

Body revolution	Projecting self (subculture)
empowerment	The savage aesthetics of voluntarism
	Break the body barrier
Body colonization	Commodification of the body, capital
disempowerment	Irreversible transformation

In Neuromancer, the author mentions body modification as a form of empowerment, creating self (female characters), and retrieving self (male characters).

The “New” Romancers

best, I think. Little, hopeless, wondering men amid vast, unknowing, blind machines that started three million years before—and just never know how to stop. They are dead—and can’t die and be still. (Silverberg, 60–61).

While “Twilight” cannot be dismissed as naïvely optimistic, it does conclude with a solution to the problem of species burnout: Earth will be inherited by a new entity, a “curious machine.” So ultimately, John Campbell’s story does—like other hard science fiction—emphasize technology’s instrumentality, for good or ill, to change the world.

Gibson’s **cyberpunk** fiction, by contrast, turns from technology’s impact on human destiny to examine at closer range its power to gratify human desire. In *Neuromancer*, technology supplies dysphoric Case with his needed highs—his drugs, his euphoric contacts with the matrix. Gibson emphasizes drug-heightened consciousness, surgical transformation, prosthetic devices—technological interventions that palliate or conceal some perceived or real defect in the self or in the soul. For a price, and with minimal inconvenience and risk, Gibson’s characters can easily replace that diseased pancreas, that mutilated arm.’ They can and do change the shape and color of their eyes. Gibson’s female characters often use high technology to create a new image or an alternative self (the lens implants of Molly Millions and Rikki Wildside; the AI afterlife that Marie-France Tessier-Ashpool fashions for herself). Gibson’s men often use technology to recover parts of a lost self: Case’s psychological dependence on union with the matrix in *Neuromancer*; Automatic Jack’s myoelectric arm in “Burning Chrome.”

Jack’s prosthesis is emphasized in “Burning Chrome” as the visible sign of the wounded humanity also revealed by his inarticulate but generous concern for Rikki. The muted but distinct undercurrent of elegy in Gibson’s treatment of prosthetic body parts is unlike the treatment of prostheses by the earlier hard SF writers Gibson seems to be self-consciously revising here. Manny O’Kelly’s prosthetic forearm in Heinlein’s *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress* (1966), for instance, implies nothing about some inner mutilation or vulnerability; it is emphasized only as tangible evidence of Manny’s bloodied-but-unbowed survivorship. Indeed, in *Futurological Congress* (1971) medically trained Stanislaw Lem parodies the casual introduction of plucky prosthesis wearers into so many hard science fiction plot lines. Lem’s time-traveling satiric

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Slusser, G.E. and Shippey, T. (1995) *Fiction 2000: Cyberpunk and the future of narrative*. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press.

https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=zh-CN&lr=&id=jlOa_XhDNLmC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1971&dq=cyberpunk+academic+pape r&ots=SxY2-KdJeH&sig=OVd2cTyeNV9mu3tRY6IciJSYuqM#v=onepage&q=cyberpunk%20academic%20paper&f=false

Projecting self (subculture)
The savage aesthetics of voluntarism
Break the body barrier

In Gibson's book Johnny Memonic, there is a 15-year-old who had his face altered, had his canine teeth implanted in his mouth, and had colorful scars tattooed on his face. Maybe it's a way of expressing personality, exercising control over body. However, when his mind is immature, it is easy to cause irreversible damage to himself.

Maria's assessment of this is a kind of voluntary barbaric aesthetics, to express the spirit of rebellion and resistance.

Subcultures are related to cyberpunk culture: Maria states that the subculture and cyberpunk culture have a lot in common, both overcoming the barriers of the original body.

Barriers and boundaries are significant element that's been explored repeatedly in cyberpunk works, and they're all about the body, the mind. For example, in the animated Cyberpunk: Edgerunners, the main character and other modifieds face the risk of developing cyberpsychosis due to excessive body modifications. Within this worldview, they struggle on the edge of sobriety and collapse.

Maria point out a deeper spiritual aspect of cyborg: **impurity** and **excessive purity**

Frankenstein - impure

Schismatrix Plus(1996) - Bruce Sterling: The Body Modification of the prostitute
Power and capital modify the body only to commercialize people for entertainment, and this excessive purity of the body is a mockery of the institutional and spiritual degradation. It reflects the disempowerment of ordinary people

Terrence Whalen also comments on this in The Future of a Commodity: Notes Toward a Critique of Cyberpunk and the Information Age, stating that this is an era in which humans are turned into commodities.

ogy") in "Johnny Mnemonic": "He regarded us with his one eye and slowly extruded a thick length of grayish tongue, licking huge canines. I wondered how they wrote off tooth-bud transplants from Dobermans as low technology. Immunosuppressives don't exactly grow on trees. ... He might have been fifteen, but the fangs and a bright mosaic of scars combined with the gaping socket to present a mask of total bestiality. It had taken time and a certain kind of creativity to assemble that face, and his posture told me he enjoyed living behind it" (Gibson, "Johnny Mnemonic" 118).

Goicoechea, M. (2008) ‘The posthuman ethos in cyberpunk science fiction’, *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 10(4). doi:10.7771/1481-4374.1398.

turned into a fetish, a lethal weapon. The cyborg is that character that every one makes to measure, in this vision of the future that is already the present, in which the body no longer is a physical barrier to be respected, but one out of the many that are daily crossed and manipulated, by oneself or others. That is why other body modifications (tattoos, scarification, piercings) are so intimately connected to cyberculture.

Goicoechea, M. (2008) ‘The posthuman ethos in cyberpunk science fiction’, *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 10(4). doi:10.7771/1481-4374.1398.

At a deeper symbolic level, the myth of the cyborg agglutinates many of the contradictions and ambiguities that characterize Anglo-American attitudes towards the body. On the one hand, it is an **impure being**, a monstrous hybrid whose physical capacity surpasses that of the human. Such is the monster of **Frankenstein**, abominable as well as incredibly strong and resistant. On the other hand, the cyborg symbolizes an ideal of purity. The different representations of the cyborg manifest to opposed fantasies, that of the impure body (a violated body, penetrated by metal), and that of the pure body, sealed, clean, hard, uncontaminated, an ideal of a body that does not eat, drink, cry, sweat, urinate, defecate, menstruate, ejaculate (see Cavallaro 47). In sum, a body that does not suffer any disease and that does not die, that is not subject to the laws of nature. According to Cavallaro, this puritan body, "without secretions or indiscretions" expresses a fantasy of omnipotence. We can add that this ideal of purity, incarnated for example by the character of the prostitute Kitsune in Bruce Sterling's novel *Schismatrix Plus* (1996), reflects a **patriarchal fantasy projected onto the feminine body**: "They gave me to the surgeons," she said. "They took my womb out, and they put in brain tissue. Grafts from the pleasure center, darling. I'm wired to the ass and spine and the throat, and it's better than being God. When I'm hot, I sweat perfume. I'm cleaner than a fresh needle, and nothing leaves my body that you can't drink like wine or eat like candy. And they left me bright, so that I would know what submission was" (31).

Goicoechea, M. (2008) ‘The posthuman ethos in cyberpunk science fiction’, *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, 10(4). doi:10.7771/1481-4374.1398.

At the thematic level as well, Gibson’s information-driven future arises less from the wild imaginings of the post-industrialists than from the harsher tendencies and contradictions of contemporary life. These tendencies also play a part in Fred Jameson’s work on postmodernism, which is characterized not only by an appreciation of the many manifestations of a new cultural logic, but also by its grasp of the contemporary mode of production as theorized in Ernest Mandel’s *Late Capitalism*. In this regard, however, it is important to understand the difference between the cultural logic of postmodernism and the economic logic of late capitalism. According to Mandel, “*The logic of late capitalism is...necessarily to convert idle capital into service capital and simultaneously to replace service capital with productive capital, in other words, services with commodities*: transportation services with private cars; theatre and film services with private television sets; tomorrow, television programmes and educational instruction with video-cassettes” (406; italics in original). In our case this logic suggests that intellectual labor will be increasingly alienated and that information production, storage, and distribution will be increasingly rationalized, with profound consequences on the type and availability of social knowledge in general. Given these dismal prospects for the future, it is easier to understand why *Neuromancer’s* ostensibly post-industrial characters remain under the spell of a multinational consumerism heralded by an endless array of gadgets. From designer drugs to biomedical implants to amnesic prostitutes called meat puppets, this is a world which relentlessly turns people into things.

The fact that information fails to become an object of direct consumption leads to a more important problem concerning the precise utility or use-value of information to society as a whole. In his preface to *Mirrorshades*, Bruce Sterling offers “the street finds its own uses for things” as a sort of slogan for the subversive power of cyberpunk (xii). The line, taken from

Whalen, T. (1992) *The future of a commodity. notes toward a critique of cyberpunk and the information age*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.