



**IMPLANTED SELVES: CYBORG IDENTITY, MEMORY,  
AND SELFHOOD IN GEORGE ALEC EFFINGER'S  
*WHEN GRAVITY FAILS***

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**Abstract**

In today's rapidly evolving technological world, exploring the changing nature of identity is more important than ever. This research aims to examine how George Effinger's *When Gravity Fails* represents the fusion of humans and technology. It focuses on how moddies (personality modules that allow a person to temporarily assume someone else's identity) and daddies (skill modules that grant specific abilities, such as shooting, hacking, or dancing, without altering one's personality) challenge fixed notions of memory, self, and identity. Drawing on Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto*, the research analyses the tension between technological empowerment and loss of autonomy. Through qualitative textual analysis, the study reveals that Effinger's dystopian vision contrasts with Haraway's optimism, depicting identity as performative and fragmented. It highlights the novel's contribution to post-humanist discourse and encourages a rethinking of identity in a technology-driven society. The study recommends further studies on non-Western cyberpunk and the application of cyborg theory to contemporary digital culture.

**Keywords:** *Cyborg, Identity, Posthumanism, Memory, Technology.*

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## 1. Introduction

Identity is what makes a person who they are. It includes their ideas, thoughts, culture, and experiences. Identity is not always fixed, but it can change over time due to an individual's personal growth, societal experiences, or technology. Nowadays, technology plays a significant role in shaping identity, especially with the rise of artificial intelligence and cybernetic enhancements. Cyborg identity is a concept that develops from this artificial or technological advancement, where human and machine merge and create a new identity. The idea of cyborg identity is essential to cyberpunk literature, which explores how technology changes the human experience. Donna Haraway (1985), in her book *A Cyborg Manifesto*, argues that humans are already cyborgs because technology has become a part of their daily lives. She believes that there is no pure human identity anymore (p. 3). Technology has always shaped who we are. Katherine Hayles (1999), in *How We Became Post-Human*, explains that cyborg identity shapes the way we think as humans, because machines can now modify, replace, and expand what people can do (p. 2).

George Alec Effinger's *When Gravity Fails* is set in a Middle Eastern-inspired world, where traditional culture or heritage co-exists with futuristic technology. The Budayaeen is a city in the Middle East that is filled with crime, corruption, dishonesty, and cynical technology. This world is chaotic and filled with drug dealers, gamblers, and all kinds of beings transforming into different personalities to escape reality. One of the disturbing pieces of technology is the "Moddy," which allows users to exchange their personality with someone else's. Whilst it might be thrilling to act like James Bond or quickly acquire a skill, Moddies is extremely addictive and can ruin individual lives. The protagonist of the novel is Marîd Audran. He refuses to give up on his true identity and uniqueness at the start of the novel.

The study explores how he refuses the use of technological implants, such as moddies and daddies, and tries to survive using his wit. However, once he becomes involved in a power struggle, he is forced to accept cybernetic modifications to survive. He is no longer the same person as he was before. This novel represents a world where identity is fluid and shaped by technology. By applying Haraway's post-humanist theory, this research challenges the fixed ideas of identity, memory, and selfhood. Effinger's novel represents both sides of the technology; while technology provides freedom and facilitates, it also controls an individual's identity and memory.

### 1.1. Aim of the Study

This research aims to explore how technology challenges the traditional ideas of identity in a novel, *When Gravity Fails*, particularly through the lens of Haraway's post-humanist theory. It looks into how brain implants affect people's ideas and behaviours. Examining this research, which also challenges whether these shifts provide people more freedom or less that helps us to better understand how technology influences people's identities.

### 1.2. Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. How is technology responsible for the changes in characters' identities in the selected novel?
2. What impact do posthuman technologies have on a person's memory and agency?
3. How does the selected novel portray the benefits and drawbacks of a posthuman identity?

### 1.3. Research Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study:

1. To identify how the characters' identities are shaped or altered by technological enhancements.
2. To understand the role of moddies and daddies in redefining memory and agency.
3. To evaluate how *When Gravity Fails* critiques or supports post-humanist perspectives on identity.

### 1.4. Limitations of the Study

The study only looks at *When Gravity Fails*, and it does not cover all the cyberpunk literature. The research uses post-humanist theory and never explores other ideas about identity. It only focuses on Donna Haraway's cyborg theory, presented in *A Cyborg Manifesto*, and doesn't explore other possible frameworks. Despite these limitations, the research holds value because it provides a foundation for future studies.

### 1.5. Significance of the study

As we move closer to the future, where human and machine integration becomes increasingly possible, this study holds critical relevance. By examining *When Gravity*

*Fails*, the research shows how the blending of human and machine can affect memory, freedom, and selfhood. It also highlights how people may lose control over their identities in a technology-driven world. This research is important as it explores the potential future implications of engaging with such technologies.

## 2. Literature Review

Lagdameo's (2013) *Cyborg Identities and the Post-Human Body* explores the cyborg and the post-human body as challenges to liberal humanism through human enhancement technologies (HETs). The author analyses HETs, which aim to overcome cognitive and physical limitations, and argues that the fusion of humans and machines leads to cyborg identities, questioning traditional humanist conceptions (pp. 21-22). Drawing on Donna Haraway's work, Lagdameo examines the boundary breakdowns between human and non-human, highlighting how animals and machines blur the lines of human uniqueness (Lagdameo, 2013, pp. 25-26). The essay ultimately proposes that the post-human condition allows for new engagements with us, other humans, animals, and technology (Lagdameo, 2013, p. 21). The article further investigates the implications of HETs, categorising them into physical, cosmetic, cognitive, and affective enhancements (Lagdameo, 2013, pp. 22-23). These enhancements are achieved through prosthetic, chemical, or genetic means, pushing the boundaries of human capabilities. Lagdameo contends that the cyborg, as a hybrid of machine and organism, embodies a new identity that challenges the rational and autonomous liberal humanist subject (Lagdameo, 2013, pp. 26-27). The post-human body, integrated with technology, represents a shift from corporeal embodiment to embodied vitality, altering our understanding of what it means to be human (Lagdameo, 2013, p. 27).

Marilou de Haan's (2015) thesis, *I am a Cyborg: Identity, Peripheral Reflexivity and Transhumanism*, explores how the rise of transhumanism and advanced bodily modification challenge Anthony Giddens' theory of reflexive self-identity. Giddens argues that in high modernity, identity becomes a reflexive project shaped by daily choices and the guiding question "How shall I live?" (de Haan, 2015, p.14). De Haan notes that while Giddens acknowledges the body's role, his theory is rooted in social and economic factors and does not fully address the impact of technological transformations on the body. As transhumanism has evolved, especially since the 1990s, its focus has shifted from abstract self-improvement to concrete bodily enhancements, fundamentally altering the relationship between body and identity (de Haan, 2015, p. 2).

To address this gap, de Haan proposes the concept of "peripheral reflexivity," which emphasises the body's physical boundaries as central to identity formation in the

age of transhumanism. The central question of selfhood shifts from “How shall I live?” to “Which boundaries do I want my body to have? This reflects the transhumanist pursuit of technological and biological augmentation (de Haan, 2015, p. 3). De Haan’s qualitative approach, including interviews with transhumanist thinkers, demonstrates that identity is now negotiated not only through internal reflection but also through deliberate choices about bodily modification. She concludes that neither Giddens’ theory nor current models of reflexive embodiment fully capture the complexities introduced by transhumanist practices, necessitating a new theoretical framework (de Haan, 2015, p. 3).

De Haan’s thesis identifies several gaps. Most notably, the concept of peripheral reflexivity, while theoretically innovative, lacks extensive empirical validation and relies heavily on Western philosophical perspectives. The study also highlights the absence of comprehensive, up-to-date descriptions of contemporary transhumanism, as much existing literature remains focused on its early philosophical roots or ethical debates.

Hari Kunzru's (2011) *You Are a Cyborg* explores Donna Haraway's concept of the cyborg as a potent symbol for understanding the intertwined relationship between humans and technology. Kunzru highlights Haraway's challenge to traditional dichotomies such as nature/culture and human/machine, arguing that the cyborg embodies the breakdown of these distinctions (Kunzru,2011, p. 3). Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* reframes the cyborg from a Cold War icon into a symbol of feminist liberation, suggesting that embracing our hybridity can empower marginalised groups by challenging fixed identities and societal norms (Kunzru,2011, p. 3). Haraway argues that technological networks alter our bodies, identities, and experiences; hence, we are all already cyborgs, as underlined in the profile (Kunzru,2011, p. 2). Kunzru investigates Haraway's viewpoint that political, cultural, and social conditions shape technology rather than an apolitical tool. Haraway argues that feminist issues reside within technology rather than a rhetorical overlay; she maintains that techno culture naturally raises issues of power, justice, and ethics (Kunzru,2011, p. 4).

Kunzru uses Haraway's example of rice cultivation to illustrate how seemingly disparate elements such as international border controls, labour practices, and genetic engineering are interconnected and influence who lives and who dies (Kunzru,2011, p. 4).

The focus on Western perspectives and experiences overlooks the diverse ways in which cyberization manifests in different cultural contexts. While the editors mention the exploitation of workers in cyborg workplaces, they do not fully explore the ethical implications of increasingly intimate human-technology interfaces or the potential for resistance and agency within these systems.

In the article "Interfacing the other: An analysis of the role of cyborgs' partiality in constructing identity," Ivers (2006) explains that identity is not fully fixed or complete,

but it is constantly shaped or changed through our interaction with others, like technology, people, and systems (Ivers, 2006, p. 1). Through the story of Isabella Dinoire, he shows how she embraces a hybrid identity after her face was replaced with the tissue donor that reflects Haraway's idea of cyborg identity (Ivers, 2006, pp. 2-3). He argues that in a world where the lines between self and other, human and machine are blurred, we need to recognise how others and technology influence who we are.

The ideas from Lagdameo, de Haan, Kunzru, and Ivers show that cyborgs and posthuman bodies challenge traditional beliefs about identity and what it means to be human. Lagdameo explains that human enhancement technologies mix machines with the body, which changes how people think about themselves. De Haan adds that as people change their bodies through technology, their sense of self also changes, and the question becomes about what kind of body they want. Kunzru, using Haraway's ideas, shows that cyborgs are not just science fiction—they help us understand how technology, power, and identity are connected in real life. Ivers backs this up by arguing that our interactions with other people, including machines, determine who we are. Together, these opinions imply that identity is fluid, influenced by technology, and ever evolving in the modern world. They also serve as a reminder to carefully consider how technology impacts us and how issues of justice, power, and culture are involved.

Despite the novel, revolving around a post-humanist theme, *When Gravity Fails* has received limited scholarly attention. To close this knowledge gap, this paper uses Haraway's theoretical framework to examine how the novel depicts cyborg identity as a fluid and evolving concept.

### 3. Research Methodology

This research follows a qualitative thematic approach. Looking at George Alec Effinger's *When Gravity Fails* mostly via textual analysis. At the core of this method is an examination of the novel's portrayal of technology, memory, and identity in connection to post-humanist and cyborg concepts. The study closely examines the characters' relationships with moddies and daddies, two kinds of technological enhancement, and how they shape their identity. This study uses Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto* as the theoretical basis. The research is guided by her ideas on the cyborg as a metaphor for breaking down boundaries between people and technology, between the physical and the immaterial, and between the sexes. Primary data comes from the novel *When Gravity Fails* and Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto*, and secondary data from critical and scholarly sources on posthumanism and cyberpunk literature. For every source, academic repute, relevance, and contribution to the aims of the research are deciding criteria.

### 3.1. Theoretical Framework

Donna Haraway's narrative in *A Cyborg Manifesto* is purposefully abrasive and thought-provoking. A combination of an organism and a machine, the cyborg is a real and fictitious social phenomenon. Haraway argues that although we often take our social interactions for granted, they are powerful social constructs that have the power to change the course of history.

Haraway says that in the late twentieth century, we all became cyborgs, hybrids of machine and living things. This idea shapes our politics. The cyborg represents both our imagination and the reality around us and influences how we can change history. In Western science and politics, there is a constant struggle over who controls production, reproduction, and imagination. Haraway encourages people to embrace the blurring of boundaries and take responsibility for how we construct them. She wants to contribute to a socialist-feminist culture that is postmodern and imagines a world without fixed gender roles. Haraway identifies three key areas where boundaries are breaking down. These are the lines between humans and animals, between organisms and machines, and between the physical and non-physical. Things like language, tool use, and social behaviour no longer separate humans from animals. Also, machines have evolved to the point where it becomes difficult to distinguish between what is natural and artificial. Our modern machines are surprisingly lifelike, while we humans sometimes appear passive and inert. Because cyborgs are everywhere yet invisible, they're difficult to spot from a political viewpoint. They exist in the world of consciousness and simulation. Haraway's cyborg myth concerns itself with violated boundaries, potent mixtures, and risks that progressive people might explore as part of their political efforts. The most profound confusions occur in the realms of pure number, pure spirit, command-control-communication-intelligence, and cryptography. The new machines are so clean and efficient, and their creators are like sunworshippers, guiding a new scientific revolution tied to the dreams of a post-industrial society.

### 4. Data Analysis and Discussion

In today's world, the line between humans and machines is blurring. This is especially clear in science fiction, where writers imagine how technology changes, what it means to be human. Here, people no longer develop skills or personalities through lived experience; instead, they use technology to acquire new behaviour, language, or entire personas. Effinger's story is set in Budayeen, a futuristic city where people can change their personalities and skills using brain implants called moddies and daddies. With these chips, a person can become someone else entirely, like a killer, a lover, or a detective. This

space becomes a cybernetic urban jungle where individuality, memory, and even personal history are no longer organically formed but technologically constructed and manipulated. It is within this environment that the protagonist, Marîd Audran, navigates a chaotic world defined by artificial enhancements, commodified identities, and the collapse of traditional subjectivity.

Marîd initially stands apart from this system, valuing the integrity of his “natural” self (Effinger, 1987, ch.1). He resists the allure of moddies and daddies, preferring to rely on his organic thoughts and instincts. However, his resistance is tested as the narrative unfolds, and the dangers of his world push him toward technological adaptation. Once he adopts a moody, he reflects with discomfort, “This is me, marid, talking: I am not getting my brain weird.” (Effinger, 1987, ch.11). This quote encapsulates the existential unease of a posthuman subject who can no longer distinguish between authentic thought and programmed behaviour. Marîd's experience underscores the loss of autonomy that accompanies technological enhancement in the Budayeen.

To understand the deeper meaning of the story, we can look at Haraway’s famous essay, *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985). She talks about the cyborg, a mix of human and machine, as a symbol of freedom because it breaks old boundaries, like male/female or nature/technology. (Haraway, 1985, p. 59) Instead of freedom and new possibilities, technology in the novel often leads to control, confusion, and loss of self. In the end, the book warns us that in a world ruled by power and technology, becoming a cyborg might mean losing what makes us human. This analysis addresses the second objective of the study underlying the role of moddies and daddies in redefining memory and personal agency.

In Effinger’s *When Gravity Fails*, the use of moddies (personality modules) and daddies (skill-add-ons) creates a strong challenge to normal ideas about self and memory. The novel imagines a world where identity is not fixed but can be bought, changed, and controlled by technology. This connects closely with Haraway’s work, which questions *A Cyborg Manifesto*, the idea of a single, unchanging identity, and supports the cyborg as a symbol of mixed, blurred lines between human and machine. The characters in Effinger’s Budayeen, an area full of excess and technology, live in a place where the self is not solid but something they perform, built from parts they can swap. The moddies and daddies act as clear symbols for breaking down the old idea of a stable self, matching Haraway’s statement that “the cyborg is resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity. It is oppositional, utopian, and completely without innocence” (Haraway, 1985, p. 7). This cyborg view supports the idea of many different identities, unlike older, rigid ways of thinking about the self.

The "James Bond moody" (Effinger, 1987, ch.1) user that Marid Audran meets at Chiri's nightclub shows how identity in this technology-driven world is temporary and performed. When the man says, "My name is Bond. James Bond" (Effinger, 1987, ch.1), it proves his personality is artificial, a copied identity that can be removed or changed at any time. These moments exemplify Haraway's notion of the cyborg as a "fabricated hybrid" (Haraway, 1985, p. 7) that performs rather than possesses identity. The cyborg identity is not fixed or stable; it is provisional, strategic, and fluid, moulded by whatever technology is embedded at the moment. This act of taking on a ready-made or cyborg identity reveals how the self can be turned into something external and sold. The moddies give people a way to escape their personality limits, letting them take on the traits and actions of made-up characters or real people from history. This mixing of reality and imitation questions the idea of a true, unchanging self, implying that identity is something built by stories in culture and changes brought by technology.

Applying Haraway's cyborg theory to the selected novel reveals Effinger's more ominous perspective on being a cyborg. Unlike Haraway, who sees cyborgs as liberating agents breaking down boundaries, Effinger stresses how technological improvement might reduce personal agency and self-awareness. The narrative suggests that in a society where robots and power dominate, being a cyborg may entail losing one's humanity. A vivid example of this is the character using the "James Bond moody" at Chiri's nightclub (Effinger, 1987, ch.1). It underscores the performative nature of his identity, which is borrowed and easily replaceable. This scene demonstrates how personality becomes externalised and consumable. The moddies provide an escape from the constraints of one's psyche, allowing individuals to emulate fictional or historical figures. This blend of simulation and reality questions the integrity of identity, suggesting that it is constructed from narratives and shaped by cultural and technological forces.

Effinger's main character, Marid Audran, stands apart from the widespread use of moddies and daddies. His refusal to use these technologies shows his wish to keep a sense of personal honesty in a world where identity is breaking apart and being treated like a product. In the current era, the distinction between humans and machines is increasingly becoming indistinct. Furthermore, identity in the Budayeen is deeply tied to memory. In traditional humanist views, memory is central to the formation of the self. One's memories shape decisions, values, and individuality. However, in Effinger's novel, memory is outsourced to chips. A person can insert a daddy to learn a language, a fighting technique, or a cultural custom, and remove it just as quickly. "You chip in a Swedish-language daddy; then you understand Swedish until you pop it out" (Effinger, 1987, ch.1). This transactional view of memory redefines selfhood, as skills and knowledge no longer originate from lived experience but are instead plug-and-play assets. The widespread use

of daddies by various professionals, including lawyers and shopkeepers, as well as con men, illustrates how this commodification has become normalised.

In this context, memory becomes a commodity, no different from clothes or gadgets. It can be exchanged, upgraded, or discarded. The implications are profound: individuals begin to lose continuity in their identity. If memory is the thread that holds a person together, then in the Budayeen, that thread is constantly being cut and replaced. This constant restructuring of memory and identity leads to what could be described as a kind of cognitive homelessness, inhabiting minds that are never fully one's own.

Moddies and daddies in *When Gravity Fails* raise troubling issues concerning our usual self and memory conception. Effinger's future has you buying and altering identity with technology rather than being born with it. Haraway contends that identity is dynamic and multi-dimensional, not fixed, and her theory fits her assertions. The inhabitants of the Budayeen perform their identities, assembling them from technological components. This dynamic reflects Haraway's statement that "the cyborg is resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity... completely without innocence" (Haraway, 1985, p. 7). In this way, the novel exemplifies the cyborg as a figure of disassembled, postmodern identity, opposing the idea of a singular, authentic self. Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* helps interpret these developments. She argues that "the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion" (Haraway, 1985, p. 4), suggesting that the speculative aspects of science fiction reflect real societal anxieties. In this context, Effinger's narrative becomes a critique of the growing commercialisation of knowledge and the erosion of the human-machine divide. The novel urges readers to reflect on the ethical implications of technological integration and its potential to redefine personhood. This contrast between Haraway's optimistic view and Effinger's darker narrative fulfils the third objective.

Another compelling figure in the Budayeen is Chiri, a nightclub owner who represents the complex intersection of tradition and modernity. Her scarification tattoos, described as "tattooed in the geometric designs of raised scars worn by her distant ancestors" (Effinger, 1987, ch.3), serve as a testament to her heritage. Her character embodies the posthuman paradox: a being who simultaneously preserves the past and capitalises on the future. Unlike the synthetic models, these markings carry historical and cultural significance. Nevertheless, Chiri also participates in the economy of identity, profiting from the sale of moddies and daddies. Her ambiguous stance on technology underscores the complexity of identity formation in a world where cultural authenticity and technological progress coexist uneasily.

The character of Pualani, the new dancer at Chiri's nightclub, shows us more about the complicated nature of identity in this world of cybernetic changes. Pualani has had many cosmetic surgeries to make her look like what people currently think is beautiful or to conform to the beauty standards. The silicone implants and other changes to her body show she wants to improve how she looks and be more successful in the tough competition of the Budayeen. Marid notices that "they all look the same" (Effinger, 1987, chapter 1), meaning that when people try to become perfect through surgery, they can end up looking identical, losing what makes them different as they try to match one strict idea of beauty. The novel describes Pualani as having "her cheekbones had been emphasised with silicone, her nose straightened and made smaller, her square jaw shaved down to a cute, rounded point, oversized breast implants, silicone to round out her ass" (Effinger, 1987, ch.1).

Yet Pualani's decision to have cosmetic surgery can also be seen as her taking control. By changing her body, she's directing her appearance and showing she has the right to decide who she is. Haraway's idea of the cyborg, which represents both control and freedom, fits here. Pualani's body shows both society's demands and her own choices. She is both affected by beauty standards and actively changing herself. As Chiri remarks, soon "she'll have her moody plug, too. Give her time, and she'll show you the personality you like best, hard-core slut or tragic soiled dove, or anything in-between." (Effinger, 1987, ch.1)

The novel examines how technology can both support and challenge current systems of power. The moddies and daddies aren't just simple tools - they exist within complicated social networks. Rich and powerful people in the Budayeen can get these technologies more easily, helping them increase their status and control. However, people with less power can also use these technologies to fight against the existing system. For instance, the James Bond movie isn't significant, but he might use the technology to suggest otherwise. This idea matches Donna Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* (1985), where she describes cyborgs as mixes of living beings and machines, breaking down the divisions between what's natural and what's manufactured. In the Budayeen district, people's bodies become places where identity battles happen, as they change themselves using different technological improvements. These range from simple appearance changes to complex brain implants. These modifications challenge traditional notions of embodiment, raising questions about the nature of humanity and the relationship between the physical self and the social self. In this setting of "cheap pleasures and easy death" (Effinger, 1987, chapter 1), even human bodies become products that people can purchase.

Pualani, the new dancer at Chiri's club, perfectly shows what a cybernetic body looks like in Effinger's story. Her many cosmetic surgeries, with silicone making her cheekbones stand out, her jaw reshaped, and breast implants added, turn her body into

something artificially created to attract male customers. Pualani's body becomes something to be bought and sold, something she uses to survive in the tough environment of the Budayeen. This treatment of the body as a product supports Haraway's point that "the cyborg has no origin story in the Western sense" (Haraway, 1985, p. 6). Pualani's body isn't natural, but something made through technology and shaped by society. Pualani's decision to undergo cosmetic surgery can also be seen as her taking charge of her own body. By altering her appearance, she controls how she is seen and claims the power to shape her own identity. She is not just someone society pushes around, but someone actively making choices about who she becomes. Haraway's idea of the cyborg, which represents both control and freedom, fits here. Pualani's body shows the influence of beauty standards, but also her own decisions. She is both affected by how men look at her and someone who changes herself on purpose. As Marid puts it: "You could have the most dazzling body in the world, but if the customers were wired too, and paying more attention to their intra-cranial entertainment, you might as well be home yourself, chipping in" (Effinger, 1987, ch.2).

Marid Audran's mixed feelings about body changes show the struggle between staying independent and fitting in within the Budayeen. He chooses not to "carry a weapon" (Effinger, 1987, ch.3), whether a moody, cybernetic implant or an actual weapon, depending instead on his natural abilities and quick thinking. His refusal to modify his body comes from wanting to keep his true self in a place where technology increasingly controls who people are. Yet this same refusal leaves him separate from most Budayeen residents, marking him as different in a society that usually favours those who follow the crowd. As Marid explains, "Besides, here in the Budayeen we work on a kind of honour system. They know I don't have a weapon; I know they don't. Anybody who breaks the rules gets broken right back. We're like one big, happy family." (Effinger, 1987, ch.2).

Effinger's novel examines how technology can both improve and weaken the human body. While cybernetic changes can give people new skills and chances, they may also damage the body's natural wholeness and make it harder to tell what's human and what's machine. The story makes us think about whether these technologies are right or wrong, questioning if trying to become perfect through body modifications might make us less human. As Marid thinks to himself, these transformations raise concerns about authenticity and human experience. Haraway's *Manifesto* gives us a way to think about these changes brought by technology. She states that "we are all chimeras, theorised and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism" (Haraway, 1985, p. 5). Human bodies have always been influenced by both tools and society. Haraway's cyborg isn't just science fiction; it's real today, showing the complicated, mixed-up nature of who we are in modern

times. Effinger's *When Gravity Fails* brings these ideas to life in story form, letting readers imagine both the problems and potential of living as part-human, part-machine beings.

The novel shows how using technology to improve ourselves might make us strangers to our feelings and bodies. The moddies especially let people run away from their true personalities by copying made-up characters or famous people from history. But putting on these ready-made identities can also make people lose touch with what's real, mixing up the difference between actual life and pretend versions of it. As Marid comments, "I don't like to see these people with their plug-in personality modules bothering anybody but another moody" (Effinger, 1987, ch.1)

Effinger's novel serves as a warning about blindly accepting technology, showing how it might reduce our control over our lives and weaken our sense of who we are. Yet the story also recognises technology's power to free and strengthen people. Like Haraway describes, a cyborg isn't just controlled by technology; it actively shapes its own identity. The cyborg figure questions old ideas about fixed identities, instead celebrating mixed, changing, and ever-developing selves.

Effinger's *When Gravity Fails* and Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto* together challenge fixed ideas about the human body and identity, encouraging one to understand it both as fluid and shaped by technology and society. They show that the human body is a socially and technologically built construct rather than an unchangeable, natural component of being human. By removing conventional gender roles and the boundaries between nature and culture, as well as between people and technology, these works explore cyborg characters to create new possibilities for agency and self-discovery in a post-human world. They also cause us to consider the political, social, and ethical consequences of how technology alters power relations and human relationships. Inviting us to picture a future where identity is not set by essentialism but is always negotiated, rejected, and changed, the selected text presents cyborgs as multi-faceted and independent people who challenge traditional roles and hierarchies.

## 5. Conclusion

Overall, this study explores how cyborg identity, memory, and technology challenge traditional ideas of selfhood in George Alec Effinger's *When Gravity Fails*. Technological implants, moddies and daddies, allow people to change their personality and skills and adopt whatever they like. This raises questions about authenticity and individuality. The results of this study show that in a posthuman society, identity becomes fragmented, performative, and commodified. However, technology both empowers and controls characters, while memory is transformed from its natural state to a manufactured

one. This study reveals that identity is fluid and shaped by technology. It focuses on how individuals encounter technology in a dystopian city of Budayeen, while representing Marid's inner struggle and his fear of losing his selfhood. However, the novel critiques how technological power can both liberate and control individuals. This also represents the darkest side of posthumanism, where identity is controlled, changed, and lost by technology. Furthermore, Haraway's post-humanist theory is widely applied in Western cyberpunk literature, leaving room for non-Western cyberpunk settings. This research fills this gap by analysing cyborg identity in the Middle East setting and through different cultural perspectives, by providing insight into non-Western fiction and its potential to challenge dominant Western narratives of technology.

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