

GW and CP

The Urth list — 3 messages, 3 voices, 21 Jun 2005

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/4457>

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Dan — 21 Jun 2005, 10:20

At 01:47 AM 6/17/2005, you wrote:

Message: 3

Date: Thu, 16 Jun 2005 23:16:40 -0700 (PDT)

From: turin <turin at HELL.COM>

Subject: (urth) Re: urth-urth.net Digest, Vol 10, Issue 15

To: urth-urth.net at lists.urth.net

Message-ID: <20050617061640.7437A23E92 at sitemail.everyone.net>

Content-Type: text/plain

/*****

unless it's titled The Tertiary Roots of
Cyberpunk: The stories that influenced the well-read authors who influenced
the authors that rode the crest of the Cyberpunk wave.

*****/

That is it exactly. I have no clue about the genealogy of scifi.

Off hand I'd say Wells, Verne and Shelley would be a good start. I think that's what that class was attempting to do was reveal a similar parentage for cyberpunk by tracing through a collection of works (numerous short stories and a few novels).

I wouldn't put Wolfe in a cyberpunk anthology at all and he is a genuine
"literary" author in the sense that he defies genre, of content not form,
identification.

Absolutely!

I was simply wondering about the "distance" between Wolfe and cyberpunk
and note the thematic similarities between Wolfe's work and the Ghost in
the Shell films in particular. There is an article (one I happen to
disagree with) in technology review entitled Against Transcendence and
Bruce Sterling is quoted as saying that transcendence is what comes with
the territory when writing science fiction.

Oh, I was being facetious on the book title. That was a good quote worth repeating from
<http://www.technologyreview.com/articles/05/02/issue/editor.asp?p=1>:

{When the science fiction writer and journalist Bruce Sterling was asked why so many science fiction novels ended with their heroes transcending their circumstances, abilities, or bodies, he was dismissive. "It's just a riff," Sterling answered. "The element of transcendence is just a feature of the SF genre, like feedback in rock music. People who take that stuff seriously end up turning into trolls....H. P. Lovecraft was a big fan of that cosmic-type stuff. That may be okay for him, but from the outside what you see is this pasty-faced guy eating canned hash in the dim corner of a restaurant, hands trembly, and a gray film over his eyes." }

(Though as an aside, I'm not sure Lovecraft really took that cosmic stuff seriously, as the correspondence of his I've read seemed to treat it rather playfully.)

It -does- seem to be a convention now, at least in the majority of the most of the important ones, but maybe I am biased towards transcendence, in fact, I am. I wonder when, in the literature, Sterling's statement becomes really applicable, because it seems to me that he is right.

As for a literary device, it's a way to show the main character growing and changing. One of the (few) stories I recall reading for that class was I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream by Harlan Ellison. Which was a good introduction to the idea of transcendence not necessarily being a good thing.

For some reason that article reminded me of The Long Sun Series when Dr. Crane reveals the true state of Loris' bio body. Truly one of the greatest cyberpunk moments ever.

also I'd very much like to hear what you think cyberpunk is

How science and technology twists society and individuals and how individuals seize them to twist back.

and as I said its genealogy besides Snyder..... or merely what was said in the class. I don't know if anyone has written anything about the evolution of scifi in a taxonomical way.... I wonder what it would look like considering the volume of material and how recent the most interesting and important were written. Teaching a class on cyberpunk sounds very interesting though very specialized.

EOT;

IIRC, the cyberpunk class was actually a spinoff of a groundbreaking class from the previous semester that was taught by two instructors from two different departments. It dealt with science in science fiction, but also focused on cyberpunk and computer technology which inspired the cyberpunk class.

Alas, such a vast amount of water has passed beneath that bridge that it has long since washed away. I don't really recall many details from the classes other than there was a lot of reading, some heated classroom discussions and that we spent a lot of time trying to deconstruct the mass media pop culture hype that was already suffocating the genre. Both were great classes.

Dan

Hmpf MacSlow — 21 Jun 2005, 11:14 · in reply to Dan

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This reminds me why I really need to find another university. We don't get any sf related classes here, and sf really is the main thing I want to study. It's not a popular subject in German universities' English departments, unfortunately.

Then again, I can't afford to move to another city at the moment. But if I ever do a Ph.D. I'll have to find a uni that will accommodate work on sf.

By the way, @ whoever mentioned Ghost in the Shell: that movie I mentioned a little while ago, Angel's Egg, is by the same director, and even more 'Wolfean' than Ghost in the Shell. If anyone here saw it, I'd really like to know what you thought of it...

Hmpf

"I don't get out much, so I read."

Pilot, Farscape

James Wynn — 21 Jun 2005, 13:42 · follows Hmpf MacSlow

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Hmmmm....

It occurs to me that The Long Sun is a cyberpunk novel told from the perspective of one totally uncomprehensive of the virtual world he lives in (imagine "The Matrix" where Neo only understands learns what the Matrix is 3/4ths of the way into the movie). Quetzal and Crane are his guides into that world. In the end, he dominates that world by becoming the ruling virtual personality in it, and discovers that he himself is a genetically improved clone.

~ Crush