



Critical analysis of the power of technology in Gibson's neuromancer: Portrayal of pessimistic society in a world of cyberpunk

AJ Manju¹, Jushaini P²

¹ Associate Professor and HOD of Ph.D. Department of English, Sree Narayana Guru College Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

² M. Phil, Department of English, Sree Narayana Guru College, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

Technology opens new entryway into the universe of the internet and give unlimited chances and permit them to interface in manners they never envisioned. Despite the fact that people are getting exponentially further developed in science and technology, we are slipping quickly into a totally fake robotic world. Neuromancer is a novel that infers the connection among people and innovation into the future, foreseeing that human and machines will gradually transform into one another intellectually. The story focuses on various gloomy outcomes of technology that progresses faster than human evolution. William Gibson provides a clear warning about the dangers of futuristic technologies by portraying a future world where human drift away from nature.

Keywords: technology, cyberpunk, pessimistic society, artificial intelligence, cyborg

Introduction

Neuromancer, one of the earliest science fiction to have anticipated a future world filled with technology will be, is the stroke of a genius. The technologies predicted by William Gibson has almost become a reality or is in its way, which itself is a testament to his writing-craft. Technologies that are mentioned in Neuromancer, which were way ahead-of-time, include that of Artificial Intelligence (AI), cyberspace, and RAMs that have the power to affect various workings of virtual as well as physical landscapes (Hollinger, 1991) ^[4]. It is quite notable that technology is a super-structure into which the novel Neuromancer is integrated skilfully by William Gibson (Barooah, 2011).

Technology related themes

The Neuromancer novel explores various futuristic technology-related themes that are intertwined between humans, and the relationship between humans & advanced machines. William Gibson has skilfully portrayed the transient emotions of love & trust getting replaced by harsher counterparts such as fear, betrayal, and apprehension in a decadent technology-dominated setting. The fusion of man & machine portrayed in here redefines as well as challenges any traditional dimensions of self & identity. So, as mentioned before, technology-related themes are depicted in the novel as a means of transformation, transcendence, and liberation from a fixed identity, and relations (Hollinger, 1991) ^[4].

What's going on within the world of Neuromancer?

Neuromancer, a quintessential cyberpunk novel, explores the technological ramifications of living experience within a post-industrialist, media-saturated western society. All characters in the novel live within a framework of a technological world while accepting its systems; a testament to the influence of technology in human evolution. Three growing industries drive the Neuromancer world forward: advertising, information, & media. These industries have

essentially automated humans via brilliant planning & strategies (Barooah, 2011).

The characters seem to be intoxicated by technology & related aids as they often refer to their bodies as something alien. For instance, they see themselves as implants that are surrounded by the flesh; as William Gibson describes "beasts of burden that carry the implants". The entire action, in Neuromancer, takes place inside a cigar-shaped orbiting station of Freeside, which consists of a brothel & banking nexus, pleasure dome & free port as well as border-town & spa. This orbiting station is owned by a certain family, whose members are kept in a cryogenic state and thawed out when any matter of governance arise in the city (Barooah, 2011).

The AIs who are kings!

Two AIs control the whole technological arena with Wintermute AI located in Berne, Switzerland, and Neuromancer AI located in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil calling all the shots through nerve-implants implanted under the skin of humans (Barooah, 2011).

The time portrayed in the Neuromancer world is endless as the city can keep a dead heart alive via various implants & transplants. Consciousness also gets stimulated with the aid of computers, and robotic systems (Barooah, 2011).

Cyberspace

The main protagonist is Henry Case who experiences the world of cyberspace through his partner, Molly's eyes. William Gibson describes a special feature of Molly: integrated lenses over her eyes; thereby, she can block out all her emotions as her real eyes lay hidden behind the eye-implants. High-tech artifacts are used throughout, which compliments the emotions of a troubled psyche & a range of moral dilemmas (Barooah, 2011).

Let's look at how William Gibson has described cyberspace. According to the author, cyberspace provides or offers new areas of sensory experiences with their own spatial or

temporal coordinates. These experiences result in the human characters obtaining their own personal as well as metaphysical dimensions (Barooh, 2011).

Humans & technology in Neuromancer

The human personalities are downloaded into computer memory cards, which can be used at will by humans through memory-card slots implanted at the back of their necks. There is an instance where Molly interacts with an individual who changes his personality when he senses Case is with Molly. Molly is depicted as a cyborg who draws the attention of audiences with surgically enhanced eyes & fingernails. A cyborg uses technology differently. The technology used by cyborg aids in detaching the body from all human attributes. Cyborg can be referred to as a cross between machine & organism (Haraway, 1991) ^[3]. A cyborg makes us think hard about the nuances of a body-technology interface (Bell, Loader, Pleace, and Schuler, 2004) ^[2].

Another brilliant use of technology is an instance wherein one of the characters has surgically removed one lung and loaded that space with high-tech implants, which enable him to project his thoughts to whoever he interacts with (Barooh, 2011).

Cybernetic tools are used extensively that defines the human body as described with examples above. As can be observed again & again, the core theme of Neuromancer is the direct interaction of man & machine, more specifically, the computer or AI with all possibilities as well as horrors that such a union entails (Barooh, 2011).

What Neuromancer reflects?

The Neuromancer by William Gibson narrates the story of how a cast of human characters is assembled as well as manipulated by an AI for creating a combination of itself & a separate half: the formation of a fully autonomous being. The novel ends with a union of Wintermute & Neuromancer AI (Barooh, 2011). The themes that get reflected in Neuromancer is the addiction of technology with the corollary being a fusion of man & machine, as mentioned in this discussion.

Critical Analysis: Power of Technology in Neuromancer

The characters in Neuromancer uses an extensive array of futuristic technological advancements to survive inside the cigar-shaped city. Emotions are hidden tactically for selfish needs by portraying the opposite of what truly goes on in one's mind. With two AIs controlling human minds via cyberspace, there is no room for colorful emotions; just plain & blunt portrayal of whatever they feel is right without any consideration for others. William Gibson beautifully portrays a pessimistic society in the world of cyberpunk governed by cryogenic beings.

With AIs being at the forefront of this city, emotions of humans take a backseat as all characters are so focused to be the best digital version of themselves ever. The concept of emotions, mind, soul, and the natural brain goes out of the window as technology drives the race of humans forward via an evolutionary path that has not been thought before. Pessimism breeds as a result and optimism are choked with humans forced into a different kind of lifestyle than they expect. Thus, through Neuromancer novel, William Gibson has successfully portrayed a world wherein AIs & humans co-exist with the AIs ruling and determining the

evolutionary pattern of human beings; AIs making humans as pessimistic as possible by taking away the factor of soul, mind, and emotions.

Conclusion

As can be observed, all characters in Neuromancer are personalities that are mostly reproductions, digital representations, or other manifestations. All the characters do live in a state of affordable beauty. These personalities thrive via cosmetic surgery, implanted circuitry, brain-computer interfaces as well as AI (Artificial Intelligence). Neuromancer brings in a world of AIs and technology-addicted humans, both of which need each other to co-exist & evolve. The technologies discussed in Neuromancer are very high-tech & futuristic and can mould a pessimistic society. These technologies have the power to transcend itself to greater power & potential. It is no doubt that the greatest achievement in technology development is the formation of cyberspace or matrix. It can be observed that the various characters become mechanical and are technologically motivated even for the physical needs of a being. We look around in awe about today's world and the one that is in Neuromancer, which was portrayed around 20 to 30 years before. The world portrayed in Neuromancer is the world we live in by using almost the same vocabulary daily. William Gibson has managed to portray a pessimistic society in the backdrop of a cyberpunk world, quite literally, beautifully, and brilliantly.

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