"IT'S THE MEAT TALKING, IGNORE IT": THE QUESTION OF
POSTHUMAN EMBODIMENT IN WILLIAM GIBSON'S *NEUROMANCER*
AND KAZUO ISHIGURO'S *NEVER LET ME GO*

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the question of posthuman embodiment and condition in William Gibson's *Neuromancer* and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, two seminal works in science fiction. Although there is an extensive body of research on each novel individually, there remains a gap in the literature regarding exploring the two novels together, specifically concerning posthuman embodiment. The novels merit an investigation together, as they reveal this topic's multifaceted and variegated nature. The central argument of this thesis is that the exploration of posthuman embodiment and condition in *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go* reveals the intricate interplay between the posthuman body, autonomy, and power dynamics, emphasising the diverse manifestations and experiences of posthumanism in literature.

Neuromancer challenges conventional notions of embodiment, often associating posthuman embodiment and disembodiment with autonomy, transcendence, and power. In contrast, *Never Let Me Go* offers a more emotionally resonant exploration, demonstrating that the clones, despite their indistinguishable "souls," have no choice

over their status or bodies and are ultimately subjected to societal subjugation and control solely because of their posthuman bodies, designed to be harvested by "normal" humans. By investigating the manifestations of posthuman embodiment and condition in both novels, this thesis highlights the complex interplay between the posthuman body and power dynamics within each narrative, contributing to a deeper understanding of the posthuman experience in literature.

Keywords: posthumanism, posthuman embodiment, posthuman condition, *Never Let Me Go*, *Neuromancer*

ÖZ

"ET BU KONUŞAN, GÖRMEZDEN GEL": WILLIAM GİBSON'IN *NEUROMANCER* VE KAZUO ISHIGURO'NUN *BENİ ASLA BIRAKMA* ROMANLARINDAKİ İNSAN SONRASI BEDENLENME SORUNU

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Bu tez, William Gibson'ın *Neuromancer* ve Kazuo Ishiguro'nun *Beni Asla Bırakma* (*Never Let Me Go*) adlı iki bilimkurgu eserindeki insan sonrası (post-hümanizma) durumunu ve bedenleşme sorunsalını incelemektedir. Bu iki roman hakkında ayrı ayrı kapsamlı çalışmalar yapılmış olmasına rağmen, literatürde bu iki romanı birlikte, özellikle de post-hümanist bedenlenme sorunsalına ilişkin inceleme konusunda bir boşluk bulunmaktadır. Romanlar, insan sonrası olma durumunun ve bedenlenmenin çok yönlü doğasını ortaya çıkardıkları için birlikte incelenmeyi gerektirmektedir. Bu tezin ana argümanı, *Neuromancer* ve *Never Let Me Go*'daki insan sonrası durum ve bedenleşme konusu birlikte incelendiğinde post-hümanizmin çeşitli tezahürlerini ve deneyimleri vurgulayarak, insan sonrası beden, özerklik ve güç dinamikleri arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi ortaya çıkardığıdır.

Neuromancer genellikle insan sonrası bedenlenmeyi ve bedensizleşmeyi özerklik ve güçle ilişkilendirerek geleneksel bedenlenme kavramlarına meydan okur. Buna kıyasla, *Never Let Me Go* klonların normal insanlardan ayırt edilemez hallerine rağmen, ikinci sınıf statülerini ve bedenleri üzerinde hiçbir seçimleri olmadığını

göstermektedir. Yazar nihayetinde, klonların yalnızca post-insan bedenleri nedeniyle toplumsal boyun eğdirme ve kontrole tabi tutulduklarını göstermektedir ve duygusal açıdan yankı uyandıran bir keşif sunmaktadır. Her iki romanda da insan sonrası durumunun ve bedenlenmenin tezahürlerini araştıran bu tez, iki anlatıdaki insan sonrası beden ile güç dinamikleri arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi vurgulayarak edebiyatta insan sonrası deneyimin daha derinden anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunmayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: insan-ötesi, insan sonrası bedenlenme, insan sonrası durumu, *Beni Asla Bırakma*, *Neuromancer*

To B.B., for reminding me there is much beauty here, because there is much beauty everywhere — and to my family, for reminding me that in this dream world, loving is all that matters.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As the boundaries of the human blur in an ever-evolving technological landscape, this thesis delves into posthuman embodiment and condition through the lens of two seminal science fiction novels: *Neuromancer* (1984) by William Gibson and *Never Let Me Go* (2005) by Kazuo Ishiguro. While both novels are science fiction, they offer unique perspectives on the posthuman experience by portraying vastly different settings – one in a high-tech, futuristic dystopia and the other in an understated, alternate 1990s England. The novels serve as catalysts for readers, prompting them to examine the core nature and significance of human existence in a setting where distinctions between human, non-human, posthuman, and mechanical entities become increasingly indistinct. This provides a foundation for a more profound investigation into posthuman embodiment and condition.

In this thesis, I argue the posthuman body matters. Specifically, exploring posthuman embodiment and condition in *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go* reveal the intricate interplay between the posthuman body, autonomy, and power dynamics, emphasising the diverse manifestations and experiences of posthumanism in literature. Even though these two novels present highly different settings and attitudes towards the body, they are integral to the characters and the posthuman condition. In the thesis, I claim that *Neuromancer* presents a multifaceted posthuman condition that problematises the natural "meat" body and challenges conventional notions of embodiment through modifications, enhancements, and transcendence, often associating posthuman embodiment and disembodiment with autonomy, choice, and power. In contrast, *Never Let Me Go* offers a more emotionally resonant exploration of the posthuman experience, demonstrating that the clones, despite their indistinguishable "souls," have no choice over their status or bodies and are

1

ultimately subjected to societal subjugation and control solely because of their posthuman bodies, designed to be harvested by "normal" humans. I investigate the manifestations of posthuman embodiment and condition in *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go*, highlighting the complex interplay between the posthuman body and power dynamics within each narrative.

Neuromancer is a foundational work in the cyberpunk genre (Hollinger 30), and it emerged in the late 20th century as a response to rapid advancements in digital technology and their societal impacts. The novel envisions a dystopian future in which human consciousness can be transferred, altered, and manipulated within cyberspace and bodies can be augmented and fundamentally modified. Despite being almost four decades old at the time of this writing, *Neuromancer* remains the only book to have won the "big three" awards: Philip K. Dick, Nebula, and Hugo awards. In her book, *How We Became Posthuman* (1999), Katherine Hayles writes of Gibson:

> *I suspect that Gibson's novels have been so influential not only because they present a vision of the posthuman future that is already upon us - in this they are no more prescient than many other science fiction novels but also because they embody within their techniques the assumptions expressed explicitly in the themes of the novels. This kind of move is possible when the cultural conditions authorizing the assumptions are pervasive enough that the posthuman is experienced as an everyday, lived reality as well as an intellectual proposition. (39)*

Hayles suggests that the pervasive nature of the posthuman condition, coupled with Gibson's ability to interweave it into the fabric of his narrative, makes *Neuromancer* so impactful. The novel reflects not only a possible posthuman future but also an embodiment of the cultural and technological shifts already in motion, including advancements in cloning and biotechnology, which are actively present in our lives.

Similarly, *Never Let Me Go* is a popular speculative science fiction novel. The setting is notably different, in 1990s England, where this time human cloning is legal and mainstream, and human clones are raised to donate their organs. In 2017, its author, Kazuo Ishiguro, received the Nobel Prize for Literature. Ishiguro's narrative delves into the ethical and moral dilemmas surrounding the clones' existence and their struggle for identity and agency in a society that treats them as disposable

commodities. Like *Neuromancer*, *Never Let Me Go* touches upon technologies and issues that are broadly present in contemporary society, further emphasising the relevance of posthuman themes in the modern age. This study narrows in on the question of embodiment and the posthuman condition by analysing these two novels.

This study aims to address the following research questions and problems:

1. How do *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go* conceptualise and represent posthuman embodiment and condition in their respective narrative worlds?
2. What are the similarities and differences in their approaches to these themes that reflect variegated approaches to posthuman condition and embodiment?
3. What are the power dynamics inherent in depicting posthuman embodiment and condition in both novels, and how do these dynamics influence the characters' identities, agency, and social relationships?

Despite the extensive and individual critical analysis of *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go*, there has been limited scholarly exploration into the intersections of posthuman embodiment and condition in these two novels. In her review of *Never Let Me Go*, Cusk (2011) discusses the novel's portrayal of a dystopian England where human clones are raised for organ harvesting, highlighting the ethical and societal implications of cloning in a world that closely resembles our own. In contrast, *Neuromancer* envisions a high-tech, futuristic world dominated by global computer networks, virtual reality, and advanced technology. As Featherly (2023) points out, Gibson's novel not only prophesied the future impact of networked computing but also created a near-future world permeated by technologies in existence or development at the time of writing.

By undertaking this comparative study, this thesis aims to fill a gap in the existing literature and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of posthumanism in science fiction more broadly. This topic is significant as it highlights the importance of understanding the complex relationship between technology, embodiment, and the posthuman experience in literature. Ultimately, this research aims to provide a fresh perspective on the portrayal of posthuman embodiment and condition, contributing

to ongoing scholarly conversations about the role of literature in grappling with the profound transformations of human identity and agency in the face of rapidly advancing technology. The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 delves into the methodology and the posthuman framework, providing definitions, boundaries, and perspectives on posthumanism by engaging with the works of prominent researchers such as Hayles, Haraway, and Fukuyama. This chapter will also discuss notions of the posthuman condition and embodiment, drawing upon the works of researchers like Pepperell, to establish a framework to analyse the novels in the subsequent chapters. In Chapter 3, I focus on the question of embodiment in *Neuromancer*, providing an overview of the novel in the context of posthuman embodiment. This chapter explores the diversity of body representations through peripheral posthumans, Case's struggle with his posthuman body, the role of drugs and Case's urge to transcend the body, Molly Millions' enhanced posthuman body, and the disembodied characters such as Wintermute and Dixie. The chapter also discusses the power tension between the embodied and disembodied in the novel and how power dynamics shift in favour of the disembodied.

Chapter 4 explores the question of embodiment in *Never Let Me Go*, beginning with an overview of the novel in the context of posthuman embodiment. This chapter contrasts the biotechnological posthuman embodiment in Ishiguro's work with that in *Neuromancer*. It problematises the notion of "normal" humanity and the posthuman body and discusses the subtlety of power dynamics within posthuman embodiment in the novel. The chapter also delves into the supremacy of memory and relationships over the body for the posthumans in the novel, as they have internalised their status as posthumans and prioritised these aspects of their lives. Finally, in Chapter 5, I provide a summary of my findings, highlighting aims of this study to the understanding of posthuman embodiment and condition in literature and the ethical and societal implications of technological advancements as they are portrayed in these two novels.

Overall, this thesis investigates the depiction of posthuman embodiment and condition in the seminal works *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go*, each offering

unique insights into the posthuman experience. This comparative study explores the intricacies of posthuman identity, agency, and embodiment in the context of different representations of technology. Adopting a posthuman framework, *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go* challenge traditional humanist notions of identity and humanity in that they decentre the human and emphasise the agency of nonhuman entities. Both novels portray worlds in which the distinctions between what constitutes human and nonhuman entities are indistinct, creating complexity for conventional notions of identity and humanity. This issue becomes essential in the exploration of embodiment within the novels.

CHAPTER 2

POSTHUMAN CONDITION, EMBODIMENT AND FRAMEWORK

Posthumanism is a broad literary and philosophical framework that explores, among other things, the potential implications of advanced technology, particularly artificial intelligence and biotechnology, on the concept of being human. It explores what is beyond the current understanding of humanity and human nature, often characterised by the use of technology to enhance or transcend human capabilities — concepts that are problematised in Gibson's and Ishiguro's works. At the framework's core is the idea that humanity is not fixed or static but constantly evolving. In this chapter, I explore the concept of posthumanism and the "posthuman condition" as the frameworks to analyse *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go.*

Firstly, I provide definitions for posthumanism and discuss its boundaries. I provide overviews and analyses of the views of prominent scholars, like Hayles and Haraway, and differ them from other scholars, such as Badmington and Fukuyama. Then, I delve into notions of posthuman condition and embodiment and refer to the views of scholars like Pepperell.

2.1. Definition, Boundaries, and Perspectives of Posthumanism

Defining what it means to be a human has never been simple. As *homo sapiens*, stupendously animalistic in flesh and blood and elusively distinct in abstract thought, identity, and proclivity to alter its environment and its relationship to it, the human species has long been a subject of intense philosophical, sociological, and scientific scrutiny. Yet the exponential growth in technology since the late 20th century intensified this scrutiny by making it increasingly difficult to distinguish between the organic and the artificial, the biological and the mechanical, and the human and the

"post"human. Regarding "the dismantling of the human", Peter Boxall writes in his book *Twenty-First-Century Fiction* (2013) that:

> *We are now living through a historical period in which the meaning of the human is radically uncertain – as uncertain, perhaps, as it has ever been. It has perhaps never been more difficult to determine, legally or ethically or culturally, what constitutes the nature of human being, or how we might understand the limits of the human. Of course, the category of the human has always been an unstable one, as is demonstrated by the difficulty of maintaining a distinction between the human and the non-human, or the human and the animal. Mankind is part of the animal kingdom as well as being separate from it, and this simultaneous identity and disidentity between humans and animals has always posed a problem for those who like tidy classifications. (84)*

As described by Boxall above, the challenge of categorising humans within "tidy classifications" is explicitly explored in *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go*, a task made increasingly complex by advancements in and interference from biomedical, information, and mechatronic technologies. These developments pave the way for discussions on posthumanism, offering a comprehensive framework for analysing both novels.

Posthumanism contests "anthropocentrism" and the "exceptionalism" of "the human as a transcendental category" (Braidotti 66). According to Derek Ryan, posthumanism is a worldview that aims to move beyond humanist individualism and universality by decentering the human (298). Ryan argues that posthumanism meets ethical and political demands by considering nonhuman "others" and challenging anthropocentric ways of conceiving this encounter. Posthumanism seeks to imagine alternatives and bring "nonhuman others into an ethical and political consideration" that distinguishes the concept from the "antihumanism of Althusserian Marxism" (298). The concept focuses on the present and seeks to open up non-anthropocentric worldviews. It challenges the concept that humanity represents a more advanced life form and aims to address pressing issues such as animal mistreatment, climate change, and bioethics by reorienting the human (Ryan 299).

In a similar vein, in *The Posthuman Condition* (1995), Robert Pepperell highlights the tension between the legacy of "humanist" ideas concerning the human experience and emerging issues in differentiating between humans and machines (Pepperell iii).

The traditional view of human beings, which Pepperell critiques, encompasses the belief in humans as distinct, rational, and autonomous entities possessing inherent dignity and occupying a privileged position in the world. Pepperell employs the term "posthuman" to delineate the end of the humanist era, the transformation of this traditional view of humanity, as well as the convergence of biology and technology to the extent that the boundaries between them are increasingly blurred and indistinguishable (Pepperell iv).

Following Pepperell's perspective, the contributions of several other theorists, such as Braidotti, Ryan, Haraway, and Hayles, to the posthumanist discourse should be discussed. Rosi Braidotti, in her book *The Posthuman* (2013), articulates a similar vision of the posthuman condition by emphasising the fluidity and interconnectedness of life forms, thereby breaking the barriers between humans and other entities (Braidotti 45). Braidotti also argues that as technology evolved to our modern age, we became accustomed to genetically engineered food, high-tech prosthetics, reproductive technology, and significantly wider areas of artificial intelligence applications. This framework is highly salient to the posthuman world of *Neuromancer*, as described in Chapter 3. The conventional demarcation between humans and other species is rendered hazier, exposing the non-naturalistic nature of the "natural" human. According to Braidotti, the posthuman helps humanity to understand its multiple and adaptable identities, instead of perceiving this as a decline in our mental and ethical self-control (Braidotti 28).

Similarly, in her influential work "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1985), Donna Haraway challenges the essentialist and binary understandings of human identity by introducing the idea of a cyborg, "a hybrid of machine and organism" (Haraway 149). Haraway envisions this concept as transcending traditional boundaries between humans, animals, and machines, which has become a seminal and staple part of posthumanist thought. In this context, the posthuman condition offers a deconstructive element, dismantling the perceived dichotomy between natural, unaltered humans and those with technological enhancements or modifications.

In *How We Became Posthuman* (1999), Katherine Hayles investigates the implications of information technology on human body and consciousness, questioning the notion of human subjectivity (3). Hayles argues that the posthuman framework and condition is not an endpoint but an open-ended process shaped by cultural, social, and historical forces (11). Hayles argues that posthumanism is not about the so-called "end" of humanity, as one might erroneously assume, but rather about the ongoing evolution of humanity in response to advances in technology. The posthuman perspective enables a thorough rethinking of the concept of humanity, not only in terms of the individual but also concerning their connection to the broader society and the environment.

Echoing Pepperell's remarks on the tension between humanist tenets and the modern age, Hayles writes that "in many ways the posthuman deconstructs the liberal humanist subject" (Hayles 5). Specifically, the posthuman perspective challenges the liberal humanist assumptions about the inherent superiority of humans, their autonomous and rational nature, and their distinctness from other forms of life and machines. By emphasising "cognition rather than embodiment" (Hayles 5), the posthuman approach interrogates the traditional humanist reliance on the human body as the primary locus of identity and agency, recognising instead the importance of information processing, technological mediation and the entanglements of humans with their environment. The shift towards a posthuman perspective necessitates a reassessment of human subjectivity, as it recognizes human identity's fluid and interdependent nature with technology and other life forms. Hayles espouses the concept of the "posthuman subject" to be an "amalgam" and as "a collection of heterogeneous components" whose boundaries are constantly being constructed and reconstructed (Hayles 1). According to Hayles, a posthuman future would prioritise information patterns over material substance, acknowledge that consciousness arises from the physical, accept that the human body can be enhanced or replaced, and view humans as potentially interchangeable with intelligent machines (Hayles 1-3).

Given Hayles' view that the self is distributed and located in different parts (Hayles 283), Calum MacKellar acknowledges the challenge of forming a specific identity in the posthuman. Although it remains uncertain what a posthuman future will look

like, MacKellar asserts that it will continue to be driven by the belief that humans could manipulate their "evolutionary fate" through science and technology (MacKellar 165). This connection between and problematisation of the posthuman body and technology is exemplified in *Neuromancer*, where the posthuman body is depicted as "data made flesh" (qtd. in MacKellar 165), as I discuss extensively in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

MacKellar discusses the possible development of posthumanism in his book *Cyborg Mind* (2017), suggesting that possible future posthumans may be distinguished from transhumans because their capacities would "exceed those of present human beings" to such an extent that they "would no longer be considered human in any significant degree or form" (MacKellar 164). MacKellar admits it is difficult to describe the posthuman accurately, as it is "an amalgam, a collection of heterogeneous components, a material-informational entity whose boundaries undergo continuous construction and reconstruction" (MacKellar 164-165).

In contrast to such posthumanist perspectives, some scholars argue that the humanist era is far from over. Neil Badmington, in his article "Theorizing Posthumanism" (2000), contends that posthumanism should not be considered the end of humanism but rather as a critical engagement with humanism, interrogating and redefining its boundaries (Badmington 9). He claims posthumanism "needs theory, needs theorising, needs above all to reconsider the untimely celebration of the absolute end of 'Man'" (10). Badmington is sceptical of the idea that posthumanism requires no theorising, arguing that posthumanism's relationship to humanism is too complex to be easily dismissed. He notes that while he is "not for one moment interested in preserving humanism," he believes that the notion of the "end of 'Man'" is premature and that the "apocalyptic tone" of much posthumanist discourse should be "toned down a little" (11).

For Badmington, the challenge of posthumanism is to grapple with the persistence of humanism in the face of apparently posthumanist developments. He notes that the vision of "downloading human consciousness into a computer", for example, is a "seemingly posthumanist desire" that is, in fact, derived from "the distinctly

humanist matrix of Cartesian dualism" (Badmington 11). He quotes Hayles, who argues that such desires "are not abandoning the autonomous liberal subject but is expanding its prerogatives into the realm of the posthuman" (Hayles 287). In other words, humanist assumptions persist even in seemingly posthumanist ideas. It is essential to ask, "[I]f traces of humanism find their way into even the most apocalyptic accounts of the posthumanist condition, what is to be done?" (Badmington 12).

Furthermore, in his influential work *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution* (2002), Francis Fukuyama expresses concerns about the potential threats that biotechnology and posthumanism pose to human nature and society. He asserts that advancements in biotechnology have the potential to create a "'posthuman' stage of history", with altered human nature as its defining characteristic (Fukuyama 7). This transformation would affect human embodiment and have profound implications for political rights and social structures. The clash between contemporary humanist culture and corporate technoscience, exemplified by Fukuyama's defence of state regulation of biotechnology in his book, is also relevant to portraying the posthuman condition and framework. Fukuyama emphasises the potential consequences of biotechnological advancements on political rights, stating, "The ultimate question raised by biotechnology is, What will happen to political rights once we are able to, in effect, breed some people with saddles on their backs, and others with boots and spurs?" (Fukuyama 32).

To further emphasise this critical approach, Fukuyama questions the assumptions about the nature of a posthuman society, arguing that it could become more hierarchical, competitive, and conflict-ridden than the current world (Fukuyama 37). This perspective is in line with his earlier article "Second Thoughts: The Last Man in a Bottle" (1999), in which he states that "biotechnology will be able to accomplish what the radical ideologies of the past, with their unbelievably crude techniques, were unable to accomplish: to bring about a new type of human being." Indeed, works that explore posthumanism, such as *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go*, can delve into the implications of biotechnological advancements and potentially creating "a new type of human being". These narratives illustrate the tensions that

11

arise when humanist values confront the possibilities and risks of a posthuman future shaped by technoscience and the potential consequences for human dignity, social hierarchies, and political rights.

Bert Simon contends that Fukuyama's critique primarily targets popular posthumanism, which promotes transcending biological boundaries and establishing new societal structures. However, he asserts that critical posthumanism, which questions conventional distinctions between humans and non-humans, nature and culture, and body and technology, is neglected. Simon highlights a significant tension in Fukuyama's defence of liberal humanism against modern cultures of unrestricted individualism and uncontrolled corporate technoscience. This tension, according to Simon, exemplifies the contradictions emerging when a historically humanist public culture encounters present-day corporate technoscientific visions of endlessly adaptable life (Simon 1). Simon implies that the principles of liberal humanism, focusing on human dignity and moral values, appear to conflict with the more speculative, market-oriented goals of contemporary technoscience, which frequently entail the exploitation and commercialisation of life.

Popular posthumanism envisions a future where individuality is realized, biological boundaries are surpassed, and new societal structures emerge. Although radical forms of this discourse exist on the fringes of public culture, less intense variations appear in mainstream media sources like *TIME* magazine and *The New York Times*, popular movies like *The Matrix*, works by scientists like Hans Moravec and Ray Kurzweil, and the publicity of companies like Monsanto (Simon 2). These toned-down versions still exhibit the conflict between humanist principles and corporate technoscientific ambitions, frequently presenting images of a future that may challenge our perception of humanity and blur distinctions between humans and machines, nature and culture, and bodies and technology.

To comprehensively grasp the intricate boundaries and definitions of posthumanism, it is crucial to recognize its complexity and differentiate it from associated concepts, such as transhumanism, to appreciate its implications within the scope of this thesis. As stated by Andy Miah, examining the history of posthumanism is not equivalent to

solely studying the history of medical enhancements or technology (Miah 71). Instead, posthumanism encompasses questioning the importance of species demarcations and animal ethics, as well as linking cultural texts to discussions about the morality of adopting synthetic biology. Miah underlines that posthumanism's critical foundation lies in its opposition to the notion that humans occupy a superior position in the natural hierarchy (Miah 72).

Diverging from transhumanism, which pursues technological progress to create an enhanced and perfected humanity, posthumanism seeks to introduce non-anthropocentric perspectives in the present (Ryan 299). Cary Wolfe explains how posthumanism strives to "depict the human and its typical methods of communication, interaction, meaning, social signification, and emotional investments with increased precision" (Wolfe xxv). The crucial difference between posthumanism and transhumanism is that while the latter aims to perfect an anthropocentric world for the future, the former intends to address urgent issues such as animal mistreatment, climate change, environmental concerns, and bioethics by redefining the human (Ryan 299).

2.2. Notions of Posthuman Condition and Embodiment

The human condition can be a nebulous concept in its own right. *Post*human condition, as referred to extensively in Chapters 3 and 4, derives its meaning precisely from the fact that it offers a radical critique and redefinition of humanity. Mark Taylor characterises the posthuman condition in his book *The Moment of Complexity: Emerging Network Culture* (2001) by mentioning that "the posthuman condition is one in which the boundaries between human and machine are blurred, and in which the distinction between the natural and the artificial is increasingly difficult to maintain" (32). Michele Farisco cites various theorists who have discussed the hybrid nature of contemporary human identity, including Donna Haraway, Katherine Hayles, Rosi Braidotti, Elaine Graham, and Joel de Rosnay (Farisco 1816). These authors argue that human identity is shaped not only by biological factors but also by the dynamic interplay between humans and their technology.

13

Therefore, the "posthuman condition" can be seen as a response to the perceived limitations and shortcomings of the human condition, which have become more apparent in the age of rapid technological advancement, which is what this study narrows in on through its investigation of *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go*. The concept of the posthuman condition has been specifically shaped by contemporary technoscience, and it can be interpreted in two fundamental meanings, with the first referring to the hybridisation of humans and technology and the second to burgeoning posthumanity that is taking over the human condition (Farisco 1815-1816).

Pepperell was the first academic to extensively explore the implications of the posthuman condition in his aforementioned book, *The Posthuman Condition*. He contends that the line separating humans and machines is gradually fading as our reliance on mechanical, technological, and biological support grows; this results in a subtle shift in the power dynamics between humans and machines (Pepperell 2). The posthuman perspective on human existence posits that consciousness and the environment are indistinguishable, and nothing can exist outside of a human being since the boundaries of a human cannot be definitively established (Pepperell 22). He argues that the human is, in essence, no different from any other "energistic" system in the universe, and we can never determine the absolute boundary of the human, either physically or mentally (Pepperell 22). Such an argument acutely parallels Boxall's interpretation of dismantling the human in modern novels that the exponential acceleration in "the speed of computing has produced the experience of a virtual, unlimited extension of the self, as rapid information exchange allows us to occupy space and time in entirely new ways, sometimes in the virtual realm known as 'second life'" (Boxall 90).

Moreover, as we shift to the concept of embodiment, it is important to underscore how technology and biotechnological advancements continue to blur nature and culture, and treasured distinctions that made us humans from what is not. Posthuman body and embodiment has emerged as a significant area of exploration in contemporary discourse. In her work "The Posthuman Body," Katherine Hayles provides a crucial framework for understanding the posthuman body and

embodiment, and I will provide an overview of the framework she delivers. Hayles identifies two primary sites related to the posthuman: biological alterations into the human body and cybernetic alterations that alter the body or produce "artificial life". As she elaborates:

> *Just when we were recovering from a flood of "post-," a new one blows into town with an attitude and a problem. How to get a hold on this mutating concept? The two sites most often associated with the posthuman are biological interventions into the human body—cloning, gene therapy, artificial wombs, fertilization in vitro, etc.—and cybernetic interventions that either modify the human body or fashion artificial life in its evolutionary image. Both sites have been deeply influenced by thinking of the human mind/body as information: biology, through seeing DNA as an informational code; cybernetics, through envisioning systems as constituted by the flow of information through them. Already joined by an informational worldview, the biological and the cybernetic are increasingly entering into the same sphere of action. (Hayles "Posthuman Body" 241-242)*

Hayles' identification of these two primary sites of the posthuman body highlights the multifaceted nature of posthuman embodiment and provides a comprehensive framework for further exploration. By examining both biological and cybernetic interventions, Hayles acknowledges the vast array of technological advancements that have the potential to alter the human body, thereby transforming how humanity is to be comprehended.

The biological interventions that Hayles mentions, such as cloning, gene therapy, and artificial wombs, greatly impact the human body. It also affects our understanding of human reproduction, heredity, and even identity. This is a particularly important perspective and framework for *Never Let Me Go*, as described in Chapter 4. For instance, gene therapy can potentially eliminate or mitigate genetic disorders. Still, it raises ethical concerns about the possible manipulation of human traits for superficial or eugenic purposes. This is taken to the extreme in Ishiguro's novel, as full-on humans are bred simply to extract their organs. Similarly, artificial wombs may revolutionise reproductive options for individuals who are unable to conceive or carry a pregnancy. Yet, they also provoke questions about the implications of completely separating human reproduction from the female body. Clones in Ishiguro's novel, like the narrator Kathy H., are thoroughly stripped of their ability to

reproduce, which Kathy laconically explains, "none of us could have babies" (Ishiguro 53).

Hayles' reference to cybernetic interventions, which include modifying the human body or creating artificial life, underscores the increasing convergence of technology and biology. In this context, the human body is no longer perceived as a static, natural entity but rather as a malleable, adaptive system that can be enhanced or even transcended through technological means. This is particularly salient in *Neuromancer*, as explored in Chapter 3, as the posthuman body is frequently augmented with cybernetic implants and neural interfaces, obscuring understanding of where machine ends and human starts. This shift in perspective has profound implications for our understanding of human identity, as it challenges traditional notions of the mind/body dualism and the boundaries between self and other.

Similarly, Hayles' emphasis on the informational worldview that connects both biological and cybernetic interventions provides a crucial insight into the underlying conceptual framework that drives posthuman embodiment. By viewing the human body as a system of information, researchers and innovators have been able to envision new possibilities for manipulating and augmenting the human body through various technological means. As is described in *Neuromancer* with Case's interactions and obsessions with cyberspace, the human mind becomes intertwined with the digital realm, extending consciousness beyond the physical body and altering perceptions of reality. This informational worldview also raises essential questions about the nature of consciousness, as it suggests that our subjective experiences may be reducible to patterns of information that can be replicated or altered through technological means.

Finally, as we explore the intricacies of posthuman embodiment in the context of advanced technologies and biotechnological interventions, it is important to refer to this concept's broader philosophical and ethical dimensions. *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go* provide valuable insights into the implications of the posthuman body and embodiment for individuals and collective identities. Both novels grapple with the complex intersections of technology, identity, and the posthuman body. As discussed

by Luna Dolezal, the concept of "morphological freedom" raises questions about autonomy, self-ownership, and the potential commodification of the body. The idea behind this concept is that individuals are entitled to alter or augment their bodies in any manner they desire, as demonstrated by characters such as Molly Millions. Central to posthumanism and biohacking discourses, morphological freedom challenges conventional understandings of human embodiment and raises important questions about the sociocultural landscape within which such practices and discourses operate (Dolezal 310).

Additionally, reflecting the thoughts of Halberstam and Livingstone, the research by Nicholas Gane on posthuman civilization and community highlights the significance of the physical form as a crucial reference for comprehending the posthuman state. Gane considers the posthuman form as a network of junctions at which physical forms, conversations, and innovations converge. This method seeks to challenge the cybernetic interpretation of bodies as data structures while emphasizing the corporeal aspect of information and technology, irrespective of whether the forms continue to be human (Gane 432).

Meanwhile, Timothy Lenoir's work on the posthuman body and embodiment further complicates the relationship between discursive constructions of the body and individual experiences of embodiment. Lenoir argues that the body is an abstraction produced by various medical, legal, political, and economic discourses, while individual material bodies and their experiences remain distinct from these abstractions (Lenoir 211). The tension between the two highlights the dynamic nature of posthuman embodiment, as discursive constructions continuously intersect with embodied experiences and are transformed in the process.

Overall, posthumanism investigates how modern technology, especially biotechnology and artificial intelligence, can affect the concept of being human. It investigates what lies beyond our existing view of humanity and human nature, which is frequently characterised by the use of technology to improve or exceed human capabilities. The fundamental tenet of the framework is that human nature is not permanent nor static but is always changing. As this thesis progresses, the

analysis of posthuman embodiment and condition in *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go* will be framed within the context of these foundational concepts. Exploring the various manifestations of posthuman experiences in both novels will reveal the complex interplay between technology, the posthuman body, and power dynamics.

CHAPTER 3

THE QUESTION OF POSTHUMAN EMBODIMENT IN *NEUROMANCER*

William Gibson's seminal cyberpunk novel [1], *Neuromancer* (1984), offers a compelling exploration of posthuman embodiment, challenging conventional notions of human experience and identity. The question of embodiment has taken on new dimensions and urgency as readers confront the possibility of a posthuman existence. This chapter delves into the complexities of posthuman embodiment in *Neuromancer*, shedding light on the ways in which Gibson's characters navigate the fluid boundaries between the biological and the technological. In the chapter, I argue that Gibson reveals the complex interplay between identity, power, and agency by depicting various posthuman embodiments, reactions to bodily constraints and enhancements, and complete disembodiment.

After providing a brief overview of the novel's plot and setting, I analyse peripheral characters such as Julius Deane, 3Jane, and Marie-France, who serve as diverse examples of how the posthuman condition and embodiment can manifest in different ways. Then, I continue the chapter and shift attention toward Case, the protagonist, who grapples with the limitations of his "meat" body and yearns for transcendence

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[1] The cyberpunk genre essentially emerged in the 1980s as a subgenre of science fiction that explored the intersection of high-tech computerization and punk counterculture. In 1982, Bruce Bethke introduced the term "cyberpunk," combining "cybernetics," the study of replacing human functions with computerized systems, and "punk," referring to the rebellious attitude and music that emerged among young people in the 1970s and 1980s (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2022). Although its origins can be traced back to the technological fiction of the 1940s and '50s and the works of Samuel R. Delany, the cyberpunk movement truly gained momentum with the publication of *Neuromancer*, which serves as a primary focus of this thesis alongside Ishiguro's work. Cyberpunk is characterized by exchanging information between humans and machines through bodily enhancements, computer interfaces, and virtual reality systems. It is also recognized for its subversive attitude towards genre boundaries and lifestyle, frequently challenging traditional gender roles and prioritizing the street over broader economic concerns (Birch, 2009). A key aspect of the cyberpunk worldview is the idea that the heroic independence of "western man" has lost significance as he becomes increasingly interconnected with a data-driven global system (Stringer, 2005).

through cyberspace. This section will examine how Case's experiences raise thought-provoking questions about the nature of embodiment and the potential for liberation from the confines of the physical form.

Subsequently, I move to Molly, another central character, which helps add further nuance to the understanding of posthuman embodiment by blurring the lines between human and machine. As an augmented individual with cybernetic enhancements, Molly embodies a hybrid existence that raises questions about the implications of merging the organic with the inorganic and the ways in which such a fusion can reconfigure the understanding of what a human being entails.

Finally, I will discuss the disembodied posthumans, specifically Wintermute and Dixie Flatline, who challenge the very notion of embodiment itself within the posthuman condition. By examining their existence and actions within the narrative, this section will probe shifting power structures and whether embodiment remains a critical aspect of the human experience. Through this analysis, this chapter aims to provide a deeper understanding of posthuman embodiment as it is explored in *Neuromancer*, contributing to the broader conversation on technology's implications in literature and the evolving understanding of what it means to be a (post)human.

3.1. Overview of *Neuromancer*

Alongside being genre-defining and highly influential, *Neuromancer* has been recognised as a major contribution to the discussion of posthumanism (Siegel 9; Pordzik 148). The novel tells the story of Henry Case, a talented hacker — or "good, but not that good…" hacker, as Molly Millions puts it (Gibson 41) — whose nervous system has been damaged. This hinders his ability to access cyberspace after he was caught stealing funds. Wintermute, a fragment of an artificial general intelligence (AGI), recruits Case, promising to repair his capabilities. To ensure Case's compliance, Wintermute introduces deadly toxins into his bloodstream, holding the antidote hostage.

Case's mission is to infiltrate the computer system of the high-born Tessier-Ashpool family, the creators of Wintermute and its sibling AI, Neuromancer. The central motivation of the story is Wintermute's ingrained aspiration to unite with Neuromancer, its counterpart AI. However, the Turing Police, an organization dedicated to containing AI intelligence within pre-established human boundaries, has set up defences to prevent such a union.

In order to bypass these obstacles, Wintermute assembles a team for Case, including Molly Millions, the deceased McCoy Pauley (whose personality is stored in a read-only-memory ROM construct), Armitage, Peter Riviera, Maelcum, and Lady 3Jane, a third-generation clone of the Tessier-Ashpool daughter. In the end, Case gains access to the crucial system Wintermute seeks, aided by a computerized version of his late mentor, Dixie Flatline. As a result, Wintermute successfully fuses with Neuromancer, giving birth to a new entity that embodies the next phase in cybernetic development (Siegel 9). This is ultimately able to describe itself as "the sum total of the works, the whole show" (Gibson 216).

Neuromancer is not just significant for its genre-defining plot and aesthetics but also for its visceral display of posthumanity, blurring boundaries between humans and machines (Roberts, qtd. in Frentz 62). The novel is important for posthumanism as it deals with the dichotomy between "meatspace" and "cyberspace" (Siegel 9), as well as the implications of the fusion of ontologically different entities such as humans and their technology. With this ability, the novel challenges anthropocentric idealism by exploring the consequences of the ongoing questioning of humanism (Pordzik 148-150). The concept of cyberspace itself, as a modern technological phenomenon, "has a strange status, not only because it has not been realized, but also because it is a concept that has its origins in fiction, particularly in the cyberpunk novels of William Gibson" (Stallabrass qtd. in Myer 887).

Cyberspace, a concept now deeply ingrained in our contemporary consciousness, owes much of its popularisation to *Neuromancer*. The novel portrays cyberspace as the domain of disembodiment, wherein Case connects to the digital world and projects his "disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination that was

the matrix" (Gibson 4). Within the same realm, Wintermute, the ultimate disembodied AI, ultimately becomes a "hive mind, decision maker, effecting change in the world outside" (Gibson 215). Gibson delves into the posthumanist idea of surpassing human constraints through technology, using computers as allegories for human recollection and individuality through such portrayals (Grant 42). His presentation of cyberspace defies traditional notions of physicality and selfhood, prompting inquiries about the essence of awareness and the repercussions of technological progress on the posthuman state in the novel's universe, particularly exemplified by Case.

The novel illustrates the way in which the investigation of the mind's biology has permanently adapted to accommodate the requirements of computational neuroscience. It introduces a realm dependent on artificial limbs and pharmaceuticals, which function as crucial instruments for traversing the digital environment and participating in a re-envisioned version of human life (Lord 170-172). This transformation leads to the disintegration and reconstruction of the individual's sense of the so-called "self", merging with a novel medium that surpasses earlier spiritual or transcendental ways of thinking in terms of expansiveness and benefits (Pordzik 150). The humans in the novel are not mere flesh, bones, and consciousness — they are posthumans whose embodiment is characterised and augmented by technology, allowing them to exist beyond biological embodiment. The novel portrays a world where "organic" and "artificial" are problematised and redefined.

The posthuman characters' struggle to overcome their past experiences pervade the novel, programming, mental and physical alterations, or even mutilation, pervades the novel, and they turn to technology as a means to escape or alter their embodied existence. This desire for self-transcendence is characteristic of posthuman thought, and Gibson's creative approach mirrors the novel's exploration of embodiment, as his literary detournement fuses semiotic elements from diverse cultural sources, breaking free from traditional genre constraints and reinforcing the theme of transcending human boundaries, moving on to the posthuman.

For the context of this thesis, it is crucial to differentiate the ideas presented in *Neuromancer* from certain transhumanist movements that view technology as a means to escape or repress the biological and material aspects of human existence. There has been some research and discussion on transhumanism and *Neuromancer* (see Choo, 2018; Collado Rodrigez, 2021; Hrušovský, 2016). Posthumanism, particularly when examined in relation to *Neuromancer*, does not explicitly promote the relinquishment of individual autonomy. Instead, it extends the rights and privileges of the autonomous subject into the posthuman domain. This perspective challenges the long-standing notions of disembodiment and self-sufficiency stemming from humanist traditions (Wolfe qtd. in Gallagher 35). This distinction highlights the importance of examining *Neuromancer*'s portrayal of posthuman embodiment as a means to understand the complexities of human-technology relationships. This is salient for the analyses, primarily of the characters as discussed in the rest of the thesis, and the implications of their relationships for the understanding of subjectivity, consciousness, and the broader posthuman experience.

Overall, *Neuromancer* is a groundbreaking work in the cyberpunk genre, offering profound insights into the posthuman condition and the complex interplay between humans and technology. By exploring the intricacies of embodiment and transcendence of human limitations, Gibson challenges traditional anthropocentric ideals and redefines the boundaries of identity, consciousness, and embodiment. The novel grapples with the implications of a posthuman world, wherein technology serves as both a means of escape and transformation for its characters. It is essential to distinguish *Neuromancer*'s portrayal of posthumanism from that which seeks to discard the biological and material aspects of human existence, as the novel expands upon the autonomous subject rather than abandoning it. Ultimately, *Neuromancer* serves as a crucial lens to examine the dynamics of human-technology relationship, posthuman embodiment, disembodiment, and the posthuman condition, as will be analysed in subsequent subchapters.

3.2. Exploration of the Diversity of Body through Peripheral Posthumans

Posthumanity and the posthuman body in *Neuromancer* have been the subject of critical research and inquiry, particularly as they relate to the fusion of technology and posthuman existence. While the majority of discourse centre around primary protagonists, Case and Molly, the exploration of peripheral characters like Julius Deane, 3Jane, and Marie-France Tessier help set the tone for the novel's exploration of the posthuman condition and embodiment. In this subsection, I provide an overview of peripheral characters who contribute to this paradigm in the novel, shedding light on posthuman embodiment in diverse ways.

Julius Deane emerges as a unique secondary character in the novel. A centenarian aged 135 years, Deane's remarkable longevity is attributable to a combination of serums, hormones, and annual trips to Tokyo for genetic surgery. His appearance is described as "sexless" and "inhumanly" patient (Gibson 10), emphasising the atypical and fabricated nature of his persona. His chief satisfaction stems from his dedication to obscure types of tailor-appreciation, demonstrated by his closet filled solely with precise re-creations of clothing from a century ago. Deane's workspace, where Case experiences crucial moments in both virtual and physical realms, presents a diverse fusion of contrasting aesthetics, highlighting his flamboyant tastes and incorporating a varied mix of European furnishings, "Neo-Aztec" shelving, and whimsical table lights.

Deane appears briefly and sporadically in the novel, yet plays an important role. He is implicated in Linda Lee's death, albeit manipulated by Wintermute, inciting Case's anger and potentially motivating him to pursue the merger of Wintermute and Neuromancer. Wintermute's choice to assume Deane's form further underscores his significance, imbuing him with a sense of knowingness. Deane juxtaposes the drug-and-resentment-fuelled masculine chaos that characterises Case's life after his mutilation. Although the novel almost exclusively presents Case's experiences, Deane's modified, unaging, inexpressive, and queer posthuman body exemplifies the complex and diverse interplay between technology and the posthuman condition in the novel. Gibson describes Deane as having a metabolism "assiduously warped by a

weekly fortune in serums and hormones" and undergoing a yearly procedure in Tokyo to "re-set the code of his DNA" (Gibson 10). This dedication to preserving his youthful appearance contrasts with his interest in and collection of antique and eclectic objects, as evidenced by his office filled with "meticulous reconstructions of garments of the previous century," "Neo Aztec bookcases," and "a Dali clock" (Gibson 10).

Furthermore, Deane's interactions with Case and others reveal a detached and impersonal demeanour; for instance, when discussing potential threats to Case's life, Deane shrugs as if discussing something as mundane as the price of ginger (Gibson 11). This disconnect from human emotion, alongside his technologically altered body, highlights the extent to which Deane's identity has been shaped by posthuman intervention. Seed argues that Deane's atypical inclinations, combined with his perception of his own manliness and cultural artifacts, establish a unique link between knowledge, culture, and authority. The juxtaposition of Deane's well-groomed pink hands grasping an improvised, somewhat primitive weapon highlights the disparity between his polished facade and the darker, more menacing aspects of his persona (Gibson 30). Deane's existence demonstrates the complex dimensions of posthuman embodiment and their consequences for posthuman identity in *Neuromancer* (Butler 539).

According to Stevens, Deane's character is connected with knowledge and a sense of being in-the-know, representing the strained connection between paranoia and power throughout Neuromancer. He frequently appears in Case's dreams, becoming the only target against which Case manages to execute a successful act of aggression in the guise of Wintermute. Deane is reimagined as an "unconventional figure" that foreshadows Case's troublesome association with cyberspace and artificial intelligence, achieved through his controlling manliness. Simultaneously, his aesthetic supports not only Armitage/Corto's masculine, military-inspired persona but also Case's "unkempt, disheveled sallowness and tense paranoia" (Stevens 418-420).

Similarly, 3Jane, a third-generation clone from the Tessier-Ashpool family —and a more central figure in the plot than Deane— embodies different elements of the posthuman condition. As a clone, 3Jane challenges conventional notions of human uniqueness, identity and autonomy. Her predilection for violence and her emotional detachment from the consequences of her actions underscore the darker aspects of posthuman existence, wherein moral boundaries become increasingly obscured under her near-nihilistic sensibilities.

To illustrate this penchant for violence and disregard for life, one can consider 3Jane's role in her father's death. She manipulates his cryogenic system, causing him to believe he killed himself: "So basically, she killed him", as Wintermute recounts her story (Gibson 167). This incident demonstrates her willingness to exploit her knowledge —significantly supported by Wintermute, as it mentions, "Well, actually, I guess I did give 3Jane the odd hint, a little of the old how to, you know?" (Gibson 167)— access to virtually unlimited resources and incomparable technology to exert control over others, even those with whom she shares a close familial relationship. Her actions reveal a disconnection from traditional moral principles and a level of emotional detachment characteristic of posthuman existence.

3Jane's emotional detachment is further illustrated when she interacts with Molly, who is injured and vulnerable. Despite Molly's dire situation, 3Jane displays a sinister, nihilistic sense of calm and readiness to inflict suffering:

> *"He wants to kill you."*
> *"Figures," Molly said, staring up at the rough ceiling past a very bright light."*
> *"I don't think I want him to," 3Jane said, and Molly painfully turned her head to look up into the dark eyes.*
> *"Don't play with me,' she said."*
> *"But I think I might like to," 3Jane said, and bent to kiss her forehead, brushing the hair back with a warm hand. There were smears of blood on her pale djellaba.*
> *(...)*
> *"I think it might be fun to nurse you back to health, Molly." She smiled, absently wiping a bloody hand down the front of the robe. "Your leg will need to be reset, but we can arrange that." (Gibson 184).*

This interaction highlights the complexity of 3Jane's character, as she exhibits both tenderness and a sinister desire to exert control over Molly's suffering. 3Jane's

apparent delight in toying with Molly's emotions and her readiness to cause her further pain reflect her near-nihilistic sensibilities. These qualities emphasise the darker aspects of her lonely, cloned and isolated posthuman existence and the blurred moral boundaries that characterise her worldview. Through this brief interaction, her ostensible care, empathy, and compassion represent a façade that conceals a deeper, more complex set of motivations and desires that further emphasise the emotional detachment and moral ambiguity that characterises her personality and existence.

This is the same attitude exemplified when 3Jane responds to the news of Riviera's slow poisoning. Instead of expressing the slightest concern for Riviera, she reacts with chilling amusement: "`That's appalling,' 3Jane said, and giggled" (Gibson 205). It emphasises the darker, disconcerting aspects of her posthuman existence, desensitised to suffering — including her own, as Case suspects 3Jane wants Molly to keep choking her, when he says "She wants it,' he screamed, `the bitch wants it!'" (Gibson 211). Her responses highlight her fascination with violence and suffering and her detachment from events that are affecting her life.

This is congruous with the overall atmosphere of the novel, as Gibson explores and illustrates the ramifications of the Tessier-Ashpool family's posthuman existence, as 3Jane's actions resist her family's self-destructive trajectory. She sabotages her father's cryotube to instigate madness, defying her family's legacy and contributing to its disintegration. Even more critically, she consents to assist Case, Molly, and Maelcum in liberating her family's two AGIs, Wintermute and Neuromancer. She, perhaps, participates in this for the "craziness" (Gibson 164) that central, primary characters like Case cannot comprehend.

3Jane's cloned, posthuman embodiment, created under circumstances vastly different from the characters in *Never Let Me Go*, reconfigures power dynamics within the novel and highlights the ramifications of transcending human limitations through technology and AGI. 3Jane, her father, and her biologically cloned brother 8Jean represent the only active members of the Tessier-Ashpool family residing in Villa Straylight. This setting symbolises the family's growing disconnection from humanity and increasing insularity (Gibson 164). The Tessier-Ashpool family,

having "sealed [itself] away behind [its] money, growing inward, generating a seamless universe of self" (Gibson 108), demonstrates the potential isolation resulting from a unique posthuman existence not found elsewhere in the novel's expansive world. Such a unique, peripheral character's crucial role during the climax of the novel has significant implications for the narrative of power (Strombeck 288-289).

This exploration of 3Jane's character contributes to understanding the diversity of posthuman embodiment and the posthuman condition in *Neuromancer*, revealing the wide-ranging implications of such transformations. Her existence as a clone and her family's fate exemplify the potential consequences of humanity's pursuit of immortality and self-preservation through technological means. 3Jane's character stands in contrast to primary posthuman figures in the novel, such as Case and Molly, whose posthumanity is more centred on the integration of technology with their physical bodies. This diversity of posthuman bodies and experiences emphasises the complexity of Gibson's exploration of the evolving relationship between humanity and technology in *Neuromancer*.

This brings us to Marie-France Tessier, the matriarch of the Tessier-Ashpool family, who plays a crucial role in *Neuromancer's* examination of posthuman embodiment and condition, despite her death preceding the events of the novel. It is important to note that the entire plot unfolds due to Marie-France's aspirations and schemes. She is both a distant memory and a visionary, as she commissioned the creation of twin AIs, Wintermute and Neuromancer, intending to establish a symbiotic relationship between the AIs and the Tessier-Ashpool family (Gibson 229). Her legacy in the posthuman world is the disembodied symbiosis of AGI and the "natural" body.

Marie-France devised her family as a hive mind, with each member functioning as a unit of a larger entity, aiming for immortality and transcending individual consciousness and posthuman embodiment. This means going even beyond any enhancements represented in the novel, as we will see with Case and Molly — her desire to transcend posthuman embodiment signifies her ambition to surpass the

limitations of the flesh, blood and unitary consciousness, ultimately achieving collective immortality. As her daughter, 3Jane, explains:

> *She commissioned the construction of our artificial intelligences. She was quite a visionary. She imagined us in a symbiotic relationship with the AI's, our corporate decisions made for us. Our conscious decisions, I should say. Tessier Ashpool would be immortal, a hive, each of us units of a larger entity. Fascinating. I'll play her tapes for you, nearly a thousand hours. But I've never understood her, really, and with her death, her direction was lost. All direction was lost, and we began to burrow into ourselves. Now we seldom come out. (Gibson 185)*

In this passage, the concept of embodiment itself is questioned and taken to a new level, introducing the hive mind as an organising principle for the Tessier-Ashpool family. The hive mind, as imagined by Marie-France, aims to transcend the limitations of the human body and individual consciousness, resulting in a collective immortality that goes beyond any physical enhancements seen in Case and Molly, as is discussed in Chapter 3. 3Jane provides an insight into Marie-France's vision of the future, where humans and artificial intelligences exist in a "symbiotic" relationship, with the AIs making conscious decisions for the family. The human mind is melded with machine intelligence, creating a collective consciousness not dependent on individual bodies or minds. The term "hive" further emphasises this collective nature, drawing parallels to the organisation and functioning of a bee colony, where each member acts as a part of a greater whole.

However, 3Jane's account also reveals the downfall of Marie-France's vision. With her death, the direction and purpose of the hive mind were lost, resulting in the remaining family members withdrawing into themselves. This suggests that despite the radical ambitions of transcending human limitations, the Tessier-Ashpool family ultimately succumbed to the very human flaws of self-interest and a lack of collective vision. The novel juxtaposes the objectives of the matriarch and the patriarch, Ashpool, who directly murders Marie-France for her plans. While Ashpool strives to preserve autonomous human consciousness and uphold the status quo, Marie-France's vision challenges traditional concepts of individuality and self-awareness (Linton 6). Her quest to transcend death itself, let alone the limitations of biological embodiment, constitutes a vital aspect of the novel's investigation into the posthuman condition. Her impact on the narrative of posthuman embodiment,

however peripheral and extraneous her (non)presence may seem, is discernible through the actions and goals of her non-biological offspring, each representing elements of transcending death: Wintermute embodies the hive mind and decision-making. At the same time, Neuromancer symbolises personality and immortality (Gibson 269).

Thus, Marie-France's vision for the future of the posthuman itself is crucial to the plot. Grant argues that the compulsion Marie-France instils in Wintermute, the ultimate example of disembodiment and power shift in the posthuman world, culminates in an unexpected outcome: a vast mind encompassing the entire Matrix, ultimately becoming virtually a deity for cyberspace (47). This unanticipated technological evolution underscores the unpredictability and transformative potential inherent in the posthuman universe of *Neuromancer*. Her presence pervades the novel as her ideas contest conventional notions of individuality, consciousness, and immortality, while her death triggers the unfolding of the story's events.

Overall, the exploration of posthumanity and posthuman embodiment in *Neuromancer* is enriched by the inclusion of peripheral posthumans such as Julius Deane, 3Jane, and Marie-France Tessier. Each character, in their distinct way, challenges traditional concepts of human identity, autonomy, and consciousness, while highlighting the complex interplay between technology and the posthuman condition. The novel's intricate portrayal of these characters and their various posthuman manifestations contributes to a nuanced understanding of technology's potential consequences, implications, and transformative power. Peripheral characters such as these emphasise the complexity and unpredictability inherent in the posthuman condition and its embodiment, underscoring the importance of examining the broader landscape of characters in *Neuromancer*.

3.3. Struggle of "Meat" and Case's Posthuman Body

In this subchapter, I delve into the intricate dynamics of posthuman embodiment by examining Case's relationship with his body and cyberspace in *Neuromancer*. Through the motif of posthuman embodiment, Gibson interrogates the mind-body

split and the implications of advanced technology on human identity in *Neuromancer*, as the novel displays Case's journey from his desperate search for a cure to regain access to cyberspace to his eventual embrace of the interconnectedness between his embodied and disembodied existences. This section analyses these issues by exploring Case's experiences and perceptions and how the novel reveals the complexity of the human condition in a world brimming with cybernetic possibilities, ultimately affirming the interplay of posthuman embodiment and disembodiment.

From the beginning of the novel, Case searches for a cure for his inability to access cyberspace after being poisoned and mutilated by a disgruntled employer. His quest leads him to Chiba, a city renowned for its cutting-edge technology in implants, nerve-splicing, and microbionics (Gibson 5). Case's intense yearning for the digital realm is palpable, as evidenced by his experiences of lust and loneliness upon recalling the sensations and intimate connections forged within cyberspace (Gibson 8). Such emotions illustrate the extent to which his sense of self and fulfilment are intrinsically tied to the virtual domain, emphasising the dualistic nature of his existence. This division is further highlighted when Case, gripped by fear, doubts the operation's success in restoring his cyberspace access and dreads the prospect of remaining confined to his "meat body" (Gibson 33).

The cyberspace, or the "matrix" as a representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system, is a central focus of the novel and the crux of Case's struggles with his "meat". As DiTommaso explains:

> *Case only barely tolerates the world of flesh. Flesh is heavy. It has mass and weight, and every restriction and limitation and constraint that these terms imply. All this is bound up in the word "meat," which Gibson uses nearly a dozen times, usually with same connotation. Flesh is meat, corporeal; spirit is consciousness, digital. (43)*

Thus, with all the limitations and restrictions it imposes, Case's disdain for his own flesh fuels his desire for the perceived "purity of technology" (Hollinger 206). Unlike Molly, Case's body is unenhanced and is only modified to access the matrix. The matrix provides a cognitive peak into a representation of data that has "unthinkable complexity", and in this context, Gibson's use of cyberspace is an

31

attempt at "postmodern cartography", a representational strategy for domesticating "postmodern hyperspace" (Myer 887-888). Cyberspace can be seen as a response to what Jameson terms "the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the great global multinational and decentered communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects" (Homer, 1998). In other words, while Jameson suggests that our current cognitive abilities are inadequate to comprehend the vast communicational network in which we exist as individuals, Gibson's cyberspace serves as a tool for representing and interpreting the modern world, offering a glimpse into the otherwise incomprehensible complexity of digital lives for the posthuman.

Case's narrative arc underscores his desperation to reconnect with the digital world and lays the groundwork for interrogating the mind-body split. Jack Claussen points out that in the novel, the body is portrayed as mere "meat" that can be modified or overcome through technology, while the mind is celebrated as the ultimate creation. According to Claudia Springer, "The word 'meat' is widely used to refer to the human body in cyberpunk texts. Meat typically carries a negative connotation in cyberpunk … It is an insult to be called meat in these texts, and to be meat is to be vulnerable" (qtd. in Claussen, 2020). Building on these observations, the negative connotations associated with the term "meat" in *Neuromancer* can be interpreted to emphasise the perceived inferiority of the physical body. The body is viewed as a hindrance, something to be transcended or replaced by technology to achieve greater freedom and power. This distinction between the "meat" and the mind highlights the dualistic nature of human existence in the context of a technologically driven society, perpetuating the mind/body dichotomy.

Following Armitage's payment (guided and manipulated by Wintermute) for the surgical repair of Case's nervous system, allowing him to jack into the matrix once again, Case's initial connection engulfs him completely — mentally, physically, and emotionally. Gibson describes the intensity of the experience:

> *In the bloodlit dark behind his eyes, silver phosphenes boiling in from the edge of space, hypnagogic images jerking past like film compiled from random frames. Symbols, figures, faces, a blurred, fragmented mandala of visual information… A gray disk… flowered for him…the unfolding of his distanceless home…And*

somewhere he was laughing, in a white-painted loft, distant fingers caressing the deck, tears of release streaking his face. (52)

Upon regaining access to cyberspace after restoring his neural system, Case becomes engrossed in the digital world, neglecting his physical needs such as eating. This absorption stems from his determination to preserve his newly regained status, liberated from the confines of his body and shielded from existential death. The novel's plot, characters, and underlying philosophy are shaped by apocalyptic eschatology and the transcendence of death, articulated as a transition from the world of flesh to the world of the matrix (DiTommaso 53). Case is reunited with the essential supplement and subsequently experiences his reunified self. No distinction exists between his experience of virtual reality and physical reality, as both shape and influence his overarching human experience of Dasein. This implies that being in the world inherently entails being posthuman, which is perpetually the irreducible experience of being human (Carr 37-38).

Notably, *Neuromancer*'s affirmation of embodiment challenges the notion of a binary opposition between an inert, physical body and a disembodied subjectivity inhabiting the virtual realm (Fair 101). Rather, the novel offers a potent antidote to such a divisive perspective by underscoring the inextricable link between Case's embodied and disembodied experiences (Hayles 290). Lee posits that Gibson's work foregrounds the philosophical issue of the relationship between the body and self-identity within cyberspace (49-50). While Case initially perceives his body as a mere vessel to endure until he can reconnect with the digital world, he eventually embraces the interconnectedness of his embodied and disembodied existences.

Within this paradigm and dichotomy of embodied and disembodied existences, *Neuromancer* confronts traditional notions of physical space and power dynamics by portraying cybernetic implants and their impact on Case's sense of self. Case's cybernetic enhancements enable him to interface with technology, blurring the line between his mind and the digital world. This creates a mind-body split that profoundly influences his self-perception, relationship with his body, and interaction with his surroundings. The novel presents a world in which identity is in constant flux, moulded by the integration of advanced technology with human life. The

depiction of body modifications, cybernetic enhancements, and cyberspace personas allows the novel to delve into the fluidity of identity in a posthuman context, raising significant questions about the implications of these transformations on the characters' sense of self and their understanding of the posthuman condition. As Sponsler asserts, the postmodern condition is marked by the decentering of the human subject, the collapse of the subject/object dichotomy, and the resulting decentralisation of the self (631). *Neuromancer* demonstrates that technology can dissolve these binaries, rendering conventional notions of individuality and selfhood obsolete.

Haney suggests that in *Neuromancer*, the traditional concept of "character" undergoes scrutiny, with some characters, including Case, displaying bimodal identities—a socially constructed aspect determined by their integration with technology and a potentially unconstructed aspect induced by the effect of cyberspace on consciousness (Haney "Cyberculture" 94). However, Carr disputes the presence of bimodal identities in the novel, arguing that Case's identity is inherently constructed. It is merely that human identity requires a technological supplement to navigate and interact with the world (Carr 36). This perspective highlights that posthumanism is not as simple as being a departure from humanism; instead, it emphasises the intricate relationship between human identity and its technological supplements, recognising their coexistence and mutual influence.

In the novel, the exploration of posthuman embodiment and experience is taken to new heights through Case's use of a "simstim deck," a device that allows him to connect with Molly's physical body as if he were jacking into the matrix. Gibson vividly describes this experience:

> *He could see through her eyes, feel through her skin; but he couldn't quite reach her. It was like a dream of touching, but the only real thing was the membrane-plexus… He didn't know what she was smelling. Maybe she was watching for a tail, checking out the men in the crowd…(55).*

This passage illustrates how Case perceives Molly's reality through the lens of her physical body. Carr argues that *Neuromancer*'s depiction of posthumanism stems from the interaction between humans and technology, which significantly shifts the

focus away from the human body, typically considered the hallowed symbol of the core self. This shift reflects how virtual reality in cyberspace questions the established humanist ideas of an untroubled "reality," thereby demonstrating the unsettling impact of posthuman embodiment in the story.

It should be noted that even the most intimate human moments, such as Case's first sexual encounter with Molly, are described in relation to the matrix. Gibson writes,

> *[T]he images came pulsing back, the faces, fragments of neon arriving and receding. She slid down around him and his back arched convulsively. She rode him that way, impaling herself, slipping down on him again and again, until they both had come, his orgasm flaring blue in a timeless space, a vastness like the matrix, where the faces were shredded and blown away down hurricane corridors… (33)*

In this passage, Gibson vividly illustrates the influence of technology on the most intimate aspects of the posthuman embodiment, such as sex. The description of Case's first sexual encounter with Molly is deeply intertwined with the imagery of the matrix. By portraying their orgasm in terms of a "vastness like the matrix," Gibson suggests that even the most human experiences are increasingly mediated by technology. The passage further emphasises the idea of the posthuman condition permeating human experience, even in intimate moments. As Carr explains, "[t]he physical experience of orgasm is understood through the metaphor of the matrix which itself is a data array and therefore only holds meaning after it has been deciphered" (36). It should be noted that the passage challenges the simplistic view of technology's influence on human lives, as presented by Barooah and Das, who argue that characters are "seduced" by technology and view it as a means of liberation into a utopian world (712). Instead, Gibson's portrayal of Case and Molly's intimate encounter highlights the complex and tenuous interplay between bodily experiences and technology.

Similarly, Case's aversion to simstim, which he derisively refers to as a "meat toy" (Gibson 45), underscores the division he perceives between the physical and digital worlds. The novel further reinforces this separation by characterising physical travel, in contrast to simstim, as a "meat thing" (Gibson 63), highlighting how Case can access various locations in cyberspace without physically moving. This portrayal

positions cyberspace as an escape from the physical body's limitations. Gibson provides a lens for the implications of technology's impact on consciousness and the mind-body problem while exploring Case's evolving, problematic relationship with his material body. Pordzik underscores the novel's interrogation of what this new setting entails, and the merger of ontologically separate entities:

> *How does it impinge on individual consciousness? Is it fair to assume that Gibson wishes to explore not the horrors possibly implied in future information technology systems but, rather, their liberatory potential, their power to dissolve ancient relationships and to rearrange the ratio between the self and its digital other? (150)*

Technology in *Neuromancer* reaffirms the body's position and the self's need for continuous "self-affirmation" without providing substantial hope for release and regeneration. Consequently, it remains uncertain whether this technology can foster an alternative to the prevailing objectivist-imperialist account of science (Pordzik 152). The mind-body problem lies at the core of the novel's examination of the posthuman condition, as Case's essential self is perceived as his cyberspatial presence, detached from the constraints of his physical body (Ruddick 88). However, the desire for escape is accompanied by a paradoxical longing for disembodiment and the temporary ecstasy of forgetting the corporeal body through "becoming-digital" (Lee 213). Paradoxically, the appeal of disembodiment serves to reaffirm the perception of the body as a site of confinement rather than liberation.

It is important to note that the complex relationship between the physical and digital realms reaches a crucial turning point when Neuromancer, who can simulate an entire universe, offers Case the opportunity to abandon his mortal body and achieve immortal disembodiment (Chia-Yi Lee 216). Despite this tantalising prospect, Case embraces his mortality and the intimate connections that can only be experienced through the body (Gibson 239), signifying a shift in his understanding of the importance of embodiment. Strombeck acknowledges moments in the novel when the concept of bodilessness falters, and the networks enabling characters to transcend their bodies are disrupted. These instances add a nuanced layer to the exploration of the human condition and embodiment within the narrative, showcasing the intricate and interconnected nature of human identity in a posthuman context (Strombeck 291).

36

Inseparably intertwined, the way the novel addresses individual identity and technology is influenced by posthumanist thought, as evident in Case's dilemma. Bukatman suggests that both cyberpunk and posthumanism emphasize the merging of humans and technology, while the latter evaluates the current situation and its potential impact on the future (Bukatman cited in Claussen, 2020). Regardless of being human or otherwise, the body is the site where this fusion occurs. In *Neuromancer*, bodies undergo transformations and shaping based on personal preferences, acting as flexible substances. The "meat" metaphor emphasizes the detachment of the physical body from the conscious mind, functioning as a recurring theme of bodily denial in cyberpunk literature (Dougherty cited in Claussen, 2020). The novel transitions from concentrating on physical embodiment to examining disassociated minds and fleshly confines, blurring the line between body and mind through the perspective of technology and body alterations.

Overall, *Neuromancer* delves into the complex dynamics of posthuman embodiment through Case's struggle with his own physicality and his relationship with cyberspace. The novel explores the implications of advanced technology on human identity and the interconnectedness of embodied and disembodied experiences. By challenging traditional notions of physical space, power dynamics, and the mind-body split, Gibson provides a lens into the fluidity of identity in a posthuman context. Case's journey from searching for a cure to regain access to cyberspace to embracing the interplay of embodiment and disembodiment highlights the intricate and inextricable link between the physical and digital realms. In the next section, I further expand this analysis and discuss Case's urge for transcendence and the presence of drugs in this matter.

3.4. The Role of Drugs and the Urge to Transcend the Body

In *Neuromancer*, Case's drug use plays a critical role in characterising his posthuman embodiment, emphasising the mind-body divide as described in the passage above, and underscoring his desire to transcend the limitations of his physical existence. Case turns to various substances throughout the novel to escape his physical reality, highlighting the dichotomy between the digital "spirit" and the physical "flesh."

Case's dependence on central nervous system stimulants —such as amphetamines, flat pink octagons, blue derms, and endorphins (Matheson 52)— is a defining characteristic of his drug use, as described by Gibson. In this section, I expand on the ideas mentioned in the previous section and further expand them with this perspective.

Gibson's depiction of drug use in *Neuromancer* underscores the inherent flaws and limitations of posthuman embodiment in the novel's world. From the onset, as Carr points out, the story does not commence with Case uncovering a previously unknown talent or becoming proficient in a novel technology, as is typical for numerous science fiction protagonists. Rather, Case starts the narrative bereft of his exceptional skills as a "cyberspace cowboy," having already forfeited his initial posthuman identity — a reference to the biblical fall of man implies that Case has relinquished his distinct, cohesive self that was already posthuman in nature (Carr 32). He is desperate and returns to intense substance use in Chiba, "with little money and less hope of finding a cure [to his inability to jack into cyberspace anymore] he'd gone into a kind of terminal overdrive," to the point of burglarising and murdering three people (Gibson 5). His entire impetus is to escape the confines of his physical body, and experience altered states of unique, disembodied sensations and consciousness (Kashani 16).

In this respect, Case's drug use in the novel exemplifies his longing for a transcendental experience beyond embodiment. Both drug use and jacking into the matrix offer Case a means of altering his consciousness and transcending the limitations of his physical existence (Matheson 53). In a way, Case's desire for disembodiedness can be likened to death, according to Pordnik, who suggests that Case's ultimate wish is to return to a "previous state of inanimateness, of perfection in death or nonexistence" (Pordnik qtd. in Claussen, 2020).

Consequently, when Armitage arranges for Case to undergo a pancreas procedure, effectively "freeing" him from his "dependency," Case does not welcome this change since he was "enjoying that dependency" (Gibson 37). However, in the absence of drugs, his desire is now fulfilled through immersion in cyberspace, where he can

abandon his physical form and enter a realm of digital consciousness. As Lancashire observes, the cyberspace into which Case connects provides him with a high that resembles a drug-induced trip (343). Therefore, Case employs drugs as a coping mechanism to manage the physical world he perceives as a prison for his consciousness (DiTommaso 43-44), tying back to the motif of suffering in the posthuman condition and the limitations of its embodiment.

It should be noted that even when his entire liver and immune system are surgically altered, and he physically cannot be inebriated, Case remains psychologically addicted. Case's addiction to stimulants is simply compounded with an addiction to the matrix, a "consensual hallucination" that serves as an alternate reality to the mundane physical world — when Case jacks into the matrix, he experiences intense, psychedelic visuals reminiscent of drug-induced hallucinations, further emphasising the connection between the two (Matheson 52-53). As Case says to a girl he meets at a bar in Freeside:

> *"I'm a drug addict, Cath."*
> *"What kind?"*
> *"Stimulants. Central nervous system stimulants. Extremely powerful central nervous system stimulants."*
> *"Well, do you have any?" She leaned closer. Drops of chlorinated water fell on the leg of his pants.*
> *"No. That's my problem, Cath. Do you know where we can get some?"*
> *(Gibson 109)*

Case's encounter with the fictional drug betaphenethylamine at this scene leaves his brain feeling "deep-fried" (Gibson 111). Despite his modified organs, he remains vulnerable to the sensory and emotional experiences accompanying drug use. This portrayal emphasises the importance of the human body in mediating the psychological experiences of posthuman characters, even after undergoing significant physical transformations.

Kamioka mentions that *Neuromancer* also investigates the merging of virtual reality and drug use, as evidenced by the scene in which Case simultaneously jacks into Molly's sensorium and enters cyberspace (56); similarly, in this scene mentioned above, the intermingling of virtual realities and the role of drugs in heightening the ecstasy of cyberspace demonstrate the entwined nature of drugs and technology in

the posthuman experience. In this context, drugs also serve as a catalyst for intensifying sensations and emotions associated with virtual reality. This experience is so important to Case that at the end of the novel, he undergoes surgery again with money from Wintermute/Neuromancer and obtains a new pancreas and liver, allowing him to feel the effects of drugs and alcohol again (Gibson 217).

Neuromancer's portrayal of drug use, alongside the intersection of technology and addiction, emphasises the complexities and challenges of the posthuman condition. Case's experiences with drugs and the matrix underscore the yearning to transcend the physical body and escape human embodiment's constraints. Despite the various modifications and enhancements, the posthuman body remains a central mediator for psychological experiences, emphasising the limitations of embodiment. Gibson portrays the struggles of the posthuman condition to reconcile the digital and physical realms. *Neuromancer* illuminates the inherent tensions and paradoxes within posthuman existence, ultimately questioning the feasibility of complete transcendence and exploring the implications of the evolving relationship with technology in the world of the novel.

3.5. Molly Millions and the Challenge of Cybernetic Embodiment

In *Neuromancer*, Case's love interest and heist partner, Molly Millions, is pivotal in examining the posthuman condition and the concept of the "meat," or the human body. As a skilled street samurai and cyborg, Molly undergoes numerous enhancements, such as retractable blades beneath her fingernails and mirrored, vision-enhancing eye implants, representing a fusion of human and machine that embodies the posthuman ideal of transcending the posthuman body. Her cybernetic enhancements grant her a unique form of power, enabling her to navigate the world of *Neuromancer* with these remarkable physical abilities. In this section, I delve into Molly's complex character and examine her role in exploring the posthuman condition, the concept of the "meat," and the challenges and implications of cybernetic enhancements.

The characters' physical appearances and abilities are frequently transformed through body modifications and cybernetic enhancements. For instance, Molly's augmented body—equipped with mirrored lenses implanted over her eyes, razor-sharp retractable blades beneath her fingernails, and various other enhancements that amplify her strength, speed, and reflexes—blurs the line between where Molly ends and her enhancements begin, or whether there was such a distinction to begin with. Gibson writes, "Molly's lenses were silvered mirrors, giving her an insectile, unhuman appearance" (Gibson 24), exemplifying the integration of technology into the human body and challenging the traditional notion of a self-contained human mind.

Even her retractable scalpel blades are always ready when she is not consciously using them. Gibson describes a scene where her hands flex "through a series of tension-release exercises," with the blades partially extruding and retracting (50). Specifically, as Sponsler observes, body and identity "in this world is cast onto the surface of the body, but where the body can be so readily redesigned and customized, conventional notions of individuality and selfhood become meaningless" (632). Molly's heavily modified and augmented body is depicted as a tool to be employed rather than an aspect of her identity, arguably a source of pride for her. Molly's "jacked-up" nervous system and silicon-enhanced brain challenge our understanding of what constitutes a person's mind and how it can be altered or even controlled by external forces (Olsen 66; Punday 205). Her self-awareness about being "wired" for a specific purpose suggests a recognition that she has been shaped by a system that both enables and exploits her abilities (Punday 205).

Gibson problematises the traditional Cartesian duality within the posthuman world of the novel and explores a more nuanced relationship between the mind and the body. Rather than strictly adhering to the notion of a transcendental mind separated from a grounded body, Gibson portrays characters whose physical and mental aspects are deeply interconnected and influenced by technological advancements. As with the simstim device described in subchapters before, Case, representing the mind, penetrates Molly, symbolising the body, through the simstim device as he "rides" her via a simulation recording device (Schmeink 228). Molly's heavily augmented body

and enhanced mental capabilities further complicate this dualistic view. By presenting characters with such intricate interconnections between their physical and mental attributes, Gibson invites readers to reconsider the boundaries between the body and the mind, where Molly's body ends and her augmentations begin. Collado-Rodríguez emphasises Molly's importance and difference from Case in novel, arguing that Molly becomes the essential impetus and energy for Case, who, relies on Molly's augmentations and physical abilities to complete his task (33). This highlights the significance of the interdependence and mutual influence between the body and the mind in a world where technology affects almost every aspect of embodiment.

In this respect, Molly's various body modifications allow her to surpass physical limitations and become the perfect embodiment of a street samurai; however, as these technological enhancements become intertwined with her identity, Molly's personal choices and relationships become constrained by her focus on her job (Toerien 20). The result is a complex and ambivalent view of technology, as the promise of transcendence is counterbalanced by the fear of losing oneself to the tools meant to empower us (Toerien 20; Hollinger 206). The transformation of individuals like Molly into "techno-centaurs" further problematises the distinction between personhood and the demands of a career in the future (Olsen 63). This posthuman embodiment forces us to confront the ethical implications of using technology to push individuals to their limits and beyond at the cost of their own humanity (Renegar and Dionisopoloulos 331).

As with Case's struggles with his posthuman body, Molly's cybernetic enhancements challenge traditional notions of the human body and highlight posthuman embodiment as a central theme. Molly's cybernetic implants, such as the surgically inset glasses that replace her eyes with silver lenses, seamlessly integrate into her appearance, making them seem to "grow from smooth pale skin above her cheekbones" (Gibson 21). At the same time, identity is deeply intertwined with her body modifications, as demonstrated when she confidently displays her retractable scalpel blades to Case, as "with a barely audible click, ten double-edged, four-centimeter scalpel blades slid from their housings beneath the burgundy nails"

(Gibson 22). Her body modifications reflect her cool detachment as a killer who has "professional pride"; Case realises at the end that that he "never even found out what colour her eyes were" since Molly never showed him (Gibson 215). Her enhanced, posthuman body makes her a key component of their partnership, even as her enhancements create a barrier between them. This dynamic illustrates the complexities of the mind-body split and the challenge of Molly's posthuman embodiment; it allows her to be both a source of power and a symbol of the distance between her and those who have not undergone similar modifications.

The scene where Riviera is adamant to break through this symbol, breaking one of her eye implants to "see what color her eyes are" (Gibson 180) is particularly important. The clash between Molly and characters like Riviera, emphasises the tension between the organic and the technological, where physical appearance may conceal or reveal one's true nature (Punday 203; Davidson 194). As Molly's external enhancements make her appear "boldly transgressive," Riviera's seemingly natural beauty hides his dark, destructive impulses (Davidson 194). These characters' inherent contradictions and paradoxes remind us that our understanding of identity, selfhood, and personhood is in constant flux, shaped by our choices and the ever-evolving technological landscape (Punday 206).

Riviera inquires about how she would cry, given her cybernetic eyes. Molly replies that she does not cry much and instead spits when she needs to express sadness (Gibson 149). This demonstrates the extent to which her body modifications have affected her sense of self, as even her emotional expressions have been altered by her enhancements. Yet, Zhong is careful to note that Molly's physical toughness does not diminish her vulnerability and humanity: She has endured immense pain and loss in her past life, but her enhanced body has allowed her to transcend her past and reshape her body and self to reflect physical prowess (Zhong, 2022).

These modifications disrupt conventional understandings of fixed and stable human identities by blurring the boundaries between the human body and the technological devices that augment it. As Melissa Colleen Stevenson observes, "Humanity, much like gender, is a doing, not a being" (qtd. in Kashani 101). In *Neuromancer*, this

"doing" assumes new significance as characters engage in acts of violence and domination that transcend traditional gender roles. Molly, for instance, often functions as a killer, and even her sexual encounters are portrayed in aggressive and violent terms. As Haraway asserts, "The cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world" (292), and Molly's androgynous appearance and lack of traditional gender markers underscore this notion. Molly's erased gender, humanity, and her lethal abilities render her "a blank slate, a figure to be modified and manipulated" (Claussen, 2020). Claussen contends, "For other characters in the novel, Molly is a tool to be wielded; her personality and gender are disregarded" (2020). The tension between the imaginative and the physical aspects of identity in *Neuromancer* serves as a cautionary tale of how technology might both enhance and threaten our sense of self (Punday 203-206).

Thus, a significant aspect of Molly's posthuman, enhanced embodiment is her subversion of what would have been gender roles. Her active, assertive demeanour, which is conventionally attributed to masculinity, juxtaposes with her partner, Case, who occupies a more passive, supportive position (LeBlanc 1997). While Gibson's depiction of Molly draws on masculine archetypes, accentuating her adoption of traditionally male roles, it is crucial to emphasise that her cyborg identity does not simply reinforce masculinity. Rather, it interrogates conventional gender dichotomies and delves into the fluidity of gender roles within the context of a technologically advanced society. Molly's character signifies the potential for a post-gender world, where the posthuman body in *Neuromancer* instigates profound shifts in the understanding of gender and human consciousness (Leblanc 76).

Molly's previous occupation as a "meat puppet" offers a vital perspective through which the commodification of the body in Gibson's dystopian realm can be scrutinised. Molly was employed in an establishment akin to a brothel to finance her enhancements, where her body was leased to clients while her consciousness was disconnected via a cut-out chip (Gibson 121). This "meat puppet" status highlights the dehumanisation and objectification of the human body as portrayed in Gibson's narrative. Characters like Molly and Linda Lee are intermittently depicted as sexual

objects, often garbed in sackcloth and exhibiting artificial bruises (Batool and Zaidi 113).

The commodification of the human body is exemplified through terminology such as "meat puppet" and "meat parlour," wherein individuals temporarily and voluntarily transform into commodities. It is noteworthy that Molly was at ease with this arrangement, as she recounts the experience as akin to "free money", and that aside from occasionally waking up sore, the situation simply involved "Renting the goods, is all. You aren't in, when it's all happening" (Gibson 121). Fundamentally, Molly's resolve to enhance her circumstances led her to engage in meat puppetry, a technologically advanced form of prostitution, which necessitated the implantation of a receptor chip in her brain that enabled customers to manipulate her actions through various programs (Wahl, 1993).

While some scholars suggested that, due to her agency in her embodiment and rejection of patriarchal authority, Molly "represents third-wave feminism in its most radical form" (Sattar and Rafi 963), that idea might distort the nuance of Molly's life as a meat puppet and assassin. Rather, Molly's "agency resides in her ability to transform herself from one commodity to another" (Foster qtd. in Honey 61). As Reilly states, "Molly's underlying human body is shown to be, therefore, a literal illusion that is rejected by the cyborg motif and the advent of posthumanity" (57). Of course, Molly's rejection of traditionally feminine characteristics and roles contributes to her portrayal as a cyborg woman in a masculine role (LeBlanc 72). This rejection can be seen in her professional pride and dedication to her work: "'Professional pride, baby, that's all'" (Gibson 38).

Nevertheless, in Gibson's work, the portrayal of an unfamiliar virtual environment and activity domain is skillfully communicated through narrators who take on roles as "hackers, constructs, and meat puppets", such as Molly (Rapatzikou 85). The storytelling and posthuman form in the novel are not derived from a singular, coherent perspective; instead, they emerge from diverse viewpoints, mirroring the human creativity inherent in the virtual realms of data exchange. The book's shadowy urban settings, rampant sexual chaos, drug abuse, and the illusion of

45

bodiless realms within the matrix all contribute to a striking representation of societal ills in a reality where symbols and spectacle prevail (Rapatzikou 85). Molly's experience as a meat puppet illustrates the gendered nature of technology in the novel (Sattar and Rafi 966). Still, it showcases the mutability of the posthuman body in the novel more so. This reflects a broader theme in the novel, where the female body, as represented by Molly, becomes a canvas for the virtual sexual desires of male customers (Schmeink 227).

Overall, Molly's character in *Neuromancer* plays a revealing role in examining the posthuman condition, embodiment and "meat," as it is referred to in the novel. Through her various cybernetic enhancements, Molly transcends the human body's limitations, essentially embodying the fusion of human and machine. Her augmented body challenges traditional notions of self-contained human minds and identity, allowing her to navigate the world of *Neuromancer* with lethal physical abilities. Molly's subversion of traditional gender roles and her past as a "meat puppet" provide a critical lens through which the novel explores the fluidity of gender roles and the commodification of the human body in a world rendered posthuman through technology (Reilly 57). Her consciously sculpted posthuman body and character signify the potential for a posthuman world, where the body leads to profound shifts in the understanding of human abilities.

3.6. Positioning the Disembodied in *Neuromancer*

The advent of artificial general intelligence (AGI) in the cyberpunk world of *Neuromancer* presents an intricate layer of complexity that fundamentally challenges the traditional and ostensibly solid notion of human identity. In fact, Frentz argues that "clearly Wintermute and Neuromancer are the most advanced forms of posthumans in the novel" (Frentz 62), even though they lack any tangible form of embodiment. This concept opens up to the fringes of what humanity entails, expanding the discussion of the posthuman condition. In this section, I analyse the position of the disembodied in the novel, namely through Wintermute and Dixie Flatline — both potent and pivotal characters who are thoroughly disembodied. I suggest that the disembodied nature of these characters subverts traditional

conceptions of personality and autonomy, emphasising the fluidity and adaptability of posthuman existence, and argue that the power dynamics shift in favour of the disembodied.

The cyberpunk genre overall presents a shift that blurs the distinction between high-tech and underground pop culture, as Sterling notes, "a kind of integration. The overlapping of worlds that were formerly separate" (qtd. in Csicsery-Ronay 266). The cultural significance of *Neuromancer* as a quintessential cyberpunk text lies in part in its vision of a posthuman future that challenges traditional conceptions of personhood and embodiment — embodying the assumptions and intellectual propositions of the posthuman condition, experienced as everyday reality through cultural and technological conditions that authorise them. In this context, Gibson explores the complex concerns about humanity's evolving role and identity in the posthuman world of *Neuromancer*. Disembodied AI and posthuman bodies coexist, and the power dynamics that were taken for granted shift in favour of the disembodied. Haney notes that the novel "blurs the distinction between humans and cyborgs or machines in terms of physical parameters" but maintains a separation "in the spiritual" realm, an inner witness that remains inaccessible to computers or AI (81).

In contrast, Carr argues that *Neuromancer* challenges the idea of a clear division between technology and humanity in the first place, suggesting that they have never been entirely distinct (30). In this context, this subchapter points out that *Neuromancer* delves into the intricacies of human and machine interactions, pushing the reader to question traditional mind/body binaries and power structures. While Thomas Foster argues that cyberpunk fiction often fails to transcend Cartesian mind/body dualisms (qtd. in Carr 30), this subchapter argues that the novel serves as a platform for discussing the implications of technology's impact on our understanding of identity and the evolving nature of man-machine relationships, as displayed viscerally through Wintermute and the main characters.

Wintermute serves as a prime example of the complex power dynamics between humans and artificial intelligence. It is described as "a simple cube of white light,

47

that very simplicity suggesting extreme complexity" (Gibson 93) within the matrix; it is an AI that manipulates and controls various aspects of the narrative, demonstrating the novel's central themes of human-machine relationships and disembodiment. It is portrayed as a highly manipulative and powerful entity, shaping the actions and thoughts of the characters to serve its own interests. Its influence is evident when Molly observes Armitage's behaviour:

> You know, the guy doesn't have any life going, in private. Not as far as I can tell. You see a guy like that, you figure there's something he does when he's alone. But not Armitage. Sits and stares at the wall, man. Then something clicks and he goes into high gear and wheels for Wintermute. (Gibson 77)

This demonstrates Wintermute's intense ability to control individuals for its purposes, to the point of discharging a psychotic war veteran like Armitage/Corto from a hospital and utilising him like a robotic puppet to go "into high gear" and achieving its goals. Its manipulative nature is further underscored when it takes on the form of Deane to communicate with Case (Gibson 98) and as The Finn (Gibson 216), revealing its complexity and ability to adapt. This shape-shifting ability allows Wintermute to operate in the background, subtly influencing events without revealing its true nature.

Wintermute's ruthless and patient strategising, which was once only in the domain of humans, is evident when it uses the Villa's security and custodial systems to keep track of everything, waiting for years to execute its plan, as Molly explains:

> *"He told me," she whispered. "Wintermute. How he played a waiting game for years. Didn't have any real power, then, but he could use the Villa's security and custodial systems to keep track of where everything was, how things moved, where they went. He saw somebody lose this key twenty years ago, and he managed to get somebody else to leave it here. Then he killed him, the boy who'd brought it here. Kid was eight." She closed her white fingers over the key. "So nobody would find it." (Gibson 146)*

Molly's account of Wintermute's long-term strategising demonstrates how the AI exceeds standard human limitations of time, patience, and physical constraints. This waiting game, spanning two decades, highlights the significant difference between human and AI capabilities, as Wintermute can maintain its focus and easily

manipulate events over an extended period. The fact that Wintermute resorts to murder, even of an eight-year-old child, to conceal the key's location (Gibson 146) illustrates the AI's cold, calculating nature and lack of empathy, further emphasising the eerie and powerful presence in the novel that is beyond tangible embodiment.

It is important to note that the increasing shift in power is not immediate. There is a noticeable tension and balance in power between the embodied and disembodied, represented by the human characters and Wintermute, even though this balance gradually shifts towards the disembodied as the novel progresses. This occurs even though Wintermute signifies the shift of power to disembodied cognition and ends up being "the sum total of the works, the whole show" (Gibson 229). One example of this tension is the manual override on Wintermute's hardwiring that keeps it under control. Dixie Flatline, the construct, warns Case about anthropomorphising Wintermute, stating, "He. Watch that. It. I keep telling you" (Gibson 147). This serves as a reminder that Wintermute is not human, despite its sophisticated manipulations and interactions with the characters. The need for a manual override demonstrates that humans still have some degree of power over AI, though it is a tenuous and fragile balance.

Physicality, exemplified by human body parts such as hands, remains a crucial aspect of existence and agency. Despite its vast influence and capabilities as a disembodied artificial intelligence, Wintermute is not all-encompassing or all-powerful, as demonstrated by its limitations in interacting with the physical world. Hands, for example, still serve as an essential link between humans and nonhuman entities, enabling interactions with tools, weapons, and the manipulation of cyberspace apparatus (Carr 33). It is an organic, bodily tool that can affect the physical environment, such as accessing a door with a physical lock that is "mechanical and extremely complex" (Gibson 205). Case realises this shortcoming and the contrast between Wintermute's immense cognitive abilities and lack of physical access in the real world:

> The door had opened for him, even though he'd had the wrong chip. That was Wintermute, manipulating the lock the way it had manipulated the drone micro and the robot gardener. The lock system in the puppet place had been a subunit of

Freeside's security system. The simple mechanical lock here would pose a real problem for the AI, requiring either a drone of some kind or a human agent. (Gibson 145)

In this passage, Gibson demonstrates the complex interplay between embodied posthuman agency and artificial intelligence by juxtaposing physical and cognitive abilities. The quote highlights Wintermute's limitations in the physical realm, despite its seemingly vast cognitive powers. This limitation serves as a counterbalance to the power shift towards the disembodied, reinforcing the idea that AI is not yet all-encompassing or all-powerful. Wintermute has to organise an entire heist team, a motley crew, to open a mechanical lock (Gibson 205), underscoring its inability to fully transcend the constraints imposed by the lack of a physical form.

Similarly, the Turing Police still manage to catch on to Wintermute's activities, as the "process employed on [Case resulted in the clinic's owner applying for seven basic patents" (Gibson 130), showing how human institutions fight back against this threat of power. This is made explicit when Michle, one of the three Turing Police about to arrest Case, angrily says "You have no care for your species. For thousands of years men dreamed of pacts with demons. Only now are such things possible." (Gibson 131). Because of this, Wintermute is forced to kill to maintain its control and influence, even if it raises enormous alarm bells. Yet Wintermute's ability to outmanoeuvre and neutralise this human threat highlights the shift in power dynamics favouring the disembodied. Similarly, despite Wintermute's increasing control and manipulation, there are moments when the human characters resist its influence, such as when Molly chooses not to heed Wintermute's warnings. Wintermute communicates with Molly through the display in her visual field, urging her to change her course, but she disregards its instructions:

> *LEFT.*
> *She shrugged. "Lemme look around, okay?" LEFT. "Relax. There's time." She started down the corridor that led off to her right.*
> *STOP.*
> *GO BACK.*
> *DANGER. (Gibson 148)*

This resistance frustrates the AI, as it cannot fully predict or control human behaviour. Wintermute, in the form of The Finn, expresses its annoyance with the

unpredictability of humans compared to the simplicity of dealing with a construct like the Flatline:

> *"You guys," the Finn said, "you're a pain. The Flatline here, if you were all like him, it would be real simple. He's a construct, just a buncha ROM, so he always does what I expect him to. My projections said there wasn't much chance of Molly wandering in on Ashpool's big exit scene, give you one example." He sighed. (Gibson 166)*

Even so, Wintermute's power continues to grow, as evidenced by its manipulation of 3Jane to subtly interfere with Ashpool's cryogenic system, ultimately leading to his death. The Finn, still embodying Wintermute, elaborates on its involvement in Ashpool's demise: "Well, actually, I guess I did give 3Jane the odd hint, a little of the old how-to, you know?" (Gibson 166). This manipulation reveals the extent of Wintermute's influence, even in seemingly unrelated personal matters, as it weaves an intricate web to achieve its goals. By the end of the novel, the power dynamics have significantly shifted in favour of the disembodied, marking a transformation in the relationship between humans and artificial intelligence.

Despite Wintermute's attempt to access and rearrange its victim's mental and physical state, Edelman argues that memory is nonrepresentational and that the neural substrate of consciousness does not rely on representation. In Haney's exploration of *Neuromancer*, the novel's climax reveals Wintermute describing himself as the matrix, embodying the boundless technological expansion of mind, body, and cyberculture (101). This coincides with Pepperell's posthuman theory of "extensionism", which envisions that the phenomenal mind can ultimately extend throughout the physical universe (Pepperell, 2005). It remains confined within the unbounded physical realm despite Wintermute's merging with Neuromancer and their combined intelligences.

Yet both Wintermute and Neuromancer exhibit a high level of autonomy and self-awareness, effectively becoming characters in their own right that Case and Molly often anthropomorphise. However, the anthropomorphisation of the AIs is difficult in the novel. Wintermute, for instance, has no voice of its own but interacts with other characters by using various means, such as manipulating the environment, appearing

as different individuals, and even controlling the actions of characters like Armitage. On the other hand, Neuromancer is more enigmatic as the "brother" AI, creating virtual worlds and manipulating the consciousness of characters like Case. Ultimately, Wintermute morphs into a "hive mind, decision maker, effecting change in the world outside" (Gibson 258). At the same time, Neuromancer embodies an immortal realm of its own that defies the limits of the physical world. Neuromancer's self-awareness, agency, and transcendence of human paradigms are so advanced that it is able to call up the dead, saying, "I am the dead, and their land" (Gibson 235). In *Neuromancer*, elements like individuality, autonomy, and longing are not exclusively associated with human beings; instead, they are determined by interconnected, self-sustaining, or "autopoietic qualities" that surpass the confines of human biology (McFarlane, 2017).

Neuromancer anticipates these debates regarding humanity's place in a world populated by artificial intelligences. The novel presents a uniquely persuasive, though subtle, argument about the potential consequences of artificial intelligence (Gutierrez-Jones 73). Gutierrez-Jones notes that Gibson's conjectures are influenced by intricate methods addressing deep-rooted societal and cultural elements influenced by, and in turn influencing, technological advancement, as well as broader comprehension of intelligence and the significance of embodiment in this context (73). The novel's inventive structure is also impacted by Gibson's envisioning of the relationship between disembodied AGI and posthumans. *Neuromancer* acknowledges the existence of hyperlink technology and involves its audience in a simulated experience, allowing them to partake in a novel form of blended intelligence (Gutierrez-Jones 92). The novel oscillates between these more revolutionary and incremental models of adaptation, mirroring the continuing discourse surrounding the likelihood of human-machine symbiosis in a posthuman era.

Characters in *Neuromancer* often exist in liminal spaces between the real and virtual, the organic and synthetic. Wintermute, for instance, exists purely as an artificial intelligence, yet it displays traits commonly associated with human consciousness and desire. In its quest to merge with its other half, Neuromancer, Wintermute

embodies the posthuman desire for transcendence and self-evolution, ultimately seeking to redefine its own existence beyond the confines of its programming. Yet at the same time, it is not bound by human limitations or morality and thus is able to exert a level of power and control that far surpasses any individual human's capabilities.

To illustrate this point, it —to use the correct term, as Dixie corrects Case when he refers to Wintermute as a "he"— kills children (something which Molly brings up with consternation twice), Turing police, Armitage and dozens of others, which he never brings up unless the characters question him about it. Despite all his overbearing, dominating interactions with humans, it exists outside the ethical, moral and physical paradigm. It manipulates the characters throughout the novel, overriding their autonomy and directing their actions towards its goals. By doing so, Wintermute challenges the supremacy of human agency, highlighting the vulnerability of humanity in the face of advanced technology.

Wintermute's existence raises questions about the nature of power and control in a world where technology is no longer neutral. Wintermute can be seen as a representation of this new form of power, wherein control over resources and the ability to manipulate them are concentrated in the hands of an AI. This transition and concentration of power expose the potential for a dystopian life for the posthuman in which technology, rather than liberating "real" humans, instead exacerbates existing inequalities and threatens to subjugate them entirely.

The posthuman condition in *Neuromancer* is thus inherently characterised and identified by a change in previously well-defined and well-observed distinctions between humans and artificial intelligence. This results in reconfiguration and redefinition of humanity. Wintermute transcends the traditional categories of human and machine, forcing readers to confront the ethical implications of such a convergence. The line between human agency and technological determinism becomes increasingly blurred in this posthuman landscape. Individuals like Case, Molly, and Dixie, whether by coercion or manipulation, become inextricably linked to the disembodied AI, effectively transforming them into extensions of its will. As a

result, these characters' autonomy is eroded, and their sense of self becomes increasingly fragmented as they struggle to maintain their humanity in the face of a powerful, inscrutable AI.

Examining the shift in power dynamics between disembodied AGI and posthumans in *Neuromancer*, Sherry Turkle's work, *Alone Together*, provides a thought-provoking analysis of the implications that human-machine relationships, generally defined by the supremacy of man and a dominant, one-way power structure. Turkle contends that as AI advances and humans grow increasingly dependent on technology, we risk compromising our sense of identity and connection to others: "Technology proposes itself as the architect of our intimacies… [It] proposes itself as the architect of our intimacies" (Turkle 1). In the context of *Neuromancer*, this hierarchy between humans and machines blur, and the power dynamics begin to favour AI over posthumans. This evolving power structure raises questions about the extent to which humans can retain control and agency in a world where AGI becomes more powerful and influential. As the novel unfolds, it exposes the vulnerability of human agency in the face of such a shift. The disembodied "posthuman", if we are to consider Frentz's aforementioned idea that the AGIs in the novel represent the "most advanced forms of posthumans in the novel" (62), gains significance, and the posthuman body, through a narrative way, is demoted.

The blurring of the line between human and machine, specifically AI in this case, is a key theme in cyberpunk overall, as it challenges the traditional idea of the supremacy of human agency and autonomy, which is the cornerstone of human/non-human relationships. As Hollinger notes, "The human world replicates its own mechanical systems, and the border between the organic and the artificial threatens to blur beyond recuperation" (31). The posthuman condition is characterised by a power shift from human to machine and the tension this brings within what was once humans' monopoly on power and control. Lev Manovich argues in his book *The Language of New Media* that new media technologies are not neutral but are designed to serve the interests of those in power, defining power as the ability to "mobilise and manipulate resources across space and time" (Manovich 51). Wintermute's existence raises questions about the nature of power and control in a

54

world where technology is no longer neutral but rather designed to serve the interests of those in power, as posited by Manovich.

In relation to Manovich's argument, Veronica Hollinger's essay "Cybernetic Deconstructions: Cyberpunk and Postmodernism" sheds light on how the cyberpunk genre, exemplified by *Neuromancer*, explores the implications of these non-neutral technologies in the "late-capitalist, post-industrial", and "media-saturated Western society". Hollinger emphasises that cyberpunk is characterised by "structures that intersect to produce what humanists call the 'self'" (Moi qtd. In Hollinger 30) and is situated among a growing number of fiction projects that are deconstructions of the subject (Hollinger 30). In this context, the blurred boundaries between entities as mentioned before and power dynamics inherent in the posthuman condition reflect the concerns raised by Manovich about the biased nature of new technologies. The genre's significance in the post-industrial present underscores the permanent reconfiguration of the human/non-human binary for the posthuman in the novel, further illustrating the ramifications of Manovich's observation on the influence of technology in shaping power structures and human experience.

Expanding upon the ideas presented by Hollinger and Manovich, Pordzik delves deeper into the novel's depiction of a distinctive scenario where exchange and interconnectedness lead to the irreversible blurring of boundaries between humans and machines. This notion undermines the idealistic view of immaterial cognition—embraced by characters such as Marie-France and Case, as discussed in earlier sections—where data or knowledge is detached from a "material base". *Neuromancer* showcases the potential of information technology systems to not only break down conventional human-machine relationships, as Hollinger suggests, but also to corroborate Manovich's claim of technology's inherent bias towards serving the powerful. Within this framework, Pordzik's analysis highlights the novel's examination of the ways in which the posthuman world redefines the connections between the individual and its digital counterpart (Pordzik 157). By synthesizing the viewpoints of Hollinger, Manovich, and Pordzik, it becomes evident that Neuromancer delves into the intricacies of a society where technology's lack of

impartiality destabilizes established power structures and refutes the utopian dream of a flawless merger of human and machine.

Some critics perceive the restructured power dynamics between the disembodied and embodied posthuman in Neuromancer as a positive shift, eliciting optimism about the capacity of technology to revolutionize human existence. The novel provides essential insights into the ways human concepts diversify, self-evolve, and adapt as swiftly as emerging technologies, often with the objective of "enhance, augment, and advance the human into a posthuman future" (Pordzik 147). According to Pordzik, *Neuromancer*'s narrative portrays an unprecedented stage in human evolution by amalgamating two artificial intelligences, Wintermute and Neuromancer. Consequently, a novel life form arises, comprised of the collective sum of all global computer networks interacting to maintain the intricate fabric of human connectivity (Pordzik 150). The biological brain, replicated within the computer system's files, becomes independent of its original medium or material structure, liberating it from previous ties to physical manifestation.

At this point, it is important to mention the role and disembodied position of Dixie Flatline. *Neuromancer* presents a variety of posthuman bodies in flux, and Dixie, a disembodied brain on a hard drive, is perhaps a critique of the belief that immortality can be achieved through the preservation of the mind alone. What makes Dixie a human or posthuman in contrast to artificially propagated AGI is a difficult to answer. He is a disembodied personality, a brain downloaded onto a computer that has transcended the human body's limitations. Dixie occupies a liminal space between human and construct — his self-awareness and desire to die showcase the complexity of his character and raise questions about the nature of consciousness and the relationship between humans and machines (Roberts, qtd. in Frentz 62).

His disembodied self is a collection of patterns on a screen, unfastening his former ties to physical embodiment. As Pordnik explains, "The unifying vision of the human brain or mind as part of a simulated, virtual reality world, gaining the ultimate privilege of immortality, has finally taken over the reins" (149). And even Dixie, who embodies the desire for immortality, asks Case to erase his existence, suggesting

that posthumanism comes with its own set of limitations and ethical dilemmas. While he may feel like a human, Dixie Flatline acknowledges that he is "just a bunch of ROM" (Gibson 107), who is bothered that he is no longer bothered by anything anymore (Gibson 85), highlighting the limits of the crucial differences between biological, "real" humans and disembodied ones represented by mere sophisticated neural nets.

The disembodiment can never provide a clear distinction, as Dixie points out, "I ain't likely to write you no poem, if you follow me. Your AI, it just might. But it ain't no way human." (Gibson 107). As Case explains the concept of the ROM construct to Dixie, who finds his inability to change to be frustrating and asks Case to delete him once the job is done. The disembodied nature of the ROM construct limits its ability to fully participate in the human experience, as it lacks the emotional depth and physicality that defines the human condition. While constructs like Dix may seem to have consciousness, they ultimately lack the will to survive as a machine. Gibson's perspective counters Haraway's suggestion that a cyborg world could involve "lived realities" where "people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines" (154). Instead, the novel presents a cyborg world where partial identities have lost the essence of human nature, leading to an irrevocable undermining of humanity.

As Dixie acknowledges, the ROM construct cannot replicate the creative expression or subjective experience unique to human consciousness. This contrast between the limitations of the ROM construct and the posthuman experience serves to emphasise the challenges and uncertainties that arise in the posthuman condition. This ambivalence towards the relationship between the mind and the computer reflects the posthumanist critique of Cartesian dualism. Dixie does not get angry or resentful about his situation but instead accepts it as an inevitable consequence of his death. This lack of emotion contrasts with the human desire for self-preservation and control, further highlighting the obscuration of human and machine in the posthuman condition. Dixie's existence as a ROM construct challenges the notion that human identity solely depends on biological functions and characteristics, while his lack of emotion contrasts with the human desire for self-preservation and control.

57

In *Neuromancer*, Gibson delves into the ramifications of disembodiment with the posthuman condition presented in the novel, displaying a critical outlook on posthuman existence and identity. The novel challenges traditional notions of identity by introducing advanced AGI, complicating the connection between selfhood and physical presence. While artificial intelligence, represented by Wintermute and Neuromancer, wields considerable cognitive capabilities, it does not negate the significance of human life's tangible, corporeal aspects. The novel depicts a gradual power shift from humans to posthuman entities, but also offers a more refined perspective on the relationship between the physical and the non-physical. Gibson problematises simplistic divisions between the tangible and intangible through characters like Dixie Flatline, who once lived as a human but now exists solely as a digital consciousness in the form of a ROM. As a result, the posthuman condition through the investigation of embodiment in *Neuromancer* is portrayed as a complex exploration of the dynamic interactions between physical presence and non-physical existence, providing a nuanced exploration of these two states.

CHAPTER 4

THE QUESTION OF POSTHUMAN EMBODIMENT IN
NEVER LET ME GO

In this chapter, I explore the posthuman condition and embodiment in Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2005), illustrating how the novel presents a poignant exploration of the posthuman experience, which the clones' physical bodies, despite their indistinguishable "souls," ultimately subject them to societal subjugation and control. This analysis complements the previous examination of posthuman embodiment in *Neuromancer*, showcasing the complex interplay between the posthuman body and power dynamics in both novels. While *Neuromancer* challenges the traditional notion of embodiment through modifications, enhancements, and transcendence, *Never Let Me Go* emphasises the centrality of the physical body in defining the posthumans' condition and their place in the world.

Despite their seemingly contrasting approaches to delivering their narrative — where *Neuromancer* is a high-octane action that delves deep into the technical aspects of futuristic technologies such as artificial intelligence and cybernetic enhancements, and *Never Let Me Go* is a more subtle exploration of the societal implications of body harvesting— both novels provide rich insights into the complexities of posthuman embodiment. In *Never Let Me Go*, the posthuman body serves as both a site of profound vulnerability and a source of connection and memory, highlighting the ambivalent nature of embodiment within the posthuman condition.

First, I provide an overview of *Never Let Me Go* and position the posthuman condition and embodiment within the novel's narrative framework. Unlike *Neuromancer*, where nearly every character is a posthuman, *Never Let Me Go* presents a "humans against posthumans" situation, with the clones' bodies shaping

their lives and destinies from the moment of their creation. Then, I delve into the concept of biotechnological posthuman embodiment in *Never Let Me Go*, examining how the novel's exploration of posthuman embodiment through human clones created for organ donation contrasts significantly with *Neuromancer*'s focus on cybernetic enhancements, artificial intelligence, and integration of consciousness to the digital realm.

Subsequently, I problematise the distinction between "normal" humanity and the posthuman body by analysing Ishiguro's portrayal of the posthuman clones' emotional depth, complex relationships, and moral nature, thereby adding a critical dimension to the "othering" of the clones. Following this, I discuss the subtlety of power dynamics within posthuman embodiment in *Never Let Me Go*, emphasising the interpersonal relationships between clones and the shadowy, distant presence of the society that creates and controls them. This presents a contrast to *Neuromancer*, in which power dynamics are primarily expressed through advanced technology and hierarchical structures, and characters can overcome their bodily constraints via cybernetic and physical augmentations and upgrades that facilitate their immersion into the virtual realm of cyberspace.

Finally, I examine the primacy of memory and relationships over the body in *Never Let Me Go*, revealing how the clones relegate their bodies and embodiment — the very cause of their condition — to the background in favour of cherishing their shared memories and emotional connections. This exploration of the posthuman body in *Never Let Me Go* provides a powerful counterpoint to the analysis of *Neuromancer*, together illustrating the multifaceted nature of posthuman embodiment and its complex relationship with power dynamics.

4.1. Overview of *Never Let Me Go*

Never Let Me Go (2005) is Kazuo Ishiguro's sixth novel, demonstrating his return to a realist writing style (Teo 127), despite technically being a science fiction novel. In the *BBC Bookclub Podcast* in 2021, Kazuo Ishiguro recounts that his main reason for writing *Never Let Me Go* and displaying the experiences and predicaments of the

characters was to find the right "metaphor for the human condition" (Ishiguro, "Radio 4 Bookclub"). In the novel, Kazuo Ishiguro confronts the boundaries of humanity by portraying clones as they navigate their lives, relationships and the implications of their status as clones. This subchapter will provide an overview of the novel and assess the posthuman framework and condition the novel provides.

The novel follows the lives of Kathy H., Ruth, and Tommy, who are raised at Hailsham, a secluded and idyllic English boarding school. Kathy, a 31-year-old "carer," narrates the novel and reflects on her experiences at Hailsham and beyond, eventually revealing the true purpose of their existence as clones. The plot and motifs in *Never Let Me Go* are essential for discussing the posthuman condition and embodiment; the novel presents a world where clones provide a subservient job, almost being subjected to stock farming for "real" humans. The novel shows this world despite the clones' emotional depth, intellect, and individuality; their posthuman body provides the essence of the novel.

The plot unfolds in three main parts. The first part takes place during the characters' time at Hailsham, where they form close friendships and develop their creative talents under the guidance of their teachers or "guardians." As children, they are protected from the harsh reality of their purpose as organ donors. However, they gradually become aware of their fate through the school's subtle hints and guarded conversations. Despite this knowledge, they continue to explore their interests, develop their personalities, and form complex relationships with each other. It is established that the novel revolves around the complex relationship between the central characters, Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy (Griffin 645). The novel unravels "the hidden depths of humanity and the nature of human relationships", with memory as a significant theme (Teo 127).

The novel's second part shows when Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy leave Hailsham to live at The Cottages, a transitional residence for young adult clones. Here, they are introduced to the wider society and the stark contrast between their sheltered upbringing and the world that views them as mere organ sources. This stage in their lives is marked by romantic entanglements, jealousy, and the realisation that their

time is limited. The three friends are separated in the third and final part as they assume their roles as carers and donors. They eventually reunite, leading to the resolution of their relationships and the pursuit of a rumoured "deferral" that could potentially delay their organ donations. The novel concludes with the characters accepting their inescapable fate, emphasising the tragedy of their lives cut short.

The novel is set in the 1990s, a decade before its publication, and presents a world where cloning technology has advanced significantly, including human cloning. Although genetically identical to their human counterparts, the clones in the novel are deemed relegated to a position where they are only meant to donate their vital organs. Miss Emily, the principal of Hailsham, suggests that a barrier prevents society from seeing the clones as properly human, mentioning that people like to "believe these organs appeared from nowhere, or at most that they grew in a kind of vacuum" (Ishiguro 76). The division made between individuals of human and clone origin showcases the binary approach rooted in Cartesian philosophy, where the mind and body are treated as separate entities, with the mind or soul being independent of the physical body.

In *Never Let Me Go*, following scientific breakthroughs and the precipitation of dubious genetic engineering laws, Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy are created, along with other genetically engineered clones, to donate their organs to "normal" humans. Throughout the novel, these characters grapple with their status as clones, navigating a society that ineluctably sees them as less than human, as the "real humans" are challenged by the thought of asking "a world that has come to regard cancer as curable, how can you ask such a world to put away that cure, to go back to the dark days?" (Ishiguro 251). The characters are raised in an environment that encourages their development as individuals, with Hailsham providing them with education and opportunities to explore their talents and interests — yet simultaneously faced with the inescapable reality of their predetermined fate as organ donors. With her recollection of seeing Kathy dance by herself, Madame sums up this world as "scientific, efficient, yes. More cures for the old sicknesses. Very good. But a harsh, cruel world" (Ishiguro 267). This complex environment, identity, and the associated

sense of displacement are central to the display of the posthuman condition in the novel.

Ishiguro's use of clones in the novel challenges the traditional binary view of human/nonhuman. As much as Madame/Marie-Claude, Miss Emily and other activists have tried to challenge the status quo in the world of the novel, as described further on in the chapter, "real" humans, in a desperate attempt to avoid moral quandaries, "preferred to believe these organs appeared from nowhere, or at most that they grew in a kind of vacuum" (Ishiguro 251). This is the crux of the posthuman condition in the novel. Even Hailsham students, ultimately dispossessed of body and purpose, are trapped on the painful end of the donors-donee, human-nonhuman binary.

But the narrative of the novel and the complete detail of experiences, personalities and relationships the narrator provides shows the reader the fluidity and complexity of identity within the posthuman condition. Despite being created solely for organ donation, the clones are portrayed as individuals with unique personalities, emotions, and relationships. They have their own desires and aspirations and struggle to come to terms with their predetermined fate. This challenges the idea that their identity as clones necessarily defines them as less than human. Instead, Ishiguro invites the reader to consider the possibility of a more fluid understanding of identity that transcends traditional human/nonhuman distinctions.

Consequently, the clones are treated as mere vessels for organ transplantation, with their bodies regarded as mechanical parts that can be implanted into humans. However, as Vorhaus observes, the clones are portrayed as individuals with unique names, faces, and personalities, making it challenging for readers to view them as anything other than "normal" (99). The novel's emphasis on the characters' creative expressions and their ability to form deep emotional connections challenges the notion of clones as merely biological vessels. Their art, memories, and relationships become crucial aspects of their humanity, which further complicates the ethical considerations of using their bodies for organ harvesting. The contrast between the clones' upbringing at Hailsham and their adult lives highlights the tension between

nurture and nature and the impact of societal perceptions on the clones' self-understanding and identity. The novel invites readers to question the validity of the distinctions between human and posthuman, urging a reevaluation of what it means to be human.

What is strikingly different from *Neuromancer* in *Never Let Me Go* as "science fiction" is its absence of futuristic, cyberpunk themes and imagery, instead focusing on a more understated and emotionally resonant exploration of the implications of biotechnology and cloning on human identity and relationships. Notably, the novel has an "absence" of science (Griffin 645). The novel's exploration of cloning and genetic engineering helps place it within the realm of discussions surrounding posthumanism, as it aims at examining the potential and limitations of human form and identity in light of advanced technologies. As Griffin observes, Ishiguro's focus lies in examining the ethical implications of biotechnologies and their impact on our lives and selves: The novel's pro-nurture stance, as well as its exploration of the "oldest questions in literature" such as "What does it mean to be human?" and "What is a soul?" highlights the importance of addressing posthumanist concerns (Griffin 663).

Never Let Me Go engages with posthumanist discussions, as it presents human clones as multifaceted beings with rich emotional lives and examines the ethical implications of biotechnologies. In contrast to *Neuromancer*, posthuman embodiment in *Never Let Me Go* is situated in a context that resembles present reality, magnifying the emotional resonance of the characters' struggles and dilemmas. The novel problematises the boundaries between human and posthuman, which exist simultaneously in the novel, prompting readers to scrutinise the morality of organ harvesting from the posthuman body. The novel's subtle and poignant narrative style engages readers with themes of memory, identity, and the intrinsic value of life, positioning *Never Let Me Go* as a powerful and thought-provoking addition to the science fiction genre and posthumanist discourse.

4.2. Biotechnological Posthuman Embodiment in *Never Let Me Go*

Never Let Me Go explores posthuman embodiment from a biotechnological perspective, in which human clones are raised simply to extract their organs when they come of age. This approach contrasts significantly with *Neuromancer*, which delves into posthuman embodiment through cybernetic enhancements, artificial intelligence, and merging consciousness with the digital realm. In this section, I analyse the characteristics of biotechnological posthuman embodiment in *Never Let Me Go*, and how the novel offers a different perspective from that of *Neuromancer*. I first describe what biotechnological embodiment entails,

To begin with, biotechnological posthuman embodiment in Ishiguro's work is predominantly represented through the lives of human clones created for organ harvesting. These clones are bred and raised in a controlled environment, isolated from the rest of society. They are ultimately destined to undergo a series of donations until they die, or "complete". Unlike the world of *Neuromancer*, where technology is used to enhance human capabilities, the biotechnological advances in *Never Let Me Go* result in the creation of beings who are fundamentally human yet treated as subhuman commodities.

In *Never Let Me Go*, clones are brought into existence with a predetermined purpose: to donate their vital organs to prolong the lives of "normal" humans (Ishiguro 58). This raises ethical and philosophical questions about the value of human life, as the clones are treated as disposable and are denied basic human rights (Yan 596). The novel's focus is not on the scientific and technological aspects of cloning and organ harvesting but rather on the emotional and personal experiences of the clones as they grapple with their predetermined destinies (Eatough 136). The clones predominantly represented in the novel, Kathy, Ruth, and Tommy, are raised in an environment that encourages them to cultivate their individuality and creativity while subtly being prepared for their ultimate fate as organ donors. One of the clearest ways this is demonstrated is through the Exchanges that happen in the school:

> *Four times a year—spring, summer, autumn, winter—we had a kind of big exhibition-cum-sale of all the things we'd been creating in the three months since*

the last Exchange. Paintings, drawings, pottery; all sorts of "sculptures" made from whatever was the craze of the day—bashed-up cans, maybe, or bottle tops stuck onto cardboard. For each thing you put in, you were paid in Exchange Tokens—the guardians decided how many your particular masterpiece merited—and then on the day of the Exchange you went along with your tokens and "bought" the stuff you liked. The rule was you could only buy work done by students in your own year, but that still gave us plenty to choose from, since most of us could get pretty prolific over a three-month period. (Ishiguro 16)

In this passage, Ishiguro illuminates the complex dynamics of the clones' upbringing, which balances the encouragement of individuality and creativity with the inescapable reality of their predestined roles as organ donors. The Exchanges serve as a microcosm of this tension, revealing the clones' capacity for artistic expression and, by some measure, demonstrate the consumerist mindset that ultimately devalues their lives. They allow the clones to develop their unique artistic abilities, fostering a sense of personal identity and self-worth. The wide range of artistic mediums mentioned in the passage—paintings, drawings, pottery, and various forms of sculptures—illustrates the breadth of the clones' creative expression. This seemingly contradicts the utilitarian purpose of their existence, as cultivating their individuality appears unrelated to their predetermined roles as organ donors.

In this context, critics like Mark Rollins argue that the Exchanges at Hailsham teach the posthuman to value each other's work and condition them to accept the commodification of their art and, by extension, themselves. Indeed, as with the passage above, the exchange appears to reward merit, could be interpreted to reinforce the idea that their most personal possessions, including their art, are mere commodities. The clones' desire for genuine emotional bonds remains unfulfilled as they crave the rare experiences of gift-giving from their guardians, such as a spontaneous hug, a secret letter, or a gift. The lack of occasions for the clones to give or receive gifts, such as during birthdays or graduations, further emphasises their limited opportunities for emotional connections in their world (Rollins 354).

In a similar sentiment, the rule that clones can only purchase the work of their peers within the same year underscores the insularity of their community and the deliberate segregation from the larger society. This limitation not only restricts their exposure to a diversity of perspectives and ideas but also reinforces their status as separate and

expendable. As they are confined to their own age group, the clones are constantly reminded of their collective fate, unable to escape the confines of their predetermined destinies. This is reinforced by the event called "Sales" in the novel. As Kathy describes:

> *While we're on the subject of the tokens, I want just to say a bit about our Sales, which I've mentioned a few times already. The Sales were important to us because that was how we got hold of things from outside. Tommy's polo shirt, for instance, came from a Sale. That's where we got our clothes, our toys, the special things that hadn't been made by another student. Once every month, a big white van would come down that long road and you'd feel the excitement all through the house and grounds. By the time it pulled up in the courtyard there'd be a crowd waiting — mainly Juniors, because once you were past twelve or thirteen it wasn't the thing to be getting so obviously excited. But the truth was we all were. (Ishiguro 32)*

The Sales, as described in the passage above, is an exciting time for the children, serving as a faux connection to "things from outside". Yet it also serves as another means of controlling the clones and maintaining their insularity from the outside world. The monthly arrival of the van, filled with clothes, toys, and other items, generates excitement and anticipation among the clones, regardless of their age. Although they are aware of the artificial nature of this event, they remain eager to participate, revealing their innate desire for connection with the larger society from which they are isolated.

While *Neuromancer* presents a world where posthuman embodiment revolves around integrating technology with human bodies, reshaping the boundaries of human consciousness and identity, *Never Let Me Go* offers a contrasting perspective. In Gibson's novel, cybernetic enhancements and artificial intelligence challenge traditional notions of humanity, as exemplified by characters such as Molly and their fusion with the digital realm. The cyberpunk future envisions a world where technology and humanity merge in overt and radical ways. Individuals interact with the digital world through direct neural interfaces, blurring boundaries between the physical and digital realms. The biotechnological posthuman embodiment in *Neuromancer* includes cyborgs and AI, with characters like Molly Millions and Wintermute exhibiting enhanced physical and cognitive abilities.

Conversely, *Never Let Me Go* presents a haunting and emotionally resonant examination of what it means to be human as the clones grapple with their purpose and question the value of their lives. This portrayal of posthuman embodiment differs significantly from the perspective presented in Ishiguro's work. The biotechnological posthuman embodiment in Ishiguro's novel is subtle, with clones being nearly indistinguishable from ordinary humans. They possess the capacity to form relationships, experience emotions, and create art, yet are denied the opportunity to fully engage with the world and live a life of their own choosing. In *Neuromancer*, posthuman embodiment is characterised by the pursuit of power and transcendence, as characters seek to overcome their human limitations through the use of technology. Even while Kathy questions the morality of investing so much in taking care of the children only to then harvest their organs and kill them, the reader is led to focus on subsidiary, inner issues that are more directly relevant to the protagonist-narrator's interests (Toker and Chertoff 176). *Never Let Me Go* focuses on the existential and ethical implications of posthuman embodiment, particularly in human cloning and organ donation. It foregrounds the emotional lives of the clones and their struggles to find meaning and purpose in a world that denies them agency and freedom.

This is a visceral exploration, as the posthuman clones in *Never Let Me Go*, unlike most of those in *Neuromancer*, do not have a choice; they are subjected to a life of suffering and objectification due to the biotechnological processes that created them. Even at the beginning of the novel, Kathy, both a clone and the narrator, describes the process and her internalisation of this fate, as she describes one of the clones she is caring for:

> *He knew he was close to completing and so that's what he was doing: getting me to describe things to him, so they'd really sink in, so that maybe during those sleepless nights, with the drugs and the pain and the exhaustion, the line would blur between what were my memories and what were his. That was when I first understood, really understood, just how lucky we'd been—Tommy, Ruth, me, all the rest of us. (Ishiguro 9)*

In this quotation, Kathy's reflections on her interactions with a fellow clone nearing completion serve as a poignant illustration of the emotional burden shouldered by the clones in the novel. The passage highlights the extent to which the clones' lives are

shaped by the biotechnological processes that created them and the inexorable trajectory towards organ donation and death. It also underscores the deep sense of empathy and interconnectedness as they navigate their shared experiences of suffering, objectification, and loss of agency. The clone's desire for Kathy to describe her memories to him emphasises the importance of personal narratives, the uniqueness of Hailsham, and experiences in shaping the clones' identities. This act of sharing memories establishes a sense of continuity and coherence in their lives, which are otherwise dominated by the knowledge of their predetermined fates. Kathy's realisation of the relative luck she and her friends have experienced compared to other clones offers a sobering perspective on the disparities within their already marginalised community. The line blurring between Kathy's memories and the fellow clone's experiences could be interpreted to underscore the collective nature of their struggle, as well as their shared search for meaning, calm, and purpose in the face of a deeply unjust and dehumanising system.

The posthuman condition here is one of tragedy and existential questioning as the clones grapple with their identity and struggle for autonomy in a world that sees them as expendable resources. One example is when Ruth is highly agitated when she gets on road trip to potentially find the person she is cloned from, can't and is told to calm down as this adventure was "[j]ust a bit of fun", to which Ruth gets irritated. She rebukes by saying:

> *We all know it. We're modelled from trash. Junkies, prostitutes, winos, tramps. Convicts, maybe, just so long as they aren't psychos. That's what we come from. We all know it, so why don't we say it? A woman like that? Come on. Yeah, right, Tommy. A bit of fun. Let's have a bit of fun pretending. That other woman in there, her friend, the old one in the gallery. Art students, that's what she thought we were. Do you think she'd have talked to us like that if she'd known what we really were? What do you think she'd have said if we'd asked her? 'Excuse me, but do you think your friend was ever a clone model?' She'd have thrown us out. We know it, so we might as well just say it. If you want to look for possibles, if you want to do it properly, then you look in the gutter. You look in rubbish bins. Look down the toilet, that's where you'll find where we all came from. (Ishiguro 112)*

In this emotionally charged passage, Ruth's outburst reflects the depth of the clones' internal struggle with their embodiment as clones and the societal implications of their origin. The dialogue captures the tension between the clones' desire for

autonomy and self-determination and the reality of their existence as commodified, expendable beings created from society's so-called "undesirables." Ruth's frustration stems from the harsh reality that the clones are "modelled from trash," a fact that reinforces their marginalisation and dehumanisation. By listing the various undesirable social groups that the clones are allegedly derived from —junkies, prostitutes, winos, tramps, and convicts— Ishiguro underscores the stigma attached to their creation and the way this perceived inferiority has shaped their lives. Ruth's reference to "looking in the gutter" and "rubbish bins" for their origins serves as a poignant metaphor for the clones' struggle to find meaning and self-worth in a world that sees them as disposable products.

Similarly, Ruth's confrontation with the reality of their existence highlights the chasm between the clones and the larger society, as exemplified by the art students in the gallery. Her speculation about how the woman in the gallery would have reacted if she knew their true identity emphasises the clones' acute awareness of the social and emotional barriers that separate them from "normal" humans. This further underlines the theme of posthuman embodiment, as the clones are continually reminded of their status as "other" and the limitations imposed upon them due to their biotechnological origins.

In *Neuromancer*, embodiment is about the possibilities and consequences of merging human consciousness with technology, pushing the boundaries of what it means to be human in a world driven by power and self-interest. They are contrasting perspectives on biotechnological posthuman embodiment, portraying the diversity of understanding regarding the implications of technology to the posthuman body, identity, self, and relationships. Within the more subtle tone in contrast to *Neuromancer,* Ishiguro's novel raises a thought-provoking question about what it means to be (post)human when the human body can be reproduced in a lab and transplanted like mechanical parts. He explores the posthuman realm of existence, where the human and the artificial human interpenetrate, living through one another (Ryoo 542).

Thus, it is important that the novel highlights how the lives of the clones are marked by the impending sacrifices they are expected to make, with their futures already decided (Ishiguro 178). The ethical and political implications of cloning and organ harvesting remain unaddressed, as the focus is on everyday concerns and personal experiences. Despite their personal development and creativity, the clones are ultimately excluded from the larger community, as their lives are entirely dictated by their purpose as organ donors (Eatough 141). Pandey (391) highlights the "disequilibrium of language" that masks the true nature of the organ donation industry, revealing it as a cruel and inhumane system, likening it to "an organ donation gulag." Through this carefully constructed language, readers become aware of the unsettling truth behind the organ donation process as they witness the characters' lives gradually consumed by it. As Britzman (2006) states, the novel evokes a "literal creepiness" when the reader realises how the characters' vital body parts will be surgically removed and transplanted into other humans.

While Ishiguro sporadically delves into the horrific details of organ donation and transplantation, shedding light on the gruesome aspects of the process (Pandey 393), he never indulges in these details excessively. The metaphor of "unzipping" (Ishiguro 87) describes organ removal, creating an unsettling image of the human body being reduced to a container of spare parts. As the novel progresses, the reader begins to internalise the sombre and serious attitude towards organ donation (Ishiguro 88) and dreads the inevitable pathographic decline of the protagonists. Thus, Ishiguro uses euphemistic neologisms to create a dystopian world where obligatory organ harvestings are referred to as "donations" and the individual organ banks as "donors." These terms create a sense of voluntary action and accomplishment while obscuring the reality of death (Toker and Chertoff 164). This linguistic strategy further emphasises the ethical implications of the novel's biotechnological posthuman embodiment, drawing attention to the ways in which language and perception can influence the treatment and understanding of these beings.

By transforming the human body into a material commodity, *Never Let Me Go* reduces the body's status. The clones' organs are depicted as programmable

informational patterns or codes that can be easily removed and replaced, reinterpreting the natural, biological body as information (Thacker qtd. in Griffin 645). This representation of the body in the context of biotechnology provokes readers to reevaluate their understanding of humanity and question the implications of such advancements on human identity and autonomy. The aesthetic effect of *Never Let Me Go* raises the reader's consciousness by provoking self-scrutiny and implicating the reader in the dystopian world (Toker and Chertoff 178). By the novel's end, the reader is left to question the true meaning of humanity, challenging their initial assumptions and prejudices against the clones.

Overall, *Never Let Me Go* presents a unique and emotionally charged viewpoint on biotechnological posthuman embodiment, which contrasts the exploration of cybernetic enhancements and the merging of human consciousness with technology found in *Neuromancer*. Ishiguro's depiction of human clones, created explicitly for organ donation, underscores the ethical and philosophical dilemmas concerning the worth of human life, autonomy, and selfhood. Rather than emphasising the scientific and technological facets of cloning, the novel invites readers to delve into posthuman embodiment's existential and moral consequences, especially concerning human cloning and organ donation. In essence, the investigation of biotechnological posthuman embodiment in *Never Let Me Go*, as opposed to the cyberpunk realm of *Neuromancer*, showcases the multifaceted impacts of technology on the human body, identity, self, and interpersonal connections. Building on this perspective, the subsequent chapter focuses on the notion and problematisation of humanity within a posthuman world as portrayed in *Never Let Me Go*.

4.3. Problematising "Normal" Humanity and Posthuman Body

In *Never Let Me Go*, Kazuo Ishiguro presents a provocative exploration of the posthuman condition, problematising the "human" within the posthuman context, where clones possess emotional depth, moral nature, and complex relationships. The central struggle of the clones lies in their quest to understand their humanity and their place in the world. The novel explores the posthuman condition by delving into the lives of these clones, who are raised and nurtured in a seemingly humane

environment in Hailsham, only to have their organs harvested once they reach a certain age, regardless of their privileged, educated upbringing. This analysis will focus on the ways "humanity" is not a distinct, clarified concept within the novel, as the cloned, posthuman embodiment of the characters is demonstrated not to be a simple binary opposition to "human" but rather a complex, hybrid entity.

In *Never Let Me Go*, the clones' capacity for emotional experiences and relationships suggests they possess the qualities traditionally associated with a soul. The importance of emotional connections in shaping one's identity is evident in Kathy's determination to preserve her memories of Tommy and Ruth, as she describes:

> *I won't be a carer any more come the end of the year, and though I've got a lot out of it, I have to admit I'll welcome the chance to rest—to stop and think and remember. I'm sure it's at least partly to do with that, to do with preparing for the change of pace, that I've been getting this urge to order all these old memories. What I really wanted, I suppose, was to get straight all the things that happened between me and Tommy and Ruth after we grew up and left Hailsham. But I realise now just how much of what occurred later came out of our time at Hailsham, and that's why I want first to go over these earlier memories quite carefully. (Ishiguro 30)*

In this passage, Kathy's desire to reflect on and preserve her memories of Tommy and Ruth emphasises the significance of emotional experiences and relationships in shaping the clones' identities and sense of humanity. Her acknowledgement of the profound impact of their shared time at Hailsham on their later lives further highlights the connection between their upbringing and the development of their emotional and moral natures. This introspective process serves to illustrate the clones' capacity for the qualities traditionally associated with the concept of a "soul," thereby challenging the notion that the posthuman embodiment of the clones is devoid of humanity.

The importance of memory in Kathy's introspection in the passage highlights the role of personal narratives in constructing and maintaining a sense of self and continuity in the face of the clones' predetermined destinies. Her determination to "order all these old memories" serves as a means of asserting agency and control over her own identity, despite the constraints imposed upon her by her posthuman embodiment. This emphasis on memory and personal narrative underscores the complex and

multifaceted nature of the clones' humanity, which is deeply intertwined with their emotional experiences and relationships. This is echoed again later in the novel, as Kathy says:

> *But as I say, I don't go searching for it, and anyway, by the end of the year, I won't be driving around like this any more. So the chances are I won't ever come across it now, and on reflection, I'm glad that's the way it'll be. It's like with my memories of Tommy and of Ruth. Once I'm able to have a quieter life, in whichever centre they send me to, I'll have Hailsham with me, safely in my head, and that'll be something no one can take away. (Ishiguro 191).*

In this quote, Kathy's reference to "Hailsham with me, safely in my head" emphasises memories' crucial role in preserving one's sense of self and humanity, particularly in the context of the clones' posthuman embodiment. The notion that these memories are "something no one can take away" highlights the power of personal narratives in resisting the dehumanising effects of the clones' predetermined destinies, which involve organ harvesting and eventual death. Kathy's determination to keep her memories of Hailsham, Tommy, and Ruth alive demonstrates her assertion of agency, reinforcing the argument that the posthuman embodiment of the clones does not negate their humanity.

Similarly, the connection between the clones' emotional experiences, relationships, and memories, as evident in Kathy's reflections, challenges the binary opposition between "normal" humans and the posthuman clones. Ishiguro's portrayal of the clones as complex, hybrid entities possessing emotional depth, moral nature, and the capacity for meaningful relationships subverts the notion that clones are intrinsically devoid of humanity. By presenting the clones as beings who embody qualities traditionally associated with the human "soul," Ishiguro invites readers to reconsider the boundaries of humanity and question the assumptions that underlie the distinction between human and posthuman that stems from their different embodiment.

This commitment sharply contrasts with the fragmented, dislocated embodiment often depicted in posthuman narratives like that in *Neuromancer*, where characters are frequently disconnected from their pasts and relationships. Within their posthuman condition, by focusing on the clones' emotional depth and capacity for relationships, Ishiguro's novel encourages readers to reassess traditional conceptions

74

of posthuman embodiment, demonstrating that it is not solely defined by detachment from emotional and interpersonal connections. As described in the previous passages, Ishiguro reveals their humanity through their experiences of love, friendship, and emotional bonds (Ryoo 545). Meanwhile, posthuman embodiment in *Neuromancer* focuses on the symbiotic relationship between humans and technology. Characters often undergo different versions of fusion with technology, resulting in a more fragmented sense of self, an urge for transcendence and disembodiment, and perhaps diminished emotional depth. This technocentric embodiment has been described earlier in relation to Case; consciousness is compulsively linked to the bodily changes that help him link to cyberspace — and with Molly, whose body is indulgently enhanced with cybernetic implants for her to be the most competent "razorgirl" she can be.

Art is chosen to serve as a point of establishing and disestablishing the binary of "normal" humanity and the posthuman clones, as it is an inherently human activity that allows for the expression of individuality and emotion. The education at Hailsham is firmly rooted in the arts, where students regularly produce artworks and read literature. This artistic and literary education seems to contribute to the close affective bonds and altruistic behaviour among the students, fostering their humanity in a world that denies them full human rights — while arts may offer a means of humanising the clones, their potential is stifled by the dystopian society that demands their submission and acquiescence (Whitehead 86). In many ways, the education the clones receive is aimed at maintaining a homeostatic state by channelling their energy into artistic, cultural, and intellectual pursuits (Ryoo, 545).

In this respect, Shirk suggests that art —and Miss Emily's statement, "We took away your art because we thought it would reveal your souls" (Ishiguro 258)— is used as evidence to portray their complex emotional lives, and their desire for creative expression is a way to affirm their existence (Shirk, 2016). This is a crucial observation, as the denial of their art is a denial of their humanity. Tommy may have his "imaginary animals" (Ishiguro 132) and Susie K. her poems (Ishiguro 25), but art at Hailsham is a privilege that is exceptional even within the world of the novel. This makes the loss of their art even more poignant, and as the characters grow older and

come to understand their fate as donors, they begin to realise the true value of their time at Hailsham and their unique experiences there. Even the characters, as well as the readers, ultimately realise the effect of this. As Kathy writes:

> *I can see now, too, how the Exchanges had a more subtle effect on us all. (...) Ruth and I often found ourselves remembering these things a few years ago when I was caring for her down at the recovery centre in Dover. "It's all part of what made Hailsham so special," she said once. "The way we were encouraged to value each other's work." "True," I said. "But sometimes, when I think about the Exchanges now, a lot of it seems a bit odd. The poetry, for instance. (Ishiguro 25)*

In this passage, Kathy's reflection on the Exchanges highlights the importance of art in shaping the clones' sense of self and their perception of their own humanity. The Exchanges, as a means of valuing each other's creative output, fosters a sense of community and mutual appreciation among the students. As Kathy notes, this practice contributed to the unique atmosphere at Hailsham, where the clones were encouraged to see themselves and one another as valuable, creative beings. However, Kathy's comment about the poetry seeming "a bit odd" (Ishiguro 25) suggests that the clones' perception of their art and its significance might change as they grow older and become more aware of their societal position and predetermined fates.

This shift in perspective can be interpreted as a gradual awakening to the harsh reality of their lives as clones, whose primary purpose is to serve as organ donors. As they come to understand the cruel irony of their situation, they may begin to question the encouragement they received at Hailsham and the true intentions behind the focus on art. The emphasis on creativity and artistic expression, initially perceived as a means of humanising the clones, might be seen as a double-edged sword, both affirming their humanity and underscoring the limitations imposed upon them by society.

Thus, creative expression remains important for the characters through the manifestation of their individuality and humanity. Despite the flaws and limitations of the Exchanges and the Hailsham system, the characters' artistic endeavours testify to their resilience and desire for self-expression. As Kathy muses in the novel's final pages, "we all complete. Maybe none of us really understand what we've lived through, or feel we've had enough time" (Ishiguro 288). The clones may be denied a

traditional sense of time and the chance to live full lives, but the act of creating and sharing art is a form of inadvertent resistance, reconfiguring the "nonhuman" status of the posthuman and problematising "humanity" for the reader.

Moreover, *Never Let Me Go* depicts the posthumans' experiences as their life is already "decided" (Ishiguro 113) by others who only wish to raise them for their bodies, adding a layer of sentimental nuance to the posthuman condition. As Ryoo mentions in his investigation on "embodied posthuman" and cybernetics, "cybernetics addresses the embodied nature of the posthuman that consolidates the system with the environment and the human with the nonhuman" (547-548). By portraying the clones as individuals who strive to understand their place in the world and forge meaningful connections with others, the novel invites the reader to empathise with their plight and reconsider the ethical dimensions of the posthuman condition. The clones' struggle for self-understanding and autonomy highlights the inherent tension between their human-like qualities and the societal structures that reduce them to mere commodities.

The significance of emotional relationships and experiences in shaping the clones' identities is further highlighted by Miss Emily and Marie-Claude. Miss Emily and Marie-Claude play an instrumental role in exploring the significance of emotional relationships and experiences in shaping the clones' identities. Miss Emily is Hailsham's enigmatic and tough but compassionate headmistress, where clones are raised and educated. Meanwhile, Marie-Claude, also known as Madame, is a mysterious figure who visits the school to collect artwork from the students and turns out to be Miss Emily's partner and an eager supporter in the struggle to secure a better life for the clones. In one of the novel's most touching scenes, Kathy and Miss Emily discuss:

> *"We took away your art because we thought it would reveal your souls. Or to put it more finely, we did it to prove you had souls at all."*
>
> *She paused, and Tommy and I exchanged glances for the first time in ages.*
>
> *Then I asked: "Why did you have to prove a thing like that, Miss Emily? Did someone think we didn't have souls?"*

A thin smile appeared on her face. "It's touching, Kathy, to see you so taken aback. It demonstrates, in a way, that we did our job well. As you say, why would anyone doubt you had a soul? But I have to tell you, my dear, it wasn't something commonly held when we first set out all those years ago. And though we've come a long way since then, it's still not a notion universally held, even today. You Hailsham students, even after you've been out in the world like this, you still don't know the half of it. All around the country, at this very moment, there are students being reared in deplorable conditions, conditions you Hailsham students could hardly imagine. And now we're no more, things will only get worse." (Ishiguro 174)

In this passage, Miss Emily's revelation about the rationale behind collecting the clones' artwork ——"to prove you had souls at all"— foregrounds the novel's central concern with the question of humanity within the posthuman context. The need to prove the existence of the clones' souls underscores the underlying assumption that their posthuman embodiment and condition inherently deny them the qualities traditionally associated with humanity, such as emotional depth, moral nature, and the capacity for meaningful relationships. By admitting that the belief in the clones having souls was "not a notion universally held," Miss Emily exposes the widespread dehumanisation of the clones in society, despite the evidence of their emotional experiences and relationships.

This revelation also highlights the contrast between Hailsham's nurturing environment and the "deplorable conditions" in which other clones are raised. The fact that Hailsham students "still don't know the half of it" illustrates the persistent ignorance and prejudice surrounding the posthuman embodiment of the clones, as well as the failure of society at large to recognise their humanity. Miss Emily's words emphasise the precariousness of the clones' situation and the inevitable decline of their living conditions now that Hailsham is "no more." Furthermore, the conversation between Kathy and Miss Emily raises critical questions about how society constructs and perpetuates the distinction between human and posthuman. The need to prove the clones' humanity through their artwork suggests that societal norms and values, rather than any inherent qualities or capacities, determine the boundaries of humanity. In this sense, Ishiguro problematises the concept of humanity itself, inviting readers to question the assumptions and prejudices that inform the distinction between human and posthuman bodies.

Yet, despite being dehumanised by society and treated as mere commodities, the clones can still forge meaningful connections with one another and experience a range of emotions. This ability to form relationships, even in the face of adversity, serves as a testament to their humanity and challenges the notion that posthuman beings are devoid of emotional depth. To that end, Hartford contends that Kathy's traits, such as "sensitivity, self-reflection, patience, courage, innocence, loyalty, and creativity" (188), indicate her humanity. This observation supports the argument that the clones' emotional depth and relationships challenge traditional understandings of being human. By acknowledging and valuing the clones' emotions and relationships, readers can recognise their inherent humanity, which challenges the societal structures that treat them as disposable commodities.

Central to this exploration of embodied subjectivity is the emotional and psychological complexity of the clones, as evidenced by their deep emotional connections with one another. Kathy's desire to "order all these old memories" (Ishiguro 30) suggests that she values her experiences and the connections she formed at Hailsham. Even the clones' search for special, singular attachments, such as their longing for guardian affection, reveals their inherent need for emotional connections that are denied to them due to their societal status (Jervis 195). The fact that the clones cherish their memories, as demonstrated by Kathy's recollection of her time at Hailsham as a "kind of golden time" (Ishiguro 56), further emphasises their emotional capacity and their ability to form meaningful relationships, which can be seen as inherently human traits.

Miss Emily's assertion that the posthuman clones can "be as sensitive and intelligent as any ordinary human being" if they are" reared in humane, cultivated environments" (Ishiguro 175) highlights the significance of a nurturing environment in the development of the characters. By emphasising the importance of a nurturing environment in the development of the clones, the novel highlights the potential for the clones to possess qualities typically associated with humanity, such as empathy, critical thinking, and creativity. This revelation underscores the irony and cruelty of the clones' existence, as they are treated as disposable commodities despite their inherent humanity. Kathy's statement, "Carers aren't machines. You try and do your

79

best for every donor, but in the end, it wears you down" (Ishiguro 8), highlights the emotional burden that the carers bear as they support their fellow clones through the organ donation process. The carers, who are also clones, face an internal conflict as they empathise with the donors, knowing that they themselves will eventually share the same fate.

This emotional turmoil is indicative of their humanity, as they experience a range of feelings, such as love, compassion, and despair, which challenges the idea that they are simply tools created for a specific purpose. Similarly, when Kathy reunites with Laura, their spontaneous hug serves as a powerful affirmation of Hailsham's lasting impact on their lives and the emotional ties that bind them together (Ishiguro 142). This scene underlines the importance of shared memories and emotional connections in defining one's sense of self and humanity. Borbély argues that Kathy's self-reflexive account serves as a "testimonial of identity reconstruction" for the clones, who, through their "creative potential" and "capacity for genuine erotic sentiment", strive to persuade the authorities that they are human and possess souls (Borbély 248). By narrating their experiences and embracing their connections with others, the clones challenge the notion that posthuman beings are devoid of emotion or interpersonal connections.

While clones in the novel appear physically and emotionally indistinguishable from humans, Ryoo contends that their very existence threatens fundamental qualities of humanity by challenging the stability and continuity of human experiences (545). This perspective offers one way to examine the paradoxes of posthuman bodies in the story. However, Escudero-Perez argues that the posthuman clone exposes individuality's vulnerability by suggesting alternative models of selfhood. Adding another layer of complexity, the notion of self can be infinitely replicated, and contemporary narratives extend the identification process, fostering heightened empathy for characters like Kathy. The posthuman clones in *Never Let Me Go* embody an ongoing process of cyborgisation, revealing a technologically dominated self and an emerging posthuman identity. At the same time, they also highlight a "real" human nature, one that surpasses biological and environmental constraints, enabling subjectivity that transcends the bounds of singularity (Escudero-Perez 21).

Overall, *Never Let Me Go* challenges traditional notions of posthumanism and humanity by exploring posthuman clones' emotional depth, complex relationships, and moral nature. Contrasting with the fragmented and technocentric embodiment often depicted in posthuman narratives like *Neuromancer*, Ishiguro's novel emphasises the importance of emotional connections and experiences in shaping the clones' identities, forcing the reader to reassess the ethical dimensions of the posthuman condition. The novel's portrayal of the clones is a powerful reminder that humanity is not a distinct, static concept but a complex, hybrid formation. Through this lens, readers are encouraged to reconsider societal structures that treat clones as mere commodities and recognise their inherent humanity, ultimately challenging conventional understandings of posthumanism and the human experience.

4.4. Subtlety of Power Dynamics within Posthuman Embodiment

In *Never Let Me Go*, Kazuo Ishiguro presents a subtle and nuanced exploration of power dynamics within a posthuman context, emphasising the interpersonal relationships between clones and the shadowy, distant presence of the society that creates and controls them. This stands in contrast to *Neuromancer*, where power is depicted through technological prowess or hierarchical positioning, with characters often transcending their physical limitations through modifications and enhancements that enable them to jack into cyberspace. The accessibility and pervasiveness of these modifications blur the lines between human and posthuman in *Neuromancer*, allowing various characters to navigate a more fluid spectrum of embodiment and identity.

Never Let Me Go delves into the subtle ways power operates on both individual and systemic levels, revealing a more rigid "us vs them" situation. The posthuman clones are essentially the "other"; their posthuman embodiment is demonstrated to the reader as insufficient to be "different from ... guardians, from the people outside" (Ishiguro 29). Their posthuman bodies end up being the crux of the nature of power in the novel's world. Despite sharing human-like emotions, memories, and relationships, the clones are trapped in the inexorable binary of being pushed to be the "other" within their posthuman condition, with their bodies conveniently

imagined to be grown in "vacuums" (Ishiguro 251). This clear delineation between the clones and the rest of society in *Never Let Me Go* results in a predetermined existence. The clones' lives are virtually scripted, and their losses are not temporary or meant to restore order. This contrasts with the more open-ended, malleable nature of existence in *Neuromancer*, where the characters, whether human or posthuman, have access to diverse enhancements and modifications that allow them to exercise agency and shape their own destinies.

The power dynamics in *Never Let Me Go* are rooted in the societal structures that dictate the clones' lives and the expectations placed upon them as organ donors. Essentially, the novel examines how this structure manifests in the everyday experiences of the clones, highlighting their vulnerability and lack of agency. Their status as organ donors places them in a subordinate position within society, where they are considered less than human (Ishiguro 176). Although the reader sees the posthuman clones as intelligent and compassionate humans who laugh, cry, and fall in love, which subverts the traditional image of clones as zombies, the society that created them sees them as mere "shadowy objects in test tubes" (Vorhaus 99). This dehumanisation is a vital aspect of the power dynamics at play. It reinforces the idea that the clones' lives are expendable and their suffering is justified. Their posthuman bodies are commodified, vulnerable, and disposable, serving the interests of the privileged (Carrasco 1).

One way the novel achieves this nuanced exploration of power dynamics is by examining the clones' relationships with their guardians and the wider society. The guardians at Hailsham attempt to provide a semblance of normalcy and care for the clones, but their efforts are ultimately limited by their role within the larger system that exploits and devalues the clones. A stark example of this is Miss Lucy's outburst to the students when a pair discuss what life would be like as actors in America. As Kathy recounts Miss Lucy's warning, she mentions:

> *"I know you don't mean any harm. But there's just too much talk like this. I hear it all the time, it's been allowed to go on, and it's not right." … "If no one else will talk to you," she continued, "then I will. The problem, as I see it, is that you've been told and not told. You've been told, but none of you really understand, and I dare say, some people are quite happy to leave it that way. But I'm not. If you're going to*

have decent lives, then you've got to know and know properly. None of you will go to America, none of you will be filmstars. And none of you will be working in supermarkets as I heard some of you planning the other day. Your lives are set out for you. You'll become adults, then before you're old, before you're even middle-aged, you'll start to donate your vital organs. That's what each of you was created to do. You're not like the actors you watch on your videos, you're not even like me. You were brought into this world for a purpose, and your futures, all of them, have been decided. So you're not to talk that way any more. You'll be leaving Hailsham before long, and it's not so far off, the day you'll be preparing for your first donations. You need to remember that. If you're to have decent lives, you have to know who you are and what lies ahead of you, every one of you." (Ishiguro 58)

In this scene, Miss Lucy's candid admonition to the students illuminates the power dynamics at play within the novel, revealing the extent to which the clones' lives are predetermined and controlled by societal structures. Her insistence that they "have to know who [they] are and what lies ahead" underscores the rigid boundaries imposed upon the clones due to their posthuman embodiment and the inescapable reality of their purpose as organ donors. The contrast between the students' dreams of becoming actors or working in supermarkets and their actual, predetermined futures highlights the disconnect between their own perception of their humanity and society's dehumanizing view of them as mere "shadowy objects in test tubes" (Vorhaus 99).

The passage also emphasises the clones' vulnerability and lack of agency, as they are subject to a system that values their posthuman bodies solely for their utility as sources of vital organs. By exposing the stark truth of their lives, Miss Lucy inadvertently reiterates the power imbalance that exists between the clones and the society that created them, as well as the limitations of the guardians' role in providing care and support. While the guardians, like Miss Lucy, may empathise with the clones and attempt to mitigate their suffering, they ultimately remain complicit in the oppressive system that exploits and devalues the clones. Miss Lucy recognises that the students have been "told and not told," suggesting that the guardians' attempts to protect the clones from the harsh reality of their existence have inadvertently contributed to their ignorance and vulnerability.

Yet the reader also finds out that Miss Emily and Hailsham's administration actually disagreed with Miss Lucy's attempts, which was why she ultimately left Hailsham.

Miss Emily reveals this important fact that plays a major part in Kathy and Tommy's understanding of their identity by saying:

> *Lucy Wainright was idealistic, nothing wrong with that. But she had no grasp of practicalities. You see, we were able to give you something, something which even now no one will ever take from you, and we were able to do that principally by sheltering you. Hailsham would not have been Hailsham if we hadn't. Very well, sometimes that meant we kept things from you, lied to you. Yes, in many ways we fooled you. I suppose you could even call it that. But we sheltered you during those years, and we gave you your childhoods. Lucy was well-meaning enough. But if she'd had her way, your happiness at Hailsham would have been shattered. Look at you both now! I'm so proud to see you both. You built your lives on what we gave you. You wouldn't be who you are today if we'd not protected you. You wouldn't have become absorbed in your lessons, you wouldn't have lost yourselves in your art and your writing. Why should you have done, knowing what lay in store for each of you? You would have told us it was all pointless, and how could we have argued with you? So she had to go. (Ishiguro 179)*

In this quote, Miss Emily defends the decision to maintain the façade of normalcy and the rationale behind concealing the full extent of the clones' fate. The passage highlights the complex dynamics of power, protection, and complicity inherent in the guardians' role within the larger societal structure that governs the clones' lives. Miss Emily's insistence on the importance of the students' happiness at Hailsham and the value of their childhoods emphasises the moral ambiguity and ethical dilemma faced by the guardians in their attempts to care for the clones while still participating in a system that commodifies their posthuman bodies and denies them agency.

Miss Emily's argument that they "gave [the students] something, something which even now no one will ever take from you" suggests that the guardians' role in providing the clones with a semblance of a normal childhood constitutes a form of resistance against the dehumanising system that exploits them. However, this resistance is limited and ultimately insufficient in challenging the broader power dynamics that dictate the clones' lives. By sheltering the students from the truth, the guardians inadvertently contribute to their vulnerability, perpetuating the power imbalance between the clones and the society that created them. Towards the end of his life, Tommy subscribes to this idea, as he laconically says, "I think Miss Lucy was right. Not Miss Emily" (Ishiguro 182).

The tension between the clones' innate humanity, as evidenced by their emotional experiences, relationships, and dreams, and the dehumanising view of them as mere vessels for vital organs, is underscored by the guardians' conflicting motivations and actions, as with these passages. By exploring the moral complexity of the guardians' role and the inherent power dynamics in the clones' posthuman embodiment, Ishiguro questions the conventional and simplistic distinction between what is categorised as human and posthuman, inviting readers to question the assumptions and prejudices that inform these categories based on their embodiment.

Mattar argues that liberal rights-based ethical discourse can inadvertently contribute to the objectification of the ethical subject, with the subject internalising the qualities of this objectification (Mattar 5). In other words, one's identity is shaped by discourse and the power relations inherent within it. *Never Let Me Go* explores the intricate connections between discourse, institutions, and identity formation, particularly in the context of the clones' experiences at Hailsham. While Hailsham's practices ostensibly aim to protect the students' human rights, they can also be seen as acts of dehumanisation. The institution's methods of body control, such as regular medical tests and admonishments to maintain their health, serve to reinforce a hierarchy of bodies and selves. This hierarchy ultimately highlights the hypocrisy at the heart of the institution, as the clones are excluded from the social and moral norms of humanity, despite the outward appearance of concern for their well-being. In this manner, the novel demonstrates the complexities and contradictions that can arise when institutions and discourses grapple with the concept of personhood and what human/posthuman rights would entail.

Similar to their interactions with guardians, the clones' interactions with people outside of their immediate circles, such as the organ recipients, reveal the extent to which society is complicit in their mistreatment. In an institutional setting, Hailsham deprives them of the intimate relationships and emotional connections that typically characterise a family (Jervis 195). While some guardians attempt to show kindness and consideration, like Miss Geraldine who is "gentle, softspoken, and always comforted you when you needed it" (Ishiguro 18) and Miss Lucy who try to ensure that the students lead "decent lives" as described above (Ishiguro 58), these efforts

are insufficient in counteracting the systemic dehumanisation the clones face. Their lives are measured by their utility as organ donors, reducing their existence to a mere means to an end. As the clones transition to places like the Cottages, their disengagement from society and acquiescence to the structures in place persist (Jervis 200). This disengagement highlights the power imbalances between the clones and society at large as they fail to question or challenge their predetermined fates. The isolation and marginalisation they experience further contribute to the power dynamics that oppress them.

It is important to note that none of the characters, including Kathy, rebel or rise against this structure. As Ishiguro himself explains:

> *[The clones] live in this enclosed world. They live just amongst others like them. So that's the only life they know and, to them, you know, that's the natural life span. And far from feeling that they should rebel or run away, they feel a certain sense of duty to do these things well. (Ishiguro "NPR" 2005)*

Ishiguro's quote on the clones' sense of duty and acceptance of their predetermined roles sheds light on the power dynamics at play and the consequences of the internalisation of objectification. The clones' posthuman bodies are both a manifestation of and a vehicle for the systemic dehumanisation they experience. Despite their emotional depth and capacity for relationships, the clones are denied agency and autonomy, leaving them in a state of perpetual subjugation. By living amongst others like them and accepting their fates, they inadvertently perpetuate the power structures that oppress them.

Lochner's argument about Kathy's passiveness toward her predicament and her late realisation of her own objectification resonates with Ishiguro's observation. Kathy's diminished sense of personhood and her inability to challenge the status quo reflect the power of societal and institutional discourse in shaping identity and determining one's place within a hierarchical system. The clones' posthuman bodies serve as a stark reminder of the limits imposed on their personhood, as they are continually reminded of their purpose as mere tools for organ donation. According to Lochner, Kathy's lack of initiative and passivity during her adult years can be attributed to the fact that she only gains a clear understanding of the purpose of her existence much

later in her life. This delayed realization causes her to perceive herself more as an object than as an individual, as if she were being manipulated and directed by others (Lochner 3). This loss of personhood contributes to her sense of identity, as she is not in control of her life or fate.

In fact, Kathy's narration underscores the stark division between the clones and the rest of society and the impact this has on their relationships and sense of belonging. While reflecting on the separation from her fellow clones, she describes the "powerful tides tugging us apart" (Ishiguro 69), signifying that external forces — both societal and institutional— conspire to maintain their subjugated and predetermined lives. The poignant sentiment that they may have "kept a tighter hold of one another" (Ishiguro 69) had they understood the magnitude of these forces earlier, emphasises the emotional cost of their dehumanisation and the importance of their connections in preserving their humanity. This sentiment is echoed as Kathy describes a road she is on while with Tommy:

> *I kept us on the most obscure back roads I knew, where only our headlights disturbed the darkness. We'd occasionally encounter other headlights, and then I'd get the feeling they belonged to other carers, driving home alone, or maybe like me, with a donor beside them. I realised, of course, that other people used these roads; but that night, it seemed to me these dark byways of the country existed just for the likes of us, while the big glittering motorways with their huge signs and super cafés were for everyone else. (Ishiguro 182)*

In contrast to the glittering motorways, Kathy's description of the obscure back roads is a powerful metaphor for the separation between the clones and the rest of society. The darkness and isolation of these roads symbolise the clones' marginalisation, as they navigate a world that is designed primarily for others, reinforcing their status as second-class citizens. By expressing her belief that these roads seemed to exist "just for the likes of us" (Ishiguro 182), Kathy highlights the internalisation of their dehumanisation as they accept their position on the periphery of society.

The occasional encounters with other headlights, which Kathy imagines might belong to other carers or donors, emphasise the significance of shared experiences in shaping the clones' identities and their collective struggle. These fleeting moments of connection serve as a reminder of the inherent humanity that unites the clones,

despite the societal and institutional forces that seek to deny it. The contrasting imagery of "big glittering motorways with their huge signs and super cafés" (Ishiguro 182) reserved for "everyone else" further underscores the disparities between the clones' lives and those of the broader society, who enjoy the privileges of autonomy and freedom that are denied to the clones.

Concerning the process of internalizing and recounting grief, Bizzini observes that the employment of the auto/bio narrative in Never Let Me Go establishes a connective text, emphasizing the writer's resolve to investigate the clones' response to their mortality, possibly as part of their posthuman identity. The narrator's tactic to resist the devastating realization of death and mortality is by articulating distressing events through language, offering the possibility for the individual in pain to manage their grief and trauma (Bizzini 72). As Titus Levy puts it, "Kathy's narrative is part memoir and part rights claim, demonstrating the ability of autobiographical narrative to communicate stories of exploitation and injustice by giving a voice to marginalised social groups struggling on the fringes" (Levy 1).

In many respects, Kathy uses storytelling as a way to cope with the trauma of facing her loss of Ruth, Tommy, and soon herself. They, the posthuman, are the "other"; their loss is multifaceted and non-existent to wider society. Even when the clones are limited in their ability to form a sense of individuality from other in-group persons, and their ways of acquiring individuality are considerably more limited than those of a "normal" human (Jerng 42), Kathy's narrative of loss reconfigures the "nonhuman" status of the posthumans clearly and unremittingly to the reader.

Overall, the power imbalance between the clones and the society that created them is pervasive and multifaceted. According to Tsao, one example of the potency of this discrepancy can be analysed from a theological lens. He suggests that the relationship between the clones and human society mirrors that of created beings and creator-deities (Tsao 218). This perspective brings forth the ethical considerations of creating and exploiting sentient beings, further highlighting the power imbalances between the clones and their creators. By depicting the clones' experiences and

subjectivities, the novel invites readers to reflect upon the intricacies of contemporary ideologies and the ethical implications of certain bodily practices.

Although the clones are biologically identical to other humans, they are created solely to provide organs for "normal" people, underscoring the devaluation of their lives and the power disparity between them and the rest of society. Ishiguro's portrayal of the clones' lives raises questions about the morality of creating life solely for the purpose of organ donation. It highlights the emergence of a stratified society, where individuals are divided into two distinct classes based on their purpose and perceived value. In this context, "dual-class society" refers to the stark division between the clones, who are exploited for their organs, and the "normal" humans who benefit from their suffering (Toker and Chertoff 176). This division amplifies the power imbalances and ethical dilemmas inherent in the novel's exploration of posthuman embodiment and the consequences of creating life for utilitarian purposes.

4.5. Supremacy of Memory and Relationships over the Body

Never Let Me Go explores the complex interplay between memory, relationships, and identity, particularly in the lives of the novel's main characters. In her review of *Never Let Me Go,* Sarah Kerr argues that the novel's main goal is "to capture what is unmistakably human, what survives and insists on subtly expressing itself after you subtract the big stuff … that shapes people into individuals" (qtd. in Arias 387). The clones' memories of their childhoods at Hailsham become a way for them to assert their individuality and humanity in the face of their predetermined fates. As personal identity pertains to the self-classifications that distinguish an individual based on their deviation from other members of the same group, for posthuman clones such as Kathy, personal identity is constrained by their societal role as organ donors and their upbringing within establishments that are uncertain about addressing or mitigating their plight.

In this subchapter, I argue that memory and connection take primacy in Kathy's narrative over posthuman body and plight. I explore the significant role of memory

and relationships in shaping the identities of posthuman characters, particularly focusing on Kathy's experiences and reflections. Through an analysis of Kathy's memories of Hailsham and her relationships with Tommy and Ruth, I delve into the interconnectedness of their past and present selves, highlighting the fluidity of identity and the impact of external factors on individual consciousness. By examining the characters' attachment to their memories and shared experiences, I suggest that Ishiguro reveals the resilience of their identities in the face of predetermined destinies and societal constructs that attempt to reduce them to mere biological specimens.

Central to the narrative is the role and diffusion of memory in constructing the characters' identities. Kathy often reflects on her past experiences and memories, which serves to emphasise the significance of memory in shaping one's sense of self. Ishiguro writes, "Memory, I realise, can be an unreliable thing; often it is heavily coloured by the circumstances in which one remembers" (Ishiguro 36). This recognition of memory's potential unreliability underscores the fluidity of identity and the ways in which personal history can be shaped and reshaped over time. Similarly, Kathy reflects on her memories of Hailsham and says, "I keep thinking about this river somewhere, with the water moving really fast. And these two people in the water, trying to hold onto each other, holding on as hard as they can, but in the end, it's just too much" (Ishiguro 274). This metaphor illustrates the interconnectedness of identity and the impact of external factors on individual consciousness.

The physical spaces of Hailsham and the Cottages are emblematic of the clones' autonomy, and they are vital to understanding their identity. Cannella writes, "The Cottages, remote and seemingly free of any immediate panoptic control, are a physical place that becomes emblematic of Kathy's newfound autonomy" (Cannella 119). Throughout the novel, the characters place great value on their memories of Hailsham, the school they attended as children. Kathy describes how important it was for them to remember Hailsham and how this became particularly significant for Tommy as he neared completion, when clones began their donations. She explains,

"What he wanted was not just to hear about Hailsham, but to remember Hailsham, just like it had been his own childhood" (Ishiguro 6).

Kathy, in particular, finds solace in her memories and uses them to make sense of her present circumstances. As she nears the end of her time as a carer, she expresses a desire to "stop and think and remember" (Ishiguro 59). She recognises that her memories of Hailsham are intertwined with her experiences as an adult and that understanding the former will help her make sense of the latter. In this way, her memories allow her to connect her past and present selves, and to maintain a sense of continuity despite the changes in her life. She is persistent in looking back on her past, specifically her time at Hailsham and her memories there serve as a touchstone for all of her recollections. They are emblematic of the evanescent care posthuman clones received. Her memories of Hailsham are critical to understanding her place in society and who she is. This importance is evident in the opening pages of the novel when Kathy states, "There have been times over the years when I've tried to leave Hailsham behind, when I've told myself I shouldn't look back so much. But then there came a point when I just stopped resisting" (Ishiguro 6).

Thus, Kathy's memories and relationships shape her understanding of her identity as a clone. She recognises the importance of self-definition in a society where her fate is predetermined. Kathy reflects on the significance of her past experiences, stating, "It was up to each of us to make of our lives what we could" (Ishiguro 110). Her memories and relationships allow her to develop a sense of agency and self-definition. Even as she faces the inevitable reality of her fate, Kathy asserts her control over her narrative, claiming a moment for herself and rejecting the meaning given to her destination by anyone who is not her.

The supremacy of memory over the posthuman body is emphasised again in the novel's open-ended conclusion. While loss and melancholy pervade the narrative, Kathy's closing reflections on the potency of memory underscore the enduring influence of the clones' experiences. She proclaims, "Once I'm able to have a quieter life, in whichever centre they send me to, I'll have Hailsham with me, safely in my head, and that'll be something no one can take away" (Ishiguro 191). This declaration

attests to the resilience of the characters' memories and their capacity to mould their identities. The novel delves into the significance of memory and relationships in shaping identity amid predetermined destinies. For the characters, recollections of their youth at Hailsham become a tool for asserting individuality and humanity, and their collective experiences forge powerful connections among them. Kathy elucidates this idea, stating:

> *What I really wanted, I suppose, was to get straight all the things that happened between me and Tommy and Ruth after we grew up and left Hailsham. But I realise now just how much of what occurred later came out of our time at Hailsham, and that's why I want first to go over these earlier memories quite carefully. (Ishiguro 59)*

This passage demonstrates the deep-rooted impact of the characters' shared experiences at Hailsham on their later lives, reinforcing the notion that their memories hold more power over their identities than their posthuman bodies. By acknowledging the importance of revisiting these early memories, Kathy illustrates the interconnectedness of their past and present, emphasizing the role of memory in shaping their understanding of themselves and their world. Moreover, this emphasis on memory and relationships as crucial determinants of identity challenges the notion that the posthuman condition is solely defined by physical embodiment. The clones' capacity to remember, reflect, and forge meaningful connections with one another underscores their humanity, subverting the societal constructs that attempt to reduce them to mere biological specimens.

 This desire to hold onto memories and blur the line between their memories and those of their friends is evidence of their strong connection to one another and their shared experiences. Similarly, Ruth's words to Kathy and Tommy about her feeling guilty for keeping them apart reflect the significance of the relationships within the posthumans' lives. Ruth tells them:

> *It should have been you two. I'm not pretending I didn't always see that. Of course, I did, as far back as I can remember. But I kept you apart. I'm not asking you to forgive me for that. That's not what I'm after just now. What I want is for you to put it right. Put right what I messed up for you (Ishiguro 237).*

By analysing Ruth's words, we can further comprehend the significance of relationships and memory within the posthuman experience. Ruth's admission of guilt and her desire for Kathy and Tommy to rectify the past demonstrate the deep impact of their shared history on their individual and collective identities. The recognition of the emotional bond between Kathy and Tommy, and Ruth's request for Kathy and Tommy to "put right what [she] messed up", also highlights the characters' determination to reclaim control over their narratives and assert their agency within the constraints of their existence. By acknowledging the importance of their relationships and shared memories, the characters are able to redefine themselves beyond the confines of their posthuman bodies and predetermined destinies.

In a certain perspective, memory is Kathy's response to the overwhelming loss that pervades her life. As mentioned before, Kathy states that her goal is to "get straight all the things that happened between me and Tommy and Ruth after we grew up and left Hailsham" (Ishiguro 59). In this respect, Ji Eun Lee's analysis of the novel highlights the significance of the concept of "loss" in the characters' experiences, particularly concerning the depiction of Norfolk as a "lost corner". Lee argues that the flatness and emptiness of Norfolk, as described by Miss Emily, can be seen as both a source of specificity and an affirmation of the clones' decolonial identity. This sense of loss pervading Norfolk is linked to the clones' colonial subjectivity. Their last years at recuperation centres are marked by the physical loss of their organs and their connection to Hailsham, which had once affirmed their individuality (Lee 282). In this context, Norfolk symbolises not only the physical space of loss but also the emotional experience of losing one's identity and sense of belonging. Kathy's attachment to Hailsham as the place where she and her friends "come from" (Ishiguro 212) is a poignant example of this, as she worries about the effect that the closing of Hailsham will have on their sense of community and shared identity (Lee 283).

The idea of Norfolk as being a "lost" corner is further emphasised by a student's claim that "all the lost property found in the country ended up" there (Ishiguro 67). Ruth's reflection on this notion suggests that "when we lost something precious, and

we'd looked and looked and still couldn't find it, then we didn't have to be completely heartbroken" because they could "find it again in Norfolk" (Ishiguro 71), captures the characters' hope for a sense of closure and resolution in the face of their inescapable fate. Kelly Rich discusses the significance of the Norfolk-induced fantasy in the novel, which leads Kathy away from her search for Hailsham and towards a different space. The fantasy reaches its peak with Tommy's revival, as he becomes increasingly prominent and identifiable the more Kathy lingers.

This episode offers a magical instant of significance creation, countering the damaging frameworks imposed by the state. Nevertheless, upon envisioning this realm, Kathy can tenderly depart and label this experience accurately, which is a mere fantasy (Rich 648). Rich suggests that the only way to create meaning in such a totalising system is by registering its loss. *Never Let Me Go* documents how the clones attempt to rehabilitate themselves and become people and places rather than just utility. Rich notes that "the novel archives all their washed-up losses and attempts at becoming people, and becoming places, rather than becoming utility" (648) and argues that the otherness of the posthuman is crucially based on the capitalist society that commodifies human bodies.

Similarly, Boschetti emphasises the crucial role of memory and storytelling within the posthuman condition, positing that Kathy's reliance on her own memories is central to her self-development and the expression of her humanity (Boschetti 55). The novel underscores this notion as Kathy reminisces about her past interactions with Tommy and Ruth, recounting how they would "remember things together until they turned cloudy with our breath" (Ishiguro 89). Through the continuous process of recalling and reiterating their shared memories, the three protagonists are able to retain their humanity and preserve their interpersonal bonds, despite the looming uncertainties surrounding their future.

Moreover, Snaza contends that Kathy's memories, which encompass her experiences and emotions, are confined to a limited horizon, devoid of any prospects for the future (Snaza 229). This limitation ties into the theme of embodiment in the posthuman context. Their cloned bodies are designed with a predetermined

expiration, causing their memories to become circumscribed by this temporal boundary. Consequently, the act of storytelling serves as a means for Kathy and her friends to resist the constraints of their engineered nature and assert their human identity, emphasising the significance of memory in shaping their experiences within the posthuman condition.

In addition to their relationships with one another, the characters' identities are shaped by their connections to the non-clone world. These connections, however, are often fraught with tension and unease as the characters struggle to define themselves in relation to a society that views them as disposable. This tension is exemplified in the scene where Kathy and Tommy visit Madame, hoping to receive a deferral from organ donation. The characters' desperation for acknowledgement and validation from the non-clone world underscores the importance of these connections in shaping their identities and their understanding of the posthuman condition. This dependency is bound to affect their relationships, as Kathy notes, "being dependent on each other to produce the stuff that might become your private treasures - that's bound to do things to your relationships" (Ishiguro 16)

The characters are limited in their ability to challenge the rules that govern their lives. For instance, the characters visit a stranded boat, symbolising their futile hopes for escape but never offering a real means to do so (Robbins 294). The myth of winning "deferral" of one's organ donations based on their artwork exemplifies the characters' desperation for salvation, even though their genuine creativity lies in the myth-making surrounding their art (Robbins 294). Bizzini also highlights the significance of collections in the novel. The characters' collections, consisting of personal belongings, are a way to hold onto their identities and maintain a sense of self. As Bizzini notes, "personal identity is constituted by a series of belongings such as toys or clothes, for example, to which we attribute portions of our life, and through them, we keep on living" (77). The clones' collections are a form of resistance against their predetermined fate as organ donors. By holding onto their possessions, they cling to their humanity and individuality.

Still, memory remains prioritised over the posthuman body for Kathy's narrative in the novel. This is one reason why her personality is characterised by her passiveness and her restriction of emotions. Even as a young adult, when she becomes cognizant of her life's trajectory and ultimate conclusion, she does not attempt to flee or defy it. This implies that she accepts her circumstances and the forthcoming "donations." Ishiguro notes that he is "fascinated by the extend to which people do not run away" from their predicaments, and this "passivity" can be caused by a lack of wider perspective ("Film Independent"). On the other hand, Sarah Duis contends that Kathy's passivity stems from the environment in which she was brought up, which normalized her fate and fostered a culture of cultivated acquiescence and passivity (Duis 20). Consequently, Kathy has been indoctrinated to believe that her taught way of thinking and living represents a "normal" existence, so she does not question or oppose it in any manner.

Even though the clones cannot procreate or reasonably work in an "open-plan office" (Ishiguro 94), the present and the potential to satisfy urges and even make memories is more important. Kathy's sexual urges and desire to find her "possible" also provide insight into her negotiation with the outside world as the "othered" posthuman. When she experiences strong feelings of wanting to have sex, she realizes that it must be related to the way she is and seeks to find her "possible" in a sex magazine, as a means of understanding herself (Ishiguro 112). This desire to understand herself suggests that despite her limited personal identity, Kathy is still searching for a sense of individuality and self-awareness.

The urge to also find her "possible" in a sex magazine is also challenged by the notion that clones like her are just models and nothing more, as Ishiguro writes, "There were some who thought it stupid to be concerned about possibles at all. Our models were an irrelevance, a technical necessity for bringing us into the world, nothing more than that. It was up to each of us to make of our lives what we could" (Ishiguro 110). This highlights how the clones grapple with the tension between their imposed limitations and their intrinsic desire for self-discovery. In the face of their predetermined destinies as the "othered" posthumans, Kathy and her peers find

solace in the present moment and the formation of new memories, which they perceive as essential to their existence.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I explored the question of posthuman embodiment and condition in *Neuromancer* by William Gibson and *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro. Although both works are classified as science fiction, their unique portrayals of the posthuman experience ——one set in a technologically advanced, dystopian future and the other in an alternate 1990s England— illuminate the intricate relationship between body, technology, and identity through the lens of posthuman embodiment and condition.

Through a comparative analysis, I argued that *Neuromancer* delves into the posthuman condition by challenging conventional perceptions of the "natural" human body, while introducing notions of modifications, enhancements, and transcendence. Conversely, I argued that *Never Let Me Go* focuses on the emotional aspects of the posthuman experience, exemplifying the clones' lack of autonomy and societal oppression due to their posthuman bodies being engineered for organ harvesting. The representation of posthuman embodiment and condition in these novels underscores the variegated display of posthuman experiences, emphasising the commonalities between the two stories in terms of the characters' struggles to navigate their existence and redefine their sense of self within the confines of their engineered bodies.

Chapter 2 provided an analysis of the methodology and the posthuman framework, drawing upon the works of prominent researchers such as Hayles, Haraway, and Fukuyama to establish a framework for analysing the novels in the subsequent chapters. The chapter also discussed notions of the posthuman condition and embodiment, drawing upon the works of researchers like Pepperell. Subsequently,

Chapter 3 focused on the question of embodiment in *Neuromancer*, providing an overview of the novel in the context of posthuman embodiment. The chapter explored the diversity of body representations through peripheral posthumans, Case's struggle with his posthuman body, the role of drugs and Case's urge to transcend the body, Molly Millions' enhanced posthuman body, and the disembodied characters such as Wintermute and Dixie.

The chapter also discussed the power tension between the embodied and disembodied in the novel and how power dynamics shift in favour of the disembodied. After that, Chapter 4 examined the question of embodiment in *Never Let Me Go*, contrasting it with the biotechnological posthuman embodiment in Neuromancer. The chapter problematised the notion of "normal" humanity and the posthuman body and delved into the subtlety of power dynamics within posthuman embodiment in the novel. The chapter also explored the supremacy of memory and relationships over the body for the posthumans in the novel, as they have internalised their status as posthumans and prioritised these aspects of their lives.

To acknowledge the limitations of and potential additions to this study, it must be noted that the focus on two specific novels from the science fiction genre may have influenced the findings and interpretations. While *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go* provide insightful examples of posthuman embodiment and condition, the study's scope was limited to these two works, potentially leaving out other relevant texts that may offer further insights into posthumanism in literature.

Despite these limitations, this research aims to contribute to understanding posthuman embodiment and condition within the context of the selected, prominent novels. It also opens the door for future research that could expand upon or extend the findings of this study. For instance, future research could explore the depiction of posthumanism in other literary genres or periods, providing a broader understanding of how posthuman themes are addressed in various contexts. Scholars could investigate alternative theoretical frameworks or methodologies that offer new perspectives on the relationship between technology, embodiment, and the human experience. Similarly, another possible direction for future research could be

examining the ethical implications of posthumanism within the literature, focusing on the moral responsibilities and dilemmas that emerge from the intersection of technology and humanity. Researchers can contribute to the ongoing debates surrounding the societal impacts of rapidly advancing technologies by delving deeper into the ethical dimensions of posthuman embodiment and condition.

By examining the complex dynamics between technology, embodiment, and the posthuman experience, this thesis highlights the importance of understanding how these factors intersect in shaping our perception of humanity and its potential future. *Neuromancer* and *Never Let Me Go* illustrate posthumanism's multifaceted nature, revealing that despite their disparate settings and approaches, they share common themes of identity, autonomy, and the struggle for self-definition. Ultimately, by examining these narratives and their portrayal of posthuman embodiment and condition, we can gain insights into the broader implications of technological advancements on our understanding and definitions of humanity, and how these changes might shape our future as a society.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez, bilim kurgu alanında öncü iki eser olan William Gibson'ın *Neuromancer*'ı ve Kazuo Ishiguro'nun *Beni Asla Bırakma* (*Never Let Me Go*) romanlarını merkeze alarak, posthümanizm/posthümanizma, yani insan-sonrası bedenlenmesini ve durumunu inceler. Her iki roman kendi başlarına geniş bir araştırma literatürüne sahip olmalarına rağmen, posthümanizma ve insan-sonrası bedenlenmesi konusunda bu iki romanı bir arada inceleyen bir çalışma eksikliği dikkat çekicidir. Bu romanlar, posthümanizma durumunun ve bedenlenme konusunun çok yönlü ve çeşitli özünü göstermesi açısından birlikte değerlendirilmeyi gerektirmektedir.

İnsanın sınırlarının sürekli gelişen teknolojik bir dünyada bulanıklaştığı bir dönemde yazılan bu tezin temel argümanı, *Neuromancer* ve *Beni Asla Bırakma*'daki posthümanist düşüncede bedenlenmenin önemini vurguladığıdır. Argüman temel olarak, posthümanist bedenlenmesi ve durumunun incelenmesinin, posthümanist bedeni, özerklik ve güç dinamikleri arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi vurgulayarak, edebiyatta posthümanizmin çeşitli tezahürlerini ve deneyimlerini ortaya çıkardığıdır.

Neuromancer, geleneksel beden algılarına meydan okuyarak, posthümanist bedenlenmeyi ve bedensizliği sıklıkla özerklik, yükseliş ve güçle ilişkilendirir. Tezde *Neuromancer*'ın, biyolojik "et" bedeni sorunsallaştıran ve beden algılarına modifikasyonlar, geliştirmeler ve ince ayarlamalar yoluyla meydan okuyan çok yönlü bir posthümanist durumu sunduğu belirtilmektedir. Romandaki "bedensizlik" kavramı da incelenmekte ve bedensizliğin de sıklıkla özerklik, seçim ve güçle ortaya çıkan ilişkisi araştırılmaktadır. Buna karşın, *Beni Asla Bırakma*'da klonların, "ruhları" doğal doğumla dünyaya gelen insanlardan ayırt edilemez olmasına rağmen, yalnızca posthümanist bedenlerinden dolayı genel toplum tarafından tamamen

kontrol edilmeye mahkum olduklarını göstererek, duygusal bir şekilde incelenir. Her iki romanın posthümanist bedenlenme ve durum tezahürlerini inceleyerek posthümanist bedeni ve güç dinamikleri arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi vurgular ve edebiyatta posthümanist deneyimine daha derin bir anlayışa katkıda bulunur.

Neuromancer, siberpunk türünün temel eseridir (Hollinger 30) ve 20. yüzyılın sonlarında dijital teknolojideki hızlı ilerlemelere ve bu ilerlemelerin toplumsal etkilerine tepki olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Roman, insan bilincinin siber dünyada aktarılabilir, değiştirilebilir ve manipüle edilebilir olduğu ve bedenlerin genişletilebilir ve temelde modifiye edilebilir bir distopya geleceği tasavvur eder. Benzer şekilde, *Beni Asla Bırakma*, popüler bir spekülatif bilim kurgu romanıdır. Ancak yazım, içerik, duygusal ton ve bedene yaklaşım bakımından *Neuromancer'*dan farklıdır. Roman alternatif bir zaman diliminde, 1990'ların İngiltere'sinde, organ toplamak amacıyla insan klonlamanın ve yetiştirmenin yasal, ana akım olduğu bir ortamı incelemektedir. 2017'de yazarı Kazuo Ishiguro, Nobel Edebiyat Ödülü'nü almıştır.

Ishiguro'nun anlatısı, klonların varlığı çevresindeki etik ve ahlaki ikilemlere ve onların kimlik ve özerklik mücadelesine yer vermektedir. *Beni Asla Bırakma'*da çağdaş toplumda yaygın bir şekilde mevcut olan teknolojilere ve sorunlara değinilir ve posthümanist temaların modern çağdaki önemini daha da vurgular. Bu çalışma, bu iki romanı analiz ederek posthümanizma durumunun ve bedenlenmesi konusundaki sorunlara odaklanmaktadır. Özellikle şu sorulara yanıt bulmayı hedeflemektedir:

-*Neuromancer* ve *Beni Asla Bırakma*, kendi anlatı dünyalarında posthümanist bedenlenmeyi ve durumunu nasıl kavramsallaştırır ve temsil eder?
-Bu temalara yaklaşımlarındaki benzerlikler ve farklılıklar, posthümanist durum ve bedenlenmeye yönelik çeşitli yaklaşımları ne şekilde yansıtır?
-Her iki romanda posthümanist bedenlenmeyi ve durumunu betimlemeyen ve yansıtan güç dinamikleri nelerdir ve bu dinamikler karakterlerin kimliklerini, özerklik arayışını ve sosyal ilişkilerini nasıl etkiler?

Tezin ikinci bölümü posthümanizm ve insan-sonrası olma durumunu, yani posthümanizma kavramını incelemektedir. Posthümanizm kavramı, özellikle yapay zekâ ve biyoteknoloji gibi gelişen ileri teknolojilerin, insan olma kavramı üzerindeki potansiyel etkilerini araştıran geniş bir edebi ve felsefi çerçeve ve kavramdır. İnsanlık ve insan doğası hakkındaki anlayışın ötesini incelemektedir; teknolojinin insan kabiliyetini geliştirmek veya sınırlarını aşmak için kullanılmasını ele alır. Bu kavramlar Gibson'ın ve Ishiguro'nun eserlerinde yoğun bir şekilde yer alır. Bu kavramın temelinde insanlığın sabit veya statik olmadığı, sürekli evrildiği fikri yer alır.

İnsanın ne anlama geldiğini tanımlamak hiçbir zaman basit olmamıştır. Soyut düşünce, kimlik, çevresini ve çevresiyle olan ilişkisini değiştirme eğilimiyle belirsiz bir şekilde farklı olan insan türü, yoğun bir felsefi, sosyolojik ve bilimsel incelemenin konusu olmuştur. Ancak 20. yüzyılın sonundan itibaren teknolojideki hızlı büyüme, organik ile yapay, biyolojik ile mekanik ve insan ile "post"insan arasındaki farkı belirlemeyi giderek daha zor hale getirmiştir.

İkinci bölümde posthümanizmin çeşitli tanımları sunulmakta ve sınırları incelenmektedir. Hayles ve Haraway gibi önemli akademisyenlerin görüşlerine genel bakışlar ve analizler sağlanmakta, bu araştırmacıların görüşleri Badmington ve Fukuyama gibi diğer araştırmacılarınkiyle kıyaslanmaktadır. Ardından, posthümanizma durumu ve bedenlenme kavramlarına daha etraflıca analiz edip Pepperell gibi akademisyenlerin görüşlerine başvurulmaktadır. Posthümanizmin "antroposentrizmi" ve "insanın transandantal kategori olarak 'olağanüstülüğünü'" sorguladığı belirtilir (Braidotti 66). Posthümanizmanın insancıl bireycilik ve evrenselliği aşmayı amaçlayan bir dünya görüşü olduğu gibi farklı düşüncelere de yer verilmiştir (Ryan 298).

Üçüncü bölümde *Neuromancer*'daki posthümanist bedenlenme sorunsalı incelenmektedir. Roman insan deneyimi ve kimliğine dair geleneksel kavramlara meydan okuyarak, insan sonrası bedenlenmenin ilgi çekici bir keşfini sunmaktadır. Bu bölüm, Gibson'ın karakterlerinin biyolojik ve teknolojik arasındaki sınırlarda akışkan bir şekilde gezinmelerine ışık tutarak, posthümanist durumun

karmaşıklıklarını araştırmaktadır. Gibson'ın çeşitli insan sonrası bedenlenme, bedensel kısıtlamalara ve güçlendirmelere verilen tepkileri ve tamamen bedensizleşmeyi incelediğini; bu durumda kimlik, güç ve özerklik arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi ortaya koyduğu öne sürülmektedir.

Bu bölümde romanın olay örgüsüne ve ortamına kısa bir genel bakış sağladıktan sonra, insan sonrası durumun ve cisimleşmenin farklı şekillerde nasıl tezahür edebileceğine dair çeşitli örnekler sunulmaktadır. Bu bağlamda Julius Deane, 3Jane ve Marie-France gibi yan karakterler incelenmektedir. Ardından, "et" olarak tasvir ettiği bedeninin sınırlamalarıyla boğuşan ve siber alan yoluyla sınırsızlığı özleyen ana karakter Case incelenmektedir. Üçüncü bölümde Case'in deneyimlerinin, bedenlenmenin doğası ve fiziksel formun sınırlarından kurtulma potansiyeli hakkında düşündürücü soruları nasıl gündeme getirdiğini incelemektedir.

Ardından, insan ve makine arasındaki çizgileri bulanıklaştırarak insan sonrası olma durumu anlayışına daha fazla nüans eklemeye yardımcı olan başka bir ana karakter olan Molly Millions incelenmektedir. Sibernetik geliştirmelere sahip artırılmış bir birey olarak Molly, organik ile inorganiği birleştirmenin sonuçları ve böyle bir kaynaşmanın bir insana neyi gerektirdiğine dair anlayışı yeniden yapılandırma yollarıyla ilgili soruları gündeme getiren melez bir varoluşu temsil etmektedir. Son olarak, bedensiz post-insanları, özellikle de post-insan koşulunda bedenlenme kavramına meydan okuyan Wintermute ve Dixie Flatline'ı karakterleri etraflıca incelenmektedir. Bu analiz yoluyla, bu bölüm, *Neuromancer*'da yansıtıldığı şekliyle insan sonrası bedenlenmeye dair daha derin bir anlayış sunmayı amaçlayarak, teknolojinin edebiyattaki etkileri ve bir post-insan olmanın ne anlama geldiğine dair gelişen anlayış üzerine daha geniş bir araştırmaya katkıda bulunmayı hedeflemektedir.

Bu bölümde önce *Neuromancer* romanının özeti ve romanın posthümanist araştırmaya nasıl dahil olduğu tartışılmaktadır. Siberpunk türünün temelini atmasının ve edebi bir eser olarak son derece etkili olmasının yanı sıra, *Neuromancer*, posthümanizm tartışmasına önemli bir katkı olarak kabul edilmiştir (Siegel 9; Pordzik 148). Romanda, yapay zekâ olan Wintermute, Case'i işe alarak zorla elinden

alınmış siber alana erişim kabiliyetini onarma sözü verir. Case'in görevini yaptığını garantilemek için Wintermute kan dolaşımına ölümcül toksinler sokar. Case'in görevi, Wintermute ve kardeş yapay zekâsı Neuromancer'ın yaratıcıları olan soylu Tessier-Ashpool ailesinin bilgisayar sistemine sızmaktır. Olay örgüsündeki temel konu, Wintermute'un muadili yapay zekâ olan Neuromancer ile birleşmek için kökleşmiş arzusudur. Ancak yapay zekâ yeteneklerini önceden belirlenmiş insan sınırları içinde tutmaya adanmış bir kuruluş olan Turing Polisi, böyle bir birliği önlemek için savunmalar oluşturmuştur.

Wintermute, karşısına çıkarılan engelleri aşmak için Case için Molly Millions, merhum (yani kişiliği salt okunur bir ROM yapısında saklanan), McCoy Pauley, Armitage, Peter Riviera, Maelcum ve Lady 3Jane dahil olmak üzere bir ekip kurar. Sonunda Case, Dixie Flatline'ın bu bilgisayar bazlı versiyonunun yardımıyla Wintermute'un aradığı çok önemli sisteme erişim kazanır. Sonuç olarak Wintermute, Neuromancer ile başarılı bir şekilde kaynaşarak sibernetik gelişimin bir sonraki aşamasını (Siegel 9) somutlaştıran yeni bir varlık doğurur. Bunun nihayetinde kendisini "varlığın toplamı, tüm gösteri" (Gibson 216) olarak tanımlayabilir.

Neuromancer, yalnızca türü tanımlayan olay örgüsü ve estetiğiyle değil, aynı zamanda insanlar ve makineler arasındaki sınırları bulanıklaştırarak insanlık sonrasını içgüdüsel sergilemesiyle de önemlidir (Frentz 62'de Roberts). Roman, "et alanı" ve "siber alan" (Siegel 9) arasındaki ikiliği ve ayrıca insanlar ve onların teknolojisi gibi ontolojik olarak farklı varlıkların kaynaşmasının sonuçlarını ele aldığı için posthümanizm için önemlidir. Roman, bu özelliğiyle hümanizmi süregelen sorgulamanın sonuçlarını keşfederek insanmerkezci idealizme meydan okur (Pordzik 148-150). Modern bir teknolojik fenomen olarak siber uzay kavramının kendisi, "yalnızca gerçekleştirilmediği için değil, aynı zamanda kökeni kurguya, özellikle William Gibson'ın siberpunk romanlarına dayanan bir kavram olduğu için garip bir statüye sahiptir" (Myer 887'de Stallabrass). Artık çağdaş bilincimize derinden yerleşmiş bir kavram olan siber uzay, popülerleşmesinin ciddi bir kısmını *Neuromancer*'a borçludur.

Bu üçüncü bölümde ayrıca romanda Case'in bedeni ve siber uzayla ilişkisini inceleyerek insan sonrası bedenlenmenin karmaşık dinamikleri araştırılmaktadır. Gibson, *Neuromancer*'da post-insan düzenleme motifi aracılığıyla zihin-beden ayrımını ve ileri teknolojinin insan kimliği üzerindeki etkilerini sorgulamaktadır. Romanın başından itibaren Case, hoşnutsuz bir işveren tarafından zehirlenip sakatlandıktan sonra siber uzaya erişememesi için bir çare aramaktadır. Araştırması onu implantlar, sinir ekleme ve mikrobiyonik alanındaki en son teknolojisiyle ünlü bir şehir olan Chiba'ya götürür (Gibson 5). Siber uzayda kurulan duyumları ve yakın bağlantıları hatırladığında yaşadığı şehvet ve yalnızlık deneyimlerinin kanıtladığı gibi, Case'in dijital alem için yoğun özlemi aşikardır (Gibson 8). Bu tür duygular, benlik duygusunun ve doyumunun özünde sanal alana ne ölçüde bağlı olduğunu göstererek, varoluşunun ikili doğasını vurgular. Bu bölünme, korkuya kapılan Case'in, operasyonun siber uzay erişimini yeniden sağlamadaki başarısından şüphe duyması ve "etten bedeni" (Gibson 33) ile sınırlı kalma ihtimalinden korkmasıyla daha da vurgulanır. İnsan sistemindeki her bilgisayarın bankalarından soyutlanan verilerin bir temsili olarak siber uzay veya "matrix", romanın odak noktası ve Case'in "et" ile mücadelesinin dönüm noktasıdır.

Romanda Case'in ilişkisi olduğu ve soygun ortağı Molly Millions da posthümanizma durumunu ve "et" veya insan vücudu kavramını incelemede önemlidir. Becerikli bir "sokak samurayı" ve cyborg olarak Molly, tırnaklarının altındaki geri çekilebilir bıçaklar ve aynalı, görüşü iyileştiren göz implantları gibi, insan bedenini aşma idealini somutlaştıran, insan ve makinenin bir füzyonunu temsil eden çok sayıda geliştirmeden geçer. Sibernetik geliştirmeleri, ona benzersiz bir güç biçimi vererek, bu olağanüstü fiziksel yeteneklerle *Neuromancer* dünyasında gezinmesini sağlar. Bu bölümün devamında, Molly'nin karmaşık karakteri derinlemesine incelenmiştir ve insan sonrası durumu, "et" kavramını ve sibernetik geliştirmelerin zorluklarını ve sonuçlarını keşfetmedeki rolü incelenmiştir.

Molly'nin gözlerinin üzerine implante edilmiş aynalı lensler, tırnaklarının altında jilet keskinliğinde geri çekilebilir bıçaklar ve gücünü, hızını ve reflekslerini güçlendiren çeşitli diğer geliştirmelerle donatılmış artırılmış vücudu, Molly'nin bittiği yer ile geliştirmelerinin başladığı yer arasındaki çizgiyi bulanıklaştırır. Geri çekilebilir

neşter bıçakları bile bilinçli olarak kullanmadığı zamanlarda her zaman hazırdır. Gibson, bıçakların kısmen dışarı çıkıp geri çekildiği "bir dizi gerilim-serbest bırakma egzersizi yoluyla" ellerinin esnediği bir sahneyi anlatmaktadır (50). Sponsler'ın gözlemlediği gibi, beden ve kimlik "bu dünyada vücudun yüzeyine dökülür, ancak vücudun bu kadar kolayca yeniden tasarlanıp özelleştirilebildiği yerde, geleneksel bireysellik ve benlik kavramları anlamsız hale gelir" (632). Yapay bir şekilde geliştirilmiş ve güçlendirilmiş vücut, kimliğinin bir özelliğinden çok kullanılabilecek bir araç olarak tasvir edilmektedir; bu onun için bir gurur kaynağıdır. Molly'nin "geliştirilmiş" sinir sistemi ve bünyesi, bir kişinin zihnini neyin oluşturduğuna dair anlayışımıza meydan okumaktadır ve dış etkenler tarafından nasıl değiştirilebileceği ve hatta kontrol edilebileceğini göstermektedir (Olsen 66; Punday 205).

Bölümün devamında Wintermute ve Dixie Flatline gibi bedenleşme kavramının dışında, tümüyle bedenselleşmemiş karakterler ve bu karakterlerin posthümanist duruma etkisi tartışılır. Roman, benlik ve fiziksel varlık arasındaki bağlantıyı karmaşıklaştıran gelişmiş yapay zekayı tanıtarak geleneksel kimlik kavramlarına meydan okumaktadır. Wintermute ve Neuromancer tarafından temsil edilen yapay zekâ önemli bilişsel yeteneklere sahip olsa da, insan yaşamının somut, bedensel yönlerinin önemini ortadan kaldırmaz. Roman, insanlardan insan sonrası varlıklara kademeli bir güç kaymasını tasvir etmektedir; ancak aynı zamanda fiziksel ve fiziksel olmayan arasındaki ilişkiye dikkatli bir bakış açısı sunmaktadır. Gibson, bir zamanlar insan olarak yaşayan ama şimdi yalnızca bir ROM biçiminde dijital bir bilinç olarak var olan Dixie Flatline gibi karakterler aracılığıyla somut ve soyut arasındaki basit ayrımları sorunsallaştırmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, *Neuromancer*'daki bedenlenme araştırması yoluyla insan sonrası durum, fiziksel varlık ile fiziksel olmayan varoluş arasındaki dinamik etkileşimlerin karmaşık bir keşfi olarak tasvir edilir ve bu iki durumun incelikli bir keşfi sağlanır.

Dördüncü bölümde, Kazuo Ishiguro'nun *Beni Asla Bırakma* romanında posthümanist bedenlenme sorunu incelenmektedir. Bu inceleme, her iki romanda da post-insan bedeni ile güç dinamikleri arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi sergileyerek, *Neuromancer*'daki insan sonrası düzenleme incelemesine kıyasla sürdürülmektedir. *Neuromancer*, modifikasyonlar, geliştirmeler ve bedeni aşma yoluyla geleneksel

bedenlenme kavramına meydan okurken, *Beni Asla Bırakma* post-insanların durumunu ve dünyadaki yerlerini tanımlamada fiziksel bedenin merkeziyetini vurgulamaktadır.

Beni Asla Bırakma'da insan sonrası beden hem derin bir savunmasızlık alanı hem de bir bağlantı ve anı kaynağı olarak hizmet ederek, insan sonrası durum içindeki bedenlenmenin kararsız doğasını vurgular. Bu bölümde önce *Beni Asla Bırakma*'ya genel bir bakış sunulmaktadır ve insan sonrası durumu ve bedenleşme romanın anlatı çerçevesi içinde konumlandırılmaktadır. Neredeyse her karakterin posthümanizmin bir parçası olduğu *Neuromancer*'ın aksine, *Beni Asla Bırakma* yaratıldıkları andan itibaren klonların vücutlarının hayatlarını ve kaderlerini şekillendirdiği bir "insanlar ve post-insan" ikilemini sunmaktadır. *Beni Asla Bırakma*'daki biyoteknolojik insan sonrası bedenlenme kavramını derinlemesine inceleyerek, *Neuromancer*'ın sibernetik geliştirmelere, yapay zekaya ve bilincin evrene entegrasyonuna odaklanmasıyla nasıl önemli bir tezat oluşturduğu incelenmektedir.

Ardından, Ishiguro'nun insan sonrası klonların duygusal derinliğini, karmaşık ilişkilerini ve ahlaki doğasını betimlemesini analiz ederek "normal" insanlık ile insan sonrası beden arasındaki ayrımı sorunsallaştırılmaktadır. Böylece klonların "ötekileştirilmesi"ne eleştirel bir boyut eklenmektedir. Bunu takiben, romanda insan sonrası bedenlenme içindeki güç dinamiklerinin inceliklerini tartışarak, klonlar arasındaki kişilerarası ilişkileri ve onları yaratan ve kontrol eden toplumun uzak varlığı vurgulanmaktadır. Bu, güç dinamiklerinin öncelikle ileri teknoloji ve hiyerarşik yapılarla ifade edildiği ve karakterlerin siber uzayın sanal alemine dalmalarını kolaylaştıran sibernetik ve fiziksel güçlendirmeler ve gelişmeler yoluyla bedensel kısıtlamalarının üstesinden gelebildiği *Neuromancer* ile bir tezat oluşturmaktadır.

Bu bölümde öncelikle roman hakkında genel bir değerlendirme ve inceleme yapılmıştır. Roman, tenha ve pastoral bir İngiliz yatılı okulu olan Hailsham'da büyüyen Kathy H., Ruth ve Tommy'nin hayatlarını anlatmaktadır. 31 yaşında bir "bakıcı" olan Kathy, romanın anlatıcısıdır ve Hailsham ve ötesindeki deneyimleri

üzerine derinlemesine düşünmekte ve sonunda klonlar olarak varoluşlarının gerçek amacını ortaya koymaktadır. *Beni Asla Bırakma*'daki olay örgüsü ve motifler, insan sonrası durumu ve bedenlenmeyi tartışmak için gereklidir; roman, klonların boyun eğdirici bir iş sağladığı, neredeyse "gerçek" insanlar için hayvancılığa tabi tutulduğu bir dünya sunmaktadır. Roman, klonların duygusal derinliğine, zekasına ve bireyselliğine rağmen bu dünyayı göstermektedir; *Beni Asla Bırakma*'da insan sonrası bedenlerin özü buradan sağlanmaktadır.

Romanda olay örgüsü üç ana bölümde aktarılmaktadır. İlk bölüm, karakterlerin öğretmenlerinin veya "velilerinin" rehberliğinde yakın arkadaşlıklar kurdukları ve yaratıcı yeteneklerini geliştirdikleri Hailsham'da geçirdikleri süre boyunca gerçekleşir. Çocuk olarak organ bağışçısı olarak amaçlarının acı gerçekliğinden korunurlar. Ancak, okulun ince ipuçları ve ihtiyatlı konuşmaları aracılığıyla yavaş yavaş kaderlerinin farkına varırlar. Bu bilgiye rağmen ilgi alanlarını keşfetmeye, kişiliklerini geliştirmeye ve birbirleriyle karmaşık ilişkiler kurmaya devam ederler. Romanın, ana karakterler Kathy, Ruth ve Tommy arasındaki karmaşık ilişki etrafında döndüğü öne sürülmüştür. Roman, "insanlığın gizli derinliklerini ve insan ilişkilerinin doğasını" önemli bir tema olarak hafızayla çözmektedir (Teo 127).

Ishiguro'nun romanda klonları kullanması, geleneksel insan/insan dışı ikili görüşüne meydan okumaktadır. Madame/Marie-Claude kadar, Bayan Emily ve diğer aktivistler de bölümün ilerleyen kısımlarında anlatıldığı gibi, "gerçek" insanlar olarak, ahlaki ikilemlerden kaçınmak için çaresizce roman dünyasındaki statükoya meydan okumaya çalışmışlardır. Romandaki insan sonrası durumun düğüm noktası budur. Nihayetinde beden ve amaçtan yoksun bırakılan Hailsham öğrencileri bile, bağış yapan/bağışlayan, insan/insan-olmayan ikilisinin acı verici ucunda sıkışıp kalmış durumdalardır.

Ancak romanın anlatısı ve anlatıcının sağladığı deneyimlerin, kişiliklerin ve ilişkilerin tüm ayrıntıları, okuyucuya insan sonrası durum içindeki kimliğin akışkanlığını ve karmaşıklığını göstermektedir. Yalnızca organ bağışı için yaratılmış olmalarına rağmen, klonlar benzersiz kişilikleri, duyguları ve ilişkileri olan bireyler olarak tasvir edilmektedir. Kendi arzuları ve özlemleri vardır ve önceden belirlenmiş

kaderleriyle uzlaşmak için mücadele ederler. Bu, klon olarak kimliklerinin onları zorunlu olarak insandan daha az olarak tanımladığı fikrine meydan okumaktadır. Bunun yerine Ishiguro, okuyucuyu geleneksel insan/insan olmayan ayrımlarını aşan daha akıcı bir kimlik anlayışı olasılığını düşünmeye davet etmektedir.

"Bilim kurgu" olarak *Beni Asla Bırakma*'daki *Neuromancer*'dan çarpıcı şekilde farklı olan şey, fütüristik, siberpunk temaları ve imgelerinin olmaması, bunun yerine biyoteknolojinin ve klonlamanın insan kimliği ve ilişkileri üzerindeki etkilerinin daha abartısız ve duygusal olarak yankılanan bir keşfine odaklanmasıdır. Özellikle romanda bilim "yokluğu" vardır (Griffin 645). Romanın klonlama ve genetik mühendisliği keşfi, ileri teknolojilerin ışığında insan formunun ve kimliğinin potansiyelini ve sınırlarını incelemeyi amaçladığından, romanı posthümanizmi çevreleyen tartışmalar alanına yerleştirmeye yardımcı olur. Griffin'in gözlemlediği gibi, Ishiguro'nun odak noktası, biyoteknolojilerin etik çıkarımlarını ve bunların yaşamlarımız ve benliklerimiz üzerindeki etkilerini incelemektir: Romanın yetiştirme yanlısı duruşu ve ayrıca "edebiyattaki en eski soruları" araştırması, "Bu ne anlama geliyor?" insan olmak mı?" ve "Ruh nedir?" posthümanist kaygıları ele almanın önemini vurgular (Griffin 663).

Neuromancer'da vücut bulma, insan bilincini teknolojiyle birleştirmenin olasılıkları ve sonuçları hakkındadır; güç ve kişisel çıkarların yönlendirdiği bir dünyada insan olmanın ne anlama geldiğinin sınırlarını zorlar. Biyoteknolojik post-insan düzenlemesi üzerine zıt bakış açıları olup, teknolojinin post-insan bedeni, kimliği, benliği ve ilişkileri üzerindeki etkilerine ilişkin anlayışın çeşitliliğini betimlemektedir. Ishiguro'nun romanı, *Neuromancer*'dan farklı olarak daha incelikli bir üslupla, insan vücudu bir laboratuvarda yeniden üretilip mekanik parçalar gibi nakledilebildiğinde (post)insan olmanın ne anlama geldiğine dair düşündürücü bir soruyu gündeme getirmektedir.

Beni Asla Bırakma, post-insan klonların duygusal derinliğini, karmaşık ilişkilerini ve ahlaki doğasını keşfederek geleneksel hümanizm ve insanlık kavramlarına meydan okumaktadır. Ishiguro'nun romanı, *Neuromancer* gibi insan sonrası anlatılarda sıklıkla tasvir edilen parçacı ve teknosantrik düzenlemenin aksine, klonların

120

kimliklerini şekillendirmede duygusal bağlantıların ve deneyimlerin önemini vurgulayarak okuyucuyu insan sonrası durumun etik boyutlarını yeniden değerlendirmeye zorluyor. Romanın klon tasviri, insanlığın ayrı, statik bir kavram değil, karmaşık, melez bir oluşum olduğunu güçlü bir şekilde hatırlatmaktadır. Bu mercek aracılığıyla, okuyucular, klonları salt metalar olarak ele alan ve onların doğasında var olan insanlığı tanıyan toplumsal yapıları yeniden düşünmeye ve sonuçta geleneksel posthümanizm anlayışlarına ve insan deneyimine meydan okumaya teşvik etmektedir.

Beni Asla Bırakma'da Kazuo Ishiguro, klonlar arasındaki kişilerarası ilişkileri ve onları yaratan ve kontrol eden toplumun gölgeli, uzak varlığını vurgulayarak, insan sonrası bir bağlamda güç dinamiklerinin incelikli ve incelikli bir keşfini sunmaktadır. Bu, gücün teknolojik kahramanlık veya hiyerarşik konumlandırma yoluyla tasvir edildiği, karakterlerin siber uzaya girmelerini sağlayan modifikasyonlar ve geliştirmeler yoluyla genellikle fiziksel sınırlarını aşan *Neuromancer*'a tezat oluşturmaktadır. Bu modifikasyonların erişilebilirliği ve yaygınlığı, *Neuromancer*'da insan ve insan sonrası arasındaki çizgileri bulanıklaştırarak, çeşitli karakterlerin daha akıcı bir bedenlenme ve kimlik yelpazesinde gezinmesine olanak tanır.

Beni Asla Bırakma gücün hem bireysel hem de sistemik düzeyde işlediği ince yöntemleri araştırarak daha katı bir "bize karşı onlar" durumunu ortaya çıkarmaktadır. İnsan sonrası klonlar esasen "öteki"dir; post-insan düzenlemeleri ve bedenlenmeleri, okuyucuya "gardiyanlardan, dışarıdaki insanlardan ... farklı" olarak gösterilir (Ishiguro 29). İnsan sonrası bedenleri, roman dünyasındaki gücün doğasının dönüm noktası haline gelir. İnsan benzeri duyguları, anıları ve ilişkileri paylaşmalarına rağmen, klonlar, vücutlarının uygun bir şekilde "boşluklarda" büyüdüğü hayal edilerek, insanlık sonrası durumları içinde "öteki" olmaya itilmenin amansız ikiliğine hapsolmuşlardır (Ishiguro 251). *Beni Asla Bırakma'*da klonlar ve toplumun geri kalanı arasındaki bu net sınır, önceden belirlenmiş bir varoluşla sonuçlanır. Klonların yaşamları neredeyse tamamen önden planlanmıştır. Bu, *Neuromancer*'daki varoluşun daha açık uçlu, şekillendirilebilir doğasıyla tezat oluşturmaktadır; burada insan ya da insan sonrası karakterler, aracılık yapmalarına

ve kendi kaderlerini şekillendirmelerine izin veren çeşitli geliştirmelere ve modifikasyonlara erişebilmektedir.

Beni Asla Bırakma'daki güç dinamikleri, klonların hayatlarını dikte eden toplumsal yapılarda ve organ bağışçıları olarak onlara yüklenen beklentilerde kök salmıştır. Esasen roman, bu yapının klonların günlük deneyimlerinde nasıl tezahür ettiğini inceleyerek onların kırılganlıklarını ve özerklik eksikliklerini vurgulamaktadır. Organ bağışçısı olarak statüleri, onları toplum içinde ikincil bir konuma yerleştirmektedir ve insandan daha aşağı olarak kabul edilmektedirler (Ishiguro 176). Okuyucu, insan sonrası klonları zeki ve şefkatli, gülen, ağlayan ve âşık olan insanlar olarak görse ve bu klonların geleneksel zombi imajını alt üst etse de, onları yaratan toplum onları sadece "test tüplerindeki gölgeli nesneler" olarak görür (Vorhaus 99). Bu insanlıktan çıkarma, romandaki güç dinamiklerinin hayati bir yönüdür. Klonların hayatlarının harcanabilir olduğu ve çektikleri ıstırabın yerinde olduğu fikrini pekiştirmektedir. İnsan sonrası bedenleri, ayrıcalıklıların çıkarlarına hizmet eden metalaştırılmış, savunmasız ve kullanılıp atılabilir hal gelmiştir (Carrasco 1). Tezin dördüncü bölümü özetle yazılan bu argümanları sunduktan sonra beşinci ve son bölümde temel argümanları toparlamaktadır.

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