

# Cyberpunk Cut-and-Paste Manifesto

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What follows is a series of quotes and paraphrases taken from a variety of sources. Some have been "sampled" so many times that their origins (and authors) have been obscured; others you will clearly recognize. Be attentive to the fact that these statements slip back and forth between the two uses of "cyberpunk" (as a literary genre and as a real world subculture). No attempt has been made to clarify their original intent nor to put them in any order.

Sources sampled include *The Mirrorshades Anthology*, *Vague* #21 (the Cyberpunk issue), *Going Gaga* #5, and the *Mississippi Review* #47/48. The original authors include Bruce Sterling, John Shirley, William Gibson, Mark Downham and Gareth Branwyn.

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Models are not true or false, they are more or less useful.

Cyberpunk is endless skimming.

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Images, electronic continents, drift past the retina, moving towards pure surface. In cyberpunk, the real, the virtual, the imaginal, the artificial, the human and the machine (cyborg) are all seeking re-invention, re-definition. Our vast technological changes are shaping new forms of culture, social organization, and myth-making.

Cyberpunk is about technological implosion, miniaturization, and synaesthetic media.

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Cyberpunk in the real world simply means the Do-It-Yourself attitude coupled with libertarian anarchist politics, projected 20 minutes into the future. It's "garage band" or rebel futurism.

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Cyberpunk is characterized by :

- A global worldview.
- An identification with underground cultures.
- Influences outside of SF.

- Punk intensity.
- Influences from rock culture.
- Anti-heroes as heroes.
- Honesty in characterization.
- Information saturation/overload.
- An interest in body modification.
- A romance with electronic forms of "non-ordinary" reality (i.e. "cyberspace").
- An interest in anarchy, libertarianism, cultural terrorism.

"Cyber" and "punk" - the ideal post-modern couple : a machine philosophy that can create the world in its own image and a self-mutilating freedom, that is that image snarling back.

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Cyberpunk reflects the increasingly pervasive influence of science fiction on post-modern culture - the moment when SF depicts the collapse of the future onto the present.

Cyberpunk deals increasingly with madness, more precisely with the most philosophically interesting phenomenon of madness : hallucination (derangement).

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We are very quickly entering a world where the difference between fantasy and reality is difficult or impossible to distinguish. It is a globalized world pulsing with information flows and data commodities, a place where infinite sub-cultures and mind cults live in their own pocket universes.

Cyberpunk is an industrial myth of the near future, a new techno-surreal fiction.

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Cyberpunk is a scrambled mass of referential fictions in search of an operational strategy for the living of life, which is increasingly experiencing slippage into the virtual technologies of the near future.

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The real is leaking into the representational.

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Cyberpunk attempts to demythologize the established cultural codes in order to decipher concealed strategies of domination, desire, will, power, and the will to power.

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Cyberpunk is a radical interrogation of the technologies at work in contemporary society.

Cyberpunk is an interzone between hard technologies, the sciences, mysticism and nihilo-romantic surreality. Cyberpunk has a strong garage band aesthetic. It grapples with the raw core of our near future, its myths, its ideas, its coming practices. It is a pop culture which is theorizing itself into a more cohesive and self-determined existence.

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The differences between the sciences and the humanities : the gulf between literary culture, the formal structures of art and politics and the culture of science, the world of science and engineering - it's all converging. Cyberpunk intuitively understands that technical culture is moving very fast. 95% of the political Left is thirty years behind this techno-convergence, and receding. The advances of science are deeply radical - potentially revolutionary even, if utilized appropriately. They are surging into the culture at large; they are invasive.

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Certain central themes spring up repeatedly in cyberpunk. Firstly the theme of body invasion, prosthetic limbs, implanted circuitry, cosmetic surgery, genetic alteration. Secondly, mind invasion and mind expansion : brain-computer interfaces, artificial intelligence, neurochemistry - all techniques radically redefining the nature of humanity, the nature of self. For cyberpunk, the computer is much more than an object; it is also an icon and a metaphor that suggests new ways of thinking about ourselves and our new environments, new ways of constructing images of what it means to be human.

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The technical revolution reshaping our society is based not in hierarchy but in decentralization, not in rigidity, but in fluidity.

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In cyberpunk, geographical frontiers no longer exist and in their place are vast micro-electronic territories. One of the key roles of the expanding electronic information grid is to articulate a new social and geopolitical stratification based on the immediate access to data. The aim of cyberpunk is to create a state of temporary grid-lock in order to insert subversive messages of its own. Information, structured by automatic data processing, becomes a new type of raw material for the (post) industrial myths of the near future.

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The street finds its own use for things. It's all in the mix.

- Information wants to be free.

- Access to computers and anything which may teach you something about how the world works should be unlimited and total.
- Always yield to the hands-on imperative.
- Mistrust Authority.
- Promote Decentralization.
- Do It Yourself.
- Fight the Power.
- Feed the noise back into the system.