PRIMARY SOURCES

BOOKS AND SHORT STORIES

Baird, Wilhelmina. Crashcourse. New York: Ace Books, 1993.
Baird's debut novel takes cyberpunk literature and adds a healthy dose of irony, along with a woman's point of view. Baird's lead character, Cassandra, is a thief who is desperately trying to escape the confines of earth life. She and her friends, Dosh (a male prostitute) and Moke (a failed artist) are desperately trying to scratch out a meager existence on earth while hoping for a better life in a space station. Their professions, attitudes, and beliefs, along with the near post-apocalyptic setting of the story, affirm that this is a cyberpunk novel.

The three are approached by a film company and offered a contract -- if they will allow their lives to be filmed, they will be given enough money to get them off the planet, now a wasteland. Cassandra quickly realizes that they are being set up, and that the film's lethal premise is all too real -- Dosh is killed during the filming as the directors look for more realism. Along with some mercenary friends, Cassandra avenges Dosh's death by going after the actress who murdered him. A sub-plot concerns Moke's success as an artist, as he eventually finds an audience, and money, at the end of the novel. He and Cassandra manage to escape earth life, but there is a suggestion that things are not all that optimistic at the end of the story.

Being Baird's first novel, the storyline is a bit rough, and her second novel is much improved as far as characterization, plot, and use of language are concerned. However, the novel does concern itself with the cyberpunk lifestyle and major themes (moral ambiguity, transcendence, etc.), and is not only highly recommended, but will be highly useful for my thesis.

---. Clipjoint. New York: Ace Books, 1994.

This sequel to Baird's earlier novel, Crashcourse, is widely considered to fall into the category of cyberpunk literature. It contains the street-level technology, the tendency of the main characters to be on the fringes of society, an antisocial attitude, and a grim and dirty view of the future which is a reflection, in many ways, of our society today.

In summary, the novel concerns two people, Cassandra and Moke, who try to discover if an old friend of theirs is alive or dead. It appears, and, in fact, turns out to be the case, that their friend, Dosh, is alive, although his memory has been wiped clean. The major action of the novel surrounds Cassandra's attempts to discover the truth, her street-deals with the thugs she must hire to help her, and, ultimately, her plot to destroy the film company responsible for Dosh's memory being erased. As a whole, the sequel is much better than the original, and is a very entertaining novel in its own right.

Specific themes in the novel which I found interesting included: the tendencies of the main characters to seek revenge rather than justice; many discussions of the death of the soul, and of conflicts between figurative "demons" and "gods"; discussion of the earth as a sort of "hell"; the question of the "heroic attitudes" of the characters. In the end, even the characters themselves question their own "heroic" qualities, and find that they are not, in fact, heroic. They are, rather, something beyond antihero but not quite godlike.

Bear, Greg. "Petra." Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology. Ed. Bruce Sterling. New York: Ace Books, 1986. 105-124.
If there were one story which I believe best exemplified the central themes of my proposed thesis, it would be this. This story, while not hard-core cyberpunk, represents a fusion of science and myth, of cyberpunk themes with the realm of fantasy. As such, it represents the movements of cyberpunk literature beyond science into the realm of myth, something Greg Bear, a fantasy and science fiction writer, is able to do well.

Bear's story opens after the fall of humanity has already taken place, the death of God (Mortdieu, as it is dubbed in the text) having finally arrived. The central figure of the story is a nameless gargoyle-like creature, the result of a mating between a real stone gargoyle and a human female. The story focuses on his discovery of the "truths" about Mortdieu, mostly via his discussions with the Stone Christ, the last remnants of God's power come to earth. The story's end suggests that humanity, or what it has become, must take over for God, since there is a void that must be filled.

Bear's story represents one view of what happens after technology has fallen, and the world is left without any dominating power. In the story, technology and religion are both gone, leaving nothing except remnants and a movement back towards mythology. Bear's characters are bizarre and twisted in their physical forms as well as in their morality and beliefs, and never arrive at any definitive answers. It is rather their quest for knowledge

and their desire to rebuild a shattered myth which makes this story entertaining as well as relevant to my thesis.

Cadigan, Pat. "Rock On." Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology. Ed. Bruce Sterling. New York: Ace Books, 1986. 34-42.
This story by Pat Cadigan has been included in several cyberpunk anthologies, lending credence to its importance in the genre. Sterling's introduction to the story cites Cadigan's fusion of high tech and punk elements to create what he calls "definitive hard -core cyberpunk" (34).

Cadigan's story is about a woman named Gina who has cybernetic implants which enable her to be hooked up to musical instruments. Called a "synner"(short for synthesizer), Gina is able to produce music, and to make other musicians sound better, by running the electronic current through her brain. At the story's opening, Gina has rejected and left behind this lifestyle, as well as the band, Man-O-War, that she used to work for. However, she is forced to work for another band named Misbegotten, a short experience which ends with her being dragged back by the lead singer of Man-O-War into a literal life of rock and roll slavery.

The story is primarily concerned with the humanity of Gina, of her desire to achieve something important in her life, and of her rejection of a lifestyle she perceives as "selling out". Dealt with in the novel are several key moral issues, both immoral and amoral, as well as a notion of transcendence to a sort of godhood, whether real or actual. The story is very entertaining and highly useful and definitive.

Gibson, William. Neuromancer. New York: Ace Books, 1984.
This novel is considered by almost all critics the first, and probably the finest, work of cyberpunk fiction ever written. Gibson is hailed by many as a genius, by some as a prophet, and all because of this novel. The work, which won the Hugo, Nebula, and Phillip K. Dick awards (the so-called "Triple Crown of Science Fiction"), is not only the "grandfather" of current cyberpunk fiction, but is also the best example of what cyberpunk fiction is all about. In my opinion, research into this topic done without mention of this book would be lacking.

The storyline itself is fairly simple -- Case, a "keyboard cowboy" who specializes in stealing data in cyberspace, is offered a deal which he cannot refuse. In return for removing the poison sacs implanted in his brain and giving him the ability to once more "run the matrix" (prior to the beginning of the novel, Case had double-crossed someone he was working for, and was caught and punished), he must help a man named Armitage

commit a crime. As it turns out, he's actually working for an Artificial Intelligence called Wintermute, who wants to escape the limitations of the network, in a sense. Case succeeds in his "duties" through a long series of deceptions and alliances, typical of cyberpunk literature.

The novel's setting and themes are much more important than the storyline itself, which, when stripped down, is very simple and direct. The twisting and turning of the story, however, makes it very difficult at times to understand everything that's happening -- this is entirely the intent of the novel. Themes which rise above the "wall of noise" which Gibson's descriptions often become include morality, or lack thereof, and transcendence, both of which are carried throughout all of the cyberpunk literature to follow. The work is central to my research, and will certainly be the most useful work of fiction for my purposes.

---. Mona Lisa Overdrive. New York: Bantam Books, 1988.
The third and final novel in his "Sprawl" series, this novel is the culmination, in many ways, of Gibson's "theories" about the Matrix, and about life in a virtual world. Although it did not receive the widespread fame and praise that Neuromancer did, it is nonetheless accepted as one of the central novels of the cyberpunk literary movement, beside Gibson's other novels.

The story concerns a girl named Mona, who is made up to look like a superstar, Angie Mitchell. Angie Mitchell is able to enter the net psychically, without any technological hookup or even a computer, unlike anyone else. An Artificial Intelligence has hatched a plot to kidnap Angie Mitchell, in order to use her for an interdimensional plot which is never truly clarified. Mona, who now looks like Angie, finds herself caught up in a network of espionage and intrigue, as the kidnappers are now after her instead of Angie. Through some twist of fate, Angie ends up projecting herself mentally into the Matrix, leaving nothing behind. While she escapes the kidnappers, Mona is left behind, and she is forced to assume the role of the now absent film star.

The novel is intriguing because it focuses mainly on the notion of the Matrix itself, cyberspace, and the people who "live" there. Angie, during her "trips" there, meets the fragmented images that the Matrix itself has become -- after attaining sentience, the Matrix split itself up into various personalities, named after voodoo gods and spirits and worshipped as such. These gods, like those of ancient mythology, can "ride" (possess) people like Angie, when they are in the "Net" (ie. the Matrix). Themes of immortality, Heaven, godliness, transcendence, and the possibility of eternal life in the Matrix are discussed at length, and it is these themes which will of no doubt be greatly useful to me in my research.

---. Virtual Light. New York: Bantam Books, 1993.
Gibson's latest novel has been the center of a wide variety of criticism. Many critics seemingly expect Gibson to continue churning out the same sorts of novels that have been traditionally associated with cyberpunk literature -- dark, confusing, often morally ambiguous novels without happy endings. This novel is a bit brighter, if still pessimistic, has a fairly straightforward plot, and contains two characters who have some sense of morals. The novel's ending also suggests some sense of hopefulness, something which most cyberpunk novels have lacked in the past. Is the novel still "cyberpunk", then?

The novel concerns a bike messenger, Chevette, who steals a pair of sunglasses from a party. Unknowingly, the glasses are a special sort of computer monitor which stimulate the optic nerves, producing an image directly in the brain. The image in the glasses is that of a future Los Angeles, with building projects which would require the destruction of existing companies -- someone is planning the takeover of Los Angeles. Along the way, Chevette meets Berry Rydell, a former security guard now turned bounty hunter, who falls in with Chevette almost by accident. When the two of them are subject to an attempted assassination, they flee with the glasses and enlist the help of a network of computer hackers who've gained control of the entire country's communication lines. The end of the novel resembles something out of Hollywood -- the bad guys are captured, the hero and the girl get all the money, and they live happily ever after. This "perfect ending" is questionable, however.

Berry and Chevette are, first of all, not morally perfect people. Chevette is a vandal and a thief, Berry kills people for money. In order to defeat their enemies, they have to commit more crimes, including enlisting the aid of the most wanted criminals in America. The ending of the novel itself is ambiguous -- though there is a notion of a happy ending, it is in a divided, shattered world of fragmented states and religions. This setting makes us wonder if any of the characters can ever truly have a happy life, and this mark of pessimism, along with the morally questionable attitudes of the protagonists and their friends, marks the novel as part of the cyberpunk genre.

The novel will be useful in several ways, as it not only picks up on traditional notions discussed in cyberpunk literature, but also represents part of the current reshaping of the genre. Themes discussed within include the notion of cyberspace and transcendence, ideas of the future of religion in America, and many questions about morality and the end results of immoral and moral acts. Altogether, the novel will be quite beneficial.

Laidlaw, Marc. "400 Boys." Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology. Ed. Bruce Sterling. New York: Ace Books, 1992. 50-65.

Laidlaw is not among the more well-known authors of cyberpunk fiction, but his work is nevertheless considered to be central to the genre. Sterling's introduction describes Laidlaw's black humor, apocalyptic sense of mythology, and his bizarre view of punks and urban street gangs, all of which are representative of cyberpunk fiction.

The story, if it can be called such, has no real plot structure to speak of. Certainly, there is a story to tell -- a gang of youths prepare for, then fight in, a street fight. It is not the story which is important as much as it is the descriptions, which evoke much more feeling than I thought possible in a short story such as this. The novel is set, for instance, in a post apocalyptic urban setting in which the gangs now rule the streets. Their views of this apocalypse, however, are not typical -- instead of fearing it, they revel in the freedom the end of the world affords them. This freedom extends beyond lawlessnes into the realm of freedom from death, or at least, freedom from fear of death.

The key to the story is the sense that technology is revered by the characters as a sort of God, offering them freedom from the constraints of life. In a sense, the characters feel that they have transcended law and have achieved a sort of godhood themselves. By escaping the power of death, they become more deadly and more free -- free from fear, law, and even morality.

Russo, Richard Paul. Destroying Angel. New York: Ace Books, 1992.
Russo's novel is a good example of some of the current trends in modern cyberpunk fiction. Mingling cyberpunk elements along with the traditions of the detective novel, the book represents the continuing evolution of cyberpunk literature as a whole.

The novel concerns the search of a detective and former cop named Tanner for a mass murderer who calls himself the "Destroying Angel". Tanner meets a young girl named Sookie, representative of the cyberpunk "street-brat" or punk, who aids him on his quest through the streets of San Francisco. Tanner eventually tracks the murderer down, discovering that the "Angel" is a half-human, half machine psychotic who believes that he's God's chosen Angel of Death.

The plot structure of this novel is different from most cyberpunk fiction, in that it is very straightforward and one-dimensional. However, this is not a criticism of the novel, which moves along fairly well and is very well written. The simple style allows some of the key themes in Russo's work to rise to the surface, so to speak -- the idea of transcendence through a union with a machine, the moral ambiguity of a cyberpunk society, and the degradation of society in the near future are all evident. Like Gibson's Virtual Light, this novel portrays its characters as somewhat more moral than those which are typically to be found in cyberpunk fiction, but this in no way limits its importance or scope.

Stephenson, Neal. Snow Crash. New York: Bantam Books, 1992.
Stephenson's novel is considered one of the "newer forms" of cyberpunk literature, based on its more satirical view of what are commonly considered cyberpunk themes -- the degradation of society, the decentralization of government, the antisocial attitudes of its characters, and the use of technology by lower-class characters. Despite the often satirical view, Stephenson's novel is highly entertaining and a bit frightening in its prophetical tone.

The main character, sarcastically named Hiro Protagonist, is a pizza deliverer in the real world who becomes a "warrior-prince" (two sides of the same coin, perhaps?) in cyberspace, the virtual world he can project himself into through his computer. He discovers a virus which is being transmitted through the computer and seeks to destroy it and its creator before a very real apocalypse can be brought about, and, in true cyberpunk fashion, turns the whole thing into a way to make money for himself.

What I find most useful about the novel is the way in which the characters are demonstrated -- the fact that they are often caricatures makes it easier to pick out tendencies and flaws which are applicable to all cyberpunk characters in general. Hiro Protagonist is no hero -- he lives in a rented storage locker and shamelessly promotes his own business while saving the world. YT, his sidekick, ends up working for the mob in order to save her mother from the clutches of the evil U.S. government. There is much discussion of characters, including Hiro, becoming "gargoyles," demonic-looking people who literally live inside the virtual network they've created in order to escape the hellish world around them -- notions of Milton's Satan speaking of the mind as it's "own place" come to mind here. All in all, the book is highly useful and interesting, and will provide much room for exploration and discussion of the major issues in cyberpunk literature.

Williams, Walter Jon. Hardwired. New York: Tor Books, 1986.
Williams is considered, along with Gibson and Sterling, one of the "Big Three" of cyberpunk fiction. This novel was made into an addition for the most popular cyberpunk game on the market today (R. Talsorian's Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0) because of the common view of its importance.

The main characters, Cowboy and Sarah, discover a plot by a pharmaceuticals corporation to kill them, and so they hatch a bigger plot to retaliate against the company. Along the way, they discover that the company is on the verge of ultimate success, having developed a cure for a dreaded plague which kills millions. To bring down the company and achieve their own ends, Cowboy and Sarah destroy the cure, thus destroying the company. They achieve their goals, but at what cost?

Hardwired is a very entertaining novel in its own right, but it serves me better as a discussion of the "cyberpunk character". The main characters in the novel are meant to be perceived as some sort of heroes, but both are, in fact, criminals in the worst sense. Cowboy is a murderer and thief, Sarah is an assassin and prostitute; both are drug-addicts. To achieve their goal of revenge, they seemingly destroy hope for millions. This selfish, perhaps even evil, attitude, is found in many cyberpunk characters. Another notion discussed at length in the novel is the view of the world as a sort of hell. The characters repeatedly try to escape to a "heaven" of sorts, either by getting off the planet into a space station, or by entering the Interface, a virtual reality in which they can, in a sense, become one with "the Universe". These themes, and others, are prevalent through the book, and lend themselves well to my research.

INTERVIEWS AND MAIL

Cadigan, Pat. Electronic Chat-line Interview. 2 Dec, 1994, 22:57.
My interview with Pat Cadigan was held via an electronic chat line on the Internet, which allowed us to speak in "real-time" and without interruption (apart from her son asking for supper during our interview). Pat Cadigan is one of the most well-known names of cyberpunk literature, and is one of the few authors who is actually accessible to the public on the Internet. I expected an enlightening conversation, and I was not disappointed.

Our interview covered a variety of topics, mostly concerned with Pat Cadigan's own particular brand of cyberpunk literature. Cadigan and I first discussed the notion of the cyberpunk protagonist, and her insistence that we must avoid labels when discussing these people in order to be sure that they remain "people," and not just stereotypes. She did mention that something that does bind her characters together is their striving for a sort of transcendence, a movement beyond the constraints of their forms and societies, whether this be done through music, television, or by entering cyberspace. Her characters, however, do not supersede all morality, but rather choose their own reasons for good and evil, not subscribing to any universal morality.

I asked Mrs. Cadigan about the point of these characters striving -- she insisted that "it matters how you live before you die," and that striving for godhood is probably impossible, since we cannot comprehend God, and if we were able to transcend our limits as humans, then our own definitions would change. Any opacity of description here is not the fault of Pat Cadigan, as we were both unable to clearly define terms such as godhood, morality, or transcendence, agreeing that such definitions were subjective, as well as probably beyond our limited perceptions. She did admit that achieving or touching "divinity" is possible, although probably very difficult, and was one form of transcendence

that cyberpunk characters strive for.

Pat Cadigan is a very well-rounded, philosophically astute person who knows a great deal about the topic of cyberpunk. Our discussion covered many key points, including morality, transcendence, and godhood, and will no doubt be useful. It is not often that one gets to speak with an author directly as I did, and the invitation to do so again is one which I readily await.

Rucker, Rudy. E-mail to the author. 15 Oct, 1994, 20:17.
This letter from cyberpunk author Rudy Rucker was received in response to my request for an interview. While Mr. Rucker declined an interview, his comments do have some merit.

Mr. Rucker admits that he does not think much of the topic of morality, preferring to "live it" rather than preach about it. He mentions that in his own cyberpunk books, his characters tend to reflect his own views -- that is, his cyberpunk characters do not think much of morality -- if they are moral, they simply act that way without preaching. Mr. Rucker also remarks in his letter that he "doesn't trust" the characters in William Gibson's Virtual Light for that very reason -- Gibson's protagonists in that novel are "kind of groovy goodygoody or something," according to Mr. Rucker. In other words, because the characters in Virtual Light are portrayed as "good" and "moral," Rucker doesn't trust them as cyberpunk characters. While Mr. Rucker's letter does not address any specific concerns, it does demonstrate the moral views of a typical cyberpunk author, and in that sense will be useful.

Sterling, Bruce. E-mail to the author. 15 Oct, 1994, 11:45.
This letter from cyberpunk author Bruce Sterling was received in response to a request for an interview with the author concerning his views on morality and cyberpunk fiction. Mr. Sterling states that he does not have any views on "God, church, or Œmorality', per se," which seemingly suggests a disregard for any "traditional morality" in his own works, and then goes on to submit a letter he wrote for Science Fiction Eye #10.

This letter concerns the morality of real life computer hackers and cyberpunks who find it amusing to lurk around and crash computer systems, emulating their "heroes" in cyberpunk fiction. Sterling strongly dissaproves of this activity, stating that while his own moral views are not explicit, neither does he support "anarchistic activities". Sterling suggests that "knowledge is power," and that this power is tempting -- knowing how to build a pipe bomb, and then actually building one, however, are two entirely different things. Sterling supports knowledge, but cautions people as to how they use that knowledge.

What interests me in Sterling's letter is his disregard for any overt moral system. His characters, and his own views, seem to support the belief that committing crimes is alright if they are necessary, but that there are limits. At the same time, Sterling asserts that he is a moral person, and admits having committed crimes in the recent past. What this indicates is a disregard for any dominant moral system, which I feel indicates a certain amorality, rather than immorality, in cyberpunk fiction as well as in today's society. This emphasis on power and knowledge, however wisely used, instead of morality seems to suggest a movement "beyond morality," one of the topics of my research in cyberpunk literature.

SECONDARY SOURCES

BOOKS AND SHORT STORIES

Campbell, Joseph. The Hero With a Thousand Faces. Cleveland: Meriden Books, 1956. Campbell's book deals primarily with the notion of the hero, as the title suggests. The purpose of my research is to attempt to "name" the cyberpunk protagonist and to refute the use of the term "hero" applied to cyberpunk characters, a term which many critics mistakenly, in my opinion, favor. In that sense, Campbell's definition and exploration of the term hero is vital to my research.

I am particularly interested in the latter portion of Campbell's book, as it deals with more modern incarnations of the hero, especially as they relate to divinity. Campbell explains, for instance, that in literature it is the heroes who carry out the desires of the gods, and only very rarely do the gods descend to act out their own wishes. It is from this notion of divinity that Campbell begins to stress the importance of mythology in all cultures and literature, which includes, by extension, cyberpunk literature. He explores the possibility that traditional myth has disappeared from modern culture and literature, replaced by science, and compares this to the earliest forms of myth, when people placed the emphasis on animal things -- for primitives, the half human/half animal was seen as divine, as a connection to the spiritual world.

Campbell's work suggests for me a lot more than it explicitly says, for I believe that cyberpunk literature represents a return to myth, in a sense. Campbell's discussion of the hero, and later of mythology, suggest several key themes which I see as present in cyberpunk novels and short stories, and although I do not believe that we can dub the cyberpunk protagonist a "hero," I nevertheless feel that Campbell's discussion of the hero will help to explain many of the themes I plan to discuss.

---. Myths to Live By. New York: The Viking Press, 1972.
The majority of this book by Campbell deals with specific myths and mythic concepts not directly related to my research. However, those portions of the novel which deal with myth in relation to science are essential to my theme, and Campbell's discussion of the nature of myth in relation to the individual is no less important.

Both the beginning and closing chapters of this book deal with the notion of science as it tends to change myth, and with the tendency of myth to arise from the ashes, so to speak, as the human imagination generates new myths. Campbell holds that science, by emphasizing the ever-expanding search for knowledge, can represent one type of myth, which is normally based on faith and imagination rather than knowledge. In the end, however, myth regenerates itself and reappears, this time through science, albeit in a new form . Campbell ultimately holds that our "New Myth" will be one of "the waking of individuals to knowledge of themselves," now that we live in a world "without horizons," a sort of transcendence of the limits of human knowledge and being. This theme of transcendence is one of the focal points of cyberpunk literature, and represents, I believe, a movement towards this "New Myth" of which Campbell is speaking. In this sense, Campbell's book is infinitely useful.

---. Interview. The Power of Myth. Ed. Betty Sue Flowers. New York: Doubleday, 1988.
This book features excerpts from an interview with Bill Moyers which appeared on television as part of a six-hour series on myth. Campbell's comments are far-ranging and widely multi-cultural, and those which deal with the notion of the machine and of the present state of myth are definitely useful to a discussion of cyberpunk literature.

Campbell deals early on with the notion of the machine as a sort of primitive God -- all-knowing, all-powerful, and distinctly amoral. Later on, he deals with the absence of myth in our culture as he perceives it, and talks about the "New Myth," which he perceives will be about one united belief for the entire planet, focusing on a full realization of the individual's place in time. He is quite clear about his beliefs that science and myth are not mutually exclusive, and that science has reached the point where it is on the verge of approaching a new myth. He deals with the notion of traditional mythological figures and heroes in modern culture, and suggests a return to an old mythology with a new twist -- science. It is this suggestion of a new myth through technology which will be helpful to my research.

Derbolav, Josef & Daisaku Ikeda. Search For A New Humanity. New York: Weatherhill, 1992.
Although this book, written as a dialogue between the two authors, tends to deal with modern social issues rather than literary topics and themes, I like the way in which the theme of humanity is discussed. The lucid discussion affords a clear view of humanism, and it is essential that an accurate definition of humanism be given in order to discuss cyberpunk literature, typically seen as "anti-humanist".

Derbolav and Ikeda discuss both traditional and modern forms of humanism, focusing mainly on the individual's turn away from a remote, superhuman God to a more personal examination. They discuss the individual's need and ability to work out his own fate without supernatural aid. This idea is developed so as to point out that this turn towards humanity and away from God has caused Christianity and morality as a whole to degenerate, a sort of degeneration that we can see in cyberpunk literature. In the end, they predict, this movement away from traditional gods and the influence of computers could eventually lead to the annihilation of the human race as we know it.

While I believe that their proposed future is a bit unlikely, I can understand the fear, because the theme is often discussed in cyberpunk novels. In the absence of god, cyberpunk characters tend to try to create new ones, and coupled with the ability to augment one's own abilities, this leads, in cyberpunk literature, to a transcendence of the human body and a striving for divinity. In this sense, the themes discussed in this book will be useful to my research.

Ellul, Jacques. The Technological Society. New York: Vintage Books, 1964.
Although Ellul's book does not speak directly of cyberpunk literature, nor of science fiction, many of the themes he speaks of as relating to our modern technological society are relevant to this study. Ellul talks of themes commonly linked in cyberpunk fiction, including chaos theory, the relations between chaos and law, and the tendency of society to degrade. Ellul also speaks at great length about how religion in general, and Christianity specifically, have tended to take a backseat to technology, which has become, in a sense, the new god in a godless world. This theme of "godlessness" runs through all cyberpunk fiction, especially when one considers the Antichristian tendencies and lack of morality present in such fiction.

The most important theme brought up by Ellul, and most applicable to my study at hand, is his discussion of how technology and the human being eventually become one, inseparably linked. I feel that although Ellul's work is sociological in scope, it applies to cyberpunk fiction. If the fiction of a particular time reflects the society of that time, then Ellul's work is certainly relevant to cyberpunk fiction, which I feel reflects certain aspects of our modern culture. Although it is at times a bit thick and dense, Ellul's work is at other times

remarkably clear and lucid, and should prove more than a bit useful.

Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism : Four Essays. Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1957.
Frye's work provides much of the driving force behind my thesis, for he discusses the development of the hero/protagonist throughout the history of fiction. Frye leaves off his discussion of the central characters of different types of literature with the anti-hero; I will attempt to continue the cycle he proposes.

Frye begins by dismissing the idea that fictions are classified morally, and asserts that they are, instead, classified according to the type of protagonist present in the story. He traces this protagonist through 5 stages: the hero or god of early mythical fiction, who is superior to other men and the environment; the romantic hero of folk tales, who is superior in degree to other men and the environment; the high mimetic hero, superior in degree or rank to men but not to the environment; the low mimetic or realistic hero, equal in degree to other men and the environment; and finally the anti-hero, or the ironic hero, who is inferior in power or intelligence to other men. Frye later recognizes the fact that this last stage of development begins a cycle which inevitably leads back to the first stage; that is, irony gradually leads back to myth; the anti-hero leads us back to the divine. I believe this may be a major part of what is ultimately my central thesis. These particular points made by Frye are what I find to be most useful , particularly as a jumping-off point for my own thoughts.

Hafner, Katie, & John Markoff. Cyberpunk : Outlaws and Hackers on the Computer Frontier. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991.
Although at first glimpse this work appeared to be one of the most useful, being one of a mere handful of books on the topic of cyberpunks, it deals mostly with the true-life story of several computer hackers whom the authors choose to label "cyberpunks". As such, only certain parts of the book will be useful to a discussion of cyberpunk fiction, particularly the introduction, in which a definition of the term "cyberpunk" is presented. Also included, almost as an afterthought, is a discussion of the way in which the lack of morality and criminal attitudes of the hackers tends to be considered more and more "acceptable" in our society and in our literature. This may indicate a shift in the way our society views illegal activities, to the point where some criminals actually become seen as "heroes".

Holman, C. Hugh, & William Harmon, eds. A Handbook to Literature. 5th ed. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1986.
This handbook to literature is primarily concerned with defining key literary terminology,

first giving a broad definition and then following with specific examples. It is used for my research primarily to offer succinct and widely accepted definitions of certain literary terms discussed within my paper.

Terms to be defined using this handbook include, but are not necessarily limited to, "Anti-Hero", "Hero", "Humanism" (and, by extension, "Anti-Humanism"), "Naturalism", "Myth", and "Romanticism". Definition will most likely be the primary context in which I will to use this resource.

Howe, Neil, & Bill Strauss. 13th Generation : Abort, Retry, Ignore, Fail?. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.
This book deals with the generation commonly referred to among the media as "Generation X," those people born in the United States between 1961 and 1981 (supposedly the "13th Generation" since the establishment of America as its own country). It is particularly useful in its discussion of how society influences, and is in turn influenced by, modern literature, technology, and film. Although specific discussions of cyberpunk literature and film are few, many of the attitudes and beliefs presented within and attributed to the 13th generation are shared by cyberpunk writers and their protagonists. The form of the book is also quite interesting, as it contains many sidebar definitions and quotes, cartoons, and other ideas which add to the overall "postmodern" feel of the book.

Discussions of morality, religious beliefs (or lack thereof), diminishing expectations, and of the language of modern youth (and, by extrapolation, of the modern protagonist in cyberpunk fiction) are especially useful, and lend themselves well to my topic.

McArthur, Tom, ed. The Oxford Companion to the English Language. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.
This handbook to the English language is a bit more extensive than the Handbook to Literature -- it offers history and more examples, and defines and explains a wider range of topics, including authors and specific works of literature. I will be using this text primarily to define a range of terms along with the aforementioned text.

Terms and ideas to be defined include, but are not limited to, "Anti-Hero", "Hero", "Humanism" (and, by extension, "Anti-Humanism"), "Naturalism", "Myth", and "Romanticism".

Milton, John. Paradise Lost. ed. Merrit Y. Hughes; New York: The Odyssey Press, 1962.

Milton's classic is widely accepted in literary circles as presenting Satan in several different lights simultaneously. On the one hand, Satan is viewed as an evil rebel who is cast from heaven and who ultimately must fail and be condemned to hell for all eternity. On the other hand, many see Satan as something of a hero -- some would place him as a type of Romantic hero (using Frye's classifications), while others cite his failure and place him in the realm of the anti-hero. I intend to draw a comparison between the abilities and attitudes evidenced by the "antichrist" figure, particularly as shown in Paradise Lost, and the abilities and attitudes of the protagonist in modern cyberpunk literature. Particularly interesting is the apparent parallel between the notion of Satan as an immoral outcast and a rebel and the notion of the cyberpunk (emphasis on "punk") as the same sort of person.

Moss, Will et al, eds. Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0. Berkeley: R. Talsorian Games Inc., 1991.
This role-playing game system is widely accepted as the "definitive" view of the cyberpunk genre among RPG's (role-playing games). This edition is the follow-up to the original version of the game, which was published in the mid-eighties (among the forerunners of the genre). Apart from the necessary rules and regulations of the game, this system lays out a very clear picture of exactly what the genre is about, including a well-founded philosophy and system of beliefs. It clearly details the ideals of the cyberpunk : "Always take it to the edge," "The traditional rules of good and evil are replaced by expedience," etc. The rulebook then goes on to explore the origins of the name, and draws some interesting and well-documented parallels to real-life technology and society.

I personally feel that, of all my sources, this gaming system is the most useful for getting an idea of what the cyberpunk genre is all about. This gaming system caused an uproar in the RPG market, and actually took the lead away from the fantasy RPG genre -- cyberpunk games are now among the top three systems sold in the United States. This tendency not only shows the incredible allure of such a game, but lends more credence to the use of a gaming system as a viable source for this study. Essentially, the rulebook for this game is a compilation of ideas from the top cyberpunk authors of the eighties, including Gibson and Williams.

The most important aspect of this book for my own studies will be the discussions of the notions of good and evil, and the lack of any true morality, in the world of the cyberpunk. These ideas are clearly developed in the rulebook.

Rucker, Rudy et al, eds. Mondo 2000: A User's Guide to the New Edge. New York: Harper Perennial, 1992.
This book is published by the editors of a magazine which commonly is hailed (and hails itself) as "The Cyberpunk Magazine," Mondo 2000. It is probably the most useful book

available for looking at the cyberpunk movement, both in the fictive and actual worlds. This is due to the fact that it looks at the cyberpunk movement from within, from the so-called "edge" of cyberpunk, which is always changing itself. The book is set up like an encyclopedia, each heading dealing with specific issues involved with cyberpunk.

Of particular use to me is the section dealing with cyberpunk fiction, which covers the major writers in the field, including Gibson and Sterling, and cites their influences from, among others, Burroughs and H.P. Lovecraft. Themes discussed include transcendence, morality, the desire to become godlike, if not "God" itself, anarchy and chaos, and the general attitudes and beliefs of the cyberpunk "protagonist". I personally believe that this book forms the core of current study on the cyberpunk movement, and found it to be enlightening as well as informative.

Rushkoff, Douglas. Cyberia : Life in the Trenches of Hyperspace. San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994.
Rushkoff's book is one of the most current in-depth discussions of the virtual space, often dubbed "cyberspace," in which the cyberpunk protagonist often finds himself, although Rushkoff renames the place "Cyberia". The book deals with "cyberia" as a real place, a sort of collective "mind-space" [similar to Satan's "The mind is it's own place" belief (Paradise Lost I:254-255)] into which people, real or fictive, project themselves as a sort of escape from the drudgery of normal life. Rushkoff spends a great deal of time speaking with the "founders" of cyberpunk fiction, including Gibson and Sterling, particularly as concerns "cyberia" and the moral and religious implications involved therein. He also presents the "real-life" hackers as a cross between intelligent mathematicians and self-taught punks, a sort of amalgamation which leads to a very powerful, very intelligent, highly dangerous sort of rebel, similar to the protagonists portrayed in cyberpunk fiction.

Rushkoff does not intend to criticize any of the works or people discussed within for their moral decisions, which is a rather fresh view. Although discussions of morality are brought up, even those involved in illegal activities are viewed subjectively. That is, their own specific situations are taken into account when dealing with morality, an important notion dealt with in cyberpunk fiction, where the "heroes", if we can use such a term, are often criminals. All in all, Rushkoff writes a very useful book which lends itself well to a discussion of both moral and societal implications of and for the cyberpunk protagonist.

Sterling, Bruce, ed. Preface and Editorial Comments. Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology. New York: Ace Books, 1986. ix-xvi.
Bruce Sterling, widely recognized as one of the major figures in the cyberpunk field, edited and wrote the preface to this collection of cyberpunk stories. After accepting the

necessity of labelling genres of literature, Sterling proceeds to outline what he feels are the key features of cyberpunk literature. He accepts that Cyberpunk is a sort of "stripped-down" science fiction genre, comparing it to the loud, raw, often discordant tones found in the punk music so popular in the early 1980's. Touching briefly on some of the symbols and tenets of the movement (mirrored sunglasses, the color black, etc.), he quickly gets to the summary of what cyberpunk is. The oft-quoted passage, "an unholy alliance of the technical world and the world of organized dissent -- the underground world ofŠstreet level anarchy (xii)," sums up Sterling's argument and presents several clear points. Sterling also acknowledges the presence of something "mythic"(125) about cyberpunk in one of his short story introductions.

I feel that Sterling's acknowledgment that there is something "unholy" about the movement, as well as his ideas concerning anarchy, the rejection of borders and the fact that "technology is visceral" are key to any summary of the movement, and must be considered when one would attempt to define the genre. Several of the short stories found within the work well represent the genre, and are cited elsewhere. As a whole, Sterling's book represents a good cross-section of the cyberpunk movement, and it is appropriately considered the "definitive" cyberpunk anthology .

SCHOLARLY ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

Asimov, Isaac. "Cybernetic Organism." Robot Visions. New York: Byron Price Visual Publications Inc., 1990.
This short article deals with the difficult question raised in many science fiction works concerning the man/robot distinction -- when does a man become a cyborg, or a "cybernetic organism," and how does society react to such "creatures", to use Asimov's term? Asimov holds that after a certain point, a person looks so inhuman that he is forced to prove his humanity, and that this is often done (in fiction and, he projects, in the real future) through violent means.

Asimov's article is, unfortunately, bereft of a discussion of moral issues (something I had hoped for), but it does offer a well-founded definition of what a cyborg is, a key to any discussion of cyberpunk fiction.

Bukatman, Scott. "Gibson's Typewriter." The South Atlantic Quarterly 92 (1993): 627-645.
The article's title refers to the fact that Gibson wrote his first cyberpunk novel,

Neuromancer, on a manual typewriter, and speaks of the anachronism of this fact. Bukatman then addresses the issue of the industrialization of our language to the point where people start to become associated with the machines they use (he gives the example of "typewriter" meaning either the machine OR the person using the machine). Bukatman appears mostly concerned, however, with the irony of Gibson's typewriter, and unfortunately never develops his ideas to a useful point.

While the idea of men becoming associated with the machines they use is a useful one, especially as it concerns the cyberpunk character, there is little defined argument in this article, something I would have liked to see.

---. "Postcards From the Posthuman Solar System." Science Fiction Studies 18.11 (1991): 343- 357.
As the title suggests, Bukatman's essay is concerned with a view of cyberpunk literature as "posthuman". Bukatman suggests that as a human race we are already cyborgs, and that cyberpunk literature reflects this push away from humanity and towards something else. Bukatman asserts that, above all else, man is posthuman, above and beyond "natural individualism" -- indeed, Bukatman goes so far as to suggest a "death of Man" as humans are reborn into bodies without organs, becoming literal "antibodies". This "new flesh" represents a total reconfiguration of the body for Bukatman, as evidenced in cybernetic attachments as well as the desire to enter the virtual world of the "Matrix" and adopt a new body.

Bukatman's work is not always concerned with cyberpunk literature specifically -- rather, he adopts a more general view of modern society, our modern tendencies, and the themes of modern science fiction literature as a whole. However, the themes Bukatman addresses are applicable to my research, particularly the theme of moving "beyond the human body" and towards divinity. In that sense, this will be a useful resource for my research.

Csicsery-Ronay, Istvan Jr. "Cyberpunk and Neuromanticism." Storming the Reality Studio:A Casebook of Cyberpunk and Postmodern Fiction. Ed. Larry McCaffery. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991. 182-193.
This article is a bit deceiving, for it never attempts a clear definition of the term used in the title, "neuromanticism". Csicery-Ronay assumes, I believe, that we will know what he is talking about, and then offers examples of what he means without actually telling us. What exactly does he tell us?

The essay begins by talking about the heights of postmodernism, the point at which cyberpunk literature enters the picture. Csicery-Ronay is often critical of cyberpunk

literature, and at one point presents a one run-on-sentence summary of all cyberpunk plots (or so he says) -- he doubts that cyberpunk works can be called revolutionary when they hold so much in common with classic science-fiction. Csicery-Ronay does talk about some key themes in cyberpunk novels, including the need to "be hip"(185), transcendence, the paradox between man's desire for and fear of the machine, and themes of humanity, antihumanity, and romanticism. His final comments suggest a movement beyond typical romanticism into a new realm, but like the rest of the essay, these thoughts are unclear and not definitive. The essay is not altogether disappointing, and will be useful, but it is certainly lacking something.

Easterbrook, Neil. "The Arc of Our Destruction: Reversal and Erasure in Cyberpunk." Science- Fiction Studies 19:11 (1992):378-394.
Neil Easterbrook's article opens with an assertion that cyberpunk itself, as a genre, is dead. Easterbrook quickly moves on to classify the statement, suggesting that cyberpunk literature has now moved on to the realm of myth, and he explains what he defines as "The Cyberpunk Mythos". He talks about conflicts between good and bad, ghosts, and the tendency of cyberpunk characters and AI's (artificial intelligences) to deify themselves as, among other things, voodoo gods, even as they attempt to become more human. Cyberpunk human characters, on the other hand, attempt to reach for divinity, using the "deus ex machina," in this case a literal "god-from-the-machine".

Easterbrook moves beyond this theme of divinity, however, concentrating on a theme of reversals of roles and meanings. He speaks of a desire to find freedom through the machine, even as humankind is trapped by it, and speaks at length of a "natural/artificial opposition" -- that is, human morality and being becomes erased and consumed by advanced technology, and yet the technology itself becomes desirable, perhaps for this very reason, leaving behind a "virtual morality."

Easterbrook's thesis is clear and definite, and the only flaw I find in the essay is his occasional tendency to bring in ideas and then fail to connect them to the dominant theme. However, there are only one or two such unclear portions, and this article will undoubtedly be one of the most useful to my research. It clearly addresses the theme in cyberpunk literature of a desire to achieve divinity, and a suggestion that the attempt will fail.

Glazer, Miryam. "What is Within Now Seen Without: Romanticism, Neuromanticism, and the Death of the Imagination in William Gibson's Fictive World." Journal of Popular Culture 23.3 (1989): 155-164.
Glazer's article takes the ideas of romanticism and, applying them to Gibson's cyberpunk world, coins the term "Neuromanticism," short for New Romanticism. The "New

Romantic" is for Glazer a romantic hero of the nerves, of the synapses, of the union between man and machine. Gibson's characters are still romantic heroes for Glazer, as they pursue "ecstatic journeys of self-liberation" (160), attempting to transcend the boundaries of their own flesh. With their capacity for feeling and their desire to leave their bodies behind, Glazer states that "the human itself has become obsolete" (163).

Glazer's article is key to my research, for it shows the possibilities of romanticism when applied to cyberpunk fiction. She focuses on the "new" type of romanticism we find in Gibson's works rather than traditional romanticism, and I believe that it is this angle which will prove interesting and useful. This is a clear and well-written article.

Grant, Glenn. "Transcendence Through Detournement in William Gibson's Neuromancer." Science-Fiction Studies 17.3 (1990): 41-49.
This article is arranged in atypical fashion -- rather than progressing normally in essay format, Grant clearly delineates his ideas by numbering them and addressing each in turn. Although not entirely clear at times, the article is well organized.

Grant's thesis is that cyberpunk protagonists tend to seek transcendence of their limited human forms, reaching for something divine, and in order to achieve this transcendence, they use what Grant calls "detournement". According to Grant, detournement is "The appropriation of alien elements; perversion; mutation; making the old into something new." (49) Grant starts by demonstrating the idea that people are trapped in a closed system, and that memory serves as the first escape, the first means to transcend the self and "kill death," or achieve immortality. By extrapolation, the mind becomes a way to escape the limits of the body, and in a world without religion, technology becomes linked with the mind and provides an enhanced means for escape. Through technological means, such as "jacking into the net" (projecting oneself mentally into the Matrix), cyberpunk characters become able to transcend their human bodies and become somewhat divine. Grant recognizes that certain characters actually become "godlike" in cyberspace, and acknowledges that certain figures, such as Gibson's Wintermute (a character in Neuromancer) are actually worshipped as divine.

Grant's thesis suggests exactly what I am suggesting -- the fact that cyberpunk literature suggests a movement towards the divine, admittedly an often absurd movement. Grant, and others, seem to suggest that cyberpunk characters, in their desire to escape the "closed systems" of their lives, actually progress towards a sort of divinity. This article will, without a doubt, be highly useful.

Haraway, Donna. "A Manifesto for Cyborgs." Socialist Review 80 (1985): 65-107.

Donna Haraway's socialist manifesto is often cited among cyberpunk critics as part of the central philosophy of the cyberpunk character. Written the year after Neuromancer was published, Haraway's essay is commonly listed as one of the earliest cyberpunk works, and is said to have influenced much of the literature of the past decade or so.

Haraway's article takes the position that cybernetics, and the image of the half-man/half-machine cyborg, are a part of a new "ironic political mythology" (65) created by the notion that we are all in "a mythic timeŠwe are all chimeras" (66). For Haraway, the cyborg represents a condensed image of imagination and reality combined, appearing at a time when not only the lines between man and animal are blurred, but the distinction between man and machine as well. Machinery for Haraway is representative of a god, and the cyborg, by becoming a part of that machine, trancends the human and becomes at least part divine. Haraway truly sees cyborgs, and cyberpunk literature, as something which will lead society to a new myth.

Haraway's thesis is clear and concise, and describes a myth based on cyberpunk writings and images of the cyborg. This work has been cited by critics so often because of its importance, and it will be just as, if not more, useful in my own research.

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Hollinger, Veronica. "Cybernetic Deconstructions: Cyberpunk and Postmodernism."
Mosaic 23 (Spring 1990): 29-44.
Veronica Hollinger's article concerns itself with the idea that cyberpunk is "postmodern," and thus, by her own extrapolation, "anti-humanist". She discusses the themes of body-invasion through cybernetic implants, the alternate reality of VR (Virtual Reality), and of the general tendencies of Cyberpunk literature to "blur the boundaries" between technology and human nature. Her discussion concludes with a suggestion that cyberpunk represents the "apotheosis of bad faith (and) postmodernism" (44), showing a "fallen humanity" ruled by a rampant technology.

Hollinger's focus is on postmodernism, as she strives to demonstrate how the breakdown of a distinction between man and technology proves cyberpunk to "glorify" postmodernism. My own interest is on Hollinger's use of the term "anti-humanist," a term which seems to signify an attempt to label the cyberpunk literature, as well as its' characters. She seems to suggest that cyberpunk protagonists are "anti-human," in that they continually strive to reach beyond the human form for something approximating divinity, and I agree. For Hollinger, the cyberpunk world is anti-human before it is anything else, and this suggests the very literary progression I hope to address in my research.

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Leary, Timothy. "The Cyberpunk: The Individual as Reality Pilot." Storming the Reality

Studio: A Casebook of Cyberpunk and Postmodern Fiction. Ed. Larry McCaffery. Durham: Duke University Press, 1991. 243-258.

Leary's essay focuses on the origins of the word cybernetics, which comes from the Greek kubernetes, or "pilot". Most of the essay focuses on the notion of "steering one's own course," particularly when one is steering against the wishes of centralized authority. Leary's notion of the cyberpunk legend as "heroic" is a point I would disagree with, but I doubt that Leary means that the cyberpunk characters are "heroes" -- he talks about cyberpunks as using Prometheus, a mythical figure, as their model, and of how in all versions of the myth (including the Christian Lucifer), the central figure uses a new technology to defy authority. Later in his essay, Leary brings up the term "ronin," a Japanese term for a masterless samurai, and relates the term to the idea of a "freelance" or "sellsword," a knight who wandered the countryside in medieval Europe, selling his services to the highest bidder, yet always living according to his own unique "code of chivalry" (254).

Leary's central thesis is to present the cyberpunk character as a person who acts as an individual, seeking to transcend the system. It is his reminder of a connection between cyberpunk and its Classical origins in Greek mythology and philosophy which is most useful and interesting, however.

McCaffery, Larry. "Skating Across Cyberpunk's Brave New Worlds: An Interview With Lewis Shiner." Critique 33 (1992): 177-196.

This is one of the most enlightening interviews with a cyberpunk author I've yet read. McCaffery's interview first deals with Shiner's own works, particularly Slam, but quickly moves on to the larger issues. The interview deals with man's tendency, in fiction and in reality, to accept technology as a matter-of-fact, a necessary evil, and the attitude that we should "use it, not cry about it". This discussion of attitude is particularly useful, for it presents the cyberpunk character as a brash, arrogant, short-sighted rebel who fights against the establishment. These people reject the spiritual side of things and instead focus on immediate needs and concerns; for them, the new heaven is to be found in the virtual world that man has created, says Shiner. The article deals with music, chaos theory, the distortion of the present, and many other aspects of cyberpunk works.

Of particular interest to me is a discussion of the speech of the cyberpunk character, which is a short, clipped equivalent of "rap-cum-speed metal". Although the cyberpunk character is often criticized for his inability to use rhetoric as effectively as, for instance, Satan in Paradise Lost, Shiner defends the cyberpunk's speech patterns, asserting that some of these street punks are remarkably clear and efficient, articulate in a non-traditional way. In the era of E-mail and instant messaging, one needs to be able to speak quickly, clearly, and efficiently, and it is that sort of speech which gives these new cyberpunks remarkable clarity. Whereas heroes in older fiction tend to speak in extended, flowery rhetoric, the

new "heroes" speak in the short sentences and fragments found on the computer bulletin boards.

McHale, Brian. "Elements of a Poetics of Cyberpunk." Critique 33:3 (1992): 149-175. McHale's article focuses primarily on a comparison of several specific cyberpunk writers, including Gibson, with the ideas and tenets of the romantic world and of romantic literature. Though the ideas are not always identical, McHale makes a strong case for some cyberpunk novels, particularly Neuromancer, as being considered romantic.

McHale's essay begins, for example, by comparing the castles and enchanted labyrinths of romantic fantasies with the towers and magical networks of cyberpunk literature. Into both of these worlds, McHale suggests, are injected the typical "wandering adventurer-hero" or the "knight-errant" (153), on a quest for knowledge and power. McHale adds that the addition of mythic elements, magical/voodoo ideas, and horrific elements into cyberpunk makes it even more romantic in nature, but with an added dimension and a "new intensity" (153).

McHale's essay is a bit rough and unclear at times, and I do not fully agree with his thesis. He leaves cyberpunk and romanticism at nearly the same level, whereas I tend to see the two views as opposing, yet sharing some common elements. Beyond my own disagreements, however, McHale's essay is well-written, and it will prove useful.

Nixon, Nicola. "Cyberpunk: Preparing the Ground for Revolution or Keeping the Boys Satisfied?" Science-Fiction Studies 19.7 (1992): 219-235.
This article is essentially a feminist criticism of cyberpunk literature. Nixon accuses Sterling, Gibson, and other cyberpunk writers of claiming to be "revolutionary" while adhering to old-fashioned traditions, typical machismo and sexism. Although I disagree with her major points, it is several of her minor points which I wish to take issue with in my research.

Nixon asserts at several points that cyberpunk characters, particularly male ones, represent a "paradigmatic American heroism" (230) -- I disagree with this attempt to pass off cyberpunk protagonists as mere American heroes. Later, Nixon accuses cyberpunk writers of male performance anxiety (fear of impotence), and claims that cyberpunk literature proposes a sort of "upward mobility" which assures that the "hero will inevitably triumph" (230). Not only do I disagree with the labelling, again, of cyberpunk characters as heroes, but I disagree that they all inevitably triumph. I feel that cyberpunk literature represents a sort of failed attempt at success, at divinity, and that the characters are certainly not heroes. Nixon's article will be useful only insofar as I can use her statements to show that

cyberpunk characters are certainly not heroes, though she asserts this.

Protnero, James. "Fantasy, Science Fiction, and the Teaching of Values." English Journal 79.3 (1990): 32-34.
This is a short article which does not deal specifically with cyberpunk, but rather addresses the larger issues of morality in all of science fiction and fantasy. Protnero argues that values can be transmitted through science fiction, which is, in effect, a modern-day form of mythology. He also talks about the disappearance of myths from society, and of how the culture tends to make up new myths to fill in the gaps. He feels that a lack of morality is a possible result. The article will be useful in setting up the premise of a type of mythology found in cyberpunk works, but is, unfortunately, limited in scope.

Rushing, Janice Hacker. "The Frankenstein Myth in Contemporary Culture." Critical Studies in Mass Communication 6.1 (1989): 61-80.
Rushing's article addresses one of the key issues of cyberpunk literature and film -- the idea that the machine is both feared and desired, loved and hated simultaneously, as it reflects both something superior and inferior to human beings. Without directly meaning to, Rushing relates several key issues in cyberpunk literature to each other -- namely, chaos and entropy, a dystopian setting, and cybernetics. Rushing discusses the Promethean or Satanic figure as it appears not only in Frankenstein, but also in the films Blade Runner, The Road Warrior, and The Terminator, all "cyberpunk" films. In speaking of a figure who is out of place in society, and who wishes to overthrow order, Rushing offers an excellent parallel between modern science fiction characters and the classical Satanic or Prometheus image.

While Rushing's article is mostly concerned with specific films, and never explicitly mentions cyberpunk, I feel her article will, nevertheless, be very useful, as it addresses most of the key issues I wish to deal with. It seems to suggest that some of the underlying themes in cyberpunk literature may be directly related, even without total authorial intent.

Sponsler, Claire. "Beyond the Ruins: the Geopolitics of Urban Decay and Cybernetic Play." Science-Fiction Studies 20.7 (1993):251-265.
Sponsler devotes her attention to the setting of cyberpunk literature in this article, immediately referring to the decay and degradation as post-humanist and anti-utopian, a virtual eco-wasteland. The interesting thing about Sponsler's labelling of this setting as "post-holocaust" and "post-apocalypse" is her statement that these apocalypses and tragedies are not labelled as either good or evil -- "they simply are" (253), she says. For

Sponsler, the cyberpunk world is a "non-moral" world, a world in which morality has vanished with the death of God and in which humans are left free to roam amidst a shattered landscape.

Sponsler's article is useful in that it suggests a "post-apocalyptic" world, a world beyond the "final judgement". This world, thus, is devoid of morality, taking the cyberpunk characters within it into the freedom of amorality, allowing them to make their own judgements, their own laws. In this sense, they seem to bridge the gap between the amoral anti-hero and the divine powers who are superior to the moralities they dictate. The article will be quite useful in assisting in my research on the morality of the cyberpunk character.

---. "Cyberpunk and the Dilemma of Postmodern Narrative: the Example of William Gibson." Contemporary Literature 33 (1992): 625-644.
In this article, Sponsler addresses many of the key aspects of cyberpunk literature, including the landscape (which is shattered and hopeless), the lack of society for the protagonist, a world referred to in technical terms, and the blurred distinction of exactly who human beings are in a world so full of technology. I disagree with some of Sponsler's terms -- she refers to the cyberpunk characters as mere "anti-heroes," for example, something I strongly disagree with. Northrop Frye, and others, commonly associate the term "anti-hero" with a character or protagonist who lacks either power or intelligence (ie. someone who is somehow "subhuman" in ability). Cyberpunk characters always seem to possess either greater intelligence or greater physical power, which seems to me to indicate that they are not mere "anti-heroes". Sponsler does, however, address many of the Promethean themes to be found in cyberpunk literature, including the need for freedom from restriction, the rebellion theme, and the tendency of some characters to represent a sort of "antichrist".

Sponsler has drawn from a number of sources, as represented in her bibliography. Covering many different fields, this article presents a very wide view of a topic which has gotten short shrift in the past. I found it very enjoyable, and despite the fact that I disagree with about half of what the author says, I feel it will be useful.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES AND MAGAZINES

Cobb, Nathan. "We Have Seen the Future, and It's Cyberpunk." Buffalo News 13 Dec. 1992, city ed.:H1+.
Cobb's article speaks of an "emerging cyberculture" which is quickly becoming "culture"

as we know it. Taken from a cultural perspective, his article speaks mostly about two aspects of the "cyberpunk counterculture" -- the hackers and the musicians of the genre, although it does touch on the beginnings of the genre as they relate to the literary field. "Touch" is the operative word here, because Cobb's article leaves a lot up in the air.

The article is written as a sort of "cyberpunk primer," and although there was less information available in late 1992 than there is currently, it lacks a great deal of detail. Although the article sets out to form a sort of thesis about society today as related to cyberpunk culture, it quickly falls into nothing more than an explanation of the genre and its key points. The second half of Cobb's article is little more than a "Gee-Whiz" view of all of the major features of cyberpunk fiction, and serves only to show how the media has jumped on the bandwagon in the past two years. I cannot help but look with derision on articles like this one, which seek to tell society at large all about this "new" genre of literature which has been around since the early 1980's.

Despite being poorly written, the article does contain a few points which are useful. Cobb speaks, for instance, of the virtual world of the hacker as a "netherworld," suggesting the sort of criminal activity that goes on there is somehow immoral and forbidden, akin to Dante's "Inferno". Cobb also does well to speak of the sense of apprehension and fear surrounding the genre, calling it "dark" and "morbid," but he doesn't carry that sense throughout the article. Overall, what Cobb does is show us a dark, dreary, morbid culture and then say "Isn't it neat that our culture will soon be like that?" His tone does not mix well with his subject.

Elmer-Dewitt, Philip. "Cyberpunk!" Time 8 Feb. 1993: 58-65.
Time's article on cyberculture is widely accepted as the breaking point for the genre, the point where what had been seen as a "counterculture" became "mainstream". The time of publication (between September of 1992 and December of 1993) falls in the middle of the largest influx of publications on the topic, the "boom" of cyberpunk, if you will. Located at the center of this period of time, thus, the article cannot help but to be a very detailed description of the genre, even though it is a bit sketchy at times.

The article itself draws on a wide range of topics, as it needs to, including the origins of cybernetics (Norbert Weiner), chaos theory, punk music, drugs, the Internet, and, as is essential, literature. These topics are discussed mostly in a sidebar next to the main article, which simply passes over them, leaving the specifics out. The major problem with this method of writing is that it does little to make a point -- that is, the article ends up being little more than a summary, and a summary is not what is needed. Aside from mere summarization, the article does make a few key points and descriptions, such as discussion of the cyberpunk culture as a sort of "movement," related to the beatniks or hippies of the 60's . Industrial music is directly linked with the cyberpunk genre, as it is in many other

places, a type of music which has been called "the sound our culture makes as it comes unglued" -- this fact goes a long way towards showing the influence of cyberculture on the real world, to the point where the culture develops its own look and even its own theme music. Also discussed in the article are some of the "tenets and beliefs" of the cyberpunk, all related to a rejection of authority and a movement towards anarchy and chaos.

Widely accepted by the media as one of the definitive sources on the cyberpunk genre, the article actually falls a bit short when compared to other works which describe cyberpunk, and winds up reading more like a dictionary than an article describing a literary genre and cultural movement. However, it is a useful text, and does provide a good general overview of the genre.

Georgy, Ralph. "God's Been Buried Under Technology." Buffalo News 11 Sep. 1994, city ed.:F7+.
Ralph Georgy's article, although it does not specifically concern cyberpunk fiction, does relate several of the key themes and issues found in cyberpunk novels and films. Georgy begins by talking about Nietzsche's assertion that "God is dead," and then accuses modern society of having replaced God with our own technologies. Through vivid examples, he shows how modern man's technology has become, in a very real sense, more powerful than the God of our ancestors. He tells of the relations between this new, more personal technology and the sex, drugs, and lack of morality we commonly see in the world around us. Georgy's article is interesting in the notion that the "cyberpunk" society of today is related to the philosophical belief in the "death of God," and would be useful in a correlation of fiction to the actual world, but it holds little value outside of that fact.

Interestingly enough, several editorial comments related to this piece have appeared in The Buffalo News through October 11, each of them refuting the claims made in this article. None of them makes their point as clearly as Georgy's article, however, which is clear, to-the-point, and utterly frightening if it is true, just as the world of the cyberpunks is.

Olsen, Lance. "Tonguing the Zeitgeist." Rev. of Storming the Reality Studio:A Casebook of Cyberpunk and Postmodern Fiction, ed. Larry McCaffery. Mondo 2000 (no date), Issue 7. 1992: 102-103.
Olsen's article does exactly what I feel it should -- laughs at the media for giving cyberpunk a bad rap. Olsen looks at the fact that the Washington Post used the term "cyberpunk" as a term of derision and mockery and the fact that the New York Times said cyberpunk was "defunct," and he mocks them. His tone is no reason to doubt the validity of this review, for it is highly useful and valid, despite its being a review article. Olsen insists that the cyberpunk movement is much more than a mere literary genre, and is,

rather, a full-fledged social movement in its own right. As such, he speaks of McCaffery's book as taking the same tone.

He takes McCaffery's thesis, that we are LIVING the cyberpunk lifestyle in our own world, and elucidates. Olsen addresses many of the key points in the book, effectively summarizing the work without making it seem insignificant: technology shapes our lives to the point where we are becoming machines, chaos and turbulence is exciting, criminals and anarchists are the new forces for change in our world, the cyberpunk lifestyle is very real, etc. Olsen's review article winds up formulating a thesis for itself, but this makes it no less valuable, since the thesis is the same as McCaffery -- the cyberpunk world IS the real world. All in all, the article is highly entertaining, informative, and valuable, considering it is only two pages long. Olsen goes a long way towards showing the value of the cyberpunk lifestyle, even if he does tend to brush away the literary beginnings of the genre as insignificant.

Ostling, Richard N. "The Generation That Forgot God." Time 5 Apr. 1993: 44-49.
This article caught my attention mainly because of earlier discussions of the cyberpunk lifestyle as indicating a rejection of God and morality. Tied in with a belief by many critics that the cyberpunk lifestyle is VERY real, this article becomes valuable due to its discussion of a movement away from organized religion by today's youth. The article speaks of Americans as searching for a "custom-made God" (44) in a sort of "revolution." It goes on the assert that our society, in general, has "lost all connection to God," and that a real shift has taken place, from "glorification of God" to "glorification of man," one of the central ideas in cyberpunk literature. The article was well written and made several points which directly relate to cyberpunk themes, and I feel it will be useful in that light.

Rucker, Rudy. Rev. of Virtual Light, by William Gibson. Mondo 2000 (no date), Issue 11. 1993: 120-121.
Rudy Rucker delivers a blisteringly harsh review of a book he later tells us he enjoyed. Although this at first seems paradoxical, one must realize that Rucker, too, is one of the major writers of cyberpunk literature, and is quite consciously comparing Gibson's novel to his own works. Rucker effectively shows us the major points and techniques used in Gibson's novel, citing such useful techniques as passing off technology as "commonplace," the placement of numerous cults and religions in the book, demonstrating the fragmentation of religion, etc. Towards the end of his article, Rucker sarcastically refers to the main characters of Gibson's novel as "heroes" and calls them "moral," (121) as if to imply that cyberpunk novels aren't supposed to be moral. In the following paragraph he asserts that he will personally keep writing about "rotten amoralŠcharacters," (121) implying that THOSE are true cyberpunk characters.

Although I disagree with Rucker in his labelling the main characters of Gibson's novel as moral, I do agree that cyberpunk characters are distinctly amoral, and that although they may form alliances, trust, and, yes, even fall in love, they do retain distinct amoralities, such as their tendencies to kill without question, a lack of belief in a real God, etc. Rucker's review is, all in all, a good summary, and quite useful.

MISCELLANEOUS SOURCES

Branwyn, Gareth et al, eds. Beyond Cyberpunk. Computer Software. The Computer Lab, 1992. Macintosh Hypercard•, 5.5 MB, 5 disks.
This program is perhaps one of the most useful sources I've yet found on the topic, if only because it contains so much information. The stack itself is organized into 4 major zones, each dedicated to discussion of a different area of cyberpunk. This discussion takes the form of several articles, followed by several in-depth reviews of books, film, and other aspects of the genre. More than any other source, this piece of software contains the most in-depth study and the best explanation of the topic of cyberpunk literature.

More important than the information discussed is the nature of the medium itself, for it abandons traditional literary forms in the wake of chaos. Pictures, sounds, and words fly off the screen through the use of multimedia, something cyberpunks hail as the future of communication. Embracing chaos theory, an animated character, Kama Sutra, appears at random while you use the program, dropping bits of random knowledge and opinion at random across the screen. The emphasis on the program seems to be on change and mutability, an aspect of cyberpunk literature that a newspaper article cannot grasp.

The program itself does not lay out a definite thesis, rather serving to be a means for defining terms, understanding topics, and looking up more information. For what it is, it is definitely useful, and will serve well for further research on the topic.

---. "The Desire to be Wired." Wired 1.4 America Online file, Keyword: newstand/Wired. Branwyn's article concerns itself mostly with actual, technical possibilities for creating cyborgs today, from artificial hearts and limbs to actual neural implants. The most interesting part of the article, however, and that which will be most useful to me, is the notion of a "new mythology," which comes from science-fiction (and, specifically, cyberpunk), and gives us a connection back to primitive mythologies. Branwyn links, for instance, body-piercing and tattooing of primitive cultures with the desire of some

"cyberpunks" to add actual cybernetic implants onto their bodies. Branwyn closes the essay with a reference to society's "mythic desire" to become bionic -- this perhaps overstates the case, but it will be useful in presenting a case for a growing movement towards the concept of the cyborg as a mythological creature.

Geiger, E. Enterprise : E-text Journal of Science-Fiction 1:2 (Feb., 1993). America Online file, Keyword: computing & software/magazines/Enterprise.
Geiger's electronic magazine may appear hastily put together, but what it contains is impressive. Included in this issue is the text to William Gibson's "Agrippa," a self-erasing poem; a review of Bruce Sterling's The Hacker Crackdown; and a speech given by Sterling about the crackdown, hackers in general, and cryptography.

The emphasis in the Œzine appears to focus on two things. First, mutability and change is a major issue, as evidenced by the paradoxical presence of Gibson's poem, which was never supposed to appear in print. Second is Sterling's discussion of the control sought by the government agencies over internet communications, and the rejection of that belief by hackers, who seek freedom and chaos. The very real struggles between the ultimate power for law and order, the government, and those rebelling against the authority, the hackers, mirrors the battles seen in cyberpunk literature as well as the mythical battle between God and Satan. While the magazine itself contains little in the way of explanation or a thesis, the information inside, taken as a whole, is impressive. Not only is it valuable information, not found in many places elsewhere, but the themes discussed are key to a discussion of cyberpunk literature.

Levy, Jaime, ed. Billy Idol's "Cyberpunk". Computer Software. Electronic Hollywood Productions, 1993. Macintosh Hypercard•, 1.3 MB, disk.
This program is mainly a summary of Billy Idol's CD, Cyberpunk, and contains the lyrics from his songs as well as a discussion of the themes in the music. It contains little "hard" information about the topic, but the atmosphere and look of the program is impressive, and does give the viewer a good idea of what the cyberpunk phenomenon is all about.

Idol has been accused of merely using the term "cyberpunk" as a marketing ploy, one which ultimately failed. Idol's CD and program were a commercial failure, mostly because the music Idol wrote was not seen as being "cyberpunkish" by those who listened to it. In his own defense, Idol has spoken about the program and CD, stating that they were based on several themes he picked up on while reading the novel Neuromancer. Taken from that perspective, Idol's program and CD are useful from a purely artistic standpoint, although they lack the information necessary to make them more than nominally useful in research on the topic, apart from Idol's "manifesto," included as part of the program.

Schneider, Erich, ed. Alt.cyberpunk FAQ List. 1 Oct, 1994. Available at:
http://www.knarf.demon.co.uk/alt-cp.htm
This file, available at several locations on the Internet, is a compilation of the most
commonly asked questions, and the most common answers, given at the alt.cyberpunk
newsgroup. The fact that over a thousand messages a week are posted to this newsgroup,
and that this newsgroup is one of the most popular on the internet, make this a viable
resource, as well as the fact that cyberpunk authors such as Bruce Sterling and Rudy
Rucker have been known to read and post messages on-line here.

The faq (frequently asked questions) list is useful in defining the term "cyberpunk," as well
as in laying out some of the themes and beliefs dealt with in the genre. It relates
connections between films and literature, deals with cyberpunk "music" and hackers, and
provides discussion of several works specifically. It is a highly useful resource for defining
the cyberpunk genre, as it represents what is probably the most current information on the
topic. I feel that it represents the future of discussion on the topic, for it is totally
interactive, fluid, and allows for an open interchange between authors and readers.

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