for it becomes a characteristic through which the postmodern subject can be understood.

One of the reasons for this constant struggle the subject is seen in is the lack of “cognitive maps” that Fredric Jameson talks about in his article *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (72). He refers to postmodernism as a cultural dominant, which is representative of the life humans created for themselves in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Discussing the notion of the lack of cognitive maps, he suggested that the subject in the postmodern era feels lost or out of place because there is nothing that could guide it. By that, he means that the old theoretical models and the ideological belief systems and the foundation that they provided for the subject to exist and critique the already established systems is lost, and this loss has left a void that is not filled in by anything in this capitalist consumer culture of the postmodern times. The subject seems to be thrown into this mess where nothing makes sense, and there is nothing to hold on to; as a result, the subject does not have any faith when it comes to ideological statements, as it has observed firsthand that these are not enough and cannot be used to provide meaning to the world. Previously (both in pre-modern and modern times), the subject had a reference point for everything, and when that is taken away, the subject in the postmodern times is left free-floating without any cognitive maps” to ensure a path or a possible destination. Jameson explains this feeling of being lost with his famous allegory of the Bonaventura Hotel in Los Angeles (72). He argues that the haphazard architecture and the chaotic, disorganized, and arbitrary way it is designed makes it impossible for the subject to feel secure. This allegory explains the feeling of a subject hurled in the postmodern social imaginary without ever feeling in place or safe in its position. The subject keeps struggling and trying to find an answer to the Who-am-I question and fails at every turn because of the unrelenting sense of being lost; the consequence is having no ultimate sense of identity. This sense of loss of identity with reference to the extremal world and its structure (class, society, economy, and others.), the lack of cognitive maps

which make it impossible for the subject to situate itself even in the shared, public space, is heightened when one brings in the internal nature of conflict as well. Jameson argues that the internal life of a subject is similarly disoriented: he calls this the “waning of affect.” He explains this by putting forth the point that human beings do not feel things as they once did, making it extremely difficult to relate to something or to belong, and writes that “there is no longer a self present to do the feeling” (72) In this way, the postmodern subject is doubly disoriented: externally and internally.

This lack of cognitive maps and reference points for explaining everything that exists in the world was not prevalent in premodern and modern times. Both these eras provided a theoretical and philosophical foundation for the subject to make sense of the social order in the world. These foundations could take various forms, from Christianity (and other religions or faiths) to political or cultural lenses to the economy, aiming to understand the nature of the world, human beings, economic systems, and more. Jean-François Lyotard calls these points of reference and models that defined what human beings are and how they ought to behave as grand narratives in his iconic work titled as *The Postmodern Condition* (1979). Lyotard does not lament the absence of these grand narratives but instead helps his audience understand that dismantling these narratives is a way to escape the premodern and modern sense of authority. However, this absence and lack of authority and a particular way of looking at the world makes it impossible for a subject to locate itself within a social imaginary already devoid of any ideals or values. This results in an irony which is an inherent feature of the postmodern condition: the theoretical models to make sense of the world have been discredited and consequently lost without being replaced by anything vital, leaving the subject wandering a landscape that appears nothing less than the wasteland that Eliot famously discusses in his poem. Grand- narratives and what they stood for is something that Lyotard rejects vehemently as he believes these narratives promised the subjects a transformation, a change, a shift towards better times, but in turn only provided humankind with “as much terror as they could take” (81). Therefore, the void that is left is not something to be anxious about; this irony, along with the uncertainty and ambiguity, becomes a defining feature of the era and, consequently, the postmodern subject.

The reliance on the subject can also characterize the inherent confusion of the subject in the postmodern age to understand images rather than the real thing. Jean Baudrillard, in *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) explains that postmodern societies are dependent on images and representations;

as a result, the subject cannot differentiate between what is real and what is not, adding angst and anxiety to the nature of the postmodern subject. He explains his point by referring to the famous three orders of simulacra. According to him, the first order is parallel to the premodern times, where the image is realized as not being real, an illusion, or a place marker for something real. The second order, he associates with the modern times where he argues that the image tries to threaten the existence of the real by copying it too well; he discusses this in relation to the Industrial Revolution and mass production. He equates the third order of simulacra with postmodern times, where the wall between the real and the image no longer exists, and the image is taken as the real thing. He argues that in the postmodern era, the image comes before the real and determines how the real would be perceived, if it exists. All that is left is simulacra: the representation. Baudrillard further explains this inability to distinguish between reality and its representations in terms of a concept he calls hyperreality, which is also a defining feature of the postmodern era. He explains it as a condition where it becomes impossible to distinguish between reality and representation as the lines between them are blended to a level that there is no distinction between the two (Mansfield 167). This comes about because of several reasons, mentioned above as well, in relation to the advent of the postmodern age: capitalist culture, advancement of technology, developments in media, excessive urbanization, and consumerism.

Jacques Derrida, in his seminal works on deconstruction, *Of Grammatology* (1997) explains it as a method that exposes the inherent instability and ambiguity in both language and texts. He borrows the concepts of binary opposition from Saussure and constructs this argument that if binary oppositions were to be deconstructed, they would topple over the hierarchal structures, and hence reveal through a process of difference and deferral, the play inherent in the meaning-making process. Further, through this process, he builds the argument towards a critique of logocentrism using his ideas of signifier, signified, and transcendental signified, arguing that there is no fixed, transparent self. He puts forth these notions of a decentered self and human subjectivity which are characterized by indeterminacy and flux. Since he argues that there is no center for the meaning making to rely on, he emphasizes the impossibility of reaching a final, absolute interpretation of anything, which highlights the endless chain of deferral in meaning-making and allows for a possibility of plurality.

Judith Butler, in *Gender Trouble* (1990) discusses plurality of subjectivity and agency in the

context of gender. She focuses on the construction of gender identities through the concept of performativity. Butler argues that gender is not an inherent or stable attribute but rather a performative act, which is produced through repeated gestures and enactments. Through destabilizing the binary opposition between male and female, she ends up challenging the essentialist notions of subjectivity in terms of gender. This position further acknowledges the fluidity of gender expressions and makes room for diverse forms and interpretations of subjectivity that move beyond the fixed traditional categories, emphasizing instead agency of human beings in creating their own identities.

It is this fluidity of expression that is evident in Butler's work that further takes the form of hybridity in Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1991) wherein she uses cyborg as a metaphor for hybridity and fluidity in contemporary society. Her work challenges the boundaries between human beings and machines, advocating for subjectivity that accepts and supports interconnectedness, multiplicity, and pluralism. She sees the cyborg as a symbol against traditional classifications and hierarchies and calls for political coalitions based on shared concerns and experiences.

By synthesizing the perspectives of Baudrillard, Butler, Derrida, Jameson, Haraway, and Lyotard, a complex understanding of human subjectivity emerges. What is similar in their works is the understanding that rather than a fixed, essential self, subjectivity is something that is fragmented and constantly changing. Collectively, these theorists challenge the notion of a unified self and emphasize, albeit differently, a plurality of identities that are influenced by the influences of culture, language, and power. While they may differ in their approaches and emphasis, their works offer insight into the complex dynamics of subjectivity in the postmodern era. While these theorists operated primarily within the framework of postmodernism, their critique of modernist ideologies and their emphasis on the contingency and plurality of human experience paved the way for metamodern explorations of subjectivity. By challenging fixed categories, hierarchies, and metanarratives, they created room for a more nuanced understanding of the notions of self and subjectivity in relation to society, culture, and technology.

Ihab Hasan's work on periodization, and his concept of postmodernism makes it easier to understand and categorize works based on their key characteristics. In his work *The Dismemberment*



of *Orpheus* (1971), he discusses fragmentation, self-reflexivity, and skepticism towards metanarratives as defining features of postmodern times and corresponding literature. This further helps in understanding how literature essentially responds to the shift in cultural norms and values. This relationship between reception of literature and shifts in cultural epoch can further be explored in Hayles work *Electronic Literature* (2008) where she argues that advancements in technology have helped transform the reception of literature. She explores how electronic literature with its defining traits of interactivity, incorporation of multimedia elements, and algorithmic processes essentially challenge the traditional narrative structure of texts. These ideas are also explored in *How We Became Posthuman* (1999) where Hayles explains the connection between technology, literature, and human identity. She discusses that the human condition is affected by the societal implications of the issues related to surveillance, privacy, and commodification of information, to name a few. She further raises questions regarding the ethical dimensions of the advancements in technology, making a strong case for how human identities are shaped by the impact of digital technologies.

Moving the debate further, there is a certain kind of feeling that theorists of the postmodern time have attributed to the era. These stem from the constant states of uncertainty, insecurity, and ambiguity that mark the postmodern age. The most prominent feeling as a result of this confusion and chaos is that of panic (13-14), as argued by Arthur and Marilouise Kroker in 1989. They believe that the consumer culture instigates this panic that if a certain commodity is not consumed, the individual will lack some sense of belonging within the space that it inhabits. The subject tries to define itself in relation to the product it consumes, and the products it consumes invariably define the place of the subject. This means that the identity of the subject is constantly changing and fluid, as is the nature of the product it consumes. This line of argument brings forth the notion that the identity of the subject is something external and has nothing to do with the essence of who the individual is, creating an atmosphere of fear (23) as per the work of Brian Massumi, published in 1993. According to the author, this fear is connected to the place of the subject in the economic world as it is through the very act of buying that a sense of belonging is created in the subject. This idea is quite worrying because with this logic, if one does not consume, one does not belong, creating the feeling of panic, which puts the subject in this constant state of fear; fear, then, becomes the dominant mood of the postmodern era. It also brings forth the idea that if a subject is dependent on the act of buying or purchasing to establish a semblance of belonging to a group within a society, all sense of identity that comes with this act is purely accidental in nature. The reality of the matter is

that the subject does not belong anywhere. It is simply an accident if it purchases a certain kind of product at a certain time, which amounts to the feeling that it might fit into a certain group for the time being.

Zygmunt Bauman brings forth another idea of “flawed consumers” (qtd. In Mansfield 169) and explains the notion further by arguing that these consumers would not have the adequate resources to buy, purchase, or consume the right products at the right time and hence would fall into the category of consumers who cannot answer the call of the market, making them unfit to be an active part of the consumer culture. If I were to connect this point to the previous point of fear, I can see that for such consumers, this fear of not belonging would be even more real, in a sense, that they would be left behind and would never belong, even momentarily in this ever-changing, unstable culture of creating fluid identities. Therefore, when it comes down to it, the postmodern era and the subject that emerges from it are characterized by panic, fear, and accidental connections that the subject makes through an act of consumption (qtd. in Mansfield 170).

Another element that drives the debate on the subject further is technological advancement in the postmodern era. The technological developments, including but not limited to the advent of the internet, social media, and cyberspace, heighten the crisis that the subject is facing in postmodern times. Whether it is the construction of the hyper realities in the cyberspaces where it is difficult to distinguish between the real and the artificial, or the consumer culture yet again looming like a constant threat in the forms of e-businesses, advertisements, or the technology blurring the boundary between the personal and public; the fear that the expansion of technology knows no limits and the consequent existence of spaces that launch the subject into these forums where the formation of identity is again a question of belonging for a fleeting moment in time and the alternative is unthinkable; the subject is in a constant state of panic and dread. From captcha codes to cookies to proving ourselves human, the abilities that were supposed to define humanness are increasingly threatened by developments in technological domains. Elements such as free will, autonomy, and authority, which yield qualities such as creativity, are being taken away from the subject in the name of advancement, and the subject is consequently stripped of the traits that once defined it. Donna Haraway voices the concern by stating that “our machines are disturbingly lively, and we ourselves frighteningly inert” (152). This inertness is characterized by fear, panic, and the constant effort that the subject has to put in for recognition; in the above context, recognition would make it different

from machines; otherwise, recognition is in terms of identifying or being able to identify who we are. This feeling of inertness is paralyzing as all efforts to establish an identity yield fruit for a fleeting moment, and even before the subject realizes it, it is gone, and the cycle has to start all over again. The basic idea is to refer to the instability that is inherent in the postmodern era. Bauman talks about identities in the postmodern era as projects and tasks that are yet to be undertaken (110), and with that, the point that is highlighted is that identities can never be “possessed” in the postmodern era. Concerning the technologies of information, it can be seen that the postmodern era is characterized by uncertainty and chaos, which is the major feature evident in the social order of the time. This becomes the lens through which the subject in the postmodern era also makes sense. Fluidity, multiplicity, and plurality, a by-product of the capitalist consumer culture, become the hallmark of the postmodern subject.

In the metamodern era, a unique kind of subject is put forward, challenging the infinite and indefinite nature of the postmodern subject, and it is here that the consideration of the nature of the subject undergoes a transformation. How metamodernism defines the subject is briefly discussed below in relation to the premodern, modern, and postmodern eras. It is deliberately left as a brief comment on the state of the subject as an in-depth exploration of the history and nature of the metamodern subject is what informs the main arguments of this study and hence makes up the theoretical framework. The next chapter gives details on metamodernism as a philosophy and the subject's condition in relation to philosophical developments.

The work of Amin Maalouf calls for a radical rethinking of the notion of identity and argues the possibility of it being related to and discussed in relation to the concepts of ethnicity, religion, or geography, all of which were previously dismantled in the postmodern era. The writer ascribes the quality of positive affirmation to such a description and debate on identity and states that all of this is done in a way that the resulting subject is at all times hyper-aware of its instability, the inherent notion of oscillation (25). This hyper-self-reflexivity is critical to understanding the felt experience, another notion that defines the metamodern subject. The subject, oscillating between two extremities, assumes a position that allows it to focus on the nature of the experience, making it what Linda Ceriello, in her webpage, calls a Life-as-movie (n.p) where the basic idea is that people's identities are created self-consciously. This self-awareness existed in the postmodern era as well, but when looked at from a metamodern angle, it shifts the focus to the individual's felt experiences and

allows for the subject to assume a position of knowledge (about its own nature and the factors that play a part in it). Metamodernism recognizes the complexities of the postmodern condition while advocating for a return to honesty and authenticity. It recognizes that individuals are active agents in making their own reality, rather than passive recipients of cultural influences. Consequently, self-awareness encompasses not only intellectual understanding but also emotional engagement with one's own experiences. This emotional involvement enables people to connect with their own emotions, and desires, which results in a better understanding of themselves and their place in the world. Instead of focusing primarily on external institutions and power dynamics, metamodernism urges people to consider their own subjective experiences and feelings. This shift in perspective broadens the definition of self-awareness, allowing individuals to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them.

In this way, the previous rejection of the personal becomes a topic for discussion under the lens of metamodernism and allows for such a subject to emerge, which makes this rejection both impossible to exist and intolerable to accept. With its oscillating and fluctuating nature, the metamodern subject assumes a position between two seemingly opposite ideas and creates room for dissecting the notion while emphasizing the experience of the self in occupying that very position. Greg Dember explains it in his website *After Postmodernism* as “the central motivation of metamodernism is to protect interior, subjective felt experience from the ironic distance of postmodernism, the scientific reductionism of modernism, and the pre-personal inertia of tradition” (n.p).

Before finishing the discussion on the subject, it is imperative to mention that I selected theorists whose work has played a monumental role in informing and establishing the position that the subject has attained over the years. This, of course, is by no means a complete description of each and every theorist and their take on the nature of the subject: that was neither my goal nor my intention, and hence, what is given above is merely a selection of works that informs my own understanding of the nature of the subject and helps in answering the questions that I designed for the present study. What is left for this section now is to arrive at a definition of sorts for the subject and subjectivity, generally speaking, in the light of the above discussion, and to pinpoint exactly how and in what sense the terms would be used to answer the research questions formulated for the present study.

What can be seen from the above discussion on subjectivity is that it is an abstract concept that allows individuals to view their inner selves in relation to other objects and people, whether it is to take others into account to cater to shared experiences or to set themselves apart from them, or to establish a forum where individuals come to interact in the context of culture, society, religion/faith, or to establish their interest, need, or desire. Subjectivity, in this way, is taken as the essence of an individual whereby the idea is to understand what makes that individual 'act,' 'how' do they 'act,' and where in space and time the action takes place. This was discussed with reference to the concepts of social imaginary and technologies of information. Following this line of thought is the subject: an entity whose existence is always considered and explored in relation to objects outside it: people, societies, ideas, concepts, theories, or belief systems. It cannot be discussed in isolation and establishes a variety of connections in the light of which it emerges as an entity that can 'act.' Mansfield explains by saying that "the word subject, therefore, proposes that the self is not a separate and isolated entity, but one that operates at the intersection of general truths and shared principles" (3).

He goes on to share four different types of subject as well: 1) the grammatical subject, 2) the politico-legal subject, 3) the philosophical subject, and 4) the human person as subject (3). He argues that in the domains of literary and cultural studies, it becomes difficult to differentiate the four types, and hence, it is imperative to use the term subject in all these senses. The difference that emerges here is that for the sake of the present study, I feel that 3 and 4 capture the essence of the argument. Although, it is impossible to discuss 3 and 4 without 1, as language is something through which 3 and 4 can be explored. Still, the study in itself is not an exploration and/or description of the grammatical and linguistic use of the subject and how it manifests in the selected texts; therefore, that would not be employed in the way discussed above. The second sense in which Mansfield defines the subject is only used in a limiting sense of what the author himself calls as a social contract (3), which allows the individuals to adhere to certain rules and regulations and act within a set limit of the society in question. Similarly, for the present study, the fictional and real context that informs the selected texts will be taken into account to establish the argument to answer the research questions.

## (II)

### **2.3. Transmedia Storytelling**

This section discusses transmedia storytelling with a particular focus on its emergence, features, and techniques for making a narrative fall into the transmedia category. The section traces the fictional narratives that use the technique in myriad ways and how it is similar and/or different from the work under consideration. The section also discusses the development and expansion of narratives and texts from their simple linear structure into more dynamic, digital, digitized, and divergent ones. This makes it easier to situate the study in this category and sets the stage for further analyzing and discussing the selected texts as transmedia narratives. Transmedia storytelling informs a significant portion of the theoretical framework of the present study as well; therefore, details pertaining to the description and the application of the methodologies are given in Chapter 3. This chapter aims to establish a background of relevant recent research concerning digital multimodal narratives and their role in creating an immersive experience for the readers/audience.

#### **2.3.1. Establishing the Origins of Transmedia Storytelling**

Traditionally speaking, when the word ‘text’ is referred to, a written document, usually in paper format, comes to mind. If this concept is to be extended with reference to stories, a fictional written document in a paper format is the result. Fictional, in turn, refers to the use of narrative techniques in which, one way or another, a story is told through a written document in paper format. The paper format, of course, can be in any shape, but considering that a traditional representation is under discussion, the format is usually a book. A book entails that the text is contained within and requires a reader to narrate the content (a story, in this case) to (a) listener(s) or read the content to themselves. In any case, the entry point to the content would be quite simplistic; the reader opens the book and starts from the very beginning. In this way, what comes to the forefront is that both the writing and the reading experience would be linear, allowing the reader to be a receiver of how the text is written and developed. Traditionally, this is how almost all the texts were constructed and received. There were, of course, texts that were not published in a book format and came out as episodes in a magazine, newspaper, or pamphlet; most of them were linear and provided a similar reading experience, as mentioned above. There were cases where the story would continue beyond the scope of one book, and writers would produce a sequel or publish their stories in parts; however,

this practice was rare and merited audience involvement in a manner where they were emotionally invested. The reading experience was still linear and did not allow for much experimentation with the format, as was the tradition.

The practices regarding the production of texts and their reception changed drastically with the fast-paced developments in science and technology, especially with the advent of home computers and the Internet in the 1980s. The Internet allowed the text to be digitized, changing the format from paper to screen. This was the first step as far as shifting the medium in relation to the format is concerned. Later, the digitized text shifted yet again and changed into a more digitalized one: links were added to establish a connection between ideas and across ideas available and other digitalized texts. This entails the text was becoming more fluid in nature and hence more approachable for the audience.

By being approachable, the text now had multiple entry points in the form of links placed within the texts. These links are referred to as hyperlinks, and the texts including these hyperlinks as hypertexts. Hypertexts are interconnected texts that allow the reader to move immediately from one point of entry to another, depending on the requirement of the said reader. This alone makes the reading experience entirely different from the traditional reading experience, where the reader has to rely entirely on the linear structure of the text and has no other option to access it. With hyperlinks embedded in the hypertexts, the reader can access multiple sources of information with a single click. The computer screen also makes this process easier and the experience more accessible because moving between pages in the paper format would be very time-consuming, taking the fun out of understanding the narrative and its structure. This kind of reading experience ensures that the reader is actively involved rather than passively consuming the text, as was the case before.

The involvement of the reader brings forth an interesting idea with reference to how engaging the text can be. When Theodor Nelson, in *Literary Machines* (1965), coined the term hypertext, he also talked about the change of medium the text goes through, for instance, text that is expressed through graphics, figures, audio, video, and other such formats. He used the term hypermedia (7) to describe these channels through which the text could reach the readers. The overall experience of reading or consuming such a text would be more engaging and immersive as compared to the traditional way of interacting with the text. In this way, a text, including hyperlinks, becomes a text

that is not constrained by a linear format and provides more opportunity for the reader to interact actively.

This interaction is made possible because hypertext fiction contains text in the form of a network of nodes, which, when combined together, often make up a singular narrative. George Landow discussed three different types of hypertext fiction: axial, arborescent, and networked (25); axial hypertext fiction has a structure along an axis, arborescent has a structure that branches out like a tree but returns to the main node, and networked refers to a structure that is interconnected without any dominant axis for the purpose of orientation. In all these types, the nodes contain several options directing the reader to choose the path that the story can take.

This, of course, makes it different from the traditional way of reading, where the reader has no other option but to start from the very beginning and move toward the end. On the screen, however, the reader gets plenty of opportunity to explore unpredictable ways in which one story can unfold. So far, then, two things differentiate the traditional experience of reading from this more modern one: the format of the text and the involvement of the reader. To define transmedia storytelling efficiently, it is essential to situate the concepts mentioned above: hypertext, hypermedia, nodes, networks, links, etc. Within an already existing body of knowledge in the fields of literary and cultural studies, including (for the sake of my argument) specifically (but otherwise, not, in any way, limited to) the seminal works of Barthes, Foucault, Kristeva, and Deleuze and Guattari.

Roland Barthes, in *S/Z*, explores the concept of the existence of ideal textuality and, in doing so, describes what has now come to be known as this computer-generated hypertext. He explains the idea by stating that such a text would be made out of chunks of words, blocks of images, where these are linked via multiple, never-ending electronic pathways, trails, or chains, joined together inextricably in an unfinished web. He states:

In this ideal text, the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend *as far as the eye can reach*, they are indeterminable. . . ; the systems of meaning can take over this absolutely plural text, but their number is never closed, based as it is on the infinity of language. (5)



Barthes mentions words and phrases like ‘networks,’ ‘several entrances’ to one text, ‘codes,’ ‘absolutely plural text,’ and how it is ‘indeterminable’ to locate the ‘main one’ to emphasize the never-ending nature of this ideal text. All these characteristics are found in hypertexts today and are features that make them distinct from the traditional way the text was understood. This reliance on other texts, being nonlinear, having multiple entry points, and the result being a ‘galaxy of signifiers’ is what rejects the closed nature of the structuralist outlook towards text and hails the openness of the poststructuralist view of the same. Graham Allen, in *Intertextuality*, explaining the move from structuralism to poststructuralism, states that the move is such that “assertions of objectivity, scientific rigor, methodological stability, and other highly rationalistic-sounding terms are replaced by an emphasis on uncertainty, indeterminacy, incommunicability, subjectivity, desire, pleasure and play” (12). These very postmodern tendencies of uncertainty, indeterminacy, or incommunicability allow for the openness in narrative structures and reliance on the reader to make meanings out of the texts. Barthes’ other seminal work, *The Death of the Author* (1967), reminds us of the similar idea.

At this point, transmedia storytelling can be explained in relation to the concepts of a text not only existing in and across different platforms but also expressed through multiple ways, such as language, symbols, and icons. The point of difference from Barthes emerges in the idea that the primary source can be located within the transmedia text and locating it or seeing how other narratives depart from the main one is what keeps the audience engaged in contemporary times. It is also considered while discussing *Orphan Black* in the three chapters of the analysis.

To emphasize the said difference, Pratten, in his work *Getting Started with Transmedia Storytelling* (2015), Robert Pratten defines transmedia storytelling similarly by emphasizing multiple platforms, audience participation, and, consequently, audience enjoyment (15). He furthers his point by stating that this is how traditionally transmedia storytelling is looked at, and this does not take into account the emotional investment of the audience; he argues for what he refers to a “moment-to-moment” (15) involvement as far as the audience is concerned. This moment-to-moment approach makes transmedia a design philosophy that caters to the synergy created between the content distributed through multiple platforms. The moment-to-moment approach ensures that the audience is involved and totally immersed in the ‘present’ point in time and allows for an engaging experience. According to Pratten, this makes transmedia storytelling distinct from multiplatform

storytelling (17). Consuming the whole (the whole narrative, that is, where the story is distributed across platforms) in this way, where there are several moments to remember, entails that the audience is curious to collect more pieces and see where the story leads them; this accounts for the active participation of the audience and hence makes the consumption of the whole satisfying. Whereas, if there is no synergy between the platforms, story wise, the audience loses interest as there is nothing to pique their curiosity; this makes the consumption of the whole a dissatisfying phenomenon.

It is not possible to not mention Kristeva when poststructuralism and intertextuality are being discussed. It was Julia Kristeva who, in 1966, coined the term intertextuality and described the reliance of one text on multiple others for the main one to make any meaning. Combining Saussure's ideas of signifiers and signifieds and his systematic features and structure of language with Bakhtin's notions of the social context of language, Kristeva, in her essay, *Word, Dialogue and Novel* (1980), talks about intertextuality as "a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another (85)".

The perspective that the present study takes is that it is not only limited to intertextuality as defined by Kristeva but also takes into account how thought has taken a different shape in transmedia storytelling. It is pertinent to mention Marsha Kinder here as it was through her work *Playing with Power in Movies, Television, and Video Games* that 'transmedia' as a term came into existence in 1991. In her work, she also establishes the similar basic difference between intermedia and transmedia narratives and their structures, keeping the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (1987–1996) and the *Muppet Babies* (19884- 1991) cartoons as a reference point for establishing her argument (35). With transmedia storytelling, the whole experience of the creation and reception of the narrative becomes audience-centric, and this is one of the many reasons why content creators in the contemporary world choose this philosophy of design. Other reasons include transmedia storytelling being a more profitable, accessible, cohesive, and consequently rewarding experience. This is definitely in line with the need of the hour; the audience is more aware, educated, technology literate, and curious. They want to know more about the content they are following and investing their time and energy in. Living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a single medium no longer satisfies the needs of the modern audience, and transmedia storytelling allows the creators to connect with their consumers, making the process more engaging and immersive. Likewise, Foucault in *The*

*Archæology of Knowledge* (1969), following Barthes and Kristeva, refers to “the frontiers of a book” as being “never clear-cut” as “it is always caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network (30)”. Here, it can be seen that, like Barthes, he also uses the term ‘network’ and the phrase ‘system of references’ to describe the never-ending web of knowledge.

This reliance on other texts and points of view is not something new when it comes to literature, as it can be seen that many great works of fiction refer to other novels and adapt the worlds of other novelists to situate their own works. An example could be Henry Fielding’s work *Joseph Andrews* (1742) based on Samuel Richardson’s work *Pamela: Virtue Rewarded* (1740); Fielding creates the character of Joseph Andrews as “illustrious brother” to Pamela from Richardson’s work and further develops the story of Joseph in four volumes. Much later, however, when Kristeva refers to a text being an “absorption and transformation of another,” postmodern tendencies of pastiche and parody do come to mind. A notable example could be Tom Stoppard’s play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1996), where the narrative is highly influenced by Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (1603).

Moving the debate back to hypertexts, though, this branching out into other narratives and texts to lend meaning to a new text, without being extra cautious regarding the creation of a direct connection between two or multiple points of reference, can be explained with Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophical concept of rhizomes. Deleuze and Guattari, in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), state that: “unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs. . .” (42). Again, it can be seen that they focus on establishing a connection between ‘any’ two or multiple points where concepts are not even ‘necessarily linked.’ This is similar to the previously discussed notions of ‘networks,’ ‘webs,’ and ‘mosaics’ but inherently very different from the approach that the present study takes. My research focuses on linked narratives and tries to see how that link helps the audience better understand the narrative; this is why transmedia storytelling is used in the present study. Nelson, defining hypertext as a term in *Literary Machines* (1965), also had similar ideas with regards to the computer-generated text, and he explains them by saying the hypertext is a “nonsequential writing — text that branches and allows choices to the reader” (13); throwing light on the previously discussed concepts related to the nonlinear structure of the

narratives and allowing for the text to exist in and across multiple platforms.

### **2.3.2. Transmedia Storytelling: Features, Techniques, and Methodologies**

Henry Jenkins is usually credited with coining the term transmedia storytelling, but as mentioned in the previous sub-section, the first time it was used was by Marsha Kinder. However, Jenkins, in his article *The Cultural Logic of Media Convergence* published in 2004, developed his theory on media convergence and described it using three functions of the media, that is, media proliferation, media consumption, and media production (37); arguing that all these different platforms are used simultaneously and also in relation to each other. In his later works, Jenkins also puts forth the idea that as a process, media convergence not only creates but also facilitates a culture of participation (this echoes what was previously said with regard to transmedia storytelling) where it can be seen that networking and collaboration as skills come in contact with media and technical literacies, making the experience more immersive in nature. According to Jenkins, this helps define transmedia narratives, where multiple platforms are used for creating, producing, and distributing narratives (38).

Building on the argument, Jenkins, in his work *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, discussed the seven principles to explain the properties of a transmedia text. These allow for the participatory nature of the text and ensure reader engagement. He refers to the properties being 1) spreadability vs. drillability, 2) continuity vs multiplicity, 3) immersion vs extractability, 4) worldbuilding, 5) seriality, 6) subjectivity, and 7) performance. Spreadability implies the spreadable nature of the content and the ease with which the content can be spread by the fans on social media using different mediums. This contrasts the notion of drillability, which, as the name indicates, caters to the depth of the narrative. This ensures reader engagement to go deep into the narrative to discover more; Jenkins refers to Jason Mittell, who gave the concept of drillable media in *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Television Storytelling* (2015). These are explained further in Chapter 3, where the theoretical framework of the study is detailed. According to Jenkins, continuity is the property of consistency in the narrative across multiple platforms and guarantees no inconsistencies in the storyline. Multiplicity accounts for the retelling of the narrative across multiple or parallel universes, but consistency within the plot and storyline is also imperative for an immersive experience. Immersion refers to the real-world wrapping of the fictional story

worlds around the readers, such as theme parks or 3-D experiences.

In contrast, Extractability is the ability of a fan to engage with the narrative world by wrapping the fiction around the real, such as being able to buy Thor's hammer, Harry Potter's wand, or being able to dress in Captain America's costume. Worldbuilding pertains to the techniques used by the creators or fans to expand the fictional world by explaining or describing it; this does not refer to the storytelling directly but simply to create content that engages the audience to explore more about a narrative. Seriality is breaking down the larger chunks of the narrative and distributing it across different platforms, such as providing prequels to, say, a comic on websites or games. Subjectivity indicates the range of points of view or perspectives that can be from different characters. Usually, a narrative is built from the perspective of the main character; other secondary characters can get a re-telling of the same narrative from their respective points of view on a different platform. For example, in *The Walking Dead* TV show, the story is told from Rick Grimes' perspective, and *The Walking Dead* video game allows several other characters to expand the storyworld further by giving multiple options to the audience. Performance illustrates the ability of the fans to contribute to the story world by creating content of their own as fan fiction or videos.

The difference lies in how the present study approaches transmedia storytelling; I intend to look at the form of the text and how it allows for the characters to develop in a more detailed fashion compared to only looking at transmedia narratives to comment on audience engagement. Moreover, the present study looks at the narratives of both the mediums of the selected text to be able to make up a complete narrative, providing details that one medium does not have the capacity to. In this way, it is not the principles that the present study is interested in, but how the narrative unfolds to give away layers for the clones in *Orphan Black*.

Scolari, in his article titled *Transmedia Storytelling: Implicit Consumers, Narrative Worlds, and Branding in Contemporary Media Production* (2009), supports Jenkins' idea by focusing on the reliance on multiple modalities for engaging the audience and creating transmedia narratives (587). Here, again, I would reiterate that the present thesis focuses on the use of transmedia to create layers in the narrative, which are later looked at as metamodern features instead of only focusing on using multiple modalities to engage the audience. The engagement of the audience is a given feature in the contemporary world since all of us are accustomed to getting information from

multiple sources and then synthesizing it to formulate a complete picture.

Discussing the principles of multimodal narrative composition, Kress, and van Leeuwen in *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (2006) proposed three connected and interrelated systems that help materialize the multimodal text; these are referred to as information value, salience, and framing (177). They define information value as the spatial orientation of the elements in a narrative that help convey meaning; salience as a property to gauge how much attention is drawn and received by a modal component of a composition; and framing as the means through which meaning is conveyed in a multimodal narrative. This could include but is not limited to pauses, rhythm, connections between music, movement, and speech (in the temporal context), or simply a degree to which elements of information or units are separated from one another in composition (in the visual context). This way, multiple elements make their way into the text, making the reading process engaging and complex in relation to the simple linear narratives.

These systems helped in making me understand the workings of a transmedia text, but this is the extent of their usage for the present study. The primary difference from Kress and van Leeuwen's approach that I find important is that they focus predominantly on conveying meaning when it comes to transmedia narratives because they use more than one medium to relay information. On the other hand, my study takes this as a starting point rather than a point at which I arrive after I carry out the analysis. This means that using multiple mediums would, of course, mean that the audience would gather information from multiple sources, but it also means that there is more room for character development, and this is where the main focus of the present study lies.

Scolari reinforces Kress and van Leeuwen's take; he emphasizes the text's structure and the systems it incorporates to organize the narrative. The multimodal texts rely on these networks and inter-relationships when it comes to the meaning-making process; as a result, the reading complexity of such narratives increases, which, in turn, demands active participation from the reader (588). Here, again, I would reiterate that the present study focuses more than looking at the inter-relationships of multiple modes and meaning-making processes and shifts attention to the layers that emerge within a narrative when techniques such as transmedia are employed. In this, I agree that this design and structure account for the text to fall under the transmedia category.

The comprehension of the multimodal texts, then, depends on the measure of information that

is required to make sense of the narrative and this measure of information (according to Hovius, Shinas, and Harpers article *The Compelling Nature of Transmedia Storytelling: Empowering Twenty First Century Readers and Writers Through Multimodality* (2021)) can be reached through information entropy (6). Information entropy can be defined as the quantitative measure of the unpredictable structures within the overall multimodal narrative. In this way, with increased unpredictability in a multimodal narrative, the entropy would increase, increasing the complexity and, hence, comprehensibility of the narrative in question (7). The narrative, however, is still more engaging than the static text and allows the reader to interact more and interact actively with the text; the dynamic nature of the text, employing different modes, makes this possible. This is also in line with the selected texts for the present study. The graphic novels in *Orphan Black* inform the arcs of several clones in the TV series and make for an over-all engaging adaptation.

Kira Kitsopanidou quotes Jeff Gomez in their work *Building a Brand Through Transmedia Audience Engagement Strategies* (2012), who argues that there are practical sides to making a transmedia text happens, which includes elements regarding a brand essence, knowing that the story world is the most important thing, and using resources and incentivizing all the stakeholders to get everything for creating the story world in a way that not only engages the audience but also validates their participation; allowing them to participate in the decisions regarding the story world or rewarding their participation through merchandise, and proper marketing. The more accessible and additive the storyworld, the more successful it will be. Scolari claims that the “cross-over” (590) between branding and narrating a story is not something entirely new; he quotes marketing semioticians Andrea Semprini and Jean-Marie Floch (599-660) to further situate his argument in the fields of narratology and semiotics. Scolari maintains that brands use specific stories to disseminate a particular set of values where the audience is free to choose the stories they like to consume. Different sets of people find different things consumable, and that allows for several brands to exist and compete for the attention of the audience, opening up the market space for creating narratives that adhere to specific symbolic values. This technique of using a story to further a set of ideals makes branding a semiotic concept. If the audience agrees to the values of a brand, a “semiotic contract is signed between the brand and the consumer” (661). I agree with these concepts again as they are similar to how I employ the technique of transmedia storytelling for the analysis of the selected texts, as the presence of different mediums attracts different types of audiences and is

influential in making a name for the franchise of *Orphan Black*.

For a contemporary audience, participation and engagement are imperative as it allows them an opportunity to further decide how the story will unfold in the future. This makes the audience curious and consequently invested in the storyworld and makes it possible for them to envision a future based on the storyworld(s). It can be discussed by making a point for the creative industries to produce time-appropriate content that puts a face to the problems and issues of not only the present world but also paves the way for developments in the collective futures of creators and audiences. Stackelberg and Jones, in their article *Tales of Our Tomorrows: Transmedia Storytelling and Communicating About the Future* (2014), put forth this interesting claim that storytelling, as a medium has been used as a guide to the future for many years as the speculative nature of stories allows the audience to establish a link between the present and the future. They have argued for genres like science fiction to be of immense help where shaping the future is concerned (60). This point becomes important for me as the genre I am using for the present study is also speculative. They propose that foresight professionals can learn lessons from collaborative and interactive user-generated content, with reference to the transmedia storytelling, where the said experience is more than mere entertainment Inspirations and lessons from the transmedia story worlds can provide “collective narratives to shape the future” (72).

### **2.3.3. Transmedia Storytelling: Alternate Terms and Recent Developments**

Situating transmedia storytelling as a theoretical perspective or a philosophy to explain how texts function in the contemporary world, it is intriguing to note that even recent researchers are perhaps confused about the term and use other terms to describe transmedia storytelling techniques and practices while talking about transmedia storytelling. This sub-section aims to highlight the confusion surrounding transmedia storytelling as a term and how different theorists and researchers use various other terms to refer to the similar idea. I outline a few of these instances, which gives room to see that research on transmedia is still an emerging field, if not globally, at least in Pakistan. This allows for a gap to emerge with reference to the field of study itself.

Burns, in their article *Potterliteracy: Cross-Media Narratives, Cultures and Grammars* (2005), discusses the then-new multi-platform approach (Jenkins first used the term in 2003 as discussed above) by using the term “cross-media” (4). He describes the term by referring to



children's literature and argues that the worlds in these literary narratives extend beyond the book the child reads; he brings forth video games, films, websites, and merchandize to illustrate his point: the overall experience being immersive in nature. This reliance on other mediums is later categorized as something significant for transmedia storytelling, as is evidenced by the works of Bordwell (2010), Graves (2011), Edwards (2012), Voigts and Nicklas (2013), and Pamment (2016), to name a few.

In 2006, Klinger, in her work *Beyond the Multiplex* is seen referring to transmedia practices as “repurposing” (7) with a focus on the entertainment industry's pursuit of making as much revenue as possible by relying on multiple platforms to distribute and spread their content; this brings forth the notion of spin-offs and prequels, explicitly designed with a purpose to make revenue for each property. This goes into a different parameter than what Jenkins discusses in his original definition of transmedia; however, it is pertinent from the point of view of marketing and business. But because I adhere mainly to Jenkins' usage of the term, this explanation of repurposing is not what I intend to use in the analysis as I do not look at the graphic novels of *Orphan Black* as merely repurposed cultural productions.

Ruppel in their article *Narrative Convergence, Cross-Sited Productions and the Archival Dilemma* (2009), while talking about storytelling across multiple channels, uses the term “cross-sited narratives” and states that different sites of narrating a story serve as additional sites of meaning-making and hence requires a causal kind of distribution of multiple elements of storytelling as compared a more general distribution with a simple purpose of repurposing the narrative for the specific intent of selling the brand. Davidson, in their book *Cross-Media Communications: An Introduction to the Art of Creating Integrated Media Experiences* (2010), employs the term cross-media while discussing the use of different forums to disseminate information; they differentiate between cross-media and transmedia by insisting that cross-media originates in advertising and hence require more active participation on the part of the audience. However, as per the argument developed up till this point, it can be said that transmedia storytelling involves an equal, if not a more proactive, approach from its readers/audiences.

In 2014, in a blogpost titled *Multimedia, Crossmedia, Transmedia... What's in a name?* Maloney, in an attempt to clear the confusion regarding the terms multimedia, cross-media, and

transmedia, states what he thinks of each in simple terms; multimedia deals with basically one story that is expressed via multiple forms using one channel; cross-media is different as it uses various channels to further a single narrative; and transmedia is distinct from both in a way that it uses multiple channels to further multiple stories, employing multiple forms, all from a single story world, where story world is the fictional world created within a narrative. His study further argues that these terms all exist simultaneously in a fluid spectrum but are to be differentiated because cross-media and multimedia talk about one story, whereas transmedia discusses multiple stories (Maloney). This is important for understanding *Orphan Black* as a transmedia text because the graphic novels give rise to new arcs for the clone characters and do not limit themselves to the singular narrative of the TV series.

Sanchez Castillo and Mora Llbata further explain in their article *Transmedia Storytelling as Collaborative Environment and Autonomous in Higher Education* (2019) that it is the wrong usage of terminologies that creates this confusion regarding what transmedia means; studies have been using even adaptations and transfigurations in the sense of transmedia storytelling and this she disagrees with (8436). She tries to redefine transmedia storytelling by focusing on the original aspects of Jenkins' definition but, unfortunately, cannot formulate a sound agreement with reference to the notion of the shared storyworld, something that is of extreme significance to transmedia storytelling.

Raybourn, in his article *Transmedia Learning in the Wild - Supporting Military Training Through Story-Driven Engagement* (2017), defines transmedia storytelling as the use of "scalable systems of messages" that represent one "core experience" by using "multiple media" (1-2). Here, again, it is observed that the definition sticks to how Jenkins first explained the term and focuses on core experiences and systems of messages disseminated through multiple media. Similarly, another concrete definition comes to the forefront with the work of Jansson and Lindell titled *News Media Consumption in the Transmedia Age* in 2015. They define transmedia in relation to textuality and news media by focusing on "social agents" and their involvement in the "production of flows" (82). This seems incredibly significant as their work introduced the element of social agents into the field, but they do not further elaborate on this idea, which seems unfortunate. Similarly, to emphasize upon the use of various mediums to further a story, even in 2016, Raphael and Lam discuss the Marvel Universe in their article *Marvel Media Convergence: Cult Following and Buddy Banter* in terms of

convergence; although based on the above discussion, it definitely falls under the paradigm of transmedia. This is surprising, to say the least, as the term and what it means had been established as compared to the initial confusion surrounding the concept.

In 2018, Carredu, in a web article, while discussing the properties that define transmedia storyworlds, states that successful storyworlds take more time to expand their narratives and characters, allowing for a more significant margin of earning profit and also making the narrative sustainable (n.p). He gives the example of the DC universe and how it tends to fall flat because more time is not spent in making the narrative sustainable, relying solely on expansion without building a connection with the audience, consequently accounting for lesser success as compared to other projects. In 2019, Tabitha Lynn Cassidy stated this idea regarding the storyworlds of *Doctor Who* and *Harry Potter*: “they are sustainable, they are expandable, and they took decades to mature and tell their stories” (49).

With this aforementioned debate, it is seen that transmedia storytelling has been defined differently by different people. However, considering that it is a recent philosophy, there is still some ambiguity that surrounds the concept. While the definitions and explanations highlighted above do clear up the confusion, there is still a lot of struggle to understand the idea, especially in the context of the present study, as most of the audience in my country still widely watch single medium narratives and rely on them for entertainment. Therefore, it is with the intention of filling this gap in both understanding and awareness that transmedia storytelling is taken up as a significant portion of this present study.

This section intends to situate the present study within the domain of transmedia storytelling. In addition, the idea was to define transmedia storytelling and identify its characteristics with respect to the already existing body of knowledge. With its overarching forms of drillable and expandable narratives, the reason for discussing the selected text as a transmedia narrative becomes more accessible as the story and plot are interwoven and interconnected within two mediums, TV, and graphic novels. Having traced the thought both on subject and subjectivity and transmedia storytelling, the chapter moves the discussion to previously conducted research available on *Orphan Black*. This would allow us to situate the present study within the established field with the intention of highlighting the gap that the present study undertakes to fill.

## (III)

**2.4. Research on *Orphan Black***

This section of the chapter intends to explore the previously conducted research on the selected texts and aims to highlight the gap that becomes evident after reviewing the said literature. The chapter discusses a variety of ways that the selected texts have been studied and how that would be extremely helpful in narrowing down the focus of the present study. Science fiction narratives usually deal with what defines and qualifies as "humanity" (Melzer, 2006). In fact, science fiction stories frequently illustrate how arbitrary the definition of "human" is. For instance, the robot Data from *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and the half-human, half-Klingon officer B'Elanna Torres from *Voyager* both struggled with the definition of what it means to be a human. Despite the fact that he was designed to be stronger, smarter, faster, and more efficient, Data said that his biggest goal was to be a human. Data was programmed, and to be human meant to "grow beyond the programming and become more than a collection of circuits and sub processors" (Brooks, 1993). *Battlestar Galactica's* Cylons, Data, and the *Star Trek* Professor all struggle to come to terms with humanity and what it means to be human. The present study also tries to achieve this by looking at the clones from *Orphan Black* and exploring the notion of subjecthood in the selected sci-fi text.

A common theme in both science fiction and horror is the blurring of the lines between the human and the Other. Examples of this in both genres include the *Star Trek* television series, the *Alien* films, and Octavia Butler's *Bloodchild*. The psychoanalytic phallic mother figure is described by Barbara Creed (1993) and Rosi Braidotti (1997) as a figure from which everyone must eventually free themselves. The monstrous, caring phallic mother is a source of both desire and horror and is viewed as being strong, in charge, and possessing masculine traits that might make her seem monstrous (Creed 1993); she ends up blurring the lines of what is masculine and what is feminine. She can be seen in *Bloodchild* as the phallic mother who impregnates men in a transgression of boundaries while still being the nurturing mother, in *Alien* as the phallic mother who is always in the background, and in *Star Trek: Enterprise (Unexpected 2001)*, and of course as Norman Bates' long-deceased mother, to whom he is so attached that he impersonates her (*Psycho* 1960). Sometimes, the point of crossing between science fiction and horror takes the form of an alien, robot, or artificial

intelligence, which then threatens to invade or enslave all of humanity. Horror is also regarded as a genre that reflects national anxieties, particularly those related to invasion, provides a platform for the monstrous to be recognized and kept that way, and is essential to the survival of society's sociopolitical fabric (Gelder 2000; Jancovich 2002). (Newman 2002). The monster in the horror genre serves as a manner of differentiation, "us" and "them," a way to distinguish who is acceptable and who is a monster, whether it blurs or crosses borders. This distinction is demonstrated in *Orphan Black's* instances of medical surveillance and through the monitoring clones. The present study is different in its approach as it does not focus on surveillance and monitoring on its own but takes into account how these notions help shape the metamodern subject.

Horror and science fiction tend to treat cyborgs and clones as "Other" and occasionally as monsters. For instance, it is revealed that the Eve clones (Biller 1993) in the television show *the X-Files* have additional chromosomal pairs that give them superhuman strength and intelligence. The murderous instincts that are unfortunately also produced by the extra chromosomes lead to the termination of the cloning studies and the clones themselves. Jurassic Park is another example (Crichton 1990). Even though it is not a case of cloning a human, it is an illustration of what may go wrong when cloning is attempted, and monsters are created. Cyborgs often produce a range of outcomes. The cyborg is portrayed in *The Matrix* (1999), *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), and *RoboCop* (1987) in varying degrees of ambiguity. Mostly works on *Orphan Black* focus on these issues of othering or the creation of monsters; the present study takes into account the unique subjects of the series as a depiction of metamodern selves, and I believe this makes for a different study as compared to what is available.

Works on *Orphan Black* explore the idea of femininity, general sensibility, and standing up against patriarchy. With human cloning as a center of its narrative, *Orphan Black* merges social reality and science fiction, and through the treatment of the characters, it alludes to some of the situations that women have faced in real life, such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, and the challenges of parenthood. Natalie Eisen, in 2016, however, discussed Helena, one of the clones from *Orphan Black*, from the perspective of monstrous women using the works of Barbara Creed, Shelley Stamp Lindsey, and Jane M. Ussher. Her thesis explored the various stages of monstrous from infancy to adulthood for Helena's character and reached the conclusion that male monsters are not linked to their masculinity as female monsters are and established that Helena was not a monster as

far as her femininity is concerned. This thesis explores the idea of the “monstrous-feminine,” or the idea that female monsters of television and film are linked to their femininity in a way that male monsters are not linked to their masculinity. Using the work of scholars such as Barbara Creed, Shelley Stamp Lindsey, and Jane M. Ussher, the thesis covers various facets of women’s lives as seen through the distorted lens of the monstrous. The character of Helena from the television show *Orphan Black* is used as a concrete example of the stages of the monstrous-feminine: the girl-child, menstruation and puberty, sexuality, and motherhood. The notion of social position is critical to comprehending how identical clones might be perceived as individuals. The lived experiences that they have at the intersections of class, gender, and sexuality, in addition to the cultural representation of clones as "abominations" in the *Orphan Black* series, are significant while discussing the narrative of *Orphan Black*. Each clone has a different social standing and, consequently, diverse experiences while being built by "society" in the show's universe to be similar. Furthermore, although having similar appearances, clones are separate individuals because of their variation in experiences.

Furthermore, reviewing material on the misogynistic treatment of women in the terminology of "monster" is crucial when looking at the *Orphan Black* series. The book *Mothers, Monsters, Machines* by Rosi Braidotti was extremely helpful in understanding the history of misogyny and why women are viewed as monsters, as objects of dread and hatred. According to her, "Monsters are people who are born with congenital defects in their bodies." She goes on to say that Aristotle is to blame for the idea that women are monsters, using the word "normal" to describe the male body. When reproduction goes normally, a boy is born; the female only appears when anything goes wrong or fails to happen throughout the reproductive process.

Feminist science fiction, in general, challenges and blurs gender stereotypes (Buran 2014). In order to oppose patriarchal domination, feminist science fiction often subverts societal reality (Buran 2014; Melzer 2006; Zirange 1994); feminist science fiction also treats aliens, which are typically portrayed as monsters, with sympathy. The monsters are frequently just moms defending their young, as in the Alien film series (Buran 2006). The "different" or "otherness" of the aliens subconsciously attracted the female audience since they had encountered "otherness" in the patriarchal realm of the male civilization, claims Zirange (1994), while addressing the appeal of Star Trek (10). Identity is another topic that is regularly discussed, both in terms of a woman's own identity and her identity in relation to other people, as in the case of cyborgs (Melzer 2006).

In *I Am Not Your Property: The Progressive Feminism of Orphan Black*, Graeme John Wilson asserts that *Orphan Black* also deserves notice for its socially conscious narrative, which functions as an allegory for women's rights. This critical studies essay intends to identify the methods through which *Orphan Black* demonstrates its feminist ambitions and contribute to the further normalization of feminism in popular media. To this end, this essay utilizes feminist film theory for its theoretical framework and rhetorical criticism for its method, analyzing specific scenes and dialogue from select *Orphan Black* episodes. By contrasting this analysis with a literature review consisting of pertinent texts concerning hegemonic masculinity and feminist ideology, this essay argues that *Orphan Black's* feminism is exhibited through four key elements of the series: its exploration of motherhood, critique of toxic masculinity, endorsement of alternate gender identities, and subversion of female stereotypes in television. Other than this, Oskar Holldroff, in 2012, studied *Orphan Black* using a compare and contrast approach. His study was centered on the music that the TV series includes, and he compared the scores with *Dare Devil* and *Mr. Robot*. The study ventured on to discuss the relevance of the selection of music and discussed textual layers in the mentioned works to arrive at a pattern that these series follow with regard to the text and music.

In an article titled *Who Am I? Postmodern Ideology and Identity in Orphan Black*, published on the website Red Herry, explores the fictional world wracked with constant change; humanity is battered again and again with the question: who are we? What does it mean to be human, and more specifically, what does it mean to be me? *Orphan Black* takes on these highly subjective, postmodern questions with the intellect of a science fiction show and the nuance of a literary work. The article emphasizes that *Orphan Black* presents us with the opportunity to view the world in shades of gray--fragmented and indiscernible, which is where postmodern thought comes into play.

Carmen Wright, in 2016, studied *Orphan Black* from the perspectives of gender performances, queer families, and personhood, developing the major idea for her thesis. Whereas Danielle Marie, in 2016, studied the series from a classical Marxist angle, investigating the portrayal of female and other queer characters to highlight how the series challenges the normative hegemonic patriarchy but, in doing so, still reinforces the perfect Western image of a female body. The study incorporates Judith Butler's and Heidi Hartman's ideas of gender performativity and feminist Marxism, respectively.

In a dissertation dealing with contemporary feminism, Ashlyn Chak (2017) discusses *Orphan Black* in the sense that it empowers female characters in the genre of science fiction; otherwise, science fiction is a male-dominated genre. The thesis elaborates on how significant the portrayal of feminism in the digital medium is and highlights the fact that gender is still a controversial topic. Similarly, in her dissertation, Lisa McGuire (2017) discusses the idea of femininity and surveillance in *Orphan Black* and highlights how the representation of female clones deconstructs the notion of monstrous with regard to females and contributes towards the feminist analysis of the work under the theoretical lens of Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto*.

Alyson Buckman, in her conference paper "*My Story Is an Embroidery*": *Representing Trauma Within the World of Orphan Black*, discusses *Orphan Black* from a lens of Trauma Studies. Attempted and actual murder, imprisonment, physical and psychological abuse, dehumanization, the withholding of love and care, and abandonment are some of the many elements of trauma enacted upon the clones of the story (as well as the audience). This essay discusses the representation of trauma within *Orphan Black*, arguing that the series' representation of isolation, storytelling, willingness to die, violence, and community illustrate the consequences and treatment of trauma.

Staci Stutsman, in her paper titled *The Unruly Clones: Tatiana Maslany's Melodramatic Masquerades in Orphan Black* (2016), offers a reading of Canadian actor Tatiana Maslany's performance in *Orphan Black* and makes visible the unruliness of melodramatic women and problematizes the binarized dichotomy of unruliness and victimhood. The article discusses Tatiana Maslany's performance in the TV series *Orphan Black*, focusing on her portrayal of multiple clones. The author analyses how Maslany's acting style allows for a unique application of film performance studies to television studies. The article explores Maslany's ability to embody various characters and develop them over the series, highlighting the nuances in her performance that challenge traditional roles of good and evil in melodrama (83-4). Stutsman argues that Maslany's portrayal of multiple clones, each with distinct characteristics, demonstrates the fluidity of stereotypical roles and the performative nature of gender identities (100). The author also delves into the significance of clone swap scenes in the series, where Maslany plays one character acting as another, showcasing the complexity of her performance. It emphasizes how Maslany's ability to embody various roles challenges traditional narratives and provides a fresh perspective on performance in television.



The publication of comic books highlights the ever-present issue of gender, race, and ethnicity in superhero comics such as Superman and Batman. In 2010, Lowery Woodall, in his dissertation, helped forward the notion of ethnicity and race in superhero comics and established the need for writers, publishers, and creators to focus on these issues and rethink policies while keeping modern times in mind. Another work on graphic novels is Cord Scott's dissertation on comics and how they infuse patriotism in its readers. In 2011, the author, with his dissertation, established the need for patriotism in the American cultural context and traced the development of its portrayal in media and literature, specifically from the time period after World War II through the Iraq War.

Zoe Shacklock, in her article *Two of a Kind: Revaluating the Work of Acting Doubles in Orphan Black* (2016), sheds light on the collaborative nature of performance in television, particularly in the context of serial storytelling. Shacklock compellingly argues that understanding acting in the realm of serial television requires recognizing the shared, supportive, and dynamic process that unfolds across space and time, involving multiple individuals in bringing a performance to life (70). By focusing on the overlooked role of the acting double, the author highlights the importance of reconfiguring our theories of television acting to account for the collective effort involved. Through the lens of *Orphan Black*, the narrative of identity as multiple and performative is underscored, emphasizing the interconnectedness between actors and the social dependencies inherent in television production. Moreover, the author emphasizes the significance of recognizing the generosity and care embedded within the collaborative process of television acting, challenging traditional notions of individual performance. This reframing of acting as a collective endeavor invites us to reconsider the invisible labor behind the performances we admire on screen (80). This study offers a fresh perspective on the complexities of television acting, urging scholars to acknowledge and appreciate the team effort involved in bringing performances to fruition. It serves as a valuable contribution in understanding of the collaborative nature of storytelling in the digital media landscape.

Dakota Becker in her article *Analysis of the Progression of the Representation of Female Protagonists in the Sci-Fi/Fantasy TV Shows Orphan Black and Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (2017) critically examines the representation of empowered sexuality and feminist themes in two influential television series, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Orphan Black*. While *Buffy* has long been celebrated for its groundbreaking portrayal of empowered female protagonists, the article argues that *Orphan Black* surpasses it in terms of diversity and challenging heteronormativity and the Heterosexual Script (1). One

of the key strengths of *Orphan Black* highlighted in the article is its emphasis on collectivity, which amplifies its feminist potential. The series expands the notion of empowered sexuality and embodies the essence of Girl Power, presenting characters who defy gender norms and traditional narratives. Despite this, *Buffy* remains a significant milestone in television history, particularly within the science fiction and fantasy genres. The study acknowledges the difficulty in assessing the feminist value of characters in both series but underscores the importance of recognizing areas of progress and stagnation in the representation of female protagonists. By examining these core issues, it offers valuable insights for viewers and producers alike, providing a framework for achieving tangible gains in the portrayal of women on television (15). It also contributes to the ongoing dialogue surrounding female representation in media, particularly within genres where misrepresentation is prevalent. It serves as a meaningful resource for understanding the complexities of feminist themes in television and highlights the need for continued progress in the industry.

Sheryl Vint in her chapter *Commodified Life: Post-Humanism, Cloning and Gender in Orphan Black* (2017) delves into the philosophical depths explored by the television series *Orphan Black* (2013-2017), particularly focusing on its examination of cloning and the broader questions surrounding posthumanism. It argues that the show goes beyond mere science fiction speculation, instead using the experiences of its clones to shed light on the rapidly evolving legal and ethical landscape concerning human embodiment (95-6). Through its portrayal of cloning, *Orphan Black* brings attention to real-world issues such as the commodification of body tissues, the commercialization of surrogate pregnancies, and the complexities of intellectual property rights in living organisms, including human DNA. By grounding its narrative in contemporary biopolitical realities, the series offers a compelling intervention into discussions surrounding techno-science and ethics, despite the fact that human clones are not (yet) a reality. Vint's analysis underscores the importance of *Orphan Black* as more than just entertainment, but as a thought-provoking exploration of the ethical implications of emerging biotechnologies. It highlights the ability of the show to provoke critical reflection on the boundaries of humanity and the ethical considerations that accompany advancements in science and technology. The author provides valuable insights into the philosophical underpinnings of *Orphan Black* and its relevance to contemporary discussions on ethics and biopolitics (112-13).

Katie Tobin, in her article explores the recent surge of feminist dystopian narratives within science fiction literature, film, and television, particularly focusing on the theme of reproductive

autonomy where *The Handmaid's Tale* (2017) and *Orphan Black* (2013) standing out as significant examples. *The Handmaid's Tale* garnered widespread attention, sparking protests against changes in abortion legislation in the United States, while *Orphan Black* earned critical acclaim and a dedicated fanbase known as the #CloneClub. The latter series delves into contemporary reproductive debates, such as the ethical implications of genetic manipulation, offering insights into the dangers of unregulated biotechnologies within patriarchal capitalist structures (49-50).

Moreover, *Orphan Black* challenges conventional notions of kinship, drawing upon posthumanist ideas to explore alternative forms of family beyond the nuclear unit. It embraces Haraway's concept of a consciously constructed space, exemplified by the show's portrayal of queer characters and their creation of new kinship networks. Through the lens of reproductive justice, the series tackles various issues, including abortion, cloning, and eugenics, presenting a dystopian narrative that serves as a cautionary tale against the unchecked exploitation of biotechnologies. While *Orphan Black* critiques the exploitation of ARTs (Assisted Reproductive Technologies) under biocapitalist frameworks, it stops short of providing definitive solutions. Instead, it prompts viewers to consider the coexistence of queerness and posthumanism and to explore alternative avenues for creating kinship outside traditional biological constraints (60). The article offers a comprehensive analysis of *Orphan Black* as a queer feminist venture into science fiction, shedding light on its thematic depth and its contribution to discussions surrounding reproductive justice and societal structures. It encourages critical reflection on the intersections of technology, patriarchy, and identity, ultimately challenging viewers to envision alternative futures beyond prevailing norms.

Olivia Belton, in her article *Metaphors of Patriarchy in Orphan Black and Westworld* (2020) explores how *Orphan Black* and *Westworld* utilize the backdrop of science fiction to construct allegories for patriarchal domination. Within these narratives, female protagonists find themselves in perpetual conflict with paternalistic figures from the realms of science and corporate power, illustrating the relentless efforts to exert control over them (1121-22). Departing from conventional portrayals of feminism on television, both series boldly confront the insidious nature of systemic patriarchal oppression, particularly within the framework of capitalism. What sets these shows apart is their explicit engagement with radical feminist concepts such as separatism and compulsory heterosexuality. By leveraging the realm of science fiction, they skillfully navigate complex feminist issues. *Westworld* employs the analogy of computer programming to mirror the mechanisms of patriarchal social

conditioning, while *Orphan Black* invokes cyborg feminism through its portrayal of clones. However, the article aptly points out that the efficacy of these narratives in addressing patriarchy varies. *Orphan Black* appears to advocate for assimilation, while *Westworld* hints at the possibility of a violent uprising against the oppressors. Yet, both struggle to present a conclusive solution to the pervasive problem of patriarchy, as evidenced by moments of narrative closure and particularly the endings of these series (1223). The article posits that despite their shortcomings, *Orphan Black* and *Westworld* signify a promising shift in television's approach to representing intricate and provocative feminist ideas. They offer a new avenue for exploring and grappling with the complexities of patriarchal oppression, thereby enriching the cultural discourse surrounding feminism in the media.

Tinic, in her article, delves into the intricate dynamics of the contemporary global media landscape, highlighting the complexities of transnational financing, production, and distribution within the television industry. It underscores the importance of reassessing cultural negotiations in light of the proliferation of digital platforms, specialty channels, and diverse audience demographics (55). Central to the discussion are the often-overlooked aspects of branding, both on national and genre-specific channels, as well as distribution strategies, which play pivotal roles in shaping transnational television flows. Using the Canadian series *Orphan Black* as a case study, particularly its acquisition by BBC America, the article elucidates how distributors navigate the expectations of national and channel branding to forge innovative transnational production partnerships. The analysis of *Orphan Black* prompts a re-evaluation of research methodologies within global media industries, urging scholars to incorporate nuanced examinations of television distribution and branding into studies of international co-productions. Unlike traditional treaty co-productions, *Orphan Black* stands as a unique example, wholly produced in Toronto yet boasting significant international appeal (56). As the article suggests, questions surrounding distribution, acquisition, and branding are not only perennial but also evolving, reflecting the shifting landscape of transnational television studies. The series serves as a focal point for contemplating the future trajectory of television content, where the interplay between national specificity and the broader structural histories of broadcasting emerges as a crucial factor in the global dissemination of select TV series.

In their article *Queer Kinship: Privacy Concerns in Orphan Black* (2021), Casey and Clayton explore the themes of alternative kinship structures, LGBTQIA+ representation, genetic testing, and privacy issues as depicted in the television series *Orphan Black*. The show presents a unique premise

where clones discover each other and form bonds while facing surveillance and exploitation by unethical organizations (127). The article discusses how the show challenges traditional notions of family and sociality, highlighting the complexities of queer relationships and genetic kinship. The authors analyze the implications of genetic testing and social media on kinship systems, emphasizing the positive and negative aspects of these novel forms of sociality. They raise concerns about privacy, consent, and the potential commodification of queer bodies in the context of genetic research. The article also delves into the intersectionality of race, class, and access to reproductive technologies, pointing out disparities in donor-conceived families and the risks of exploitation (131). Furthermore, the discussion extends to the ethical considerations surrounding genetic research, particularly in relation to LGBTQIA+ communities. The authors highlight the need for strict controls over data collected in genetic studies to prevent misuse and ensure the protection of marginalized groups (136). They also draw parallels between the themes in *Orphan Black* and real-world issues, such as historical injustices in medical research and the vulnerability of different populations to genetic exploitation. The article provides a thought-provoking analysis of the complex themes presented in *Orphan Black* and their relevance to contemporary societal issues. It offers valuable insights into the evolving landscape of kinship structures, privacy concerns in genetic research, and the intersection of identity, technology, and ethics.

Ivan Lacko, in *Saviors, Naïfs, or Orphans? The Posthuman Condition in Literary and Cinematic Perspectives on Human Cloning* (2021) delves into the exploration of post- and transhuman narratives in literary fiction and cinema, focusing on the use of themes such as human enhancement, cyborgization, and genetic engineering. By examining three notable works spanning several decades, Lacko provides a comprehensive analysis of how human clones are utilized to address posthumanist and transhumanist issues (43). Drawing on a theoretical framework rooted in posthumanist criticism and philosophical posthumanism, the study analyzes Kate Wilhelm's *Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang* (1976), Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005), and the television series *Orphan Black* (2013–2017) to explore the evolution of clone characters within fictional microcosms. The objective is to showcase these works as valid and relevant societies where human cloning serves as a backdrop for the development of complex characters within a posthuman environment. The analysis traces the portrayal of clone characters from impersonal representations to more nuanced and psychologically rich portrayals, highlighting the evolution of their identities and agency within their respective narratives. Through this examination, the article offers valuable insights into the ways in which fiction grapples with the ethical, social, and philosophical implications of human cloning (53). This article provides a thought-provoking exploration

of posthumanist and transhumanist themes in literature and cinema, offering a deeper understanding of the role of clone characters in shaping narratives of identity and humanity in a technologically advanced world.

Katherine Schaab in her work *Orphan Black and Radicalizing White Femininity for the Revolution* (2022) argues that *Orphan Black* serves as a poignant commentary on the political and cultural landscape that often marginalizes women's bodies and knowledge, while simultaneously offering a progressive narrative grounded in the philosophy of "the future is female." The series skillfully weaves familiar sociopolitical issues into its storyline, highlighting the tension between the current reality and the potential for change, thus inspiring viewers to resist injustice. The show's relevance extends beyond its entertainment value, as it addresses pressing contemporary issues such as reproductive rights, healthcare disparities, police violence against marginalized communities, and wealth inequality. By portraying the struggles against oppression and the limitations of resistance, *Orphan Black* prompts viewers to reflect on the complexities of social change and the importance of intersectional commitments in achieving a just and equitable future. While the series may not offer definitive solutions, it invites viewers to engage in feminist action and encourages dialogue about challenging the status quo. Although it leaves certain questions unanswered, such as the long-term consequences of societal upheaval, *Orphan Black* provides a platform for cultural discourse and activism, ultimately contributing to ongoing conversations about equity-based movements.

In an article titled *Autonomy and Bioethics in Fan Responses to Orphan Black* (2024), the authors Ayden, Bradley, and Calyton delve into the complex interplay between public perception of genetic science and the popular television series *Orphan Black*, known for its captivating exploration of bioethical dilemmas. Through a meticulous analysis of 182 viewer-created blog posts, the authors uncover how fans of the show engage with its bioethical themes and their implications (174-75). Employing a mixed methods approach, the study reveals that viewers of *Orphan Black* are deeply engaged with the characters' struggle for autonomy, which serves as a focal point for discussions on bioethics. Particularly noteworthy are the connections drawn between the moral dilemmas depicted on screen and real-world issues, particularly those affecting women. Through their blog posts, fans demonstrate an active participation in meaning-making and bioethical reasoning, highlighting their nuanced understanding of the ethical challenges posed by genetic science. While existing scholarship has acknowledged the thematic richness of *Orphan Black*, this study offers a fresh perspective by

emphasizing the active role of science fiction fans in shaping public understanding of bioethical issues. By shedding light on the ways in which viewers interpret and engage with the show's themes, the authors provide valuable insights into the intersection of popular culture and bioethics discourse (186). Overall, this article presents a novel approach to studying fan-generated content, offering a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between entertainment media and public perception of science.

The present thesis presents a unique perspective on human subjectivity, viewing it through the lens of metamodernism as an oscillation between extremes that results in a multi-dimensional manifestation of self. Unlike the studies reviewed in this section, which primarily focus on specific themes or narratives within *Orphan Black*, this study takes a broader approach by examining how the concept of multiple subjectivity is portrayed in both the television series and its graphic novel adaptation and looks at the multiplicity of self as manifesting in human clones. By analyzing these works under the qualitative paradigm, the study aims to uncover deeper insights into the nature of human subjectivity in the contemporary digital age, particularly within the context of metamodernism. Moreover, while the studies reviewed may emphasize specific aspects of the series, such as feminist themes or narrative structure, this thesis explores a more abstract and philosophical concept—namely, the multiplicity of subjectivity. By delving into the consequences of this multiplicity, the study seeks to shed light on the complexities of human agency and its evolution in the metamodernist world. In doing so, it offers a fresh perspective on *Orphan Black* that goes beyond traditional thematic analysis.

Furthermore, the present study stands out in its interdisciplinary approach, drawing from theories of metamodernism to inform its analysis of the selected works. This interdisciplinary framework allows for a richer exploration of the subject matter, integrating insights from philosophy, cultural studies, and media studies. By situating the discussion within the context of metamodernism, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the contemporary subject and the ways in which it is represented in popular culture.

Another thing that deserves mention here is that I have not come across any study from Pakistan on *Orphan Black* and from this theoretical perspective; therefore, the present study can be taken as different from what usually are the topics for research at this degree level. Again, it is a claim I am making based on my own knowledge and research done for this study, and by the time it

is published or submitted, this might have changed. I do not make this claim lightly, as it is the dearth of material available on the topic and/or the genre or medium of study that made it difficult for me to gather information and material to make this study a reality.

Most of the works on *Orphan Black* highlight the themes of patriarchy, rebellion, gender roles, monstrous in the female gender, and others. Focusing on subjective positions taken by the clones in order to assert their voice, these themes do not focus on letting go of a subjective position and/or occupying multiple positions while maintaining their agency. The present research intends to fill this gap by discussing clones as metamodern subjects. Seth Abramson, a metamodern critic, states in one of his blogposts that research into metamodernism is still in its exceedingly early stages, signifying the need for studying contemporary works from this perspective in order to situate them in a correct socio-cultural context (n.p).

The focus of this section was to give examples of research carried out on *Orphan Black* and carve out a niche for the present study. The current research intends to study clone characters as subjects existing in the metamodern world. In doing so, the study departs from the usual take on *Orphan Black* and focuses instead on establishing the clones as subjects regardless of their sexual orientation. The idea is to focus on the creation of the metamodern subject, and the selected texts help in furthering the argument regarding the cultural conditions, cultural environment, and the socio-historical turn of events that make it possible for a different subject to exist in the contemporary world. The clone characters are taken as subjects and are discussed as examples of metamodern subjects within the fictional world. They are also taken as examples to comment on the condition of subjectivity and agency of subjects outside the imaginary realms of the narrative. As per the research carried out for this study, works on *Orphan Black* have not focused on these perspectives and hence are discussed in detail for the present project.

Moreover, the focus extends to the narrative and narrative techniques that are employed to categorize the selected texts as metamodern. In this vein, science fiction as a genre and transmedia storytelling as a technique are used in addition to metamodernism to establish the grounds for exploring the narrative in detail. This, again, has not been done, to my knowledge, and is surprising for a text as widely discussed as *Orphan Black*, and the present study intends to fill this gap.

As far as the theoretical underpinnings are concerned, again, I have not come across a



metamodernist reading of the selected texts, and because the present study offers such a reading, it can be said to be different from the studies that already exist on *Orphan Black*. I do understand and reiterate in Chapter 3 (while discussing the research method) that this study is just one of the many readings that the selected texts generated, and there definitely is always room for improvement and further research. *Orphan Black* is a vast universe, and the way I delimited the present study allows me to address only the issues that answer the research questions designed for this study. There are plenty of concerns that I wanted to address, but the scope of the dissertation would not allow them to be included; these are therefore included in the last chapter of the dissertation, where I propose areas for future research.

The intended outcome of this chapter was to give a comprehensive review of the literature available in the fields pertinent to my study: subjectivity, transmedia storytelling, and *Orphan Black*. The first section covered the development of the nature of the subject from modern to metamodern times and traced the evolution of thought on the ever-changing nature of the subject and what that involves. The section highlights how the thought has changed and attempts to give an understanding of the present state of the subject, as that is the focus of the present study. This understanding is necessary for the analysis of the selected texts and their portrayal of the subject in its myriad ways. The second section focused on transmedia storytelling and its characteristics to situate the present study within the domain of the said field. The idea was to define what transmedia storytelling is and highlight its features and attributes with an aim to reach an understanding of storyworlds and how they function in the contemporary world. This understanding allows the researcher to look at the storyworld of the selected text and define it as a transmedia, using different mediums to build its narrative. The third section of the chapter moved the discussion to the previously conducted research on *Orphan Black* and highlighted the gap that the present study intends to fill. The section covers the ways that the selected texts have been studied, including feminist readings, social readings, and socio-cultural readings, bringing the attention of the reader to the objective of the present study and how it aims to discuss the selected texts from a unique perspective.

Reviewing the sources in three different sections as summarized in the previous paragraph helped me narrow the point of intervention for the present thesis. The reason for such a comprehensive descriptive review of available material is to chart the development of thought in the three areas that my study aims to bring together and see how there is room to discuss the element of

subjectivity in science fiction narratives through the lens of metamodernism and transmedia storytelling. As evident from the literature review, there is not any considerable work done on *Orphan Black* from the perspectives of metamodern subjectivity and if I bring in transmedia storytelling, the angle chosen for the selected work becomes unique, and this is the point where I believe my study can contribute in the existing field of knowledge. This enables me to determine my research methodology and theoretical framework for the analysis of the selected texts, that I discuss in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

# THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology in detail. The chapter is divided into two sub-sections, the first pertaining to the theoretical framework and the second to delineate the research methodology. In the first section, the theoretical framework adapted for the study is explained in detail. It is instructive to mention at the outset that the framework is not used, as it is, as a lens to examine the selected text but is, in fact, informing the analysis and is used as support to give a particular direction to it. The purpose of this section then is to highlight, describe, and explain the two major areas, metamodernism and transmedia storytelling, from which the theoretical framework originates; this understanding is later used as a support to analyze and interpret the text.

In the second section of the chapter, textual analysis as a method used for carrying out the analysis of the selected text is explained in detail. Metamodernism and Transmedia storytelling are taken as the theoretical underpinnings of the study, whereas the technique employed is textual analysis. It is in this section that Catherine Belsey's way of employing textual analysis is discussed in detail, highlighting how the present study intends to use it. At the end of the chapter, it becomes significant to find a middle ground to merge these three vast areas, and this is another purpose that this chapter aims to serve. In Section I, which is to follow, the theoretical underpinnings of the study are detailed, and it is through invoking and employing these lenses that my analysis of the selected texts is informed and shaped.

## (I)

**Theoretical Framework**

In this section, I have explained the concepts of metamodernism and transmedia storytelling and tried to provide a rationale for invoking these lenses. In order to provide a detailed argument for deploying metamodernism and transmedia storytelling, I have divided this section into two following parts: first metamodernism and then transmedia storytelling.

**3.2. Metamodernism**

In this section, I will trace how Vermeulen and van den Akker use the term metamodernism as it would serve as the basis for how the present study will incorporate the said term and later use it to analyze the selected texts. The term, as explained earlier, is really not a new one and has been used before in diverse geographical and philosophical contexts ranging from South America to Asia and Western Europe to discuss and cover a variety of topics including but not limited to literary forms like experimental poetry, cultural phenomena after postmodernism, as well as in other disciplines like technology, economics, and art.

However, metamodernism, as defined by Vermeulen and Akker, is a structure of feeling that emerged in the 2000s and has dominated Western capitalist thought since then in terms of being a cultural logic. Trying to come to terms with the aesthetics, politics, and culture of today's world in its contemporary condition, Vermeulen and Akker use the term metamodernism both as a "heuristic label" and as "a notion to periodize these preferences" (29). In their initial essay *Notes on Metamodernism* (2010), Vermeulen and Akker based their understanding of the term on Raymond Williams' notion of structure of feeling, its use in Fredric Jameson's (1991) and David Harvey's (1990) studies of interrelation of/between imperial culture, late capitalism, and postmodern thought; Jos de Mul's study of the romantic roots of modernism and postmodernism (1999); and the neo-romantic turn to study the visual arts in the early 2000s. This brings to the forefront how the term can be classified to label the cultural logic of the present era. In periodizing the term, many scholars

highlight the bend of history and try to focus on how the term metamodernism can be employed to talk about something that postmodernism did not address and/or failed to discuss.

Two relevant scholars in this vein are Furlani and Dumitrescu, who in 2007 proposed that metamodernism as a school of thought that addresses issues that postmodernism did not and, in doing so, blends modern and postmodern thought. Furlani, in his work, explores Guy Davenport as an author whose work, he believes, transcends the disorder and chaos of postmodern thought because of its inherent complementarity and contrasts immersed in harmony. Similarly, Dumitrescu opines in her essay that metamodernism is a “budding cultural paradigm” and highlights the features of holism, integration, and connectionism as a part of metamodern thought. She explores the works of Blake and Houellebecq and argues that bootstrapping, connectionism, and theory overlapping are aspects of metamodernism, and using these, the authors defy postmodern thought and move ahead. In doing so, both Furlani and Dumitrescu propose a solution and/or alternative to postmodernism and suggest a philosophical move where there is an overlap between modernism and postmodernism, which they say is a characteristic of the metamodern school of thought. Now, this is the point where Vermeulen and van den Akker also agree, as they look at and discuss metamodernism as an oscillation between modernism and postmodernism (57). Vermeulen and van den Akker state that their interpretation of the term is different from the previous scholars in at least three ways, and explaining those will help in coming to a better comprehension of not only the term but also how the theorists employ the idea of in-between-ness which is the fundamental requirement of the present study.

Primarily, the theorists opine that the texts and cultural practices that they would categorize as metamodern do not aim to solve and or provide an answer to the postmodern chaos and confusion. Their study, therefore, should not be looked at as a manifesto or a social movement which attempts to offer a better view to solve the problematic of the postmodern era. Although, of course, their understanding involves the comprehension of philosophies, stylistic registers, and a number of social and technological developments such as Romanticism, Modernism, Speculative Realism, and New Sincerity, to name a few. In a broader sense, then, metamodernism should be looked at as a structure of feeling that has emerged from postmodernism and, because of the very same chronological placement, reacts to postmodern ideas. But simultaneously, it is as much of a cultural logic which corresponds to the contemporary state of affairs in global capitalism. Saying so, Vermeulen and van

den Akker take a middle ground where not only modern and postmodern collide but also where the resulting metamodern neither celebrates the waning of postmodernism nor pushes for a solution-oriented approach. The term and the school of thought acknowledge the blend of both pessimistic/optimistic states of affairs today and state that, in many a way, humanity is worse off than it was before. This would entail that their comprehension is descriptive in nature, and therefore, this becomes the first thread that combines the theoretical understanding of the human condition and agency with what can be (is) studied in the contemporary world.

Secondly, Vermeulen and van den Akker stress that this structure of feeling or cultural logic does not, of course, exist in isolation. It is developed, as discussed earlier as well, in connection to what came before this bend in history. It is formulated with a systematic understanding of dominant cultural and social practices from romantic to postmodern times. Emphasizing this relation with the previous movements, then, it again becomes clear that description is an essential feature of the school of thought, and it is through this description of similarities and differences that the position of any present dominant socio-cultural, economic, and/or political event can be highlighted. In terms of the present study, this descriptive feature helps shed light on human/posthuman agency not only in the selected texts but also in the contemporary world.

The argument now circles back to oscillation because of the points mentioned above, which is the third way in which the theorists' understanding differs from that of previous scholars. This oscillation explains metamodernism both as a heuristic label and as a term for periodization. Vermeulen and van den Akker put forth the idea that this oscillation becomes the crucial point for the investigation of any cultural, social, political, economic, and/or literary discourses in the contemporary world. They have highlighted it in their essay *Notes on Metamodernism*, where they explained this structure of feeling they call metamodern through artworks, literature, and exhibitions. This strategy is later expanded in their work *Metamodernism: Historicity, Affect, and Depth After Postmodernism*. The principal argument that they give, and I intend to incorporate, is that the contemporary discourse or dialectic is in constant motion and is never or can never be fixed in one consolidated position. Because history is almost always studied in retrospect, and to do so, making sense of the present is vital in a sense that allows us to acknowledge the constant to and fro motion of discourses, allowing them to occupy more than one position. The technique that Vermeulen and van den Akker have used in both their seminal works to study these diverse discourses is of textual

analysis, for which they say “that textual analysis of the culturally dominant phenomena is a consistent feature and a starting point for any critique of the current historical moment” (33-4). This last point about textual analysis connects the theoretical framework of the study to the technique that is used to study the selected texts. The details can be found in the coming sections of the chapter. Returning to the notion of oscillation and the constant overcoming of boundaries and/or consolidated positions to understand the dominant contemporary discourses, Vermeulen and van den Akker highlight the meaning of the *structure of feeling* and the prefix *meta* in metamodernism.

As mentioned in the previous section, Vermeulen and van den Akker developed their understanding of the term metamodernism through Raymond Williams’ notion of the structure of feeling that he proposed in 1954. Williams explained and developed the term over a number of years in multiple works, but he first used the term in *A Preface to Film*, which he co-authored with Michael Orrom. In the said volume, he describes briefly what he means by the term structure of feeling in the following words:

A structure of feeling lies deeply embedded in our lives; it cannot be merely extracted and summarized; it is perhaps only in art – and this is the importance of art – that it can be realized, and communicated, as a whole experience. (40)

As per this definition, a structure of feeling, then, is a sentiment, a sensibility that exists for everyone living in a particular society at a specific time, but it is hard to put a finger on what it really is. Williams argues that if one has to know what it really means, this can be seen and experienced through art because, if at all, it is through art that the sensibility or the sentiment of an era can be conveyed. This seems vague and ambiguous, but that was his intention, and it also goes hand in hand with what has become of culture, art, and society in the contemporary world.

Moreover, this structure of feeling also has to do with how art, cultures, and societies are studied, all in retrospect. At one moment in time, one can study only a singular aspect of an artistic or literary movement, and for the sake of studying it, this separatist approach bodes well, too; but when living through that era, one experiences the artistic and/or literary movement in relation to everything that is happening in that era: a holistic view. In this way, art encompasses the spirit, sentiment, or sensibility of the era as a whole, and for the sake of in-depth analysis, one can separate it from other movements, authors, schools of thought, and others. only to look at them in relation to

one another yet again. When composing, however, artists draw from the holistic feeling of an era rather than its individual parts, and it is from this totality that a dominant feeling and sentiment emerges. This dominant feeling of an era does not have a counterpart in the external already existing world and hence becomes a common sentiment of only that particular era. This distinct feature, element, or characteristic of an era thus can be looked at as a structure of feeling.

This explanation of the term by Williams, then, makes it clear that this structure of feeling is not a static concept; it is like a living organism that changes its shape and spirit with the changes in time, culture, and societal structures. This would entail that the individual characteristic of an era cannot be traced back to only one piece of art, a single movement, or a thought process; the feeling of an era is a lived experience of all that has happened in the era and later can be described in one way or the other. The dominant sentiment of one period would essentially differ from another, and that is why and/or how we can differentiate between art being ironic, anxious, surreal, realist, chaotic, abstract, and/or sincere. Another thing that is brought to the forefront because of this distinction is the means through which these structures are perceived, analyzed, and understood within and among different time periods. It becomes easier to come to terms with the fact that with the change in structures of an era, the employed means and ways would also change and hence replace the already existing patterns, which, of course, would become obsolete to study the ever-changing structure of feeling. Williams, in another one of his works further explains the notion of a structure of feeling by saying that it is “a particular quality of social experience. . . historically distinct from other particular qualities, which gives the sense of a generation or of a period” (133).

Keeping in view the above discussion and what Williams has said about the term, defining metamodernism as a structure of feeling then becomes apt because it, no doubt, is the dominant element, sentiment, and/or sensibility of the contemporary era and, by definition is (should be) different from what (post)modernism had in store. Vermeulen and van den Akker characterize this difference both in 2010 and 2017 as an oscillation with an aversion to fixed patterns and consolidated positions; it is inherent in the understanding of the term *a structure of feeling*. They further their case by explaining the prefix *meta-* which in Greek can be comprehended in at least three different ways: 1) with or among, 2) between, and 3) after. This is almost precisely how Jameson describes the prefix *post-* in postmodernism to refer to a cultural logic and sensibility of what came after modernism. For the present study, as described in Chapter 1, the meaning of the prefix *meta-* is taken to be *between*.



Explaining all the three senses of the term is what the coming paragraphs will cater to. After that, it becomes clear as to why the choice of the meaning for this study has been limited to *between* and its Greek counterpart, *metaxy*.

First and foremost, the meaning of the prefix as *with* or *among* signifies what I have discussed above in the sense of metamodernism being a structure of feeling. The prefix makes the case for it by suggesting that the metamodern structure of feeling exists “*with* or *among* older and newer structures of feeling” (39). This, of course, would account for metamodernism as the dominant structure of feeling in the contemporary world among many subordinate structures of feelings, and this makes it easier to study the past, present, and future in relation to the current moment in time. Also, if metamodernism, as a feeling, exists with and among other feelings, it would entail that the metamodern culture has a distinct relation to the past, whether looked at as modern or postmodern and provides for an understanding of the future, which is entirely different from the modern and/or postmodern narrative. In doing so, the metamodern gives us a moment in time that exists with the pre-existing narratives but simultaneously gives a route that, among others, alternates between the past and the future. This is so because the present moment is studied among the past and the future, determining how the present functions.

The notion of understanding the present and being aware that the present needs to be understood with and among both past and future has been the dominant feeling of the current era. The above- mentioned incorporation of such a feeling in art is essential to refer back to because not only Vermeulen and van den Akker (2010) but also Vaessen and van Dijk (2011), Mary Holland (2013), and James and Seshagiri (2014) have quoted many contemporary authors such as Tom McCarthy, Ali Smith, Julian Barnes, Ruth Ozeki, Ian McEwan, Cynthia Ozick, Will Self, Zadie Smith, George Saunders, to name a few who use both modernist and postmodernist techniques in their writing today with an understanding of their work being primarily metamodern. The authors move beyond the postmodern use of stylistic techniques and, in doing so, ironically, and playfully implement modernist and, at times, realist authorial strategies and methods. The resulting pieces of literature take such a position where they have a blend of both postmodern and pre-postmodern and exist with and among all such pieces, which can be categorized as modern, postmodern, and/or realist. Vermeulen and van den Akker use the term “upcycling” (42), where the authors employ modern and postmodern stylistic and narrative techniques with the purpose of improving upon and adding value to what already exists.

This, they argue, is different from the postmodern works, where the authors usually employ the technique of “recycling” with a result of pastiche and parody where the aim was to refer to the canonized popular culture and the works of literary masters with a result that is less pure than the original and has lesser value as compared to what the metamodernist authors or artists intend to achieve. Vermeulen and van den Akker explain this by stating “[M]etamodern artists attempt to move beyond the worn-out sensibilities and emptied practices of the postmodernists – not by radically parting with their attitudes and techniques but by incorporating and redirecting them towards new positions and horizons” (42). This deliberate movement creates what Holland calls a “truthful tension” (201) in contemporary fiction, where there is an effort to take a position that reconciles or at least attempts to reconcile modern and postmodern humanistic elements (Vaessens and Dijk 12). This quote also highlights that metamodern artists seek to work with already existing cultural notions and push their boundaries to create something that has the potential to function with or among the modern and postmodern yet be something fundamentally different in its direction and purpose.

The second meaning of the prefix *meta-* is from Plato’s term *metaxy*, which refers to a state of in-between-ness. The in-between-ness is characterized by the trademark quality of oscillation in metamodern thought and allows for a movement between various positions like a swinging pendulum. To understand this movement, it is vital to comprehend that this movement is not between a continuum or a binary but a movement between numerous opposite poles that allow for both neither-nor and either-or positions. This can function with the knowledge that the metamodern functions with or among modern and postmodern; thus, the second sense of the prefix *meta-* keeps the first in check. Moreover, inferring the in-between-ness inherent in the prefix allows for an understanding and comprehension of the human condition in the current times. This comprehension in relation to the posthuman sci-fi world of *Orphan Black* is one of the goals of the present study and caters to the fact that Vermeulen and van den Akker also neither intend to “describe the current human condition nor prescribe a model for artistic production” (44) but aim to comment on and give an understanding of what it means to be a metamodern subject in the contemporary times. According to this school of thought, metamodern sensibility moves between the postmodern and modern, occupying infinite positions oscillating from sincerity to irony, from order to chaos, from “construction to deconstruction,” and from “eclecticism to purity” (44). This movement, however, is not restricted only between the postmodern and the modern but tends to go beyond that as well. In doing so, this structure of feeling makes a niche and situates itself within contemporary times and

helps understand the morphing structures and shifting ideologies of today's Western capitalist societies, which, of course, are addressed many a time in literature and media produced in contemporary times. It is crucial to understand here that in moving between the postmodern and modern, the metamodern subject does not necessarily take a position that can be described as better than or worse than what was before: it is, as mentioned earlier, a comment on the movement itself, the composition of the contemporary subject, and its relation to and with its ever-changing technologically advanced surroundings. The structure of feeling exists with an inherent understanding that society and its developments do not always fall under the prescribed labels of being better than or worse off than previous times but move ahead in a way that its relation with the previous movements can be seen at all times which develops a sense of the movement itself and caters to answer questions regarding this mobility and its fluidity. This links the discussion to the first meaning of the prefix and helps move to the third meaning that Vermeulen and van den Akker associate with the term *meta-* as after. Chronologically, metamodernism, as previously explained in Chapter 1, comes after and replaces postmodernism, and in taking its place, then, becomes the "dominant cultural logic" of the contemporary Western world: a phrase Jameson uses to describe postmodernism in his work *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1989). Jameson periodized the sixties as the postmodern, commenting on the loss of connection with history, disassociation of reality from images, and the consumer culture of the time in relation to economy and politics. Similarly, Vermeulen and van den Akker discuss the 2000s as a move away from the 90s and, keeping in view the political, social, cultural, and economical changes that have taken place in the said time period all over the world, opine that the language and the discourses of the postmodern then are not adequate to discuss the changes that have taken place from 1999 to the present day: hence a need for a new discourse which they call as metamodernism. They highlight and discuss in length the issues and concerns of the 2000s, such as the coming of age of millennials, technological advancements, 9/11, the fourth wave of terrorism, the Iraq War and its effects on the US treasury, the decline of US hegemony, Project Europe, energy crises, ecological and environmental disasters, to name a few: these changes in the contemporary world, then, made way for economic instability, financial inequality, and political destability<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the political and economic development in the 2000s, see "Periodizing the 2000s" in

The theorists are of the opinion that these developments in the political, technological, economic, social, and ecological sphere have together brought upon a change in the contemporary world for which this metamodern structure of feeling has emerged, and they attribute this to the 2000s as a transitional period, as Jameson had done with the 1960s in relation to the emergence of postmodernism. Since *Orphan Black* deals with scientific and technological evolution in the contemporary world, that is, human cloning and its consequences, it is fair to discuss the series under the metamodern structure of feeling, particularly in reference to the (post)human subject, what it means to be one, what the composition is, and what the consequences are. This thesis does not address the political, socio-economic, and/or ecological concerns of the present day, as the breadth and scope of it all would be challenging to discuss in one project. Therefore, in terms of the meaning of the prefix *meta-*, for my project, the sense of ‘after’ will only be used in terms of positioning the subject in contemporary times and using that position as a threshold to launch the discussion in the direction of the oscillation of the subject between numerous positions, the constant and inevitable metaxy, and the resulting atopos.

A combination, then, of all the three meanings of the prefix *meta-* would help situate the subject, understand its nature, and how it functions in multiple positions. Having discussed Metamodernism in detail, the chapter will now focus on explaining transmedia storytelling and how it is used to understand the form of the selected texts. This helps in analyzing the texts, keeping in mind their multi-faceted nature.

### **3.3. Transmedia Storytelling**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, creators and producers of television series have turned to innovative and creative ways of narrating a story, which involves expanding and extending the storyline into other mediums such as video games, blogs, novels and novellas, comic books, graphic novels, jigsaw puzzles, and others., to name a few. Simply put, this technique of telling a story across several mediums is what constitutes the vast discipline of what is known as transmedia storytelling. But of course, the field itself comes with its own set of intricacies: multiple entrances to the text being one of them. The other span over concerns like primary and secondary texts, character-oriented storytelling vs. plot-oriented storytelling, texts in contrast with paratexts, and the commercialization of the story itself.

In order to understand the workings of a transmedia text involves the audience to understand

how the text engages them, what are the motivations of the creators to indulge in this technique, and how it helps in the development of the story. In the contemporary world, it has become customary for a well-rated television series to extend and expand beyond the screen, whereas previously, it was not the case. Moreover, with the increase in the viewers of television, it becomes difficult for a TV series to carve a niche and attract a reasonable audience if it does not employ the use of mediums other than television. The digital age of today has created an audience that has the capacity to understand, explore, and dissect fictional narratives from more than one viewpoint, and this comes with the story being extended beyond the single medium of television. Multiple entrances into the fictional world keep the audience on board and allow for the expansion of the narrative from television to their daily lives, including but not limited to discussions on social media and blogs.

This allows the audience to take on a substantial role in deciphering the text and generating multiple meanings from it, which was not the case previously as the audience had a passive role that only allowed them to watch what the creators had created for them. Jason Mittell reinforces a similar idea in his book *Complex TV: The Poetics of Contemporary Storytelling* in the following words:

[I]ndustrial shifts that have shrunk the relative size of any one program's television audience and expanded competition across numerous cable and broadcast outlets have encouraged producers to experiment with transmedia as a way to get noticed and to build viewers' loyalty in an increasingly cluttered television schedule. We might characterize this as a shift in norms: in previous decades, it was exceptional for a program to employ a significant transmedia strategy, while today it is more exceptional for a high-profile series not to. (574)

The last line articulates the importance of using transmedia strategies not only to engage the audience but also to build the narrative in a complex yet entertaining manner. Today's audience relies heavily on hypertexts, digitized and digitalized media, multiple entrances to the fictional world and their own involvement in the meaning-making process, which makes the job of the creators two-fold.

Here, however, it becomes important to distinguish between primary and secondary texts and also texts in relation to the paratexts. Starting from the latter and moving towards the former would make the distinction easier, so that is the course that I follow here. In the contemporary world of digital media, it becomes next to impossible to watch a film and/or television series without first

engaging in promotional videos, trailers, ratings, posters, blurbs, and social media posts. These forms can be termed as “thresholds,” “vestibules,” “undecided zones,” and/or fringes or borders,” which help the audience and give them the possibility to either enter (a text) or turn back. The word paratext is used in all these senses and was first used in literature by French literary theorist Gerard Genette to describe that a text “rarely appears in its naked state, without the reinforcement and accompaniment of a certain number of productions, themselves verbal or not, like an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations” (27-28). Thus, a paratext would be the means through which the text offers itself to the readers and the public in general, such as the abovementioned means of trailers, promotional videos, and others, in addition to reviews, prefaces, illustrations, and others, for film, television, and literature. This would entail that the sub-texts surrounding the text aid the audience in deciding on whether to invest their time in a book, film, or TV series or turn back, so to speak.

Jonathan Gray, in his book, *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Paratexts* (2010), explains the similar notion of viewing a film with regards to the material that precedes its release and prepares the audience in terms of expectations from the said film. He adapted Genette’s idea of paratexts and applied it to films, and years after that, it was a norm to go through the paratexts before actually entering the actual text. This promotional content is one of the many functions of paratexts, and it is crucial to understand this function in relation to the one that expands the narrative fictional world. The promotional content does not expand or extend the fictional world but serves as an entry point, a threshold to the major text as explained above, hence creating a difference between primary (the film/TV series itself) and secondary (the promotional content and others.) texts as almost all the films and television series come pre-framed with these paratexts, which introduce and discuss the potential of the said text. Another function that the paratexts serve is that of expanding the fictional world, which is a continuous process that is important for this study in terms of transmedia storytelling. Henry Jenkins defines transmedia storytelling as follows in his web article:

Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story. (n.p)

This definition problematizes the relation between text and paratext as, according to the definition, “ideally” all and/or each medium contributes (should contribute) to the development of the narrative (equally). In contrast, practically, when transmedia texts are studied, there is a clear distinction between the major text and the sub-texts or the primary text and the supporting paratexts: promos, trailers, spoilers, and others, being some examples of such transmedia texts. It is rare that both the major and minor off-shoots of the text would be given an equal weightage and create a balanced or ‘unified and coordinated entertainment experience.’ Most of the time, it is evident that one medium is given more importance in terms of the development of the narrative, whereas the rest support or add to the main narrative, thereby creating an unbalanced transmedia narrative.

Wolf, in his article *Transmedia World-Building*, explains these sites as “multiple windows” (141), which allows the audience to look into the narrative from multiple perspectives and have an active role in decoding the text itself. In this way, transmedial fictional worlds cater to the audience’s need for “novelty and familiarity” (143), and the active participation of the audience across multiple texts enhances the experience of the transmedial world. This active role also allows the audience to experience familiar characters and plot lines in a unique and novel way, which, on the other hand, increases viewership and/or readership (142-43). It is through the participation of the audience then that the mediums are combined to form a “coordinated and unified” experience, as mentioned in Jenkins’ definition above.

Discussing the balanced transmedial experience and the paratexts, Jens Eder, in his article, uses the terms “motherships and points of entry” (73), which highlights the function of the core and paratexts, respectively. The paratexts keep referring to the core text (the mothership) while providing new entry points, multiple windows, or multiple entrances into the fictional narrative. These multiple entrances enhance the experience of the audience as they allow them to interact with the same characters under different circumstances or merely among different mediums. In what has been discussed so far, *Orphan Black* can be situated as a transmedial text that makes use of television series as the core text and the graphic novels as paratexts or off-shoots that make use of the characters and establish the fictional world using the principle of novelty and familiarity. The graphic novels keep referring to the mothership but explain and explore the context and backstory of the major characters, which allows the audience to know more about the characters from the television series, making use of a different medium altogether. As Wolf points out in his article, the

construction of the transmedial worlds almost always requires multiple authors, usually overseen by the creator of the imaginary world (144), as without their contribution, the world would not exist in the first place.

Discussing television series and extending paratexts, Jason Mittell, in his book, also reinforces the idea that “television storytellers must privilege the mothership by designing experiences that viewers can consume in a wide range of ways without sacrificing coherence or engagement, regardless of how aware they may be of the paratextual extensions” (295). It can be observed for *Orphan Black* as well, where the creators of the show have overseen the production of the graphic novels alongside the artists and illustrators. In this way, then, taking transmedia storytelling as one of the theoretical concerns becomes essential as the selected text functions on two different platforms and takes a different form of adaptation, reverse adaptation, from television series to graphic novels, whereas usually the opposite is accepted and considered to be the norm. Therefore, the analysis of the series would focus on the modes of engagement with the text as well as the development of the narrative.

Jason Mittell, in this regard, distinguishes between two kinds of transmedia by using the terms “What Is” and “What If” transmedia (315). What Is transmedia explains what already exists in the core text and expands it among different mediums while exploring the plot line and consequently extending the narrative. What Is transmedia extends the narrative within its canon and, in doing so, hopes to expand not only the fictional world but also the viewer’s understanding of the text. In this way, the understanding of the text itself is scattered across mediums, and it is with the audience’s participation that the meaning of the text comes to the surface. What If transmedia, on the other hand, does exactly what its name suggests: create alternate routes and paths within the actual core text. In this way, What If transmedia makes use of hypothetical situations and builds new worlds for the characters but under different circumstances. This fuels the viewer’s imagination, and they tend to invest more time and energy in the fictional narrative. The movement of the text and the audience is also crucial for the meaning to emerge in both kinds of transmedia and helps in decoding the meaning. In both What Is and What If transmedia, the development of the text across mediums makes it necessary for the text to move in a horizontal direction, spreading information across multiple platforms. This type of movement is obviously expansionist in nature and is used to develop plots, introduce characters, explore plotlines, and build an overall understanding of the fictional



world. This movement, therefore, extends the narrative outward, and Mittell uses the word centrifugal storytelling to explain this phenomenon (304). However, when it comes to the participation of the audience, it is to be noticed that the movement is (has become) vertical and not horizontal, which is to say that to keep up with the horizontal expansion of the text, the audience does not necessarily have to engage in the similar fashion, but their engagement is vertical in nature because it requires them to dig deeper. This movement categorizes the once “spreadable media” as what Mittell calls “drillable text” (Henry Jenkins 135), where meaning is revealed systematically and is a result of the in-depth investigation of the viewer. This vertical movement then offers opportunities for revealing narrative complexities, deciphering the motivations of characters, exploring novel experimental forms of plot development, and, of course, keeping the text relevant among audiences.

The vertical movement allows the viewers to understand not only the outward expansion but also the inward expansion of the text, for which Mittell uses the term centripetal storytelling (306). The inward expansion, in contrast to the outward expansion, requires the text to “fold in on itself” (306) and provides room for an intense study of characters and exploring new dimensions of characterization. Whether the text moves outward or inward, the viewer’s movement in a vertical fashion aids them in drilling into the text and developing an understanding of the narrative, which is the primary purpose of employing the transmedia narrative technique. It is not always necessary that the television series (or any core text per se) will function both as spreadable and drillable media. The core text can extend across platforms but might not gather an audience for it to be transformed into a drillable media because digging deeper or drilling requires intense involvement. Therefore, as discussed above, the vertical movement on the part of the audience transforms the spreadable media into drillable. Jason Mittell, in a web-essay on *Drillable Texts*, explains the idea in the following words:

The opposition between spreadable and drillable shouldn’t be thought of as a hierarchy but rather as opposing vectors of cultural engagement. Spreadable media encourages horizontal ripples, accumulating eyeballs without necessarily encouraging more long-term engagement. Drillable media typically engage far fewer people, but they occupy more of their time and energies in a vertical descent into a text’s complexities. (n.p)

Now that the theoretical underpinnings of the study have been discussed in detail, it is here that the question of method has to be addressed. As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, textual analysis is the technique that is used for answering the questions and formulating the discussion on the selected texts. The present study draws from Catherine Belsey and her technique of using textual analysis, which she elaborates on in an essay titled *Textual Analysis as a Research Method* (2005). The essay is critical because it discusses the use of visual material as ‘text’ and gives insight into using the technique efficiently to extract the meaning. This aligns with the present study because both the mediums of the selected texts, the comic books, and the TV series, are visual in nature; therefore, the essay helps in employing the technique to study these texts and to develop a comprehensive account of the subject. The following sections of the chapter will first elaborate on the method and how I intend to use it, and then comment on stitching the theory with the method in order to bridge the gap and how that will help arrive at a better understanding of the selected texts.

## (II)

### **Research Methodology**

This research project subscribes to the qualitative paradigm. At the beginning of this section, I intend to explain the qualitative paradigm within which the present study is located. The aim is to briefly discuss the interpretable and explorable nature of the said paradigm, which helps in understanding how the findings in this type of research and are quite subjective in their nature are not generalizable. In doing so, a rationale for using a qualitative approach for the present study will be established. Furthermore, this type of research focuses on a more active role of the researcher in both establishing meaning and coming to interpretations after gathering data themselves and coding it into forms that seem fit for the nature of the project. This entails that the researchers themselves decide a path that the study would take, and rather than depending on other researchers, theorists, or tools to collect data, they do so by following what is appropriate in accordance with the nature of the study they are undertaking. They would follow a protocol or technique to collect, gather, and record the data, but it is done so on a personal level and hence makes the findings ungeneralizable. This type of research would take into account the researcher’s own comments and reflections regarding the data, and this makes the study more explorative and descriptive in its stance. This is what Hatch (2002), Creswell (2016), and Marshall and Rossman (2016) describe as the researcher being the key

instrument in qualitative research.

Moreover, qualitative studies use multiple sources for data collection, both primary and secondary. It is then the researcher's job to sift through the said data and derive a code through which to categorize, whether thematically or content-wise. This ensures that both inductive and deductive reasoning go into the process of analyzing the collected and code data; inductive in the beginning as the researcher follows a bottom-up approach to categorizing and organizing the data into abstract units of meaning, and later, as the analysis moves in a forward direction, it is more deductive because the researcher has to go back to the data set and see if more information can be added to the established categories and themes or if more evidence is needed to back up the themes or codes previously developed. Braun and Clarke (2013) opine that the fundamental difference between quantitative and qualitative research is that qualitative research relies on and uses words as data and how those words can both be collected and interpreted in a variety of ways (3-4).

The details mentioned above make the qualitative design more emergent in nature, as it has the potential to keep changing and shifting during the process of conducting the research. This happens because, as explained earlier, the qualitative paradigm is explorative in nature; the primary aim is to delve deeper and arrive at an understanding of the phenomenon under discussion. Creswell and Creswell (2018) propose that this emergent nature means that during the process of carrying out the research, the focus of questions might change, the forms of collecting data might shift, or even where the data is being collected from (the sites) might be revised as new meanings and interpretations of the phenomenon emerge (257-8). This change signals that the researcher's own stance regarding the data and the object of study would decide the direction that the study will take; this makes the qualitative research reflexive in nature. The inquirer keeps visiting and revisiting the role they have to play in analyzing the collected data; their cultural, experiential, and personal background has a lot to offer in terms of situating the analysis within the larger domain of information, making the findings ungeneralizable. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain it by asserting that qualitative researchers are interested in looking at what meanings emerge from their perspectives and how those meanings can be attributed to the construction of the world and their experiences within it (30).

It becomes evident from the details mentioned above that the present study will function

under the qualitative research paradigm. The aim is to understand human subjectivity in a post(human) world from the perspective of metamodernism within the selected text. This would entail that the study locates and analyzes multiple sources of data discussing human subjectivity, metamodernism, and the genre of the selected text in order to arrive at the answers required for the designed inquiries. It becomes instructive to mention here that the meanings and understanding I arrive at are one of the many interpretations of the selected text and are informed by my own cultural and individual experiences with such texts. It is reiterated from a methodological point of view in this section, where I discuss Belsey and her technique of textual analysis.

### **3.4. Textual Analysis**

In this section, I discuss Catherine Belsey's essay titled *Textual Analysis as Research Method* in order to give a rationale for the research method that I use to analyze my selected texts. I attempt to highlight specifications from her argument and later adhere to them for analyzing the selected texts. Catherine Belsey starts the essay with a focus on the difference textual analysis, as a technique, can make in the field of analyzing cultural texts, specifically in the discipline of English Studies. She makes her point by beginning the argument with questions about the importance of, the nature of, and the technique of the analysis itself. Taking into account *Tarquin and Lucretia*, a painting by an Italian Renaissance painter, Tiziano Vecelli or Titian, she builds her initial questions about gender, power, objectification of women, and rape. Just by describing the scene to the readers, she builds her case, takes evidence from what the text has to offer, and asserts that the "painting evidently plays a part in the history of gender politics" (162). She describes the painting further in terms of composition, angles, and lighting and brings this image of Tarquin and Lucretia in line with 1970s feminism and creates a contention about power, rape, and gender politics that she answers throughout her essay with an assertion that paintings and art can teach a lot about reading a text. While making this point, she also emphasizes the notion that the researcher should "let the text itself set the agenda for research" (161) and move from there to see what interpretations might come forward. As a researcher, then, this is the first point that I intend to follow for my research as well: gathering information from the text itself and starting from there. This helps in the present study because a TV series, as a medium, offers a plethora of information, and it is of utmost importance to sift through it all and find a starting point that is both relevant to the questions you want to be answered and significant in terms of contribution to the field.

The second point, however, is the fact that when one reads text, watches a TV series, or looks at a painting, one does so by bringing their external cultural and ideological references with them. Therefore, gathering the information from the text itself cannot be a purely objective activity as the readers/viewers would gather based on their own personal subjective understanding of the world. In this way, Belsey also opines that “there is no such thing as a ‘pure’ reading” (163). This point links it to the first one, where I mentioned that the gathered information should be in sync with the proposed question(s) one has about the text. Answering the question, then, requires information from the text, one’s own cultural, social, political, and ideological approach, and the use of secondary sources because there is, of course, always the material of which one is unaware. Belsey proposes to use secondary sources after first formulating the questions and finding a starting point, and this has been the case for my study as well. The secondary sources have helped position the selected texts and make comparisons with or among other TV series to assert the significance and/or relevance of the point the present study is trying to make.

While asserting the importance of the reader and what they bring to the text, Belsey refers to (an ideal reader), a third party (other than the author and the researcher/reader), a supposed addressee, for whom the work itself is meant for even “if the work never sees the light of day” (162). This supposed addressee and their presence prevents the researcher from asking silly questions or making foolish interpretations and assumptions just because that is what they ‘see’ in the text. Textual analysis is, of course, different from assuming things that are not there to begin with, and this whole of things not being there within a text supports that a supposed addressee exists, and as a researcher, we stick to the information the text is handing out to them: in *Tarquin and Lucretia*, Belsey says that the light exists for someone, the angles convey meaning, the positioning has a message, so as a researcher, one starts from these points and builds their case. This also ensures that the researcher never loses focus and does not stray from the actual purpose of finding (an) answer(s). Following this line of thought, Belsey states Roland Barthes’ essay *The Death of the Author* (1977) highlighting the nature of the supposed reader and their purpose. Moving away from the author and focusing on the destination of the text seems to be the purpose, and that is what Belsey suggests as well: not in terms of replacing the authority of the author (producer of the text) to a particular reader, but in terms of the supposed reader, an addressee, all the voices that the texts have not catered to till that moment in time, and a reader who exists outside of the producer and the researcher. This entails that vague and absurd subjectivism is not the purpose of textual analysis, but

the purpose is to understand that the ‘who is being addressed’ is as important as the ‘what is being said.’ Barthes, in *The Death of the Author*, forces the researchers to be more attentive and rigorous to the details in their approach to analyzing a text and states:

The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he is simply someone who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted. (148)

Calling the ideal reader a ‘space,’ Barthes makes a point in asserting the importance of the ideal reader without a personal ‘history, biography, or psychology’ and places this reader with the people, removing or taking away authority from the author or the researcher. In this way, the third point I intend to focus on in my analysis of the selected texts is always being aware of the fact that when one reads the text, the text exists in its difference from us (Belsey 166) and hence demands utmost attention.

Building her argument further, Belsey emphasizes dialogue in interpretation, which is the fourth point of focus for me as a researcher. She opines that the reader and the text almost always engage in a dialogue, and that is what gives rise to the meaning or interpretation. She further highlights and emphasizes the notion of plurality and difference, linked to the previous point, and states that meaning does not lie solely within the text or with the reader but is a result of the dialogue and is multifaceted. Meaning, Belsey says, is not “at the disposal of the individual and . . . is not a matter of intention, an isolatable ‘idea,’ fully formed prior to its inscription” (167). Meaning, therefore, exists in relation to and between people depending on language and dialogue, as previously stated. This links the debate to poststructuralism and what Derrida has said about plurality, signifiers, and signifieds when it comes to meaning. The text, being part of a socio-cultural construct, then also depends and relies on outside sources for meaning and repeats in multiple ways what lies outside of it, hence becoming a representation of the time in which it is produced. This also ensures that the plurality of meaning then is not infinite, and the texts invites the readers to interpret in several ways already embedded within the fabric of the text: this links back to the previous point of gathering information from the text.

In this sense, then, even the artist, the author, or the producer of text does not have full authority over meaning as they are repeating what already exists within society, drawing from it, or expanding on the already available material. This would entail that the text offers certain assumptions about the issues it caters to, and as researchers, we might tend to agree and build on the gathered information or choose to ignore the standpoint of the producer and take a look from a different perspective: all the while, being fully aware of how our reading, interpretation, or meaning cannot be the *only* one as it has been established that there is plurality when it comes to meaning. This highlights another point as well, which is the active involvement of the reader in the meaning-making process and how it involves a dialogue; this active involvement with the text and being aware of where it comes from helps in minimizing free association with the text and prevents silly and absurd interpretations because the text itself offers a domain within which the meaning-making process can take place.

For the selected text, *Orphan Black*, this is true because it is the focus of the text itself that helped me, as a researcher, to formulate the questions that need to be answered for this study. The text, dealing with human cloning, morphing subjectivities, issues of power, agency, and in-betweenness, invites the reader/viewer to be a part of the domain where these concerns are explored and discussed. Belsey talks about it in these words: “. . .in principle, my idea is that the text has priority; ideally, the text sets the agenda” (171). She opines that appropriating or molding the text to fit the queries that a researcher might have should be avoided as much as possible, although, of course, the queries are what the researcher brings to the text, as discussed above, simultaneously, a researcher should be aware that the text takes the lead, it the text that invites the reader/viewer to look for the questions in the first place. Similarly, the text may offer many areas of investigation and entry points, but it is the job of the researcher to be aware of the impossibility of discussing everything that a text offers as it has been made clear up to this point that a text can be read from multiple perspectives and can have multiple meanings; for which Belsey says, “If we maintain the sense of a dialogue between what we bring and what we find, the reading that results is likely to make – or to come to make – sense to other people, to be admissible, at least in the end, as interpretation. . .” (169). Talking about *all* the meanings and from *all* the perspectives is both an exhaustive practice and somewhat of a pointless analysis as such a study would not be able to answer anything concrete from one perspective and would refrain the researcher from going in-depth and close reading and in-depth investigation are key features of a textual analysis.

The fifth point that I adhere to from Belsey's essay is that she clearly states that "any specific textual analysis is made at a particular historical moment and from within a specific culture" (169). This is important throughout this chapter and otherwise, I have stated several times that the analysis of the selected text is from a contemporary metamodernist point of view, and it is done to discuss and explore a contemporary (post)human subject. Belsey, analyzing *Tarquin and Lucretia* brings in the time period of the production of the painting, the accuracy of the costumes, the actual story of Tarquin and Lucretia, her own position as a woman and an academic from the Western world, and presents several interpretations based on all these factors. The historical moment, position of the researcher, and culture lend layers of meaning to the text and help in situating the text and characters as well. Situating the subject with reference to time and space aids in formulating questions, forming objectives, and finding a path to answer the said queries.

Situating the text itself with reference to genre, content, and concerns is also essential because it makes the position of the researcher clear and helps streamline the purpose and their take on the text. For the present study, then, situating *Orphan Black* as science fiction dealing with issues of power, agency, and subjectivity in and for the clones helps somewhat narrow down the perspectives that one might take to read and interpret the text. Culturally situating the study and my position as a researcher from Pakistan would also be significant. It would not be wrong to say that the country is already in the process of accepting digital influence considers the number of people who interact on social media, use smartphones, and have access to television and the internet.

The majority of the young audience watches science fiction TV series and films, reads graphic novels, and/or understands the content in terms of the effect it has on their real life and what it means to be human in this technologically advanced contemporary world. Granted, the number is small, but many young authors are writing science fiction and talking about their speculative role in the advancement of human civilization. These perspectives, then, both in terms of situating the selected text in terms of genre and content and in terms of my position as a researcher, would provide me with a lens to look for meanings within the text. Belsey, concluding the essay, addresses the notion of resolving the issue of what the painting might mean and remarks that "mercifully, we do not need to" (176). She explains that the theories of text and language that she draws on work on notions of contestations and asserts that there is not final signifier/signified and, hence, meaning. She ends by saying that "all we can be sure of, in other words, is the signifier, and this cannot be tied to any unique



reading-to-end-all-readings. On the contrary, meanings are always ultimately undecidable. . . there is literally no end to it. But there is a great deal of work to be done in the process of exploring all the possible avenues” (176), and this is precisely what the present study intends to do: explore *one* of the many avenues for the questions of morphing subjectivities and shifting agencies.

At the end of this chapter, I want to situate the present study within the framework and methodology explained above and provide a rationale for doing so. The Latin word ‘trivium’ literally means a point where three roads meet, and the meeting point of the three different roads that I have taken to explain the methodology in this chapter is the selected text and its drillable nature. Using transmedia, metamodernism, and textual analysis, the present study intends to investigate the multiple subjective positions that the clones occupy, how they oscillate between infinite points, and what the results of such morphing subjectivities are. The present research aims to study *Orphan Black*, a sci-fi transmedia text that deals with human cloning, from a metamodernist perspective to explore the nature of the (post)human subject in the fictional world. The purpose of combining these different paths is to ensure that the analysis is comprehensive in terms of dealing with the multiple inherent notions that the text brings with itself. Working in two separate mediums of TV and graphic novels, it becomes impossible to ignore transmedia storytelling, and hence, it was necessary to combine it with metamodernism to develop the required framework to analyze the said text. This addition would ensure that the fluid nature of the text itself is discussed as metamodern as it shifts from one medium to another, in addition to the clones within the series who occupy multiple positions simultaneously. The drillable nature of the text allows for in-depth textual analysis and paves the way for answering the research questions effectively. In the next three chapters, I have done the textual analysis of the selected texts where I invoke the theoretical lenses and the reading technique discussed in this chapter to carry out the analysis of the selected texts.

## CHAPTER 4

### OSCILLATION AND MULTIPLE SUBJECTIVITIES IN *ORPHAN BLACK*

*I am one of those lifetime seekers that the ancient Greeks called a zetetic. . .  
From my research on scepticism and the foundations of science and logic, it  
became clear to me that pluralism (every event has many descriptions and possible  
outcomes) and a healthy scepticism (always seeking the truth but never claiming it)  
make up the most consistent approach to respecting the perspectives and  
experiences of others, human and nonhuman.*

— Arne Næss, *Scepticism: Wonder and Joy of a Wandering Seeker*

#### 4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I attempt to answer the first of the three research questions proposed at the beginning of the present study. The aim is to develop an understanding of how subjectivities multiply exist within the fictional narrative of the TV series. The background information regarding several clones, where required, is brought in from the graphic novels and helps understand the arc of the characters and the development of the series. There are points in the narrative where the story from the graphic novels ties in with the plot line of the TV series, as the graphic novels are based on the said TV series. The analysis of the selected texts is not dealt with chronologically; rather, it takes the form of the positions that different subjects take within the narrative, irrespective of the chronological order of the series. The purpose is to analyze the subjectivity and its manifestation and not to give a season-wise or book-wise account of the plot; therefore, the analysis refers to incidents and events from wherever it makes sense in relation to the question at hand. That said, a summary of the plot and the basic storyline is given to contextualize the analysis.

The question is answered in the light of the theoretical lens developed and detailed in Chapter 3 and is two-pronged in nature; first and foremost, the subjects introduced within the fictional world

are analyzed from a metamodern perspective, taking Vermeulen and Akker's work as a point of reference; second, the transmedia nature of the selected texts and how it allows for the subjects to take multiple positions is catered to. These two prongs are discussed simultaneously as addressing them separately would have warranted repetition but discussing them side by side allows for an in-depth analysis of the content. Also detailed in Chapter 3 is the technique for the analysis of the selected text, which is textual analysis, as proposed by Belsey. For a detailed exploration of the question, the visual nature of both the TV series and the graphic novels helps me, as a researcher, to locate the ways in which the text portrays the subjects as taking multiple positions and makes the task all the more interesting. The look of certain characters, for instance, and how they speak to the audience and is later transitioned into graphic novels paves the way for addressing the concerns of multiplicity. The text inherently relies on visual techniques to illustrate a point, and the framework allows me to interpret the text using those techniques and arrive at a conclusion. The metamodernist transmedial textual analysis, in this way, yields a detailed response to my first research question regarding the ways in which subjectivities exist multiply and later provides a foundation for answering the second and the third questions as well.

## **4.2. Exploring The Premise of *Orphan Black***

In the following paragraphs, the basic story of the selected text is mentioned for two particular reasons: first, to demonstrate how the clones are different from one another despite being genetically identical, and second, to provide a context in order to build the analysis. The TV series starts with Sarah Manning, who is a streetwise con artist and a single mother to Kira, to whom she is really devoted but has trouble getting her sole custody because of her financial situation. In the opening scene of the TV series, Sarah observes a woman (who looks exactly like her own self) jump in front of a train. She is shocked but realizes it is too late for her to do anything. She also notices that the woman has left her shoes and bag on the platform, and desperate as she is, she goes for her purse amidst all the chaos surrounding the woman's death. In it, she finds her cards, keys, and other markers of identity; taking advantage to become someone else, she takes her doppelganger's stuff and plans to assume her identity. She does this to take over the woman's bank accounts and thinks that this way, she can take Kira and start a new life. Visiting the woman's home, Sarah comes to know that the woman's name was Elizabeth Childs and that she was a police officer. She goes as far as to visit Beth's workplace and discovers that Beth is involved in an investigation of her clones.

This discovery comes as a shock to her, and she digs deeper, only to find out that there are other clones as well. This is where the audience is introduced to other characters, including but not limited to Alison Hendrix, Cosima Niehaus, Helena, and Rachel Duncan. She also comes to know that someone is killing the clones one after the other, and that is why the clones have decided to maintain distance. All of them have Clone Phones (pink cell phones) with each other's numbers programmed in and are working on uncovering the truth. Sarah is troubled to get all this information but is also eager to find the underlying cause of this mystery; she impersonates Beth for as long as she can and keeps working as a police officer in order to investigate the matter. This poses a threat to her life and her daughter's, but she is relentless in her pursuit.

This furthers the plot, and the audience comes to know about the lives of other clones as well, all set up in their own communities with their monitors. Almost all clones (with the exception of a few), up to a certain point in the narrative, are unaware of the fact that they are clones or that there is a person designated to monitor them at all times, taking notes and keeping a record of their everyday activities. All the clones are different from one another despite being genetically identical, and the series further explores this concept in relation to various clones, their careers, their lives, and how their lives are inevitably connected with each other. It is crucial to briefly situate the previously mentioned major clones and discuss their arcs to contextualize the narrative. This further helps with the analysis of the subject from the metamodernist perspective.

Alison Hendrix, who is another clone, is shown to be a resourceful soccer mom, married to Donnie. They live in the suburbs and are a typical snobbish wealthy family concerned about keeping up appearances and presenting a united front in the neighborhood. They have two adopted kids, and for Alison, the children and the house are her main concern, which is until her life is torn apart by the knowledge of her being one of the clones. She then starts suspecting that her husband is her monitor (which is later proved to be true) and putting her resources to use, helping other clones whenever they need, like funding Cosima's lab or Beth's (and Sarah's) need for equipment, all in order to get to the bottom of the Neolution's agenda for the LEDA clones. Cosima Niehaus, another clone character, is portrayed as a brilliant scientist working in the field of evolutionary biology and genetics. She is working on figuring out the genetic coding of the clones to determine the very nature of who they are and what it means to be one of them. Moreover, this allows her to uncover the mystery of the clones' existence, ensuring what can happen to them, including certain medical

conditions and their way of combating those. For instance, the audience is informed that the clones are created to be sterile and cannot have children, which is why we see Alison with her adopted kids. However, it is also shown that Sarah is unique in this case, as Kira is her biological daughter. This is one of the many reasons that Neolution wants to get Sarah and Kira to run experiments and see how they are an anomaly. Cosima's character is helpful here as she wants the Clone Club to be ahead of Neolution and allows the audience to understand the nature of her work and her interest in evolutionary development. Later in the series, Cosima gets a respiratory disease (one that the clones in the series die from) and runs experimental trials to collect data that would help her save not only her own life but also other clones. She is shown to be in a relationship with another woman, Delphine, whom she suspects to be her monitor but is in love with. Their story arc is important as well, as it is revealed that the Neolution sends Delphine to track Cosima and see what and how much she has discovered about the clones.

Then there is Helena, a religious zealot who grew up in Ukraine and is brainwashed to believe that she is the original of the clones and that the rest are mere copies and abominations in the eyes of God. She is a trained assassin, and when the series opens, she has already killed many of the clones in Europe based on her beliefs. She is shown to be an unhinged character based on her turbulent childhood and is in America to kill Beth when the story begins. However, considering that Beth took her own life, and that Sarah is impersonating Beth when Helena and Sarah have an encounter, it is revealed that Helena, a cold-blooded killer, feels an emotional connection to Sarah and is unable to complete her task. The audience is later informed that Sarah and Helena were born twins and that Neolution had separated them deliberately, and that is how they ended up in different corners of the world. Sarah was brought up by S, her foster mother, who has Kira's custody as well, and Helena was raised as a religious fanatic. When she discovers the truth, she refers to Sarah and the other clones as 'sesterahs' and is devoted to working with them in their cause of exposing Neolution and saving themselves. Helena is ecstatic to discover such a bond with the other clones as she has grown up without any family, siblings, or friends and, hence, is extremely loyal to the cause. In her story arc, the audience gets to know that she, like Sarah, can also bear children, which is an anomaly as far as the clones are concerned.

Another important character is Rachel Duncan, who is raised as a self-aware clone and is working for Neolution. She is also responsible for the cloning experiments and, when the series

begins, is determined to bring in more clones who have become self-aware over a period of time. She is a cold, calculated corporate worker who manipulates and uses people for her own gain. She is aware of the fatal medical conditions that many of the clones are exhibiting symptoms of and wants to bring them in for further exploration, perfecting the gene sequence for more clones to be developed. In a similar vein, she wants to bring in Sarah and Helena so they can have children, and she wants Neolution to be able to study them. In this regard and many others, she does not look at the clones as human beings or entities whose lives she is playing with; she wants her purpose served and is willing to go to any length for that. One such attempt is Kira's kidnapping, where Rachel believes that she can get Sarah to come on board. In a confrontation with the streetwise Sarah, who can do anything to protect her daughter, Sarah shoots Rachel to save Kira and leaves her for dead. It is later revealed that Rachel survived; her eye was damaged, however, and is replaced by a bionic one, which makes her a cyborg clone.

The six clones mentioned above are the major clone characters who appear and re-appear throughout the five seasons of the series, and hence, the analysis will be based on these characters and their interactions with one another and other major and minor characters. Throughout the series, there are a total of 276 clones, out of which 17 clones are mentioned; ten in Season 1 (other than the six mentioned above, the audience is given references of Katja Obinger, Aryanna Giordano, Janika Angler, and Danielle Fournier) two in Season 2 (Jennifer Fitzsimmons and Tony Sawicki), three in Season 5 (Miriam Johnson, and unnamed clone, and Camilla Torres), and one each in Season 3 and 4 (Krystal Goderitch and MK Veera "M.K." Suominen respectively). Out of these seventeen, seven are shown to die because of Neolution and other reasons, either on screen or before the story begins, and the rest of the ten (out of which six are the main characters) keep the plot moving forward.

The clones are a result of experiments carried out by the Dyad Institute, a part of a group of companies named Dyad Group. The institute works to promote research on biotechnology and is devoted to pushing the limits of human evolution. The Dyad Institute is also encouraging Neolution, a scientific organization working in the field of advanced research on evolutionary development. The institute created two projects, Project LEDA, and Project Castor, both female and male clones, designed from one rare genetic sequence obtained from Kendall Malone, a chimera. Kendall Malone is shown to be Siobhan's biological mother and is the template from which these projects were created. The female clones in LEDA were unaware of their condition. Hence, they had designated

monitors to keep detailed reports of their activities for Dyad and Neolution. In contrast, the male CASTOR clones were self-aware and were raised in a military setting for the purpose of warfare. A similar arc is seen in the graphic novels where the series starts with Sarah's (and Beth's) story and eventually develops with reference to the other four clones in separate volumes: Helena, Alison, Cosima, and Rachel, the series being eponymous.

The present study focuses on the LEDA clones and how their backgrounds, the overall context, and the nature of the storytelling medium all allow for an analysis of multiple subjectivity and its consequences. In the coming sub-sections, the concepts of oscillation and the as-if mindset from the metamodernist theory will be used as reading props to explain the nature of multiplicity in clones. Moreover, transmedia storytelling and how the narrative fits into the categories discussed in the framework better explain the subject and the positions they occupy throughout the plot. Belsey's textual analysis further aids in understanding the visual mediums and establishing the subject as a metamodern one.

### **4.3. Multiple Subjective Positions**

In each chapter of the analysis, I employ two conceptual categories previously discussed in the framework in an attempt to answer the question at hand. In this chapter, the concepts of Oscillation and the As-if mindset are used to explain the multiplicity of positions that the clones occupy. It is through transmedia storytelling that these categories manifest and help in understanding the characters and how they occupy the said multiple subjective positions.

The selected text revolves around the story of human clones, and that establishes all of them as parts of one; this way of looking at the clones, considering their evolutionary similarities, allows the audience to situate them as multiple manifestations of one genetic code. This can be seen in the way the series portrays all of them and how one actor plays all the parts, with changes in hair, dress, and accents aside. This portrayal is unique in the sense that it becomes difficult for the other characters to distinguish between the clones, and there are many times throughout the series that the clones impersonate one another. While doing so, the clones occupy multiple positions because they are neither entirely one nor the other and are simultaneously performing as two individuals, although they are portrayed as one. For me, this back-and-forth movement between different subjective positions is inherently metamodern. It is in line with how the theorists describe the concept of

oscillation in relation to the subject.

This continuous oscillation creates a sense of motion and does not let the audience and/or other characters settle for one kind of representation, which creates layers in the narrative and keeps functioning on all these distinct levels. For instance, in the opening sequence (Manson 2013), when Sarah observes Beth jump in front of the train, the audience is made to realize that these two women look alike and are/must be connected in one way or the other. When Sarah decides to take hold of Beth's bag, cards, and then her life, the narrative already has two layers on which it is functioning: Sarah's own life with her daughter Kira and her foster mother S and brother Felix, and the other with Beth's life as a police officer and the threat that brings into the first arc, considering that people in both their lives are unaware of these new revelations of Sarah and Beth being clones. Sarah soon discovers other clones and is made to stay in the police force for as long as she can manage to gather information regarding Beth's involvement, which can help the clones figure out who Beth's monitor is and how much they know about Beth being alive or dead (Manson 2013). The first question of the present study focuses on the manifestation of the multiple subjective positions of the subject in the selected text. For this discussion, it is imperative to delineate what is taken to be the subject and what it means to occupy subjective positions. Raoul Eshelman (2008), a literary scholar, describes a novel kind of subject in contemporary times as one that develops itself in spite of disruptive forces by an act of believing (46). This subject, a cohesive self, reintroduces the possibilities of affiliation, affection, and selfhood—but not in a simplistic or uncritical manner, considering that the contemporary post-postmodern subject is reflective and aware in nature.

Similarly, Karen Coats asserts that the Cartesian Ego cannot reappear after all that has been learned from postmodernism, only to then throw the catchphrase "I love; therefore I am" into the discussion, urging a reconsideration of the idea of the Self while recognizing the importance of love in its creation. This idea of reconstruction and rebuilding of the self is further discussed in Chapter 6 with a focus on metamodern elements of collaboration and cooperation. In a similar vein, Amin Maalouf, a Lebanese French novelist in *The Name of Identity* (2012), calls for a reconsideration of the idea of identity in his writings. He describes it as an act of affirmation that can involve a connection to a religion, a region, or an ethnic group while also accepting the ephemerality of identification as such. And suddenly, even Ihab Hassan, the foremost proponent of postmodernism, argues for an "Aesthetic of Trust" in which, in a "world flow of ultimate secrets," the relationship



between subject and object might be reformulated in terms of "deep trust."

In contemporary literature, cinema, and television, we occasionally come across characters who pass for coherent reflective subjects. They are creative individuals who enter the scene with an eccentricity that, possibly due to their distinctive sincerity, makes it possible for a fresh relationship between the literary hero and the recipient. There is also a noticeable change in the way the characters and then the audience think about the political agency: the focus of postmodernism and its subjects were fundamental helplessness in the operations of global capitalism, as Slavoj Žižek constantly reminds us (Wright and Wright 1999), but the metamodern subject is different, it has agency, and it wants to work and move forward despite knowing that the future might be (and is) bleak. The subject works for the betterment and wields hope as compared to its predecessors.

Sarah Manning is the central clone who is introduced to the audience in the opening sequence as a streetwise criminal who is returning to Canada to be near her daughter Kira and eventually gain custody (Manson 2013). In this sense, it is through her character that the audience gets to know other clones, and hence, she becomes the subject when the series starts. It is also the case for graphic novels as the first volume is titled *Sarah*, and it reveals her story, starting from her birth and what led to the opening sequence of the TV series. The discussion, then, would look at Sarah's character as the subject who initially initiates the action and then allows the audience to meet other clone characters. The five major clones are therefore looked at as off-shoots to Sarah who function in relation to her and are evaluated to be further extensions of the LEDA project. As the discussion moves forward, the five major clones serve as subject, and the numerous positions they occupy subjective positions.

By holding a subjective position, I mean that the subjects would occupy a place where they are agents, are active and can make decisions as far as their own individual self is concerned. This generally holds true before and after the clones become self-aware of the fact that they are human clones and are a result of illegal experimentation carried out by the Dyad Institute and Neolution. The agency wields the power to work against these corporations and work towards their survival; however, it stems from the knowledge of being clones and being aware. They decide consciously to take a subjective stance. This is in line with the working definitions of both the subject and subjectivity previously detailed in the literature review and creates a possibility for the selected

subjects to be referred to as metamodern in nature. Subjectivity, with reference to the said discussion, narrows down to the way an individual acts, the reasons for their actions, and the context in which the action takes place. This particular way of analyzing the subjects makes it possible to look at the clones as Mansfield describes in *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway* (2000), both as the philosophical concept of subject in the metamodern times and to look at them as human persons, again, within the context of the metamodern times.

Keeping in view the above discussion, if the characters of Sarah, Beth, Cosima, Helena, or Allison are looked at, it can be observed that all these clones are not only aware of being clones but are also aware that they have to keep this a secret from their respective communities such as neighbors, colleagues, friends, and/or family members. This awareness results in metamodern oscillation, the to-and-fro movement from being aware to being unaware, from being extraordinary to ordinary, and from being a clone to a normal human being. The narrative itself functions on both these levels; the layers that this constant and continuous move from ignorance to knowledge and back to ignorance create and allow for the subjects to assume multiple subjective positions. Moreover, there is another level that this oscillation creates, the movement from being one clone to impersonating another (whenever the need arises) and back to being their own self. This back-and-forth motion results in a continuous motion in the narrative and can be described as metamodern oscillation.

One clone, then, is simultaneously functioning as themselves, the other clone they are impersonating in a particular moment, their old self who was unaware of the fact that they are a clone and keeping up the act for their friends and family, and their actual self who is aware of being a clone and working towards their survival. This oscillation is, then, a form of negotiation in terms of not only coming to terms with the identity and agency that the subject occupies but also with reference to the context in which the transition from one position to the other takes place. This transition and the ability to morph into a variety of subjective positions makes the subject fall under the metamodern category. Akker and Vermeulen describe this as:

Indeed, by oscillating to and fro or back and forth, the metamodern negotiates . . . One should be careful not to think of this oscillation as a balance; however, rather, it is a pendulum swinging between 2, 3, 5, 10,

innumerable poles. (6)

This movement, like a ‘pendulum,’ becomes extremely important as it is because of this movement that the subject continuously negotiates between being one and the other, taking a decision to occupy one place or the other and assuming multiple identities in doing so. This movement is not a balanced movement per se, as it is not necessary that the subject stays in two or more positions for an equal amount of time or remains in a position for an indefinite amount of time. This explains the clones’ continuous back-and-forth movement between the positions mentioned above. This swinging motion is also indicative of the fact that the subject does not remain in a/any place for so long as to assume the characteristics of an occupied position, meaning that the traits keep shifting and transitioning as well in relation to the continuous motion of the subject.

This sense of movement does not let the audience settle for one or the other representation, and the audience is ready to accept the clones as much as a whole as they are taken as separate individuals. Oscillation, then, manifests as this expectation in the audience as well, especially when they are ready to accept the shift from one subjective position to the other. It is not only accepting of the multiple portrayals of the clones but also keeping up with all the back-and-forth motions. To experience the series completely and in an immersive sense, the audience is also engaged in a continuous negotiation between different subjective positions that the clones occupy. Abramson, in a web article titled *Five More Basic Principles of Metamodernism*, puts forth the idea that too frequently, rather than confronting an issue jointly with the goal of enacting constructive change, meaning-making processes in contemporary society focus on staking out a position and defending it (n.p). If postmodernism’s advocacy of dialectics honored individual subjectivities but at the expense of effective collaboration and dialogue, and modernism’s promotion of ostensibly “universal” principles was ineffective because a moral high ground fails to engage those who disagree with its first assumptions.

Metamodernism is less about appeasing one’s own vanity — either through the adoption of a supposedly superior personal code or minute tailoring of one’s worldview and more about engaging in dialogue and reaching out to others with an open mind. Metamodern art is e focused on the effect it generates in the reader or observer. The theory behind effect-oriented art is that if an artist calibrates the effect of a work as or more carefully than its technical composition or craft, the

work is more likely to engage and, therefore, move to action with its audience. We can see in this ethos of "effect" an attempt to tear down the wall between Art and Life and the distance between the two that postmodernism fetishizes (Abramson n.p). It is true for *Orphan Black* as well, as it allows the audience to engage with the content and the characters in an active manner.

For instance, when Sarah impersonates Beth (Manson 2013), or when Alison goes to visit Kira as Sarah (Fawcett 2013), or when Felix identifies Beth's body as Sarah (Manson 2013), the audience is aware of the transition that the clones go through whereas the characters in the series are not; the metamodern element of oscillation thus functions on this level as well. Audience involvement, in this way, is not fixed and keeps shifting from one story arc to another, from one clone to another, and how they are brought together as a whole. This type of active direct engagement aids in extending the metamodern oscillation beyond the confines of the fictional work. Oscillation, in a metamodern sense, then extends beyond the confines of the work itself, which manifests as an act of negotiation between the creator and the audience, and how constantly the swinging motion helps generate meaning with reference to the work under consideration. Tom Drayton discusses the phenomenon with regard to the metamodern theater and states that:

[the theater] at once negotiates a discourse between the audience and the artist in order to strive towards a form of utopic vision through political interface, whilst also struggling with self- critique through an awareness of this form's failings, frailties, and falsehoods. (177)

It can also be said for *Orphan Black* as a text because it engages the audience on different levels, as a viewer given the visual nature of the TV series, and a reader (and yet again as a viewer) when it comes to the graphic novels, but both entirely different as the mediums require an understanding of the form and the asks the audience to shift between not only forms but characters and plots. In this way, this shift, or oscillation, is not fixed and results in the audience's displacement as far as their focus is concerned and might also play with their sense of presence regarding the engagement with content. This oscillation on the audience's part is something that fascinates me in terms of their subjectivity in relation to the characters' subjective stances. Despite knowing one actor is playing all the clones and the graphic novels are based on the same actor, the audience chooses to resonate with one character at a time or perhaps with different character traits from different clones or even one medium of text over another. This goes parallel to the subjective positions that the clones occupy

and how they constantly keep moving between those positions. It is imperative to mention here that this oscillation in the numerous positions that the subjects occupy results in lapses in the narrative every now and then, making the audiences' involvement more active in a sense that they would want to fill those gaps or spaces which is where the medium and form of the selected text plays a major role. *Orphan Black* is developed among and across different mediums; hence, it becomes pertinent to consider the element of transmedia storytelling and the diverse ways in which the narratives are (can be) built when it comes to the use of this technique. As discussed in detail in Chapter 3, the audience today relies upon the use of hypertexts and paratexts for entering the text from multiple directions or entry points, making the meaning-making process quite subjective as compared to the linear text (Jenkins 2007). This is precisely the case with *Orphan Black*, which makes use of the TV series as the primary text, and then the graphic novels prove to be the secondary site for interaction.

Usually, the secondary texts or paratexts allow the audience a chance to have a glimpse of what can be expected when they enter the main text or the mothership, especially in terms of how much they are willing to invest in the primary text (Freeman and Gambarato 8). In the case of *Orphan Black*, however, the paratexts function as an expanding medium for the main text in such a way that the graphic novels provide an opportunity for the readers to get extra information regarding the clones and their backgrounds when one chooses to enter the fictional world from this entry point. For instance, the TV series directly opens with a shot of Sarah and Beth on the train station (Manson 2013), whereas the graphic novel begins in 1984, 29 years earlier, in Wales with Sarah and Helena's birth and how their mother decides to separate the two girls because she suspects the Dyad Institute will find out about them (Manson, Fawcett, and Houser 2-3). This allows for the background to be established in a way that is not possible in the opening scene of the TV series; one has to keep following Sarah's track to find out about the clones and how she proceeds to impersonate Beth to gain custody of Kira.

By engaging the audience in two separate mediums, their need for novelty and familiarity is catered to, and they actively take part in decoding the narrative, which brings forth varying sets of meanings. Jenkins explains that for a paratext to work successfully, it is crucial that the creators of the fictional world oversee their production so as to ensure that the audience is getting a unified and coherent experience (n.p). For the graphic novels to function as paratexts then, the *Orphan Black* creators worked with the artists and illustrators to create the graphic novels, and it can be seen that

the artwork is based on the actor playing the clones. This is also supported by Wolf, who asserts that the creator's contribution is mandatory as, without them, the fictional world would not have existed at all (57). With this in mind, it can be said that graphic novels help allow the reader to experience the fictional world through a different medium and, in doing so, build familiarity with the characters and the plotline. With the said understanding and insight about the fictional world, the readers get to decide the entry point for themselves, and the story would change the direction as per the decision.

With the example mentioned above, the metamodern oscillation can be discussed in a way that when we enter the narrative with the knowledge of the existence of the two baby girls, the focus is different as we are already aware of their separation and would want to know what happens in the coming scenes. This is the case even if they do not have any information regarding them being clones or why the mother is worried that someone would find out about their existence. We can read the scene with the knowledge of the twins being clones and then proceed with the story where the next scene illustrates the interaction between Sarah and Beth on the train station; the knowledge gained from the TV series helps in establishing this groundwork for the graphic novels, all the while the graphic novels are chronologically providing information to help understand Sarah's track. This constant oscillation allows the subjective positions to manifest themselves in a way that they work simultaneously in the said fictional narrative and cater to the development of not only the characters but also the plot.

With reference to transmedia storytelling, the narrative is an unbalanced one since the TV series is the core text. In contrast, graphic novels, being the off-shoots or paratexts, function as the site for the ongoing development of the story and/or characters and provide multiple entrances into the fictional world. *Orphan Black*, being a transmedia text, employs both centrifugal and centripetal storytelling techniques as the series expands outward but with a focus on inward character expansion and extension, as described by Mittell in 2015. In this way, the series falls under the category of spreadable media but simultaneously requires the audience to dig deeper because of its focus on characterization and, in this way, works as drillable media as well. Therefore, it can be argued that the series is not boxed in one category but can be understood from a more fluid position, which helps in understanding its transition from one form to the other depending on the needs of the narrative. This factor makes a compelling case for the narrative to be categorized as a metamodern one depending upon its need and inherent nature to mold and shift forms as and when required. Dealing with issues

of gender, identity, politics, technology, human cloning, power, and posthuman agency, it is no surprise that the creators have made the narrative technique flexible to cater to the need of the complexity of the narrative. In this way, the fictional world in the graphic novels is constructed with a two-fold purpose: to develop a backstory for the clones and their existence and, at times, to develop alternate routes for the exploration of the said characters, especially in other series such as *Deviation* (2018). The graphic novels, of course, are an added expansion of the narrative and are based on the core text of the television series and adapt the appearance of the characters and the setting of the action from the said television series except for places where the background is being established.

The narrative form allows the characters to occupy multiple positions and behave as agents in a manner that also makes use of the as-if mindset in the metamodernist sense. The said mindset puts forth this notion of progressing and improving as if progression is possible and is not an “impossible possibility” (Akker and Vermeulen 8). Vermeulen and van den Akker discuss this idea with reference to Kant and his positive idealism and say that human history and development are studied in retrospect, and in doing so, it is acknowledged that the present moment cannot be discussed with certainty. This is further explored with Kant’s idea of humanity being guided by a thread as if moving towards something, whereas the reality of the matter is that everyone is unaware of what lies ahead and is still progressing in a forward direction. The importance of such a movement cannot be denied as the reverse and being stuck in the present is not possible; it is evident to the theorists here that with this movement, all one is doing is pretending to move towards a goal as if it will be meaningful. A metamodern subject, in this sense, tends to move because of this awareness and, in doing so, strives to find a natural outcome or reach the truth, knowing fully well that such a search and movement would be futile. It is interesting because this knowledge does not stop the movement; in fact, the movement is the only point that gives the subject its agency and makes it act in a particular way and towards a specific direction.

If *Orphan Black* is looked at from this perspective, it can be said that the subjects are aware of their movement throughout the plot development and irrespective of the medium, as it is the very act of movement that gives them their agency and allows them to manifest multiply. Whether it is Sarah observing Beth’s suicide, Sarah acting as Beth, Alison acting as Sarah to meet Kira or Helena acting as Sarah-as-Beth and entering the police station, it is clear that the clones are aware of their actions and movements and their subjective positions make them decide when and where they undergo

transformation. Other instances include Sarah watching the tapes to copy Beth's movements and accent (Manson 2013), Sarah coming to terms with the fact that Beth's boyfriend Paul was her monitor (Manson 2016), using Beth's surveillance tapes and data to dig out the truth, or Alison finding out that Donnie is her monitor (Pascoe 2013) and installing her own surveillance equipment to get ahead of Dr. Leekie and Neolution (Levine 2013), or Helena working against her captors and working with her sisters, all point towards the clones' decision to actively pursue what they believe is right at the moment they are making the decision and then further directing the course of the plot. This oscillation stems from the as-if mindset in a way that the clones believe as if there is a way to outrun the Dyad Institute and establish their own identities outside of being clones, which, even towards the end of the TV series, is not what they can achieve. Despite the fact that Sarah, along with the other clones topples over the Dyad Institute and Neolution, it is seen that there are clones that they do not know about. Rachel hands Felix a document with the details of 274 clones (Fawcett 2017), and it is evident that there is still a lot that they have to work towards, highlighting the metamodern move forward. This is significant because the clones looked at Dyad and Neolution as if finishing that would be the final step, but the disclosure of the document and the list in the last episode speaks quite a lot about their struggle and what is yet to come. Vermeulen and van den Akker use the metaphor of the donkey and the carrot to illustrate this notion, explaining that the metamodern donkey will keep chasing the carrot it never manages to eat, the reason being that the carrot is always out of its reach, but because it is out of reach and it does not get to eat the carrot, the donkey keeps chasing it (9). This move is evident regardless of the form of the narrative as it is the TV series that ends on the note as discussed previously; the graphic novels, as explained in Chapter 1, already have other series where the characters take alternate routes with a continuous reference to the mothership or the core text; making the narrative flow in all directions.

It is really intriguing to see what this means for the audience because this behavior is not confined to the characters within the TV series or the graphic novels; it has implications on a larger scale. The franchises would keep producing the content (moving forward) because they are aware that the audiences will consume it in one way or the other. The audience is equally invested in knowing if the clones would proceed further and, doing so, create their own as if tautology thinking that this matters and allows them to proceed further with what was discussed previously with reference to paratexts and off-shoots, digging deeper and expanding the narrative further.



When Vermeulen and van den Akker state that “the metamodern discourse acknowledges that history’s purpose will never be fulfilled because it does not exist” (7), it becomes relevant with regards to the text under discussion considering that the subject here, the clones, struggles for something that is beyond their reach. In doing so, they uncover parts of their history and development; being agents is important to them in this regard as well because the awareness of being clones takes away from them their sense of identity and individualization; the struggle to find out the truth is, in fact, a struggle to establish themselves as agents. The metamodern discourse, so to speak, can be understood here as the narrative itself, regardless of the form it takes, because the narrative and its inherent sense of struggle are what make the characters exhibit this multiplicity. This said and discussed multiplicity manifests in terms of oscillation, and the to-and-fro movement itself stems from the as-if mindset. This movement is made possible because of the nature of the plot, and the clones, therefore, act accordingly and ensure forward motion. The reverse adaptation from TV series to graphic novels is something that acts as a zone where this subjectivity is discussed in terms of the history of the clones. The information provided in the graphic novels helps establish a sense of identity for the clones and allows the audience to enter the fictional world with a proper insight into their actions and behaviors.

Through the metamodern concepts of oscillation and as-if mindset and the transmedial nature of the texts, the purpose in this chapter was to understand the how subjectivities multiply manifest in *Orphan Black*. Throughout the chapter, I argue that the form of the text, with multiple entry points, allows for the manifestation of subjectivities on multiple positions. The clones, in occupying these several positions and not staying in one, wield agency in all the said positions because of the constant to-and fro motion- the oscillation. The site for exploring the kind of subjects in the selected text also provides an opportunity to see what kind of subjects exist in the metamodern world since television is such an impactful medium for cultural representation. Portraying characters in search of truth and trying to establish themselves as agents is what makes the clones relatable as human subjects, despite being clones. Their sense of identity and determining who they are outside the zone they are relegated to becomes an integral part of the audiences’ struggle as well. This will move the discussion further to how occupying these multiple positions simultaneously works to create a space where transcendence from the spectrum of self would be possible; these aspects are discussed in detail in the coming chapters of the analysis. The focus in Chapter 5 is on explaining the spectrum of self and how the subject occupies multiple subjective positions within the said spectrum.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE SPECTRUM OF SELF IN *ORPHAN BLACK*

*The world is but a perennial movement. All things in it are in constant motion. I cannot keep my subject still I do not portray being: I portray passing.*

— Michel de Montaigne, *Repentance*

#### 5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I investigate the spectrum of self in *Orphan Black*, keeping in mind the metamodern notions of Simultaneity and Paradox. Exploring this spectrum aids in situating the subject from the selected texts as one that keeps morphing and shifting positions. In the previous chapter, it was discussed how the subject from the selected works oscillates between numerous positions and expresses its multiplicity; this was both due to its nature and the form of the texts that allow for this manifestation. The metamodern oscillation is what gives the self-reflexive and self-aware subject the possibility to occupy the above-mentioned numerous positions at a time and results in the creation of a philosophical subject that transcends the boundaries of self and identity. The numerous subjective positions thus can also be understood with the concept of metaxis. Taking that a step further in this chapter, the idea is to see what this multiplicity yields and how it can be expressed in relation to the spectrum of self that usually is occupied by subjects before the metamodern turn and how this turn explains the difference in the positions that the subject occupies.

With Simultaneity and Paradox, the spectrum of self is explained in a way that accounts for both either-or and neither-nor positioning. Once it is evident that the selected subject not only swings between these usual positions but also moves beyond them, the discussion will be directed to Chapter 6, where I explain the transcendence in detail. In this chapter, I also intend to answer the second question posed at the beginning of the study with the help of the features mentioned above

from metamodernism, namely Simultaneity and Paradox. These features emerge from the framework and help in understanding the nature of the subject in the selected texts and aid in establishing a pattern in which the said subject transcends the spectrum of self. In addition to that, transmedia storytelling and how the text functions on multiple levels and in multiple directions also helps in understanding the subject and its consequent trajectory of movement.

I will discuss Belsey and her method of textual analysis before charting the course the chapter would take. Belsey, in her essay, highlights how to analyze a visual text, and it is vital to pinpoint the steps I have used to carry out this analysis. The details are given in Chapter 3, where I discuss the research methodology for the present study. Here, I intend to list the five points I gather from her essay and examine them in relation to the research question at hand. First, she asserts that the researcher should “let the text set the agenda for research” (161). By this, she means that a visual text presents a lot of information to the audience. One should find a starting point that is simultaneously useful for answering the question one wants answered and making a contribution to the field. In this chapter, the focus is to highlight the spectrum of self and how the subject performs on the spectrum; the data taken from the selected texts hence corresponds to these concerns. Second, Belsey opines that “there is no such thing as a pure reading” (163) as one gathers information and deciphers the text based on one's own cultural and ideological foundations. This, of course, is extremely important in a qualitative subjective study as this one, and it is because of this point that I believe a contribution to the field can be made, considering that the questions designed for the study and how I answer them is situated within a cultural and ideological paradigm. Third, Belsey states that the text exists in its difference from us as readers (166) and therefore requires a lot of attention from the reader or viewer. This signifies the importance of how the claims a researcher makes while analyzing a text have to be always backed up by logic, reason, and previous research and that there is definitely no room for vague assertions just because the analysis is subjective in nature. I adhere to this point as much as I can by referring to metamodernism as a school of thought, science fiction as a genre, and transmedia storytelling for form, and use these concepts for providing a theoretical foundation for analyzing the selected texts.

The fourth point I find extremely useful from Belsey's essay is the importance she places on the dialogue between the reader/viewer and the text. She argues that the meaning of any text comes to the forefront based on that back-and-forth communication between the audience and the text. I

rely on this the most, considering the present study is a qualitative one, and the primary source of information is the selected texts. The last and fifth point from the essay that I follow in my analysis is Belsey's assertion that "any specific textual analysis is made at a particular historical moment and from within a specific culture" (169). I have argued previously as well but will reiterate the fact that the present study looks at the text from a contemporary metamodern perspective, and the analysis is centered around the concepts of metamodernism, the genre of the text, the form of the text, and my position as a researcher. The listed points make for a detailed analysis, and I have attempted to answer the questions employing the said method of textual analysis throughout the study.

The discussion in this chapter is categorized such that Simultaneity is explained in accordance with metamodernism, and examples from the selected texts are given to illustrate the point of the subject occupying more than one position at a time; once this is established, the idea of Paradox helps explain how the said positioning is self-contradictory and how this eventually creates a trajectory for the subject to move beyond the either-or and neither-nor boundary. The chapter discusses the spectrum of self in terms of both-neither positioning and, in doing so, explains how simultaneously occupying more than one subjective position is, in fact, paradoxical in nature. These boundaries are what is considered a norm or a usual practice for a self-aware and active subject, but here I try to argue that the clones from *Orphan Black* occupy multiple subjective positions at a time and are fully aware of that; this helps them chart a path for their movement well outside the said spectrum.

## **5.2. Simultaneity and Paradox**

The previous chapter of the analysis brings forth the idea that the clones from the selected texts occupy multiple subjective positions and are very much aware of their multiplicity and how it manifests; in fact, there are times that they are able to control it as well. The choice of morphing in and out of the awareness or shifting positions with reference to the context in which they find themselves, the clones move forward and work against the Dyad Institute.

In my opinion, when a subject is looked at in this way where, it can easily be said that the subject is self-aware and subjectively occupies numerous positions, rather keeps oscillating between them, which I have explained with verbs like morphing and shifting; the result of this aforementioned oscillation, then, is the simultaneity that I intend to explain in this chapter.

Looking at the subject from a metamodernist point of view yields an understanding that the subject keeps oscillating between opposing thought patterns, opposing feelings, and, consequently, an opposing sense of being. The theorists explain these opposing positions in terms of either-or and neither-nor positions of a pole. Simply put, one being cannot or should not be at one end of an extreme while being simultaneously at the other end. If the spectrum of self is explained like this, the defining feature is the fact that there would be two opposing poles to a spectrum, and an individual can, at one point, occupy only one. The clones in *Orphan Black* defy this as they tend to occupy not only the positions on the opposing poles but also many others on the spectrum; not only do they occupy these positions, but they are also aware of their movement between poles and otherwise.

Looking at it from a metamodernist angle, it can also be observed that they occupy all the positions mentioned above simultaneously. Therefore, the interesting thing is not the fact that the subject takes these numerous positions but the fact that they are being taken simultaneously, which makes the subject inherently very dynamic in nature. This notion is usually explained in opposition to the idea of oscillation in a way that if the subject is oscillating, it cannot be stationary enough to occupy a position simultaneously or otherwise. However, because Vermeulen and van den Akker use the analogy of a pendulum swinging between poles, I believe it is this constant movement of which simultaneity is a result. If the movement is taken out of the equation, the shift from one pole to another or from one position to another would be impossible; it is the movement that allows for the subject to not only occupy but also move beyond the poles and the occupied positions.

Simultaneity, then, is explained for the present study in terms of the existence of the subject on the spectrum in a variety of positions at a time. This inhabitation of numerous positions at a time explains the clones and how they tend to move deliberately between places of their choice. Vermeulen and van den Akker, while discussing both the epistemology and ontology of metamodernism assert that it works on the both-neither dynamic (10). This becomes significant for my argument, with reference to the concept of the spectrum of self, considering that the both-neither dynamic helps the subject occupy a place (through the swinging motion) that is at once on either extreme of the spectrum and not at either extreme of the spectrum, and yet is both. This positioning, which is neither here nor there but still at both ends (and more), is what makes the subject manifest multiply and gives it the ability not only to morph but also shift positions and,

consequently, agencies. In this sense, this metaxis, or in-between-ness, is what sets a metamodern subject apart. The metaxis, in terms of Plato, is a defining characteristic of being human. Plato used the term metaxis (or metaxy) to define the state of in-between-ness that is one of the traits of human existence (Benardete 192-94). Rhodes reiterates the meaning of in-between-ness by stating that “the word "metaxy" is a Greek preposition, meaning "between." Normally, Greek philosophers use "metaxy" much as we use "between" (1). Plato, however, specifically used the term in reference to spirituality, characterizing it as existing somewhere between the human and the divine. Voegelin describes the Platonic use further as follows:

Existence has the structure of the In-Between, of the Platonic metaxy, and if anything is constant in the history of mankind it is the language of tension between life and death, immortality and mortality, perfection and imperfection, time, and timelessness, between order and disorder, truth and untruth, sense and senselessness of existence. (119)

Linds, in 2006, further expanded the idea and defined metaxis as the condition of belonging fully and concurrently to two different autonomous realms (117). This is in line with how the clones behave in *Orphan Black* since all of them have a separate identity of their own but also function as clones. They keep shifting in and out of what is required of them and perform accordingly. This continuous occupation of numerous positions with agency is the defining feature, and the metaxis or the in-betweenness or what was previously referred to as the both-neither dynamic is what enables the clones to act in the way that they do. Similarly, the notion of metaxis is looked at by Whelan (2008) in a comparable sense of in-between-ness, and they assert that "we humans are suspended on a web of polarities--the one and the many, eternity and time, freedom and fate, instinct and intellect, risk and safety, love, and hate, to name but a few" (n.p).

Vermeulen and van den Akker identify with the Platonic use of the term metaxy and further explain the movement inherent in describing the metamodern turn of cultural change. The theorists argue that the metamodern subject oscillates between modern and postmodern and takes both of their and neither of their traits simultaneously (7). I, however, argue for my project from a perspective that is pertinent to understanding the nature of the subject. It is one thing to discuss the cultural movement and the structure of feeling, borrowing Raymond William's term (as explained previously), but another to attempt an understanding of the subject functioning within

contemporary times with regard to this structure of feeling. The present study attempts to do the latter with the help of the clones from *Orphan Black*.

Given below is the image from the first book in the graphic novel series, titled *Sarah*. The image shows an encounter, rather than the first and only encounter, between Sarah Manning and Elizabeth (Beth) Childs at a subway station (Manson, Fawcett, and Houser 4-5). Beth is aware of the existence of clones, and we are informed about it later, but Sarah, at this point, is entirely unaware. The women technically do not know each other, and Sarah approaches Beth only because she sees a woman in distress who is about to jump in front of a train. When they look at one another, Sarah is genuinely shocked, as is evident by her remarks, “[T]he hell?!” (4). In contrast, Beth registers the presence of another clone before committing suicide, which is evident from the “Oh.” (5).

It can be said that Beth is behaving both as a clone and an ordinary woman in this encounter, and her reaction only works as that of a clone. Sarah, because she is unaware, is caught by actual surprise and shock and cannot believe what she is looking at. This shift for Beth from an ordinary woman to a clone and vice versa is made evident by the next panel in the graphic novel where she actually says, “Another one. Of course.” (2) much to Sarah’s confusion.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

The confrontation between the two clones can be looked at as a representation of multiple positions that they occupy without being aware of both the agency and the reality. The audience is also unaware of the LEDA clones and is equally shocked and intrigued. Sarah, being a streetwise criminal, sees an opportunity to get her hands on money and see her daughter, so she does what she does best and steals Beth's purse and bank cards (4). This, of course, is done to move the plot forward, as Sarah is unaware of what she is getting herself into.

Even when Sarah does not know the reality, the audience can see both women occupying a position of agency where one decides to end her life, and the other chooses to make the best out of a worse situation. This act, on Sarah's part pushes her into Beth's life, and she then is shown in a variety of scenes impersonating Beth; whether it is her sense of style or her accent, she changes everything and eventually becomes a part of the clone club (Mason 2013). This is possible because she realized in the brief encounter discussed above that the woman (Beth) looked just like her; this is evident in the panel from the first issue of the graphic novel. (Manson, Fawcett, and Houser, Sarah) below:



Fig. 3



The fact that Sarah and Beth look like has Sarah intrigued, and she confesses it to Felix, her foster brother (Manson, Fawcett, and Houser 6-7) before she enters Beth's life and tries to find answers, financial ones for her own sake, but others too when she realizes what she is caught up in. The positioning of the character is such that she has to morph in and out of her act as Beth, shifts to who she is (as Sarah), and functions as a mother and an ordinary woman in her surroundings without revealing anything about the clone club. This existence on both ends of the Sarah-Beth spectrum and inhabiting various other positions in between the two can be looked at as an example of simultaneity. Sarah is both Sarah and Beth, and neither of them, when she is either a clone or an ordinary; this makes the said positions paradoxical as well. She shifts in and out of these molds whenever required, and the transition is relatively seamless as other people in both Sarah's and Beth's lives do not catch up to it. This is evident from the example given below, where one of Beth's neighbors does not recognize that the woman she is talking to is not Beth but Sarah, despite noticing something is amiss (9).



Fig. 4

This encounter takes place before Sarah knows anything about the clones, but she gathers from the remark about her British accent that Beth is a local and hence, when required, shifts her accent, among other things. Once she enters Beth's apartment, it is shown in detail in the TV series how she watches videos of Beth going through her clothes, pictures, and other belongings to

impersonate her to get a hold of Beth's money (Manson 2013). There are instances where she has to go to Beth's workplace, a police station, and act accordingly (Manson 2013); this has been discussed in the previous chapter as well. This simultaneous occupation of numerous positions allows the audience to see the inherent paradox and gives the subject a metamodern color.

Here, it is also essential to mention the notion of juxtaposition, which asserts the existence of a variety of positions simultaneously but acknowledges how one position can superimpose on the other and that the subject is also aware of this contradiction. Jenny Rowell argues this for *The Interrogative Mood*. She opines in her web article that in terms of structure, the juxtaposition of questions illustrates the rerouting in Metamodernism. The juxtaposition in *The Interrogative Mood* illustrates the oscillating, "both-neither" tension of metamodernism as contrasted to the "neither-nor" tension of postmodernism (n.p). This is evident from the examples discussed above. Because generally, if one were to understand the positions on the spectrum, they would deem them separate from one another, but to exist or rather exist simultaneously, it becomes extremely difficult to find a point of difference, and it would result in ambiguity where it is impossible to separate the two positions, at least with reference to their defining features. Belyk (2018) asserts that metamodernism embraces paradox and juxtaposition and builds on modernism's project of creation and postmodernism's project of deconstruction to create its own reconstruction. This element of reconstruction is discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Abramson, in his article on HuffPost, explains juxtaposition as one of the basic principles of metamodernism and states, "juxtaposition occurs when one thing is super-imposed atop another thing from which it would normally be deemed entirely separate" (n.p).

Another example can be observed from the third issue in the graphic novel, titled *Alison*.



Fig. 5

The panel illustrates another occasion of the clones being aware of their simultaneous existence, what it means to be a human or clone, and how that affects their sense of individuality. It can be seen throughout the series that the clones act both as separate individuals and as a team or variants of one individual, working as if occupying these infinite positions on a spectrum specifically meant for them as clones. In this particular encounter between Alison and Sarah, it can be seen that Alison is questioning her personhood when she says, “I am not even a real person” (Manson, Fawcett, and Houser 6) as she is aware that she is a clone and is being monitored by no one else but her own husband. This makes it hard for her, and it is in this hardship that the audience observes Sarah stepping in as another variant (and not as another person) to pacify Alison and make her see things clearly. In the panel, it can be seen that Alison says to Sarah, “You’re the only person I can talk to, and you’re just another version of me” (Manson, Fawcett and Houser 6).

She is acknowledging that they are variants of a genetic code, and Sarah’s response as that

variant reminds her and the audience that the clones are, in fact, both versions of one another performing individually according to their position on the spectrum and actual living breathing humans, each with their own life, family, and story. This, of course, demonstrates what I have been arguing with regard to the subject in singular (each clone individually) or subjects in plural (all of the clones together, working as versions of one individual). Thus, their simultaneous existence as both and paradoxically neither is a metamodern feature and enables the audience to see in-between-ness or experience metaxis within the realm of *Orphan Black*.

In season 3, episode 1, *The Weight of This Combination*, Sarah Manning's existential crisis deepens as she confronts her identity as a clone and the profound implications of her connection to her sister clones. Her struggle embodies the metamodern theme of simultaneity, as she grapples with the multiplicity of identities within her, each vying for recognition and understanding. Similarly, in season 4, episode 6, *The Scandal of Altruism*, Cosima Niehaus confronts a moral dilemma rooted in her dual identity as both scientist and subject. As she delves into research on her own biology, Cosima navigates the paradoxical tension between her agency as a researcher and her vulnerability as a subject, embodying the metamodern exploration of paradox within the context of scientific inquiry. These examples help understand the concepts of simultaneity and paradox in terms of metamodern subjectivity where the characters are shown to occupy multiple positions on the spectrum of self simultaneously and deal with the implications of this manifestation. They embody the traits of all these positions simultaneously and yet are novel in that fluidity and are representative of the neither-nor argument of metamodernism.

Similarly, in season 5, episode 8 *Guillotines Decide* Alison Hendrix is shown embarking on a quest for authenticity, challenging societal norms and expectations as she seeks to rediscover her true self. Her journey illuminates the paradoxical nature of authenticity in a world defined by social constructs, as she navigates the tension between conformity and individuality. Throughout the series, including pivotal episodes like season 3, episode 10 *History Yet to Be Written* and season 4, episode 10 *From Dancing Mice to Psychopaths*, the clone sisters unite against oppressive forces like Neolution, demonstrating the simultaneous interconnectedness of their experiences and the paradoxical tension between individual autonomy and collective action.

Moreover, *Orphan Black* confronts existential paradoxes inherent in contemporary

existence, inviting viewers to grapple with the complexities of life. The series embodies the metamodern notion of simultaneity by portraying characters who navigate multiple identities and roles simultaneously, reflecting the richness and depth of human subjectivity. Whether it's Sarah's struggle with her clone lineage, Cosima's dual identity as scientist and subject, or Alison's quest for authenticity, the characters embody the complexities of contemporary life, existing in a state of flux between different roles and identities and yet celebrating the resulting amalgamation of all these selves.

The clones in *Orphan Black* exhibit the features of a metamodern subject. They are different individuals, each with their own separate identity and circumstances, but when they are treated as variants of one genetic code, all of them collectively work as a subject occupying multiple positions and, at times, situating and positioning themselves as clones other than themselves, this juxtaposition then allows the clones to exist simultaneously where they are not only occupying their own subjective position but are also borrowing traits of another. Outside of this spectrum, the clones are all looked at separately and function on different scales as well. However, within this domain, it is exceedingly difficult to separate one from another as all of them have traits that collectively make it possible for them to work towards their survival. The following examples from the fourth series, titled *Cosima*, can further explain the point.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

In these panels, the readers can see how Cosima and Beth, despite being aware of being clones, have an awkward encounter (Manson, Fawcett, and Houser 7). Cosima accepts that looking at Beth is like looking at her own face, knowing fully well it is another woman. In their discussion, it is also revealed that Cosima wants them to learn as much about themselves as possible. The use of plural personal pronouns of ‘ourselves’ and ‘we’ clearly indicates how the clones look at themselves as part of one and are invested in saving everyone; the survival of one would mean the survival of the other and the rest, considering their genetic make-up. Another image shows Beth leaving a coffee shop (Cosima 7- 8) right after the above conversation, and smoothly, she shifts into her own individual identity for the rest of the world. It can be seen that Emi, Cosima’s girlfriend, is confused; she thinks that Beth is Cosima and even calls out her name, but Beth does not even acknowledge Emi’s confused call. Emi is shown trying to process that brief encounter and even tries to ask Cosima, only to have Cosima change the topic.



Fig. 8

The clones’ ability to morph into these various roles and positions is what makes them metamodern, in my perspective. Their knowledge regarding their position on the spectrum and how and when to step in and out makes for a fascinating manifestation of the both-neither dynamic. The idea of working individually, then, is challenged because in order to survive, they

have to be together and work in a similar fashion as well. This allows for the clones to be looked at from a metamodern perspective of simultaneity as occupying a place which is at a time both (or more) is what makes the whole neither-both dynamic possible. This explains the said notions of either-or and neither-nor because the subject is occupying both (or more) positions and is in constant motion as well. This constant movement and being stationary enough to occupy a spot on the spectrum can also be explained through the concepts of simultaneity and paradox. The oscillation, then, makes it possible for the subject to exist in more than one position simultaneously.

The paradox, in this way, is embraced by metamodernism. The idea of how we individually behave and what we believe in is entirely in contrast to how society perceives us and what society believes in when it comes to its individuals. As individuals living in a(ny) society, we simultaneously move from individual perceptions to those that are social or cultural and vice versa. This can also be said for the fictional narrative and world of *Orphan Black*, where the clones have to move between their perceptions of being clones and being ordinary individuals (as perceived by society) or from ignorance to knowledge when it comes to the existence of human clones and the knowledge and/or proof available for it to exist. This simultaneous existence of both perceptions is a metamodern feature in itself and allows for a reading of the text which exhibits paradox.

What makes for an interesting argument is the ability of the said simultaneity and paradox to generate ambiguity; this ambiguity creates a narrative in *Orphan Black* that asks for the involvement of the audience on a very active level. With reference to the examples discussed above, it can be stated that within the Beth-Cosima spectrum, they both behave as their individual selves and as members of a team, or variants of one individual, and outside of their spectrum, the simultaneity can be observed with reference to existing as clones and ordinary individuals at a time. The consequence, of course, is the inherent paradox that results in ambiguity, manifested here with Emi's reaction of confusion and, previously, with Beth's neighbor when Sarah was mistaken as Beth.

The audience is actively involved not only in keeping up with the change in appearances, accents, dress sense, and how a particular clone carries themselves but also with the several major

and minor storylines of the clones. The transmedia form of the narrative and how it expands both horizontally and vertically makes it difficult for a strict boundary to remain between creator, work, and audience. The audience is earnestly engaged and can see through the apparent divide between the creator, work, and themselves; multiple mediums help in establishing that connection on a deeper level, and the audience connects and reconnects with the characters and, consequently, the narrative in an effective way. It is effective in the sense that the audience gets to know the characters from all dimensions; what they cannot find in the TV series, they can fill in from the graphic novels and work through the mediums to reach a comprehensive understanding.

Not only that, but also baring their tactics to the audience, such as using one actor to play the clones (obviously) and using the same look for the graphic novels, makes it evident to the audience that it is a created world, and nothing is hidden from them. There are plenty of times that the clones are shown occupying the screen together, and it is evident that either a double is being used or the screen is technologically manipulated in post-production; either way, the audience can see all and is still willingly invested in knowing more about the subject, its journey, and how it all unfolds. The struggle of the clones to deal with their existential issues, their personhood, and their individuality, all the while nudging the narrative towards posthumanism, are definitely some of the reasons that the sci-fi series captures the attention of the audience. The issues are very contemporary and relatable, and the genre of science fiction makes it all the more probable and possible. It can be said that metamodernism is the expression of a new philosophical view of existential problems, a vision that leaves its mark on how they are approached and resolved, and it symbolizes the trend that characterizes contemporary society. These narratives represent scenarios where constructive efforts to address societal problems, rather than criticism and problematization, are crucial. These plotlines encourage proactive and anticipatory thinking, such as "how will it be in the future if...," or "what can we do to..." and promote constructive, reflective, rational, and proactive thinking (Brunton 65). These types of narratives, then, are different from the previously available narratives, and I think it is a metamodern feature in itself: the creation of a narrative that earnestly engages the audience.

This kind of earnest engagement does not alienate the audience and makes them an equal in the meaning-making process, which is not possible in linear narratives where the role of the audience is passive or even in narratives where, using the deconstructive strategies, the author



removes the trust from the narrative itself. With this kind of reading, a metamodern narrative is created, which constructs hope and gives the audience a chance to reconnect with narratives in a way that was previously denied because of the modern and postmodern techniques of narrative building. Where the modern narrative presents the work in such a way that the divide between the author, work, and audience is enhanced through the use of metanarratives, postmodern narratives blur the boundaries between the creator, work, and audience with the help of a continual ironic denial and rejection of metanarratives, metamodern narratives present a chance for the audience to reconnect with the narrative by giving up the pretense that a divide between creator, work, and audience is something that cannot be diminished; they make their role apparent and reach out to the audience, inspiring hope in the process. *Orphan Black* is an example of such a metamodern narrative, both because of its form and content. Focusing on issues of human cloning and the consequent subjectivity of the said clones, the text simultaneously allows for a fictional present dealing with these issues to exist in harmony with an actual future (or present) where human cloning is a possibility, making the audience wonder about what happens (or will happen) when one's individuality and existence is questioned or challenged in this way. This simultaneous existence is inherently paradoxical as well as technically, a text should occupy one of these positions, but because the genre is science fiction, it becomes easier for the creators to take liberties and imagine a world where all that they discuss is not only a possibility but also a speculative probability.

This kind of narrative then not only allows for a connection between the creator, work, and audience but also ensures that the audience feels this connection either through form or through content, and in my opinion, *Orphan Black* pulls the audience in on both fronts. The clones and their connection, how the texts keep referring to them as “clone club” or the clones as “sestra,” the feeling it evokes is real, and the clones feel for one another, which, in turn, makes the audience explore the connection differently and one is found rooting for all the sister clones. This return of feeling for a narrative (or otherwise) in contrast to a postmodern detachment and sense of cynicism is what cultivates earnestness and gives value to lived and felt experiences. This difference between postmodern and metamodern narratives is explained by Dember (2018) in the following words when he says that if postmodernism “shame[s] ebullient, unabashed self-expression,” then “[m]etamodernism gives us permission for [ebullient, unabashed self-expression]...not toward a randomness or anarchic or destructive impulse” but rather “to protect the solidity of felt experience against the scientific reductionism of the modernist perspective and

the ironic detachment of the postmodern sensibility.” (n.p)

Vermeulen and van den Akker describe this return of feeling or return of earnestness by saying that “the cultural industry has...increasingly [abandoned] tactics such as pastiche and parataxis for strategies like myth and metaxis, melancholy for hope, and exhibitionism for engagement” (7). They further explain their thought:

Indeed, both metamodernism and the postmodern turn to pluralism, irony, and deconstruction in order to counter modernist fanaticism. However, in metamodernism this pluralism and irony are utilized to counter the modern aspiration, while in postmodernism they are employed to cancel it out. That is to say, metamodern irony is intrinsically bound to desire, whereas postmodern irony is inherently tied to apathy. (10)

What the theorists suggest is important as it gives importance to what the creators have chosen to turn to in metamodern times. Previously, with the modern narratives, the work was presented to the audience through the author, and as the creator, they had a god-like status, with essentially no one judging or questioning the validity of the narrative, and the audience simply suspended their disbelief willingly as there was nothing that they could question. With postmodern narratives and the advent of suspicion and denial of metanarratives and the author’s agency, the audience became suspicious of the narrative itself as the creator made their role evident as a manipulator, as imperfect as anyone from the audience and consequently, the audience cannot suspend their disbelief as they do not believe in the first place. The metamodern narrative, on the other hand, makes the audience aware of the devices and techniques used by the author. The audience has all the knowledge of how the work is constructed. Yet, they can choose to suspend their disbelief in order to enjoy the narrative, and the creator, having bared it all, still has not shattered any illusions regarding the fact that it is, in fact, a narrative.

In the metamodern narrative, the artist and audience are both aware of the work's constructed nature but opt to partake in the experience for the purpose of doing so, making the tension between them less likely to arise; this is in contrast to the modern illusion or the postmodern disclosure. In other words, the return to earnestness is not just a return to earnestness; it is also a return to emotion and feeling, a means of cultivating optimism rather than apathy; the return to earnestness reconnects where postmodernism intended to disconnect. Although metamodern work acknowledges the

artificiality of these sensitivities, it still makes use of them because they are crucial to the felt human experience. Alber and Bell reiterate the sentiment when they say:

Like their postmodernist predecessors, artists of the twenty-first century acknowledge the fundamental constructedness of ethical principles. The postmodernist reaction can be characterized as a form of escapist withdrawal from societal and global responsibilities into ironic self-reflexivity and/or playful metafictionality ...By contrast, more recent artists suggest that belief systems and convictions matter, even though – as discourses – they are inevitably constructed. (125)

In this chapter, the purpose was to demonstrate how the metamodern subject occupies multiple positions on the spectrum of self simultaneously and, in doing so, exhibits metaxis or in-betweenness, explaining the neither-both dynamic inherent in such a subject. This line of argument is driven by the claim put forth in Chapter 4 with regard to the subject under discussion; there, the present study puts forth the notions of oscillation and the as-if mindset to clarify the nature of the metamodern subject. It was discussed how the subject in the metamodern times is constantly in motion, and this back-and-forth movement was explored using the concept of oscillation; in doing so, the subject believes as if occupying multiple positions allows it (or would allow it) to be somebody outside of what they essentially are. This chapter takes this discussion a step further. It can be seen that through the oscillation and the struggle to escape their inherent and essential self, the subject enters a zone that is manifested through simultaneity and paradox; they occupy multiple positions at a time, and their movement on the spectrum creates ambiguity because of the neither-both dynamic, considering that when they occupy one position, they cannot or should not be able to occupy another. Still, the subject in contemporary times does so, making it impossible for them to identify with either of the positions completely. Paradoxically, they end up identifying with neither or both. This again can be explained with reference to the as-if mindset because the subject believes as if such a motion is possible, as if identifying with two or more positions is something that is achievable, as if swinging between innumerable polarities will not end up in confusion or ambiguity, as if there is a place beyond the spectrum where they can manifest their agency, and as if being aware of all these contradictions makes them any less of a contradiction.

Instead, metamodernism embraces this concept of multiple subjectivities, which holds that

not only can we all find ourselves in an infinite number of categories at once but that we also briefly share subjectivities with others who may appear to be quite different from us. Abramson explains this in his web article on HuffPost by referring to the internet (n.p) and how it is used by all of us to create that sense of connection, manifesting our own multiple subjective positions. He argues that we frequently find ourselves linking our words and deeds with individuals we do not know, save that they agree with us on the one issue we are debating at the time, in the paradoxically anonymous and falsely personal places of the Internet. Through this, we can experience a shared subjectivity with those who, if we met them in person, we would recognize as entirely "different" from us in terms of (for example) their race, religion, gender, ethnicity, or other characteristics. The clones in the selected texts behave in a similar fashion as they all have their individual, entirely different personal identities. However, they also simultaneously are clones and, hence, continuously keep shifting and morphing between these respective positions. This is only slightly different from Abramson's concept in a way that regular ordinary individuals in the real world do not behave as variants of one individual like the clones do, but definitely have multiple subjectivities that they can choose to shift between, which can be argued as various sides of a person and how they choose to represent themselves given a particular situation or context.

Being able to experience numerous subjectivities includes having the freedom and right to permanently reject or deemphasize a subjectivity that one would typically be expected to identify with, switch subjective positions when it feels emotionally or practically appropriate, temporarily tune out some subjectivities in order to work with others, or establish totally new subjectivities that have greater meaning to oneself; all this is in contrast to what essentially prevails in terms of the discourses of rejection of differences in almost all societies. The clones in *Orphan Black* are shown to be doing all of this: they identify with some elements from their variants, express differences in others, tune out of what is not situationally or contextually appropriate, and work on new subjective identities to work with others on their collective goal of survival.

Additionally, it entails accepting the diversity of subjectivities of others even though it is impossible for one to identify with some or all of them, as opposed to viewing these discrepancies as points of contention. To be clear, none of this indicates a wish to eliminate or marginalize already-existing subjective categories; rather, it complicates the conceptions of how these categories form, interact, overlap, and eventually aid in understanding the idea of being a

subject in contemporary metamodern times.

The idea in this chapter was to explain the spectrum of self with reference to the clones from the selected texts. The next point in the argument is to illustrate how, in simultaneously occupying these multiple subjective positions, the clones move beyond the spectrum of self and transcend to occupy a space that is not a space or place in the physical sense of the word. The neither-both dynamic, the ambiguity, and the inherent paradox of it all make it impossible for the metamodern subject to position itself on the spectrum like subjects usually would. It is already discussed in detail how the functioning between polarities and extremes makes it essentially impossible for the subject to identify with both or more positions that they occupy. The clones work as an example to explore the nature of the subject in contemporary times and demonstrate that transcendence which results from what has been discussed so far. Therefore, in the next and last chapter of the analysis, I argue that the clones surpass the said spectrum of self and end up occupying a place that is not a place.

## CHAPTER 6

### TRANSCENDENCE OF SELF AND ATOPOS IN *ORPHAN BLACK*

*Who would then deny that when I am sipping tea in my tearoom I am swallowing the whole universe with it and that this very moment of my lifting the bowl to my lips is eternity itself transcending time and space?*

— Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, *Zen, and Japanese Culture*

#### 6.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the goal is to discuss the place the subject ends up occupying by virtue of its constant movement and the paradox inherent within. The previous chapter explores the neither-both dynamic of the subject's existence and the metamodern features of Simultaneity and Paradox that help establish that dynamic. In this chapter, the purpose is to turn the debate towards the result that the unique movement achieves; the subject's oscillation and the simultaneity it exhibits due to that motion arguably brings the subject to a place that is not a place in the physical sense of the word. This should entail that the subjectivity or agency should be affected, as the subject would need a position in which it gains agency, but that is not the case, at least in the clones from the selected texts, and also, in extension, otherwise in the subject of the contemporary times. The subject is seen experiencing agency outside what is referred to as the spectrum of self, and to do so, it basically moves beyond and transcends that spectrum. The trajectory of that movement is important to discuss here, and that is the intention of this last chapter of the analysis. I intend to use two metamodern features of the Erasure of Boundaries or Borderlessness and Reconstruction to help further this debate of the subject working in atopos.

It is a state that, in my opinion, is reached as a result of oscillation and simultaneous paradoxical existence in and between numerous positions. The subject attains this paradoxical

placelessness and yet experiences being in complete control of the placement in that placelessness; that placelessness from which it functions becomes a place in every sense of the word. It becomes a site of discussion, and it can be observed that it is within that state of atopos that the subject materializes in its truest sense. The constant tension that is a result of the movement and the positioning on the spectrum can be said to end when the subject achieves this transcendence; the trajectory of its movement can be traced beyond the spectrum. This position, however, is equally subjective to those on the spectrum, and the subject is equally aware of this newfound place, as it is also aware of the agency that it has in all the said and discussed places. This entails that the subject can very well move back to the positions on the spectrum as and when required and then move beyond them as well; this movement obviously is another spin on the metamodern oscillation and allows the subject to exist in atopos with a knowledge that it is not going to be a permanent position. This placement outside the spectrum can be explained with reference to the displacement of or dissolution of the boundaries inherent in a spectrum and signals a reconstruction of the subject, a morphing, so to say, in a being that transcends these physical parameters. Knowing that this movement in itself is paradoxical as a subject cannot or should be able to exist in a place that is not a place, but the whole endeavor becomes metamodern in its attempt to desire and see the results of such a strange or extraordinary deliberate movement. Moreover, the cultural implications of the erasure of boundaries and reconstructions will also be addressed to discuss how the metamodern age is different from its predecessors. For this reason, the narrative, its form, its genre, and subject matter are also explored in regard to the concepts of erasure of boundaries and reconstruction.

Before setting out the direction the chapter will follow, it is vital to briefly discuss Belsey and her approach to textual analysis. It is crucial to refer to Belsey's work, which illustrates how to examine a visual text. The specifics are provided in Chapter 3, where I talk about the research method used for this study. Here, I will outline the five ideas I took away from her essay and point out how they relate and are used in this chapter. First, she says that the researcher should "let the text define the agenda for study" (161), by which she means that a visual text delivers a lot of information to the audience, and one should find a balance between the information it provides and the questions it raises. Second, Belsey claims that because each reader receives information and interprets the text according to their own cultural and ideological roots, "there is no such thing as pure reading" (163). Third, according to Belsey, the text lives in its distinction from us as readers (166), necessitating a

great deal of focus on the part of the reader or viewer. The significance Belsey places on a dialogue between the audience and the text is the fourth point from her essay that I find to be incredibly helpful in carrying out the analysis. Belsey's claim that "every specific textual analysis is made at a particular historical moment and from within a certain culture" (169) is the last and fifth argument from the essay that I use in interpreting the text. The five points are used simultaneously to address the last question of the subject transcending the boundary of self. Belsey's work guides the analysis in a way that it is a combination of the textual references from *Orphan Black* discussed under the light of metamodernism and a comment on the contemporary cultural environment that makes the existence of such texts as the selected ones possible.

Before going ahead to explain the movement of the clones to answer the question at hand, it is essential to discuss trajectory and transcendence as terms in an attempt to clearly state how I intend to use the concepts for my discussion. Also, defining atopos is necessary with regard to how different theorists have looked at the term. For the purpose of my argument, I intend to rely most on how Vermeulen and van den Akker use the term in their essay, but it is relevant to discuss the usage of the term generally before discussing atopos in relation to the selected sci-fi *Orphan Black*.

## 6.2. Defining Trajectory

According to the dictionary definition, the trajectory can be defined as "a path, progression, or line of development resembling a physical trajectory" (Merriam-Webster), where the physical trajectory is "the curve that a body (such as a planet or comet in its orbit or a rocket) describes in space" (Merriam- Webster). For my argument, the first definition is pertinent since I am discussing the movement in an abstract way. The term itself implies movement from a certain path and in a certain direction. The idea of looking at trajectory as a "path," "progression," or "line of development" is in line with the underlying concept of movement or motion. In this sense, then, I am looking at all three notions that the definition implies.

In the present study, the idea is to look at the movement of the clone characters from one particular position to another position. This movement enables the researcher to trace and chart the line of development or the path that the characters take in order to depart from the position where they were initially situated. It would, therefore, also include the sense of progression because the



movement enables the characters to perform in a unique way (exhibiting plurality in an accumulated sense of traits) as compared to only in singularities (where they only exhibit traits of one entity). The subjectivity and agency that the subject displays with the help of this trajectory are something that this chapter is going to discuss in detail. The spectrum of self allows the characters to exhibit their agency in a more horizontal fashion, so to speak, where they keep oscillating and take on traits of different characters depending on their position on the spectrum, but when they move beyond the said spectrum, it becomes significant to trace that path and progression and see exactly what that line of development entails. It is here that the concept of “moving beyond” or “transcendence” needs to be addressed.

### **6.3. Defining Transcendence**

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines transcendence as “the quality or state of being transcendent” (n.p), where transcendent is looked at as both a transitive and intransitive verb. The dictionary defines the transitive verb in three senses: “a) to rise above or go beyond the limits of, b) to triumph over the negative or restrictive aspects of OVERCOME, and c) to be prior to, beyond, and above (the universe or material existence)” (n.p). And, as an intransitive verb, transcendent is defined as “to rise above or extend notably beyond ordinary limits” (n.p). All the definitions imply movement, and that too, in the sense of taking the object beyond the ordinary limits of something. For the sake of my argument, it is evident that the spectrum of self is restrictive in a manner that, because of the constant oscillation and paradox inherent within, the subject ends up crossing the limits of the said spectrum. Therefore, to argue that I have used the word in the sense of rising above or going beyond the limits of something where the movement takes the subject beyond the physical sense of place would not be wrong. The definition states, “extending notably beyond ordinary limits,” and this can be discussed with reference to the limits of the spectrum and how the transcendence beyond that allows the subject to perform differently in comparison to the usual expected way of exhibiting agency. This also covers the sense of “triumphing over” or “overcoming the restrictive limits” of the spectrum per se and, hence, occupying a place outside the physical sense of material space. It now becomes significant to see what that placeless place is and how it can be defined.

## 6.4. Defining Atopos

Liddell and Scott, in *A Greek-English Lexicon*, generally define atopos as “out of place or out of the way” (n.p), with further descriptions of four different ways the word is/can be used. First, they state, the term can be used to mean “unwanted, extraordinary,” second, to mean “strange, paradoxical, or absurd,” third, to mean “unnatural, or in an unfavorable position,” and fourth, in the sense of “non-spatial” (n.p). Now, out of these, the closest to how I used the term at the beginning of this chapter is non-spatial, strange, or, by extension, paradoxical since I have already discussed the inherent paradox of a place not being a place. Therefore, the general understanding of being “out of place,” as Liddell and Scott put forth, is important for the nature of my argument as the clones exhibit agency in this state of being placeless. Hence, the connection with the fourth sense of being “non-spatial” is significant to note here.

This usage is further supported by Socrates’ dialogues with an anonymous friend in *Protagoras* by Plato. The dialogue starts with the anonymous friend asking Socrates where he is coming from, which before Socrates can answer, the friend himself, by the way of answering, inquires whether he had been with Alcibiades. Socrates does not refute and, taking the debate further, states that he was, in fact, with Alcibiades, and he would like to report something “really strange” (Plato 60-61). The Greek word used here is of atopon, which is a variation of atopos, translated as strange, and is in line with how Liddell and Scott define the term. Similarly, Plato makes use of the term towards the end of the dialogue where Socrates states that if the dialogue between him and his friend had a voice of its own, it would state “mockingly” how “strange,” atopoi, they both are (129) signifying the usage of the term with reference to being odd or being perceived as such. Otherwise, as well, it can be seen that the word atopos is used for Socrates in Plato’s dialogues to describe his disposition or manner. Songe-Møller refers to two other instances in her work, first in *Theaetetus*, Socrates is seen stating about himself that “... they say that I am a very odd sort of person ( atopôtatos ) [always causing people to get into difficulties (aporein)]”, and second, in the *Symposium*, Alcibiades refers to Socrates by using the term atopia (166).

However, Songe-Møller herself explains atopos as “a negation of the word topos, which means a physical, or geographical, “place,” or a “region” (168). This is discussed in relation to the beginning of the dialogue between Socrates and his anonymous friend in *Protagoras*, where, as

discussed, the friend asks where Socrates is coming from. The translation by Lambardo and Bell states the first line as: “FRIEND: Where have you just come from, Socrates?” (129). This can be understood as a reference to a place where he has been, and Songe-Møller, referring to the dialogue, says, “[m]y contention is, in other words, that not only the opening question but also Socrates’ own characterization of his narration as *atopos* are concerned with the notion of place, in both a concrete and a metaphorical meaning of the word” (169). If we look at the ending of this statement, where she states that the term can be understood both physically and metaphorically, it can be observed that it is in line with how Liddell and Scott’s definition of *atopos* which says that is being “out of place” or “non-spatial.” In the physical sense of the word, of course, the reference the friend is making is to the actual place Socrates has been to, but otherwise, it also stands to mean where he is coming from intellectually, as in how his thoughts have changed or what does he want to tell his friend in terms of something really strange. Songe-Møller conveys the point by saying:

“*Pothen, o Sôkratês, phainê?*” This question is obviously meant to be understood in a very concrete sense: “From where (that is, from which physical place), Socrates, have you just come?” The word *phainê*, which is here translated as “have just come,” is the present tense of the verb *phainesthai*, which basic, and also common, meaning is “come to light,” “appear,” “show forth”. The opening question can therefore also be interpreted in a metaphorical way: “From where, Socrates, are you appearing (*phainê*)?” From where does Socrates, as a philosopher, come? From which philosophical place, *topos*, does he appear, for instance in this very dialogue, the *Protagoras*? (169)

This explanation helps in building my argument in relation to the term *atopos* for my study as I intend to look at how the subject’s performativity is altered when they are performing in *atopos*, a place that is not a place. The clone characters, when transcend the boundary of the spectrum, wield this agency to be all the clones simultaneously and be none of them at the same time. The neither-both (or more) dynamic enables the transcendence, and I discuss that placeless place the subject ends up occupying, which, for me, is how I look at *atopos*. The scope of the study allows me to comment on the nature of the subject in that place and how the subject performs differently.

In a similar vein, Eide and his work on Socrates’ *atopia* shed light on the usage of the term in

detail. At the beginning of his article, he discusses how Plato introduced this concept in Greek literature, and his constant usage of the term in his various works merits discussion and analysis. Eide, borrowing from this Platonian sense, argues that *ἀτοπος* “ had its origin in Greek science in a sense "contrary to *τόπος*" (*τόπος* being the mathematical concept of "geometrical locus"), thus "illogical," "inconsistent," "contradictory," and that this sense should be given to the word, particularly in its earliest history, more often than is generally done” (60). Here, *ἀτοπος* is *atopos* and *τόπος* is *topos*. This is also in accordance with the previous definitions discussed above, especially the one by Liddell and Scott, where they assert that *atopos* can be looked at as being non-spatial. If we see how Eide describes *topos*, the concept of “geometrical locus” where locus can be explained as a definite place where something occurs or is positioned at or as the center of action or activity (Merriam-Webster)

This is really helpful in understanding the concept of *atopos* with regard to the present study. The clone characters occupy a certain position on the spectrum of self, and that position or locus enables the clones to exhibit their subjectivity in a particular manner. When the locus shifts, the nature of their performativity shifts as well; this was discussed previously with reference to the concepts of oscillation and metaxis. The locus when moves beyond the spectrum, which is where the clones start to manifest their subjectivity in an extraordinary fashion because, by definition, the locus is supposed to be a place in the physical sense of the word. When this changes, it can be seen that the non-spatial angle is hard to ignore, and hence, *atopos* are what can be used to discuss this placeless place. The clones, when take on the traits of other clones and manifest their agency, accordingly, are what makes them transform into an entity that is different than their identity as a clone or many clones lumped together. In this new form in a new place, they wield their agency in a way that is different than being one of the clones or many of them together. This morphed entity, in my opinion, is not only an amalgamation of two or more clones together but also has characteristics of them not being clones at all.

This new entity is definitely abstract in nature, I mean in the sense that it does not take a different shape or form physically, but simultaneously, it is evident that in that form, the clones are not functioning as they usually function. It is more than that, and the form of the text also plays a vital role in establishing it. For instance, when all the clones appear on the TV screen together, it is obvious for the viewer to discern the differences between them based on their physical appearance,

but it is also obvious that all of them cannot exist at that moment together as only one actor is playing all of them. Despite this knowledge and awareness, it is apparent that all of them together function as one entity working against the Dyad Institute. The entity I am referring to does not have a physical form, as stated before, but is a combination of all of them together and all of them as individuals. This transformation is significant because it allows the entity to work on an abstract level (in atopos), outside of the spectrum because the spectrum is reserved for the clones and their multiple subjective positions between which they constantly oscillate. Once the oscillation is so strong that they achieve metaxis, it can be argued that it is here that the clones morph into an entity without a physical shape or form and that this entity has to function in a placeless place because of the very nature of the morphed subject itself. The spectrum is to be transcended, and the subject ends up in atopos; wielding agency here is arguably different in terms of plurality and the morphed nature of the subject. The trajectory of their movement is pertinent as it is the movement that both displaces the clones and allows them to morph into a new entity. Vermeulen and van den Akker explain the metamodern sensibility of atopic metaxis by discussing the notions of being out of time, being out of space, and assuming that this is possible, knowing fully well that it is not. They state at the end of their article:

It is therefore ironic that our inquiries into the discursivity by which current geopolitical tendencies can be explained and the sensibility by which the arts express themselves have led us precisely to those three concerns: a deliberate being out of time, an intentional being out of place, and the pretense that that desired atemporality and displacement are actually possible even though they are not. (12)

It is imperative to notice the use of deliberate and intentional while discussing the concepts of atemporality and displacement as they help in understanding the aware nature of the subject, as I argue in my project. I take these very notions of atemporality and displacement to be the defining features of atopos and explain them with the concepts of the Erasure of Boundaries and Reconstruction. Vermeulen and van den Akker define atopos as being “impossibly, at once a place and not a place, a territory without boundaries, a position without parameters” (11). It is here that the discussion will move towards the said concepts to answer the designed third research question and move the study to its conclusion.

## 6.5. Erasure of Boundaries

The erasure of definite boundaries and the consequent borderlessness is a metamodern sensibility that develops, rather emerges, from the current contemporary issues brought on by late globalization. This has been demonstrated by a number of events that have attracted international notice, and as internet technologies advance, access to and interest in international politics and technological development has become easier in recent years. Issues related to gender politics, gender identities, and politics surrounding that, biotechnological and genetic advancements, and the moral and ethical debates surrounding them have become some of the most discussed topics in the academic world internationally. The dissolution of boundaries between mediums, forums, and news itself has helped transform the world into a well-connected place. Social media, electronic media, TV, film, and other cultural productions, where culturally situated, discuss issues of global importance, and thus become significant worldwide.

Human cloning is an integral part of these said debates, and the mediums of television and other cultural productions, such as literature, play a vital role in bringing forth this critical issue to the general audience. *Orphan Black*, the selected text, deals with human cloning as a central issue, and that is where the concern regarding human subjectivity for the present study stems. The idea that the audience is dealing with posthuman subjects, and the TV series and the graphic novels address the very nature of these subjects, the way they survive against all odds, and the way that the creators use the genre and the medium to their advantage speaks a lot about the erasure that I have discussed in this section. The very fact that I, as a researcher living in a developing country that is drowning in economic and social crisis, am aware of the pressing concerns of human agency and what the lack of it can do is enough to speak about the said erasure. The financial and/or socio-cultural crisis explains the need for people to keep themselves up to date about the development in the world and comment on how it is affecting their well-being. Literature and art, in general, have proved to be a perfect medium for making a social critique on the state of affairs in any nation, and Pakistan is no different. In 2020, a sci-fi dystopian short film titled *Shehr-e-Tabassum* (City of Smiles) was released. It is an animated Urdu language short film commenting on the state of violence and crime and how it has affected the lives of people to the extent that the government is controlling them by ensuring that people smile at all times, and failure to do so will result in punishment. It is situated in 2071 and has all the features of a dystopian narrative: surveillance, governmental control, the protagonist trying to

escape the stifling control, and the consequent rebellion of the protagonist (Mazhar). The point of mentioning the short film is to refer to the fact that science fiction as a genre is now being used in Pakistan (albeit late as compared to the global scene) to raise awareness regarding several social issues and comment on the injustices that stem from it. The selected TV series also does so by raising awareness regarding the pressing matter of human cloning by showing the story of a small population of clones working for their survival. The legality of it all, the ethical concerns, the religious concerns, the scientific development, and the range of technological advancement, the selected texts deal with everything and work as a commentary on these issues and more, as previously mentioned in Chapter 1. It discusses the prospect of human cloning when, in the real world, the audience understands and is well aware that human cloning is banned and considered illegal.

Living in this part of the world, if I am aware of these issues and am concerned with what it means for the human agency, the world, and the coming generations, it is because of the information available to me. There are no boundaries when it comes to the age of the Internet, and because of that, the world today is more connected than it has ever been in recorded history, and information, ideas, and other communications may be transmitted more easily and quickly than ever. It definitely is a defining feature of the age of post-posts that we are living in, and Abramson goes on to illustrate the dissolution of boundaries in contrast to postmodernism in his article on HuffPost by saying:

Postmodernism, which came of age in the Age of Radio, is...likely to emphasize how meaning degenerates as it moves across the vast expanse of space between selves and groups of selves. Metamodernism, which came of age in the Digital Age, recognizes that we feel at once distant from others — because on the Internet almost everyone is a stranger, so we are daily surrounded by more strangers than at any other point in human history — but also incredibly close to others, as the Internet allows us to create connections more quickly than ever before. (n.p)

For metamodernism, this increased connectivity necessitates that we comprehend and acknowledge the effects that we have on a globally interconnected world. More particularly, metamodernism stresses that we should exercise caution while acting because we are conscious of

the interconnectedness of the world and the fact that all of our acts will have an impact. Other barriers also dissolve as national and international boundaries do. Abramson goes on to say that metamodernism promotes cooperation in part because a globalized world cannot function without people learning to cooperate and in part because the erasure of boundaries enables people to reflect on themselves in novel ways that will allow them to connect with those who would otherwise appear to be completely different. Television and literature, among other cultural productions, play a vital role in developing this understanding of embracing differences and connecting with people and nations to address issues that concern all humanity, hence, the erasure of boundaries. *Orphan Black* does the same, both as a cultural production and as a TV series that shows characters coming together for a common cause.

The characters in the selected text—or perhaps it would be more accurate to call them Project LEDA's offspring—are the results of a number of studies carried out in the UK in the 1980s by geneticists Susan and Ethan Duncan. Their research was undoubtedly advanced compared to the actual cloning of Dolly the sheep in Edinburgh in 1996. The Duncans' clones were implanted as fertilized eggs into surrogate mothers and grew up while being secretly monitored by "monitors" employed by the Dyad Institute. The Institute itself is shown to be run by Rachel Duncan, a self-aware clone raised by the Duncans themselves. Their research was destroyed in a fire in which the floppy discs containing the genome sequence (to create more clones) were lost. This sets the stage for the Duncans' interest in the Clone Club and why they keep following them and are extremely interested once they find out that Sarah and Helena can bear children, considering that the audience is told that the clones are all supposed to be barren by design. Keeping in mind the actual cloning of Dolly the sheep in 1996, who died after six years in 2003 due to a genetic defect resulting in a lung tumor, it can be seen why the selected text is an important commentary on cloning. The audience is shown, and it has been discussed earlier as well, that the clones all have a genetic defect that is making them die; Cosima herself has a lung disease and is trying to find a cure for the survival of the Clone Club. In the first episode of the series, Sarah learns she is a clone, a fact that many of the other clones are already aware of. Since then, Sarah has been working hard to contact other clones, such as Helena, who is both Sarah's twin and clone, as well as Alison, a soccer mom, and Cosima, a PhD student. Sarah has been studying the background of Project Leda in her spare time as well and is also attempting to shield her little daughter Kira from the Dyad Institute. This is significant because Sarah, Beth, Alison, Cosima,



and Helena are entirely different from one another, and despite these differences, their situation brings them together, and once that happens, it is difficult for the audience to see them all as separate individuals. They act as one entity, and this, I see, as a blurring and eventual erasure as the clones leave their individuality behind to transform into another entity that has an individuality of its own.

For the purpose of discussion, I would refer to that morphed entity as Clone X. Clone X is an amalgamation of all the clones and none of them simultaneously, which allows me to argue that it is working outside the spectrum of self. It is through the erasure of boundaries between all clones that Clone X comes into existence, and it is not a physical existence to begin with. It is an abstract, shapeless entity performing outside the spectrum, so to speak. This enables me to explore the possibility that atopos can be explained through the erasure of boundaries. A place that is not a place necessitates that an entity that is not an entity per se has the ability to occupy the said place. The agency that Clone X exhibits in atopos is the agency of all the clones combined and yet equal to none of them; a unique way of manifesting subjectivity where Clone X itself is aware of the constant shift and transcendence from the spectrum which allows it to exist in the first place and the fact that this transcendence does not mean that the other clones working on the spectrum disappear. It is this very simultaneous existence of both (or more) of these clones that makes atopos possible. Vermeulen and van den Akker state that atopos can be explained with reference to being deliberately out of place and time and pretending that this atemporality is possible, knowing that it is not (13).

The ‘existence’ of Clone X outside the spectrum is paradoxical, it is evident that it is not an actual being, but it is also apparent that it is, considering the fact that it occupies a position without parameters as Vermeulen and van den Akker propose (12). Of course, they mentioned this with regard to metamodernism itself, but I am taking that interpretation and using it to explain the nature of a metamodern subject and its transcendence to atopos. This becomes easier to understand if we look at how theorists explain metaxis; they state that metaxis is “being simultaneously here, there, and nowhere” (12). Here, I contend that “here” and “there” can be used to explain the positions of the subject on the spectrum, and as discussed in detail in the previous two chapters of the analysis, the subject is in continuous motion, the constant oscillation allows it to exhibit in-between-ness and it is because of this simultaneous existence of “here” and “there” that “nowhere” becomes possible. This “nowhere” can be taken as a transcendence from “here” and “there,” but

again, it is pertinent to stress that existing in “nowhere” does not mean that existence in “here” and “there” is challenged. It is this co-existence, which can be explained through the metamodern paradox. For instance, in the first scene of *Orphan Black*, Sarah, who is waiting for her train, observes a woman taking off her stiletto heels and folding her suit jacket before setting them down on the platform next to her handbag. The woman turns briefly to look at Sarah before stepping off the platform and in front of the approaching train. Sarah is shocked by the woman's behavior as well as by how she looks. She resembles a more polished version of herself (Sarah). The CCTV camera at the railway station is then used to show Sarah taking the abandoned purse and leaving the area (Manson, 2013). Later, the audience is shown that Sarah is trying on another identity, that of Beth, by watching her videos and pictures in her apartment and using her wardrobe. In that moment, she is neither Sarah nor Beth, and also not a combination of both. At that moment, she is acting outside the spectrum, which would place her “here” or “there,” but the audience is shown that she is occupying a placeless place, “nowhere,” and hence is situated outside the said spectrum. It does not mean that she is not Sarah or Sarah-as-Beth, but it does mean that she is also simultaneously neither of them. She does have agency at the moment, is aware of her actions, and can also shift back to Sarah or Sarah-as-Beth as and when required, which is shown later in many instances.

This brings the discussion back to the metamodern paradox, which enables people to have competing truths coexist within themselves without having to resolve those conflicts. By allowing our own selves to be paradoxical, we realize that others may be as well, and that may lead to a foundation for communication and collaboration, which themselves are needed to make sense of the contemporary world. Abramson, in his article on HuffPost, refers to collaboration as a major characteristic of metamodernism (n.p). *Orphan Black* demonstrates this paradox, the existence of competing truths, which can be explained by the example of both Rachel and Krystal. Rachel, as mentioned earlier, is brought up by the Duncans and is a self-aware clone. Krystal, a salon owner, on the other hand, is introduced later in the TV series and is technically a newcomer but is aware of the existence of the clones. There are instances in the TV series where both Rachel and Krystal face captivity at the hands of Dyad, and their respective reactions to captivity are proof of the metamodern paradox. In one scene, Rachel is shown to be in a hospital bed and is confined there (held captive) for reasons unknown to her. She finds that she is being monitored (as there is a camera in the room), and despite being aware of everything regarding the clones and their history,

she directs her complaints and queries to the said camera. She engages in this dialogue with nobody, in particular, showcasing her paradoxical shift from an agent to a passive prisoner (Manson 2016). Similarly, Krystal Goderitch is aware that people participate in human experimentation. She cons her way into a Neolution clinic to gather proof because she believes that two competing beauty product businesses are testing new products on patients without their consent. When she is discovered, the director is baffled and does not know what to do with her, so she is escorted to a conference room and is held there for a while. Knowing she is being watched, she starts admitting the whole thing to the surveillance camera in the room (Melville 2016). This again is paradoxical as Rachel, Krystal is shown to be very active in the face of trouble and is also shown to engage in physical fights to defend herself (Melville 2016), but here she acts in a completely different manner, she is scared and acts in a way which is not usual for her, hence paradoxical. This simultaneous existence of truth helps move the discussion toward collaboration without technically finding a need to resolve these conflicts. The metamodern narrative allows for their existence and develops the story despite their existence.

As the story develops, there is significant discussion over the "original," or which of the clones is the one from whom all others are made. The answer lies with a former convict of Her Majesty's prison system named Kendall Malone. Kendall is S's mother, who is not only Sarah and Felix's foster mom but also keeps Sarah's daughter Kira safe. The audience is told that during her years at the prison, a scientist from Neolution approached Kendall and claimed to be working on cancer research. According to Kendall, he stole her genes (Cochrane 2015). Kendall is shown to be in danger since Neolution is looking for her so they can take her cells for additional research and clone production. The audience is further informed that a rival group inside Neolution arranges for Kendall to be abducted, murdered, and burned so that no one can access her DNA since Neolution only considers her as "genetic samples" (Roberts 2016). This makes sense as Neolution scientists also initially hired Sarah's (and Helena's) birth mother under the guise of a needy couple seeking a surrogate (Levine 2013). Moreover, there are scenes in the television and graphic novel series that show the monitors performing tests on the clones or surveilling them (without their knowledge) and handing over the results to Neolution and Dyad. The audience is shown that Sarah-as-Beth is subjected to medical tests during the night, which she is unaware of (Levine 2013). Similarly, when Alison finds out about her husband being her monitor, she, in a desperate attempt to live without a monitor and with no additional threat to her family, reluctantly

signs a contract with Dyad to voluntarily submit to medical tests (Manson 2013).

In another scene, Sarah is kept at Dyad and informed that her eggs will be retrieved in a short period, with or without her approval, which is in an extreme case of medical surveillance and abrogation of consent (Manson 2014). The reason for mentioning these examples is that for many years, the clones were shown to be passive and lacked agency when it came to their bodies and their lives because the Dyad Institute only looked at them as property and not individuals. When the clones get together and work for their survival, they are shown to be agents trying to preserve their individuality. The clones, once aware, perform in various positions on the spectrum, and eventually, the cause becomes greater than all of them. The collaboration between Dyad and Neolution is another factor that enables them to transcend from their respective positions on the spectrum and enter atopos. In this nowhere, Clone X exhibits a unique agency, one which is a combination of all the clones and none of them. The boundaries of the clones being separate individuals are erased, and this ironically allows them to express their individuality more assertively.

Discussing the erasure of boundaries, the boundaries that formerly divided off academic disciplines of study are another boundary that is starting to disappear. It is challenging to continue defending a rigid distinction in all sectors in a world where everything is becoming increasingly intertwined. This is significant for the study since the selected text covers issues from different fields of study, such as politics (the ban on human cloning), science (human cloning itself), gender and sexuality (the clones are mostly female, and there is one transgender clone, the texts otherwise display characters from variety of gender and sex spectrum), history (the origins of cloning and the historical background, Lepore, *In The History Lurking Behind "Orphan Black,"* argues it goes in line with research on cloning (n.p), and culture (the clones come from different parts of the world) to name a few fields. The lines between all these fields essentially disappear as they are brought together in yet another field of TV and adapted into another field of graphic novels. Studying these various fields across different mediums is something that the erasure of boundaries has made possible. This has an impact on academic scholars as well as those who straddle the line between practitioner and scholar. The latter is referred to by Abramson as a form of interdisciplinarity in his web article on HuffPost (n.p), although Clasquin-Johnson challenges this notion, arguing that "[i]nter'-disciplinarity implies the existence of two disciplines as hard,

well-defined entities. What we need...is a ‘Meta’- disciplinarity in which the boundaries between disciplines are softened and allowed to overlap” (9).

This concept of meta-disciplinary learning and teaching methods undoubtedly creates opportunities for the adaptability required to thrive in a globalized environment. The use of two different mediums and the technique of transmedia storytelling is in line with this concept and has helped me to find answers to the questions designed for this study and otherwise. In regard to the gap between practitioner and scholar, Daniel Southward talks about the challenges of being both a creative writer and a researcher who studies creative writing (275). He then explains how the usage of metamodern oscillation may be able to bridge this gap. The simultaneous existence of the metamodern dilemma and the erasure of clearly delineated borders, as summarized by Clasquin-Johnson, facilitates the ability for scholar-practitioners to just exist. He says that “There need not be a separate category of scholar–practitioner. One oscillates between the role of scholar and the role of practitioner. With time and practice, both roles are presented simultaneously. The dichotomy is shown not to be false but negotiable” (5). In accordance with metamodern theory, creative endeavors might result in knowledge via producing information. Indeed, any creative endeavor—or, perhaps more precisely, any endeavor in a world where limits are less clearly defined—creates knowledge and information for the person who engages in it. We also have a variety of ways to capture and share this information, which we do to further the body of information and knowledge that records our existence and experience. *Orphan Black*, as a narrative, does the same and, creates knowledge and produces information for a variety of audiences.

Applying this to the narrative itself, the erasure of clearly defined borders permits a certain flexibility in the metamodern narrative. The concept of oscillation, which enables narrative oscillation to incorporate the audience and blurs the lines between work and audience, has already been mentioned (in the previous chapter) as one aspect of this fluidity. Even while disintegration is not often the primary goal of returning to earnestness (as discussed in the previous chapter), the act of doing so itself encourages dissolution. Postmodern intertextuality, which served to highlight the manufactured nature of the work by making references to both itself and other works, sets the stage for the disintegration of narrative boundaries. Abramson, in *Five Basic Principles of Metamodernism*, succinctly summarizes the practice of intertextuality in modernism,

postmodernism, and now metamodernism by claiming that each employs intertextuality for a different reason and that modernist intertextuality was interested in metanarratives, postmodernist intertextuality questioned those metanarratives, and metamodernist intertextuality gives methods of uniquely processing diverse sorts of information. He reiterates the point by stating that the use of metamodern intertextuality is:

...much more flexible: often brief; only intermittently substantive; ambivalent about whether they are readily recognized by every member of an audience; sometimes so distorted or jumbled up by the author as to even be unrecognizable as citations; intended as an idiosyncratic expression of the author's network of associations rather than the establishment of a broader canon of associations. (n.p)

It is here that the titles of the episodes in *Orphan Black* merit a mention. All the fifty titles of the fifty episodes in five seasons are taken from other works ranging from Darwin's work on evolution, Haraway's work on posthumanism, Bacon's philosophy to Wilcox's poem *Protest*. All the episode titles in Season 1 (2013) are taken from Darwin's *On The Origin of Species* (1859) (Jancelewicz 2014), such as "Natural Selection" (Episode 1, Season 1), "Conditions of Existence" (Episode 5, Season 1), and "Endless Forms Most Beautiful" (Episode 10, Season 1). All the episode titles from Season 2 (2014) are quotes from Sir Francis Bacon's work (Jancelewicz 2014), such as "Governed as It Were by Chance" (Episode 4, Season 2), "To Hound Nature in Her Wanderings" (Episode 6, Season 2), and "By Means Which Have Never Yet Been Tried" (Episode 10, Season 2). Titles from Season 3 (2015) are quotes taken from the farewell address of Eisenhower (Nguyen 2015), which was delivered on January 17, 1961. Examples include "The Weight of This Combination" (Episode 1, Season 3), "Scarred by Many Past Frustrations" (Episode 5, Season 3), and "Insolvent Phantom of Tomorrow" (Episode 9, Season 3). Season 4 (2016) makes use of the works of Donna Haraway for its episode titles (Hodson 2016), such as "The Stigmata of Progress" (Episode 3, Season 4), "The Scandal of Altruism" (Episode 6, Season 4), and "The Redesign of Natural Objects" (Episode 8, Season 4). Similarly, all titles for the last season, Season 5 (2017), are quotes from Ella Wheeler Wilcox's poem *Protest* (Herter 2017). Examples include "Clutch of Greed" (Episode 2, Season 5), "Gag or Throttle" (Episode 7, Season 5), and "To Right the Wrongs of Many" (Episode 10, Season 5).

This is an extremely important example of brief, flexible metamodern intertextuality, which, as Abramson, in his web article, puts it, is “ambivalent about whether they are readily recognized by every member of an audience” (n.p). It defies all sorts of boundaries as it borrows from several types of works from various disciplines to set the stage for the Clone Club to perform the way that they do. The genre of science fiction becomes even more relevant now, considering the plethora of references to the evolution of species and posthuman philosophy (from just the titles). This, in addition to Ethan Duncan’s copy of the 1896 sci-fi novel *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (Walton 2014), is pertinent with reference to what all science fiction narratives can achieve. The speculative nature of the show pertaining to human cloning and the posthuman subjects and the erasure of boundaries throughout (whether it is the content, the themes, or the characters themselves) makes a compelling case for the selected text to be considered metamodern.

Because the limits that once impeded the intertextual flow are less clearly defined, this particular use of intertextuality is made possible, particularly the combining of multiple references, and those are no longer strictly necessary to locate the work chronologically or temporally. The references merely exist to stitch everything together for me as a viewer, and it might mean something entirely different for another viewer. This makes one wonder, maybe the boundaries never really existed, considering their constructed nature in the first place; the fact that they were artificial, or abstract is what is causing them to be erased in the contemporary narratives. Such dissolutions allow for intertextual allusions, which let the actual world seep into the made-up. The deliberate blending of fact and fiction also has postmodern roots, and it can be seen in fictional stories through intertextual character borrowing, metaleptic shifts between worlds, narrative inconsistencies, and the mingling of reality and fiction. Such reality-fiction crossovers were used in postmodern works to displace the viewer and the work by drawing attention to the fabricated fiction world. For metamodernism, there is no such displacement because the employment of this technique is without irony or deconstruction, and this is possible because of the return to earnestness. Instead, this method of intertextuality is powerfully used in metamodern works to create a universe where other worlds are allowed to overlap and link.

Explaining the effects of the globalized world on the narratives, Gibbons mentions the use of heterochrony and integrated linguistics in his web article to discuss the erasure of boundaries further. She states:

In metamodernist writing, heterochrony is often created through frequent temporal deictic shifts (e.g., changes in tense), while specificity is made manifest through the use of proper nouns providing specific geographical locations. Moreover, the breakdown of national borders and geographical boundaries in the globalizing world is often enacted in metamodernist writing through integrating lexis from different languages. (n.p)

Heterochrony causes changes in time, and these distinct temporal shifts can coexist or nest inside one another in a variety of ways to influence or support the story. The past, present, and future could all move and coexist with ease; this is especially true in fiction, which is not constrained by the laws of physics as the "actual" reality. This is also very evident in *Orphan Black* graphic novels, where the story of the TV series is supplemented by the history and background information on clones that the graphic novels provide. The readers are shown that different timelines exist simultaneously within different panels on the same page of the graphic novel, and one is also aware that these timelines are different from the ones being shown in the TV series. This shift between not only the timelines but the varying information in two mediums allows the readers to experience atopos; they are functioning on and outside the spectrum and are here, there, and nowhere simultaneously. Transmedia storytelling and its techniques of drilling for information become extremely useful when the audience is expected to shift mediums (for a better understanding of the fictional world).

For example, in the opening scene from the first graphic novel (Manson, Fawcett and Houser 1-2), it can be seen that the setting is Wales, and the year is 1984. The book opens with the birth scene of Helena and Sarah, and in the coming sequences, their mother decides to separate the babies to keep them safe (as she suspects Neolution of conning her into surrogacy). The scene then shifts to 29 years later and to the encounter between Sarah and Beth at the train station (1-2). Both are shown in the figures on the next page. It is also significant to mention that the images are taken as text, and this is in line with how Belsey discusses the usage of visuals as text. In her essay, she discusses a painting as text and analyses it to make her point regarding the implementation of visuals in English Studies. Following her method, the present study looks at images from graphic novels and scenes from the TV series as a whole, and that whole is referred to as text.





Fig. 9



Fig. 10

In the TV series, as I have discussed several times now, the opening scene is situated in Toronto at the train station, where Sarah sees Beth commit suicide (Manson 2013). This makes the existence of several timelines clear and helps in understanding the erasure as well. Another example is from Rachel's story in the fifth book, which opens with a scene between a young Rachel and her parents, Ethan, and Susan Duncan (Manson, Fawcett, and Houser 1). The scene leads to the fire that destroys the lab and kills the Duncans. Rachel is taken by Leekie and is brought up as a self-aware clone. This added information regarding Rachel's childhood is given to the audience much later in

the TV series. The scenes shift between past and present and make the transition seamless. Moreover, Gibbons asserts that “specificity is made manifest through the use of proper nouns providing specific geographical locations,” and that can be seen in these examples where the creators have provided the specific locations where the action is taking place. The images below demonstrate the point:

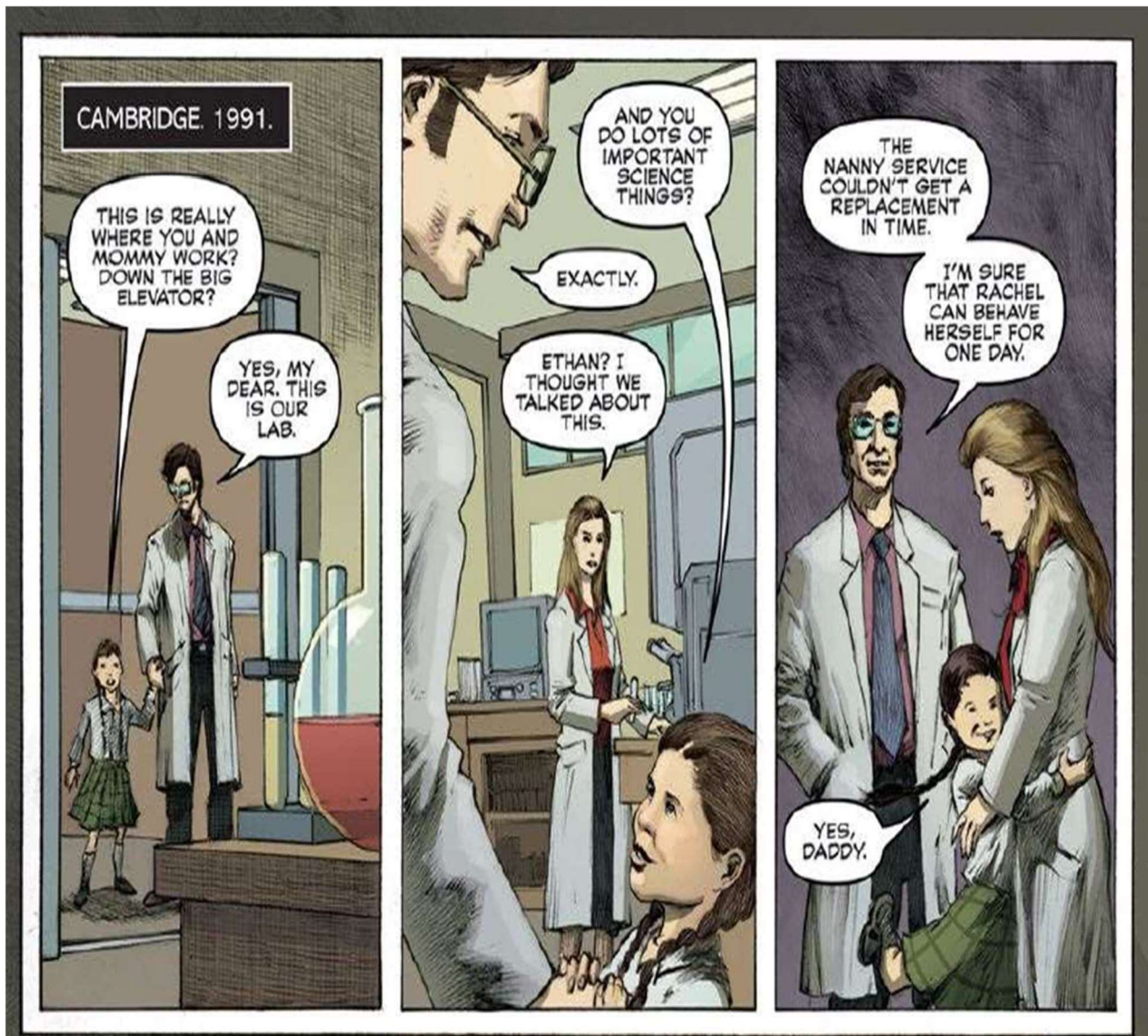


Fig. 11

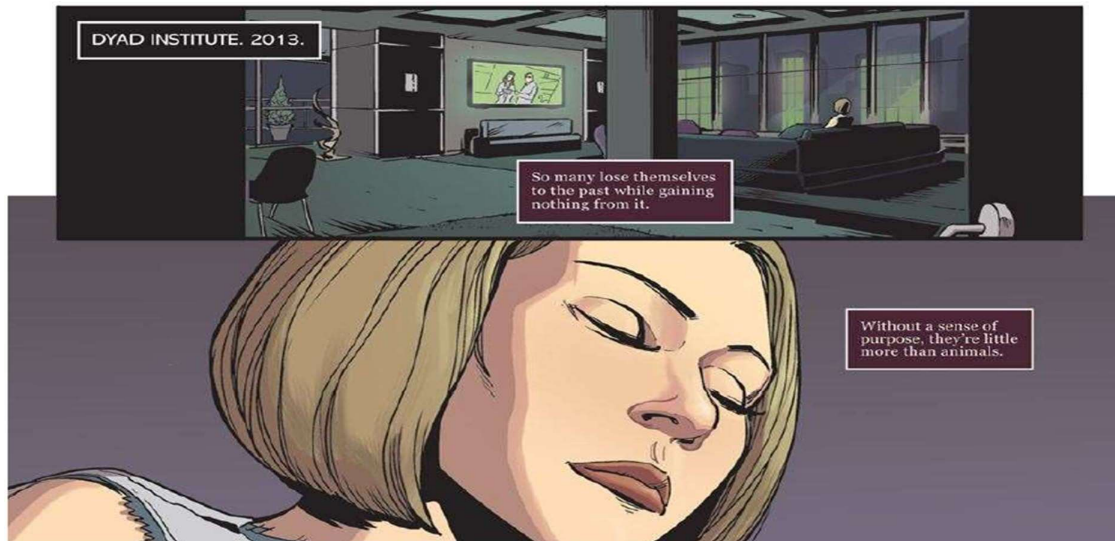


Fig. 12

The impacts of globalization, however, make it appear as though the bounds of time are less defined because different parts of the world exist at various points in time. Communication across these borders entails communication across temporal boundaries, contributing to the eradication of those divides. Since language and a common language are essential to communication, the linguist mixing is a more evident effect of globalization. When cultural productions cross countries of their productions, they carry with themselves imprints of the linguistic and cultural environment they were actually produced in, and consequently, global consumers of the product end picking up these imprints, which affect their overall understanding of the media. This is also evident in *Orphan Black* since the work is produced in Canada and shows characters from various parts of the world. The erasure of boundaries here can be taken in terms of the availability of the content around the globe and how a variety of audiences can react to the selected work, one of the reactions being the present study. The element of the common language for me is also present as the work is produced in English, and the language crosses borders when it comes to being mutually intelligible. The cultural environment and the issues that the selected texts deal with are Western and display that level of advancement, which is associated with Global North, the audiences can easily pick on that, and it definitely plays a role in making them understand the texts.

In *Orphan Black*, the concept of metamodern atopos is manifested through various characters

and narratives, weaving together sincerity and irony resulting in a fluid display of subjectivity. The clones, at the heart of the series, epitomize this dynamic interplay as they navigate the complexities of identity, autonomy, and belonging. In season 3, episode 1 *The Weight of This Combination*, Sarah, Alison, and Cosima confront the weight of their shared genetic origins, each reacting in distinct ways that reflect their individual subjectivities. This subjective journey of self-discovery encapsulates the metamodern atopos, as the clones occupy a fluid space within the narrative, constantly oscillating between sincerity and irony in their quest for self-definition. Their struggle with identity challenges the notion of a fixed, essential self, blurring the boundaries between self and other and results in them occupying a space which is not a space in a physical sense of the word.

The Clone Club's mission to protect each other and expose the truth behind their creation embodies the metamodern atopos in season 5, episode 7 *Gag or Throttle*. Rooted in their shared experiences of sisterhood and solidarity, the Clone Club's dedication to each other is sincere and heartfelt. However, their use of aliases and covert operations introduces an ironic dimension, challenging conventional notions of heroism and morality. In this liminal space between sincerity and irony, the Clone Club defies categorization, and hence the atopos.

Moreover, Helena's character arc, spanning the entire series, offers a compelling exploration of the concept of atopos. In season 4, episode 8, *The Redesign of Natural Objects*, Helena's inner turmoil and emotional growth are laid bare as she grapples with questions of identity, belonging, and redemption. Her transformation from a ruthless assassin to a protective mother embodies the metamodern juxtaposition of sincerity and irony. As Helena alternates between moments of intense vulnerability and brutal violence, she defies categorization, existing on the fringes of society where the lines between heroism and villainy blur. In this fluid space, Helena challenges viewers to reconsider preconceived notions of morality and human nature, highlighting the complexity of her character and the capacity for transformation. This becomes an interesting example of atopos since Helena is shown to be a character who goes beyond the extremes on the spectrum of self, hence transcending the traditional sense of occupying a place on the said spectrum. In this transcendence and challenging the viewers to view her characters differently, she ends up occupying a place which is not a physical place on the spectrum and in doing so, exists in multiple spots simultaneously and paradoxically not in any of them completely.

The concept of atopus is also reflected through characters and entities other than the clones. One example is Felix's artistic journey which provides yet another lens through which to examine the metamodern atopus. In season 4, episode 8, *The Redesign of Natural Objects*, Felix grapples with questions of authenticity and artistic integrity as he explores his creative talents. His subjective struggle with identity and self-expression is palpable, reflecting the complexities of his character. As Felix navigates the art world, he challenges traditional notions of creativity and authenticity, existing in a fluid space. His sincerity in pursuing his artistic vision is juxtaposed with an ironic detachment towards the commodification and pretensions of the art market, highlighting the fluidity of artistic identity and the tension between individual expression and commercialization. This helps us in understanding the resulting space as one which cannot be understood in the traditional physical sense of the word. It is more of a state which is neither here nor there, and is in fact, an amalgamation of both at the same time, and yet a new space which has its own defining characteristics.

Similarly, *The Neolutionists*, on the other hand, with their fervent pursuit of genetic manipulation and transhumanist ideals, represent another facet of the metamodern atopus. In season 4, episode 1, *The Collapse of Nature*, the ideology of the Neolutionists is explored, revealing their belief in scientific progress and human enhancement. However, their disregard for ethical boundaries and manipulation of genetic technology introduces an ironic dimension, challenging viewers to question the moral implications of scientific advancement and the limits of human agency. Within the narrative, the Neolutionists occupy a liminal space, existing at the intersection of sincerity and irony, where their earnest pursuit of progress clashes with the ethical dilemmas it entails.

As evident from the above discussion, *Erasure of Boundaries* is a complex metamodern technique. Although it has postmodernist roots, it is inextricably linked to how the world is becoming increasingly globalized. It involves the erasure of both regionally and personally defined boundaries and extends to how we view the world. With regard to narratives, it manifests with the blurring of lines between texts and allows for the intertextual blending of reality and fiction as well as different fictitious worlds and times. All of this has been discussed with reference to *Orphan Black* with a focus on how this dissolution of boundaries aids in understanding atopus. With metamodern objectives like collaboration at the core, *Erasure of Boundaries* establishes itself as a broad strategy that is used in metamodern

works. Here, in the case of the selected texts, the idea is to look at how characters transcend the boundary of self by collaborating with one another and cooperating amongst themselves against a common enemy. This enables them to move beyond their prescribed roles, and they are shown to wield agency, which would not be possible otherwise. In this placeless place, which is here, there, and nowhere, the clones assert their individuality in ways that enable them to fuse with their other versions. The erasure of boundaries is also discussed with reference to the transmedial form and content of the selected text, as that also enables the text itself to cross borders and keep shifting between different disciplines, highlighting the need for meta-disciplinarity, which allows for disciplines to overlap and co-exist. It was stated previously that atopus could be explained through the erasure of boundaries and reconstruction. Having dealt with the erasure of boundaries, the discussion will now move towards the other metamodern feature.

## 6.6. Reconstruction

Although many academics have cited oscillation as one of the essential characteristics of metamodernism, and I concur that oscillation is somewhat of a trademark of the movement (Chapter 4 details oscillation and multiple subjectivities), I also believe that the primary goal of the metamodern is reconstruction. The metamodern should necessarily oscillate between constructing and deconstructing if, as is known, the modern constructs and the postmodern deconstructs. It is also probable that metamodernism is focused on reconstruction following deconstruction rather than merely vacillating between the two concepts. Reconstruction, according to Nick Bentley, is a potential "post-postmodern" tool that has recently been used in contemporary art. He states:

Whereas much postmodernist literature was invested in promoting a process of fragmentation in order to interrogate, challenge or deconstruct a variety of grand or metanarratives, post-postmodernism...starts at a point of fragmentation and explores possible ways of (re-)forming connections. If postmodernism was a movement of deconstruction, post-postmodernism is about the possibility of reconstruction. (740)

Although Bentley does not immediately embrace metamodernism, he does observe that a substantial portion of post-postmodern literature appears more interested in reconstruction than deconstruction. This is seen in *Orphan Black*, which focuses on establishing connections and

putting together the pieces of the mess the Dyad Institute left behind. The clones, once separated, come together throughout the plot of the story and are able to move forward because of what Bentley refers to as “(re-)forming connections” (741). From the very first episode and the very first scene in the graphic novel, it is clear that the characters will be made to look for other clones and form connections. It is ironic since they all are already connected with one another because of their genetic sequence, and the connections, once severed, are reestablished throughout the narrative. It is also interesting to see that this quest for making and remaking connections is not something that only the characters embark upon; the burden also falls on the audience since they have to keep track of the characters and the narrative’s progress. The transmedia form ties in nicely here since the audience has to move mediums and struggle in order to find connections. Jenkins refers to the use of both drillable and spreadable mediums (17) to shed light on this struggle, and it can be seen that the audience for *Orphan Black* engages in both directions. Horizontal to make sense of the narrative, and vertical to get more information about the characters.

Reconstruction can be seen in another way in the selected text. Almost all the clone characters have disturbing pasts, and they pick up their damaged pieces and try to rebuild their lives. This is done for some characters even prior to the knowledge of being clones; Sarah wants to rebuild her life for the sake of her daughter Kira, Alison is willing to forgive a cheating husband and move on from her trauma of not being able to have children for the sake of her adopted kids and ensuring that they live as a family, and Cosima tries to reconstruct herself by accepting her sexuality. For others, such as Rachel, she moves on from a troubled childhood and takes control of the Neolution empire; Helena reconstructs herself to gain favor with her “sestra” and tries to redeem herself from being a brain-washed killer. We also see Rachel giving Felix the list of more clones at the end of the series, an act of reconstructing herself, and Cosima changing her majors at the university to study what could benefit all of them. These actions speak a lot about encouraging collaboration and moving towards a future with the hope that it will be better. The clones display a lot of resilience, and they keep pushing and moving forward despite knowing (at times) that they might not succeed. It is imperative to note these personal struggles as they keep surfacing, and despite being clones and having this common enemy in Dyad, the characters have to overcome these personal issues if they are to thrive.



Reconstruction is a significant feature of metamodernism, and it stems from the global need of the younger generations to be aware of and leave something meaningful for the coming generations. They require a method of reconstruction to rebuild the world without reverting to postmodern nihilism or the naive modernist zeal that gladly fueled capitalism's excessive use of the planet's resources. All of this is evident in *Orphan Black*, starting from its subject of human cloning, which tries to raise awareness about the ethical and moral concerns regarding it. The characters are trying to unveil how the operations of Dyad are not fruitful despite their success; the result is looking at posthuman subjects as mere property, and the characters struggle against that. The fact that Sarah, Helena, and Alison have children also speaks a lot about this, as they want their children to be safe and not live in the realities that they live in. Similar was the case with Sarah and Helena's birth mother, discussed in the previous section; she wanted her children to be safe, and even if it meant separating them and being away from them, she took that step.

The narrative inspires hope, among all other things, and it is one of the many reasons for its success. Reconstruction is more about hope and healing than anything else, but it is not simple. To stress the importance of the similar thought, Vermeulen and van den Akker write that "hope is both natural to the human species and a skill that needs to be learned, a rare good that needs to be fought for" (12). The clones are shown doing that, and it is remarkable that they survive with each other's help. It is here that atopos can be discussed with reference to the clones acting out of a place of hope when they know there is none; the idea that they might not survive keeps them going, and this is in line with how Vermeulen and van den Akker describe atopos. They state:

Metamodernism displaces the parameters of the present with those of a future presence that is futureless; and it displaces the boundaries of our place with those of a surreal place that is placeless. For indeed, that is the "destiny" of the metamodern wo/man: to pursue a horizon that is forever receding. (14)

Moving the discussion toward narrative, although many critics look at reconstruction as an important tenet of metamodernism, there was only one research I came across that used the feature to explore narratives and fictional worlds, a thesis by Gina Barbieri. She identifies reconstruction as a technique evident when the main idea of the story and the characters' actions work towards inspiring hope and/or rebuilding their lives or world through cooperative, reconstructive means

rather than through deconstruction and conflict that results in the complete annihilation of one or more entities. She further argues that regardless of the fact that the story's conflict ends up being resolved with destruction, a narrative can still contain metamodern and/or reconstructive themes because stories are complex and have many layers. She concludes that only a true metamodern narrative will use the concept of reconstruction to inspire hope and heal without completely destroying everything that is on stake.

I agree with these assumptions and further add that it is not only the healing or hope that makes the selected narrative metamodern but the fact that despite the destruction of any hope or possibility, the clone characters continue to move forward, thinking as if a better future awaits them or is possible. This inherent paradox, even in reconstruction, is what makes for a truly metamodern narrative. Moreover, the present study also focuses on how the subjects end up reconstructing their surroundings and how it is only possible when they themselves gather up the debris of their existence and use it to transform into a different entity. For instance, when Alison realizes that her high school sweetheart, her husband, is her monitor and is tracking her (Levine 2013), she takes action and is shown to install her own surveillance equipment to verify her theory. In this act of preserving her sanity, she gathers proof against her monitor and is equipped with information to take charge of the situation. Similarly, the audience is informed that Beth had checked out surveillance equipment from her workplace to keep an eye on her boyfriend, Paul. Beth was also right in her suspicion regarding Paul being her monitor (Manson 2016), and she felt safe keeping an eye on him and his activities. Later, Sarah as Beth receives a call from Beth's workplace demanding that she return the said equipment (Levine 2016), and then the audience comes to know the truth. These examples from the text support the idea that the clones, even when they did not have each other for support, had certain suspicions regarding their surroundings, so they ended up reconstructing those. Alison and Beth both used cameras and other surveillance equipment and transformed their homes into places they were not used to, this reconstruction gave them an upper hand, and they were able to come to terms with who their monitors were and prove the fact that they were not crazy in thinking that they were being monitored and experimented upon.

Although Vermeulen and van den Akker in *Notes on Metamodernism* do not link metamodern to reconstruction, they do point out that new metamodern movements like Romantic Conceptualism and Neoromanticism (10) are associated with concepts of reconstruction. Abramson, in *Five More*

*Basic Principles of Metamodernism*, goes a step further and labels reconstruction as metamodern (n.p). According to Abramson, postmodern deconstruction promotes "dialects" that force people to choose sides and engage in conflict until one is declared the winner, whereas the metamodern promotes dialogue—collaboration—as a way to uncover common ground to ensure that instead of destroying one another, people can unite to rebuild. This, in my opinion, is also the goal of the metamodern pursuit: to reconnect with, re-link, and rebuild what postmodernism shattered and left in ruins rather than to destroy and conquer continuously. Reconstruction does not involve reassembling modernist structures. Instead, reconstruction is about moving on and recovering from the harm caused by those frameworks, just as postmodernism destroyed the modernist constructs to highlight their flaws. It involves putting things back together, but not in order to recreate the detrimental original, but rather to rebuild using the parts that worked and attempting something new in the hopes of getting a better result. Because deconstruction frequently results in stagnation through postmodern nihilism, postmodernism specifically does not provide the solutions or courses of action required to deal with these crises. The return to earnestness and the "as-if" mentality also have reconstruction as one of its main objectives.

In art and architecture, among other cultural productions, the idea is that this post-postmodern ethos, which rejects both the superficial materialism of postmodernity and the naive metaphysical systems of the past, has prompted a project of reconstruction in which new myths and paradigmatic models are currently being skillfully created for the twenty-first century. Hanzi Freinacht also considers reconstructions to be one of the mantras of metamodernism and asserts that metamodernism is the reconstruction that follows the destruction of postmodernism (n.p). Brenden Dempsey argues this by focusing on the re-emergence of specific ideas and saying that “myth and grand narratives are receiving a second look and, from a once-homed focus on contingency and context, interests in the ‘timeless’ and ‘universal’ are again finding energetic expression” (n.p). Metamodernism allows for this kind of reconstruction, where we simultaneously acknowledge that things are still in pieces but also that the pieces we have to be treated as usable even if we still have some doubts about that. Alexandra Dumitrescu, a scholar from New Zealand, compared metamodernism to "a boat being built or repaired as it sails" (n.p). A metamodern "reconstruction" is not just a "construction" because it acknowledges that we are trying to "fix" something that has already been demolished; rather, it is not a deconstruction since we are starting to attempt to construct a "complete" object, albeit cautiously and with skepticism.

The primary purpose of this chapter was to discuss and understand the metamodern concept of atopos. The present study argues that the subject reaches atopos through its constant motion and oscillation. Atopos is described as a place that is not a place by the theorists Vermeulen and van den Akker, and using this definition, I argued for the clones in *Orphan Black* to reach atopos. The idea was to highlight the means through which the subject transcends the otherwise inherent boundary of self and reaches a place that is not a place. This was made possible through the features of the erasure of boundaries and reconstruction.

Considering that this is the last chapter of the analysis, it is imperative to state how this atopos is a result of oscillation, as-if mindset, simultaneity, and paradox discussed separately in the previous chapters of the analysis. I argue that atopos is reached because of the metamodern subject being in constant motion; this movement is characterized by oscillation, and it is because of that the subject is able to exist in both or more places simultaneously. However, this simultaneous existence is paradoxical and enables one to argue further that this inherent paradox allows the subject to move outside the spectrum, hence transcending the boundaries. This is also in line with the reconstruction and rebuilding that is required to exist in a new place (different from the one that the subject was previously occupying). In the case of clones, all metamodern subjects, the positions are innumerable, and in all, the clones wield agency. This agency and subjectivity manifest because of the erasure of boundaries where the clones fuse together to become a new entity without shape or form; it is paradoxical as well because technically, the clones can either function on the spectrum or outside of it and not in both (or more) positions. The discussion shows that they do exist on both and more and function as agents in all the positions they occupy.

The discussion further elaborated on the features of the erasure of boundaries and reconstruction with regards to narrative and concluded that the form and content of *Orphan Black* also make it a metamodern text as it covers a variety of themes and functions in two basic mediums as selected for the purpose of the study. Moreover, cultural implications of metamodernism were argued in relation to the said features of erasure of boundaries and reconstruction and how this contemporary turn is remarkably different from both modernism and postmodernism. In the next chapter, I conclude my argument and point out the critical findings.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

*I am still waiting for an apocalyptic angel with a key to this abyss.*

— J.G. Hamann, Letter to J.G. Herder, August 6, 1784

In this chapter, in order to conclude my research, it is instructive to revisit the premises with which I initiated this research. At the very outset of this chapter, it would be necessary to state that throughout the process of conducting and writing this research, the study itself morphed various times into different shapes, forms, and structures. This, now, in retrospect, appears intriguing to me as a researcher, but it was frustrating when the study took its own shape, a little different from what I had initially planned, and guided me towards this stage rather than me steering it in a direction that I had so carefully planned. This new form of the research project is nothing less than a metamodern feature in itself, as it refused to be bound into a conservative structure that I had previously imagined for it.

The study focused on three facets: the notion of subjectivity and metamodernism, the way that science fiction allows for the subject to exist in myriad ways, and transmedia storytelling (for it is the form that decides the direction the narrative would take). Combining the three, the idea was to look at the selected text, *Orphan Black*, and analyze how it deals with the issues of human subjectivity from a metamodern perspective. Keeping these aspects in mind, the study intended to explore the questions of subjectivities multiply manifesting in *Orphan Black*, the subject taking various positions and transcending the boundary of self in *Orphan Black*, and the exploration of different consequences for the subject when it transcends the said boundaries in *Orphan Black*.

In order to answer the queries mentioned above, a framework was designed to help analyze and explore the narrative for ways in which it deals with the issue of human subjectivity and how it

can be categorized as metamodern. The framework, then, is primarily derived from the theory of metamodernism as proposed by Vermeulen and van den Akker. In addition to that, transmedia storytelling is used because the selected storyworld has multiple entry points for the reader and/or audience and, consequently, multiple levels at which it functions. This is also because of the nature of the text, as *Orphan Black* follows the structure of a reverse adaptation, from a TV show to graphic novels, allowing for the narrative to develop in multiple directions and letting the story and plot take separate paths for both the TV series and the five selected graphic novels. Moreover, the fact that graphic novels complement the TV series (especially in terms of providing background information for the characters) allows for both a vertical and horizontal expansion of the narrative to emerge, catering to various kinds of audiences and/or readers. Therefore, merging the transmedia storytelling with metamodernism and tailoring the theoretical framework for this research catered to the need of the study and allowed me, as a researcher, to explore the narrative from multiple positions, accommodating and serving the purpose of exploring the element of subjectivity.

This moves the discussion to how the analysis was conducted in the light of the framework. Belsey's technique of textual analysis for visual text within the paradigm of qualitative research proved to be effective in answering the research questions designed for this study. Her focus on the possibility of multiple meanings and readings and stressing that only one meaning of a particular text cannot exist paves the way for a metamodernist reading of the selected text. Throughout the study, I claim that the way I approach the text and attempt to answer the questions is *one* of the many possible ways that the text can be approached. The methodology allowed me to maintain focus by designing questions one needs to find answers for and then approaching the text with that focus to gather information. The collected information is then synthesized, keeping in mind the human subjective position and the bias that comes with it, situating the reading within a cultural and social setting.

Another key factor that her essay deals with and that I adhere to is the notion that there exists an intended/ideal reader or addressee (other than us) for any text under discussion, and it is that difference between the said addressee and us that allows the text to exist in the first place. These factors, combined together, with metamodernism and transmedia storytelling, made up the methodology and helped evaluate and assess the selected text with the purpose of finding answers for the set objectives for the said study. *Orphan Black*, being a science fiction transmedia narrative

dealing with human cloning as its central issue, yields quite a lot of information when approached from an angle of metamodernism, especially with reference to the multiple positions occupied by the clones, the oscillation therein between infinite points, and the results of these morphing subjectivities and shifting agencies.

In the paragraphs that follow, I have summarized the findings of the study with respect to the three controlling questions framed in the beginning. The idea is to list the significant outcomes and comment on the degree to which they conform with or defy the expectations I had regarding them when I planned to carry out this research. It is imperative to mention here that the qualitative analysis I have done is largely subjective as it relies on my personal interpretations of the selected texts.

The first analysis chapter deals with the idea of subjectivities multiply manifesting in *Orphan Black*. I maintain, throughout my argument in this chapter, that *Orphan Black* is a science fiction transmedia text with two distinct mediums under discussion: TV series and graphic novels. The methodology adopted reveals that the visual nature of these mediums shows different appearances for different clones along with the separate storylines for the said clones, which establishes that the positions these clones occupy are very distinct from one another. It further illustrated that the spreadable nature of the narrative made approaching the text from multiple positions possible, hence establishing the point that the clones do, in fact, capture multiple subjective positions. Another insight that follows is that the drillable nature of the text makes it possible for the reader and/or audience to enter and explore the narrative from multiple entry points, from the perspectives of different clones, and create a world where they all come together to drive the story forward.

An important finding, therefore, is that the metamodern possibility of the existence of multiple subjectivities with reference to one individual is made possible within the selected narrative because of its transmedial nature. The graphic novels narrate the story from the perspectives of different clones in different volumes and allow the reader to explore the fictional world from multiple angles; the reader understands that, despite being clones, the characters occupy different subjective positions and are driven accordingly. The TV series also focuses on this simultaneous difference and similarity (as the lead characters are clones, after all) within the narrative and places the audience in a unique position with respect to the performative nature of the said subjectivity and how it manifests in

keeping the plot going forward with regards to all the clones and their multiple subjective positions.

In the second analysis chapter, the discussion centers around the ways in which the metamodern subject transcends the spectrum of self and the reasons for the said transcendence. The second question is answered with reference to the concept of oscillation and the as-if mindset prevalent in the metamodern debate. The major finding here is that the notion of oscillation in relation to the concepts of in-between-ness and metaxis is what allowed the subject in *Orphan Black* to manifest in myriad ways. It enables the subject to transcend the inherent spectrum of self and thereby deny the either-or or neither-nor positions; focusing entirely on the fact that it occupies numerous positions simultaneously and keeps oscillating between them, like a swinging pendulum. In doing so, the clones, on multiple occasions, take each other's place and wield the agency of another in addition to their own. Their appearances, style choices, and distinct linguistic preferences and accents allow the reader and/or audience to differentiate them, but when they take each other's positions and switch accents or dress differently, they are occupying more than one space simultaneously. The clones, in this way, challenge the ways in which they are perceived by the other characters and what is, in turn, expected of them. Another insight here is that they can let go of the certain inhibitions that come with their original sense of self and put on a character where they can let go of those boundaries, adopting the as-if mindset catering to the question of transcendence (as if possible).

The above discussion leads to another finding in this chapter, which is the presence of the metamodern element of paradox. The element of paradox is at play because the possibility of transcendence manifests within this as-if mindset of the whole narrative. The very idea of challenging the notion of the spectrum and/or boundary helps in asserting as if the move beyond it is possible. This paradoxical position allows the subject to actually transcend while challenging such a possibility of transcendence. This is discussed and analyzed with reference to the clones and how this occupation of multiple positions allows the metaxis to emerge within the narrative.

The third and last chapter of the analysis deals with the consequences of the multiple positions that the subject occupies and how, in doing so, it transcends the spectrum of self. The consequences of these trajectories of transcendence are discussed with the metamodernist theoretical concept of atopos, the subjects occupying a place that is no place. It was discovered that it is the



fluid nature of the subject, as discussed previously, which allows it to occupy and hold several positions simultaneously, deliberately letting go and/or adopting the features of a position as per requirement. In so doing, an important finding that emerges is that the transcendence of the subject takes it to a place that is no place because, in this unique position, the subject has neither all the characteristics of their real self nor all the characteristics of their assumed self, and is in constant oscillation, resulting in atopos. The consequence of this kind of constant movement allows the subject to take infinite positions and wield agency in terms that were not possible before but are very much possible in a metamodern storyworld.

It is imperative to mention here that it is the science fiction genre (as well) that allows the subject to take these many positions and makes the reader and/or audience question the notions of subjectivity in such a fluid narrative. The speculative nature of the genre and technological advancement within such a storyworld gave the clones a perfect home to function in a way that made investigating these queries possible. It is also important to discuss the unexpected direction that the study took and how different it was from what I had imagined in the beginning. The addition of the dimension of transmedia storytelling to inform my analysis made it take a direction slightly different from the intended course. This ensured the involvement of the fluid nature of the narrative itself with multiple entry points. It created a possibility to explore how the narrative allowed the characters to assume the positions that they did and the discussion to go in this direction. Initially I thought that the discussion would be more character-centered since I wanted to explore the notion of subjectivity, but the narrative and its techniques supplemented the thought and moved it in a direction where it assumed a different form and made the discussion on subjectivity take a different route. This tangentiality in thought took me by surprise initially, but still, it was the direction that the study had to take as it was not possible to answer the controlling research questions without putting into use the concepts that were employed. The adapted framework and the focus that the questions created for me to approach the text allowed the study to morph into a form that appears to have catered to the issues of multiple subjectivities and shifting agencies.

Having summarized the findings, it is worth mentioning that there has been no considerable research conducted on *Orphan Black* from this theoretical perspective from Pakistan or elsewhere that I have come across while working on this study, which makes it different from previous research. In exploring *Orphan Black* through the lens of metamodern subjectivities, it is essential to

link this sci-fi narrative to my own Pakistani context. While *Orphan Black* presents complex multiplicities of identity, agency, and subjectivity in a futuristic and technologically advanced world, it also speaks to universal concerns about identity, power, and control that resonate across cultural contexts. In Pakistan, where questions of identity are deeply intertwined with historical, cultural, and political dynamics, the shifting subjectivities depicted in *Orphan Black*—particularly in the form of the clones—can be mapped onto contemporary Pakistani narratives that explore fragmented selves under global and local pressures. Works like *Sher-e-Tabassum*, a recent Pakistani sci-fi production, show the emerging discourse around identity in non-Western settings, challenging traditional boundaries while echoing the fluid, oscillating self of metamodernism. This cultural transposition enriches our understanding of how technology and identity politics interact in various socio-political climates, underscoring that the concerns of *Orphan Black* are not just Western but global. Thus, my study emphasizes the capacity of transmedia narratives, like those in *Orphan Black*, to transcend cultural boundaries and address shared human concerns of agency and identity in an interconnected world, offering transformative insights into the evolving nature of subjectivities.

The study is significant in the sense that it takes on a new and challenging area to investigate. The interdisciplinary nature of the study and the selected mediums have made the exploration of subjectivity interesting and, as mentioned earlier, this study is just one of the many possible interpretations. This allows me to comment on more that can be done in these areas and in the next section, I have mentioned a few recommendations for future research.

### **7.1. Recommendations for Further Research**

The present study delimits its discussion to the metamodernist notions of multiple subjectivities, metaxis, and atopos with reference to the science fiction digital text *Orphan Black*. The similar text could be explored with reference to the issues of gender, politics, human cloning, and bioengineering, taking into account other variations of the graphic novels such as *Deviations* or the new TV series *Orphan Black: Echoes*, which premiered in 2023. Similar ideas can also be investigated further with reference to the variations mentioned above in the texts. Moreover, the female clones from Project LEDA that the present study is delimited to can be compared and contrasted to the male clones from Project CASTOR within the TV series in terms of their subjective positions and the consequences of it.

The selected fictional universe can provide material for research projects on the ethics of human cloning, the consequences of it, and the implications of the existence of posthuman subjects in the contemporary world. Another recommended course could be to discuss the ever-developing field of metamodernism and how it deals with the notions of subjecthood, narrative, and characterization with reference to other science fiction TV narratives such as but not limited to *Westworld*, *Mr. Robot*, *Walking Dead*, *Better Than Us*, *Almost Human* and others. Different studies can be conducted on such TV series separately, or a compare and contrast approach can even be used by taking different characters from different series and looking at them simultaneously. Moreover, similar ideas can be looked into in film as well and would yield a very different kind of analysis pertaining to the shift in medium.

Considering that metamodernism is still a developing area of interest, quite a lot of avenues can be explored within the said theoretical domain. Within the ever-developing field of digital narratives, other genres such as comics, video games, manga, animation, anime, fan fiction, and/or web series can be used as sample texts to explore the possibilities for a metamodern subject to emerge and function. In addition to the ideas mentioned above, traditional literature and its different genres can be discussed by using metamodernism as a theoretical prop with a focus on narrative, plot, characters, or form.

Other theorists and their take on metamodernism as a school of thought can be deployed in contrast to my own theoretical lens derived from Vermeulen and Akker. Writers such as Sherryl Vint, Raoul Eshleman, Seth Abramson, and Jason Ananda Josephson Storm, to name but a few. Their views regarding metamodern subjects, performativity, the metamodern era, and the ensuing debate can be used to further many research projects in the fields of literature, TV studies, film studies, or cultural studies.

With reference to the technique of analysis, textual analysis itself can be employed in a variety of ways and, hence, can be used differently in future research. Moreover, within the domain of visual texts, other techniques, and methods, such as semiotic analysis, can be incorporated. In addition to this, within the domains of TV and film, camera angles, use of lighting, actors, and their performativity, and/ or narrative analysis can be some of the areas future researchers may look into with reference to metamodernism or even otherwise.

Subjectivity, in *Orphan Black*, can be studied from a variety of different perspectives, other than metamodernism. Frameworks from Critical Race Theory, Bioethics and Biopolitics Studies, Cyborg and Posthuman Studies, and/or Feminist Studies can be incorporated to trace the development of identity politics, agency, and human-machine hybridity, to name a few. Subjects such as trauma and desire in the clones can be studied from Affect Theory, which focuses on the myriad ways sensations, emotions, and experiences of the body shape subjectivity. Similarly, fields like Digital Humanities and Media Studies can be used to understand fan cultures and fan responses, and in collaboration with transmedia storytelling techniques, help explore how subjectivities are negotiated in digital spaces. Some other avenues that can be explored are corporate exploitation and how that can shape and transform the understanding and manifestation of subjectivity and agency; or studying different manifestations of subjectivities based on fluid gender spectrum through fields like Intersectional Feminism and/or Queer Studies.

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