# Evaluation de l'importance de la technologie dans le Cyberpunk

**The Cyberpunk Project**

Technology is integral to cyberpunk. It separates cyberpunk from conventional science fiction, forwards the plot and makes the fictional world more concrete.

The technology in cyberpunk is all possible in the "near future". You won't see any of the space aliens, warp drives, light sabers, or robotic manservants that are common in traditional science fiction. This distinction helps to make cyberpunk unique. When you start reading a novel by Gibson, you know there isn't going to be any techno-babble ending, nor will there be a gigantic battle in outer space.

The authors of this genre are careful to keep their imaginary worlds grounded in reality. Authors like Gibson and Stephenson tend to extrapolate from the current level of technology and project it into a world just a few years ahead of our real world. This results in an entirely different aesthetic towards technology. Instead of dealing extensively with outer space, which now seems to be forever out of humanity's reach, cyberpunk authors deal with computers, genetic engineering, and slick weaponry.

The final aim of technology in cyberpunk is not the same as traditional science fiction. Where mainstream novels want to awe and inspire the imagination with fantastic imagery, cyberpunk literature aspires to predict an immanent future by extrapolating from current technological and sociological conditions. Cyberpunk tends to deal more with the human condition, and how we are altered by a world that is now more artificial than natural.

Without technology playing a realistic and near future role in cyberpunk, the genre would completely lose its significance. When a character dies, he or she stays dead. You won't see anything resembling Star Trek's Data using a matter-inducer in conjunction with the transporter's pattern buffer to save Picard from a life as sentient energy. Everything in cyberpunk has very real ramifications.

Compare Star Trek's many cases of complete recovery from death to Lise, in Gibson's "The Winter Market", and Dixie Flatline in Neuromancer. Lise want's to live, despite the limitations of her body. So she transcends biology and becomes one with the machine. We are left to wonder if death would be preferable. Dixie Flatline seemed to believe death is preferable to "living" as a ROM construct. His only wish was to be erased.

By limiting technology to realistic proportions, the authors of cyberpunk add drama and consequence to their stories. Unfortunately, we can better identify with a world where pollution, corruption, and death are very real influences on the characters. By limiting technology, cyberpunk worlds are much more current and believable than those of traditional science fiction.

Cyberpunk authors are renown for their amazing descriptions of technology. The world of Neuromancer is almost photorealistic, even without a single picture. Cyberspace "feels" real, and one can almost visualize Case's view of the matrix. Every piece of hardware is very concrete, due to the detailed descriptions the authors construct. The Ono-Sendai deck can fit right in with a Sony VCR and a Braun coffee maker. The lines of what is real and what isn't are intentionally blurred by the authors' juxtaposition of real and fictional hardware.

Almost everything in cyberpunk novels is covered with dirt, dented, scratched, and in a state of disrepair. There are no sparkling cities of tomorrow, no flaxen haired master race. The objects and characters of these novels brings the futuristic fiction down to a level of common use, and helps the reader better immerse themselves in

the world of the novel.

While traditional science fiction has a firm hold on the public, cyberpunk has carved an important niche for itself. The very real technology is partly responsible for cyberpunk's success. People have a need for fiction that presents a view of the world and technology that is current, different, and very real. Cyberpunk excels in all these areas.