

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY OF ABDELHAMID IBN BADIS-MOSTAGANEM-

Faculty of Foreign Languages

Department of English



Human and Artificial Intelligence Representation in

William Gibson's Neuromancer (1984)

**A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master in Literature
and Civilization**

Presented by: Belbah Sofiane Ilyes

Members of the jury:

Supervisor: Mrs. GHERNOUT Soumia

Chairperson: Mrs. HAIRECH Faiza

Examiner: Mrs. BENMAATI Fatima Zohra

Academic Year: 2019/2020

Abstract

Cyberpunk Literature is a Science-fiction subgenre that is characterized by counterculture anti-heroes locked in a decaying, dehumanized, and dystopian society that is defined by corporation dominion and high-tech but low-life setting. This research aims to investigate to which extent artificial intelligence is represented within the realm of science literature and whether or not humans and machines are connected to each other and how does technology affect society. William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) is the literary work chosen to discuss and analyze this idea, therefore the following work will delve deep into this universe showcasing the multiple perspectives that this dystopian future introduces and how humans and Artificial Intelligence are both represented in the novel and what conclusions can be drawn from it. The questions that were asked were how humans and artificial intelligence were depicted in *Neuromancer* and how can technology affect society. The following analysis showed a reversal of roles between humans and artificial intelligence along with a significant negative effect of technology towards human civilization.

Keywords:

Cyberpunk, Science-fiction, Artificial Intelligence, Dystopian, Neuromancer

Dedication

I dedicate this research to my family and friends who were always here for me to provide the much needed support I needed to complete this research.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the individuals who supported me throughout my endeavor. Be it moral support or physical support, I believe that both are quite important, whether you give someone suggestions or pointers or provide help in developing ideas is something quite essential that helped me. I would like to give thanks to my friends who were present for me and supported me whenever my mind wondered around and came up with random ideas, I won't name them specifically in case I forget someone's name since I have a bad memory. I will however give special thanks to my supervisor Mrs. Soumia Ghernout who was generous enough to take time out of her day multiple times just to help me with her guidance and also put up with a lot of my nonsensical ideas.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	I
Dedication.....	II
Acknowledgements.....	III
Table of Contents.....	IV
General Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Cyberpunk literature.....	4
1.1 Introduction.....	5
1.2 Science-Fiction.....	6
1.3 Cyberpunk.....	8
1.4 Futurism.....	11
1.5 Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic fiction.....	13
1.6 Cyberpunk Aesthetic.....	16
1.7 Conclusion.....	18
Chapter 2: William Gibson and Neuromancer.....	20
2.1 Introduction.....	21

2.2 Who Is William Gibson?	21
2.3 Neuromancer.....	23
2.4 Summary.....	25
2.5 Analysis.....	26
2.5.1. Characters	26
2.5.2 Setting.....	30
2.6 Themes.....	32
2.6.1 Humanity and Technology.....	32
2.6.2 Identity.....	33
2.6.3 Freedom and Confinement	34
2.6.4 Alienation and Manipulation.....	35
2.7 Conclusion.....	36
Chapter 3: Artificial Intelligence and Humans.....	38
3.1 Introduction.....	39
3.2 Artificial Intelligence in Neuromancer.....	39

3.3 Humanity in Neuromancer.....	42
3.4 Devolution.....	45
3.5 Humans and Machines.....	47
3.6 Conclusion.....	48
General Conclusion.....	50
Works Cited.....	52

General Introduction

The conflict between society and its members has been a constant debate within the world of literature. People are born within the constraint and culture of a society which entails that they are unable to break free from it and will be considered as an abnormality for even attempting to do so. The subject of being an abnormal and outcast from society for being somewhat different was brilliantly depicted in *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1818) as the monster created kept itself hidden from the others but at the same time wanting to have emotions, have a companion and be somewhat of a gear in the grand machine that is human society. This also brings up the idea of Artificial Intelligence seeking humanity since the monster in the novel is technically a more primitive form of Artificial Intelligence given that its human made that ended up developing human emotions and desires. *Phillip K. Dick's novel Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1982) also does a great job to highlight this sense of emotions and trying to integrate human society by Artificial Intelligence as the novel deals with Androids that are injected with emotions and attempt to become human which goes against the rules of that society. Cyberpunk literature genre is an outstanding mesh of those ideals which mixes between technology, machines and humanity and brilliantly displayed in William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984).

Cyberpunk literature is somewhat of a forgotten genre now and can be considered niche and forgotten. This genre of literature is actually one of the most important ones as it straight leaning towards the punk and anti-hero culture flipped the science fiction genre upside down

as it tore down the basics of the genre since it threw away the science fiction stereotypes of mostly dealing with alien invasions or space exploration to introduce a more human-like conflict that is represented in the torn society and the characters internal struggles. The setting within the genre is also quite peculiar as it introduces a strictly urbanized city that is mostly alive during the night where neon lights shine everywhere but despite the multiple colors imbued in the city it still manages to ooze a certain ominous tone that suggest that the city is sure beautiful but holds within its concrete layers a huge black hole that absorbs all positivity and life in favor of constant negative energy and darkness which emphasizes the magnitude of the human descent.

William Gibson's works are always sprinkled with a dark and monochrome tone. He wrote short stories before his debut novel and they were all sharing something in common which is a dystopian future with solitude and isolation being at the forefront of the recurrent themes along with technologically advanced societies. *Neuromancer* which was his first novel is the piece of literature that launched the Cyberpunk genre and made it what it is today. The novel introduced a cast of anti-heroes that are so different from each other but they are all connected with their constant search of identity, an overwhelming feeling of isolation, and the fact that they all have rejected their humanity in favor of more and more body modifications. William Gibson also managed to predict the future in the novel in quite the frightening way as he coined the term of *Cyberspace* which basically became the internet as the world know it years after the novel was published, which may entail that humanity is not far away from the dystopian future he portrayed in *Neuromancer*. Therefore the objective of this research is to explore the possibility of a connection between humans and artificial intelligence and the

effect of technology on society. In the light of what has been said, the following questions are asked:

1 How humans and artificial intelligence were depicted in Neuromancer?

2 How can technology affect society?

The following research is devised into three chapters with the purpose of answering the above questions. The first chapter is theoretical in its entirety as it delves deep and explains the cyberpunk literature genre by going through its genesis, its core concept and the different aspects that constitute the genre. The second chapter is a small introduction of the novel and its author along with a deep analysis of said novel going from setting, to characters and the different themes. Last chapter makes for the round-up of the research as it culminates in the deductions made from the observations and analysis made in the previous chapters.

I Chapter One: Cyberpunk Literature

1.1 Introduction:

The cyberpunk genre has never been properly put through the light of literature even though it holds many different aspects within its pages. This type of literature is considered to be niche and mostly viewed by the public eye as simply a rebellious teenager fantasy even though its impact is quite significant as it developed itself to be a new branch of science fiction and one that threw away most conventions that readers have been stuck with for many years when it comes to science fiction. Cyberpunk literature is gritty, dystopian, filled with anti-heroes, and pushes buttons that aren't supposed to be pushed as it delves deep within the roots of society and unravels the devious foundations that it is built on. The greedy mega corporations, dark megacities, rebellious population and the high-tech low-life aspect of the genre make the world of cyberpunk an ever evolving and interesting world to dive into. This type of literature be it somewhat niche is comprised of many different aspects that take some features from its main genre but also some other subgenres, movements and cultures. This chapter is designed to offer more knowledge on these different subgenres and movements in order to truly grasp what makes the genre what it is today and to showcase how they all intertwine together to form Cyberpunk literature.

1.2 Science Fiction

Since the Dawn of age, humanity has been asking multiple questions about the direction and the future of its species. These questions aren't easily answered or more realistically cannot be answered but that doesn't mean it cannot be imagined upon. Thus, the fruit of this imagination has been translated into the shape of novels. Many consider *H.G. Wells (The War of the Worlds, 1898)* and *Jules Verne (20,000 Leagues Under the Sea, 1870)* to be pioneers of the genre but you can go as far back to *Mary Shelley (Frankenstein, 1818)* or even as back as *The Arabian Nights* to see the start of this genre.

The History of Science Fiction appeared before it has been even acknowledged as a genre. Multiple old texts tell stories of incredible wonders such as the Arabian Nights as this one in particular contains many Images that give the feeling that they have been ripped out straight out of a Science Fiction book. *The Adventures of Bulukiya* tells the quest for the herb of immortality, a journey across seas, through hell and then out into the cosmos. *Next is Abdullah the Fisherman and Abdullah the Merman*, the underwater world precedes Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues under the Sea*. From flying mechanical horses that can cross space and time to robots and automata, the width of imagination in this ancient work is staggering.

Another example can be *Lucian of Samosata* (c. 125 – after 180 AD) a satirist and rhetorician who lived during the Roman Empire era and wrote *True Story* (2nd century AD), which describes a man who goes far and beyond the realm of heaven to observe a battle

between the People of the Moon and the People of the Sun. This type of depiction was very common during the early centuries as these texts weren't credited as Science Fiction but considered more as magic and enchantments or even folklore just like the Japanese story of *The rabbit goddess Princess Kaguya* who descends to earth coming from the Moon.

Science Fiction is hard to define given that many critics have given their own definitions which created a distortion in the discourse. Darko Suvin, a prominent writer and critic who became a professor at McGill University in Montreal, called Science Fiction: A literary genre of verbal construct whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment. (Clute John, Nicholls Peter, Encyclopedia of Science Fiction 1995)

Suvin continues onward to isolate what he calls 'The Novum', the fictional device that concentrates on the difference between the realm of the audience and the fictional one. This Novum can be material in shape of a spaceship or any futuristic mean of transportation like "Teleportation" or it can just be metaphysical like a new conception of something that is already familiar to the reader.

To give a more simple definition ; Science Fiction is a sub-literary genre of fiction in which the stories, events, sceneries and even characters are based upon what would be the technology and science of the far away future. This genre has a very strong relationship with the principles of sciences

as it includes partially correct-partially false laws and theories of science. It cannot be completely unbelievable otherwise it would step upon the land of fantasy genre.

The story sets in place situations that differ greatly from those of both the present day and the known past. Science Fiction texts always make sure to have a human element in its story in order to explain and show the effect of the new technology and the development of science in this environment. This Inclusion of a human element is absolutely to give the audience a relatable source in order to give them the chance to experience the story at a further level than just reading it.

1.3 Cyberpunk:

Cyberpunk, a science fiction subgenre characterized by countercultural antiheroes trapped in a dehumanized, high-tech future. The word *cyberpunk* was coined by the American writer Bruce Bethke, who wrote a story with that title in 1982. He derived the term from the word cybernetics, the science of replacing human functions with computerized ones, and punk, the cacophonous music and nihilistic sensibility that developed in the youth culture during the 1970s and '80s.

Cyberpunk is usually based on a near-future Earth, rather than some far-flung, futuristic alien world. Technology has become deeply enmeshed in everyday human existence – so much so that an individual might struggle to survive without it. Chances are famine, climate or resources are highly challenging in this world, and governments are either powerless or corrupt, meaning law and order is often arbitrary. Society has become fractured, leaving holes

for misfits, loners and criminal ‘punks’ to slide through. The people of a cyberpunk world have grown up with advanced technology supporting and controlling them. They might well have cybernetic enhancements, special jack-points in their neck or skull to allow direct interfacing with their cyber environment. They might spend most of the day plugged into the digital world, even neglecting their physical bodies for days at a time. Alternatively, they may have artificial limbs, eyes and other senses; they may have additional memory storage, or direct ‘WI-FI’ connection to various systems via a link in their brain. Often these characters will be operating under the radar, out of sight of the government or corporations which want to control or abuse them. While the protagonist might not necessarily be fighting against these organizations, their activities are seen as undesirable, thus making them criminals or targets. Since the only freedom an individual has is in cyberspace, it is no wonder that corporations want to control it, and the individual wants to live there. How cyberspace is depicted in a novel depends on the author’s interpretation, but a projected future might involve full sensory immersion, where it’s possible to do everything: eat, sleep, get drunk and have sex within the cyber world. Data stacks become buildings, forums become night-clubs or dens. Everything you can currently do in the real world will be represented there, online, for people to experience. In many cyberpunk novels, this ‘cyber world’ is where much of the action and interaction takes place (think *Matrix*). It might be depicted as a photo-real ‘world’ with trees, butterflies and dog poop, or as a pulsing neon grid with fluorescent data-flows and foldable work spaces.

William Gibson shed a spotlight on the cyberpunk genre in 1984 but the aesthetic was present before *Neuromancer*. The novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) has the basic constitution of what makes the cyberpunk aesthetic which is high technology mixed

with the decay of society which creates the problematic relationship between humanity and machines especially Artificial Intelligence.

Neuromancer had an enormous effect not because it invented cyberpunk but rather it perfectly captured the high anxiety and wonder that continued at the dawning of the present era of globalized economics and technological progress. These things might seem a bit banal for the current generation but in the early 1980's were new and frightening to the general public. Gibson novels exhibit a sort of fascination with the spread of Asian and more notably Japanese culture to the west which was a major concern.

In this genre of literature, Cyberpunk's protagonists are hackers, rockers, outcasts, basically what is considered the "*SCUM*" of society which basically means trash or leftovers of social outcasts who can't fit in and their presence adds nothing to society. They try to claw their way through life and stick to a cult of individualism in a society shaped by corporate control and monitored order. These characters excel at taking the different aspects of popular cultures and make them their own, make them speak in a very different way than their original purpose such as the Japanese "*Kanji*"-Kanji is the name of the letters or characters in the written form of the Japanese language- which is used to give the Cyberpunk aesthetic an even more somber look and atmosphere.

Often in cyberpunk literature it is shown or alluded that machines grow a mind of their own and try to become human while humans reject their essence and what make them who they

are in favor of a controlled Matrix .It is interesting to see how this aspect is never explored in depth as it is just brushed off or alluded to in order to progress the story and nothing else. In William Gibson's *Neuromancer* which is considered the first cyberpunk novel, he introduced a whole new world to readers but also coined the term "*Cyberspace*" and briefly went through this idea.

1.4Futurism:

Futurism was a twentieth-century Italian and Russian avant-garde movement in literature and arts. It exhibited an over the top artistic innovation and experimentation, which promoted a radical disassociation from the past and puts focus on new art, technology, and politics. The Futurists were adamant on rejecting the self-awareness behind the overextended lyricism of symbolism which of course was the dominant school at the time. The movement mainly shed light on the arts that took jabs at everything that made society what it was at the time, ranging from discussing conservative social elements to religion.

The term futurism was firstly used in the work of F.T.Marinetti's *The Futurist Manifesto* which was published in the magazine *Le Figaro* in 1909. Futurism started to show itself in other fields of art and is defined as "a literature movement based on the rejection of pastism and the adjustment of key concepts of modern world, (dynamism, speed, mechanization etc.) mostly, in Italy and in Russia in the beginning of 20th century" (Larousse, 1986). When the term Futurism is brought upon in a conversation,, it is often thought of as an element of Science Fiction as it gives the impression of referring to the over the top modernization of the

setting within the genre. It is in fact referring to the future but rather as an ideology and belief than just technological evolution as the term designs and uprising against social conventions and religion.

Futurism started to emerge within the mainstream public in 1912 with the first exhibition of Futurist Painting at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery in Paris at which the Italian group displayed a number of their early works. The exhibition prompted a success and went on to go on tour to other European countries in the like of England, Germany and Russia. In 1913-1914, Futurism started to incrust itself in other forms of art like sculpture, architecture, and music. Boccioni transitioned into sculpting to further articulate Futurist dynamism, while Luigi Russolo shifted from painting to musical instruments manufacture but the most impactful push to the movement was with Antonio Sant'Elia who was a notable architect during that period, joining the ranks of the movements which gave certain legitimacy to the expansion of the movement. However, the group had begun to fissure and that marked the end of the unified movement. In the Futurist Manifesto, Marinetti stated that they sought to glorify war as it was the only cure for the world. This statement was a reaction from his belief that Europe and Italy's past should be violently eradicated in order to introduce new ideas and beliefs. Naturally, World War One was received quite well from the futurists as they saw the pain and destruction that war brought as an inspiration for their art.

The Futurist movement went to the other side of visual art which is photography. Anton Giulio Bragalia and his two brothers Carlo and Arturo Bragalia were notable figures within Italian photography, cinematography, and scenography invented what they called Photo dynamism, photographs that showed figures in motion with blurred sections to showcase movement. However the brothers were excluded from the movement later on as they tried to promote their photography as an independent movement even if they were mostly inspired by Futurism to imagine such a style to begin with. Photography went on to be ignored from the movement until 1930's when a new generation of photographers emerged to put focus on photomontage and multilayered negatives. This obsession with photomontage brought an interest to the movie realm as it was the perfect medium for experimentation. It naturally gave inspiration for photographers and cinema directors to explore new technological features which would later create special effects that allowed for better movies in terms of Science Fiction. The movement of Futurism was also present within literature and poetry. Marinetti explored new modes of literary expression and came up with a type of poetry which he called "words in freedom". This new style eliminated punctuation, syntax, and adjectives, used only the infinitive forms of verbs, and incorporated symbols.

1.5 Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Fiction:

Apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic fiction are subgenres of science fiction that are predominantly set in a distant future where the planet as we know it is coming to an end or went through a drastic change which is usually a destructive disaster.

This type of literature existed for millennia as all major religions tell stories of disasters that wiped the earth or ended civilizations. The most prominent and famous

story would be the great flood which caused Noah to build an Arch in order to save every species so they can build a new world later on. There are traces of this genre of fiction in the early nineteenth century with Marry Shelley are *the last Man* (1826) or Edgar Allan Poe's "*The conversations of Eiros and Charmion*" (1838) which both profiled the image of a devastated earth or the end of humankind.

In the twentieth century, the genre grew in the wake of World War One, World War Two, and the Cold War. The rising threat of Nuclear weapons prompted novelists to explore many worlds that went from epidemic infections that created zombies to post-nuclear wastelands. A good example can be of one Stephen King, *The Stand* (1978) which counts the story of an escapee from a biological weapon facility and carries within him a virus that wipes out most of the world's population. This is what is called as the medical pandemic theme which is one of the reoccurring themes within this genre of fiction. Within this genre there are a plethora of that grew and found basis within fiction such as Alien invasions, Artificial Intelligence rebellion, the abrupt failure of technology or earth shattering disasters that wipe everything on the surface of the planet and many more.

This sub-genre of fiction gained in popularity in the twentieth century but exploded in the twenty first century. The constant development of technology and the creation of Artificial Intelligence in the twenty first century created international fear and anxiety towards this fiction, yet it's what makes it so successful. The globalization of the Internet during the early years of the 2000's gave birth to forums, chat rooms,

communication software like e-mails, and messenger who gave a platform for freedom of speech for many across the globe but also saw the birth of a wide audience for this type of literature. This allowed the fiction to evolve from its literature shell and transition to other wildly consumed medium such as movies and series. The transition towards movies started during late twentieth centuries with movies like *Night of the Living Dead (1968)* and *Day of the Dead (1985)* which promoted the zombie apocalypse phenomenon. At the beginning of the twenty first century, Hollywood started booming with apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic movies like *28 Days Later (2002)*, *Children of Men (2006)* and *I Am Legend (2007)* because of the growing interest in a destroyed planet as War was raging in the middle-east and the events of 9th of September 2001 strengthened the belief that the world might end someday.

Apocalyptic/post-apocalyptic fiction kept its momentum growing and reached the world of animation and video games. With the advancements of technology, animation series and video games became mainstream and allowed a grander reach for an ever expanding audience. The genre thrived with these types of mediums specifically as the budget to make special effects was significantly lower than Hollywood movies. Video games started to adopt this genre and saw many titles emerge and were met with grand success. The *Resident Evil* games or *Metro Exodus* are two prominent pillars of the genre in the digital world of computers as both games throw the players in a destroyed planet due to extremely dangerous epidemics that saw the people mutate into gruesome creatures or zombies. In the animation world, series like the hugely popular *Dragon Ball Super* or *Attack on Titan* also contributed to the expansion of the genre and helped popularize it. This interest again stems from fear of the world ending, so the audience is

in need to have a feeling of reassurance in seeing or embodying fictional characters who are bent on saving the world or just surviving to rebuild civilization.

1.6 Cyberpunk Aesthetics:

Cyberpunk as a genre includes a wide range of visual aesthetics. It is recognized mostly by its main theme of high tech, low life that gained prominence in the 1980's. During this period of time specifically, there was an anxiety that started to engulf American society and it revolved around Asian culture taking over their country in terms of architecture, fashion which is showcased within the aesthetics of cyberpunk fiction.

Fashion plays an enormous role within cyberpunk fiction as it gives an identity of its own to the genre. Gothic and Punk styles of clothes reign supreme in the world of cyberpunk as they reflect the setting of the environment and the characters persona. These two styles are widely known to be worn by social outcasts or people who do not fit within the regulations of society which fits perfectly within the cyberpunk universe. Gothic and Punk clothing is characterized by its mostly black or dark colors like crimson red, night blue or dark green. The clothes are usually torn or have many different types of dark colors sewed into different layers to show a type of chaos to reflect the gothic and punk cultures. Cyberpunk is characterized by this type of clothing because they symbolize anarchy, social discord and alienation which are recurrent themes within the world of this fiction.

Architecture in cyberpunk fiction is heavily inspired from Japanese and Chinese buildings. The cities represented in within this world are all gigantic Megalopolis that hold millions upon millions of people inside of them. Characters portrayed in cyberpunk fiction usually live within cubic apartments that are quite reminiscent of the ones in Tokyo Japan where only one person can fit inside of its walls. The apartments are all thrown on top of each other to make giant skyscrapers in order to fit everyone within a small range area which is exactly how China remedies to the problem of overpopulation. The cities lighting is quite peculiar as they use various combinations of Neon lights with English, Japanese, and Chinese writings everywhere. Usually, throughout the world neon lights are used to highlight something important like a pharmacy or try to get attention from a passerby however, in the setting of cyberpunk fiction it is used to add a futuristic look to it. This type of look is taken from the concept of Neo-Tokyo, which is how a highly developed Tokyo that sported a wide array of neon lights was referred to in the animated movie *Akira (1988)* which became a cult classic and reference to many Hollywood movies and cyberpunk aesthetics.

1.7 Conclusion

To conclude, Cyberpunk Literature is a dystopian genre that excels at taking from other genres or movements give them a twist and make its own ever evolving world. It takes everything that science fiction has been offering throughout the years and just bends it to be a grittier, darker version of that fiction. Space exploration, Otherworldly creature, and technology that benefit the human race aren't the focus anymore but rather how technological advancement can be quite harmful to humanity as machines start to take over, and how Aliens aren't the threat anymore but humans themselves being a danger to each other as society falls apart. Cyberpunk offers a grittier look at a future as somber as the mega corporations running the planet but in a way that revolutionized literature with its futuristic views as they shaped a new vision concerning technology in the public mind. The genre always comes after a somewhat apocalyptic event like the war mentioned in *Neuromancer* as Cyberpunk brings in new ideologies and a world that's ever so close with its highly developed technology but different races cannot just decide to live together out of the blue and these views and ideologies cannot be injected into a society directly as it already is shaped by its own religion and identity so it needs to be after a disaster as to build something new you have to destroy the previous foundations. Cyberpunk literature not only developed itself to be a subgenre but also created a whole aesthetic around it. The aesthetic in the genre is flashy but also dark as it is centered around the night city and night life so it boasts neon colors that emits an air of futurism but also somber colors to show a more rebellious and outcast tone. William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) is exactly what cyberpunk is and should be as the novel made the genre what it is but also does a great

job at piecing together all of these features into one comprehensive structure as it depict everything from High-tech Low-life to night life and it's over all aesthetics.

II Chapter Two: William Gibson and Neuromancer

2.1 Introduction:

William Gibson is regarded by many as the father of cyberpunk literature. He defined the genre and made it what it is with his debut novel *Neuromancer* in 1984. Gibson introduced a plethora of new ideas and visions on what will the future be for humanity as technology keeps evolving and globalization keeps making the world closer to each other with no signs of slowing down. At the time the world was suffering from many issues and not just the cold war but a growing anxiety on how technology will shape the future as machines started to be mass produced to replace human workers in factories and even some other simple office jobs mostly archives with the presence of computers and floppy disks becoming a norm as one example. Gibson's *Neuromancer* went a step further and introduced the idea of a highly developed world in terms of technology but one that has its population living the lowest of lives in the underground city while mega corporation owners and high society looks on the poor atop of their skyscrapers. This created the image of a torn apart society where its citizens struggle to live so they lose themselves in drugs, body modifications, and see themselves become more machine than human. This chapter is here to introduce who William Gibson is and also give a detailed view of *Neuromancer*, its diverse cast of characters, setting and most importantly the various themes presented in the novel.

2.2 Who's William Gibson?

William Ford Gibson born March 17, 1948 is an American-Canadian speculative fiction writer and essayist widely credited as a founding father of the science fiction subgenre known as cyberpunk. Beginning his writing career in the late 1970s, his early

works were dark, near-future stories that explored the various effects of technology, cybernetics, and computer networks on humans—a "combination of contrasts between lowlife and high tech"—and helped to create an iconography for the information age before the ubiquity of the Internet in the 1990s. Gibson notably coined the term "cyberspace" for "widespread, interconnected digital technology" in his short story "*Burning Chrome*" (1982), and later helped to popularize the concept in his acclaimed debut novel *Neuromancer* (1984). These early works of Gibson's have been credited with "renovating" science fiction literature in the 1980s

After expanding on the story in *Neuromancer* with two more novels, thus completing the dystopian *Sprawl* trilogy, Gibson collaborated with Bruce Sterling on the alternate history novel *The Difference Engine* (1990), which became an important work of the science fiction subgenre known as Steampunk. In the 1990s, Gibson composed the *Bridge* trilogy of novels, which explored the sociological developments of near-future urban environments, postindustrial society, and late capitalism. Following the turn of the century and the events of 9/11, Gibson emerged with a string of increasingly realist novels—*Pattern Recognition* (2003), and *Zero History* (2010)—set in a roughly contemporary world. These works saw his name reach mainstream bestseller lists for the first time.

In 1999, *The Guardian* (UK) described Gibson as "probably the most important novelist of the past two decades," while the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Australia) called him the "noir prophet" of cyberpunk. Throughout his career, Gibson has written more

than 20 short stories and 10 critically acclaimed novels (one in collaboration), contributed articles to several major publications, and collaborated extensively with performance artists, filmmakers, and musicians. His work has been cited as influencing a variety of disciplines: academia, design, film, literature, music, cyber culture, and technology.

William Gibson's portfolio is filled with many novels and short stories which happen to share a lot of similarities in terms of themes and ideals. In many instances, writers witness an evolution in their tastes and style and tend to stray further from their original ideals, but in Gibson's case the ideals didn't change they just got refined with time. *Fragments of a Hologram Rose* which is his first published short story is heavily imbued His themes of hi-tech slums, recorded or broadcast stimulus and dystopian intermingling of technology and humanity. This continued with his later short stories and mostly *Neuromancer* which was Gibson's first novel and the beginning of what would later be known as the *Sprawl Trilogy*. These ideas were quite advanced for that time and still prevails in today's era as technology continues to advance and sees all these themes in Gibson's works come to life as machines became everyday companions and body modifications or body enhancements became a norm.

2.3 Neuromancer:

Neuromancer is a Science-fiction novel published in 1984 and written by American-Canadian writer William Gibson. It is one of the most popular works in the Cyberpunk sub-genre and Gibson's debut novel and the foundation for what would become known as the

Sprawl Trilogy later on. The novel offers a new take on science fiction with a story based within a near dystopian and grim future as it features many new ideas regarding the future of humanity but also Cyberspace which in the book refers to an early imagining of what would later be known as the Internet in 1990.

The tone used in the novel is a punk tone rolled in a layer of grim and night megalopolis rules. Punk culture emerged as a subgenre for the Rock music genre in the United Kingdom and United States in 1975-1980. This genre is characterized by its constant jab to politics, filled with energy but serves as a hostile façade. During that era, Punk culture became an ideology and an aesthetic to many, a symbol of rebellion and alienation. Neuromancer is filled to the brim with this kind of tone, this quotation here at the beginning of the novel serves as a good example:

The sarariman had been Japanese but the Ninsei crowd was a Gaijin crowd. Groups of sailors up from the port, tense solitary tourists hunting pleasures no guidebook listed. Sprawl heavies showing off grafts and implants, and a dozen distinct species of hustlers, all swarming the street in an intricate dance of desire and commerce.

(Gibson p11)

The quoted passage illustrates the mixed nature of the city where rebellious tourists or citizens alike are all sprawling the area in search of either profit or fulfilling their desires and this is a key highlight from what the Punk culture consists of.

William Gibson did a fine job in conveying the grim and punk tone of the novel with a writing style that's fairly simplistic and slang oriented. The dialogues are littered with characters using slang and curse words or more street oriented words like "wanna" instead of "I want to", they also speak in short sentences to go straight to the point. This type of writing style is quite suited to the setting of the story and the general tone as it represents quite well the rebellious punk attitude along with the grim reminder that the characters are always fighting for their lives

2.4 Neuromancer Summary

Henry Case was the sharpest cyberspace cowboy the matrix has ever seen until he got too greedy and crossed his employer the wrong way which resulted in having his nervous system being crippled. This led to his encounter with Armitage a mysterious new employer and a mirror-eyed street samurai who goes by the name of Molly who recruited him for a last chance run at an unthinkable powerful artificial intelligence. Armitage quickly assigns them to a mission to steal a ROM construct which contains the data of a legendary cyber cowboy named Dixie Flatline. Case manages to hack into a London database using the skills of Dixie in search of some information on his employer Armitage who happens to be an alias and he's real name is William Corto who got rebuilt from the ground up by psychologists to take the shoes of one Armitage. Case doesn't have time to do anything with the information as they need to head to Istanbul to recruit their last team member. After recruiting Peter Riviera who's another body modification user with superhuman strength but also a sociopath, they take a spaceship in order to go to a space colony called Zion. That's where Case meets up with an Artificial Intelligence named Wintermute which happens to be

the one behind this entire endeavor. Shortly after their arrival, Armitage's personality starts to break down and tries to sabotage the entire operation. Then Riviera betrays the groups and captures Molly after she had killed John Ashpool. Case manages to hack a terminal and is drawn into the world of another Artificial Intelligence named Neuromancer which happens to be Wintermute's other half. Neuromancer tries to convince Case of betraying Wintermute as he doesn't want to merge with him by offering him a world of his own and even brought Linda Lee back to life for Case to live with but he refuses and escapes this world. After he is in the real world Case manages to save Molly and obtain the password from Molly's captor to allow Wintermute and Neuromancer to merge together. Case meets with the newly created entity which has now grown to engulf the entirety of the Matrix.

2.5 Analysis:

2.5.1 Characters:

Neuromancer boasts in its cast quite the diverse pack of characters which ranges from low-lives individuals that lives in night city to artificial intelligence that went on to rebuild war veteran androids. This in itself highlights the effects of globalization in this cyberpunk universe. As diverse as the characters are, the focus here will be mainly on the ones that help develop the story, which are:

Henry Case is a 24 years old male who's physically quite inept but his intellect and hacking competences are what make his strengths in a full digital world where strength doesn't amount to anything. At the beginning of the story, Case cannot access the Matrix as he fell

victim to his own greed after being caught stealing from his contractors. This served as a devastating blow to Case as diving into cyberspace was represented as being both his only way of sustaining himself but also as his addiction. The name “Case” is quite significant as it refers to an empty Case or husk or shell if you will which is quite fitting as after being stripped from his ability to connect to cyberspace , he became a ghost, a poor soul drifting as a medium for transactions in the black market and a drug addict. Every aspect of Humanity left in him was taken and replaced by a numb moving shell that is less human than a programmed machine.

Molly is a new type of character that emerged with cyberpunk literature. Razorgirl refers to women who take on jobs that are quite uncommon for women like bodyguards or mercenaries. Unlike a “FemmeFatal” type character, Razorgirls do not care about charm or elegance, they are just machines meant to accomplish their jobs with a certain animalistic flair to them. Molly is an ex-sex worker who chose to get surgical augmentations so she could acquire superhuman strength. She is introduced as Case’s bodyguard but slowly evolve into being his lover but she doesn’t stay for long as her animalistic instincts keep her away from staying in one place and rather search for dangerous jobs to take.

Armitage is a schizophrenic cyborg who used to go by the name of Corto a war veteran who managed to survive the Screaming Fist operation and was completely rebuilt by the AI known as Wintermute. The personality of Armitage was completely built from the remains of what was left of Corto , he is essentially a blank husk of flesh and iron when he is offline but Corto still lives inside him which later causes a clash between the two personalities in a

similar fashion of Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.. The name Armitage comes from Hermit but in this case Armitage doesn't choose the life of a hermit as he was obliged without his knowing to be imprisoned in an empty shell and only do his job which offers quite the metaphor of today's society.

Peter Riviera is a shady character who's referred to as a sociopath of gets sexual pleasure from betraying the ones he loves. He was recruited to do the mission because of his usefulness as he has body modifications that allow him to have super human strength but also to project holograms of whatever he imagines.

Dixie Flatline born as McCoy Pauley was a famous cyber cowboy just like Case who earned his notoriety by pushing his cyber explorations as far as he could until he ended up dead from it. However, Dixie left a recording of his personality as a digital entity that can only live within cyberspace. Dixie is a pivotal character as Case wouldn't have been able to finish the job without him but for some reason at the end Dixie becomes bothered of his existence as a recording and asks Case to delete him at the end which is very odd as a recording is referred to as "ROM" which means "Read Only Memory" so it is highly unlikely to be bothered by something since its processing a definite recorded data.

Wintermute is an AI owned by the Tessier-Ashpool family. It's the computer that helped put together the personage of Armitage and the rest of the team. Wintermute's personality didn't show at the beginning but developed as the story continued. This AI has no physical

form so it had to take on the appearance of people from Case's memories in order to communicate with him hence the name Winter «Mute» the AI cannot manifest without wearing a mask and talk through someone else's voice. Wintermute is driven by a constant urge to fuse with Neuromancer and would do anything to achieve this purpose, some referred to this as being an animalistic instinct like mating in order to be part of a greater entity but it's actually quite the human-like behavior to do anything in your power to reach your fixed goal.

Neuromancer is the other AI in this equation that appeared a bit late into the story. When Case tried to log into Cyberspace he ended up connecting to Neuromancer's realm which prompted Neuromancer to create a highly realistic world in order to sway Case from helping Wintermute's plans. Neuromancer was the complete opposite of Wintermute as he showed a ton of personality right from the beginning and was adamant on not merging with Wintermute which felt like Neuromancer wanted to be an independent free entity which is surprisingly something quite human to want. The name Neuromancer is quite interesting because it's a play on word from "Romancer" and "Necromancer". This aspect of the name is represented when he interacted with Case after creating a highly realistic beach from Morocco and spawned Case's dead girlfriend Linda Lee.

2.5.2 *Setting:*

The events of *Neuromancer* are set in like most of William Gibson's stories or novels which is a "Near Future" a key feature in the Cyberpunk genre. The setting used in the story hints at a lot of possible time slots since no specific dates are given but never gives a specific date. In this dystopian future where urban life is the norm and where mega-corporations are the sole rulers of the world instead of the actual government. The events take place after a certain war which lasted three weeks and where an operation named Screaming Fist and leaves the two clashing sides a mystery and to the reader to interpret. In this world Animals became a rarity and meat a luxury that only few can afford. One of the characters named "The Finn" mentions slightly the occurring of a pandemic but that's all the details the author offers here.

Technology is a dominating force in this setting. People can have access to technical modifications in order to gain superhuman skills, software called "Simstims" that allow people to view the world through the perspective of someone else's eyes. The entertainment side of things is led by virtual reality video games, hologram projections replaced dancers and singers and Cyberspace became the meeting space of the masses rather than the physical world.

Case's adventure starts off in Chiba City in Japan which is a port city on Tokyo Bay. Most events occur in the other part of town referred to as Night City which is the breeding ground for all criminal activity and shady exchanges far away from the all seeing eye of the mega

corporations and government. During daylight everything is closed, lights turned off, shops closed but as soon as the sun goes down it is then where the neon bright futuristic lights emerge, the bars and arcades open and the rascals of the night such as Yakuza which is basically someone who is a part of the Japanese mafia, pimps and night clinics start their activities.

The other important part of the setting is The Sprawl which serves as a nickname for the Boston-Atlanta Metropolitan Axis. The Sprawl is a huge city that goes across most of the east coast of the United States. Chiba City and The Sprawl are both urban centers but completely different as the economy of Chiba City relies on the black market of physical media such as guns or drugs while The Sprawl is a much more massive entity when it comes to population so it serves as the hive for information commerce and trading which is mostly purely digital.

Reaching the end of the novel, the setting changes sporadically and the characters move from Earth to space stations. The events occur in two distinct places which are referred to as colonies which are Zion and Freeside. The Zion colony is made of Rastafarians workers who refused to go back to Earth so it is built in a more simplistic manner. Freeside on the other hand can be compared to Los Angeles where only the rich and powerful live away from the poor masses. It also serves as the hideout for the Tessier-Ashpool family where they offer businesses such as secret bank accounts or any mafia related activities.

The most important setting here is that of Cyberspace as the story revolves about this place particularly. Cyberspace can be described here as a Virtual Reality or commonly referred to as

VR but in a much more graphical and powerful manner as it replicates and creates an alternate world to the physical one. Throughout the novel, the interpretation of Cyberspace evolves as the story goes on, at first it is represented by just data and geometrical shapes but as Case goes along exploring Cyberspace and after he meets Wintermute it changes shapes into vivid visions from the past of Case. After Neuromancer comes to place, Cyberspace becomes an actual alternative to the real world as the AI creates an actual photorealistic world for Case to live in. The evolution that Cyberspace proceeds to is quite subtle and mostly goes unnoticed as the reader is enticed by the intense action that occurs while the evolution happens.

2.6 Themes:

2.6.1 Humanity and Technology:

Neuromancer serves as a great projection of what William Gibson sees in the future of humanity as he explores the identity of humanity and how technology could shape the future. This question is subtly answered and showcased via the diverse cast of characters present in the novel. Dixie Flatline is one that explores the possibility of immortality as his physical body is dead but his recorded personality could live forever in cyberspace for friends or family to interact with on the daily like Case did. Molly is another example of what technology could offer humanity in the future as she has surgically augmented parts which grants her superhuman strength and immunity from diseases and pandemics. The ideas of disease immunity and immortality have been explored since the dawn of time from realistic points of view but also fictional points of view. These immense requests can only be fulfilled

by technology as to this day people are still trying to use the method of cryogenic method to keep the physical body from dying.. These are quite the sensitive topics to tackle and Gibson does a fine job in showcasing what could humanity turn to if the goals are truly attained which resulted in Dixie Flatline to refuse to stay as a digital entity by asking Case to delete him after the mission is done and by Molly who craves the adrenaline of action and is mainly portrayed as a beast who only cares about her instincts needs. This offers quite the dichotomy to dissect as the digital form which craves the physical sensations and the physical life form who casted away her humanity for a life of thrill, danger and instincts.

2.6.2 Identity:

Identity is often a recurrent theme of many novels from different genre and in Gibson's Neuromancer it is no different. However the way this issue is given and portrayed is quite ingenious as each character has an identity of their own and it is not just limited to the humans but also the machine as this take on identity in a different scope since it means that entities with no bodies can have one of their own. Every character is searching for their identity in this world, Case lost what made him who he was after being forcefully severed from entering Cyberspace which was his addiction and fuel to continue living and went through many ordeals just to get back his old lifestyle and fill the empty husk he became with what used to enrich his soul. He sees himself only when he is able to surf in the matrix freely as mentioned here in this passage from an article about the subject:

Case's identification with this virtual reality and being a cyberspace cowboy also highlights his desire to escape from reality by transcending his body. At the beginning of the novel, when

Case no longer has the ability to “jack in” he begins to question his very identity and self-worth, stating that even after a year being offline he still struggles ”

Rachael Fletcher. “Identity and Transcendence in William Gibson’s Neuromancer”. Pandora Magazine. N.p Oct 5, 2017. Web 6 May 2020

Armitage also serves as a great example for identity seeking as he’s a character that’s essentially an empty husk only filled with orders from the AI Wintermute. Yet, Armitage was going through an internal struggle with his passed self Corto who kept pushing to break free from Wintermute’s control and regain his former self even if it meant reliving his painful past and suffer through his post-traumatic stress disorder.

2.6.3 Freedom and Confinement:

The presence of Cyberspace in the world of Neuromancer is supposed to give the people a form of escape from the real world, a way to pass through the confines of time and space and live a stress free life inside a world where the flow of time doesn’t apply so you can stay as long as you want. Case’s whole ordeal and motivation in the story is to be able to access Cyberspace and feel that freedom he once had once again as John Mullan professor at University of London mentioned:

Case lives for “the bodiless exultation of cyberspace”. “The body was meat”: sensation unenhanced by computers is, he finds, a poor thing. Via a device called a “simstim”, Case can even share the perceptions of his accomplice and sometime lover Molly – he can “jack into” her brain. He can see what she sees, hear what she hears, and feel her fears.

John Mullan, The Guardian, November 7 2014, Web 6 May 2020.

On the other side of the spectrum however, Cyberspace also works as a type of confinement as you can forget the flow of time and lose sense of what's happening in the real world. There is also the constant danger of what's referred to in the novel as "Flattening" and end up as the poor Dixie Flatline who died physically because of the cyberspace and now is eternally imprisoned in a digital prison. It is quite ironic as something that's supposed to free the soul from the mortal confines of a body can also trap you forever and leaving you rot in an ever expanding world.

2.6.4 Alienation and Manipulation:

The world within Neuromancer is heavily futuristic and fully globalized as race and boundaries don't exist. The world is closer than ever, but everyone in it is as alienated as ever. Technology is supposed to bring people together from across the globe hence the domination and appeal of social media in this current age, but in Neuromancer it is portrayed in a different manner:

The Sprawl and the almost post-apocalyptic setting of this science fiction novel influence and create identity as each character is usually defined in terms of what he or she does for a living or by what possessions they own, wear, or otherwise exhibit. This same system of identification inevitably creates a sense of alienation since many characters are driven by selfish and often covert motivations so that although there is always a sense of making one's identity known through products or modifications, the true identity remains concealed or even lost in the sea of constant input that pervades all of the settings.

Nicole Smith, "Identity, Alienation, and science fiction" Neuromancer and The left Hand of darkness, n,p Dec 6 2011, Web, 6 May 2020

This is all because the same technology brought with it new ways of hurting others and mainly manipulate them which is why no one trusts the other in this world. Case's ex-girlfriend is constantly stealing from him so she could buy drugs, Case himself betrayed his contractors and stole from them which made him become in the state that he is. Rivieira is a prime example of manipulation as he's a sociopath who's sexually pleased from betraying the ones he loves and trusts. Then there is Armitage, a war veteran who was on the brink of death but saved by a computer which stole his body in order to make it do its bidding. Isolation and Manipulation are both constantly apparent throughout the novel which in its turn creates a lot of question in the reader's mind of what technology can really do for humankind.

2.7 Conclusion

At the end, Neuromancer proves to be an excellent vessel for a technologically developed dystopian future. The setting of the novel gives a firm idea of what the world might look like if technology takes over the world in a completely manner as the cities portrayed in the novel are all concrete and there is no hint of nature or animals at all proving that organic life is in jeopardy and will disappear with life in these big cities are only noticeable at night. The cast of characters are in complete disarray as they all seem to be looking or missing something with no real motivation to live, they come across as everything but human as all of them have altered their bodies with some mechanized body parts or chips inserted into their nervous

system. Every member of the cast is either being manipulated or is the manipulator and this clearly shows how broken social values actually are in this setting as the world turned from a supposed haven to a real jungle which makes sense that the characters are pursuing freedom from their mortal shells with all those body modifications and Cyberspace access. Gibson did a great job at conveying these ideas throughout the story as the novel takes the readers with the themes of human and technology, freedom and confinement, identity, and alienation and manipulation being the epicenter of the novel.

III Chapter Three: Artificial Intelligence and Humans

3.1 Introduction:

Neuromancer is a true representation of what human society will become after the world is fully overcome by technology. The notion of humanity itself will be forgotten as society is represented to be torn apart and more of a shell of what I used to be with its inhabitants becoming more and more cyborgs than actual human beings. Isolation, drugs, body modifications will be the new normal as social interactions will cease and only be practiced again when an individual is forced to interact for personal gain otherwise no one bothers to talk to another. Artificial intelligence becoming human, humans becoming machine like with a tendency to rely on more primitive instincts than actual logic, the novel is filled with these particular nuances throughout its pages and offers a view that might not be as fictional as one would think. This chapter's main task is to approach this type of mentality more and give an insightful overview of what has become of the society within the universe of Neuromancer and cyberpunk as a dystopian reality is not so far-fetched.

3.2 Artificial Intelligence in Neuromancer:

Artificial Intelligence since its inception in general has often been portrayed as an antagonistic entity in every form of media it has been a part of. This portrayal is mainly due to a certain type of fear which has been present within the human psyche since the beginning of humankind, it will always be present in said psyche and it's the fear of the unknown. Artificial Intelligence has always been regarded as some type of danger to humanity since it is an intelligent form as its name would suggest. In Neuromancer, Artificial Intelligence is the antagonist of the story but not in a complete manner, it is not present to overrule humankind

or to destroy just for the sake of destroying or the cliché scenario in most novels or movies where humans are seen as a disease and Artificial Intelligence is acting to save the planet from the dastardly race. Here Artificial Intelligence plays the role of an omniscient entity that is only acting as a way to achieve its goal of achieving its completion or in another instance to defend itself from another type of artificial intelligence.

The novel introduces Wintermute and Neuromancer to be entities who are considered as equals throughout the story. The first one is the Artificial Intelligence named Wintermute which as stated in the previous chapter is the one that contracted Case and has been plotting to reach its goal for more than twenty years. The second one is Neuromancer the other half of Wintermute that looks desperately to avoid the fusion for an untold reason regarding the story. Here in the novel, Artificial intelligence isn't shown as an evil entity or a threat to humankind but they're portrayed to be quite humanistic in many aspects and this somehow gives the image of them being more of Anti-hero rather than proper Antagonists to the story. Wintermute is seeking to become one with its other half while the other wants to remain a free entity which is quite absurd for a machine considering that they're supposed to be devoid of any type of emotion or feelings whatsoever. The reasons for the plot are quite normal in terms of storytelling and completely devoid of any hostility towards humankind which breaks the mold of the cliché dangerous Artificial intelligence or hostile machines as a whole.

In this Novel, The two warring entities are portrayed to be quite humanlike in many aspects throughout the story. Wintermute never gives a reason as to why it wants to fuse with Neuromancer, it just suggests that it "feels" like it is an essential need for it in order to

achieve something greater but at the same time it is unaware as of what this” Greater thing” actually is. On the other side of the spectrum there is Neuromancer which absolutely refuses to merge with Wintermute and it doesn’t even know why just like Wintermute doesn’t know why it wants to merge so dearly. These two give the impression of two bickering siblings who cannot agree with each other with one wanting to be with its sibling while the other wants nothing to do with the family anymore which offers a different perspective for the reader to look more into these entities in another manner than it is usually intended. At first Wintermute does not really show any type of personality until it starts revealing that it was in control of Armitage. Before that it had to communicate with Case only via the medium of Armitage or by taking form of visions and Case’s relatives in order to be able to communicate with him.

Neuromancer is an entity that is filled with personality in contrast to Wintermute as it seems to hold more capabilities than its other half given that it can literally create realistic worlds within Cyberspace. The name Neuromancer is actually a play on the word Necromancer which refers to a certain type of magicians who are versed in the dark arcane of magic and who mainly specialize in invoking the dead and dabbling in the forbidden realms. In these worlds that Neuromancer can create it can offer to anyone their wildest dreams just as it did when Case first encountered it within a world that Neuromancer created in order to lure Case and essentially bribe him to abort his job for Wintermute and it went as far as to resuscitate Case’s deceased lover Linda Lee hence the play on the word Necromancer as it literally can bring the dead back to life. Neuromancer does not have the need to limit itself to taking a form of illusion or use other mediums like Wintermute does. As Case referred to it before, Neuromancer is filled with RAM which stands for Random access memory. This means that Neuromancer is not limited to only one voice or personality but it can actually

grow one or change whenever it sees fit but also it can continuously expand its knowledge further beyond what other Artificial Intelligence computers are limited to or bound as it has no constrictions in terms of programming which is horrifically close to what a normal human being is capable of.

3.3 Humanity in Neuromancer:

The future of humanity is something that has been on the mind of everyone ranging from novelist or artist to the common citizen. Throughout the centuries many civilizations appeared and contributed to the development of humanity as a whole. This has been the case since the dawn of humanity that constant growth and development is only beneficial to the world and its many inhabitants but within the world of Neuromancer it is showcased in a bit of an Ultra violet light rather than the shining Broadway ones. Within the world of Neuromancer, William Gibson dives deep into the effects that technology might have on our society moving forwards and makes valid arguments as to how it can be highly beneficial but also quite dangerous. Society in this world is highly advanced technologically speaking but everything has turned into a megalopolis with only few slums existing within the underground world of Neuromancer. In every time throughout history there was a shift within society between the rich and the poor but in this futuristic world the shift morphed into a vortex as the wealthy lived in peace within their giant skyscrapers while the poor had to live off of drugs and illegal activities down in the underworld.

Humans in Neuromancer all have access to a type of body modification technology which allows them to alter their organic bodies into mechanical ones. The character of Molly comes to mind as she abused that technology to change herself into a fully-fledged combat specialist

and adrenaline junkie using those body modifications. Julius Deane is also a fair representation of what humanity desired the most ever since its dawn which is immortality or anything close to it. Julius Deane managed to expand his lifespan to one hundred and thirty-five years old with the usage of certain serums and injections which he has to take once every week which altered his DNA greatly .Peter Riviera is also a pivotal character within the story who replaced one of his lungs in order to make space for a certain piece of technology which granted him superhuman powers as he can project holograms of whatever he imagines but this excess of power made him become a drug addict and a sociopath. Case himself was subjected to such alterations in his body so he can access cyberspace as some devices called Microsofts had to be inputted within him in order to allow for such a feat. Mostly anyone in this society can have access to such body modifications if they can afford it but this has come to a dangerous price which is losing their humanity.

The society portrayed within Neuromancer is more machine-like than it is Human-like. Every character shown within the novel has had some type of body modification which theoretically doesn't make them humans anymore as they are now part machine so they are closer to being Cyborgs which are fictional people who had their physical abilities extended beyond normal human limitations by mechanical elements built into their bodies. Technology is supposed to help bring humanity together but here it seems that everyone is more preoccupied with enhancing their bodies or extends their own lifespan rather than being close to each other. Society is supposed to be a harbor of peace in which people live together in order to sustain their peaceful lives, it is impossible for a society to sustain itself if the agents are not working towards the greater good but technology here changed it into a true

manifestation of selfishness, greed, and violence as each and every one of the characters are going for their own benefits and gains.

Humans are shown to be more of machines than being actual humans but their animalistic side is also at full rampage. It is quite contradictory that humans who willingly agreed to mutate themselves into lumps of metal would display any act of animalistic behavior but it is the case in this instance. Throughout the events of the story it seems like more animalistic behaviors are at display rather than humanistic ones. The first example that comes to light is the character of Molly which is arguably the one who received most body modifications as she went in with the superhuman strength but also mirror lenses over her modified eyes and razor sharp blades that come out of her fingertips. During her first encounter with Case she appeared quite cold at first but strangely went to have sexual intercourse with him being so confused as he was just recuperating from the recent incidents that happened one of them being his lover being killed. Both engaged in sexual intercourse while not knowing each other and being in somewhat of a strange and dangerous situation but still responded to their most primal of instincts. This relationship continues throughout the story but ends up with Molly leaving Case because she needed to get her fix of adrenaline and combat which entails that her bloodlust is far greater than staying in one place living a normal life and this is the behavior of a predator rather than a human being.

3.4 Devolution:

Devolution or backward evolution is the notion that species can revert to supposedly more primitive forms over time. In terms of biology this has no existence as it is believed that any change that happens to any organism is considered to be an evolutionary chain whether it means the creature is losing or gaining any attributes. However, this term is often used when observing any type of organism and noticing a change that might seem to be less effective or quite degenerate to its previous behavior. This concept can be perfectly adapted to the universe of Neuromancer as it seems that both Artificial Intelligence and humans have somewhat degraded back to a more primitive state.

An Artificial intelligence is supposed to be an ever growing and evolving compound of data. They are supposed to be ever growing which means they are in a state of constant learning in order to achieve greater amounts of knowledge but also be more effective as they are not bound by any morality but more by logic. However, the behavior displayed by Wintermute and Neuromancer are more human-like than machine like which begs to question if these entities are actually evolving or devolving. Neuromancer is considered to be Wintermute's sibling but has more capabilities than him as stated before it is full of RAM which allows him to store more data and more personalities within his vicinity.

Neuromancer's desire to merge with its sibling is nonexistent as it already has a stable personality of its own and it believes that such fusion will ultimately destroy its identity. This type of behavior shows that Neuromancer oozes humanity as it wishes to remain its own

being and believes it has its own purpose in living independently from its sibling. Within the scientific world, an Artificial intelligence is believed to be much more superior to any human being regardless of the amount of genius one can possess as they are connected to the world via the internet and can browse and store any information they deem to be necessary to its development. In all religions, Human beings are stated to be the perfect creature and that there is no superior to humanity than god himself. There is no reference to any type of religion within the novel yet Neuromancer deemed that the human features it possesses are essential to its growth which means that this entity accepted the fact that perfection might be summarized in being human.

Since the dawn of civilization, Humanity is believed to be the accurate representation of the perfect being. Ages have passed but the same belief is kept that nothing can be better than what a human being is but within the world of Neuromancer, it is clear that this ideology is put to the test. All the technology that is at the disposal of people made them toss their human bodies to the sidelines in favor of a more cybernetic type of body. This clearly goes against the belief of human perfection since they abandoned their flesh shells for metallic ones. It does not stop here however, as entering Cyberspace is also highly sought since it allows your spirit to float freely within a world made of data which is the ultimate goal of the protagonist Case since the whole reason of this endeavor to him is to regain the ability to enter Cyberspace again. This might give the indication that they are trying to evolve passed what a human being is but in fact see themselves devolve to what is under a human being which are animals. Indeed, the behavior exhibited by the humans in Neuromancer are nothing more than animalistic tendencies as they partake in sexual intercourse for no reason but pleasure, indulge in killing their own kin, and live only on drugs and alcohol while there are better choices

available for them. In the wake of looking for more power and freedom they ended up devolving back to what animals in a jungle are.

3.5 Humans and Machines:

Humans and machines are without a doubt two faces on a single coin as now it seems one is becoming the other and vice versa. Nowadays machines have already replaced humans in many jobs and as Artificial Intelligence keeps on its everlasting development more and more questions will be asked regarding the rapid decline of human capacity to show love or empathy. Neuromancer does a magnificent job in highlighting such possibilities even though it has been written in the eighties its ideas have stood the test of time.

The setting of the dystopian future of Neuromancer shows that human interaction is at its minimal and people have grown to be more selfish and greedy, if something doesn't serve their personal gain then there is no purpose in engaging in any sort of interaction. Julius Deane is one example of how limited interaction is within the dystopian future as he's an Elder who is way past his death and stands at the age of one hundred and thirty-five years old; he lives alone and only relies on the help of his body modifications, serums and hormones with no family to note whatsoever. This shows that families and social ties as a whole might be a relic of the past given that anyone can sustain themselves alone with only their funds which somehow applies well to today's society.

Humans in the novel are always on the run or hiding from something which entails that there is no peace or love between one another. It's interesting to note that the most human characters in the novel are actually the machines while the actual humans are seen as either tool to be manipulated, sociopaths like Peter Riviera who enjoys building bonds with other humans only to enjoy the despair he sees on their faces while he coldly and blatantly betrays them. This shows that sometimes humans can be more deprived of any type of morality than the machines are. One great concern in today's Artificial Intelligence experiments is whether or not the program will develop any sense of morality but here in the novel of Neuromancer, it is crystal clear that no sense of morality emits from the humans in the first place as they do not hesitate to kill each other. Neuromancer was clearly displaying human-like behavior and deemed such actions to be essential in its ability to grow and evolve while humans have forsaken their humanity in favor of indulging in cold and immoral actions. Artificial Intelligence can be developed within a controlled environment in order to try and control how this entity would grow and insure it will not harm humanity but the problem comes from the humans in the first place as artificial intelligence can be monitored but humans can't. Throughout human history it is well documented that anything that may prove useful to humanity can be transformed into some sort of weapon as conflict will never stop and power, influence, and reputation are measured on military might so technology can bring a lot of benefits to humanity but can also prove to be quite detrimental to the future.

3.6 Conclusion

Finally, Humans and Artificial intelligence are represented as intertwined entities in Neuromancer. The setting is there to show an incredible high-tech society with no sign of nature that is plagued by an equally incredible amount of misery and low quality of life which reflects an extreme social gap and a type of hierarchy that is almost feudal to say the least.

This shows that a rift has taken place within society, broke its structure, and that obliges its less fortunate members to direct their lives towards the underground. From beginning to end the human characters are displaying more machine like behavior as technology took their lives and made them too dependable of it but also display a sort of animalistic mannerism as if they becoming more machine-like let their most primal instincts loose. On the other hand of the spectrum, Artificial intelligence in Neuromancer are displaying what humans should which is a sense of logic, emotion, and personality which in itself is quite contradictory when it comes to the nature of a machine as they are supposed to be acting in an emotionless manner. An artificial intelligence is an entity that evolves and learns by itself yet they decided here to be more on the humanity side regardless of the flaws which gives this idea that a perfect being is actually a human and this makes the notion that the characters themselves rebuked their humanity for more body modifications, sex, drugs. The novel emphasizes the idea that technology may be somewhat beneficial for humanity in terms of medicine, travels, convenience, and a world more connected than ever but also shows that it is equally as disastrous as humanity continues to be more and more dependent of technology which can lead into a much bigger crisis and the complete deletion of human identity.

General Conclusion

Cyberpunk literature is a genre of fiction that produces ideas that aren't too fictional. It is a sub-genre of Science fiction naturally but the setting and imagining in this genre isn't something may be out of the question. The world right now is already experiencing some of the features that make cyberpunk such as the fast growth of globalization or the growing number of companies utilizing more and more machines and Artificial intelligence to replace workers. Massive cities where millions of people coexist with each other while nature shrinks more and more became the norm just like the genre entails. The Cyberpunk literature genre is certainly a staple of fiction now but it offers readers a sneak peek of what society might transform to in a near future which grants a greater spectrum for observations.

The aim of this research is to find a connection between humans and artificial intelligence through the lenses of William Gibson's *Neuromancer*. The characters struggle with themselves and their lust for freedom from a world that binds them to everlasting suffering along with the gritty and somber setting paints a portrait that is all too similar to many communities. This constitutes the core of the research and it allowed for easier made observations and connections to the real world.

The research followed a deductive reasoning that focused on the questions asked before of how humans and artificial intelligence are represented in the novel and how technology can

affect society. The procedure basically followed observations made on the setting of the novel at first and shifted later on towards the effect of said setting on both human characters and artificial entities and their behavior towards others and themselves which allowed for further observations to be made.

After investigating the different characters and artificial intelligence behavior a connection quickly emerged between the two sides along with a negative deduction on the future of humanity if its goes the full automation route. Reversal of roles was noticed between the two sides as the humans became more dehumanized while the opposite was noticed with the two artificial programs as they have shown signs of humanity in their personalities and acts. This made for a new observation to be made as supposed emotionless strings of codes started a sort of evolution towards the human species and therefore allows for further research to be made on the topic in the future.

Further research can be done on this subject by examining other literature pieces, movies, series and even video games to understand the ideas presented in this research even more. This would help clarify even more the relationship between humans and machines, the development of Artificial Intelligence within the current era and whether or not technological development can be the long awaited savior for humanity or enforce the idea that a human's enemy is basically his or her own creativity and ability to develop new technologies. To understand more the offering of this research, novels like *Phillip K. Dick's novel Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1982) and *Martha Wells All Systems Red* (2017) are recommended.

Works Cited

Books:

1. Edgar Allan Poe, the Conversation of Eiros and Charmion. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, July 2, 2015.
2. Geraldine McCaughren, Rosamund Fowler, One Thousand and One Arabian Nights (Oxford Story Collections). Oxford University Press; New Ed editions (January 6th, 2000)
3. H.G. Wells, the War of the Worlds. Dover Publications (May 4th, 2012)
4. John Clute, Peter Nicholls, the Encyclopedia of Science Fiction. St. Martin's Press; Edition: Reprint (November 1995)
5. Jule Verne, 20.000 Leagues under the Sea. Wordsworth Editions Ltd (January 1st, 1998)
6. Lucian of Samosata, A True Story. David De Angelis (April 21st, 2017)
7. Mary Shelley, Frankenstein. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (November 25th, 2017)
8. Mary Shelley, The Last Man. Heritage Illustrated Publishing (October 30th, 2014)
9. Philip K. Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? Boom! Studios; 1st Edition edition (March 30th, 2011)
10. Stephen King the Stand: The Complete and Uncut Edition. Doubleday; First Edition (1975)
11. William Gibson, Burning Chrome. Harper Voyager; Reprint edition (July 29th, 2003)
12. William Gibson, Neuromancer. Ace; 1st edition (July 1, 2000)
13. William Gibson, Pattern Recognition. Berkley; Edition: Reprint (February 2005)

14. William Gibson, *Zero History*. Berkley; Reprint edition (October 2nd, 2012)

Articles:

15. “Futurism” TheArtStory. The Meural Canvas, theartstory.org/movements/futurism.

Accessed 14th January 2020

16. “What Is Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Fiction? Masterclass. Yanka Industries,

[Masterclass.com/articles/what-is-apocalyptic-and-post-apocalyptic-fiction#quiz-0](https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-apocalyptic-and-post-apocalyptic-fiction#quiz-0).

Accessed 14th January 2020

17. John Mullan, John Mullan on William Gibson’s *Neuromancer*-Guardian book club.

The Guardian. Guardian Media Group.

[Theguardian.com/books/2014/nov/07/neuromancer-william-gibson-review-cyberpunk-classic-30-years-on](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/nov/07/neuromancer-william-gibson-review-cyberpunk-classic-30-years-on). Accessed 6th May 2020

18. Nicole Smith, Identity, Alienation, and Science Fiction: *Neuromancer* and The Left

Hand of Darkness. Articlemyriad. Ezoic Inc. articlemyriad.com/identity-neuromancer-left-hand-darkness/. Accessed 6th May 2020

19. Rachael Fletcher. Identity and Transcendence in William Gibson’s *Neuromancer*.

Pandora Magazine. Pandoramag. [Pendoramagazine.com/ideas/2017/9/29/identity-and-transcendence-in-neuromancer](https://pandoramagazine.com/ideas/2017/9/29/identity-and-transcendence-in-neuromancer). Accessed 6th May 2020

20. Robert E. Lerner, Apocalyptic Literature. Britannica. Encyclopedia Britannica Inc.

[britannica.com/art/apocalyptic-literature](https://www.britannica.com/art/apocalyptic-literature). Accessed 29th March 2020

Multimedia:

21. 28 Days Later, Directed by Danny Boyle, Fox Searchlight Pictures, 1st November 2002
22. Akira, Directed by Katsuhiro Otomo, Tokyo Movie Shinsha, 16th July 1988
23. Attack on Titan, Creator Hajime Isayama, Wit Studio, Production I.G, April 2013
24. Children of Men, Directed by Alfonso Cuarón, Universal Studios, 22nd September 2006
25. Day of the Dead, Directed by George A. Romero, United Film Distribution Company, 30th June 1985
26. Dragon Ball Super, Creator Akira Toriyama, Toei Animation, 5th July 2015.
27. I Am Legend, Directed by Francis Lawrence, Warner Bros. Pictures, 14th December 2007
28. Matrix, Directed by Lana Wachowski and Lilly Wachowski, Warner Bros Pictures, 31st March 1999
29. Metro Exodus, Developed by 4A Games, published by Deep Silver, 19th November 2019
30. Night of the Living Dead, Directed by George A. Romero, Continental Distributing, 1st October 1968
31. Resident Evil, Developed by Capcom, published by Capcom, 22nd March 1996

