

Cyborgs and a Post Human Future?

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Logging On To Cyber Society



Cyborgs



Cyborgs in Sci-Fi

- Demonstrating the power of man and science over the natural world
- [Metropolis](#) 1927
- [Six Million Dollar Man](#) & [Bionic Woman](#)
- [Blade Runner](#)



Types of Cyborg ?

- Cyborg – cybernetic organism
- Hybrids of human-machine
- How are people using technology to explore being cybernetic organisms (cyborgs), hybrids of the human and the machine? ([Film](#))
- Cybernetic systems constitute cyborgs by using biology and technology
- Separable cyborg (pilot-aircraft, ear-hearing aid) Steve Mann ([Film](#))
- Invasive cybernetic technologies – Kevin [Warwick](#) ([Film](#))



Prosthetic cybernetic technologies - Stelarc

- ‘The body needs to be repositioned from the psycho realm of the biological to the cyber zone of the interface and extension – from genetic containment to electronic extrusion’.
- It cannot cope with the quantity, complexity and quality of information it has accumulated..., it is biologically ill-equipped to cope with its new extra-terrestrial environment’.
(Stelarc, 2000, p.560-1)



A. Murphie & J. Potts -

'Cyborgs: the body, information and technology'

- Awareness of patterns of control that constrain us can lead to change
- Cyborg culturally significant metaphor for crossing boundaries of human and non-human – powerful site of resistance to binary systems that structure our worldview
- Subversively blurs boundaries between oppositional concepts in which one may be marked as superior



Breaking down binaries

- Human/nonhuman
- Culture/nature
- Male/female
- Technology/biology
- Divine /man made
- Reality/ representation
- Subject/ object



Vs.



Donna Haraway

'The Cyborg Manifesto'

- Haraway's hybrid bio-technological world
- Cyborg as the “disassembled, reassembled postmodern collective and personal self” that empowers us through the negotiation of culture and identity
- Extends the idea of ‘bodies’ beyond accepted norms, especially in terms of gender
- Existence on the boundaries of human and machine



Cyborgs, sex and gender

- Cyborgs challenge gender binaries and support the idea that gender is socially acquired.
- "There is nothing about being female that naturally binds women. There is not even such a state as 'being' female, itself a highly complex category constructed in contested sexual scientific discourses and other social practices"-Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto" (155).
- Gender as language, codes and signs.
- The cyborg transgresses gender stereotypes and is a liminal being with its own subjectivity.



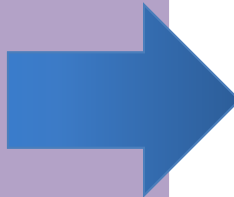
Haraways 'Informatics of Domination'

- | • Old | New |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Representation | Simulation |
| • Bourgeois novel, realism | Science fiction, postmodernism |
| • Organism | Biotic Component |
| • Depth, integrity | Surface, boundary |
| • Heat | Noise |
| • Biology as clinical practice | Biology as inscription |
| • Physiology Communications | Engineering |
| • Small group | Subsystem |
| • Perfection | Optimization |
| • Eugenics | Population Control |
| • Sex | Genetic engineering |
| • Labour | Robotics |
| • Mind | Artificial intelligence |
| • Second World War | Star Wars |
| • White Capitalist Patriarchy | Informatics of Domination |



Hierarchal Systems of Domination

- Organism
- Perfection
- Reproduction
- Nature / Culture
- Mind



Informatics of Domination

- Biotic component
- Optimisation
- Replication
- Fields of difference
- Artificial Intelligence

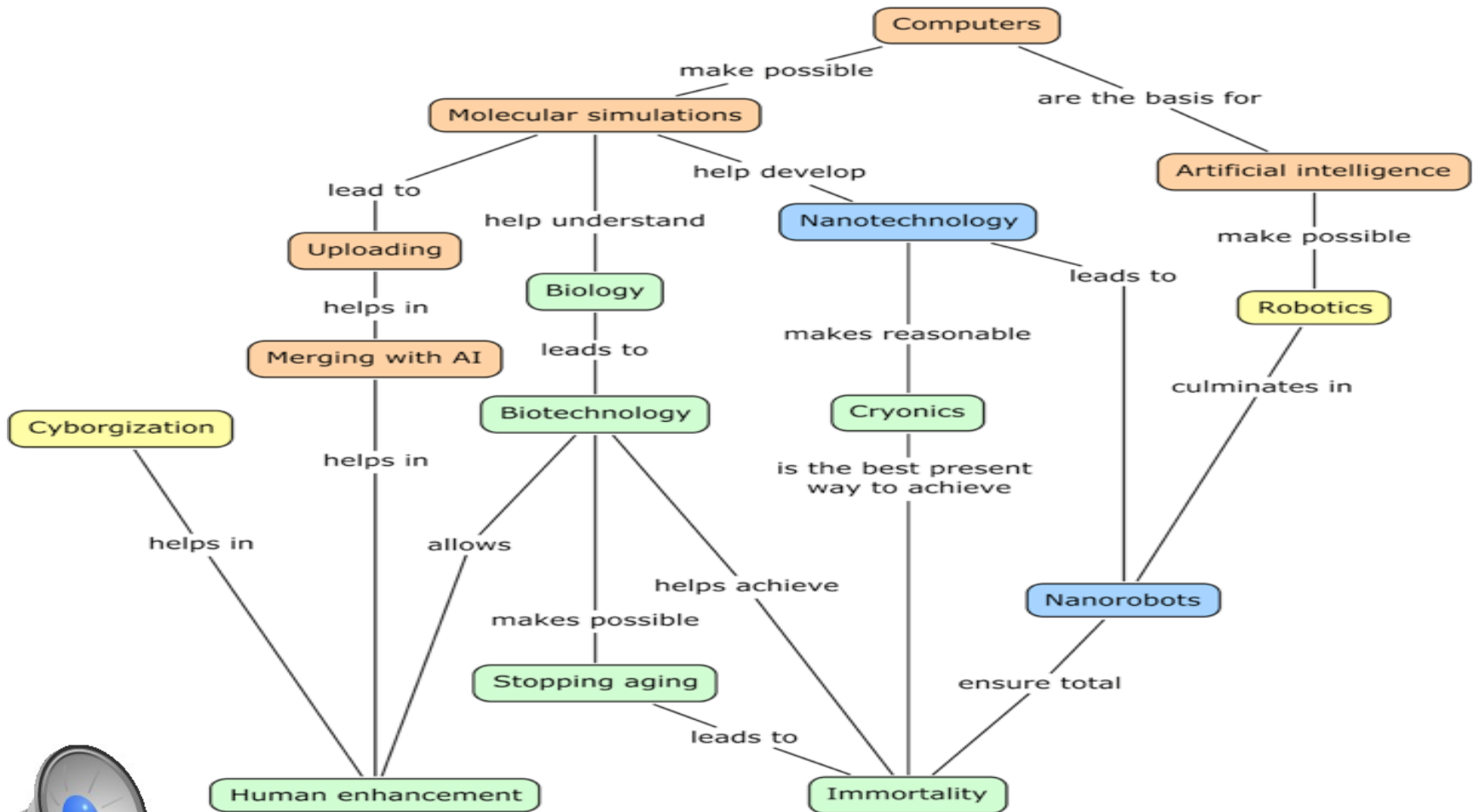


Non invasive

- how the boundaries of technology and humanity are blurring together privacy, identity and connectivity
- mobile technology
- user experience design
- information dispersal, storage and retrieval
- physiological effects of technology on mental processes



Merging Humans and Technology (Lim 2010)



Cyborg- Online identities

- Heightened connection to machine
- Online identities - Multi identity, partiality
- The internet allows for the deconstruction of binary genders
- The new identity is formed from the relationship between the original identity and the internet. It is a cyborg identity, part machine, part human
- The user as a cyborg



Issues

- Technology is increasingly **integrated** with the human body.
- Technology is used to **augment** or **replace** the things we used to do ourselves.
- What is the morality of such changes?
- Do our **values change** when we are hybrid human –machines, Does becoming cyborgs alter us??
- Do we need to ‘control’ or ‘regulate’ the development of cyborgs?
 - If so how? And who decides this?
- Are we now **post-human**?



Post Humanism

- What is posthumanism?
 - Emphasising the new
 - The new is characterised by **speculation**
 - eg. We may imagine a future where people are genetically modified to try to ensure health, but such a future may need health surveillance and interactions throughout life
 - Advent of the consumer/leisure/information societies
 - Change, keeping up with developments seen as essential, rather than just a fad or a freaky idea



Post Humanism

- Joanna Zylińska 'ethics of cultural studies' (2005)
 - Political, social, and (moral) philosophical implications of posthumanism
 - Different ways of characterising the human
- Virilio's concerns
 - Suspicious of modern/postmodern
 - Not fragmented communities
 - The Transplant Revolution
 - Collapse of the distinction between the human body and technology
 - Rejects Cybersex: technological replacement of emotion



Post Post Humanism?

- What is the status of the posthuman?
 - Is it Different?
- Why is the concept of technological futures often portrayed as a negative?
- Is it so different from present day? Are we already there?
- What happens after?
- Is post human 'after'? Or just another false dawn?
- If concept of 'human' is contested then why should PH be any different?



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