The Cyberpunk Anthology

Edited By Bruce Sterling

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What Is Cyberpunk?

CYBERPUNK is a sub-genre of science fiction that usually focuses on "high tech and low-life." Originally coined by Bruce Bethke it features advanced science, such as information technology and cybernetics, coupled with a degree of breakdown or radical change in the social order.

Cyberpunk plots often center on a conflict among hackers, artificial intelligences, and megacorporations, and tend to be set in a near-future Earth, rather than the far-future settings or galactic vistas.

High Tech: artificial life or beings, genetic and mechanical enhancements as well as the advancement of cyberspace

Lowlife: Social breakdown caused by overly oppressive governments/ or megacorporations, drugs, the underside of society, and the dark side of technology

:: Your Post-Apocalyptic Self ::

You Are A
CYBERPUNK!

Slick to the core,
you dance through
this new world
technology with
ease.
You rather past the time
hacking into a mainframe
than dealing with
the state of the world.

What the heck
is Electronic Mail?

When Were These Stories Written?

The 1980's

Technological Advances

- Personal Computers
- CAD (Computer Aided Design)
- Graphical User Interfaces
- Compact Discs
- Walkmans

- Camcorders
- Answering machines
- Cell Phones
- Fax Machines

- Cyberpunk came about in a time when there where great strides made in personal and industrial computing. This lead to the beginnings of the Internet, CNC (Computer Numerical Control) factories, computer controlled fuel injection, Electronic Mail, the use of digital Synthesizers in music, and the integration of the microprocessor in almost every electrical application.

- Take all these technological advances, throw in some imagination, fantasy, and talented writers and you have the the genre Cyberpunk.

List of Short stories in mirrorshades

- The Gernsback Continumm
- Snakes Eyes
- Rack On
- Tales of Houdini
- 400 Boys
- Solstice
- Petra
- Till Human Voices Wake Us
- Freezone
- Stone Lives
- Red Star, Winter Orbit
- Mozart in Mirrorshades

Bruce Sterling

Born April 14, 1954, Bruce Sterling is one of the premier voices in the cyber-punk movement and the science fiction genre as a whole. Works include:

- One of the founders of cyber-punk.
- Innovative Writer
- Futurist –those who speculate about the future.
- Environmental Activist
- Advocate for electronic user rights

Schismatrix (1985), Islands in the Net (1988), Heavy Weather (1994), and Holy Fire (1996). In 1986, he edited Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology. Crystal Express (1989) and Globalhead (1992)
The Hacker Crackdown (1992)
Tomorrow Now: Envisioning the Next 50 years (2003)

Tom M

❑ Maddox is a science fiction autho
cyberpunk movement. He was born

❑ 1985 had his first story published
called OMNI magazine. Also where
published as well in 1986.

❑ He wrote a monthly column titled
Frontier" for Locus magazine.

❑ His first novel titled Halo was pub
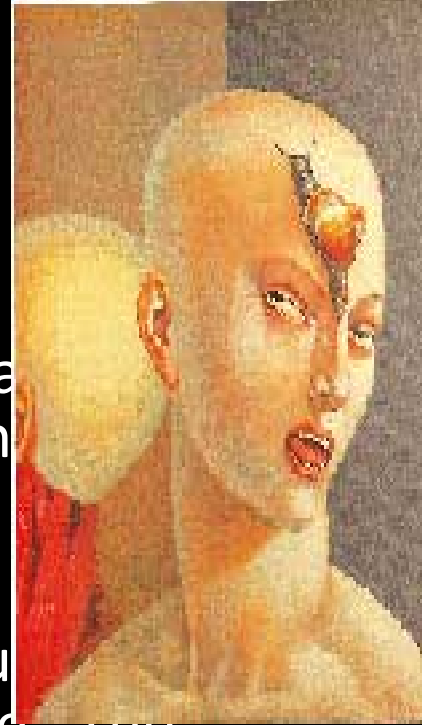
❑ Co-wrote "Kill Switch" and "First
The X-Files T.V. series.

❑ Coined the term "Intrusion Count
refers to security programs which pr
accessed by hackers and was popula
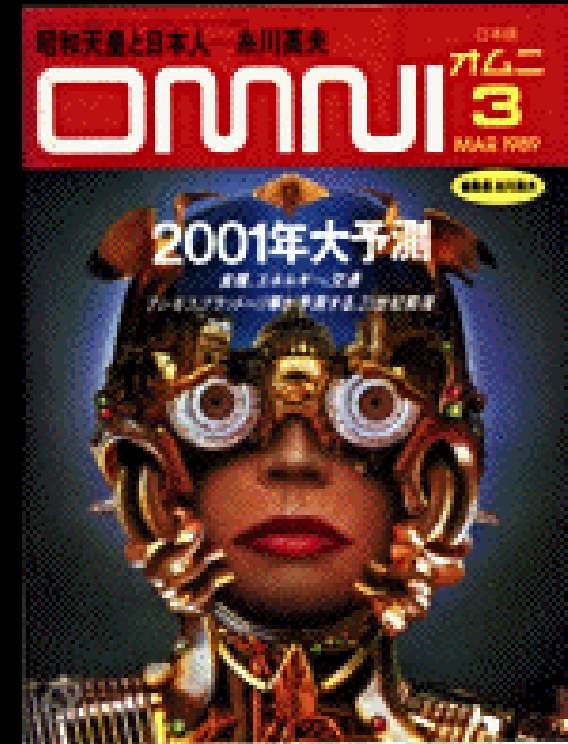longtime friend William Gibson.

"Snake Eyes"

❑ George Jordan was an Air Force Veteran who wa[s] discharged when the U.S. decided to back out an[d] the war that was going on with Thailand.

❑ They had turned him into a war ready cyborg bu[t] war going on, he was now stuck with this lifestyle. [The] technology had began to take over his life, he calls it "the snake" but the Air Force calls it "Effective Human Interface Technology (EHIT)"

❑ He goes onto a space shuttle called "Telecom Sentrax" hoping to get rid of "the snake." There he meets Dr. Hughes and another female cyborg named Lizzie.

"Snake Eyes" cont.

❑ On this shuttle he finds himself falling in love with Lizzie but cannot control "the snake" which ultimately drives him to try to commit suicide.

❑ Aleph, who to Lizzie is a person or possibly a group of people, but who is referred to as a machine, is all knowing and controlling. He basically pushes George to his limits to see if he could survive "the snake" and not kill himself that is what Aleph is out to get.

❑ Aleph see's the cyborgs as his children and wants to create many of them that will survive, some have not and few have and that day George was one of them.
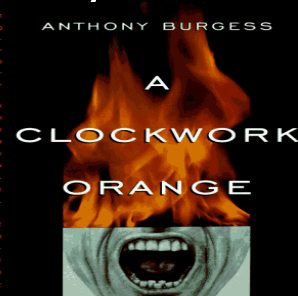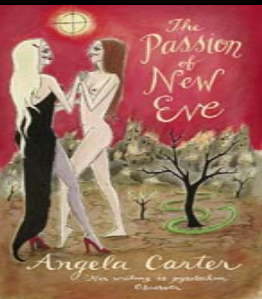
Relating to other Reading

- ❑ "A Clockwork Orange" – by changing a person's way of thinking and manipulating them to live a certain way. Aleph aka the government did it to George as the government did it to Alex.

- ❑ "Frankenstein" – Aleph (Government) is creating super human cyborgs just as Victor wanted to create a super human race of people who could survive disease and death.

- ❑ "Dr Jekyll & Mr. Hyde" – George was fighting this inner being he called "the snake" and did not want it to take over his life which even lead him to attempt suicide. Just as Dr. Jekyll struggled with transforming in Mr. Hyde unfortunately the suicide in that story was successful.

- ❑ "The Passion of New Eve" – Transforming something into a completely ... er new life form.

Themes

❑ Religion – There were some comparisons to George and Lizzie being similar to Adam & Eve.

❑ Government – Aleph is a representation of the government. He can't be seen but is in control of everyone's actions and outcomes. Could possibly be more than one person.

❑ Mind Control – "The Snake" is a form of mind control that George suffers from because of the "Effective Human Interface Technology (EHIT)"

James Patrick Kelly

❑ Born 1951 in Mineola, New York his career as an author began in 1975, and gained momentum in the 1980's.

❑ Kelly is generally associated with a group of 80's writers called the new "literary wing" opposing the heavy use of technology in cyberpunk. Although, he wrote several bold short   stories with copious cyberpunk elements.

❑ The short story "Solstice" was one of his first cyberpunk works, and was published in Bruce Sterling's <u>MirrorShades: The Cyberpunk Anthology</u>.

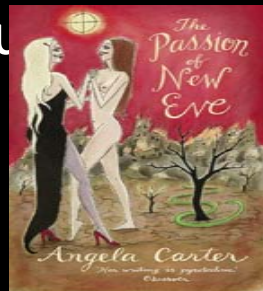❑ Kelly has been awarded multiple Hugo Awards, and won the Nebula Award in 2006 for his novel <u>Burn</u>.

Relating to other Readings

❑ Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde - Tony experiments on himself much like Dr Jekyll to discover "DMD" creating a drug which he regularly takes. Altering his perception of the world.

❑ The Passion of New Eve - Creating a female form from male. Tony uses his own genes, combined with genetic engineering to create a female version of himself.

❑ A Clockwork Orange - Wynne is a perfect example of a clockwork orange, born through artificial means turned from something natural into the unnatural. The substances Tony creates also has very similar affects to the tainted milk dru[nk] by teenagers in A Clockwork Orange.

RUDY RUCKER

Rudy Rucker is a well known SF author who started his career as a Professor in Mathematics. He taught geometry based classes from 1972-1978 at the State University College at Geneseo, New York. This is where he wrote his first books which were not science fiction. In 1976 while he was still in New York he started writing his a science fiction novel named *Spacetime Donuts* but had little success from that book. From 1978 to 1980 Rudy and his family lived in Heidelberg Germany. He ended up writing two more science fiction novels during his stay in Germany. He finally found his way back to that States and from the year 198o to 1982 he worked at an all woman's college. After his short stay he decided to devote his time on becoming a full time writer. The years1982-1986 marked the beginning of the CYBERPUNK movement and he became recognized as one of the founding fathers of this genre of science fiction. Finally from 1986-

Science as well as Math at SJSU. Teaching computer science helped him generate ideas for more cyberpunk based science fiction novels. Although he no longer teaches he is currently working on two more novels that he wishes to finish in the next couple of years. .

http://www.cs.sjsu.edu/faculty/rucker/biography.htm

TALES OF HOUDINI

Tales of Houdini takes place in the late 1940's and is about a News anchor who decides to test Houdini's escape abilities by randomly kidnapping him and setting him up for some of the toughest escapes he has ever attempted.

Characters
Houdini
Mel Rabstein
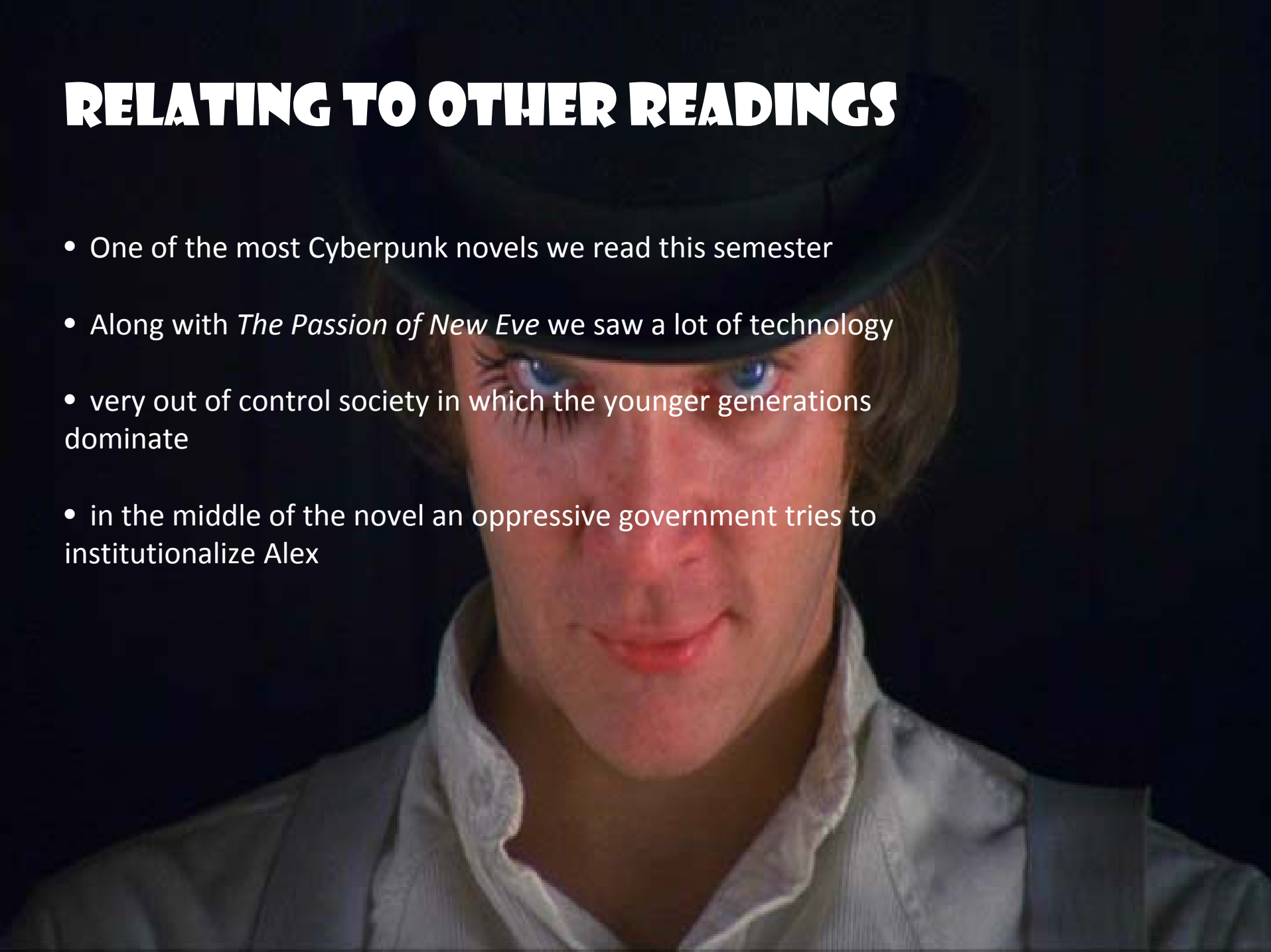Houdini's Mom
The A-Holes
Priest
Rabbi
Judge
Doctor
Scientist
Eddie Machotka

Reason why this story was in a Cyberpunk Anthology novel: Houdini agreed to take part in the challenge to be able to use the money and buy his mother a music shop. From the outset of the story we know Houdini is broke so we understand that he is risking his life to gain the money to better himself. He figured he had nothing more in to lose but his own life.

This story is hard to categorize into Cyberpunk. It has no real mention of any cyberpunk related technology or attributes. The only one it can possibly relate to is poverty, which is in the Low-life category of cyberpunk.

RELATING TO OTHER READINGS

- One of the most Cyberpunk novels we read this semester

- Along with *The Passion of New Eve* we saw a lot of technology

- very out of control society in which the younger generations dominate

- in the middle of the novel an oppressive government tries to institutionalize Alex

Marc Laidlaw

•Laidlaw is an accomplished writer who also works to develop video games chiefly developing plot, characters, setting, etc. It has been said that his storytelling in his novels has directly influenced his choices in developing video games with the company Valve. His works include:

• 400 Boys (1983), published in the Mirrorshades anthology
•Dad's Nuke (1985)
•Neon Lotus (1988)
•Kalifornia (1993)
•The Orchid Eater (1994)
•The Third Force (1996)
•The 37th Mandala (1996)

400 Boys by Marc Laidlaw

- Depicts apocalyptic gang warfare.
- Provides a look at how warring factions vie for power in the technological era.
- Provides a look at how gang life corrupts the innocence of youth.
- Depicts the condition of urban areas and how they are affected by gangs.
- Author sarcastically names the city "Fun City" while simultaneously showing you the stresses.

Relating to Other Reading

- Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde- just as Mr. Hyde gives into his violent urges, the gangs in the story don't hesitate upon that either.
- Frankenstein-just as Frankenstein's monster is not quite human, the story depicts a gang member with "battery packs...with laser turret strapped to her head." (pg 58)
- Clockwork Orange- Young kids running around completely and violently free to do as they please.

Cyberpunk in Films

If you have no idea what cyberpunk is a good movie to watch, that will allow you to grasp the concept of cyberpunk, is *The Matrix*.

In this science fiction movie a computer hacker, who goes by the alias of Neo, is lead to a group of rebels who are fighting against an artificial intelligence that their own human race created in the 21st century. This A.I. controls everyone, except for those who escaped their made up world, by running a program that make s them believe it is the year 1999 when in reality it's actually closer to the year 2199. Neo realizes the lies he has been put through and decides to fight against the controllers of his once fake reality.

Why is the *The Matrix considered* as CYBERPUNK? It has all the major qualities as defined by Cyberpunk. It depicts a world in the near future filled with A.I. and an oppressive force that controls the minds of its inhabitants. It also has a lot of focus on "information technology". This is the software used to run all the programs seen in *The Matrix.*