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THE SHIFTING SANDS OF REALITY: POWER, SUBJECTIVITY AND THE MECHANISMS OF CONTROL IN HARI KUNZRU'S *RED PILL*

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores *Red Pill* (2020) by Hari Kunzru as a novel that reflects the growing concerns of a dystopian world shaped by technology, misinformation and surveillance. Using close reading as its methodology, the study examines how Kunzru's use of the "*Red Pill*" metaphor critiques the allure of ideological extremism, particularly within the context of alt-right discourse. As part of Kunzru's color trilogy—alongside *White Tears* (2017) and *Blue Ruin* (2024)—*Red Pill* reflects the fractured nature of modern identity and the psychological consequences of ideological entrapment in a divided world. The story follows an unnamed protagonist who, drawn into the world of alt-right ideology, begins to lose touch with reality, embodying the anxieties of a postmodern society where truth is constantly questioned. By portraying the protagonist's psychological breakdown, the novel highlights the dangers of living in an era where technology and media control our understanding of the world. The book critiques how dystopian forces, such as political extremism and the search for false truths, shape our lives in a postmodern age marked by uncertainty and fragmentation. Divided into four sections—Wannsee, Zersetzung, An Apocalypse, and Home—the novel interrogates key socio-political tensions in Europe and the USA at the turn of the 21st century, exploring themes of identity, freedom, and collective consciousness in a media-dominated society. *Red Pill* deconstructs the *Red Pill* as a symbol of supposed enlightenment, revealing how the pursuit of meaning in an era of misinformation and surveillance leads to existential fragmentation. Overall, this study provides insight into how Kunzru's narrative critiques the intersection of technology, authoritarianism, and personal freedom, suggesting that the digital age, rather than providing liberation, often subjects individuals to new forms of control.

Keywords: Identity, Dystopia, Surveillance, Freedom, Hari Kunzru

1. INTRODUCTION

Hari Kunzru is widely regarded as one of the most prominent contemporary Indian diasporic writers, whose works deftly navigate themes such as selfhood, identity, cultural negotiation, and the intricate challenges of modern existence. Born and raised in an entirely English-speaking household in the United Kingdom, Kunzru grew up at the intersection of two distinct cultural worlds. His father, of Kashmiri Indian descent, and his British mother together represent the dual heritage that subtly but powerfully shapes Kunzru's literary consciousness. These intertwined cultural influences find resonant expression in his fiction, where questions of

belonging and the fluidity of identity recur with striking regularity. After completing his studies at the University of East Anglia, Kunzru began to forge his path as a writer. Through his fictional narratives, he gradually discovered a voice that is both critically reflective and emotionally attuned to the complexities of diasporic life. His first work of fiction, *The Impressionist*, published in 2002, was acclaimed as one of the finest novels of the new millennium and marked Hari Kunzru as a novelist of considerable promise. It narrates a young Indian man's life as it takes views regarding identity and state change. In addition to *The Impressionist*, Kunzru's other significant works include *Transmission* (2004), which focuses on technology, anthropology, and culture. *Tower of the Hints*, a historical fiction published in 2007, focuses on revolutionary spirit and self-metamorphosis. *Gods without Men* (2011) hands the readers a complex web of multiple plots to make the world know the conflict between good and evil in the contemporary world. His novel *Red Pill* (2020) explores surveillance, reality, and the modern world. Kunzru has been gratefully rewarded for his work – he was awarded the Whitbread Prize for a First Novel and the Shakti Bhatt Prize. His writings have appeared in various major literary magazines and story collections, which added to the gains he had already achieved. Besides fiction, Kunzru has published essays and articles that concern issues of culture and politics of the present-day world and avails himself of the discourse. Hari Kunzru creates a complicated world vision by connecting plots and characters.

The concept of the '*Red Pill*' originates from the 1999 science fiction film *The Matrix*, wherein the protagonist, Neo, is confronted with a pivotal choice: to ingest the blue pill and remain ensnared within a fabricated, comfortable illusion of reality or to take the *Red Pill* and awaken to the harsh, unsettling truths of the world as it actually exists. Symbolically, the *Red Pill* represents a jarring confrontation with reality—one that dismantles established narratives and challenges the comfort of consensus-driven beliefs. Although originally embedded within a cinematic and philosophical framework, the term has since been appropriated and recontextualized within socio-political discourse, particularly in the early 21st century. Most notably, it gained traction among alt-right communities and online forums as a metaphor for ideological awakening—a process by which individuals come to reject mainstream political and cultural paradigms in favour of alternative, often contrarian worldviews. In this politicized usage, to be 'red-pilled' is to claim intellectual liberation from what adherents perceive as systemic deception propagated by liberal institutions, media, and academia. As Lorentzen (2020), para.1) notes, "Getting red-pilled means taking a reactionary turn, becoming unwoke, and going deep into the weeds of politically incorrect 'facts.'" Online alt-right communities have built a conversion narrative around the *Red Pill*, portraying it as a moment of realization that liberal values—particularly feminism, immigration, and racial inclusion—threaten the status and identity of the white male. This redefinition marks a shift from philosophical questioning to political backlash. As Ulin (2020), para. 5) puts it, the *Red Pill* is now "contemporary internet slang for an alt-right awakening." In this context, the *Red Pill* no longer symbolizes truth-seeking but rather a rejection of progressive ideals, weaponized to validate cultural resentment and ideological resistance.

Hari Kunzru (2020) draws its title directly from this cultural and political mutation of the metaphor. The novel critiques the ideological seductions of authoritarian thinking in the digital age, following a narrator whose descent into paranoia mirrors the red-pilling process itself. By invoking the term, Kunzru interrogates how the pursuit of truth can be manipulated into a dangerous ideological trap, exposing the psychological and political costs of this so-called awakening. In this way, the novel reclaims and deconstructs the *Red Pill* metaphor,

revealing its modern usage as a reflection of contemporary anxieties, disinformation, and the allure of extremism. With the Proust-like setting and characters, the novel *Red Pill* lays bare surveillance culture, alt-right extremism, and the fragmentation of personal identity. The novel flakes political and cultural changes and ponders over the ties between art, politics, and power in the digital era. Schmitt (2023) reads *Red Pill*, a novel with substantial fodder to feed incumbent cultural and philosophical pessimism. Kunzru suggests intellectual pursuits may feel increasingly futile in a world dominated by ideology, disinformation, and surveillance. In doing so, it raises urgent questions about the future of individual freedom and the role of intellectuals in resisting the forces of control and manipulation. *Red Pill* is a timely and essential reflection on our time's political and existential crises, forcing readers to confront the precariousness of personal identity in an increasingly surveilled and ideologically fractured world. The novel thus reflects a deep anxiety about the powerlessness of art and intellectualism to counteract the forces of extremism and control. Furthermore, it demonstrates a critical engagement with contemporary political currents, notably the ascendance of Western populism, the resistance to accepting Syrian refugees, and the electoral victory of Donald Trump. In the words of Lozano:

> *Red Pill* is a novel of ideas probing seemingly disparate poles of thought: the conception of the self, the creation of whiteness in European Romanticism, and the threat of the Internet—the way it has destroyed our sense of privacy, circulated fringe ideas, and popularized the alt-right. (2020, Para. 1)

Red Pill's plot is often criticized for being complex and elusive, with some critics calling it a "paratactical blizzard" Docx (2020) para. 4), others describing it as "quirky" Sasaki (2023) para. 6), and some even labeling it "exasperating" Gorra (2020), para. 2). These reactions point to the novel's challenging structure—its multi-layered narrative and the paranoia of its unreliable narrator can be difficult to follow. However, to dismiss it simply as overly complicated is to overlook the richness it holds in just approximately three hundred pages. Far from being a confusing mess, the novel is densely packed with meaning, offering a narrative full of hidden gems and subtle clues. As Rosenthal puts it, "The novel is seeded with hints and bits of Meta, and it's the reader's job to put the clues together" (2020, para. 9). This is a crucial point: *Red Pill*'s complexity is not meant to alienate readers but to invite them into an active role in the story. It is as if the text challenges the reader to engage, piece together fragments, and uncover the hidden layers beneath the surface. Instead of being a passive experience, reading *Red Pill* becomes a puzzle that rewards effort and patience. The novel's richness does not lie in its straightforwardness but in the sense of discovery that comes with each turn of the page. Far from being a flaw, its complexity becomes a rewarding invitation for those willing to dive deeper, making the narrative an intellectual challenge and an engaging, immersive experience. From the reillumination of the German literary romantic period - reviving Hölderlin, Goethe, Kleist, and Schopenhauer, refreshing memories of the Nazi holocaust, punk culture, and the Stasis period in Germany to rise of Alt-right, the global refugee crisis, neo-Nazi rhetoric during 2016 election in the USA, *Red Pill* uses "the machinery of the thriller, with its secrets and hidden identities, as a way to explore the contemporary sense of the self." Gorra (2020) para. 6). Sarah Mills appropriately contends about the narrative canvass of *Red Pill* when she writes:

> Kunzru weaves an intricate fabric from a multitude of seemingly disparate elements — German romanticism, the legacy of the Third Reich, the Stasi, the European migrant crisis, the 2016 US presidential election — all of which come

> together to create this haunted tale that merges questions of privacy, transhumanism, the political ascendency of the Right in Europe and the US, and moral responsibility, among others. (2020, para. 3)

Besides, *Red Pill* is the perfect epitome of a Gen X Midlife-Crisis Novel; other, including Here I Am by Jonathan Safran Foer, A Children's Bible by Lydia Millet, Forest Dark by Nicole Krauss, Weather by Jenny Offill, and Hark by Sam Lipsyte forms a corpus of narrative unraveling the trajectories of generation that came of age in the 1990s, drawing on the protagonist steeped in flimsy worldview and shallow personalities with apocalyptic visions. "The Gen X Midlife-Crisis Novel is the weary (and unzany) successor to Hysterical Realism, and its foil is the rising Millennial Bildungsroman, in which virtuous young idealists enter a morally tainted adult world not of their making" Lorentzen (2020), para. 3). The narrator in the novel is a middle-aged journalist, writer, PhD drop-out, and leftist idealist grappling to make sense of his identity and existence in the socio-political reality of his world.

2. WANNSEE: SELF AND SURVEILLANCE

Red Pill begins with an unnamed narrator's acknowledgement of a midlife crisis. The novel's first section is 'Wannsee,' named after the southwestern locality in Berlin, Germany where the narrator is on a research fellowship to ponder over the construction of self in lyric poetry. He is an independent researcher with an adjunct appointment in creative writing at a university. Rather than writing for peer-reviewed publications, he writes for periodicals and commercial publishers. Despite being untrustworthy in the eyes of academia, the narrator says, "I'm interested in what I'm interested in" Kunzru (2020). Five years before receiving an invitation to Berlin, he published a book about taste, considering it as an intrinsic part of a human's unique identity. His family consists of his wife, Rei, a lawyer for a non-profit that addresses civil liberties and immigration, and his daughter, Nina. The narrator needs help with writer's block, finding it hard to write in the congested space of his New York apartment. His derangement and exasperation have been taking a toll on the family environment. Therefore, when he gets the fellowship from Berlin, he grabs it as an opportunity to break off writer's block and return rejuvenated. He informs: "I was aware that I'd come to Berlin with the tacit agreement that I would return changed, that I would deal with it, whatever it was, and not drag it back home with me" (p. 17).

The project contains the narrator's three-month residency at the Deuter Centre on the outskirts of Wannsee. An idealistic industrialist founded the Deuter Center for Social and Cultural Research to advance each person's unique potential. It caters to the demands of the writers and scholars without burdening them, and ultimately, it fosters "the full potential of the individual human spirit" (p. 10). Nevertheless, when the narrator joins the center, his expectations are thrashed to the dust as the Deuter environment is topsy-turvy to its vision. The center's culture is "formal and old fashioned" (p. 14). There, he meets an array of people. His room is like a corporate office, and the shared space of the workstation gives an air of hands working for a mega-producer. It is like a public space with "A line of small plastic soldiers marching along the top of one monitor." Just opposite to all of the narrator, "fantasies about my working life at the Deuter Center had been privacy. Seclusion and a lockable door" (p. 18). The narrator is flabbergasted to see the blank face of the porter when he announces that he cannot work in such a public space. He tried his best to convince the porter that self-construction is not a community affair. He imagines the consequences of working in the workstation sitting in the middle of rows. He says:

> Other 'workstations' were located nearby in positions where I'd be able to see their occupants' screens. My own screen would be visible to others, perhaps not close enough to read a piece of text, but certainly enough to judge whether it displayed a document or a video playing on a social media site. I would be visible from every angle. My body, my posture. . . The feeling of being watched induces an intolerable self-consciousness. (p. 19)

The narrator feels cornered and isolated when Dr Weber at the center asks him why he is not writing about Indian poetry, his own culture, rather than breaching in English poetry. The narrator tries to convince Mr Weber that he does not believe in the idea of national literature, though he fails to persuade him. The Deuter Centre's space is not personal but a shared and opinionated space. The narrator refers to the ideas of Satre in his Being and Nothingness, where being watched is being other and objectified. In the modern corporate world, people are made to have working lives with this "alienating surveillance" (p. 20). The narrator takes it as an insult and an assault on his status as an independent scholar. He starts spending time having long walks, binging on violent TV shows and avoiding interaction with peers at the workstation and dining area. He avoids using the workstation as much as possible and spends time in his room watching a Netflix series, Blue Lives. Binging on the violent content of Blue Lives propels a sense of paranoia in him. He has delusions of being watched. His belief of being watched takes a toll on his sanity. He reports, "Not only was I being watched, I was being gamified" (p. 60). Despite failing to write a word for his project and not keeping up with the desired progress in his research, the narrator cannot think of leaving the centre. Just like any other employee who falls for the luring package and perk of service in a multinational corporation, the narrator focuses on the stipend and accommodation and "failed to register the radical nature of the center's ambition" (p. 24). He has already been mollified to know that he will have to share space while having meals, and the center will keep tabs on his research progress every week.

The narrator's disorientation is propelled by the bone-chilling weather and morosely colourless building, utterly formal conversations, and blood-smeared past of Wannsee. The narrator is told that, across the Deuter Centre, "the grey villa next to the tall white building, the one half-hidden by trees, is the venue of the Wannsee Conference. . . Where the final solution to the Jewish Question was planned in 1942" (p. 26), obviously referring to Nazis' decision of extermination of Jews via holocaust during Second World War. The building, laced with technological surveillance, ensures "how digital technologies shape the experience of urban space, producing an urban experience that is both local and global" Anderson (2024).

The second section of Hari Kunzru's *Red Pill*, titled "Zersetzung"—a German term meaning "undermining" or "decomposition," historically associated with the psychological warfare tactics employed by the East German secret police—marks a pivotal turn in the novel's structure and thematic depth. At first glance, this segment appears somewhat detached from the narrator's personal descent into paranoia and moral panic, almost like a narrative digression. However, it functions as a crucial mirror to the central protagonist's psychological and ethical unravelling. The story shifts focus to Monika, a seemingly peripheral character who works as a cleaner at the Deuter Center, but whose past life reveals a harrowing tale of systemic betrayal and coerced complicity. Once a punk drummer and youth subculture rebel in the GDR between the 1950s and 1980s, Monika becomes a tragic emblem of state manipulation. As she slowly opens up to the narrator—encouraged by his willingness to speak vulnerably about his fears and unease—she recounts her traumatic experiences of being recruited by the Stasi. Forced into swearing loyalty,

Monika is made to spy on her peers, a role that fractures her identity and leaves deep psychic scars.

Although temporally and geographically removed from the novel's main narrative arc, this section is far from a narrative aside. It operates metaphorically and structurally, laying a foundation for the narrator's psychological destabilization in the following section, An Apocalypse. Just as Monika is manipulated into turning against her community, the narrator later finds himself gaslighted, discredited, and increasingly isolated by Anton and his intellectually aloof circle of friends. Monika's testimony does not just parallel the narrator's disillusionment—it foreshadows it. Her lived experience under a surveillance regime echoes the narrator's growing sense that ideological complicity and moral compromise are not relics of authoritarian pasts but persistent features of modern liberal societies. Moreover, the motif of Zersetzung—the deliberate unravelling of a person's mental state through covert psychological operations—resonates profoundly with the novel's broader meditation on paranoia, surveillance, and the fragility of selfhood under pressure. Thus, what initially seems like an interpolated anecdote reveals itself as a thematic cornerstone of *Red Pill*, blurring the lines between state-imposed control and the subtler mechanisms of social and psychological coercion in contemporary life.

3. AN APOCALYPSE: THE WORLD FALLING APART

As the name suggests, this third section of the story reveals the narrator's fears. *Red Pill*, set during the fall of 2016, captures the repercussions of the 2015 migration crisis, where over a million refugees sought shelters across Europe. The narrator's only time out of Wannsee is for an art-world fundraiser, and a refugee camp near the Deuter Centre reflects the situation. The novel highlights the misreading of the realities of those forced to travel to Berlin. The narrator observes the language used in street signs relating to migration. "The headlines were about the refugees, the repercussions of Chancellor Merkel's promise that the nation would handle the influx of people fleeing the wars in Syria and Afghanistan" (p. 107). The signboards on the roads reflect Germans' anguish and intolerance. Moreover, "It was the year they all came, more than a million refugees crossing Europe, massing at fences, drowning in the Mediterranean, hunted by vigilantes in the Bulgarian woods" (p. 153). When the narrator comes across a refugee father-daughter duo, he shudders to envision himself and his daughter in their place. Out of compassion and sympathy, the narrator follows them to the refugee camp to help them with a coat and some money. However, his chasing is deciphered as his monovalent plans of kidnapping the refugee girl. In the paranoiac and divided world, people are utterly distraught and cynical that even a humble gesture of love and kindness is interpreted as a crime.

Later, the narrator happens to meet Anton, the director of Blue Lives, at a party. The narrator enters into a discussion about the motives and philosophy of violence served and justified in Blue Lives as the narrator feels that "its vision of the world was utterly cold and merciless" (p. 162). Anton personifies the alt-right; he is the representative of the Alt-right ideology fed through online trends and cultures. He is among the stakeholders of "alt-right virtual spaces in creating and maintaining racist collective identities" Dignam and Rohlinger (2019). Besides, Kristian Shaw contends that:

> Mysterious Anton, a baleful personification of the alt-right, leads him [the narrator] to question the values of a Habermasian public sphere and the morality of what Shaw terms his 'gestural cosmopolitanism'. As he argues, the alt-rights vision of a distorted 'American sublime,' predicated on a nativist myth of ethnic unity, aligns with Trump's attempts to tap into a destructive nostalgia untainted by the politics of progress. (2023, p. 164)

Anton mocks the "obsolescence of literary humanism" Miller (2023), calling the narrator an escapist living in a world of literary allusions. Anton's remarks take over the narrator, and he feels restless as if he has been defeated in the war between Anton's Alt-rights extremism and his liberal humanitarian beliefs. To settle the score, he leaves the centre and journeys to all of Anton's possible whereabouts. Firstly, he flies to Paris, then the west coast of Scotland. On the west coast of Scotland in a bothy, which might belong to Anton, he ultimately finds the solitude he has been grappling for; with a scenic and serene ambience of the bothy, the narrator vents out the volcano of fears and vision he has been struggling to give words to. He writes about over-mechanization, swallowing human emotion and resources, pandemics, climate change, and cruel racialism. How would the technological Frankenstein dwindle human resourcefulness? How the essence of being human would be at stake? He writes:

> Machine vision is not human vision. Nonhuman agents will have interests and priorities that may not align with ours. . . . We will carry on trying to make a case for ourselves, for our own specialness, but we will find that arrayed against us is an inexorable and inhuman power, manic and all-devouring, a power thirsty for the total annihilation of its object, that object being the earth and everything on it, all that exists. Kunzru (2020)

In the serene, unregulated expanse of nature—removed from the noise of surveillance, societal expectations, and digital overstimulation—the narrator of *Red Pill* finally experiences a breakthrough from his paralyzing writer's block. This moment marks one of the most contemplative and illuminating passages in the novel, offering a rare instance of clarity amidst the surrounding psychological turbulence. Stripped of external interference, the narrator undergoes a temporary sense of purification, as though nature itself has cleansed him of the ideological and existential grime accumulated throughout his journey. He reflects, "My mind was clear, or so it seemed to me. The red dust of the bustling world had settled. I was a saint, a desert father, serene and detached" (p. 229). This striking imagery evokes not only a monastic retreat from worldly chaos but also suggests a longing for moral and intellectual asceticism—a withdrawal into solitude as a means of reclaiming inner order. Here, the narrator likens himself to the Desert Fathers, early Christian hermits who sought enlightenment through withdrawal from corrupt civilizations. The passage resonates with Kunzru's broader themes: the desire to locate truth outside institutional frameworks, the fragile boundary between clarity and delusion, and the false comfort of detachment in a world teeming with ethical complexities. This moment, though fleeting, crystallizes the narrator's yearning for purity and control in a world he finds increasingly chaotic and morally compromised.

4. HOME: THE ODYSSEUS RETURNS

The final section of *Red Pill* marks the closing arc of the narrator's harrowing psychological and existential journey. Set against the bleak and isolating backdrop of the west coast of Scotland, this segment sees the narrator reaching his lowest point—physically and mentally exhausted, teetering on the edge of collapse. Three

police officers discover him in what appears to be a suicide attempt. This moment encapsulates his total disintegration after being consumed by obsession, fear, and moral panic. His wife, upon being informed, retrieves him and arranges for his admission to a psychiatric facility in Glasgow, where he is confined to a locked rehabilitation ward for two weeks under heavy medication and sedation. This enforced stillness contrasts sharply with the feverish energy of the earlier sections, signaling a shift in narrative tone and power dynamics.

During this hospital confinement, the prose becomes markedly passive, mirroring the narrator's new status—not as a seeker or critic, but as a subject under surveillance, evaluation, and control. The once-probing and opinionated voice is now flattened, subdued, and rendered voiceless as others observe, diagnose, and categorize him. In this sense, the asylum becomes a microcosm of the very systems of ideological and psychological regulation the narrator has spent the novel railing against. His stay at the hospital—ostensibly a place of healing—symbolizes the final surrender of agency, reflecting the novel's central concern with how individuals are managed, silenced, and depersonalized by institutions under the guise of care. This narrative descent into institutional passivity reinforces the thematic through line of *Red Pill*: that in a world governed by invisible structures of control, both authoritarian and liberal, the self can be quietly dismantled, observed, and rewritten—often without resistance, and sometimes even in the name of sanity. He says:

> As a patient in a mental health facility, it was objectively true that I was under surveillance, but I developed an exaggerated sense of its intensity. I believed that my captors had implanted sensors under my skin, so tiny that although I examined myself thoroughly, running my fingertips over each scratch and blemish, I couldn't detect them. . . . The people watching me were analyzing this data and using it to predict and control my behavior. (p. 247)

His wife and daughter feel insecure and uncomfortable in his presence; his friends pity him, and he has to simulate normality to feel the part of the world around him. He again gets paranoid thinking about his wife's closeness to any men. The last blow that pulls out the narrator's soul is Rei's blatantly expressed sense of insecurity and fear from him. She asked him, "Are you a danger to Nina and Me?" (p. 253). This inconceivable and shattering inquiry leaves the narrator numb and frozen. He says, "For me to have to answer. It was as if a hole had opened up inside me, a great pit of misery that had sucked in all my substance" (p. 254). The narrator afflicted with Cassandra's curse could see through the repercussions of the rise of "ethnonationalist politics of the Right . . . fascist politics of white supremacy" Vint, (2023) p. 188). However, his wife and friends don't believe him. He would have been striving to make them realize the dystopian world ahead if the alt-right people supporting the Trumpian party won. However, his wife and friends are self-assured of Hilary's victory. The narrator's speculation is rejected as his overthinking and overreacting an obvious part of the writer's nature.

The novel ends by referring to Trump's victory, bringing a sense of fear among immigrants, minorities, non-white men, and women. The narrator contemplates "what a Trump presidency means for people like us, the unreal Americans, the ones who the new president and his supporters hate most of all" (p. 281). He can envision Anton sneering, jibing and jostling among the celebrants on the TV screen. Finally, the online juggernaut swept over the public. This makes the narrator ponder over the insignificance of authentic literature and philosophy, being disabled bystanders, helplessly witnessing the parade of codes or, short-sells or algorithms taking over the world. In the last scene, despondent, distraught, and frazzled, the narrator sits

on the bed, crouched and nestled with his wife and daughter, anticipating their future on the US land. They strain their minds thinking about safe routes and cities with no solace except sticking together in these catastrophic times. The closing lines, "Together we talk, holding each other, imagining escape routes. Sometime during the night, Nina crawls into the bed and joins us. Outside the wide world is howling and scratching at the window. Tomorrow morning, we will have no choice but to let it in" (p. 284). The last line leaves the readers and intellectuals with many questions and apprehensions. The world waiting outside is unbridled with racialism, male chauvinism, Xenophobia, misogyny, violence, and dominance, where they will be either dominators or dominated, throwing humanity back to its primal stage.

5. CONCLUSION

Red Pill's narrative "charts a path through a wide-ranging ideological debate and historical inquiry" Lozano (2020), para. 7). Throughout the novel, Kunzru intricately dissects the volatile intersections of power, subjectivity, and control in a world increasingly blurred by digital paranoia and ideological extremism. This paper discusses the contemporary concerns of the dystopian postmodern world as experienced and envisioned by the novel's unnamed narrator. The narrator, a South Asian USA-based expat, with his disillusionment and paranoia, astutely represents the derangement and existential crisis of the middle-aged generation at the turn of millennia. Born and brought up with humanitarian ideologies as a vestige of enlightenment, the Gen X generation is caught in the whirlwind of online culture and alt-right juggernaut, where he meets an avatar for everything wrong with the Western world—white supremacy, the Internet, and bad television. This is the *Red Pill* realization, a nihilism unravelling that we are on a planet floating in unfathomable space, on which all values, meaning, and beliefs can only be mere projections. The study has examined the thread of dystopian themes through all four sections of the novel. From the beginning of the narrative, when the narrator moves to Berlin on a research project to his coming home as a paranoid patient, the novel touches on a myriad of man-induced threats for his brethren and nature, metamorphosing into a leviathan. The dooming ideologies like racialism, male chauvinism, Xenophobia, misogyny, and violence would prove the Noachian Flood, but this time, the people with money, power, and technological edge will survive. Humanity is losing its soul and spirit. Conclusively, *Red Pill* seems to propel the readers to face the fragility of truth and the urgency of vigilance. In the postmodern age of digital surveillance, power often operates invisibly; however, it has profound psychological and societal consequences.

The author hereby declares that the present research paper is an original work solely written by the author. No external assistance or funding was received for the preparation or completion of this paper. All sources used have been duly acknowledged and cited as per academic standards.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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