

CYBERPUNK

Cyberpunk is a subgenre of SF which features a mash-up of high technology and underground culture. The “cyber” is derived from cybernetics, nominally the study of control and communications in machines. The “punk” refers to cultural attitudes typical of the characters (if not the authors themselves). Cyberpunk proper exploded and died in the mid-1980s with a handful of loosely associated authors. William Gibson’s *Neuromancer*, the *Mirrorshades* anthology, and the *Cheap Truth* fanzine were the cornerstones of the scene. Never before had a SF genre movement attracted as much media attention or ultimately have as much cultural influence (no cyberpunk = no *Matrix* films). This bibliography includes edgy SF works that cyberpunk authors drew inspiration from, classic cyberpunk texts, and books by some of today’s best SF writers whose work evolved from the cyberpunk meme.

Ballard, J.G. *The Best Short Stories of J.G. Ballard*

Ballard’s cynical dystopian visions and nihilistic protagonists were cyberpunk before there was such a term.

Bova, Ben. *Death Dream*

Reporting to ParaReality Inc. to make sure its virtual reality playground, CyberWorld, opens on schedule, Dan Santorini is alarmed when test subjects begin to die, and his family may be among the next victims.

Budz, Mark. *Clade*

Rigo finds his life turned upside down when he is chosen to become part of a team assigned to help construct a new colony on a nearby comet, an enterprise that ends in disaster, in a novel set in a post-ecocaust San Jose. First of Budz’ “biopunk” trilogy.

Burgess, Anthony. *A Clockwork Orange*

Burgess’ satire of the present inhumanity of man to man through a futuristic culture where teenagers rule with violence. This violent, youth-oriented dystopian vision of the future would become a key feature of cyberpunk novels.

Burroughs, William S. *The Soft Machine*

The first of the Nova Trilogy, an experimental, anarchic tale concerning mind control by psychic, electronic, sexual, pharmaceutical, and subliminal means which some say is the true beginning of the cyberpunk genre

Cadigan, Pat. *Patterns: Stories*

A Locus award-winning collection from one of the originators of the genre.

Delany, Samuel R. *Nova*

Nova is considered one of the major forerunners of the cyberpunk movement, prefiguring cyberpunk’s staple trope of human interfacing with computers via implants.

Dick, Philip K. *A Scanner Darkly*

A drug dealer of the future periodically moves away from his spaced-out world to become an informer for narcotics agents until he becomes unable to separate his two personalities. Many elements of Dick’s work foreshadow the cyberpunk movement.

Di Filippo, Paul. *Ribofunk*

Thirteen stories on a world of designer-drugs and human-animal hybrids serving as slaves. Can you get more ribofunky?

Doctorow, Cory. *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*

Realizing his boyhood dream of moving to the twentieth-century artistic creation of Disney World, Jules becomes incensed by a new group that would change the Hall of Presidents by replacing the audioanimatronics with brain interfaces. Oh yeah. Locus Award Winner for Best First Novel

Egan, Greg. *Permutation City*

Transformed into an electronic code, a Copy must discover an alternate way out, back into its real body, because the original avenue of escape has been cut off by the human version from which it was originally copied. John W. Campbell Memorial Award Winner

Ellison, Harlan. *The Essential Ellison: a 35-year Retrospective*

Though a notorious detractor of the internet, the technology most closely associated with cyberpunk, without the fierce attitude Ellison brought to SF, cyberpunk would have never been possible.

Gibson, William. *Neuromancer*

Probably the single work most synonymous of the genre. Case, a burned out computer whiz, is asked to steal a security code that is locked in the most heavily guarded databank in the solar system. Winner of the Nebula, Hugo & Philip K. Dick Awards

Gibson, William & Bruce Sterling. *The Difference Engine*

Two of the genre's heavy weights team up and give us their take on steampunk (i.e. 19th century technology and cyberpunk attitude mashed-up w/SF elements).

Goonan, Kathleen Ann. *Queen City Jazz*

Journeying to the enlivened city of Cincinnati after her world is decimated by the nanotech plagues, Verity learns about the dark side to its utopian existence, where residents must endlessly relive a dark creator's fantasies, and vows to take over. New York Times Notable Book of the Year

Lethem, Jonathan. *Gun, with Occasional Music*

In a bizarre, noirish world shared by people and intelligent animals, Conrad Metcalf, a human private detective, finds one of his cases has drawn him into a conflict between gangsters and the Inquisitor's office. Locus Award Winner for Best First Novel

Mieville, China. *Perdido Street Station*

Mieville is current king of steampunk. In squallid and brutal New Crobuzon, a Garuda requests eccentric crisis theorist Isaac to work with lab specimens, particularly a caterpillar that feeds on a hallucinatory drug until its evolution, when it will invoke malignant terror. Winner of the Arthur C. Clarke Award

Noon, Jeff. *Vurt*

A futuristic society is thrown into chaos by the emergence of a virtual-reality cyberdrug that causes its users to experience their worst nightmares and ultimate fears in violent and devastating ways. Arthur C. Clarke Award Winner

Powers, Tim. *The Drawing in the Dark.*

Powers is the originator of the steampunk genre. An aging mercenary must uncover the secret of Herzwesten beer, which is said to have saved the entire Western World from invading Turkish armies.

Rucker, Ruby. *Master of Space and Time*

One of the originators of the genre. Fletch, a programmer, and Harry, an inventor, former partners in bankrupt business, develop a machine that allows them to control the universe.

Ryman, Geoff. *Air, or, Have Not Have*

When Air, the latest communication technology, finally comes to the remote village of Kizuldah, Karzistan, it has disastrous results. Winner of the Arthur C. Clarke Award and James Tiptree Jr. Award

Scott, Melissa. *Dreaming Metal*

When entertainer and illusionist Celinde Fortune takes her act to Persephone--a planet torn apart by class struggle--and combines two computer chips that seem to simulate artificial intelligence, she finds her life threatened by the planet's radicals.

Shiner, Lewis. *Deserted Cities of the Heart*.

The jungles and cities of contemporary Mexico are the setting for this novel of revolution and the apocalypse, and of a shattering odyssey into the Mayan underworld.

Shirley, John, *Eclipse*

Tapping anxieties about rising global nationalism, genre heavyweight Shirley presents a Goya-esque vision of war-torn western Europe, bombed out and unstable in the early years of the 21st century from a resurgence of Russian militarism and the collapse of NATO.

Spinrad, Norman *Bug Jack Baron*

A pre-cyberpunk tale of the cynical, exploitative talk-show host Jack Barron who gradually uncovers the secret for immortality when he meets a power hungry madman. Contains the classic quote: "The saddest day of your life isn't when you decide to sell out. The saddest day of your life is when you decide to sell out *and nobody wants to buy.*"

Stephenson, Neal. *Snow Crash*

In twenty-first-century America, a computer hacker finds himself fighting a computer virus that battles virtual reality technology and a deadly drug that turns humans into zombies. Stephenson remains one of the most popular authors associated with genre.

Sterling, Bruce. *Schismatrix Plus*

Brilliant diplomat Abelard Lindsay, a failed and exiled revolutionary against Mech domination, becomes a pawn in the interstellar intrigue of a human and alien power struggle for control of humanity's future.

Compilations

Mirrorshades: the Cyberpunk Anthology

This is the original ground breaking cyberpunk anthology, edited by Bruce Sterling.

Rewired: the Post-Cyberpunk Anthology

20 years on, a revisiting of the genre by some of SF's hottest writers, edited by James Patrick Kelly & John Kessel.

Electronic Resources

Cheap Truth

<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~erich/cheaptruth/>

Follow this link to the complete archive of the influential fanzine which shaped the genre. A true underground magazine that was spread person to person via photocopies alá Soviet *samizdat*. Edited by Bruce Sterling under the pseudonym Vincent Omniaveritas, laugh as Sterling verbally shreds any work on this bibliography published before 1980.