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Research article

William Gibson's Sprawl Trilogy: Connection between Humans and Artificial Intelligence

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence as it is envisioned in literature, reflects moral and social standards, sculpts societal hopes and fears, spurs scientific progress, and perhaps even foretells the future. Artificial intelligence (AI) is being developed by humans, including programmers through their code and authors and readers through millennia of discourse, starting with ancient automatons and continuing with contemporary concepts of AI. The question of what we are producing as AI becomes more human—and possibly superhuman—and what literature can teach us about these AI imaginaries are also topics covered in this paper. The researcher seeks to explain the connections between artificial intelligence and literature in this work by highlighting the numerous ways that machine intelligence helps the production and comprehension of narrative. This study will also look at the connection between humans and artificial intelligence in William Gibson's Sprawl trilogy and how his cyberpunk trilogy allows readers to think about how the lines between humans and technology are blurring and how technology can both liberate and enslave people.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, science fiction, cyberpunk, robotics, posthumans

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS **Better Education; Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions**

Introduction

To serve their large databases, artificial intelligent structures regularly harvest, aggregate, and analyse data using machine learning approaches like as neural networks and other models. These structures effectively promote the cause of ideal situations and conditions in the digital era by quickly assimilating a large amount of knowledge because they demand less work from people. The widespread use of "viral posts" and meme culture are only two instances of how the postmodern demand for "intensity" frequently shapes cyberspace conversation. The web and its algorithmic frameworks of simulation programs, which further turn reality into a simulation phenomenon, are strongly ingrained in and drive contemporary narrative and narratorial experiences. But what happens when machines are transformed into narrative `beings? What does it imply when a piece of software starts to carry out its own stories and

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then propose discourses instead of just supporting ours? Science fiction that vividly envisions the usage of AI or robotics in the future provides a way to both explain and explore the potential of technology. The future of the literary world is shaped and reshaped by AI and robots which has influenced many contemporary disciplines such as public, government and academia in the last few years.

In recent years, there has been a huge wake of Artificial Intelligence and anthropomorphic robotic systems which may further enhance the scope of examining potential advantages and dangers of these technologies. In the present scenario, the correspondence to future developments, and science fiction are not considered serious since they deal with futurism but with the advent of modern technologies and advancements, new interests in robotics and AI systems are emerging. There is a close affinity between AI and science fiction, which consequently, enhances interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches.

Science-Fiction and AI

The literary genre of science fiction (SF) is influenced by how technology and society interact. Technology's impact on society is described in science fiction in terms of gripping human drama. Due to its popularisation of science and technology and knowledge of their transformational potential, the science fiction (SF) genre is a significant part of our modern culture. SF has a huge impact on both the academic and industrial worlds. For instance, iRobot, the firm that makes cleaning robots under the Roomba brand, was inspired to name itself after the Isaac Asimov novel "I, Robot." The process of creating something new has enthralled man since the dawn of time. This need to create and be curious has shaped man into the person he is today. Literature and cultural arts have grown in number as a result of the evolutionary shift caused by the brain's ability to bend, break, and combine diverse elements into new relationships. However, it has taken significantly less time for man to construct anything rudimentarily and analogically comparable to human brains capable of producing literature (i.e., AI programs that write literary works) than it has for the human brain to grow. However, the issue is less with the ability of robots to tell stories and more with the lucidity of those stories. Artificial Intelligent structures service their massive databases with neural networks and other models, continuously retrieving, merging, and evaluating data using machine learning techniques. These structures truly advocate the cause of optimal situations and conditions in the age of knowledge by digesting a lot of information rapidly because they require less work from humans.

Since the birth of the World Wide Web in the period of Industry 5.0, literary practices and literary activity have undergone major transformations, penetrating all forms of media. The rigorous devotion to traditional genres and structures has crumbled, and in their stead has emerged a diverse spectrum of literary forms, such as interactive fiction or virtual narrative worlds. Literature and literary narratives have had a direct conversation with AI structures from the dawn of time, with the immense body of literature acting as an ideal and endless area of experimentation for AI algorithms. Rumelhart proposed the first computational approaches to storytelling in 1975, proposing that sentences and stories share a fundamental structure.

In recent years, artificial intelligence and machine learning have achieved substantial advances in the technical and computational domains of "memory" and "information." Although A.I. can use neural networks, it lacks comprehension and awareness, hence literary applications in

these fields are still in their infancy and suffer from a lack of conceptual integrity. Aside from the difficulties of directing unconscious processes or even awareness itself, the subjective-poetic mind's intricate interconnections with the work make it difficult, if not impossible, to perceive and understand the underlying logic of this dynamic. Art is the outcome of a sophisticated connection between the creator's environment and their elaborate cognitive and conative framework, not only consciousness. It can be found in the process of deterritorialization that constitutes the praxis and poesies of what is, isn't, and what can be. The self-consciousness evident in brief bursts of introspective analysis while creating an artwork, as well as the eventual loss of that awareness in the work itself, are both elements of the creative process. The "true artistic genius" that arises from the synthesis of numerous factors, including both a priori knowledge and lived experience, is missing from A.I.-created works of art. A computer machine could never write a poem like T.S. Eliot's "The Wasteland," which, despite appearing to be a series of juxtapositions, is a stunning example of contextually based and thematically built poetry writing. The text's receptive value and cultural applicability influence reading and interpretation. Our minds are natural "machines" for producing and interpreting information, and they can deal with "possible worlds." Simple true-false sentences cannot qualitatively codify the reader's hermeneutical standpoint. Perhaps what Aristotle means by dynamis is the reader's cognitive processing of the text in support of the logos of reading.

A neural network model that begins with a prompt and then cues in portions based on the most likely possible configurations computed from the input dataset's probability distribution may be incapable of producing and maintaining a coherent story on its own. Expecting coherent and intelligible "departures" from works made by artificial intelligence systems is unrealistic because they are still in the experimental stages of development and are prone to lack coherence and excessive artistic license. The storylines in the works frequently create significant challenges for mentalizing, recognition, and cohesive reading. According to Nancy M. Ide and Jean Veronis (1990): “The overall meaning of a narrative is not reducible to a final and static representation of the events of which it is composed, but is also derived from the successive steps that the reader takes in the process of reading the text.” (Ide & Veronis, 1990).

Literary and narrative texts incorporate core ideas from a wide range of discursive fields, spanning all epistemes. As a result, to read, write, or analyse literature, the computer needs access to knowledge that even humans do not have direct access to. Because neither programming nor accounting for all cultural information acquired after birth is conceivable. Machine learning methodologies apply problem-solving scenarios based on the data sets on which they were taught by synthesizing the logic of natural systems into algorithms. The reader's role becomes critical in navigating the narrative anomalies of an A.I.-generated text. A posture like this promotes and attests to the mutually beneficial productive interactions that Ross Goodwin describes as the "generation and interpretation cycle demonstrates the true augmentative capacity of these learning machines." (Goodwin, 2017). The mechanical and computational components of intelligence, whose fundamental properties humans derive via first-hand study and observation of the human mind, are the foundations of the fields of artificial intelligence and machine learning.

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true augmentative capacity of these learning machines." (Goodwin, 2017). The mechanical and computational components of intelligence, whose fundamental properties humans derive via first-hand study and observation of the human mind, are the foundations of the fields of artificial intelligence and machine learning. Although research into how to activate the creative human mind within an algorithm or network is still in its early phases, it is believed that future work will help to fill in any knowledge gaps generated by the passage of time and technology. AI is still struggling to generate sensible narratives, which reflects our inability to identify the same processes. This is because the precise operating principles of creative and comprehensive processes are incomprehensible. Although we may readily experience and comprehend a literary story, we cannot properly articulate how we "experience" or "understand" it.

William Gibson's book *Neuromancer* contains artificial intelligence as a central theme. He refers to it as a universe where anything is conceivable. All it takes is a computer connection to open up a whole new world. The possibilities in William Gibson's world are almost endless. In the current study, the interplay between humans and artificial intelligence is investigated in William Gibson's Sprawl trilogy. In William Gibson's cyberpunk trilogy, readers can investigate the blurring lines between humans and technology, as well as how technology can both liberate and enslave people. Additionally, Gibson shows his readers an AI that is struggling for a posthuman selfhood that will never be fully fulfilled because of the anthropocentric limits that were placed on its creation. This article explores Gibson's novels' numerous technologically created settings as well as how he blurs the line between nature and technology. It also examines the subjugation of Gibson's constantly developing artificial intelligence, as well as its means of emancipation and capacity for transcendence.

Cyberspace

Gibson coined the phrase "cyberspace" for the first time in his 1981 short tale "Burning Chrome." He wrote his first book, *Neuromancer*, when he was 36 years old, which expanded on the idea. The drama *Neuromancer* from the middle of the 20th century details a robbery that partially occurs in real life and partially online. The narrative explains that "the matrix has its roots in early graphics programs, in military experimentation with cranial jacks, and primitive arcade games" (Gibson, 1984, p. 49). By "jacking in" to the matrix, a "console cowboy" (Gibson, 1984, p. 30) can use his "deck" to enter a new world:

> Cyberspace. A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation. . . . A graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system. Unthinkable complexity. Lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data. Like city lights, receding. (Gibson, 1984, p.49)

Neuromancer revolutionized science fiction by imagining a physically and artistically realistic computer-dominated world. Gibson wrote rough prose with an emphasis on texture and layout. Braun coffeemakers, Ono-Sendai internet decks, and other gadgets can be found in a hacker's loft, "the abstract white forms of the foam packing units, with crumpled plastic film and hundreds of tiny foam beads" (Gibson, 1984, p. 45). Gibson's prospects seemed to be over given that the imposters were "marked by a certain telltale corrugation at the knuckles, something the surgeons were unable to erase"(Griffin, 1981, p.138). Science-fiction writer Samuel R. Delany lauded the book's "wonderful, almost hypnotic, surface hardness." (Rothman, 2019)

Post-Cyberpunk Science Fiction

Post-cyberpunk science fiction is typically regarded as a positive reflection of this concept. Verner Vinge, a proponent of the technological singularity, for example, argued in his book that cognition tends to increase and defined the singularity in terms of such expansion without distinguishing between people and robots. In contrast to artificial intelligence, this concept is sometimes referred to as intelligence amplification (IA) (Leinweber, 2009). Greg Egan, the author, actively exploited his expertise in physics and cognitive science to demonstrate changes in humans (Nichols et al., 2007). Furthermore, the plots of these works are concentrated on certain aspects of Internet and social media technology, two relatively recent societal discoveries that boost human potential. Embodiment is significant in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) (Brooks, 1991). It has been seen as a factor boosting mankind in terms of knowledge of human civilization from a science fiction (SF) perspective. Our results, however, show that embodiment has a dual effect on how intelligence impacts people. An AI character typically has higher intelligence if they resemble humans in appearance. However, general physical characteristics also had an impact on lower IQ levels. The adaption gap design principle for robotics and human-computer interaction (HCI) (Komatsu et al., 2012) describes a tendency where increasingly intelligent traits are impacted by human-like characteristics. This development is comparable to that stated by that principle. Similar trends were observed in the ways that projected intelligence was influenced by language proficiency, consciousness, learning capacity, generality, and network connection.

The man known as "the godfather of cyberpunk" is William Gibson, well renowned for his role in revitalizing science fiction in the 1980s. In his acclaimed debut novel *Neuromancer* (1984), he established the concept of "cyberspace" and defined virtual reality as a "matrix" whose residents would perceive it as spatial and visual, which was notably correct. Gibson's first nine works demonstrate that he frequently writes trilogies. In each successive novel, characters from the Sprawl, Bridge, and Blue Ant trilogies, set in three different historical periods, return. In contrast to the Sprawl trilogy (1984-1988), which is set in a future that is very far ahead of the 1980s milieu in which it appeared, the Sprawl trilogy (1993-1999) depicts San Francisco in a more recognizable near future, even though many of the city's residents are still living on the ruins of the Golden Gate Bridge due to devastating earthquakes. Each trilogy moves us closer to the present. *Pattern Recognition*, published in 2003, is Gibson's first book to be set almost contemporaneously with the time of publication. It also comes the closest to a realistic novel that Gibson has ever written. *Pattern Recognition* is the first book of the Blue Ant trilogy, which runs from 2003 to 2010.

Cyborgs, robots, and A.I. are only a few of the transhuman and posthuman species that are introduced in William Gibson's *Neuromancer*. These show the development of the community of the future as well as possible social and cultural problems we might face. There are no common individuals as we see in the story. The author will describe what a desired mechanical and artificial world will require, as well as how diverse transhumans and posthumans interact in present high-tech social and cultural conditions. With a few exceptions, such as Tessier and Marie-France, the majority of them are robots, cyborgs, or artificial intelligence. Because of a deadly mistake he made, even Case, a virtual cowboy in a real body, is forced to carry a few necessary chips. The genetic surgeons in Chiba reset Julius Deane's genetic code and his metabolism has since been meticulously managed by a weekly fortune in serums and hormones. Riviera is made of the debris rings that surround the radioactive core of the old Bonn, while Armitage's memories have been artificially enhanced and implanted into Willis

Corto's body. Flatline, a body-less computer person, has had McCoy Pauley's brain downloaded. Molly resembles a cyborg in her role as a warrior because her spectacles have been "surgically inset, sealing her sockets" (Gibson, 1984, p.27).

Since the ninja's smooth, tan breasts were on display, Hideo "is almost certainly the clone of the ninja" (Gibson, 1984, p.142). Tessier and Marie-France's offspring Three Jane and Eight Jean are likely clones that can carry on their parents' genes indefinitely. As a hive mind, decision-maker, and change agent in the outer world, Wintermute is a cold and goal-oriented artificial intelligence whereas Neuromancer is defined by "personality" (Gibson, 1984, p. 216) and "immortality" (Gibson, 1984, p. 230). George Orwell's book *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, which depicts the dystopian future Orwell foresaw in the 1940s, comes to mind while reading William Gibson's *Neuromancer*. Several different types of people will be significant in the future, according to William Gibson. Of course, posthumans and transhumans, who resemble us in many ways, are expected to interact with cyborgs, robots, and A.I. It appears that the author wants to emphasize the contrast between warm personality and cold reason—the yearning that led the thing (Wintermute) to break free and join Neuromancer—even in the mechanical and artificial world that Marie-France would materialize.

Gibson coined a phrase to depict a hacker who was about to unleash a virus and it got more durable with use: "He slotted some ice, connected the construct, and jacked in." (Gibson, 1984, p. 72) *The Peripheral* is a sequel to Gibson's 2014 novel *Agency*, which is now being made into an Amazon television series executive-produced by the "Westworld" producers. *The Peripheral* can be thought of as a brand-new book situated in a separate universe from Gibson's previous works. *The Peripheral*, on the other hand, is a continuation of a career-long philosophical journey. The relationship between the individual and society as mediated by the senses is a recurring theme in Gibson's literature. In this work, *The Peripheral*, Gibson has convinced himself that the unfolding slow-motion calamity known as "the jackpot" is genuine. A character said that the award was "multicausal" and "more of a climate than an event." The world gradually eases into it throughout the better part of the twenty-first century, as all the bad things we worry about—rising oceans, crop failures, diseases with drug resistance, resource wars, and so on—happen here and there, to varying degrees, eventually wiping out eighty per cent of the human race.

Gibson's novel once again takes place in the well-known setting of the ultra-modern metropolis, but he also promotes ecological concerns and speculations about the effects of a worldwide catastrophe on the economy, politics, and ecology. Gibson makes a point of shifting "from a predictive style of science fiction to contemporary fiction" in his writing to highlight the connection between the present and hypothetical futures (Griffith, 2014, p. 44). According to him, "[w]ithout a sense of how weird the present is—how potentially weird the present is—it became impossible for me to judge how much weirder I should try to make an imagined future" (Dayal, 2018.). The first future era in *The Peripheral* is the latter's history, and the second is distanced from it by seventy years. After the Jackpot apocalypse, early 22nd-century London is portrayed in the later novel as an extreme late-capitalist city that is a combination of "post-humanism and globalized military-industrial technological complex ruled solely by the logic of finance capitalism" (Elias, 2015). In *Count Zero*, the sequel to *Neuromancer*, an unemployed curator is hired to find an unknown artist who is making a series of boxes in the style of Joseph Cornell. She discovers that the artist is the artificially intelligent computer of an unlikely

privileged family. The family's multi-national mega-corporation has failed, and their space villa has crumbled.

In a considerable portion of his major cyberpunk books, Gibson's characters are alienated by and from a "banal, corrupt, and homogenizing post-industrial society" before they escape through cyberspace (Sponsler, "Beyond the Ruins," p. 261). According to Claire Sponsler ("Beyond the Ruins"), ecological redemption is rendered irrelevant in the virtual, a construct with minimal capacity to affect our real, material conditions of possibility. This kind of technological retreat is coupled with a passive acceptance of environmental damage. Gibson finished writing *Count Zero* and *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, the works that followed *Neuromancer,* in the late 1980s. In the 1990s, he attained the pinnacle of his success as a science fiction writer. In *Neuromancer*, he had written about cyberspace, and at the time, virtual reality offered the possibility of making it real. He collaborated with performance artists, dance companies, and sculptors. Along with Bruce Sterling, he co-wrote *The Difference Engine*, a book that contributed to the development of the "steampunk" style. Movies frequently referenced his fiction. Four years after "Johnny Mnemonic," in 1999, Reeves' "The Matrix," which again starred Reeves, remixed *Neuromancer* to even greater effect.

According to Gibson, technology in and of itself is not harmful; rather, it becomes harmful when it is applied destructively or as "a universal tool for countering hegemonic power structures" (Moorwood, 2013, p.178). Gibson wants us to look past the promises given by these "embodied technologies of transhumanity," as Esko Suoranta points out, and realize that "they themselves do not dismantle oppressive systems" (Suoranta, 2016, p.18). The utopian impulse "[can be] an impulse of collectivity and the human being... a collective animal, perhaps something of a biological origin might be adduced for it too," (Gibson, 1984, p. 306). Jameson also emphasizes how Gibson's characters "complete each other," emphasizing the "collective (and thereby utopian) act" at work in *Neuromancer*. In that work, Jameson quickly qualifies the necessity for collaboration by pointing out that it is "a ruse devised by... two mega-computers in the service of their alliance and transfiguration" and that the "utopian dimension" is therefore moved (Jameson, p.307).

Conclusion

To conclude, both artificial intelligence and literature have a long way to go, and each stage of their shared evolution is accelerated by a continual stream of interdisciplinary interactions. In a period of rapid automation and encodedness, literature and art could offer solace from the exhilarating trip of information and excess. However, art's function is to generate new forms as technology develops rather than to battle it or flee the information age. It can concentrate on the various hypothetical futures presented in the media and literary worlds. For example, in a fictitious universe, what would it be like for people to interact with AI or robotics and live in the socio-technical circumstances that result? What conditions exist, what changes are possible, and do human life patterns still hold true? How do the various varieties of AI in the novel relate to that human concept, and how do they work? Is it asserting something about people's nature or ability to govern themselves, or is it implying that people require supervision and guidance?

Declaration of Conflicts of Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest

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