

# SimStim in William Gibson's Neuromancer

Joshua Hendrix

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The SimStim allows Case to "tap in" to Molly's experiences as she is having them, although not into her private thoughts. The device enables Case to experience the full range of her sensory input but have no control over her actions.

Gibson uses the Simstim to facilitate jumps between the storylines of separated characters when their actions become tightly integrated. This artful narrative device stretches the boundaries of the book by allowing quick cuts between actions happening almost in parallel. Gibson effectively steps into a realm that is remarkably like television and the movies; the narratives between Case's flips become vignettes that bear resemblance to fast cuts between locales or points of view onscreen.

Gibson also stretches the boundaries of third person narration in a unique way. Although two distinctly different points of view, Molly's and Case's, are present, the whole story is really only told through Case's point of view. The Simstim allows his point of view to essentially merge with Molly's at points in the story where her actions are relevant to the outcome. Gibson only abandons this device towards the end, when Case is forced to go after Molly physically. By allowing Case to switch points of view so flexibly, Gibson in effect makes Case the only medium through which the reader experiences the narrative, a feat that would be hard to accomplish for a two-character story line without this device.

With the addition of a record and playback mechanism, the Simstim could be used as an extraordinary hypermedia engine. Such a device would unite author and reader in a fashion that would be a step beyond current technologies. The word "reader" would be transcended, and the reader would become even more of a participant in the exchange. The only ways to be closer would be to have 2-way communication between the users of the device, or further to have direct access to the other person's thoughts or symbolic processing systems.