

A Comparative Analysis on Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* and *The Candy House*: through the Lens of Postmodernism

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

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3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
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Abstract

This whole paper studies the idea of postmodernism based on Jennifer Egan's two novels *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010) and *The Candy House* (2022), which stand as the remarkable exemplars of postmodern fiction in twenty first century. In spite of being published more than a decade apart, these two novels are elaborately linked through their unified characters, narrative formats, as well as through their thematic concerns. Although *The Candy House* does not serve merely as a sequel; still it is an expansion of the imaginative as well as the structural universe of the novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. While this paper explores the postmodern feature through the idea of postmodern narrative strategies; which includes fragmentation, non linear temporality, intertextuality, shifting narrative perspectives; in order to question the postmodern anxieties which is surrounded by fluid identity, technology, and surveillance.

Key Words:

Fragmentation, non linear temporality, metafiction, shifting perspectives, technological anxiety, fluid identity, technology, surveillance

Table of Contents

Serial No.	Name of Contents	Page No.
1.	Declaration	II
2.	Approval	III
3.	Acknowledgement	IV
4.	Abstract	V
5.	Table of Contents	VI
6.	Introduction	7-17
7.	Research Questions	17
8.	Literature Review	18-30
9.	Discussion	31-45
10.	Findings	46
11.	Conclusion	47
12.	Works Cited	48-51

Introduction

Jennifer Egan's two novels *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010) and *The Candy House* (2022) represents the idea of postmodern fiction of 21st century. Although the works of these novels are separated from more than a decade; still these are closely connected depending on their form and content; where *The Candy House* is considered as an extended version of *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. In these two novels, Egan uses a collection of postmodern narrative strategies, which includes fragmentation, non linear temporality, metafiction, shifting perspectives, as well as technological anxiety or so to say paranoia; in order to question the sense of identity, memory as well as the whole narrative itself. The characters in her two novels seem to struggle because of the loss of their stable self during the age of surveillance and digital overexposure; which echoes the key concern of postmodernism.

In the novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, time seems to portray as an invisible destructive force "the goon" which alters the sense of identity and connection through its discontinuous depictions. As it is stated by one of the characters in the novel that, "Time's a goon, right?" (Egan, *Goon Squad*, p.127). While in *The Candy House* this concern is intensified in a digital world; where memory seems to be commodified, externalized as well as subjected to the algorithmic control. Moreover, these two novels demonstrate the postmodern conditions by its formal innovation and also by its thematic depth. Although *The Candy House* shows a shift towards the digital postmodernism; while directly struggling with data surveillance, algorithmic identity and performative authenticity. The narrative techniques of these two novels portrays the fragmentation of contemporary life as well as the recursive nature of digital memory, while suggesting the human desire for having connection during the time of technological alienation.

Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is a postmodern narrative which rejects the linear plot and reflects the unified voice through fragmentation as well as through narrative multiplicity. This novel epitomizes its structure by presenting thirteen chapters, where each chapter holds different perspectives of a number of characters often is a different voice and in a different stylistic form. For instance, in Chapter 12; "Great Rock and Roll Pauses" fully presented in power point slides; which shows the formal and visual disruption of the writing style of traditional prose. As Alison Blake writes that, "The pause makes you think the song will end. And then it doesn't," (Egan, *Goon Squad*, p.284). Here Alison demonstrates the musical motif of this novel as well as shows the structural refusal to resolve, through which the idea of fragmentation is being portrayed thoroughly.

While in *The Candy House* the formal play continues, which seems more like a mimic and an extension of the fragmented structure of the *Goon Squad*. The characters take new forms and reappear across decades; which includes spy narratives, algorithmic analysis and social media feeds. The whole narrative does not seem to progress in a linear way; rather it branches and twists in a hyperlinked fashion while mimicking the structure of the internet. In Chapter 8, which is titled as "Lulu the Spy, 2032", Egan states that, "Time has ceased to be a line and become a cloud," (Egan, *The Candy House*, p.192), which shows a digital metaphor by collapsing the linearity of time. Although the nonlinear structure does not seem merely stylistic, still it depicts the epistemological instability, which is one of the central themes of postmodernism. Egan seems to resist the idea of single or so to say the idea of authoritative story by using these disjunctive forms. In *The Candy House*, one of the characters muses by saying that, "There was no master narrative only a great dispersal of shards" (Egan, *The Candy House*, p.67). Through this quote Egan tries to

encapsulate the formal approach of the narrative that it is no longer coherent rather a network of fragments, which is mirroring the idea of postmodern skepticism of authority and coherence.

Moreover, postmodern theory always rejects the idea of unified or so to say a stable self. In the worldview of postmodernism; identity is always performative, contingent, and shifting. So the characters in these two novels exemplify the idea of instability by reinventing themselves consciously depending on time, trauma, and technology. The character Sasha in the novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad* represents the theme of shifting identity. In the very first chapter of this novel; which is titled as the “Found Objects”, we are introduced with the character named Sasha, who is a middle aged woman and works under a music executive named Bennie Salazar; as his personal assistant. The novel begins with a very ambiguous and interconnected narrative structure by focusing on the character of Sasha; as a kleptomaniac. The setting was in the bathroom of the Lassimo Hotel, where Sasha was adjusting her yellow eye shadow looking at the mirror and suddenly noticed a bag on the floor, which was beside a sink. The owner of this bag was in the toilet stall leaving her bag outside. A kind of deeper feeling stoke in Sasha’s mind; when she saw a pale green leather wallet; which was barely visible inside the bag and she could not resist but stole the wallet from the bag and then silently came out of the toilet. Sasha was explaining the whole incident and how she was trying her best to stop her from stealing towards her therapist named Coz. He was trying to know Sasha’s opinion while she was standing with Alex in front of all the stolen stuffs; and he came to know about that, she was feeling shame and was trying to distract her mind, while she tried to have a sexual intercourse with Alex. This shows the internal conflict of Sasha, which was happening in her mind. Her compulsive behavior regarding stealing objects, is a kind of disorder that started from her youth.

In this chapter, we can also have a glimpse of Sasha's troublesome past where we came to know about how she stole the plumber's tool belt. However, she never took anything from stores cause the cold inert goods did not tempt her; rather she only took things from people. Moreover, her kleptomaniac gave her the feeling of shame as well as self loathing. Nevertheless, she also stole the wallet of Alex when he went for taking shower and she could not get any chance to give it back to him. Since Alex left her home after taking shower, she did not talk to him anymore. At the same time, while talking to Alex in the Lassimo Hotel within twenty minutes Sasha felt tired of him, which showed her inability of maintaining meaningful connections and emotional bonding.

Moreover, we also came to know about one of Sasha's friends named Lizzie with whom she had stopped talking, which also shows nothing but her inability to maintain a close relationship. At some point, it seemed like Coz and Sasha were trying to write a story; where they were feeling perplexed whether to give it a happy ending or something else. However, Sasha wanted to have a turning point in her life; by not picking up the wallet of Alex, and wanted to become a changed person. The way Sasha showed her embarrassment while talking about her kleptomania, also shows her thirst of having redemption and transformation. So, we can see her theft as an existential resistance; "She lifted the wallet, took out the bills and slipped them in her pocket. It claimed her"(Egan, *Goon Sauad*,p.4). The habit of her stealing is not just pathological; rather it also symbolizes the fractured identity of Sasha, who is continually trying to assert control over it.

Similarly, if it is about the character Bennie Salazar, who was a former punk rocker; now he has turned into a record executive; seems to experience an existential crisis, because he got disconnected from music; which used to define him once. In the Chapter 2 which is titled as

“The Gold Cure” from the novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad* shifts the focus from the female character Sasha to the male character Bennie Salazar. This whole chapter gives us a glimpse of Bennie’s present day life and also provides us information regarding his past life. Moreover, this whole chapter centers around his personal and professional struggles, while showing his complicated relationship with time, along with his career and the people to whom; he is associated with. The title of this chapter “The Gold Cure” refers to the idea of fictional treatment for drug addiction and also serves as a metaphor to show Bennie’s efforts to break free from this past as well as from his emotional baggage, which he always carries with him. This chapter starts with Bennie’s present life, when he is in his mid- forties and working as a music producer as well as an executive in the rapidly changing music industry. He has achieved a degree of success in his past life and he feels sad when he looks back. He feels disconnected as the world around him is rapidly shifting. Moreover, the sense of music is also moved on to new forms and technologies, which he does not understand properly. He is depicted as a person, who seems to have a deeper sense of nostalgia for his past, especially the time of his youth; when he used to have the vibrant music sense in the New York City. So the most significant part of this character revolves around the memories of Bennie’s youth as well as his present years in the music business. Moreover, he also recalls the time when he was a young idealistic musician as well as his experiences regarding his former band. Once he was also become a part of the group which was on the point to get success but unfortunately the success of the band was short lived, and this failure is also one of the reasons that Bennie feels so much disconnected from his present self. So, we can see that how Bennie’s ambitions and his youthful dreams were destroyed by the realities of the music industry as well as how his attempts of reconciling the earlier sense of purpose becomes largely unsuccessful. However, Bennie’s relationship with the people around him are also noticed through the sense of

disconnection and disappointment. His ex- wife also left him years ago, and he remarried to a new woman named Stephanie. Nonetheless, they are also having a struggling marriage because of Bennie's lack of emotional intimacy, which also creates a sense of loneliness in his life. In this chapter it is quite evident that Bennie's discontent with his relationships as well as with his career, where he seems to search for something that can provide him with the sense of fulfillment or so to say closure.

However, in this chapter Bennie was seemed to take gold flaks every now and then to feel the sense of relief and to escape from his past memories, where the "Gold Cure" symbolically shows Bennie's desire to have a quick fix from his deeper emotional and psychological issues. This whole chapter explores the disconnect feelings , troublesome relationships and the lost sense of purpose of the character Bennie Salazar, who is facing difficulties to reconcile his past with his present. Through this character Egan tries to portray the picture of a person, who seems to be stuck in a cycle of self- doubt and disappointment and also looking for cure from his emotional malaise but can only find some fleeting solutions. As one character in this novel states that, " The problem is that once you start looking at a life, it's hard to stop" (Egan, *Goon Squad*,p.81). This statements shows that, the identity of the character is always slipping away.

On the other hand, in the novel *The Candy House* , the identity crisis is represented through technology. "Own Your Unconscious" which is the central invention that allows people to upload and to share their memories with others; where the darker truth is masked by the promise of the radical empathy through externalizing memory ; where individuals become data, manipulable and accessible by strangers and corporations. In this novel, there is a character named Alfred Hollander seems to be obsessed with authenticity, where he tries to become invisible literally and

metaphorically; in order to elope from this digital panopticon. As Egan writes that, “He wanted to be no one,” “To be no one was to be free” (Egan, *The Candy House*, p.111). So here he showed his desire for anonymity, which seems a direct response to a world, where the self seems to be endlessly performed as well as observed.

Moreover, the two characters like Bix Bouton Miranda Kline provide other insights regarding the commodification of identity. The character Bix; who is the creator of “Own Your Unconscious” seems to be horrified by the implications of his own invention. At the same time he is a visionary as well as a villain or so to say a postmodern Faust, who seems to trade truth for access. As it is stated in this novel that, “There is no room for forgetting in this world. Everything is archived” (Egan, *The Candy House*, p.199). This statement talks about the loss of forgetting; which is nothing but the loss of reinvention through Egan’s characters searching for meaning.

However, postmodern literature often use self-referentiality, irony as well as metafiction ;in order to show the constructed nature of narrative as well as identity. While writing novels, Egan seems very aware of artificiality as well as the limit of language in terms of storytelling. Egan shows the shifting narrative perspectives as well as inventive forms by playing with the boundaries of genre and also questions the contemporary narrative structure. For instance; in *A Visit from the Goon Squad* the chapters adopted unexpected formats. So the metafictional quality is evident through the power point presentation or so to say through the third person omniscient narration which is seemed to be dissolved into a child’s visual perception. So these stylistic shifts reflects the instability of voice as well as shows the impossibility of a single or so to say authoritative point of view. Alison’s PowerPoint slides in “Great Rock and Roll Pauses” represent both a narrative

innovation as well as a formal disruption. In the PowerPoint slides he uses bullet points and also graphical elements which mimics the way of our absorbing information in digital formats.

Moreover, the way people are invited to engage as a reader with the text through a presentation and not with a story. This way of writing challenges the conventional narrative structures and reflects the idea of fragmentation. While it comes to language Egan uses sharper irony as a form of manipulation. In the chapter “ Pure Language “ we can see that, the character Alex works in PR, who seems to take an attempt of operating a viral marketing campaign by targeting the toddlers through their parents. The scepticism regarding this endeavor is unmistakable. In order to highlight this paradox; one of the characters says that, “We’re marketing authenticity” (Egan, *Goon Squad*, p.253).Through this statement we can see that, the classic postmodern irony regarding the concept of manufacturing authenticity in being questioned in a mediated world.

On the other hand, in the novel *The Candy House* the characters are hyper aware regarding their narratives and roles. The character named Lulu seems to appear in both the novels, who moves fluidly between the roles of literal and figurative spies. The mission of Lulu is to “harvest authenticity” from people seems to be an iconic twist, which is earlier Egan’s satire of branding. As Egan states that,” Authenticity has become the most valuable currency” (Egan, *The Candy House*, p.183). So the portrayal of espionage tropes doubles which is used as a metaphor in order to show how people are surveilling each other in a performative culture and also seem to be obsessed with transparency.

Moreover, sometimes the characters of *Goon Squad* reappears in *The Candy House* in altered roles and also viewed from different perspectives. The artificiality of storytelling is being

highlighted through the recursive narrative structure while emphasizing on its redemptive potential. The characters of Egan mostly reminds that; they are constructed a narrative from shards, as they are assembling themselves from their fractured identities and memories.

Furthermore, Egan seems to play with another hallmark of postmodernism; which is intertextuality. Throughout these two novels ; there are references of classical fairy tales as well as digital culture scattered in various ways. While the title *The Candy House* evokes the idea of “Hansel and Gretel” by suggesting that the house of technology is made of sweets and also luring people with the promise of knowledge and connection, in order to swallow their privacy and freedom. However, these novels are multilayered with cultural texts of ancient and modern in a playful manner.

In addition to that, the profound thematic development from the novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad* to *The Candy House* is nothing but a shift from time as a destructive force towards technology which is a potentially more insidious one. On one hand, *Goon Squad* suggests memory as unreliable and slippery; while *The Candy House* explores the idea of memory as standardized, externalized, as well as mined for data. So, this transformation seems to align with the concern of postmodernism regarding the commodification of self as well as seems to collapse the private into the public.

The idea of memory in *Goon Squad* is essentially melancholic and personalized. Sasha’s way of stealing objects represents the idea of holding fleeting moments. In the character “Goodbye, My Love” Sasha seems to be described as someone who is “ tryna to make the world stay still by stealing from it” (Egan, *Goon Squad*, p.55). Here the writer tries to symbolize Sasha’s theft as a postmodern impulse; in order to resist the erosion of time through fragments. Besides,

the character Bennie seems to cling with his punk past just to resist the dullness of his current life. As he says that, “The song sounded the same , but something was missing” (Egan, *Goon Squad*, p.77). Here the memory is deeply attached to music, which evokes both the loss and connection.

However, in the novel *The Candy House* the idea of memory seems no longer intangible; rather it seems more like a commodity. As Bix Bouton’s “Own Your Unconscious”, gives access to the users to upload their memories and share their experiences with others. So, this radical transparency seems at the same time seductive as well as terrifying. As one of the users stated that, “What good is forgetting if you’ve already shared everything “(Egan, *The Candy House*, p.206). While forgetting is one of the vital parts of the human experience, which enables reinvention as well as healing. Technology seems to destroy the personal growth and relief of past traumas by eliminating it.

In addition to that, there is a profound implication, where there is a division between the lived experience and the performed memory, which seems to collapse. As the characters in this novel found themselves haunted not only by their past but also by the visibility of their past. The character Alfred Hollander, who looks for anonymity is nothing but a tragic figure of resistance, where he seems to choose his solitude by deleting his data and by erasing his digital footprint. As he says that, “To be unseen was the only true freedom life” (Egan, *The Candy House*, p.221).

Jennifer Egan’s two novels *A Visit from the Goon Squad* and *The Candy House* are considered to be the most enthralling explorations of postmodern themes in the field of contemporary literature. The structure of these two novels resist the idea of traditional structures of linear storytelling as well as character development. Rather there is a jumping between genres, characters and in media format which mirrors the idea of fragmented consciousness in

postmodernism. Moreover, the author also emphasized on the issue of authenticity and performance.

Research Question:

How the idea of postmodernism is reflected in Jennifer Egan's two novels *A Visit from the Goon Squad* and *The Candy House* based on the issues of fragmentation, identity, memory and technology?

Literature Review

Jennifer Egan's two novels *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010) and *The Candy House* (2022) are the portrayal of postmodern fiction of 21st century. In these two novels the author tries to deploy quintessential postmodern techniques through fragmented narrative, metafiction, non-linear temporality and shifting viewpoints; in order to explore the idea of memory, connection and identity; which are amplified and eroded; during the period of digitalization and surveillance.

The concept of postmodernism can be described as “ a complex anti- modernist strategies which emerged in the 1950s and developed momentum in the course of 1960s” (Bertens). The main distinguishing feature of postmodernism is ‘relativity’, which clearly rejects the belief or the idea of the existence of one fixed truth. It is also argues and questions over the relatively of everything, which includes the previously established morality, truth, ethics and religious beliefs, thus it seems to establish a self referential identity. Moreover, postmodernism also rejects the metanarrative or so to say the grand narrative of modernism; rather it suggests multi narratives. While the tendency of adapting relativity as well as rejecting grand narratives seem to accompanied by, “ a deeply felt loss of faith in our ability to represent the real, in the widest sense”(Bertens,11).

The postmodern writers style and structure of writing also reflects skeptical attitudes as well as their rejection of writing a well organized linear narrative, which is replaced by non linearity and fragmentation. As, Ihab Hasan says about the concept of postmodernism that, “I mean a complex referent that these diverse concepts help to delineate: ambiguity, discontinuity, heterodoxy, pluralism, randomness revolt, perversion, deformation. The latter alone subsumes a

dozen current terms of unmaking: decreation, disintegration, deconstruction, decenterment, displacement, difference, discontinuity disjunction, disappearance, decomposition, de-definition, demystification, detotalization, delegitimization-let alone more technical terms referring to the rhetoric of irony, rupture, silence”(Hasan,p.7). Thus, postmodernism emphasized on the idea of fragmentation, hyperreality, pastiche, temporal disorder, paranoia, and also rejects the idea of metanarratives.

Postmodernism celebrates the idea of fragmented structure and contradictions by Lyotard’s rejection of metanarratives as well as by Jameson’s surreal temporal structures and pastiche. Egan’s two novels exemplify these tendencies. While, the *Goon Squad*’s form of writing seems to defy chronology by jumping across different characters and decades. As Lewis says in “Postmodernism and Fiction” about temporal disorder that, “Postmodernist fiction does not just disrupt the past, but corrupts the present too. It disorders the linear coherence of narrative by warping the sense of significant time, *kairos* or the dull passing of ordinary time *chronos*” (Lewis,p.114) . On the other hand, the form of *The Candy House* extends the idea of fragmentation by reminiscing algorithms, social media feeds as well as by spying. Thus, Egan’s narrative strategies highlight commodification of memory, instability of identity as well as the paradoxical search for connection.

According to some of the dominant features of postmodernist fiction includes the idea of temporal disorder, a pointless and pervasive use of pastiche, the erosion of the sense of time, a foregrounding of words as fragmenting material sings, where there is a loose association of ideas, a loss of distinction between logically separated level of discourse, as well as vicious circle and paranoia. These traits are seemed to encounter time back and forth in the bewildering, bare

landscapes of postmodernism. According to John W. Aldridge in *The American Novel and the Way We Live Now* (1983): “In the fiction of [postmodernist writers]...virtually everything and everyone exists in such a radical state of distortion and aberration that there is no way of determining from which conditions in the real world they have been derived or from what standard of sanity they may be said to depart. The conventions of verisimilitude and sanity have been nullified. Characters inhabit a dimension of structureless being in which their behaviour becomes inexplicably arbitrary and unjudgeable because the fiction itself stands as a metaphor of a derangement that is seemingly without provocation and beyond measurement” (Lewis,p.113).

Moreover, the novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad* represents multiple voices in the narrative through its characters, which echos the concept of Michael Bakhtin’s polyphony. In the narrative of the two novels,Egan also uses analepsis and prolepsis. Thus, these techniques seem to contribute presenting the narrative of these novels in a non linear as well as a multilayered way. While the idea of multi layered narrative is reflected through the usage of PowerPoint format, in addition to the multi voice and non-linearity regarding the events allow the fragmentation of the narrative. Nevertheless, the postmodern feature of fragmentation seems to be defined by the characters’, who are searching for authenticity and harmony by the representation of the unity which connects all the characters in an ambiguous way.

Jean Baudrillard who is known as one of the well known French theorists and sociologists, is also a prominent figure to examine the idea of postmodernism, where one of his notable theories is simulacra and simulacra and hyperreality. Usually reality is seemed to be compared with what is created in the mind; nevertheless Baudrillard thinks that reality is vanished. By the idea of real, he means the appearance which indicates toward a sort of disappearance, where

the real is disappearing; while the sense of disappearance seems to be another type of appearance (Smith, 2010, p.30).

Hyperreality is a postmodern notion, which is explained by Baudrillard (1994) as nothing but the present social situation, moreover it is an act of creating something false which is supposed to be real (p.58). Through this hypothesis; it means that nationalism, politics, and religion seem to establish a setting where we are existing but with delusion (p.94). According to John Tiffin and Nobuyoshi Terashima (2001), hyperreality is considered to be a situation where the reality and the imaginary are seemed to be pointlessly merged together, thus there is no vibration difference in between where one ends and where the other begins (p.8).

According to Mike Gane (2010), Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality collects three specifies all together; the initial one is the condition that the signs are already proclaimed. While the second condition talks about the method through which modern cultures are gathered, "in which they wipe out old age boundaries or transgress boundaries, the more real than real"; where the final one is the establishment of a common culture which discloses the differences in between the true and the false (p.95-96).

Therefore, Baudrillard (1994) also talks about hyperreality that "as the generation by models of a real without origin or reality" (p.6). He also declared that hyperreality seems to form a symbol that denote something which does not seem to really happen (p.3). Furthermore, "The world we live in has been replaced by a copy world, where we seek simulated stimuli and nothing more" (p.3).

Simulacra and Simulation is considered as one of the most significant works for this research. Baudrillard in his book seemed to inspect the connection in between signs, society and reality. The core concept of simulacra refers to the idea of copies; which show things either as derivative or they have lost their innovation. Besides, the replication of real life procedure is also specified by simulation over time (Banks, 2005,p.3).

Baudrillard in “The Precession of Simulacra” stated that, the things which are occurring in postmodern culture because of that our society seems tremendously dependent on the copies where we have lost our relationship and connection with the real world. Thus, reality itself seems to be the duplication of the model; where it controls the real world: “The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory—precession of simulacra—that engenders the territory” (Baudrillard, 1991, p. 342).

In postmodern simulacra and simulation, "It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real" (Baudrillard, 1991, p. 343).Therefore, Baudrillard also discusses about a number of issues which seems to excavate the loss; where ideology, capitalism and language are considered to be exceptionally dominating.

Moreover, the notion of hyperreality signifies the procedure of developing ideas of reality, which is resulting in cultural situation of misperception, where the signs and symbols are formed to take the place of reality as well as to discern the reality (Lawson & Garrod, 2001, p. 104). However, hyperreality is also considered as a compliment of owing the destiny of perception regarding the reality in media and culture, the things what is usually observed as real and the things

what is viewed as fiction are perfectly unified together, and there is no clear difference where one seems to finish and the other starts (Tiffin & Terashima, 2001).

Baudrillard was initially developed the notion of postmodern semiotics of hyperreality in *Simulacra and Simulation* (Pavlik-Malone, 2018, p. 35). While Baudrillard (1994) mentioned “hyperreality” as “the generation by models of a real without origin or reality” (p.25). Thus, the notion of hyperreality of Baudrillard was profoundly inspired by such fields as semiotics and phenomenology.

Moreover, Baudrillard also claimed that, “the unlimited existence of “hyperreal” number or non-standard reals” infinite and infinitesimal, that cluster about assumedly fixed or real numbers and factor through transference differentials” (Lincoln, 2009, p. 19). According to Arva (2008) stated that, “ the contemporary theories likely to believe Jean Baudrillard’s term “hyperreality” (*Simulacra and Simulation*) not as an object rather as a medium of traumatic imagination——where the literary consciousness attached in coping with as well as reconstructing the real——yet as an elusive rhetorical chimera(p.60).

Furthermore, the idea of simulacrum can also be connected with the fragmented personality of the characters in these two novels. Where the identity of these characters are replaced through the representation of shifting. As Baudrillard says that, “Pretending, or dissimulating, leaves the principle of reality intact: the difference is always clear, it is simply masked, whereas simulation threatens the difference between the "true" and the "false," the "real" and the "imaginary” (Baudrillard, 7). Where, we can see that, all these characters were suffering from hopelessness and existential crisis, through which they seemed to express their fragmented personality. Therefore, if we think about the character of Bennie Salazar who was once a punk

rocker and with the passage of time he has become a record executive, which gives us the idea of his struggle and can also be considered as the sign of his fragmented identity. While if it is about the character of Alfred Hollander then he was also looking for the meaning of life. He seemed to question himself about his life, where he started to feel suffocating. As Stoehr states that; “Human existence consists of meanings and patterns formed by the living of our lives and by the choices that we make on a daily basis. Human existence is not always about knowing something and human life is sometimes composed of events or qualities that cannot be fully explained in a rational, logical manner” (*Nihilism in Film and Television*, 12).

Therefore, the idea of mass media is intertwined with all medium of communications or so to say with digital word in *The Candy House*. The medium of communication includes the written, spoken, as well as the idea of broadcasting; that reaches towards an enormous number of audiences. Where all the written, spoken, and broadcast medium of communication includes the newspaper, magazine, internet, radio, television, advertisement, movies, and so on. And with technological advancement, the idea of mass media has flourished with different spheres.

However, the social networking apps like Facebook and YouTube are playing a very significant role in shaping and manipulating peoples’ mindset. Where people seems to be the scapegoat of mass mentality or so to say become part of a hegemonic society, that provokes people to believe in a specific set of ideas , is nothing but an aftermath of mass media. As Adorno and Horkheimer says that, “industry robs the individual of his function. Its prime service to the customer is to do his schematizing for him” (*Culture Industry*, 3). Where, the idea of losing the sense of reality; is a reflection of postmodernism, and hegemony gives us the reflection of modernism, which is tied up together in one frame, and seem to be challenged by Egan in her novel.

Postmodernism mainly emerged as an art form in the mid to late 1980's and seemed to grow from and relate to the modernist movement. Postmodernism simply rejected the idea of 'originality' or so to say the 'original'. Where, the idea of finding something authentic and original was discarded. The factor that was feared about postmodernism is that the never-ending reference; meant that all grip on reality has disappeared. Where, we have lost the sense of what is 'real' within art and culture due to reality being discarded in favor of mass inter-textual referencing. But the fear about postmodern culture was that there no longer an anchor to reality at all, that 'reality' had disappeared into an endless chain of other representations. (Bate, 3)

Guy Debord states on the Society of the Spectacle; about how developments in photographs and mass media have contributed to what Debord describes as the society of the spectacle. In the spectacular world images and representations become our reality and everything exists as and for images. Real-life experiences become repressed and events take place in a mediated, pseudo-reality. Our experience, events, and emotions; both on an individual and public scale are heavily mediated. Where images refer to one another endlessly the originality and authenticity of them are abolished. As a result of this, it is claimed; we have lost any relation to the real. (Debord, 7)

The idea of existential crisis refers to the feeling of unease that people experience regarding their choice, meaning and freedom of their life. Where the feeling of existential crisis often causes anxiety to people and they inherently started to take their life as inherently pointless and that their existence has no meaning. Moreover, the feeling of existential crisis also leads people towards the feeling of confusion regarding the sense of an individual's identity. While the same situation happened to the characters in these two novels *A Visit from the Goon Squad* and in *The Candy House*. As the narrator says, "they were writing a story of redemption of fresh beginnings

and second chances. But in the direction lay only sorrow” (Egan, *Goon Squad*, p.14) .This statement clearly shows the meaninglessness of their life. Where these character started to feel their existence as utterly meaningless within herself. Where existential crisis tends to arise the existential anxiety during the time of transitions and also reflects difficulty in terms of adapting a situation. Moreover, the sense of existential crisis is also related to loosing security and safety. Where a person started to question regarding the meaning of their existence.

However, if we think about the character of Alfred Hollander in *The Candy House*, he seemed to keep himself away from the digital world in pursuit of finding his own self, where in the end they had an epiphany of searching for the meaning and purpose of their life, which can be connected with the idea of existentialism; where they seemed to get disconnected from other people for the pursuit of their self. This also shows the sense of paranoia. As Lewis in “Postmodernism and Fiction” stated that, “In each instance the imprisoning of the individual by outside powers propagates a panic of identity..... To compensate for the hopelessness of their predicaments, these paranoids long for a state of complete fluidity an openness. However, their impulse towards freedom is tainted both by their terror of the actual open road and their cynicism about possible escape” (Lewis, p.119).

Moreover, the concept of “unconsciousness” by Freud also throws light on the behavior of the characters in these novels. Freud in his research came across his patients who were unable to express their feelings and attitudes consciously. As a result Freud understood that, beyond the consciousness there must be another layer; which is responsible to influence an individual in terms of their personality. Therefore, he tends to divide the psyche of people between the consciousness and the unconsciousness. Where the unconscious part is found behind self-identity; as a result, there seems to have a hidden self, which is separated from self-knowledge. The concept of

unconscious is drawn by Freud from his theory of repression. As Freud states that, “Repression,... is the process by which a mental act capable of becoming conscious... is made unconscious and forced back into the unconscious system...These impressions have never really been forgotten, but were only inaccessible and latent, having become part of the unconscious. But sometimes it happens that they emerge spontaneously from the unconscious” (*A General Introduction to Psycho-analysis*, 211).

On the other hand, if it is about the identity of the characters of these two novels, then we can see that; there is also an essence of dual identity. If we take a look on the characters of Sasha, Bennie Salazar, and Alfred Hollander; then it becomes quite clear that, there is a conflict between their internal and external identity. And throughout this whole novel both of the characters seems to suffer from their identity crisis, where they had a perplexed psyche regarding their authentic identity. Where nobody seems to have satisfaction based on their own identity as they have duality both in their thoughts and actions, which created their dual identity. Moreover, both of the characters seem to deceive each other through their actions, which creates nothing but the juxtaposed nature of a person that creates the sense of dual identity.

In addition to that, the theory of “transference” by Freud can also be connected with the identity of Sasha. According to Freud, “transference” is related to the past experience of painful experience; which influences the present life and relationship of an individual, “The individual self holds a transference relationship to other people, to social bonds and to the cultural realm more generally. In our emotional attachments to others, from intimate sexual relationships to the organizational structures of authority in public life, the phenomenon of transference is a fundamental dimension of human experience: we people our world, [...] with emotions and fantasies drawn from the past, but projected on to current experience....” (Elliott, 17).

So, the core concept and idea of Freud regarding “transference” helps us to understand that, how the traumatic past of an individual haunts their present, and let us know more about the condition of Sasha’s identity. As we can see that, Sasha often thinks about her past, where she had stolen a lot of stuffs from anonymous people, which she could not return to them later on. And not only that, from the very beginning of this novel; we can also observe that; she used to remember about her psychological condition; whenever she looks at the stolen things; which makes her feel guilty and bothers her in the present life.

However, the theories of Freud regarding sexual development of an individual connects with the idea of ‘Oedipus complex’ and ‘Electra complex’ illuminate the reasons behind the formation of identity of Sasha and Bennie Salazar throughout the novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. If we think about the relationship of these two characters in this novel; that there is a male characters and a female character, where one is the boss another is the employee. Still none of them seems to have any romantic relationship with each other, except having a formal relationship. Where Sasha tried hard to get into a relationship with the character Alex but she was unable to get into it.

On the other hand, if it is about Bennie Salazar he also had an unsuccessful married life. So, both of them have failed to feel any kind of intimacy, that shows nothing but the reflection of their personality; which is formed based on their sexual development during their childhood. As the narrator says that, “She was tired of Alex. In a mere twenty minutes, they’d blown past the desired point of meaningful-connection-through-shared-experience into the less appealing state of knowing-each-other-too-well” (Egan, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* .p.15).

Therefore, Freud claims that, the age in between four to six is a timeframe; when there is a profound emotional bonding in between the children and the parents of their opposite sex.

However, the presence of father seems to become the reason of breaking the close bond between a boy and his mother. Where the authority of a father becomes the reason of the hatred of a son, and the son inwardly wishes for his death. And this state originates in “the Oedipus complex”. As Freud states that, “....the little man wants his mother all to himself, finds his father in the way, becomes restive when the latter takes upon himself to caress her, and shows his satisfaction when the father goes away or is absent...” (A General Introduction to Psycho-analysis, 341).

Where the child seems to find out the fact that, he is unable to defeat his father’s authority. And in terms of the positive Oedipus complex the boy seems to overcome his feelings regarding the animosity of his father. According to Freud, the task regarding the child consists of “detaching his libidinal wishes from his mother and employing them for the choice of a real outside love object, and in reconciling himself with his father if he has remained in opposition to him, or in freeing himself from his pressure, if, as a reaction to his infantile rebelliousness, he has become subservient to him” (A General Introduction to Psycho- analysis, 337).

In the novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, the author writes the whole novel depending on a number of characters, where the notable characters seem to convey the theory of existentialism and absurdity, through their different ideologies which directly embodies with the sense of identity. According to Stoehr , “ Both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche stress a general but fundamental point that is a hallmark of existentialist thinking : Human existence should be defined not in terms of the irreducible uniqueness of the individual as well as the situated choices that he or she makes in everyday life” (*Nihilism in Film and Television*,11-12).

Also the philosophers of existentialism says that, human life becomes mysterious due to the unpredictability of the universe as well as the whole emphasis is placed upon the personal accountability and individual agency of one’s activity and actions; that they show and perform.

Egan considers the character of Sasha, Bennie Salazar, and Alfred Hollander as the epitome of existentialism; through their actions that they have showed throughout these two novels.

Ultimately, Jennifer Egan's two novels *A Visit from the Goon Squad* and *The Candy House* are presenting an evolving and a subtle portrait of postmodernism. These two novels capture the possibilities as well as the anxieties of a world; where the sense of identity seems fluid or so to say fragmented, memory is mutable, and the connection seems to be mediated by technology. The thematic complexity as well as the formal inventiveness of Egan's writing of these two novels place her work firmly within the canon of postmodernism.

Discussion

The novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is intertwined with a collection of stories where a number of characters are seemed to be connected with Bennie Salazar who was the former punk rocker as well as a record executive; besides Sasha was his assistant. Whereas, the novel *The Candy House* is an extended version of the *Goon Squad*. These two novels have represented a detour through a number of characters, where the process of writing does not seem to be always smooth and easy. Despite being such causal diversions these two novels became the most acclaimed and amusing novels of Egan. She tries to illustrate her creative process of writing and beings her books with an entrancing sense of place and time. Therefore, these two novels seem to deviate from the usual pattern of writing and constantly seem to move backwards and forwards irrespective of time; where it seems totally impossible to point out a precise temporal center. As some of the chapters are set during the late 70's, where the other chapters are found to set in the 2000s, and the countless leaps into the future are also be found. In terms of place there is also a certain level of vagueness, as there are a number of locations which has appeared throughout these novel: New York, Kenya, Naples, San Francisco, and the Californian desert.

Therefore, there is always an absence of stable spatiotemporal coordinates; where there is a consequent presence of innumerable atmospheres through the portal of different time frames, characters, and their actions. It seems hard to identify Egan's writing whether as a collection of short stories or a novel. Whereas, the New York Times defined the book *A Visit from the Goon Squad* as a "tough uncategorizable work of fiction" (Maslin). In this novel each chapter sounds so differently from the other chapters, where there is an absence of traditional structure and linear development. While considering a wide range of characters, this whole book juxtaposes the

interlocking of stories, and ignores the deep unitary force. Moreover, in these two novels Egan writes about a different person in each chapter. While each chapter holds a different mood, feel and tone. Thus, each and every chapter seems to stand completely different on its own, where there is no central theme and it lacks a leading center. The lack of momentum and fragmentation evokes the readers every time to start all over again.

Furthermore, if it is about the narrative genre of *A Visit from the Goon Squad* then it definitely shows a problematic collocation which triggers the reflection of different genres. For instance; if it is about chapter 9 then it is about a newspaper report; and if it is about chapter 12 then it is a power point presentation and throughout the book there are newspaper headlines and text messages. Lastly, the whole structure of the novel mirrors nothing but the organization of a music album from (Part A and Part B). Because of the highly experimental combination of genres this novel has been defined as a “postmodern pastiche”(Cowart 243). While Duerre Humann says that, “Egan, however, not only plays with narrative time in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, but the experiments with genre, as well, ultimately presenting within the novel a pastiche of literary forms” (Duerre Humann 90). As Egan seems to combine different narrative styles, where incompatible things coexist.

Moreover, in this novel it is also clearly recognizable that; there is not only genre clash but also fusion in terms of narrative styles and tones. Throughout this novel all the different narrators as well as all the voices seem to come up with their own vocabulary. They also articulated their words in their own way; where they also showed their own way of filtering as well as interpreting reality. Besides, based on Egan’s work Barthes said that, “the text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multi-

dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash” (Barthes 146).

On the other hand, these novels also acknowledge the time that it passes without taking any position regarding one specific sense or the other. For instance; this happens in the case of Kitty Jackson; who can be found both in these two novels, initially as a movie star or so to say as a celebrity in the *Goon Squad* and later become an outspoken activist in *The Candy House*. While she thinks about the future, what it holds for her, “Sometimes I imagine myself looking back on right now, and I think, like, where will I be standing when I look back? Will right now look like the beginning of a great life...or what?” (182)

Moreover, the portrayal of The character kitty in *A Visit from the Goon Squad* and *The Candy House* expressed the evolution of postmodern identity under the influence of media simulation, celebrity culture, and technological hyperreality . Where, in the *Goon Squad* Kitty initially appears as a fallen Hollywood star, a woman who seems to trapped in the constructed simulation of fame as well as the exploitive mechanisms of the entertainment industry. Where her character symbolizes the postmodern crisis of authenticity as well as her sense of self seems to be entirely mediated through the lens of public perception.

Kitty in the chapter ‘X’s and O’s ‘ is portrayed in the morally ambiguous world of public relations, where the image seems to supersede substances. Moreover, truth becomes a commodity. Kitty was hired by Dolly Peale, who is the disgraced PR agent to participate in a public campaign, which is designed to rehabilitate the image of General B, who is a brutal director and his crimes are seemed to erase through the aesthetic manipulation. While in this narrative Egan shows the postmodern interplay between spectacle, power and representation, which echoes

Baudrillard's notion of simulacra that the reality is being replaced . In the late capitalist culture Kitty's image is not even her rather she becomes a tool because of media simulation, while her identity is being consumed. While Kitty openly rebels against the script by criticizing the director and by asking for her safety and this act of defending herself shows her yearning for authenticity in a world which is governed by surface appearances. Thereafter, her instability of maintaining an authentic self shows the postmodern structure of control. Where Kitty is constructed as tragic figure whose humanity seems to flicker beneath the layers of spectacles in a media saturated society.

Furthermore, in *The Candy House* Egan after a decade revisits Kitty Jackson ; while framing her in a technologically mediated future, where the connectivity , surveillance and shared consciousness has seemed to replace the earlier media driven observation with the celebrities. Where in this novel the chapter "Own Your Consciousness" defined technology that allows individuals to share and upload their entire memories by creating a collective digital archive of experience. So in such hyper connected landscape in postmodernism there is a loss of privacy, where authenticity becomes literalized. Once in the *Goon Squad* what was metaphorical now becomes technologically real. While Kitty reappears in the chapter "Lulu the Spy, 2032". Now she no longer exploited by the media handlers ; rather she becomes a vocal critique, who has survived through the commodification of identity and now come up with how to resist it. Though her presence was brief in the narrative ; still it seems deeply symbolic .While she is standing as a remnant of the past era of spectacles, where the spectacles has been internalized through surveillance oppression , cameras as well as through the voluntary perception in digital networks. So, *A Visit from the Good Squad* to *The Candy House*; there is a shift from public relations manipulation to the algorithmic transparency; the trajectory changes. Still , from the mass media

simulation to the data driven self surveillance, in both the context Kitty's struggle remains consistent, which is the battle of retaining an authentic self in between the forces of fragmentation, commodity and fluid identity.

Furthermore, the most perfect example that how time can resolve problems by causing an unexpected and positive reversal of a situation through the character of Sasha, where her accomplishments of kleptomaniac tendencies are being concerned. In the *Goon Squad* chapter 12, she seemed to transform her compulsion of stealing objects into artistic creativity. As Alison the daughter of Sasha explains about her mother that m; she began a hobby of making collages and also added that, "she uses found objects. She says they're precious because they're causal and meaningless. But they tell the whole story if you really look" (Egan, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* 273). The most interesting part of this extract is; Alison seems to interpret her mother's way of entertainment as an artistic expression, and the kid addresses them as "found objects". While the readers are already aware of the fact that, she uses the stolen objects. However, from the point of view of Sasha, this hobby holds a deeper significance. As Sasha is creating art; besides she is also giving shape to a different and a new name, which transforms her identity as less problematic. Through this extract, the narrative trajectory as well as the transformation of Sasha from a kleptomaniac to an artist is presented through the lens of her daughter, who has viewed her mother's hobby from her limited perspective.

On the other hand, the most significant thread of the *Good Squad*; which concerns about the impact of technology over creative artistry as well as its impact on the life of people in general. As Bennie severely criticized over the negative effects of digitalization in chapter 1 ; and he said that, " sucked the life out of everything that got smeared through its microscopic mesh.

Film, photography, music: dead. An aesthetic holocaust!” (24). Whereas in the closing chapter of this novel set in the 2020s, the issue of digitalization was touched more extensively by Egan and “projects current trends in marketing and music into the future to envisage a society of comprehensive consumer and state surveillance” (Johnston 168).

Besides, Egan also portrays a dystopian future, where children at a very early age seem to interact with technology, where ironically “Rebecca and Alex had agreed that she should not until age five” (320). Whereas, the new generations seem to be ironically identified as the “pure language” of profiling as well as marketing. Also Bennie’s new assistant named Lulu represents all these future trends, where the narrator portrays her as nothing but a “living embodiment of the new ‘handset employee’: paperless, deskless, commuteless, and theoretically omnipresent” (325).

In addition to that, these two novels also comprise a number of intertwined stories which seem to set in a polyphonic fictional world. As every new chapter of these novels acquaint with new characters as well as their relation with the previous chapters are not immediately evident. So these two novels are following the extremely heterogeneous narratological decisions, for instance; in the *Goon Squad* chapter 2,4, and 7 are portrayed through the authorial narrator, where in chapter 3,5, and 6 there is first person narrative structure, whereas in chapter 10 there is second person narrative structure and in chapter 1,8,11 and 13 there is figural narrative structure. As Funk demonstrates that, “this variety of form is representative of Egan's (authentic) narrative approach, in order to present human existence as a heap of broken stories, without an ordering, authoritative instance to guide the reader through the incongruity of this mortal coil” (Funk 50).

Moreover, these novels appear to be formless and also represent a significant chronological as well as perspectival jumbling, which are the characteristic traits of a postmodern

novel. Besides, these novels have radically different structures than the other novels because of its writing process. The writing procedure also reflects an extremely organic as well as a fluid process; where there is no predetermined decisions, which aimed at creating a specific effect or so to say any surprise.

Nevertheless, a general evaluation regarding the function of the chapters represent an authorial voice. In chapter 2 of the *Goon Squad* “ The Gold Cure “, which is the only chapter; where Bennie and Sasha are together and in the final paragraph they convey goodbye to each other, and their farewell seem to be definitive for the readers. While chapter 4 and chapter 7 are the longest chapters of this novel, where these are subdivided into different sections (the sections of chapter 4 holds a title , whereas the sections of chapter 7 are only numbered). Thus, it is very difficult to perceive a satisfactory explanation to find the presence of the authorial narrator in these chapters as well as in the other chapters. However, these three chapters are the most significant segments of this novel, which can be identified for a number of reasons and these are also narrated from the point of view of the omniscient narrator, which makes these chapters even more recognizable.

Furthermore, the sense of fragmentation is also paradoxically amplified in the chapter 7 of *Goon Squad*. While at the beginning of this chapter explains how the omniscient narrator fails to achieve his usual role, “ Stephanie and Bennie had lived in Crandale a year before they were invited to a party. It wasn't a place that warmed easily to stranger. They'd known that going in and hadn't cared" (117). While without giving any support the readers are encouraged to understand the new sections of this novel by their own that when and where these events are taking place as well as their relevance in the context of the novel.

Moreover, these two texts are not the traditional novels. As a result, a number of characters are revolving around throughout these texts and have some sort of connections based on familiar, professional, sentimental or amical relationship. While some characters have got a certain importance at some parts; they seem to end up disappearing completely from the novel, where some peripheral figures take the leading role in some narrations. There is a constant fluctuation and the notion of chronology is complete missing in these texts. While the characters are not being portrayed in a rigorous manner by detailing about their age , occupation and their physical appearance ; rather those characters are represented through a significant gesture as well as through their actions, which seem to change with the passage of time. As the character ‘Dolly’ is introduced in chapter 7, but the writer only leaves a distinct impression of this woman that; she is self confident, witty and always brave to speak up. The whole thing about the woman is not explained, as the notion of consistency is totally misleading in these texts; where real people are not consistent. This shows nothing but the reflection of the inconsistency of people. As the writer tries to hold the authenticity by portraying the characters as real individuals and by not showing any predetermined pattern.

Furthermore, there is always a balance between inevitability and surprise in these texts. The past and the future of the characters are plunged from one chapter to the another. For instance; if it is about the character of Lou’s trajectory in the *Goon Squad* then; there is no chronological order in chapter 3 , 4 and 5 while talking about this character, where Lou leads a chaotic and disordered life , seems to remarry several times, and has a number of children. During his final years he falls into depression and cannot manage to recover. While the narrator of this section named Jocelyn looks at Lou and finds him as a completely different man. As once upon a time in Lou’s house there was no place for ugliness or age ; but now she wonders and said that, “how did

you get so old? Was it all at once, in a day, or did you peter out bit by bit? When did you stop having parties? Did everyone else get old, or was it just you? [...] Did you know this was coming and hide that you knew, or did it ambush you from behind?" (89). This statement particularly gives a voice to some irrational questions, which has no answer; still this question is asked by a person to his own self; in order to find the reason or proper justification for the dramatic changes, which is occurred through time .

Now, if it is about the chapter 12 the "Great Rock and Roll Pauses " , then it holds a special attention as this whole chapter is writing through a series of Power Point slides. While the creator of this slide show is Sasha's daughter , Allison Baker , and in order to keep her journal she uses the power point, which is a very unique way of writing. This surpass the traditional way of writing, which makes this writing even more successful and interesting to read. Consequently, this chapter also epitomizes the functions of this entire novel which represents a huge number of information gaps as well as several temporal leaps, where the chapters are not placed in any chronological order. In the same way, the narration in the power point seems to inherently discontinues, as the slides are the free standing elements in the story. Whereas in the whole novel as well as in the power point slide chapter the flow of the narration has interrupted multiple times. Each and every chapters and slides are independent by their own; while contributing to the narrative as a whole.

However, the value of *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is obtained from its fragmentation, discontinuity as well as from its gaps. This structure of writing ultimately mirrors every narrative while concerning one's life, that can never be exhaustive as well as a complete 'true'. According to the concept of Burner's life narratives are not the records of what happened; rather it is a

repeated interpretation that what has happened and wonders about the coverage ; while talks about the importance of exclusion.(Burner 693). The Power Point chapter is nothing but a reflection on pauses; in terms of rock and roll music feature that seem to obsess Allison's brother, Lincoln. His father keen to know the reason of his inexplicable fascination for pauses , while Lincoln replied that, " the pause makes you think the song will end. And then the song isn't really over, so you're relieved. But then the song does actually end, because every song ends, obviously, and THAT. TIME. THE. END. IS. FOR. REAL" (289).

The connotation of this extract from the Power Point sounds surprisingly poetic; which goes well beyond pauses in music. This also mirrors the pleasure of reading *A Visit from the Goon Squad* while encountering a character again that had already come across where the readers are unsure to meet them again or not. Whereas the excerpt also conveys the general statement of the constant ending, as one knows that there would be a definitive ending and also feels relief and happy about realizing that some ends are the temporary pauses and once again there will be a new beginning. The same concept can also be seen in Chapter 7 by Jules Jones, who is a journalist and recently released from the prison and now stayed with his sister Stephanie and Bennie. Where "An ominous stasis had set in" (126) his life and Jules was truly purposeless for several months. When he got the opportunity of a new job, he seems to fill with sheer excitement, "If you'd asked me this morning, I would have said we were finished,' he said. 'All of us, the whole country the fucking world. But now I feel the opposite. [...] Sure, everything is ending' Jules said, 'but not yet.'"(139). As a result, the tragic notion of time is tagged with its limitations, while everything is slowly falling apart, which shows that time is not constant.

Apart from this chapter in the Power Point there is also another metaphor which echoes the narrative procedure of constructing stories from apparently accidental pieces of information. For instance; Sasha's compulsion of stealing random objects can also be associated with this concept. While Funk argues over the fact that, "Sasha's display of stolen goods, as it were, metaleptically mirrors Egan's display of stories. [...] This can be read as a diegetic commentary on Egan's metadiegetic agenda and Sasha's progress from compulsive kleptomaniac to careful collagist in turn reflects the reader's progress from baffled recipient of plot elements to thoughtful reconstructor of (life-)stories" (Funk 50).

Moreover, during the time of reading *A Visit from the Good Squad*, there is no clear guidelines which is provided by the author, rather it is always expected from the readers to build the story world by themselves. When starting the new chapter the readers often wonder regarding the connection between the new characters with the previous ones as well as try to find out the chronological connection along with the rest of the story, where the readers are left with the clues of intertwining narratives in order to see the bigger picture. Nevertheless, there is an unquestionable presence of such larger frame which seems to take shape in the last chapters. As Funk said that, "Egan's novel is emblematic, even celebratory, of the irremediable fragmentation of human existence. It deduces, however, from that condition an appeal to the individual, an ethical imperative even, to preserve their unique and genuine, authentic understanding of the greater frame of reference, in which their existence is played out" (Funk 58).

In a nutshell, the closing paragraphs of this novel highlights the undoubtable correlation which can be viewed through the bigger picture by the readers. While in chapter 1 there was an encounter of Sasha and Alex, who drank together and visited her place, while Sasha

fantasized thinking about a time in future ; when she would meet Alex after few years. As the narrator says that, “It jarred Sasha to think of herself as a glint in the hazy memories that Alex would struggle to organize a year or two from now: Where was that place with the bathtub? Who was that girl?” (14)

Moreover, at the end of the book Bennie and Alex meet together and were wandering towards the lower East side in New York . It was also several years that Sasha stopped working with Bennie. At some point, both of the men reached the building where Sasha used to live once. “ Alex looked up at the building sooty against the lavender sky, and experienced a hot-cold flash of recognition, a shiver of déjà vu, as if he were returning to a place that no longer existed”(A Visit from the Goon Squad, 348).

This statement shows the struggle of Alex to remember Sasha; except some of the significant memories. Thus the final part of this novel ties up loose ends in such a memorable way by the characters Alex and Bennie, who seem to reconnect with their past while talking about Sasha belonging in their past memory and wished her a ‘good life’. This refers to the idea that, with the passage of time a lot of things seem to be changed.

In addition to that, as a postmodern novel *The Candy House* portrays the literary concept of hyperreality that challenges the usual sense of interpretation. While hyperreality is the outcome of Jean Baudrillard’s basic fundamental theory regarding simulacra or simulacrum. Simulacrum signifies as the reproduction of an image which has no orientation with the real or so to say with the innovative; rather depending on its self- referentiality. Thus, Baudrillard’s hyperreality shows an emblematic interaction to both the imaginary as well as the real. Where the signifier or so to say the image goes before its meaning ; while in the converse instruction of Saussurean

structuralism progressively becomes central. For that reason; the concept of history, reality, truth and meaning become damaged . Consequently, in the postmodern world of simulacra, it seems like the hyperreal turns into a self conscious presentation of simulation which simulates itself (Amis, 2022, p. 81). While the analysis of *The Candy House* portrays that Egan has subverted the division between the fiction and reality.

In order to establish textual hyperreality the writer has employed Baudrillardian theory of simulacra in her narrative. Egan in her fiction creates a cognizant attempt to form hyperreality with the formation of some signifiers. Jennifer Egan's novel *The Candy House* vividly revolves around the cultural as well as the social condition of the current century. While it seems to depict the technological advancement and its influence over the identity of human beings. As technology results in forming a vacant identity along the way of revealing the reality, where the real inhabitant of that identity is seemed to be removed .

Moreover, Egan's novel *The Candy House* also represents the postmodern perspective of the society. In this novel Egan displayed language as seen through in the postmodern society. Where Klages (2006, p.169) states that, modern societies decidedly rely on the idea that signifiers always seem to point the signifieds, besides the reality exists in signifieds. Although in postmodernism there are only signifiers. Where the idea of unchanging or so to say perpetual reality vanishes. While in postmodern societies there are only signifiers without any signifieds, where Baudrillard address such divisions between the signifiers and signified as simulacrum.

In *The Candy House* the postmodern perspective of the reality is regarded as nothing but disjointed along with its free structure with mechanisms; which are seemed to form by societal activities. Whereas hyperreality is ascribed to be the postmodern condition, especially in the

postmodern world the way people search for simulation by fashioning unreal worlds ; with all the technological developments. Also nothing in *The Candy House* is real, rather all are the limitless reproductions of reality, as the reality of simulations are not expected to be the real and unreal, where both are equally hyperreal.

Furthermore, the reality of *The Candy House* is compared with Jean Baudrillard's simulacra and simulation, where communication as well as semantic functions are controlled by numerical technologies and automatic media. Consequently, "simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (Luke, 1991, p. 347). Besides, there is nothing called original regarding human behavior.

In addition to that, the postmodern world which is noticeable in *The Candy House* is nothing but a world of simulacra. As the human beings are not being able to differentiate between the real and the artificial. People in the postmodern society seem to replace the substituted reality with codes and cyphers, while it is acknowledged that reality is only a reproduction of reality. Whereas , the signs of media and culture that form reality seem to establish simulacrum, which is pervaded with sound, image as well as with other features of simulated realism.

In *The Candy House* the world of simulacra seems to exceed the world of real, where consequently it becomes hyperreal because of being more real than what is the actual real. Merely while the simulacra is present , the lines between reality and signs disappears, while inventiveness is believed to be completely pointless. Where Egan's postmodern word seems to be under the influence of technology. The human beings in this novel are under the control of technology; where it seems like they are all the time under the surveillance and their freedom is totally lost. For

instance; if they think about going for a walk; they need to consider the security cameras . In this novel, one night Bix decided to go out for a walk, where the narrator says that, “ He decided to get dressed again and go outside. It was after eleven. It violated his board's security requirements for him to walk New York's streets alone at any hour, much less after dark, so he avoided the trademark deconstructed zoot suit he'd just taken o (inspired by the ska bands he'd loved in high school) and the small leather fedora he'd worn since leaving NYU fifteen years ago to assuage the weird exposure he'd felt after cutting o his dreads”. (Egan, 2022, p. 8). So this shows that, how the life of every people are being surveillanced every moment and how people are controlled through technology.

Findings

Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010) and *The Candy House* (2022) are two powerful representations of postmodern fiction during the twenty first century. Despite being published a decade these two novels are intricately interconnected through the themes, shared characters, and experimental structures. While *The Candy House* is nothing but the expansion of the world which is previously introduced in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, where Egan implements a number of postmodern techniques like ; fragmentation , non-linear temporality, shifting perspectives , and metafiction in order to ask the reliability of identity, memory, and narrative in a technologically mediated world.

Additionally, both the novels reflect a deep concern depending on the instability of selfhood in an era, where people are dominated by digital exposure and surveillance. The characters of Egan in these two novels seem to struggle with the dissolution of authentic identity, while technology transforms the personal experiences into data and the memories of people into commodities. Also , Egan blurs the fiction and reality by presenting the power point chapter which highlights that; storytelling itself is a tool for exploring the postmodern uncertainties.

However, Egan through the interwoven narratives tried to portray the hyper connected and fragmented world, where time is fluid, moment seems unreliable, as well as individuality is continuously constructed . Where authenticity is destabilized by performance and through data sharing, performance and artificial connectivity. Also the metafictional approach of stories within stories, different narrative forms as well as unconventional chapter structures, like the Power Point chapter in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, evokes the readers to understand the postmodern features and to question their worth.

Conclusion

To sum up, Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010) and *The Candy House* (2022) together seem to redefine the boundaries of postmodernism as postmodern fictions of twenty first century; while merging the experimental narrative techniques along with contemporary concerns of identity, technology and memory. The disjointed nature of modern existence is reflected through the fragmented storytelling, multiplicity of perspectives and non-linear structure, where individuals are seem to caught between authenticity and digital performance. Besides, all the characters struggle to maintain a coherent sense of self during the inescapable influence of technology, which echoes the postmodern crisis of identity, while revealing how connectivity, data exchange and surveillance have transformed the human experience into self-exposure and fragmentation. Ultimately, the works of Egan in these two novels serve as nothing but a profound commentary over the postmodern condition. While the essence of world is portrayed through narrative experimentation, fractured identities, and technological dependency, where the self is perpetually reconstructed and meaning seems fluid. Through these two novels Egan not only exemplifies postmodernism but also strengthens it by offering a fresh perspective on how fiction can navigate as well as critique the complexities of modern digital life.

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