

Online Communication in the Digital Age
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Lecture – 19
Evolving Landscape of Cybernetic Writing

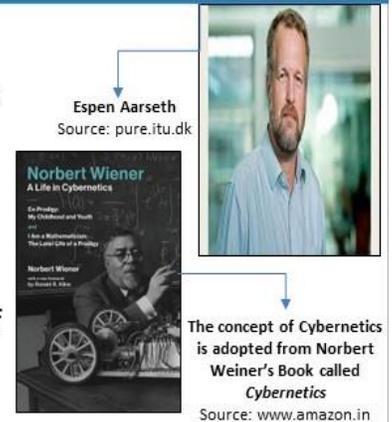
Good morning dear friends and welcome to this module. In the previous module, we had traced the evolution of digital literary practices and analyzed various examples like hypertext literature. These digital writing projects as we saw are inclined more towards the user defined, embodied and interactive process that can dynamically reshape the reading experience. Today, we shall focus on key developments related with digital narrative practices and new media fiction. We will see what is new about these storytelling modes to further understand textuality and digital communication. We will particularly refer to cybernetic writing, new media fiction, cyber fiction and cyberpunk narratives.

The impact of digital textuality on narratives has redefined how we create, consume and think about the written content. And this brings us to the concept of cybertexts. The first thing to remember is that the cybertext is not a revolutionary form of text with capabilities made possible only through the intervention of the digital computer. It is also not a radical break with old fashioned technology.

As Aarseth has commented, cybertext is a perspective on all forms of textuality, a way to expand the scope of writing and literary studies to include phenomena that today are perceived as outside of or marginalized by the field of literary writing. Espen Aarseth had coined the term cybertext in his 1997 work *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. He had also coined the word ergodic which refers to any kind of literature that requires a special effort to navigate and digest. The term is derived from the Greek words *ergon* which means work and *hodos* which means path.

The Advent of the Cybertext

- It was Espen Aarseth who coined the term 'cybertext' in his work *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (1997) to refer to a wide range of possible textualities, where the functional capabilities of cybernetics play a defining role in determining the aesthetic process.
- Cybertext shifts the focus from the dyadic/dichotomy of author/sender and reader/receiver to an information-feedback loop of trans-medial and multimodal reading, governed by cybernetic interaction among the reader, the text and the hypermedium.
- It reduces the intentional powers of the human operator and makes them part of a text-driven digital performance.



Aarseth's coinage of the term cybertext refers to a wide range of possible textualities where the functional capabilities of cybernetics play a defining role in determining the aesthetic process.

Cybertext shifts the focus from the dyadic or the dichotomy of author-sender and reader-receiver to an information feedback loop of transmedial and multimodal reading governed by cybernetic interaction among the reader, the text in the hypermedium. It reduces the intentional powers of human operator and makes them part of a text driven digital performance. Digital forms of creative writing are not an imitation or a mockery of the traditional print text or author. We are dealing with what can be termed as cyborg literature produced by a combination of human and technological activities. A cybertextuality would question the relevance of author, text and reader and does not marginalize the positions of the text and the reader for the author.

Instead of trying to create a surrogate author, we have to see the computer and other modes of technology as literary agents that point towards dialogic forms of improvisation and free play between the user and the interface.

The Cyborg Author

- Espen Aarseth talks about three main positions of human-machine collaboration in the study of cyborg literature.
 - **Preprocessing**, in which, the machine is programmed, configured and loaded by the human.
 - **Coprocessing**, in which the machine and the human produce text in tandem.
 - **Postprocessing**, in which the human selects some of the machine's effusions and excludes others.



Woody Allen's *Manhattan Murder Mystery* Source: <https://youtu.be/XkmaLH5ag>

- Woody Allen's 1993 film *Manhattan Murder Mystery* makes use of preprocessing and coprocessing.
- Four main characters record and edit the samples of a woman's voice and use the machine to conduct conversations with the movie's assumed 'murderer'.
- Allen's film is a demonstration of the 'Eliza Effect'- the errors produced by the machine is funny for the knowing observer. Also, the naïve human participants in these 'conversations' are capable of projecting sentience and intelligence onto their technological counterparts.



Aarseth has talked about three positions of human-machine collaboration in the study of cyborg literature and they are pre-processing, co-processing and post-processing. Pre-processing suggest when the machine is programmed, configured and loaded by the human. Co-processing suggest when the machine and the human produce text in tandem together. Post-processing is in which the human selects some of the machines effusions and excludes others.

Here we have shown certain clippings of Woody Allen's 1993 film *Manhattan Murder Mystery* which makes use of pre-processing and co-processing effectively. The cyborg authorship does not mean that the author has given up control. As we have seen from Woody Allen's film, the response from the machine is beyond the control of its author who can only hope that the machine follows a very linear narration. But the naive user gets manipulated in new and interesting ways. And that is when we talk about digital narratives.

We cannot separate the text in the reader. Our body is doubly situated within the narrative. The user readers are embodied as direct receivers whose bodies interact with the hardware and software of the computer. They are also re-embodied through the feedback they experience in represented forms such as through visible or invisible

avatars. We will take the example of a physio cyber-textual crime fiction called *The Breathing Wall* by Kate Pullinger and Stephen Schemat to understand how multimodal reading is governed by corporeal politics.

The 'Cybersomatic' in *The Breathing Wall* (2004)

- This corresponds to Katherine Hayles' concept of a posthuman world which sees the body as a prosthetic that we can manipulate.
- The implied reader creates an augmented sense of corporeality that shows how semiotic resources are combined multimodally to form a multisensory artifact.
- Thus the narrative experience is a blend of multimodal techniques and bodily interactive elements. This integration of traditional narration with physiological and cybernetic analyses is termed as 'cybersomatic'.

The Breathing Wall by Kate Pullinger, Stefan Schemat and Chris Joseph is a physio-cybertext crime fiction that responds to the reader's rate of breathing using a designed software called 'Hyper Trance Fiction Matrix'.

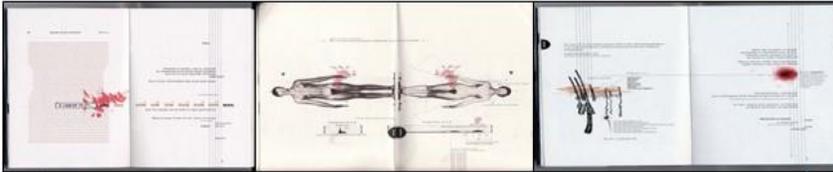
Sources: mt2.uqam.ca, digitalartarchive.siggraph.org
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The *Breathing Wall* corresponds to Katherine Hayles' concept of a post-human world which sees the body as a prosthetic that we can manipulate. The implied reader creates an augmented sense of corporeality that shows how semiotic resources are combined multimodally to form a multisensory artifact. Thus, the narrative experience is a blend of multimodal techniques and bodily interactive elements. This integration of traditional narration with physiological and cybernetic analysis is termed as cyber somatic. The *Breathing Wall* is a physio-cyber-text crime fiction that responds to the reader's rate of breathing using a design software called hyper-transfiction matrix.

The gothic effect of the story is amplified through the physical immersion in the narrative cybernetic matrix. It is the implied reader itself that assumes the role of the private eye of the protagonist. The advent of new media fiction has also pushed the boundaries of traditional narrative forms and explores the intersections of literature and technology. We will look at two works at this point. One is the 2002 novel by Steve Tomasula, *Vas: an Opera in Flatland* and the other is Mark Danielewski's 2006 novel

Coded Bodies in Steve Tomasula's *Vas: An Opera in Flatland*

- *Vas* primarily focuses on the relationship between textuality of the body and the materiality of the text, that is, the difficulty of distinguishing between code and world.



Steve Tomasula

Source: www.vulture.com, en.wikipedia.org

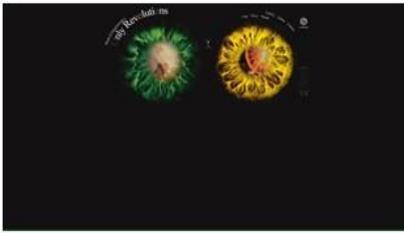
- *Vas* is largely the exploration of the posthuman body in which bodies have become manipulable, and are rewritable as texts.
- It shows the impact of new information technologies on literary production.
- Codes that constitute the book gradually become indistinguishable from the codes that constitute actual living matter.

Vas primarily focuses on the relationship between textuality of the body and the materiality of the text, that is, the difficulty of distinguishing between code and the world. *Vas* is largely the exploration of the post human body in which bodies have become manipulable and are rewritable as texts and this shows the impact of new information technologies on the way literature can be produced now. Codes that constitute the book gradually become indistinguishable from the codes that constitute actual living matter. The form of the novel is made possible by the development of new publishing software. It also contains a wide variety of technical images that could be compiled and distributed through photocopying, microfilm and the internet.

Similarly, Danielewski's iBook edition of *Only Revolutions* affords the reader a view of the transformative opportunities embedded in a digitally democratic text and the new possibilities of the digital medium.



Mark Danielewski's iBook Edition of *Only Revolutions* (2015)



Source: <https://youtu.be/CIPWwizZ7eY>

- He lists different historical moments in what he calls as 'chronomosaic'.
- However, the two characters across time and space, are joined together in the story content and layout of the page.
- The reader can reorient between the two narratives by clicking on the "central page dial".

- Contemporary narratives 'democratize' textual parts by giving equal importance to the separate elements in the narrative development.
- Hyperlinking and music provide a multi-tiered readerly experience that shifts authority and source.
- The book functions like digital media and is fashioned to perform like a computer.



Source: <https://youtu.be/BH0YPhZC4U>



Only Revolutions

Source: Paul Riatkowski- Deteritorializing the textual site in the digital age

Contemporary narratives democratize textual parts by giving equal importance to the separate elements of the narrative development. Hyperlinking and music provide a multi-tiered readerly experience that shifts authority and source. So, the book functions like digital media and is fashioned to perform like a computer. Danielewski also lists different historical moments in what he calls as chronomosaic.

However, the two characters across time and space are joined together in the story content as well as in the layout of the pages. The reader can reorient between the two narratives by clicking on the central page tile. Danielewski inscribes the divisions onto the pages from parallel channels. Each voice retains individual characteristics, but also equally contributes to forming the whole. The anxiety that technology poses a specific threat to or competes with something human has been articulated by artists and critics since the industrial revolution.

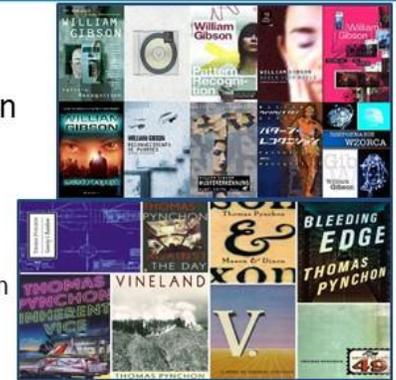
In today's digital age, we are forced to address the notion that not only humans, but also the creative writing they produce in the language they use may be nothing more than a machine interface. And these writings focus on the cybernetic society and disruptions of pre-established patterns of behavior that maximizes the fungibility or interchangeability of futures. This specific form of writing that addresses this concept of postmodern



thought is termed as cybernetic fiction. This form of writing has become important for our study because it shows the strategic consequences of communications in the future.

Cybernetic Fiction and the *Implied Reader*

- Cybernetic fiction is a sub-genre of postmodernist fiction that imitates or purports to be machines or are structured like highly polished and integrated mechanical devices.
 - They anticipate the effacement of the discontinuity between man and machine and narrate against technological determinism.
- The term '*implied reader*' was introduced by literary theorist Wolfgang Iser to address the kind of reader that a text assumes or suggests.
- Cybernetic fiction deconstructs the notion of implied reader through its non-linear storytelling. Readers potentially navigate the text in different ways, creating their own paths and interpretations.



Cybernetic Fiction
Source: www.vulture.com, en.wikipedia.org

Cybernetic fiction is a sub-genre of postmodernistic fiction that imitates or purports to be machines or are structured like highly polished and integrated mechanical devices.

They anticipate the effacement of the discontinuity between man and machine and narrate against technological determinism. The term implied reader was introduced by literary theorist, Wolfgang Iser to address the kind of reader that a text assumes or suggests. Cybernetic fiction constructs the notion of implied reader through the non-linear storytelling. Readers potentially navigate the text in different ways, creating their own paths and interpretations. Implied reader is a concept of a textual structure anticipating the presence of a recipient without necessarily defining one.

The cybernetic postmodern fiction is a playful treachery in the sense that it may look like a machine or talk about the mechanized man himself, but it functions as something more than a machine, something inexplicable by assimilating a flesh and technology as well as human interactions with machines. It shows how cyborg communication is formed. Let us further try to understand the concept through some of the major works of cyber fiction.

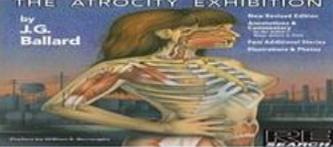


We would refer to J.G. Ballard's 1973 novel, *Crash*. It reveals the destiny of the human body in a world wired by cybernetics and catastrophe. That is a crash body or an ungodly offspring of technology and science.

Crash-Body in J.G. Ballard's *Crash* (1973)

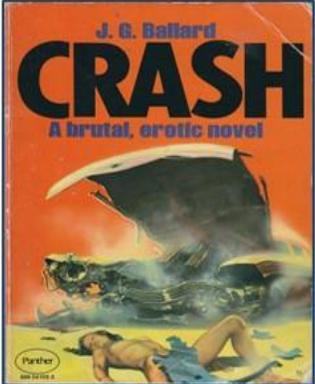
- *Crash* pursues the image of Vaughan, its narrative alpha and omega.
- Technologies of photography become the condition of all that Vaughan does and is, in terms of voyeurism and hyperreal representations.
- The novel sees the automobile as the condition of agency in the cybernetic society. The body becomes the prosthesis of the automobile and a surface in relation to it.
- The car and the photograph become the cultural signifiers of disembodied eroticism that disseminates sex as a set of surface features like gestures, behaviors and postures.

THE ATROCITY EXHIBITION
by J.G. Ballard



"I watched him matching the details of her body with the photographs of grotesque wounds in a textbook of plastic surgery"

- Vaughan uses the photographic representation of the character Elizabeth Taylor to bisect and rearrange it so that it can assimilate the textbook wounds of other bodies.
- The image collapses body's vital depths into a culturally continuous surface.



J.G. Ballard's *Crash*

Source: www.goodreads.com, astrofella.wordpress.com




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Automobile is also seen as a condition of agency in the cybernetic society. The body becomes the prosthesis of the automobile and its surface in relation to it. Vaughan has used photographic representation of Elizabeth Taylor also to rearrange it so that it can assimilate the textbook wounds of other bodies. We can say that *Crash* represents the cybernetic postmodern society as disembodied without any effect or a semiotics without any meaning. It is a strange fact of cyber fiction that it has explored the intersection between homosexuality and technoscience.

We would also refer to William Burroughs and Samuel Delany, two authors that assimilate queer sexuality to technoscience. Let us see how a sexualized cyber fiction becomes the erotic software of cybernetic society.

- **Queer Science** builds a new politics that refuses the concept of bodies as personal properties.
- William Burroughs' trilogy, *The Soft Machine*, *Nova Express* and *The Ticket that Exploded*, deconstructs the autonomous heterosexual body as a host body under siege by an array of incompatible life forms like viruses.
- Samuel Delany's *Stars in my Pocket like Grains of Sand* talks about creating new bodies and experiencing new forms of life and sex: the gay protagonist Rat Korga's planet explodes leaving him as its sole survivor.

- The writers turn to queer spaces where the body mutates under new conditions and turns sexuality into a means of bodily transformation, not reproduction.
- For both Delany and Burroughs, the creation of privacy, reproduction and consent remain a slave to forces that determine its agencies, sexual or otherwise.

• Throughout the novel, Delany uses the word "women" to refer to all humans. This disturbs normative assumptions about gendered agency and sexual identities. Women become the new standard of humanity.



Sources: www.amazon.in, www.goodreads.com

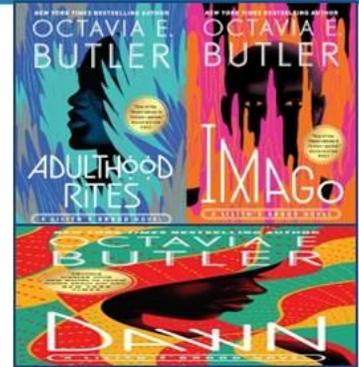
Burrough and Delany turn to queer spaces where the body mutates under new conditions and turns sexuality into a means of bodily transformation not reproduction. For both these authors the creation of privacy, reproduction and consent remain a slave to forces that determinates agencies, sexual or otherwise. Delany has used the word women to refer to all humans in his work and this disturbs normative assumptions about gendered agency and sexual identities even within the digital sphere.

Burrow's trilogy deconstructs the autonomous heterosexual body as a host body under siege by an array of incompatible life forms like viruses. Delany's work talks about creating new bodies and experiencing new forms of life and sex. The gay protagonist Korga's planet explodes leaving him as its sole survivor. Both these writers refuse subordination and its masochistic pleasures and in this sense queer science advances new sexualities for cybernetic society. Cyber fiction often posits fantasies of technological triumph over female flesh.

All these changes when women start writing cyber fiction. Genetics and bioengineering take the cybernetic turn for the insurgents of reproductive female body against its masters. The best sci-fi practitioner who puts the concept at the center of her work is Octavia Butler.

Cybernetic Fiction and the Female Body

- In Octavia Butler's future in her *Xenogenesis* trilogy (1987-89), sexual reproduction gives way to genetic hybridization.
- Through an alien species called the Oankali, Butler reenacts one of the darkest aspects of the slave economy, its reduction of the body, specifically the female body, to its reproductive capacity.
- Butler posits a future where the reproduction of flesh becomes a creative process.
 - She views culture and the human tendency to make it the condition of identity, as an obstacle to the kind of change she calls xenogenesis.
 - She imagines a postcultural future in which identity is flesh and life is change.



Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* Trilogy
Sources: thequilltolive.com, www.thriftbooks.com



In Octavia Butler's famous trilogy sexual reproduction gives way to genetic hybridization. Through an alien species Butler reenacts one of the darkest aspects of the slave economy.

Its reduction of the body is specifically the female body to its reproductive capacity. So Butler posits a future where the reproduction of flesh becomes a creative process and she views culture in the human tendency to make it the condition of identity as an obstacle to the kind of change she calls xenogenesis. She imagines a postcultural future in which identity is flesh and life is change. What Butler tries to do here is to view change as something that occurs physically which is to say at the level of living flesh so that identity will not be restricted to cultural politics. The important point to consider here is that alternatives to conventional modalities of human existence are there as well.

That is subjectivities that radically define the nature of humanity and the nature of self. Let us look at this concept further by analyzing a contemporary fiction Vega the Intergalactic Warrior by an Indian author Priyamvada Gaur.

Decentering Conventional Humanist Notions in *Vega* (2023)

- *Vega, the Intergalactic Warrior* (2023) by Priyamvada Gaur is about an orphan young intergalactic warrior set in the multiverse of 'Antriksha'.
- The novel extrapolates the micro-politics in parallel worlds and demonstrates the construction/deconstruction of the feminist subject in a technologically-influenced posthuman world.
- It warns against the limitations, socio-cultural realities and ideological systems inherent in any vision of a post-apocalyptic future.
 - It asks vital questions about family, love, freedom and how they stack up when the profiteers of war take the Earth and *Antriksha* towards annihilation.



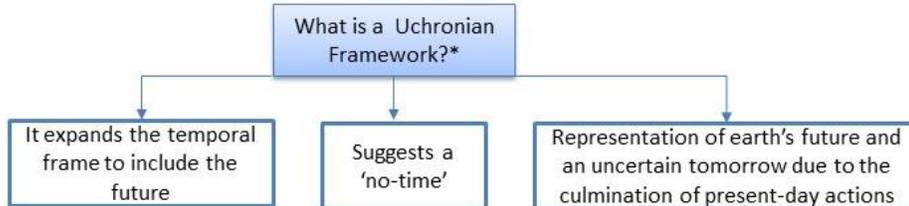
Vega the Intergalactic Warrior published in 2023 is about an orphan young intergalactic warrior set in the multiverse of Antriksha. The novel extrapolates the micro politics in parallel worlds and demonstrates the construction as well as deconstruction of the feminist subject in a technologically influenced posthuman world. It was against the limitations, socio cultural realities and ideological systems inherent in any vision of a post apocalyptic future.

It also asks vital questions about family, love and freedom and how they stack up when the profiteers of war take the earth as well as the multiverse Antriksha towards annihilation. Here again we deconstruct human and more than human opposition and begin to ask new questions about the ways in which humans and more than humans mutually evolve. When we talk about Vega or any other cybernetic novel placed in a cultural context, it becomes difficult to place it in familiar space or a time period. This multiverse represent a place in which our future present day might look, yes. But does it represent a utopia or a real time period now? No.

In a state these forms of speculative fiction fall within the realm of Uchronian texts. So, what is the concept of Uchronia?

The Concept of 'Uchronia'

- 'Uchronia' is our present-day world in a fictional time period (Nayar 75).



- Vega* is a blend of dystopia and uchronia as it presents an alternate kind and conditions of life in a different fictional time.
 - It shows a teleological progression of today's behavior in a world that has changed, some time in the future, precisely due to same human actions.

*Refer Pramod K Nayar- Ecoprecarity: Vulnerable Lives in Literature and Culture



Uchronia is our present day world in a fictional time period. The framework of Uchronia expands the temporal frame to include the future. It also suggests a no time and a representation of earth's future and an uncertain tomorrow due to the culmination of present day actions. Vega can be termed as a blend of dystopia and Uchronia as it presents an alternate kind and conditions of life in a different fictional time.

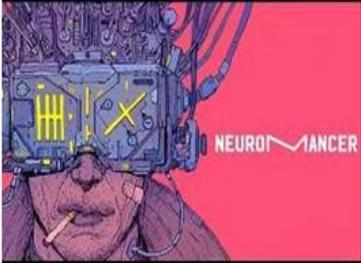
It shows a teleological progression of today's behavior in a world that has changed sometime in the future precisely due to same human actions. So, why do cybernetic texts suggest a no time rather than in no place in a dystopian universe? It is because that they show that the same place might look different in a different time. Further details of the novel Vega are provided in the reference section. Contemporary cyber culture in certain cyborg performances contain the actualization of new experiences of bodies with the spread of the electronic environment. Let us try to understand this change of the body view in cyberspace and cyber culture reexamining the infinite possibilities for interpreting the body.

The Body in Cyberspace

William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) presents the imagery of cyberspace as a 'techno-fantasy' or a 'fleshless ontology'. It was founded on the belief that technologies can enable transcendence of the body.

- Contemporary cyberculture has evolved to show how we grasp the experience of bodies through technologies and digital performances.
- Media theorist, Allucquere Rosanne Stone, conceives bodies in cyberspace not to be free from physical bodies.
 - The body representatives in cyberspace have consensual, interactive and haptic experiences.
 - They become 'reconstructed bodies' that permeate the social, biological and the technological.

Artist and theorist, Monica Fleischmann, discusses how the body interacts with technologies or environment and uses digital interfaces as a "playful interaction of bodies, art and technology" in opposition to the theory of the disappearing body in cyberspace.



Gibson's *Neuromancer*
Source: www.thefundamentals.com



Source: izea2022.izea-international.org

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All of us are familiar with Gibson's *Neuromancer* which had presented the imagery of cyberspace as a techno-fantasy. Contemporary cyber culture has evolved to show how we grasp the experience of bodies through technologies and digital performances. Media theorist Rosanne Stone conceives bodies in cyberspace not to be free from physical bodies. The body representatives in cyberspace in her view have consensual interactive and haptic experiences and become reconstructed bodies that permit the social, biological and the technological. Artist and theorist Monica Fleischmann discusses how the body interacts with technologies or environment and uses digital interfaces as a playful interaction of bodies, art and technology in opposition to the theory of disappearing body in cyberspace.

Thus, the reconstructed bodies in cyberspace have both material and virtual dimensions. They gain a sense of presence and agency through the interface and avatar. Let us take an example from popular culture. The 1999 movie *Matrix* directed by Lana and Lili Wachowski is a cinematic representation of pushing our bodily limits to the edge of virtuality and cyberspace.

More Virtual than Real- *The Matrix*

- The film describes a future in which reality perceived by humans is actually the matrix- a hyperreality created by sentient machines in order to pacify and subdue the human population.
- These sentient machines called 'agents' patrol within the matrix simulation and eradicate any doubts as to the reality of the virtual lives of its subject.
- The protagonist, a hacker called Neo, becomes 'posthuman' through his entry and embodiment inside the cyberspace of the matrix.
- *The Matrix* supplements Jean Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality and simulation in which the medium has vanished and fiction has overtaken reality by fully 'virtualizing' the body.



"Wake up Neo, the Matrix has you"

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4y7NACDmG28>



Swajanti



The film describes a future in which reality perceived by humans is actually the matrix, a hyper-reality created by sentient machines in order to pacify and subdue the human population.

These sentient machines called agents patrol within the matrix simulation and eradicate any doubts as to the reality to the virtual lives of its subjects. The protagonist is a hacker who becomes post-human through his entry and embodiment inside the cyberspace of the matrix. The film supplements Jean Baudrillard's concept of hyper-reality and simulation in which the medium has vanished and fiction has overtaken reality by fully virtualizing the body.

For Neo, the only escape from the machine virtual reality of the matrix is by becoming more virtual than the screen. A Baudrillardian instance would suggest that the post-humor has already happened and it is now merely a matter of imagining it. Then again, the question of what to do with the materiality and physicality of the body comes. Let us look at the performance art of Stelarc, an artist who explores the possibilities of redesigning the body into a cyborg through an interface of human and the virtual.

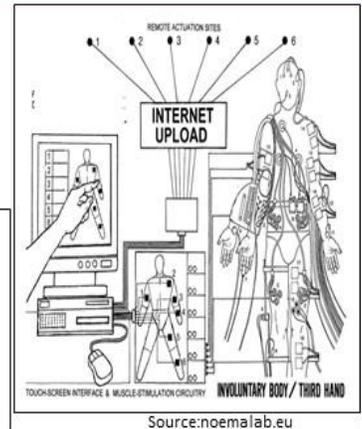
The Performance Art of Stelarc

- Stelarc's performance interrogates the symbiotic relationship between humans and technology, body data and computer-generated information.



Sources: stelarc.org

- In his **Movatar/Avatar performance**, Stelarc empties his body of its own desire and fills it instead with the desire of an autonomous Alife entity.
- Stelarc's body becomes a prosthetic moved by an artificial external stimulus-an exoskeleton.
- Both the human and the virtual body have input into the operational behavior of one another.



- Here, the body functions as a liminal interface between technologies.
 - It illustrates not an artist's design but rather a virtual entity's desired movement that Stelarc refers to as 'whims of the avatar'.



Stelarc's performance interrogates the symbiotic relationship between humans in technology, body data and computer generated information.

Stelarc's body becomes a prosthetic moved by an artificial external stimulus on exoskeleton. Both the human and the virtual body have input into the operational behavior of one another. So, the body functions as a liminal interface between technologies and it illustrates not an artist's design, but rather a virtual entity's desired movement that Stelarc refers to as the whims of the avatar. This is a state of human not human where the physical self and virtual self are in a continuous feedback loop. Let us now look at an art performance of Stelarc where he performs his concept of walking machine exoskeleton at the STRP Biennial at Eindhoven in the Netherlands.

"The Body has become Obsolete"
-Stelarc

STELARC

Source:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dnk3ag8-ve>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10G3htmye-A>

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I guess it's a general curiosity about what's possible, what's plausible, what pushes the boundaries. So determining, for example, the psychological and physiological parameters of the body or how one can augment the physical body, the biological body with prosthetic attachments or robotic extensions or using instruments that enhance your sensory apparatus, that's the kind of approach that this particular artist takes. You know we're increasingly expected to perform in mixed realities. We're still biological bodies but increasingly we're accelerated by our machines, we're enhanced by our instruments, our computational capabilities are amplified with new technologies. So the body can be seen as a construct of meat, metal and code.

This performance that we see in the video is a cybernetic prototype in a multimedia performance event. The performance nucleus lies in the code of digital entity that lies in the avatar and its movements which are then moving Stelarc. The virtual interchangeability of humans and machines is a recurring theme in cyberpunk and intrinsic to its representation of cyborgs. Cyberpunk is a genre that couches the ambiguity of cybernetics by representing the conflicts and contradictions in cyberculture.

Cyberpunk and Virtual Technologies

- Cyberpunk has been described as a postmodern literary-cultural style that projects a computerized future.
 - The multi-accentuality of cyberpunk is paralleled by the related phenomena of cyberspace and virtual reality.
- The cyberpunk narratives create a 'hypertexted' body constructed via technology and it deconstructs the opposition between wired and organic corporeality.
- They foreground virtual technologies as decentering space and identities and forming cybernetic communities that either lead to emancipation or perpetuation of hierarchical structures.



Multi-User Dimensions encompass different ways of constructing identities and spaces

Sources: medium.com, [/courses.cs.vt.edu](https://courses.cs.vt.edu)



So cyberpunk can be described as a postmodern literary cultural style that projects a computerized future.

The multi-accentuality of cyberpunk is paralleled by the related phenomena of cyberspace and virtual realities. So the cyberpunk narratives create a hypertext body constructed via technology and it also deconstructs the opposition between wired and organic corporeality. It foregrounds virtual technologies as decentering space and identities informing cybernetic communities that either lead to emancipation or perpetuation of hierarchical structures of the society. What we have to understand about cyberpunk narratives is that it conceives the body as a very fluid entity that is as an ever changing product of technology and cultural contexts. The cyberpunk body can be a personality construct or even a commodity that is it becomes hypervisible.

We will discuss in detail the hypervisibility of bodies when we talk about cybernetic sexual modalities and gendered subjects in the coming weeks. Let us also briefly discuss one of the most intriguing areas of cyber literature that is fan fiction. Fan fiction combines popular culture and literature in a unique symbiotic relationship.

Margins of Cyberliterature- Fanfiction

- Fanfiction signifies texts mainly created as 'pseudo-sequels' to a book, comic-strip, TV series or film and that are not written by professional authors but by fans.
- Fanfiction forms a cybercommunity where members interact only in written form and the reader communicates only with the pure creation of the text.
- It is an extreme manifestation of the "death of the author" as the traditional role of readers has changed and they directly interfere in the writing process with their comments.
- 'Real person fic' is a unique type of fanfiction written by fans of public personalities, pop or rock groups.
 - This can be seen as a form of hyperreality where characters are replaced by a simulacra of their representations in fan fictions.



Fanfiction from Movies, Pop Artists To Politicians.

Sources: www.quotev.com, www.wattpad.com, www.politico.com



It signifies texts mainly created as pseudo-sequels to a book or a comic strip or a TV series of film and that are not written by professional authors but by fans only. Fan fiction forms a cyber community where members interact only in written form and the reader communicates only with the pure creation of the text.

It is an extreme manifestation of the postmodernist concept of the death of the author as the traditional role of reader has changed and they directly interfere in the writing process with their comments. Real person fic is a unique type of fan fiction written by fans of public personalities, pop or rock groups. This can be seen either as a form of hyper reality where characters are replaced by a simulacra of their representations in fan fictions. In fan fiction, the author's own interference as a character sometimes makes the manipulation with reality even more intense. Cybernetic writing and its offshoots signify a compelling step forward in the evolution of literary art promising a future where the written word co-exists harmoniously with the infinite possibilities of technology.

Conclusion

- The exploration of cybernetic writing, new media fiction, and cyberfiction presents a fascinating intersection of literature and technology that reshapes traditional storytelling paradigms.
- As the digital age continues to evolve, the boundaries between reality and fiction become increasingly blurred, inviting us to question the nature of identity, communication, and the very essence of storytelling itself.
- The dynamic integration of multimedia elements, interactive structures, and complex narratives characterizes this evolving landscape, offering readers and creators alike a unique and immersive experience.



The exploration of cybernetic writing, new media fiction and cyber fiction presents a fascinating intersection of literature and technology that reshapes traditional storytelling paradigms. As the digital age continues to evolve, the boundaries between reality and fiction become increasingly blurred, inviting us to question the nature of identity, communication and the very essence of storytelling itself. The dynamic integration of multimedia elements, interactive structures and complex narratives characterizes this evolving landscape offering readers and creators alike a unique and immersive experience. These forms of narrative expression not only challenge our understanding of literature, but also redefine the ways in which we engage with stories. In the next module, we will be talking about digital communication in the contested realm of digital scholarship, publishing, access and digital materiality.

We will also have a look at how we can sort out the digital humanities in the contemporary era of digital communication. Thank you.