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.
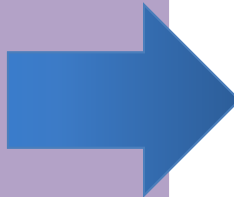- The cyborg transgresses gender sterotypes and is a liminal being with it its own subjectivity.

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
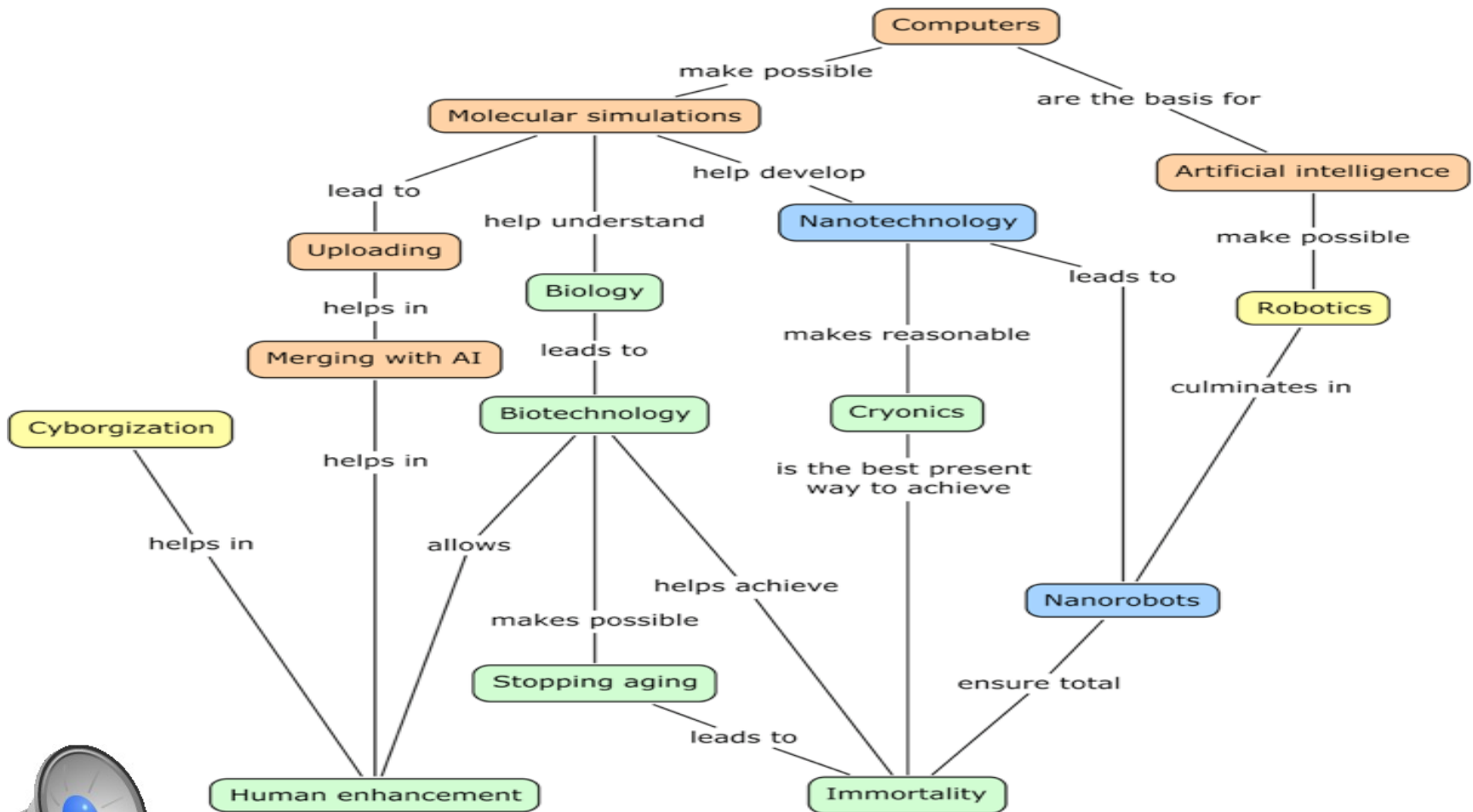- Fields of difference
- Artificial Intelligence

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 Zylinska '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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