

cyberpunk part one the definitive haze

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You may wonder what Cyberpunk means. Someone may tell you what the "correct" definition is, but if you ask another person, you will probably hear a different answer. Answers range from "It's an attitude" to "it's what you wear." I will begin my explanation by using a reliable source: the *Webster Dictionary*.
cybernetics (sing. In form)
n. - The scientific study of the control processes in mechani-

cal, electronic, and biological systems.

punk (slang) n. - 1. A young inexperienced or insignificant person. 2. A young hoodlum or tough.

From these definitions we can reasonably derive that 'Cyber' refers to mechanical, electronic, and biological science. The definition of punk is a little more obscure— "A young inexperienced or insignificant person?" It makes punk sound like a derogatory term, which may be true. The young hoodlum part sounds a bit more central to this article.

Hence, a Cyberpunk is a young, inexperienced, and insignificant hoodlum that involves him/herself with the scientific study of mechanical, electronic, and biological systems. Wait a second . . . what does a punk have to gain in the scientific study of computers and biochemistry? This is the biggest problem in defining Cyberpunk. . . it is a literary term. So Cyberpunk is a concept, not a definition. In any case,

An example of the common image associated with Cyberpunk is an urban lowlife slumped back in a chair, with dozens of wires running from his head to a console. In some novels, the marriage of biochemistry and computer technology allow for the creation of "The Net."

"The Net" is a vast network which exists as a communion for executives and hedonists alike. Using an electronic implant located on the skull's exterior, one can enter the visually-oriented universe. A very limited but existing form of "The Net" is the ever-popular Internet, which spans the globe.

The word "Cyberpunk" was spawned by the title of an early 80s short-story by Bruce Bethke. However, it was not Bethke,

but the editor of Isaac Asimov's *Science Fiction Magazine*, Gardner Dozois, who developed the title into a concept.

It was in 1984 that the literary movement made a splash. A quiet Canadian writer named William Gibson wrote *Neuromancer*. It was the first science fiction novel to capture the Hugo, Nebula and Philip K. Dick awards, all in one year.

Neuromancer captured the true essence of Cyberpunk, and introduced the concept of "Cyberspace." Cyberspace is essentially the same as "The Net"; the only difference lies in the background of their respective inception. The story is a bit confusing, because narration continually switches between the main character and a female mercenary, both of whom happen to be in two very remote locations.

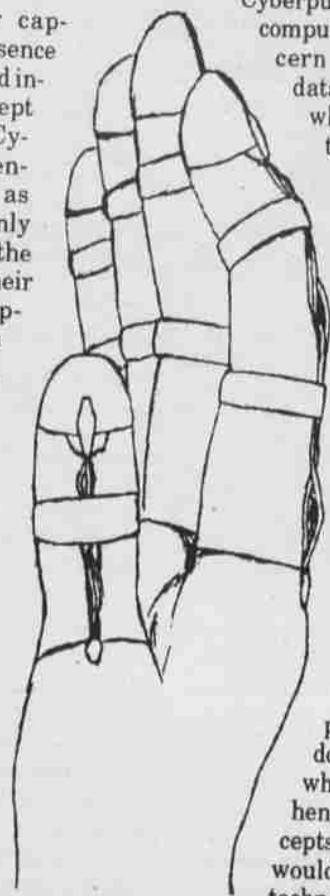
Elements captured in the novel: big corporations, cybernetic virtual reality, and gory deaths. More than anything, I believe that *Neuromancer* excels in an aesthetic way. The inherently repugnant novel has an interestingly pleasant effect on the mind upon completion. It was the first Cyberpunk book I ever read, and life has never been the same since then.

A great ongoing dispute has Cyberpunks arguing endlessly on the Internet newsgroup, "alt.cyberpunk." The issue: is Cyberpunk aesthetic or something more? Another topic is whether Cyberpunk has been tainted by

commercialism. They are referring to the irritating use of formerly meaningful words like: multimedia, virtual reality, and interactive. However, these arguments contribute to the element of Cyberpunk, because they all apply.

One little criticism I'd like to make about the group is that a majority of them think that Cyberpunks are limited to computer hackers who concern themselves with data encryption and the whole bit. I think that their theory is bunk; if the 'Cyberpunk Movement' is literary, which it is, you wouldn't even have to know what a computer is to be considered a Cyberpunk (Of course, that would be very odd in 2046). Solos, better known as mercenaries, rely on cybernetics as well as their weapons, which makes them Cyberpunks. Yet, I would doubt that anyone who could comprehend some of the concepts in *Neuromancer* would be oblivious to technology.

Another characteristic of a Cyberpunk is that they view life with a negative outlook. This is not necessarily true with all, but the manner in which Cyberpunk literature is written suggests an apocalyptic world with little hope of the "normal life."



Glossary of Terms

The Net—A vast network accessed by use of a visually-oriented user interface (Virtual Reality).

alt.cyberpunk—A newsgroup located within the Internet.

cybernetics—the combination of flesh and electronics, man and machine.

Gothic—Of or relating to a style of fiction emphasizing the grotesque, mysterious, and desolate.

If you are having difficulty following me, I'll try something different. If Cyberpunk were a Playmate, here's what her profile would look like:

Name: Vera Kestrel
Place of Birth: Las Vegas, NV
D.O.B.: 7/12/68
Height: 5'7"
Weight: 110 lbs
Favorite Pastime: Slashing elderly people with razor nails.
Turn-ons: Black vinyl, insensitive guys, atomic cycles and stimulation programs.
Turn-offs: Wool, gentlemen, politics and cologne.

A basic synopsis of the definitive Cyberpunk:

An individual who experiences life with a weariness towards authority, and possesses an infatuation for technology and gothic media.

next week

cyberpunk part two cultural blotches

A look at the mainstream influence of Cyberpunk, plus a list of related music, books, and more.

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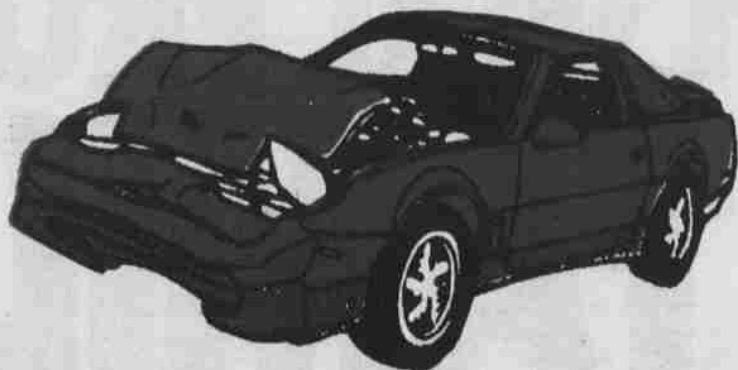
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Aladdin

out of luck; the last performance was on Sunday.

continued from 7
soundtrack. The producers probably thought that no one would pay attention to this detail, but the people sitting in the first few rows were painfully aware of this fact.

Anyone who would like to see *Aladdin* for themselves is sadly

All is not lost though. Since *Aladdin* is the second most successful Disney movie to be made into an ice show (last year's *Beauty and the Beast* being the first), odds are that the resourceful people at Disney will come up with yet a third installment to their "World on Ice" series—*The Lion King on Ice*?

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