Understanding the Future Posthumanities: An Analytical Study of William Gibson's *Spook Country*

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Abstract

William Gibson, who introduced the term 'cyberpunk' is a distinguished American Canadian science fiction writer. Gibson's *Spook Country*, published in 2007, is a popular science fiction political thriller. With three interesting and intersecting plots, the novel is set against the background of the post-September 11, 2001 incident. Gibson portrays a future society that is beyond human capabilities using philosophical and imaginative posthumanist concepts such as Post-Humanism, Post-Anthropocentrism, and Post-Dualism intertwined with science fiction themes like interactive media, cyberspace, locative art, espionage and the art of virtual reality. This article analyzes the novel *Spook Country* based on Synthetic Theoretical Posthumanism, a typology framed by Matthew E. Gladden. The Posthuman theorists use philosophy and science fiction as a resource to re-examine the notion of "human" in a future techno cultural context. In addition, this study uses the theoretical framework of Francesca Ferrando, Rosi Braidotti, and other posthumanist theorists to substantiate how the novel represents future posthumanities.

Keywords: Philosophical Posthumanism, Science Fiction, Post-Anthropocentrism, William Gibson, Cyberspace, Post-Dualism

1. Introduction

1.1 Science Fiction

Science fiction has fascinated readers for more than a century. It emerged in the 19th century, but gained popularity in the 20th century. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1864), and H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895) popularized this genre. These writers have employed science and technology that defy the human imagination. Lirk and Canavan (2015) contended that science fiction underwent a significant transformation following the attacks of 9/11" (44). After 9/11 attack, science fiction writers began to integrate posthumanist techniques in their writings. According to Latham (2014), "science fiction has speculated about the posthuman condition by exploring posthuman scenarios that transcend humanism (p. 524). Ferrando (2019) defines posthumanism philosophically, stating that the concept of the posthuman is not only seen as a possible advancement or progression of the human species, but also as a change in viewpoints that encompasses various areas of investigation, including the onto-epistemological, ethical, socio-political, biotechnological, and existential dimensions" (p. 185).

1.2 Posthumanism

Herbrechter (2013) observes that the 'post-' in 'posthumanism' is not only ambiguous but even "radically open" in its meaning (p. 69). Posthumanism can be interpreted in two ways: as a critical analysis and deconstruction of the underlying principles of humanism or as a philosophical perspective on the development of developed beings with capabilities that are anticipated to exceed those of human beings today (Herbrechter, 2013, p.16). Badmington (2003) defines posthumanism as a movement wherein "humanism begins to deconstruct itself" (p. 11). Further, he states, 'posthumanism' is anything but alien to contemporary western culture (Badmington, 2004, p. 109). Miller (2012) defines the fundamental concept of posthumanism as "the heart of posthumanism is a post-anthropocentric perspective that looks beyond traditional human beings…" (p. 164).

In Sapient Circuits and Digitalized Flesh, Matthew E. Gladden (2018) categorizes Philosophical Posthumanism and Science Fiction as a synthetic theoretical posthumanism. According to him, Philosophical Posthumanism "constructs scenarios of future posthumanities and its goal is to deepen human knowledge rather than to generate some economic, political, or technological impact" (p. 59). The researcher claims that Gibson's *Spook Country* is based upon the philosophical and "fictional scenarios as a means of exploring the profound ontological, biological, ethical, social and cultural impacts of posthumanization" (p. 62).

1.3 Spook Country

William Gibson is credited as the father of 'Cyberpunk'. His contribution to the world of science fiction is par excellence. The selected science fiction novel *Spook Country* (2007) is one of his novels from the Blue Ant Trilogy, which follows *Pattern Recognition* (2003) and precedes *Zero History* (2010). With three intersecting plots, the first part of the story revolves around Hollis Henry, a freelance journalist. She is hired by the advertising mogul Hubertus Bigend to write a story for his magazine 'Node' about locative technology in the art world. She befriends a Los Angeles artist named Alberto Corrales, who in turn introduces her to Bobby Chombo, an expert in geospatial technologies who handles Corrales' technical requirements. The second plot of the story deals with Tito who is a part of a Chinese Cuban family of freelance "illegal facilitators." He is assigned to hand over a series of iPods containing secret information to a mysterious old man. The identity of the old man remains a mystery, but it is alluded that he may be the father of Cayce Pollard (protagonist of Pattern Recognition). The third plot revolves around Brown, an employee of a covert operative for a shadowy organization who tries to track Tito along with Milgrim, a captive who is addicted to anti-anxiety drugs. Brown believes that Tito and the old man have information that would undermine public confidence in the U.S.'s participation in the Iraq War. The three characters namely, Hollis Henry, Tito and the Milgrim meet on a shipping container that contains millions of U.S. dollars diverted from Iraq reconstruction funds.

2. Review of Literature

McAvan (2010) determined that William Gibson's novel *Spook Country* delves into the post-9/11 world of GPS technology, emphasizing the blending of the virtual and real worlds of surveillance, as well as the hazy boundaries between government and commercial enterprises. Kneale (2011) comments that Gibson delves into narratives set in various locations, with a particular emphasis on the themes of missing individuals and space-based conspiracies. Gibson's novels, such as Pattern Recognition and *Spook Country*, are propelled by the interplay between unforeseen events and chance occurrences. While Kneale (2011) analyses about Gibson's interest in exploring the space, Delioglanis (2023) states that William Gibson's novel *Spook Country*, criticizes the rise of locative media technologies, examining their influence on both virtual and physical realms, as well as their significance in narrative, art, and gaming activities.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The present study analyses the posthumanistic elements in William Gibson's *Spook Country* taking into account the theoretical framework of Matthew E. Gladden's Typologies of Posthumanism as classified in the book Sapient Circuits and Digitalized Flesh published in 2018. According to Matthew E. Gladden, there are five distinct typologies. Gladden (2018) enumerated a wide range of posthumanism in these typologies. For example, under the typology of synthetic theoretical posthumanisms, Gladden renders four posthuman ideas: Philosophical Posthumanism, Science Fiction, Prehumanism and Techno Idealism. The researcher analyses Gibson's *Spook Country* from the perspectives of Philosophical Posthumanism and Science Fiction.

3. Discussion

3.1 Philosophical Posthumanism

According to Gladden (2018), "Philosophical posthumanism combines critical posthumanism's academic rigor with science fiction's practice of imagining possible future paths for the processes of posthumanization" (p. 58). Followed by many theorists and philosophers like Ihab Hassan, Michel Foucault, Donna Haraway, Cary Wolfe and Katherine Hayles, Francesca Ferrando provides a new perception on the Philosophical Posthumanism. According to Ferrando (2019), "Philosophical Posthumanism is an onto-epistemological approach as well as an ethical one, manifesting as a philosophy of mediation" (p. 22). "The term onto-epistemology indexes that questions of epistemology are inextricable from ontological ones. The notion that knowledge can be abstracted from the ways of life from which it emerges, is a characteristic of Western Science" (Gatt, 2023, p. 03). Further, Ferrando (2019) adds that Philosophical Posthumanism "discharges any confrontational dualisms and hierarchical legacies; this is why it can be approached as a post-humanism, a post-anthropocentrism, and a post-dualism" (p. 22). Francesca Ferrando does not stop with this definition. Rather she states that "these three aspects should be addressed in conjunction, which means an account based on a philosophical posthumanist approach shall have a posthumanist sensitivity as well as a post-anthropocentric and a post-dualistic one" (p. 54). This paper analyzes Gibson's *Spook Country* from the perspectives of post-humanism, post-anthropocentrism, post-dualism, and their conjunctions.

3.1.1 Post-humanism

According to Ferrando (2019), "Post-humanism implies the understanding of the plurality of the human experience; the human is not recognized as one but as many, that is, human(s)—thus undermining the humanist tradition based on a generalized and universalized approach to the human" (p. 54). According to this notion, the researcher finds a plurality of human experiences in the novel *Spook Country*. Ferrando (2019) further elucidated the ideas of humans and humanism. Stating, "Both the notion of the "human" and the historical occurrence of "humanism," have been sustained by reiterative formulations of symbolic "others," which have functioned as markers of the shifting borders of who and what would be considered "human": non-Europeans, non-whites, women, queers, freaks, animals, and automata, among others, have historically represented such oppositional terms" (p. 24).

In the novel, *Spook Country*, the author explores the inclusion of other characters and their subjective perspectives. For example, Hollis Henry, a journalist, formerly pursued a career as a rock singer in a band called 'The Curfew.' Gibson (2008) highlights the popularity and recognition of Hollis Henry. In a conversation with Hollis Henry, Hubertus Bigend states, "Bear with me. There is a public history, and there is secret history. I am proposing to make you privy to secret history. Not because you are a journalist, actually, but because you are, to

whatever extent, a celebrity" (p. 298). Thus, the subjectivity of Hollis Henry is very much prominent in the novel as she has been hired by an advertising mogul Hubertus Bigend to write a story on his magazine called 'Node.' By placing a female character at the center, Gibson through Hubertus Bigend has challenged the historical notion of humanism, which places only civilized white men as the subject. Further, other characters in the novel have deconstructed the traditional notion of humanism by rendering recognition and consideration to the 'others.' Not only Hubertus Bigend but also Boby Chombo, who works with technology and locative art, has deconstructed Western humanistic ideas by including the automated other into their lives. He says, "We're all doing VR, every time we look at a screen. We have been for decades now. We just do it. We didn't need the goggles, the gloves. It just happened" (p. 68).

Alberto Corrales is a Los Angeles artist who works with locative art. With the help of virtual reality, Alberto recreates the scene wherein River Phoenix, an American actor and musician dies due to drug abuse. Bobby further demonstrates the process of locative art to Hollis Henry. Gibson (2008) narrates, "The locative, though, lots of us are already doing it. But you can't just do the locative with your nervous system. One day, you will. We'll have internalized the interface. It'll have evolved to the point where we forget about it." (p. 68) In this way, Alberto Corrales and Bobby Chombo recognize the "Automata" (Ferrando, 2019, p. 24) as a human giving the technological devices some recognition and consideration in the human centric world.

William Gibson's *Spook Country* offers a compelling platform to explore Francesca Ferrando's post-humanist concepts. The novel delineates a world in which technological augmentation dramatically reshapes the human experience, challenging the primacy of the natural body. This shift aligns with Ferrando's critique of Western humanism, which centres on the idealization of the natural human form. Gibson's protagonist Hollis Henry exemplifies this technological embodiment. Armed with a suite of digital tools, she navigates reality mediated through technology. The visor, a key technological prosthesis, amplifies her perceptual capabilities, allowing her to engage with the world in ways that transcend biological limitations. Gibson (2007) narrates, "Hollis put the visor on". Using this visor, "Hollis approached the body. That wasn't there. But was" (p. 7). This augmented sensory experience is emblematic of Ferrando's notion of the posthuman as a hybrid entity inextricably linked to technology.

Through Hollis, Gibson demonstrates how technology reconfigures the subject-object relationship. The boundary between human and machine blurs as technological extensions become an integral part of the self. This convergence challenges traditional ontological and epistemological assumptions, aligning with Ferrando's posthumanist perspective that questions the primacy of the human in understanding reality.

On the one hand, Alberto and Hollis access historical data through virtual reality, and on the other hand, Tito provides a series of iPods that contain secret information which is considered a nonhuman. Tito meets the old man in a public place in order to evade any suspicion and he hands over the iPods skillfully by folding it in a newspaper. Gibson describes this act vividly by stating how Tito hides the ipods in a newspaper "beside the concrete chess tables, and carefully passing him an iPod, beneath a folded newspaper" (Gibson, 2007, p. 9). It is obvious that the characters in the novel consider technology as important as humans. The embodiment of information in iPods adds more prominence to the information it carries. That is why Hayles (1999) puts that "the phenomenon of embodiment within a biological substrate can be regarded as an unexpected event in the history, rather than an indispensable prerequisite for the existence of life" (p. 2). In the place of humans, Gibson has substituted technology as the main carriers of information.

In light of this perspective, Hayles (1999) postulates two fundamental assumptions: first, the proposition that information exists as an immaterial entity, detached from any particular material medium, and second, the contention that human consciousness can be understood as a manifestation of information. Tito has been assigned to deliver some iPods which are nonhuman agents that carry secret information about the American Government. In this scenario, the iPods are considered as nonhuman entities that work in collaboration with human existence. Through these possible examples from the novel *Spook Country*, the researcher concludes that the novel possesses Ferrando's idea of post-humanism, wherein humans and nonhumans coexist, which is one of the aspects of Philosophical Posthumanism. Ferrando's idea of post-humanism further leads to the deconstruction of the anthropocentrism resulting in post-anthropocentrism which is evident in the novel *Spook Country*.

3.1.2 Post-anthropocentrism

"Post-anthropocentrism refers to decentering the human in relation to the nonhuman; it is based on the realization that the human species has been placed in a hierarchical scale and have been granted an ontological privilege in the large majority of the historical accounts on the human" (Ferrando, 2019, p. 24). According to Ferrando's post-anthropocentric aspect, Gibson creates a new futuristic world of posthumanities. According to Gibson, many non-human entities have replaced the centrality or primacy of humans in the novel *Spook Country*. Nonhuman entities like the magazine 'Node,' iPods, GPS technology, virtual reality and the container have all become the primary factors in the novel.

According to Ferrando, non-human entities have not strictly replaced humans from their center; rather, they have also become the center along with the human subject. For example, the advertising mogul Hubertus Bigend recruits Hollis Henry to write a paper on the magazine called 'Node.' Hollis Henry has been assigned to write on the locative art which comprises of two different technologies like GPS technology and Virtual reality. These two technologies are brought to the center along with humans. Gibson (2008) narrates, "The container sends a signal periodically, announcing its location, and probably that it hasn't been tampered with. It's an intermittent signal, encrypted, and it shifts frequencies, but if you're Bobby, evidently, you'll know when and where to listen for it" (p. 192). In this way, the characters in the novel, in the process of achieving their personal tasks use these technologies to find some sensitive information about the container. It is

in the container the whole story revolves around. This setting becomes central to the novel where a lot of twists and turns happen. In this way, non-human entities are brought to the center along with humans.

It is clear from these conversations that non-human entities, such as iPods, and the information they contain have remained enigmatic. In the second plot, the iPods that Tito delivers become the focal point more than Tito. All other characters are behind these iPods, and the information they carry. These two non-human entities, along with the characters Tito, the old man, and Bobby Chombo, have become focal points of the plot.

By blurring the lines between natural and artificial environments, Gibson's characters deconstruct human-centerd scenarios. For example, Gibson renders many scenarios that place the technologically modified world at the center, rather than the natural world beginning from recreating the "death of River Phoenix" (Gibson, 2008, p.7), to the show of a giant squid that amuses Hollis Henry. Similarly, Alberto creates a virtual giant squid which is "Ten feet above the orange tape outline, the glossy greyish-white form of a giant squid appeared, about ninety feet in total length, its tentacles undulating gracefully. 'Architeuthis,' Bobby said. Its one visible eye was the size of an SUV tire." (p. 58). The gigantic squid and other similar projects by Bobby Chombo aim to project the intersection of technology and art, and challenge our perceptions and interactions with our surroundings.

Hollis says to Bigend, "There are some interesting possibilities for keeping track of commercial shipping, today. Of a specific vessel, I mean. But I doubt any of them would help us trace our mystery box, because I think it keeps changing vessels… All either forty or twenty. Standardization. Containers full of merchandise. Packets full of information. No breakbulk" (Gibson, 2007, pp. 203-204). Through these incidents, it is obvious that the characters have placed technology and information at the center to blur the lines between the natural and artificial environments.

On another occasion, the container becomes the center of the novel because all the characters in the novel converge to reveal the secret hidden in the container. Here, the container replaces the human characters in the novel from being at the center. Towards the climax of the novel, a truth is revealed about the job Bobby has been assigned.   Thus, all these non-human entities become the center of the novel paving way to the post-anthropocentric context. These non-human entities further help the characters in the novel deconstruct the strict dichotomies of the world such as, human/nonhuman, virtuality/reality and body/mind.

3.1.3 Post-Dualism

Post-Dualism is yet another aspect of Philosophical Posthumanism. Ferrando (2019) states that "Post-dualism is a necessary step in the final deconstruction of the human" (p. 60). Post-dualism deconstructs the strict dichotomy of human/non-human, human/machine, male/female, life/death, etc. Ferrando adds that through post-dualism and its practices, we can put an end to racism, sexism and anthropocentrism. In the novel *Spook Country*, Gibson has made humans and machines, reality, virtual reality, life, and death coexist. Through locative art, Alberto Corrales deconstructs the dualistic notions of life and death by recreating the death of River Phoenix with the help of virtual reality, which in turn works in cyberspace.

Gibson (2008) in his futuristic novel *Spook Country* has brilliantly dealt with the aspect of materialization in cyberspace. Alberto Corrales is the main character with whom Gibson has deconstructed this dualism towards the deconstruction of traditional humanism. Gibson (2008) narrates, "Hollis," said Alberto, "check it." He was holding what she took to be a VR visor of Bobby's, one that looked nothing like anything you'd find at a garage sale. "Wireless." She walked over to him, took it from him, and put it on. "You're going to love this," he assured her. "Bobby?" (p. 55). From this conversation, it is obvious that Alberto, with the use of virtual reality, accessed the real world from the virtual world. All these technologies that are considered as non-humans have played the vital role in materializing the reality as Ferrando (2019) puts it, "we have further expanded into an original thought experiment on the posthuman multiverse, to emphasize posthumanist ontology as a monistic pluralism and a pluralistic monism" (p. 183).

Ferrando's posthumanist ontology provides a viewpoint that recognizes the interconnectedness of all entities and the diverse nature of existence in a world in which human and non-human entities are becoming more interconnected. *Spook Country* alludes to the interconnectedness between physical and virtual worlds. The fact that Hollis heavily depends on technology to handle information and manage its surroundings implies the merging or confusion of these limits. Another illustration of mind/body post-dualism is shown in the novel, where the protagonists are not physically present in several locations. Instead, they were present mentally there through the use of virtual reality.

Through Bobby Chombo, Gibson deconstructs these conventional dualisms of human/nonhuman and body/mind. In terms of human/nonhuman deconstruction, Gibson (2007) narrates, "Chombo?" "He's their king of tech-assist, these locative artists. Their geohacker. GPS signals can't penetrate buildings. He does work-arounds. Triangulates off cellular towers, other systems. Very clever" (p. 34). Moreover, by using those GPS technology and virtual reality visor, Gibson deconstructs the dualism between mind and body. Gibson (2007) narrates,

"She set that aside and lifted the fold of bubble wrap. Something black and matte silver. She drew out what she took to be a more aggressively styled version of the wireless helmet she'd used to view the squid at Bobby Chombo's. Through the cutaway shell, she saw the same few simple touch pads. She turned the thing over, looking for a manufacturer's logo, but found none. She did find MADE IN CHINA in minute bas-relief, but then most things were." (p. 122)

Later, Hollis navigated further to reach heroine poppies. She stays in one place, but with the help of the virtual reality visor, she accesses

another place. Gibson narrates that Hollis is in a room, participating in fairly ordinary tasks. She engages with a variety of items, including a box, bubble wrap, and vinyl figure. The deactivation of the green LED indicates a potential technical engagement, maybe related to a security apparatus or a device. Hollis proceeds to the restroom, a secluded area, signifying a shift from exterior engagements to inward contemplation. While getting ready for a bath, she starts to contemplate earlier occurrences, namely those involving a character named Jimmy and the money she loaned him in Paris. Hollis's contemplations over Jimmy and the money she loaned him imply a more profound emotional or intimate involvement (p. 123). This narration captures Hollis' time of regularity and self-reflection, emphasizing her affiliation with Blue Ant, her own routines, and her analysis of past occurrences and relationships. Hollis experience all these by staying in one place with the help of technology. It establishes the atmosphere for the novel's examination of technology, art, and indistinct boundaries between the body and mind.

Thus, all these aspects of Philosophical Posthumanism, as theorized by Francesca Ferrando, lead the novel to categorise it as a posthumanist novel. Further, all these philosophical concepts lead the researcher to analyze the novel from the perspective of science fiction which is contended to be "the most posthumanized of all genres" as described by Herbrechter (2013).

3.2 Science Fiction

In *Sapient Circuits and Digitalized Flesh,* Matthew E. Gladden categorizes Science Fiction as a synthetic theoretical posthumanism wherein it evolves the construction of fictional scenarios as a means of exploring the profound impacts of posthumanization (Gladden, 2018, p. 62).

In the second part of the discussion, this article examines the science fictional elements of posthumanization, such as interactive media, cyberspace, locative art, espionage, and virtual reality. These elements have contributed to the transformation of the posthuman imagination into a commercial part of posthumanization, mostly owing to human intervention. All of the aforementioned aspects exhibit interconnections among themselves. For example, the advancement of technology has resulted in various way of interacting with people living in cyberspace, a man-made virtual environment. This has also led to the ability to track one's location within this virtual space, allowing for the practice of locative art, in which individuals spy on each other's conversations while pursuing their own objectives. Ultimately, these interactions occur within the realm of virtual reality.

3.2.1 Interactive Media

"Interactive media refers to a mode of communication wherein individuals process and exchange information, as well as their modes of communication with one another" Dhir (2021). Gladden states that "interactive media such as computer games and tabletop roleplaying games put their human players in situations in which they face complex ethical dilemmas and actively confront challenges associated with new posthumanized ways of being" (p. 63).

In *Spook Country*, the characters partake in numerous covert missions facilitated by virtual role-playing scenarios, wherein they seek resolutions to real-world issues. The virtual places in which the characters act are not real; rather, they are places created by Alberto Corrales, an artist from Los Angeles who specializes in creating virtual places. Alberto possesses exceptional expertise in utilizing virtual reality to replicate the demise of renowned individuals, demonstrate his mastery in the realm of cyberspace. On an occasion, Alberto explains his job to Hollis Henry stating, "I build virtual models, then cover them with skins, textures I have sampled, or created myself… The modelling is like pushing and pulling clay … I do that over an inner structure of joints – the skeleton, with a spine, shoulders, elbows, fingers. It's not that different from designing figures for a game" (Gibson, 2008, p. 43).

Alberto introduces Hollis to Bobby through his virtual reality. When Hollis and Bobby meet, "Hollis," said Alberto, "check it." He was holding what she took to be a VR visor of Bobby's, one that looked nothing like anything you'd find at a garage sale. "Wireless." She walked over to him, took it from him, and put it on" (p. 55). Thus, technology permeates the whole novel

3.2.2 Cyberspace and Locative Art

Engineers have created many devices for social interaction in the modern world that work in a virtual space called 'cyberspace.' According to Rouse, Cyberspace refers to the virtual computer world and, more specifically, an electronic medium that is used to facilitate online communication. "Cyberspace typically involves a large computer network made up of many worldwide computer subnetworks that employ TCP/IP protocol to aid in communication and data exchange activities" (Rouse, 2019).

Most of the activities that take place in *Spook Country* are in cyberspace. For instance, Gibson narrates a situation in which Alberto helps Hollis access the real world using virtual interaction in cyberspace. Gibson narrates, "Archie, over there' – she gestured in the direction of empty space – you're going to hang him over a street in Tokyo.' He nodded. But You could do that and still leave him here" (Gibson, 2008, p. 67). This question of Hollis to Alberto is from the excitement that she sees the actual place through cyberspace. Moreover, Alberto and Bobby Chombo work with large computers and the Internet to create cyberspace and place Hollis in that virtual space. Bobby who deals with GPS troubleshooting serves as a big assert to Alberto in locating places through GPS tracking and they create a virtual locative art that accesses the actual place.

This is where cyberspace becomes evert, as mentioned by Hollis. During her conversation with Alberto and Chombo, she asserts that "Someone told me that cyberspace was "everting" … Sure, and once it everts, then there isn't any cyberspace, is there?" (Gibson, 2008, p. 67). This conversation between Hollis and Alberto shows how the posthumanism of imagination creates a fully immersive visual and tactile world where humans find it hard to distinguish it from the real world. With locative art, cyberspace has become a real place where characters interact with the real world from afar. Taking advantage of this, the characters spy on each other.

3.2.3 Espionage

The invention of computers and the Internet have not only created cyberspace, but also allowed wealthy people to profit from it. Many affluent people in the world spy and store information in a secretive virtual place that only a few can access. In *Spook Country*, characters investigate and hack cyberspace's secret messages. Posthumanized interactive media have used cyberspace to spy on node employees' writing and research.

The characters in the novel keep away from knowing who they are working for and what they are working for. The characters are paid to keep their secrets. For example, they are paid not to reveal the one who pays them to do these jobs. Gibson notes the dialogue between Bigend and his employees who are about to deal with the container saying,

"Chombo, evidently, has found a way to know where it is, at least periodically." "Why don't you just ask him?" "Because it's a secret. He's being paid handsomely to keep it a secret, and his personality is such, as you've noted, that he likes having a secret." "Who's paying him, then?" "That seems to be even more of a secret." "Do you think it might be the container's owner? (p. 107).

Through this conversation, it is evident that espionage is an essential element of science fiction that makes the genre an obviously posthumanist one.

Alberto, who specializes in creating virtual reality, helps Hollis to complete the tasks assigned by Bigend. In a virtual world full of GPS tracking and surveillance, Hollis completes her task as a journalist by searching for proofs and incidents to write stories for the magazine called Node. Apparently, all characters in the novel are assigned to spy on each other in the pursuit of uncovering and discovering secret information. For instance, the old man tries to uncover the US government's secrets with Tito's secret messages, while Hollis Henry investigates and writes about locative art for 'Node'. The government sends Milgrim and Brown to spy on Hollis' and the old man's teams to prevent him from investigating and revealing US government secrets. The characters in the novel spy over each other using the art of virtual reality in cyberspace.

3.2.4 Art of Virtual Reality

Throughout its history, virtual reality has faced criticism for disembodying it, with popular culture often imitating William Gibson's ideas that the body will become obsolete. During the 1980s and 1990s, head-mounted display (HMD) units were used to provide full immersion, often with data-gloves and haptic interfaces for "touch" of virtual objects (Popat, 2016). As Popat pointed out, Gibson's imagination on virtual reality has given numerous ideas to engineers to proceed to the posthumanized future, not only to explore the impossibly accessible realities, but also to use the art of virtual reality in the posthumanized culture that would be our possible future.

Science fiction imagined a posthumanized future with virtual reality and locative art. Gibson uses Bobby Chombo's words to turn virtual reality into reality: "We're all doing VR, everytime we look at a screen. "Been for decades. Just do it. Goggles weren't needed. The gloves. I just happened. VR gave us more precise directions." (68). Furthermore, he offers even more advanced nervous system work. The nervous system cannot do the locative, he says. You will eventually. Everyone has internalized the interface. It will have evolved to be forgotten (68). Gibson imagines posthumanization based on Bobby's virtual reality explanations to Hollis. The researcher uses the research of Takeuchi et al. (2021) who argues that Gibson's fictional ideas allow transhumanists to blur the lines between reality and virtuality with technology, claiming that our system can create a sense of companionship among individuals, allowing them to navigate urban environments despite being physically separated.

4. Conclusion

The researcher concludes that philosophical posthumanism aids in the deconstruction of traditional forms of humanism, based on analyses conducted from the perspective of typologies as classified by Gladden. Specifically, philosophical posthumanism did not strictly deconstruct humanism; rather, it paved the way for mediation through the intersection of post-humanism, post-anthropocentrism, and post-dualism, which essentially paved the way for understanding future posthumanities through the science fiction novel *Spook Country*. Furthermore, the researcher asserts that philosophical posthumanism and science fiction have become unavoidable in the construction of imaginative scientific narratives through deconstruction of conventional humanism. Thus, William Gibson's *Spook Country* explores the future of posthumanities through the framework of Philosophical Posthumanism.

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