

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Chapter 1: The Differences and Similarities Between the Historical <i>Flâneur</i> and the <i>Cyberflâneur</i>	7
Chapter 2: The Relationship between Realspace and Cyberspace from the Perspective of the <i>Flâneur</i> and <i>Cyberflâneur</i>	23
Chapter 3: Realspace and Cyberspace in <i>Neuromancer</i> and <i>Quantum Thief</i>	29
Chapter 4: The Characters of <i>Neuromancer</i> and <i>Quantum Thief</i> as <i>Flâneurs</i> and <i>Cyberflâneurs</i>	41
Conclusion	51
Works Cited	53
Pedagogical Relevance	57

Introduction

The literary type of the *flâneur* frequented the streets of nineteenth-century Paris. He was also a fictional type who narrated the poetry of Charles Baudelaire. The both fictional and non-fictional *flâneur* was scrutinised by Walter Benjamin in the early twentieth century, but it would soon evolve into a new iteration. While the original *flâneur* was the product of modernity (Buck-Morss 304), postmodernity would soon produce its new iteration: the *cyberflâneur*. A new frontier revealed itself to the *flâneur* when William Gibson coined the term “cyberspace” in his seminal novel *Neuromancer*. A form of passive observation, which is the main pastime and aim of the *flâneur*, was also possible in cyberspace: *cyberflânerie*. The Oxford Dictionary definition of “cyberspace” is “the notional environment in which communication over computer networks occurs”, and this is the environment the *cyberflâneur* is commonly associated with. However, the digital habitat of the *cyberflâneur* is not what separates the *cyberflâneur* from the original *flâneur*. I propose that the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur* should be defined by their inherent qualities and not their whereabouts, and that both the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur* can be found in realspace and cyberspace. In this dissertation, the term “realspace” will refer to environments that are not cyberspaces, but physical.

The inspiration behind this hypothesis is Evgeny Morozov’s article in the New York Times, titled *The Death of the Cyberflâneur*. He argues that companies like Facebook and Google render digital *flânerie* impossible because those companies record and suggest what their users should do. His arguments are based on the fact that there is little room for happenstance encounters online when most encounters are orchestrated by a company. However, his conclusion, that the *cyberflâneur* is outdated, requires an unwarranted generalisation: that the internet governed by Facebook and Google comprises all of cyberspace. Furthermore, it implies that the *cyberflâneur* cannot reside anywhere else. I will argue that the *cyberflâneur* can reside in places other than the internet, and even outside of cyberspace. The *cyberflâneur*, just like the *flâneur*, is free to roam anywhere, as long as the place lets him indulge in his affinities.

The inherent qualities of the two *flâneurs* are those that do not depend on their location. One could argue that one of the qualities of the *cyberflâneur* is that he is in cyberspace, but I will separate their inherent qualities from the spaces in which they reside. Those spaces are, as I argued above, arbitrary. The inherent qualities of the *cyberflâneur*, which can also be observed outside of cyberspaces, are his inclination towards speed

(Hartmann 137, Jenks 33), information and code (Skees 286) and anonymity (Hartmann 126). These obsessions can be fuelled elsewhere than on the internet because the element of the *cyberflâneur* is not the internet or another digital cyberspace. Information is the element of the *cyberflâneur* whereas the crowd is the element of the *flâneur*. Baudelaire's *flâneur* sought "to become one flesh with the crowd", individual by individual, as he puts it in his essay *Painter of Modern Life* (Baudelaire 9). His profession was that of the physiognomist (Shaw 3), to decipher people based on a first impression. The *cyberflâneur*, on the other hand, has no interest in the crowd as individuals because he is the only one who is important (Hartmann 138). Like the *flâneur*, he seeks to decipher the city as text, but by other means. He deciphers it not by using the raw, first-hand impressions from people on the street, but by deciphering processed information that represents reality. Therefore, the difference lies not in the place they inhabit, but *what* they observe and *how* they observe. What they have in common is their inclination towards aimless strolling and observation, which is possible in any space because orientation in both spaces is geographical, be it cyber or not (Veel 152). For the *cyberflâneur*, information can be found in any space: the internet, a book or physically manifested in a fictional reality. Similarly, crowds can potentially be found in an online virtual café. Thus, a *flâneur* can reside both in the streets of nineteenth-century Paris or cyberspaces where people can be observed.

Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project* is also relevant to this view of the *cyberflâneur*. Benjamin wrote that the *flâneur* provided continuity between modernity and the consumer culture (Jenks 36), which manifested itself as fetishism: that we are more interested in what consumer items represent than the items themselves and their history in the production process. Jean Baudrillard expanded on the idea of fetishes as representations of consumer items to include all information. Everything we know, every text, is a representation which may or may not be true. According to Baudrillard, the information age has led society into a hyperreality in which reality and fiction merge together. Similarly, for the *cyberflâneur*, all that is written is equally real (Jahshan 158). The *cyberflâneur*, in his instant yet undetermined stroll through information space, indulges in *flânerie* in the texts of hyperreality. He does not, as Benjamin would put it for the *flâneur*, observe the fetish culture by observing the fluctuations and people in the market. Instead, he observes and strolls *in* the fetish itself: the representation – the simulation. This idea of *cyberflânerie* being a stroll through the representation is made problematic by William Gibson's *Neuromancer*. One of the messages in the novel, according to Paul Jahshan, is that "the physical world is the mirror image of cyberspace, and vice-versa" (158). This is a further generalisation of Baudrillard's scepticism

towards information because experienced reality may also be a representation of cyberspace. Thus, reality may or may not be the fetish. The *cyberflâneur* sheds new light on Benjamin's *flâneur* who reveals yet avoids the fetish. The *cyberflâneur* does not avoid it, but focuses on it. He observes the representation, whether it is online or physical.

The novels *Neuromancer* (1984) by William Gibson and *Quantum Thief* (2010) by Hannu Rajaniemi support the idea of a hyperreality where original and representational become indistinguishable. Cyberspaces in the novels share so many traits with reality that it becomes clear that the only thing that makes a virtual world virtual, is its connection to the real world (Dagenais 283). If the cyberspaces were to be isolated from their host reality, the cyberspaces would be realities in their own right. Furthermore, ubiquitous technological devices in both novels blur the boundaries between cyberspace and realspace, which problematises the idea of a *cyberflâneur* because one's presence in either realspace or cyberspace becomes indeterminable.

In this dissertation, I will first scrutinise the histories of the *flâneur* and his cyber-iteration to be able to define the *flâneurs*. The two *flâneurs* have distinct qualities, and these qualities are in some cases even opposing. For instance, the *flâneur* has an affinity for crowds while the *cyberflâneur* does not. However, they both need to be able to stroll idly. Here, the two novels provide examples that problematise the distinctions between the two *flâneurs*. For example, the novel *Quantum Thief* provides a crowd of humans with digitally altered memories. Such a crowd can be deciphered by both a *flâneur* and a *cyberflâneur*. Secondly, I will describe the many similarities between realspace and cyberspace. For example, both spaces allow for navigation, and both spaces can be more or less representational or informational. Unlike the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur*, the two spaces do not have many distinct qualities if we regard cyberspace as more than our contemporary internet. In the third chapter, the novels *Neuromancer* and *Quantum Thief* provide examples of realities and cyberspaces that blur the lines between cyberspace and realspace. A lack of distinctions between the spaces shows how the *flâneur* and his iteration cannot be defined by location alone. In the fourth and final chapter, I will analyse some of the characters in the two novels in regard to the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur*. Both novels, *Quantum Thief* and *Neuromancer*, include characters that must be defined by their inherent qualities rather than the spaces they occupy because of the ambiguity of those spaces.

Chapter 1

The Differences and Similarities Between the Historical *Flâneur* and the *Cyberflâneur*

The differences between the *flâneur* and its *cyberflâneur* iteration are significant, but do not relate to the dichotomy of realspace and cyberspace. The differences relate to what the two *flâneurs* observe, how they observe and how they move. In this chapter, I will scrutinise the history and properties of the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur* to show that it is their inherent differences that separate them, while the novels *Neuromancer* and *Quantum Thief* provide examples of how cyberspaces and realspace allow for these differences. The scrutiny of the types will be chronological, beginning with the pre-Baudelairian *flâneur*, proceeding to Baudelaire's *flâneur*, Benjamin's *flâneur*, and finally the *cyberflâneur*.

Although most literature dealing with the *flâneur* uses Charles Baudelaire's essay titled *Le Peintre de la vie modern (The Painter of Modern Life)* as a starting point (Pope 7), the pre-Baudelairian views on the *flâneur* are also significant. They prove that the *flâneur* has always been a dynamic figure who has been subject to change since the nineteenth century. One of the first mentions of the *flâneur* is found in a publication of sketches called *Paris, ou Le Livre des Cent-et-un* from 1831-34, which describes a *flâneur* of Paris as a type "able to sharpen contemporaries' perceptions of their surroundings" (Lauster 153). Furthermore, the *flâneur* was someone who is able to see through the veil of popular media and discover the true city, and he was common knowledge as early as 1832 (147). This early *flâneur* "strives to understand the Other in his or her otherness" (Burton 5). Thus, empathy and individuals are important for the early *flâneur*, and they will remain key elements for Baudelaire's *flâneur*. The main difference between the pre-Baudelairian *flâneur* and the more popular Baudelairian version is that the early type was never incognito. There used to be a mutual personal acquaintance between the *flâneur* and his environment. By Baudelaire's time, this acquaintance was gone (Lauster 155). Baudelaire imagined a *flâneur* who was alone yet immersed in the crowd: invisible while in plain sight. Baudelaire's conceptualisation of the *flâneur* was not original, but an iteration of the first concept of the *flâneur* (Lauster 147). Baudelaire iterates the first *flâneur* by making him incognito.

Charles Baudelaire (born in 1821) wrote both verse and prose poetry, and the *flâneur* appeared in both of those genres. The narrators of his poems often assume the role of *flâneur* as they observe people or crowds and are otherwise passive. Most notably however, Baudelaire also wrote *about* the *flâneur*, explicitly explaining how he acts and why he acts as he does. Baudelaire's collection of prose poetry, *Le Spleen de Paris (Paris Spleen)*, contains

descriptions of Paris and even brief descriptions of the *flâneur* himself, although Baudelaire did not always use the term *flâneur*, but *promeneur solitaire*, which translates to ‘lone walker’. Here is a translated excerpt from *Les Foules (Crowds)*, one of the prose poems of *Le Spleen de Paris*:

Not everyone is capable of immersing himself in the multitude as in a bath: enjoying the crowd is an art (...) The poet enjoys this incomparable privilege, that he can be, just as he likes, either himself or someone else. Like those wandering souls in search of a body, he enters, whenever he likes, into the characters of everyone (...) The solitary, pensive walker finds a singular intoxication in this universal communion. The one who weds himself to the crowd enjoys feverish pleasures denied to the egoist, who is locked up like a safe (Baudelaire, *Paris Spleen, and La Fanfarlo* 22)

In the poem, Baudelaire explicitly describes the *promeneur*'s adeptness and eagerness to observe and read the crowd. Thus, much of Benjamin's work was already done for him; Baudelaire did not merely *show* the reader how the *flâneur* (or *promeneur*) acts and what he thinks – he *told* the reader: The *flâneur* is able to take on the perspectives of others and see the world through their eyes. Both Gibson's *Neuromancer* and Rajaniemi's *Quantum Thief* epitomise this ability to enter into the character of anyone by the use of technology. In *Neuromancer*, television has been replaced by *Simstim* devices that allow the viewer to experience the same sensory input as an actor in a show (Gibson 55). This technology can be utilised to communicate thoughts and feelings. In *Quantum Thief*, a similar neural link allows characters to communicate, but they also share other sensory input whether they like it or not (Rajaniemi 15). This means that a *flâneur* would not need an empathetic talent to enter the mind of a stranger, but simply a technological device. Moreover, the digital nature of these devices makes empathetic *flânerie* cybernetic. Furthermore, the *Simstim* device commercialises the act of entering the mind of a stranger. *Simstim* is therefore a commodity, which Walter Benjamin in the wake of Baudelaire would argue that the *flâneur* seeks to avoid. Already, fictional technology problematises the established nature of the *flâneur* of the street, and blurs the lines between *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur*.

Baudelaire also wrote verse poetry that has become important to the understanding of the *flâneur*. In his poetry he included characters and narrators with sentiments or qualities similar to those described in *Les Foules*. In his arguably most significant work, *Les Fleurs du Mal (The Flowers of Evil)*, the poem *À une passante (To a Passerby)* is narrated by a

character who possesses such qualities. In the first stanza, the narrator sees a mourning widow. In the second stanza, the narrator observes her and is overcome with emotion:

Agile and graceful, her leg was like a statue's.
Tense as in a delirium, I drank
From her eyes, pale sky where tempests germinate,
The sweetness that enralls and the pleasure that kills. (Baudelaire, *Fleurs du mal / Flowers of Evil*)

Notably, this encounter takes place in a Parisian street, which is not made explicit in the poem itself, but the poem is part of the chapter called *Tableaux parisiens* (Parisian Scenes). It is uncertain whether or not the narrator experiences an empathetic or sympathetic sensation by being able to, as Baudelaire put it, *be someone else* in this scene. To “drink someone’s eyes” may mean either to see the world from their perspective or to simply take in their visage.

Another of the qualities of the *flâneur* does however come into the picture at this point: his propensity for the ephemeral. The widow in the poem is only present in the life of the narrator for a moment. The third stanza emphasises the narrator’s dislike of the brevity of the encounter. However, this brevity is what the whole encounter is based upon:

A lightning flash... then night! Fleeting beauty
By whose glance I was suddenly reborn,
Will I see you no more before eternity? (Baudelaire, *Fleurs du mal / Flowers of Evil*)

Baudelaire has himself explained this tendency of the *flâneur* to be able to savour the short-lived. In his essay *Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne* (The Painter of Modern Life), in which he himself refers to the literary type as a *flâneur*, this propensity is elaborated:

Observer, philosopher, flâneur – call him what you will; but whatever words you use in trying to define this kind of artist, you will certainly be led to bestow upon him some adjective which you could not apply to the painter of eternal, or at least more lasting things, of heroic or religious subjects. (Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* 4)

The essay revolves around a characterisation of a man that Baudelaire once met, referred to with the pseudonym Monsieur G, which is possibly a pseudonym for Constantin Guys, an artist (Golsan 166). However, this person is not an artist, Baudelaire points out – artists are only interested in the permanent. Monsieur G is the opposite. He is the painter of modern life and the observer of fleeting moments. As the excerpt above points out: whatever you call him, a simple artist cannot be called the same. The reasoning behind this love of the ephemeral is that beauty is ever-changing and therefore lies not in the permanent, but the ephemeral (Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* 4).

The essay provides an elaborate description of the *flâneur* by comparing the type to the artist, as mentioned. In addition to having a propensity for the eternal rather than ephemeral, the artist is interested in local affairs while the *flâneur* is a man of the world (7). This contrast between the artist and the *flâneur*, Baudelaire explains, is caused by the “mainspring of his genius [which] is *curiosity*” (7). This curiosity may even become a dangerously irresistible passion. Baudelaire also compares his *flâneur* to another literary character – the dandy stroller. These two characters are equal in that they both blur the lines between multitude and solitude (Golsan 168), but Baudelaire points out that while the dandy aspires to insensitivity to seeing and feeling, the *flâneur* maintains an insatiable passion for just that (Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* 9).

Again, the novels *Neuromancer* and *Quantum Thief* provide fictional technology that makes Baudelairean *flânerie* (which immortalises the ephemeral) unnecessary or even futile: In the Martian city of the Oublette in *Quantum Thief*, people’s memories are downloadable and can thus be stored for an unlimited amount of time. Moreover, people are reborn into artificial bodies. Beauty is therefore not fleeting. In *Neuromancer*, too, people’s personalities can be uploaded and saved digitally. This immortalising of people is in a sense equal to what Baudelaire did. He made people immortal with the technology that was available at the time: pen and paper. In the novels, the *flâneur* can do this even more efficiently in cyberspace by saving people digitally. This poses the question of whether this *flâneur* becomes a *cyberflâneur* or simply a *flâneur* who utilises contemporary technology. This requires further scrutiny of the literary figure and its cyber-iteration.

Much like in his prose poem *Les Foules*, Baudelaire underlines the *flâneur*’s main mission in *Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne*: “to become one flesh with the crowd”. As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, one of his most significant descriptions of the qualities of the *flâneur* is found in this essay:

The crowd is his element, as the air is that of birds and water of fishes. His passion and his profession are to become one flesh with the crowd. For the perfect *flâneur*, for the passionate spectator, it is an immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement, in the midst of the fugitive and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world (9).

In this paragraph alone, we can identify the *flâneur's* propensity for the ethereal and fugitive, his passivity and anonymity among the multitude and ability for empathy by becoming one with the crowd, all while feeling at home. The word “fugitive” also relates to the *flâneur's* tendency to socialise with the asocial, which Benjamin makes a point out of. The initial parallel to birds in the air and fish in water not only exemplifies the *flâneur's* sense of feeling at home in the element of the crowd, but equally importantly his adeptness at navigating that element; he reads and traverses crowds like a fish in water. Furthermore, the paragraph includes another important character trait common to Baudelaire's *flâneurs*: being hidden from the world.

In the novel *Neuromancer*, the artificial intelligence with the titular name Neuromancer is a perfect example of the type of *flâneur* that Baudelaire describes in the excerpt above. Neuromancer is nothing but software and is connected to the world-wide internet. He is in a sense omnipresent, yet completely hidden from the world. Most importantly, however, he is a passionate spectator. He can read the “dances of the street” (Gibson 259), apparently anywhere in the world. He is therefore a *flâneur* although he operates in cyberspace, but he is nevertheless not a *cyberflâneur*. There are other, more important distinctions regarding what the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur* observe and their approach to simulations or representations of reality. In this regard, Walter Benjamin's notion of the phantasmagoria becomes relevant.

The German philosopher and cultural critic Walter Benjamin had a vision of writing a book based on his many notes and sketches (or convolutes, roughly translated from German) in which the *flâneur* was a central figure in connection to Parisian arcades, amongst other things. The idea of writing such a book began in the 1920s in collaboration with a newspaper (Benjamin ix), but the book was never finished. In the 80s, his notes and ideas were published as they were. The *Arcades Project* is composed of his two drafts of exposés, in addition to the vast number of notes or convolutes that constitute most of the entire work. The project covered many details regarding Parisian commercial arcades, but of greatest

significance was his idea of the Parisian arcades as perfect urban spaces in which the *flâneur* could stroll and observe. As such, his notes offer interesting insight and novel sentiments on the *flâneur* as a type and Paris as a place to observe. His notes on the arcades themselves are of particular importance to the modern *flâneur*, as they are an example of how the *flâneur* has been applied to a modern urban place different from the places into which Baudelaire himself placed his original *flâneur*. In a sense, Benjamin paved the way for *cyberflânerie*.

One of the most significant sentiments from among all his notes is much like those of Baudelaire in that the importance of the crowd is emphasised, the main difference being that Benjamin explicitly places the *flâneur* inside and connects him to the phantasmagoria:

The crowd is the veil through which the familiar city beckons to the flâneur as phantasmagoria – now a landscape, now a room. Both become elements of the department store, which makes use of flânerie itself to sell goods. The department store is the last promenade for the flâneur. (Benjamin, Exposé of 1935, 10)

Benjamin's notion of phantasmagoria is recurrent. Phantasmagoria is, for Benjamin, the driving force of the *flâneur*: it is what the crowd hides beneath the veil. He states that the *flâneur*, in connection to the arcades, "abandons himself to the phantasmagorias of the marketplace" (15). A phantasmagoria is an image projected onto or through a transparent veil or cloud of smoke to create a type of crude hologram, but this was not exactly what Benjamin referred to. According to James Martel, "the phantasmagoria is the offshoot of commodity fetishism and the rise of capitalism" (Martel). The origin of this notion is both elaborate and divine; because humans no longer know divine truth after the fall of paradise, we create our own idea of knowledge that is a misrepresentation of absolute truth. Fetishism is the inability to identify this failure of representation. To Benjamin, the phantasmagoria is the ubiquitous misrepresentative truths that define our culture and society – which during his time (and ours) was influenced by capitalism (Martel). René Boomkens put it this way: "shopping arcades represented the phantasmagorical dreamworld of the capitalist commodity culture" while the people in it were somehow removed from social hierarchy (Boomkens 19). The *flâneur* could interpret this commodity culture and was therefore "the observer of the marketplace [...] He is a spy for the capitalists, on assignment in the realm of consumers" (Benjamin 427).

The *flâneur* seeks to decipher the misrepresentation, but does so by reading the crowd. In other words, the *flâneur* does his own field work and collects raw data from the street that he deciphers. In Benjamin's words, he goes "botanizing on the asphalt" (Benjamin

372). In cyberspace, on the other hand, a *flâneur* would not go botanising on the asphalt himself because cyberspace is for the most part composed of representational information: texts written by others. This is made problematic by Gibson's artificial intelligence, Neuromancer, who is inherently bound to cyberspace yet his omnipresence makes him able to go botanising on the asphalt himself. Interestingly, because cyberspace is in a sense another realm than reality, Neuromancer is "on assignment in the realm of consumers" when he observes reality. In the Martian city of the Oublette in Rajaniemi's *Quantum Thief*, drawing raw data from the crowd is itself impossible because the crowd is completely unreliable. Those who go botanising on the asphalt are simply being tricked by a misrepresentative crowd.

The idea of the *flâneur* and general *flânerie* as a tool of capitalism is of significance to the development of the *cyberflâneur*, but it also makes the *flâneur* somewhat political. Benjamin effectively places the *flâneur* in a social middleclass by stating, also in the same exposé, that "in the flâneur, the intelligentsia sets foot in the marketplace – ostensibly to look around, but in truth to find a buyer", although he also states that the *flâneur* "stands on the threshold of the metropolis as of the middle class. Neither has him in his power yet. In neither is he at home. He seeks refuge in the crowd". Shopping arcades are spaces for the *flâneur* to truly reside in the limbo between metropolis and middleclass while the crowd provides the means for him to read the phantasmagorical. The *flâneur* himself is, however, not a voluntary part of capitalism, and thus neither a voluntary part of the middleclass. In one of his notes, Benjamin writes that "The idleness of the flâneur is a demonstration against the division of labor" (Benjamin 427). To Benjamin, the *flâneur* does indeed relate to commercialism and capitalism, but does so through his passive presence – a presence that does not fuel capitalism.

Continuing the same train of thought, Benjamin likens the *flâneur* to the *bohème*, a group that "views the true leaders of the proletariat as its adversary" and that Baudelaire himself draws strength from "the rebellious pathos of this group" and therefore sides with the asocial (10). We could further liken the *bohème* to a computer hacker, who indulges in a form of "digital flânerie" (Skees 281). Moreover, both the hacker-*flâneur* and the *bohème* rebel. Computer hackers are the modern *flâneurs* who rebel by abusing the system. In *Neuromancer*, the computer hacker Henry Case is not part of the capitalist production process, but rebels against it by living online as a computer hacker. Again, the fact that he is online does not necessarily itself make him a *cyberflâneur*, but his hacking skills are similar to the *flâneur* who is able to be among the crowd like "a fish in water"; he is in his right

element. Case's talent for navigating in code is similar to the *flâneur* who has a talent for crowds, but is also equal in terms of the rebellion against capitalism.

For Benjamin, the *flâneur* was the antithesis of his contemporaries' critique of modernisation. The *flâneur* was aware of the infidelity of the capitalist phantasmagoria, but was nevertheless intrigued by it. He did not criticise the evolution of society brought about by commodity culture, but enjoyed, in its wake, the whirlpool of social classes in the commercial arcades. Simultaneously, Benjamin acknowledged the crowd-loving nature of Baudelaire's *flâneur*, ranging from the solitude/multitude dichotomy to the envisioning of the landscape of the city:

The masses in Baudelaire. They stretch before the flâneur as a veil: they are the newest drug for the solitary. – Second, they efface all traces of the individual: they are the newest asylum for the reprobate and the proscrip. – Finally, within the labyrinth of the city, the masses are the newest and most inscrutable labyrinth. Through them, previously unknown chthonic traits are imprinted on the image of the city. (Benjamin 446)

Again, we see that the *flâneur* deciphers the city by reading the crowd, and that the crowd is the most enigmatic of codes in the city. In the Oubliette, however, the traits of the city cannot be read through the crowd because the crowd is misrepresentative. The *flâneur* is therefore obsolete in the Oubliette. To decipher the crowd in the Oubliette, we need a *flâneur* who does not go botanising on the asphalt, but can decipher the misrepresentation.

According to Benjamin, the *flâneur* was also made obsolete in Paris. The *flâneur* did not survive the modernisation and restructuring of Paris. Modernity and mass production had “spilled over into the streets, waging ‘war on flânerie’” (Hanssen 35). The *flâneur* became a casualty of this war, but it is difficult to determine exactly which kind of *flâneur* Benjamin is talking about (Pope 6). Benjamin mentions the sandwich man as a salaried *flâneur* (Buck-Morss 307), who spends all his working hours on the street passively looking at people. If anything, modernity paved the way for such labour, lucrative or not. To Benjamin, the sandwich man is a perfect *flâneur*: he had intimate knowledge of the exchange value of commodities because he himself was one (Hartmann 117). Here it is difficult to fully grasp Benjamin and his thoughts on the *flâneur*. He contradicts himself in his descriptions of the *flâneur* (Lauster), and does not admit mistakes; he blames Baudelaire for ambiguities in Baudelaire's interpretations of Poe's *Man of the Crowd* (Jenks 21), which Baudelaire cited in his *Le Peintre de la Vie Moderne*. Benjamin cannot really be blamed, though. His *Arcades*

Project was never finished. Nevertheless, Benjamin is right when he writes that some places are unable to host a *flâneur*, but we cannot proceed to generalise and regard the *flâneur* as universally obsolete. Neither Paris (in a sense) nor the Oubliette can host him, but other spaces may very well be able to host him if they provide what he requires of crowds and empathy. The same is true for the *cyberflâneur*, as I will argue later. Although the internet may not have become a suitable cyberspace for the *cyberflâneur*, as Morozov argues, the *cyberflâneur* can thrive in any other place that fits his needs.

After Benjamin, modernity evolved into postmodernity and changed the familiar places of the *flâneur*: streets and arcades. The *flâneur* is inherently bound to the places he occupies. In a sense, they define him much like he defines them. Not only do spaces change, but the way we interact with spaces may change fundamentally. The basic acts of the *flâneur* are walking and looking, and these are activities that have changed significantly since the nineteenth century. In America, walking has deviated from its original purpose, which has been adopted by cars. Walking is now for the dispossessed and is consequently socially unacceptable (Kroker et al., 450). Our contemporary *flâneur* would need to reconsider his mode of transportation because walking in America summons forth “judgments on your conduct” (450). The *flâneur* wants to remain invisible. He wants to be one with the crowd, which is impossible if the crowd is scattered and divided among cars – even if he were to drive himself. Therefore, shopping malls may play a more vital role for the *flâneur* now than ever. Benjamin wrote that “the department store is the last promenade of the *flâneur*”, after the Parisian arcades were repurposed during the Haussmanisation of Paris: Wide boulevards with individual department stores were favoured over crowded streets and arcades (McGarrigle). Benjamin was correct according to Kroker, as modern streets are not populated at all – except by cars. The *flâneur* has been driven inside – at least some places in America – but that does not mean that the *flâneur* has been driven inside everywhere. Benjamin’s notion of futile *flânerie* in modern Paris can be compared to Morozov’s notion of futile *cyberflânerie*. They are only correct if we limit *flânerie* and *cyberflânerie* to post-Haussmannisation Paris or post-Facebookisation internet.

Nevertheless, the modern urban *flâneur* is, to some extent, unable to indulge in *flânerie* in spaces other than commercial centres because of the ubiquitous private car and shopping malls. This has a couple of consequences for the *flâneur* and *flânerie* in general. Manuel Castells introduced an idea of two separate types of spaces: Spaces of places and spaces of flows. A shopping mall is not a space of place, but a space of flows; it is “based on the power generated by flows of information, capital, technology, sounds and symbols (...)

and these flows are connected, regulated and to a certain extent controlled by global networks of organizations, companies and entrepreneurs” (Boomkens 28). On the other hand, a space of places is where “people give meaning to themselves, the others, and the world in which they live” or, in other words, a space of places is “the world of local everyday experiences” (28). For the modern *flâneur*, the consequences of this are catastrophic: the only place in which *flânerie* is possible is the place that has been so consumed by commodity phantasmagoria that identities are not found there. “Without identity, people do not exist”, but identities are derived from people’s place-bound activities (28). Consequentially, the *flâneur* can only read the crowd in spaces that do not generate identities, or, as anthropologist Marc Augé put it: the *flâneur* is banished to the “supermodern world of non-places, the alien places of airports, malls and business areas, where narrativity (as the source of identity) can not take hold” (29). Nevertheless, the *flâneur* is able to counter the anti-narrative effects of spaces of flows. David Harvey writes that the *flâneur* “maps the city’s terrain and evokes its living qualities” (Harvey 55), while Conor McGarrigle writes that the *flâneur* is “taking back urban space from instrumentalist consumer culture” (McGarrigle). The *flâneur* takes urban space back from consumer culture by observing the crowd by seeing past the commercial veil of phantasmagoria. He is one who is able to notice identities where there apparently are none. However, the novel *Quantum Thief* provides a place where this act becomes near impossible for the *flâneur*. While places of flows are “controlled by entrepreneurs”, as Boomkens put it, and therefore do not produce identities, what if such an entrepreneur intentionally creates identities in such a place?

In the Martian city of the Oublette, where people’s memories are forged by an outsider, narrativity is no longer the source of identity. Identity is formed by the whim of a designer. A *flâneur* cannot counter this anti-narrative effect by immersing into the crowd. He must instead seek out the source of identity, which in this case is the King of Mars. As such, the *flâneur* is only able to take back urban space from instrumentalist culture if the masses are not completely bound to the instrumentalist culture in the first place. Fictional technology shows how the *flâneur* is not always able to decipher the city by reading the masses. In this case, a new iteration of the *flâneur* is needed in reality to decode the masses. The *cyberflâneur* must decipher the masses of reality by removing the phantasmagorical and cybernetic veil of the King of Mars. The method of the *flâneur*, to see past the phantasmagoria, is futile. However, a *flâneur* who accomplishes such a feat would in one sense be a *cyberflâneur*, but a *flâneur* in another. This ambiguity requires further scrutiny of the *cyberflâneur* himself – historically and contemporarily.

The *cyberflâneur* is a type of *flâneur* who inhabits cyberspace – the space coined by William Gibson in his novel *Neuromancer*. They read and interpret the space they inhabit much like the *flâneur*. "Cybernauts become, in the cyber-city – an invisible city par excellence, – cyber-flâneurs trying, like their real-life counterparts, to decipher the city-as-text they have themselves helped shape" (Jahshan 155). Nevertheless, there are some important differences.

The term *cyberflâneur* became particularly prominent in the 90s (Hartmann 122), when internet users started self-identifying as *cyberflâneurs*. The term, with its connection to Poe and Baudelaire, was used somewhat uncritically. William Mitchell, professor of architecture at MIT, wrote in 1995 that "I am an electronic *flâneur*. I hang out on the network. The keyboard is my café" (Mitchell 7). Although he did not use the term *cyberflâneur* himself, his use of the word *flâneur* requires a broad sense of the word. He continues to elaborate on how he spends time online, which mostly involves sending emails of different sorts. Likewise, Steven Goldate wrote in 1998 that "the Cyberflâneur 'strolls' through information space, taking in the virtual architecture and remaining anonymous" (Goldate). Again, there are no immediate allusions to the empathetic *flâneur* who feels at home in the crowd. Similarly, Nan Ellin wrote in 1997 that "cyberflâneurs have become captivated with the Internet's ready supply of huge amounts of information" (292). Also, the idea of the *flâneur* feeling like a fish in water, being in his own element, has brought up the idea of the very first hackers as digital *flâneurs* (Skees 273), but there were no crowds to observe in the early years of computing.

The common trait of the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur* is the stroll – the browsing of either information or individuals. In her doctoral dissertation, Maren Hartmann distinguishes between *flânerie* and the *dérive* of the avant-garde Situationists, both being forms of more or less aimless strolling (Hartmann 93). While *flânerie* does not entail a two-way engagement with the object, *dérive* does. In the *dérive*, the walker engages with his objects while in an intoxicated state, which makes it impossible to keep a form of distance to what is observed. Another aspect of the *flâneur* that is often neglected in the *cyberflâneur* is his relationship to the dandy stroller. While the *flâneur* understands and is potentially overwhelmed with emotion, the dandy aspires to insensitivity. He pretends to understand and empathise while in fact being cynical (Pope 12). This means that a *cyberflâneur* could in many cases be called a *cyberdandy*. The *dérive* and the dandy are two important opposites of *flânerie* and the *flâneur* that are often disregarded or uncritically included in the term *cyberflâneur*. This disregard can be justified, however, as empathy does not apply to all kinds of information. If it is the case

that “these individuals feel at home in code as the *flâneur* felt at home in crowds” (Skees 286), then the *flâneur*/dandy distinction is irrelevant. Nevertheless, the complexity of the original *flâneur* is lost. Hartmann writes: “From the outside, the *flâneur* is simply seen as the wandering figure, taking in the sights. However, he is more complex than that” (116), and this complexity is exactly what is lost in the early interpretations of the *cyberflâneur*. Chris Jenks also points out the importance of the *flâneur*’s complexity: “To reduce the *flâneur* simply to the status of embodied, strolling, leering, nineteenth-century fop with time on his hands is a mistake” (Jenks 32). In *Neuromancer*, protagonist Case wanders through cyberspace often with no other aim than to enjoy the experience of a digital stroll, but that alone does not make him a *cyberflâneur* because being a *cyberflâneur* is more complex than that. Still, the remaining common trait of the two *flâneurs* is their walk through information, which takes on the form of either a city or the web (Hartmann 93), and by observing this information they both decipher the city-as-text (Jahshan 155).

Although the *cyberflâneur* is the one interested in information, we can nevertheless imagine a classic *flâneur* residing in cyberspace. He would be different from the *cyberflâneur* in that he does not feel at home in the code of the internet, but in the apparent crowds of people who are there or the crowds that can be observed from there. Goldate, without drawing parallels to the original *flâneur*, writes that “poignant is here the Internet figure of the ‘lurker’, defined as someone who reads newsgroup or Listserv messages without responding to them, thus remaining unnoticed”. This ‘lurker’ that he defines would in a sense correspond to the *flâneur* of the streets, who observes without engaging – other than potential texts he produces afterwards. His choice of the word ‘lurker’ suggests a form of sleaziness that the *flâneur* did not warrant in the streets of Paris. Online, on the other hand, having a particular interest in other people without engaging them and giving something in return, could presumably come across as more perverse than on the streets of Paris. Goldate does not discriminate between the lurker and the *cyberflâneur*, and his idea of the *cyberflâneur* may therefore be an empathetic one. Hartmann points out that Goldate’s version of the *cyberflâneur* “is not changed, but exaggerated” (126) when compared to the *flâneur*. William Gibson provides a perfect example of such a cyber-lurker in *Neuromancer*, namely Neuromancer himself. The artificial intelligence inherently resides in cyberspace, but observes people in reality.

Empathetic or not, the *cyberflâneur* does not engage with the other, and he remains completely anonymous. The *flâneur* of the street will engage to a certain extent because he will himself be observed, and because he in many cases (like Baudelaire’s) produced texts for

the crowds. In cyberspace, because of the properties of the internet and web surfing, it is possible to navigate and observe without being observed at all. You leave some traces, but these traces are usually invisible to other layman users. Therefore, the passive *cyberflâneur* does not engage in any social exchange with other citizens of the cyber-city. The *flâneur* would in this case “compensate for this [lack of exchange] through creative acts, but [the *cyberflâneur*] rarely does” (Hartmann 139). Unlike the *flâneur*, according to Hartmann, the *cyberflâneur* sees himself as the only one who is important. An interesting distinction between the two *flâneurs* lies in the way they need and/or utilise other people: While the *flâneur* needs to observe people to produce texts himself (either physiognomies, poetry or newspapers as a salaried *flâneur*), the *cyberflâneur* needs people to provide him with information. He needs the texts. This has one important implication: The *flâneur* lives for the sensation of “love at last sight” (Hanssen 42). By witnessing people whom he will never see again, this last sight is truly the last one. The *cyberflâneur*, as a stark contrast, lives in the past. He reads the information that has already been produced. He does not need to live in the now because web browsing allows for backtracking, and you can view the same image for as long as you like. The *cyberflâneur* does not need to engage with other users because he only interprets what has already been written – or otherwise created. This distinction is problematised if an observer not only produces texts of the people he observes, but reproduces the people themselves, which is what Neuromancer does when he uploads a version of Linda Lee into his own cyberspace (Gibson 235). This recreation also poses the question of whether or not Neuromancer savours a passed moment.

The *flâneur* makes the passing moment sacred (Pope 11) while the *cyberflâneur* does not have to because the information he observes is already saved. This enables him to prioritise speed over slowness. As a reply to Morozov’s claim that the *cyberflâneur* is dead, John Hendel points out how the contemporary *cyberflâneur* does in fact resemble Baudelaire’s type. He asks:

Is the creation of an offbeat GIF really so different than way 19th-century flâneurs walked turtles down the street? Both acts heighten observation of individual moments. (Hendel)

Both acts do heighten observation of the moments, but the very creation and saving of the GIF file enables you to whizz past the moment without having to savour it. It becomes one of the near-infinite moments you can access at any time. As an opposite of making sacred, the

post-modern *cyberflâneur* rather ingests the images of the net like Pacman (Dagenais 286), which emphasises his propensity for speed.

The evolution from *flâneur* to *cyberflâneur* was not sudden but gradual. His propensity for speed, information and lack of engagement did not come as a result of the emerging cyberspace, but as a result of technological advances in general. The *flâneur* armed himself with technology long before he entered the internet. I suggest that one of the first *cyberflâneurs*, although disconnected, was Nadar the photographer and balloonist, also known as Gaspard-Félix Tournachon. He took aerial photographs of France in the nineteenth century. According to Anne Friedberg, he was an armed *flâneur* (Friedberg 31). He was armed with a camera and had a panoptic view of the labyrinth of realspace while keeping a safe distance. He did not engage with individuals other than taking pictures of them. He was in a sense a disconnected *cyberflâneur* in realspace. If the *flâneur* is the modern Theseus (Veel 159), the *cyberflâneur* is the postmodern King Minos with complete view of his labyrinth while being safe. Nadar's camera allows him to savour moments without having to be slow and make them sacred. On the contrary, the faster he wanders the more moments he will be able to capture. A photograph is a form of asynchronous communication, which is the element preferred by the *cyberflâneur* much like what the crowd is to the *flâneur*.

Asynchronous communication is however nothing new. The internet made it ubiquitous, but written letters are no less asynchronous (Mitchell 15). Another aspect of the *cyberflâneur* that is reflected in Nadar the Balloonist is that cyberspace is not alien to the *cyberflâneur* (Jahshan 155). Neither is the French landscape alien to Nadar. Furthermore, Nadar does not live in the air. Neither does he live in a photograph. He simply visits the aerial vantage point and the photographic image. Similarly, a person who spends all his or her time online, is no *cyberflâneur* because being a *cyberflâneur* entails a certain degree of unfamiliarity (Simon 63-64). The *flâneur*, too, is a "displaced native" (Pope 8) who is "both of the street and removed from it" (Shaw 13). The *flâneur* started evolving into the *cyberflâneur* when he began writing and drawing sketches of what he saw an experienced, reached a critical point with photographs and other recordings, and the evolution was complete when the *flâneur* started indulging in *flânerie* (or *dérive*) in the recordings themselves: in cyberspace. He indulged in *flânerie* of the representation.

Most definitions of the *cyberflâneur* place him unconditionally in an electronic cyberspace, rather than a more general informational space, despite the many parallels between cyberspace and for example textual information. Paul Jahshan draws parallels between fictional cities and cyber-cities in his book *Cybermapping and the Writing of Myth*.

Jahshan writes that in the novel *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino, a range of more or less abstract cities is described by Marco Polo and it becomes clear that the appearance of one of these cities depends on the way the visitor interprets it (Jahshan 155). Nevertheless, Marco Polo is able to navigate through this city and interpret it very much like a text. Jahshan proceeds to draw parallels between this textual city and cyber-cities or cyberspace, in which the *cyberflâneur* resides. He does not, however, attempt to place the *cyberflâneur* into the textual city. For Jahshan, the *cyberflâneur* remains in the electronic cyberspace despite it being almost indistinguishable from textual or otherwise informational spaces. The *cyberflâneur* may stroll through a copy of an encyclopaedia just as well as through the net. To the *cyberflâneur*, there are no differences between the two mediums that alter the way he moves or observes.

To conclude this chapter, the main differences between the *flâneur* and the *cyberflâneur* vary, depending on whether you prioritise a Baudelarian reading, a Benjaminian or a more general reading of the *flâneur* that emphasises strolling and general observation. With Baudelaire and Benjamin in mind, the *flâneur* depends on the crowd to populate the streets he wanders. Likewise for the *cyberflâneur*, if we emphasise the experience of the *cyberflâneur* rather than simply the act of strolling aimlessly in cyberspace, he depends on information to decorate the otherwise empty or non-existing cyberspace. Processed information is for the *cyberflâneur* what the raw crowd is for the *flâneur*, and they may both wander through any space as long as this space lets them indulge in their affinity for either information or crowd. If we see the *flâneur* as a figure who simply enjoys aimless strolls, the *cyberflâneur* can be seen as just as simple: a person who hangs out on the web like William J. Mitchell. If we consider the complexity of both the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur*, however, it becomes apparent that the spaces they inhabit are not their most important difference. In his collection of essays titled *Spazieren in Berlin*, Franz Hessel was able to transport the originally Parisian *flâneur* to Berlin without warranting an iteration of the type. In the same way, simply transporting the *flâneur* to cyberspace without changing him fundamentally does not in itself warrant the cyber-iteration of the *flâneur*. Hessel's *flâneur* does not differ significantly from Baudelaire's. The *cyberflâneur* iteration, however, has been changed significantly. He has a propensity for speed, he is completely anonymous and does not engage with others. Their objectives are also different: While Baudelaire's *flâneur* sought to savour the moment, Benjamin's interpretation deciphered the city. The *cyberflâneur*, too, seeks to decipher the city (Jahshan 155), but not by observing the crowd. He observes something unoriginal instead: a representation. Moreover, while the *flâneur* was able to see

through the veil of phantasmagoria without explicitly reflecting on this ability of his, the *cyberflâneur* does reflect on the informational and representational nature of cyberspace (Hartmann 122). The iteration is therefore warranted, but not because of the relocation. The *cyberflâneur* is a warranted iteration because he has been changed – not because he has been moved. To show how a relocation from realspace to cyberspace can be compared to a relocation from for example Paris to Berlin, and therefore that the *cyberflâneur* should be defined by his qualities rather than his whereabouts, I will scrutinise the likenesses and differences between cyberspace and reality. The novels *Neuromancer* and *Quantum Thief* provide cyberspaces that blur the lines between cyberspace and reality. For example, browsing people's memories in cyberspace is akin to what an empathetic *flâneur* would do, but it requires access to cyberspace. On the other hand, a *cyberflâneur* may stroll down a street that is a physical manifestation of digital code. In other words, a *cyberflâneur* can walk down a street indulging in *cyberflânerie* of that very street.

Chapter 2

The Relationship between Realspace and Cyberspace from the Perspective of the *Flâneur* and *Cyberflâneur*

Although realspace and cyberspace appear dichotomous in that one is physical while the other is abstract and digital, the differences between them are only superficial. For the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur*, there are no significant differences between the two types of spaces that affect the two types of *flânerie*. In this chapter, I will argue that both realspace and cyberspace can allow for similar forms of navigation, empathy and engagement, but also that both realspaces and cyberspaces may deny these things. For example, the *flâneur* needs to be able to “go botanising on the asphalt” (Benjamin 372), while the *cyberflâneur* needs to be able to observe and even stroll through a representation or phantasmagoria. A realspace may allow for one or both of these activities, while another realspace may not. The same is true for cyberspaces. To show how realspace and cyberspace are similar in this sense, I will also argue for a broad definition of the term “cyberspace”.

There are many reasons in which cyberspace and realspace are similar. The “cyber”-prefix in “cyberspace” creates an immediate connection to the internet, but we should consider the properties of cyberspaces and not dismiss them all as internet-spaces. Moreover, cyberspace can encompass more than the digital. Sci-fi author Bruce Sterling has an example of a non-digital cyberspace in his non-fiction book “The Hacker Crackdown”:

Cyberspace is the "place" where a telephone conversation appears to occur. Not inside your actual phone, the plastic device on your desk. Not inside the other person's phone, in some other city. THE PLACE BETWEEN the phones. The indefinite place OUT THERE, where the two of you, two human beings, actually meet and communicate (Sterling 9).

In this sense, cyberspace is the space of information or communication. Similarly, Gordon Fletcher describes “traditional and historical pre-cyberspaces” as “imagined environments [...] experienced through human mediums or in a deferred manner” (Fletcher). Such pre-cyberspaces can be found in literature and spirituality (Fletcher) and have nothing to do with modern computers, but are types of cyberspaces nevertheless. As such, the digital nature commonly ascribed to cyberspaces is not a distinction between cyberspaces in general and realspace, but between the internet and realspace. Cyberspaces are not all digital, but all cyberspaces represent information.

Paul Jahshan writes that cyberspace “is the simulacrum par excellence” (13). The “simulacrum” is, according to Jean Baudrillard, all the information we are fed that together makes up a false representation of reality. It is unclear whether Jahshan means that all that information is a form of cyberspace, but this is a possible implication. Jahshan also writes that there are many different perspectives on cyberspace and what sort of spaces the term encompasses. Some see cyberspace as “a generic term which refers to a cluster of different technologies” (14). These technologies create either a Gibsonian cyberspace represented as a city of information from which every document is available, a Barlovian cyberspace which represents electronic business interactions rather than showing a visualised cyberspace (Burrows 240), or a virtual reality (Jahshan 14). A more general view of cyberspace is that it is a navigable and continuously expanding space (Jahshan 13). The idea of a navigable cyberspace is shared by Kristen Veel, who writes that “orientation and navigation in cyberspace is highly geographical” (Veel 152). She proposes that cyberspace should be viewed as a labyrinth. It should not be envisioned as a rhizome, a structure in which every place is a pathway to any other place (154) because a hypertext-structure like the internet does not necessarily allow travel from all single points to all other points. However, Veel’s idea does not necessarily fit with all cyberspaces because we can imagine a fictional cyberspace which definitely should be defined as having a rhizome structure. Nevertheless, according to Veel, the modern internet is an example of a cyberspace with a structure similar to that of reality – not different from it, which one could initially assume. In Paris, the *flâneur* is busy in his *dérive* – his impulsive yet not random walk (Jenks 37). He “follows whatever cue, or indeed clue, that the streets offer as enticement to fascination” (37) in the same way that the *cyberflâneur* would follow impulsive paths in a hypertext. This *dérive* provides the means to make a psycho-geographical map (37), and a similar *dérive* of a hypertext would provide the means to make a mental map of the hypertext. This map would have more in common with a labyrinth than a rhizome. Our perception of a hypertext with many hyperlinks is much like that of a street with many junctions. A non-geographical space may therefore be perceived as geographical. For the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur*, the important difference between cyberspace and reality is therefore not that reality is geographical while cyberspace is not, but that cyberspace is informational and representational.

The idea of cyberspace as the ultimate simulation and that cyberspace is the space created by all information, is controversial. Robert Markley writes that even if we limit cyberspace to include no more than “everything from e-mail to GameBoy cartridges” it is still a very unspecific “catch-all term” (Markley 434). He refers to Michael Benedict who defines

cyberspace as inherently computer-sustained and computer-accessed. I argue that this definition is too narrow because a hypertext is no less navigable if it is in a physical encyclopaedia than if it is online. According to Veel, the hypertext creates a navigable and geographical space in both cases. The only difference between the analogue and digital hypertext is that one is analogue while the other is digital. There are no other implications, at least not for the *flâneur*. The only difference between cyberspace and informational space in general is therefore that cyberspace is accessed on a computer. It seems arbitrary that a hypertext (or any story) loses its status as cyberspace if it is printed. Moreover, technology today is becoming increasingly ubiquitous and the borders between a cyber-text and an analogue text are becoming vague, but they are still both navigable but abstract spaces.

Therefore, cyberspace should encompass more than the digital. Alternatively, cyberspace should be seen as the part of informational space that is accessible online or by a computer. Conclusively, it does not matter for the *cyberflâneur* whether the space he inhabits is hosted by a digital server or by a magical lamp. What matters is that it is representational or a *simulacrum*, as Baudrillard would put it. Nevertheless, the use of the term “cyberspace” in the following will include non-digital informational spaces like hypertexts because cyberspace and information space are equal in the eyes of the *cyberflâneur*. The reason why the digital cyberspace is perceived as native to the *cyberflâneur* is because it is the ultimate representation today, but fiction provides other ultimate representations. In *Quantum Thief*, reality itself is potentially such an ultimate representation because it is partially composed of completely malleable and computerised material. For the *cyberflâneur*, such a reality equals a digital cyberspace.

In both fiction and non-fiction, it may be near-impossible to distinguish between realspace and cyberspace. In our own reality today, we are experiencing a hybridisation of the two spaces, which brings the internet into realspace and realspace into the internet. A similar hybridisation has taken place in the future world in which William Gibson’s *Neuromancer* takes place. Both in the novel and in our present day, technological transcendence has made the borders between technology and nature unclear (van Elferen 109). Moreover, the autonomy of that technology forces a potential *flâneur* to question who or what is the actual *flâneur*: he himself, or his iPhone apps (Churchill 66)? This is true for both the fictional world of *Neuromancer* and our own. In his article *The Network of Waves Living and Acting in a Hybrid Space*, Eric Kluitenberg writes that the boundaries between “physical space and informational space” are collapsing into a hybrid space (Kluitenberg 6-16). In the article *Forget the Flâneur*, Conor McGarrigle writes that the *cyberflâneur* no longer ‘fits the

purpose' of deciphering this space which is different from both cyberspace and realspace (McGarrigle). He suggests that a further iteration of the *flâneur* is needed for that purpose. I will not propose an iteration to play this role, but instead try to place the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur* into this hybrid space. Hybrid space does not only merge the two spaces, but shows how alike and compatible they really are, and that both the *flâneur* and its cyber-iteration may co-exist, which implies that they are not defined by their whereabouts.

Although there are many similarities between reality and cyberspace, they will remain different in one aspect: cyberspace, or informational space, as Kluitenberg called it above, does not present the real world. Instead of presenting it, cyberspaces present representations of the real world (or of a fictional real world) in the form of text, images, sound or any other sensory stimuli. It is, as Jahshan writes "a simulacrum par excellence" (13). Goldate points out the imperfections of these replicas (or simulations): "It's difficult to see the rich texture of an on-line painting, or feel the rough surface of a woodfired bowl", but this imperfection only applies to our contemporary internet and technology. *Simstim* devices in *Neuromancer* and the neuro-link in *Quantum Thief* show how technology can present any form of stimulus with perfect fidelity to the literary *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur*. As such, a *flâneur* can experience the same things in cyberspace as he could in reality. Also, perfect fidelity of the representations will by itself eradicate differences between the two spaces.

Nevertheless, the stimuli that we receive in a cyberspace are representations, or mirrors, of the physical world (Jahshan 158) because any virtual world "must be connected to the real to remain virtual" (Dagenais 283). If there is no connection to the real world, the virtual world or cyberspace would be no less real than any other world. A certain degree of hybridisation is therefore difficult to avoid. Jahshan turns the tables, writing that the physical city is "almost a replica, of the *real* cyber-city". Therefore, those who can access cyberspace have access to the blueprint of the real city (154). Real cities can be read and deciphered through cyberspace because they both represent the same textual city. In the novel *Invisible Cities*, on the other hand, the apparently textual city that Marco Polo visits seems to be independent from his own reality. The invisible city is no less real than the other. Moreover, the textual city is not a blueprint of reality or vice versa. They are two separate cities; one is informational (or cyber) and the other is tangible (or real). Nevertheless, they share the geographical qualities that allow for spatial navigation, as Veel points out. Such a disconnection between a real world and an informational world is not the case for our contemporary internet. On the internet, many cyberspaces correspond to physical spaces in reality. A library is both online and physical, and maybe it lies next to a hospital which is also

both online and physical and even uses the same servers and sewers as the library.

Cyberspace as a blueprint of reality is a valid metaphor, but fiction can present very different and independent cyberspaces. Fiction may provide cyberspaces that are more hybridised than our own contemporary internet, but they also provide cyberspaces that are completely independent, yet still cyberspaces. An example of a more hybridised space would be a physical space composed of tangible pixels governed by computers. In *Quantum Thief*, a possible example of such a space is the Dilemma Prison.

To draw on Benjamin, what happened to the arcades also happened in cyberspace. While Sigrid Weigel writes that “the body- and image-space of the collective is transposed into the arcades and passageways of the city which the author enters as a reader to decipher them” (21), I suggest that this is also how cyberspace mirrors reality. The image-space of the collective is what cyberspace is composed of entirely. The body- and image-space of the collective escaped the place of the arcades and became its own place independent of physicality, and the *cyberflâneur* accesses and deciphers it. Cyberspace is the manifestation of the simulation that Baudrillard wrote about in his *Simulacra and Simulation*, which is a development of the idea of the consumer fetish that Benjamin presented in his *Arcades Project*, amongst other places. The consumer fetish invaded the arcades, and in the information age, individuals entered the simulation (the consumer fetish) in the form of internet users. These internet users become *cyberflâneurs* if they decipher the city by using information in general, or *flâneurs-of-cyberspace* if they observe crowds or individuals through cyberspace. Similarly, Benjamin’s *flâneur* was a *flâneur-of-the-arcade*.

Chapter 3

Realspace and Cyberspace in *Neuromancer* and *Quantum Thief*

The novels *Neuromancer* by William Gibson and *Quantum Thief* by Hannu Rajaniemi provide new perspectives on cyberspace and hybrid space which are especially important in regards to the *flâneur* as a literary type. In the novels, cyberspace takes very different forms. In *Neuromancer*, cyberspace is similar to that of the modern internet. William Gibson describes the cyberspace in his novel as

A consensual hallucination experienced daily by billions of legitimate operators, in every nation, by children being taught mathematical concepts... 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 51)

The cyberspace in his novel is inherently connected to computers, but the cyberspace is not the computers themselves or in those computers. Cyberspace is the representation of data that is abstracted from the computers. Using Bruce Sterling's words cyberspace would be the space between computers or between the computer and the user – much like how a telephone call takes place in the abstract place between the phones. Nevertheless, the cyberspace in *Neuromancer* is digital as it is intrinsically connected to computers. Despite this connection, the protagonist “Case and all cyber-flâneurs discover that all writings make up the text and none is more or less real than the other” (Jahshan 158). As a *cyberflâneur*, he ends up not distinguishing between texts or representations. Cyberspace is no less real than reality. Francine Dagenais pointed out that the only thing that distinguishes a cyberspace from its real counterpart is their connection (Dagenais 283). Cyberspace is the reflection of reality and there is often a way to move from one to the other. Case, like other cybernauts, discovers that this distinction is the only one. The cyberspace in *Neuromancer* does not therefore itself support the idea of a cyberspace that incorporates all simulations or all representations, but Case as a *cyberflâneur* emphasises the lack of distinction between cyberspace and other representations. As noted previously, the only distinction between a cyberspace and another representation is the digital/analogue dichotomy.

Cyberspace in *Neuromancer* is inherently digital, and the similarities to contemporary internet are many. Firstly, local cyberspaces in *Neuromancer* correspond to local places in

reality. While in cyberspace, Case visits both cyber-Copenhagen (Gibson 81) and cyber-Rio de Janeiro (114). Additionally, some clusters of data in the cyberspace resemble places in realspace with no apparent reason to do so:

“Hey, shit,” the construct said, “those things are the RCA Building. You know the old RCA Building?” The Kuang program dived past the gleaming spires of a dozen identical towers of data, each one a blue neon replica of the Manhattan skyscraper” (Gibson 257)

In our own reality, the relationship between places and cyberplaces would soon equate those of *Neuromancer*. As William Mitchell pointed out as early as in 1995: “Increasingly the architectures of physical space and cyberspace – of the specifically situated body and of its fluid electronic extensions – are superimposed, intertwined, and hybridized in complex ways” (Mitchell 44). We can visit a physical library, or we can visit the same library in cyberspace. This is also the case in *Neuromancer*, but it is also true for cities and countries. Corresponding places in cyberspace and realspace become very apparent when Case needs to hack into terminals while his physical sidekick Molly walks into the places controlled by those terminals (Gibson 60-61). Despite this relationship between realspace and cyberspace, it does not matter where Case is when he enters cyberspace: “Cyberspace, as the deck presented it, had no particular relationship with the deck’s physical whereabouts” (Gibson 105). This equals our own internet which can be accessed from anywhere. Despite certain exceptions, one’s whereabouts does not limit the sites you can visit online. In this sense, Gibson was able to anticipate many of the properties of the internet that was to come. More importantly, it shows how the two spaces are connected. Their mutual connection has nothing to do with location, but everything to do with representation.

An important difference between the cyberspace of *Neuromancer* and that of our own internet is that the cyberspace in *Neuromancer* appears not only graphical, but spatial; different places in cyberspace appear to be spatially in relation to each other. When Case enters cyberspace for the first time in the novel, after being unable to for some time, cyberspace presents itself as a “transparent 3D chessboard extending to infinity (...) and high and very far away he saw the spiral arms of military systems, forever beyond his reach” (52). While our own internet can appear geographical when we trace our steps and history like in a labyrinth, the cyberspace of *Neuromancer* is inherently spatial. Also when traversing cyberspace, movement appears gradual and spatial rather than instant:

Case punched for the Swiss banking sector, feeling a wave of exhilaration as cyberspace shivered, blurred, gelled (...) He punched again, for Berne.

“Up,” the construct said. “It’ll be high.”

They ascended lattices of light, levels strobing, a blue flicker.

(...)

Case punched to within four grid points of the cube. Its blank face, towering above him now, began to seethe with faint internal shadows (...) (Gibson 115-116)

Here it is apparent that Case cannot punch for Berne directly. He has to travel via the Swiss banking sector. Thus, a form of *dérive* is possible and even necessary. For the *flâneur*, although he does not necessarily have a place at which he has chosen to arrive, it is the places in between the departure and arrival that allow for random encounters. In this case, the Swiss banking sector is one such place. Our internet only allows a form of *dérive* when we choose hyperlinks on a whim and experience a form of random encounters this way. The cyberspace of *Neuromancer*, on the other hand, allows for instant travel (for example to cyber-Switzerland) and also gradual movement. The act of ascending is not possible in a hypertext because you are either somewhere or somewhere else. There is no in between (except when you wait for a page to load, but this is not movement in the same sense). Moreover, the cyberspace shows Case’s spatial proximity to his destination in the form of grid points. In the excerpt above, the cube reacts when Case comes closer to it. Although he is not exactly where it is, it is aware of his proximity to it and thereby reacts. This differs slightly from Kristen Veel’s idea of geographical navigation being possible in a space composed of hyperlinks. It is possible to navigate a hypertext, she argues, and the internet is constructed like a hypertext (Veel 164). When we follow hyperlinks either online or in texts in general, we make a trail that can be backtracked. Every hyperlink on this trail represents a junction or a choice. One’s proximity to a point in a hypertext or online can then be determined by the number of hyperlinks between oneself and that point. In *Neuromancer*, the units of measurement called “grid points” do in a sense represent hyperlink junctions in that they are presumably the shortest possible distance of movement. The difference is that you do not necessarily enter a new text or a new space when you reach a new grid point. Case ostensibly remains in the same space when he moves a number of grid points closer to the cube. He is in another place, but in the same space. Another differentiating and interesting aspect of the cyberspace in *Neuromancer* is that the construct of the deceased cyber-cowboy Dixie Flatline tells Case to go “up”. “It’ll be high,” he says. Case then proceeds to ascend towards the cube.

This implies that the cyberspace has at least three dimensions. A text that is not a hypertext can be mapped in only one dimension if it is read front to back. A hypertext can be mapped in two dimensions regardless of how many hyperlinks there are. A third dimension does not apply to hypertexts. Although a third dimension may make a complex hypertext easier to grasp visually, I posit that there is nothing intrinsically three-dimensional about a hypertext. The three dimensions in the cyberspace of *Neuromancer* is therefore different from the internet and texts as cyberspaces. It is more similar to a city, which is emphasised by the RCA Building that is manifested as a visual building in cyberspace, and by the oxymoronic 3D chessboard in Case's description of it. Similar to a chessboard, modern cities are mainly two-dimensional, with skyscrapers that allow travel in the third dimension. Thus, in the spatial cyberspace of *Neuromancer*, Case travels much like how he does in the physical Sprawl, the future megacity that has engulfed the cities of the American east coast. He has proximity to other points and he travels in three dimensions. Therefore, for Case, the main difference between cyberspace and reality in terms of navigation is the speed and even instantaneity of cyberspace. In a sense, this cyberspace is hybrid not because it has entered reality, but vice versa. Moreover, these spatial qualities of cyberspace allow Case to wander through it not only as a *cyberflâneur*, but more like a *flâneur*. He can choose to be slow and take in the three-dimensional sites.

This consensual hallucination experienced by billions of users is not the only cyberspace in *Neuromancer*. Although it is connected to the same world-wide network, the AI Neuromancer creates his own seemingly separate virtual reality into which he forces Case. This virtual-reality cyberspace looks and feels exactly like reality. Neuromancer tells Case that there is no difference between living in this virtual reality and living in actual reality: "To live here is to live. There is no difference" (Gibson 258). Although this cyberspace created by Neuromancer is a representation of reality, Neuromancer claims that living in it equals living in what it represents. This is interesting because it would mean that there is absolute fidelity between the representation and the represented, if Neuromancer's claim is true. If cyberspace is inherently representational, then this is no cyberspace. It is instead a duplication of reality. If this space, which is hosted by a computer network, is equal to reality, then a person who passively observes in it does not observe the representation, but reality. A *flâneur* in this space would equal the original *flâneur* and not a *cyberflâneur*. This serves as an example of how the *flâneur* and his iteration should not be defined by their whereabouts. Unfortunately, it turns out that Neuromancer's cyberspace is neither disconnected from reality nor completely equal to it. Neuromancer's space is too limited in both time and area.

Nevertheless, if an inhabitant of his space is convinced that his space is real, this character would act as a *flâneur* in his own eyes. Thus, being a *flâneur* relies on the subjective experience of the representation, and therefore not merely one's whereabouts.

Neuromancer therefore provides two cyberspaces, both of which bear more similarities to reality than does the internet: they are experienced as inherently three-dimensional and movement is not only instant but gradual. Because of these qualities, it is easier to envision the *flâneur* residing in such cyberspaces, although he also had a propensity for the crowd, which is not provided by the three dimensions or the gradual movement. These two cyberspaces are cyberspaces in most definitions of the term: they are connected to a greater network, they are hosted by computers, and they are digital (in that their smallest elements are binary codes). The latter cyberspace – the seemingly real place manifested by *Neuromancer* himself – is a cyberspace for the reasons mentioned above, but it is difficult to say whether or not it is representational. Although it is a replica of reality, the resemblance is so great that reality may very well be the replica of the cyberspace. As Jahshan writes, "The physical world is the mirror image of cyberspace, and vice-versa; this is probably, for the purpose of the present study, the single most important message of Gibson's *Neuromancer*" (158). With Baudrillard's idea of simulated reality in mind, we form the texts we produce, but the texts also form us and how we perceive reality. *Neuromancer*'s cyberspace shows that the same is true for a very advanced cyberspace. It is therefore difficult to ascertain that it is an informational space or that it is a real space – which is not a representation, or not informational. After Case is forced into this space by *Neuromancer*, he begins to wander aimlessly. While he wanders, he does not engage in *cyberflânerie* because this world is for him seemingly real. There is nothing informational about it although it is inherently digital. On the other hand, the former cyberspace in *Neuromancer* – the consensual hallucination experienced by billions of operators – is both three-dimensional and appears informational. It presents itself as "lines of light ranged in the nonspace of the mind, clusters and constellations of data" (Gibson 51). What Case and all other operators see in cyberspace is three-dimensional representations of data. If data is representations of reality, this cyberspace is a representation of the representation. Data is organised and presented in a way that lets operators experience it spatially. Moreover, it seems arbitrary that the data related to the RCA Building needs to be presented as a tower in cyberspace. While a hypertext map usually shows the paths and junctions the reader/user can take without organising these junctions so that the map spells out 'FACEBOOK' in the area where you find Facebook, the consensual cyberspace of *Neuromancer* actually does arrange the data so that the data constellations

themselves show where you are. A *cyberflâneur* wandering through this informational city can decipher the city by viewing these constellations because they are not random. If the data related to a person is presented in a similar way, i.e. that the data was manifested in the shape of the person himself, a *flâneur* could indulge in *flânerie* in the cyberspace because he could view people and potentially savour the moment.

In Hannu Rajaniemi's *Quantum Thief*, there are many spaces, which are almost all difficult to categorise. In the universe in which the novel takes place, technology is ubiquitous and advanced to such an extent that there is little distinction between natural and artificial and human and robot. Even the opposites of abstract and concrete are difficult concepts to handle. There are similarities between some of the technology in the novel and the internet, but the novel generally shows how cyberspace and realspace coincide to the extreme. In the opening scene of the novel, protagonist Jean le Flambeur is in a Dilemma Prison, a place where inmates have to play a lethal variant of the prisoner's dilemma. However, in the prison, death is not permanent.

You never get used to the feeling of hot metal, entering your skull and exiting through the back of your head. It's simulated in glorious detail. A burning train through your forehead, a warm spray of blood and brain on your shoulders and back, the sudden chill – and finally, the black, when things *stop* (Rajaniemi 2).

It is not completely clear whether the prison is an abstract cyberspace in which experience is simulated or that the prisoners in it are immortal because their minds have been uploaded into artificial bodies that can be rebuilt instantly and the mind reinstalled. If it is a cyberspace, it is a cyberspace that stimulates its (involuntary) users in ways that seem realistic. Being shot through the head ostensibly feels like being shot through the head. In this sense, it is a virtual reality. In the other case, if the prison is a tangible place where both your mind and body are trapped together, it shows how technically advanced the prison is. It can conjure up new scenarios in which the lethal dilemma game is played:

The dilemma games the inmates play vary, and they take place in different scenarios: Sometimes it's chicken: we are racers on an endless highway, driving at each other at high speeds, deciding whether or not to turn away at the last minute. Sometimes we are soldiers trapped in trench warfare, facing each other across no-man's-land (3).

The prisoners may either be in a tangible and highly technological manifestation of trench warfare, or they may be forced into a dream of trench warfare. This ambiguity is emphasised when Jean is rescued from the prison.

Soon, the Prison is a grid of tiny squares beneath them. The squares change colour, like pixels, forming infinitely complex patterns of cooperation and defection, like pictures (Rajaniemi 10)

Regardless of whether the prison is tangible or not, it is a representation. The high-speed chicken game is a representation of a chicken game whether it is shaped by pixels or q-dots (synthesised molecules that replicate the properties of any material). Q-dots are as malleable as a computer pixel, and can be used to manifest anything in realspace. This programmable matter is frequently used in weapons and other types of combat technology:

Her right hand contains a q-dot gun, a linear accelerator firing semi-autonomous coherent payloads. Her left has a ghostgun with an array of nanomissiles: each has a war gogol ready to invade enemy systems, to flood them with copies of itself. The programmable matter layer under her epidermis becomes armour, her fingernails harder than diamond (Rajaniemi 154).

A realspace in which q-dots or otherwise programmable matter is ubiquitous is interchangeable with a digital cyberspace – especially when the human consciousness can be up- and downloaded into artificial bodies on a whim. Like pixels in a cyberspace, q-dots need to be shaped by a design. Much like a painting, they represent or manifest what the designer had intended them to represent. The significant difference between q-dots and any other malleable substance we know of, like clay or iron, lies in the instantaneousness, unpredictability and potential. Because of these qualities, q-dots are in a sense pixels manifested in reality. A world with ubiquitous q-dots would be a world in which reality and simulation collide and unify. Moreover, a world with ubiquitous q-dots would be intrinsically informational because the q-dots depend on the information that shapes them. Although there are q-dots in the universe of Quantum Thief, these do not seem to be completely ubiquitous. Nevertheless, they show how a real world can be fundamentally interchangeable with a cyberspace. It would be a cyberspace in all definitions of the word if those q-dots are controlled by a computer network. If a computer network is a cyberspace if it is manifested on a visual monitor, it would be no less of a cyberspace if it is manifested as tangible physical

objects. The contemporary visual manifestation of a cyberspace is arbitrary to the definitions of cyberspace by Jahshan and others. However, an artificial world created by intelligent design and manifested in reality loses an important distinction pointed out by Dagenais: that the only thing that makes a virtual world virtual, is its connection to the real (Dagenais 283). Although a space in Rajaniemi's *Quantum Thief* is completely artificial and even hosted by computers, it is no virtual reality. This is because there is no connection between that space and real space. The virtual world *is* reality, and vice versa. This emphasises the point made by Jahshan about *Neuromancer*: "that all writings make up the text and none is more or less real than the other" (158). A *flâneur* in this space does not need to be a hybrid *flâneur*, but can either be a *flâneur* or a *cyberflâneur*, depending on whether he goes botanising on the asphalt or scrutinises the world as the representation it is.

In Rajaniemi's universe, people are software. In the excerpt above, it becomes apparent that the whole body of the character Mieli is artificial. It has been purposely designed and sports a range of offensive weapons, but it is no empty shell. Mieli's consciousness has been downloaded into it. Similarly, Jean le Flambeur is given a new body after he is extracted from the prison. This implies that he did not have a body while he was in the prison, which means that the prison was an abstract cyberspace, but this is never made explicitly clear. To become software, people must first be uploaded into a database, which means that people are representations of their former selves. I will not discuss whether they remain the same person here (in the novel, they are assumed to be the same person, i.e. that their consciousness is continuous from flesh to software). Their bodies, too, are representations. Jean le Flambeur enters a third-person *spimescape* view to view his new body:

The spimescape view is seething with detail. A network of q-dots under the skin, protemic computers in every cell, dense computronium in the bones (Rajaniemi 20)

His body is constructed and it is in a sense partially composed of computers. Here, the "technological transcendency", that van Elferen calls it (109), has reached a point where the term *hybrid space* in Kluitenberg's original sense no longer applies. Contemporary twenty first-century reality is hybrid because cyberspace is accessible anywhere any time. Reality in *Quantum Thief* is hybrid because cyberspace has entered into reality. Even people are made of the inherently cyber *computronium*.

This technological transcendency is manifested in a different way in the moving Martian city of Oublette. It is, as the name implies, a prison. A historical oubliette allows for insight into the cell from above, but the Oublette is a perfect Panopticon because the Martian king can see everything: “The King of Mars can see everything, but there are places where he chooses not to look” (Rajaniemi 63). This omnipresence is made possible by recording everything that happens. These recordings are referred to as *exomemory*, which is the city’s collective memory bank. People can access information in the exomemory by *‘blinking*. The apostrophe in *‘blink* alludes to other shortened forms we use today, like blogs. It is therefore probably short for *weblink*. The information is digital and accessed digitally. The digital nature of exomemory also tells us something of the digital nature of the inhabitants of the Oublette. Their consciousnesses are software, but their memories are not local and independent of other people’s. Exomemory is the memory bank of every person, and altering it alters everyone’s memory. The King of Mars proves this during an execution:

Out of courtesy, the King grants him a quick truedeath. A flash of a zoku q-gun, a breeze through exomemory eradicating all traces of the person once called André, his friend. He absorbs all of André that he needs. Passersby flinch at the sudden heat and then forget it (Rajaniemi 65).

Not only does the king kill André, but he erases him from the collective memory. To draw on Baudrillard and Benjamin here, the memories of the citizens themselves are simulations or phantasmagorias. As mentioned in the first chapter, on the *flâneur*, the phantasmagoria is the ubiquitous misrepresentative truths that define our culture and society (Martel). The very memories and thus apparent experiences of the citizens of the Oublette are misrepresentative. Not only do the citizens live in a form of representation, but their own memories are misrepresentations of what the representational world has shown. In this sense, the collective memory (thus also the memory of the individual) is a cyberspace in every sense: it is based on computer networks, it is representational and it is intangible. The interesting aspect of *exomemory* is that it is not only representational but intentionally misrepresentational. To the *cyberflâneur*, this makes *flânerie* of memories possible because the *cyberflâneur* indulges in *flânerie* of representations. The memories themselves are a phantasmagoria produced by the King, into which the *cyberflâneur* enters to decipher it. For the *flâneur* to go botanising on the asphalt would be futile because the results would be misrepresentative of the people and the actual city.

In addition to making a cyberspace of people's memories, *exomemory* allows users to deny access to information about themselves. All that happens in the Oubliette is recorded, and it is this recording that people view and listen to when they appear to be having a conversation. They *are* having a conversation, but they are not listening to it directly. Although they are present in the moment, their own consciousness is not fed with real stimuli, but stimuli that have been edited and censored by other users. Therefore, these citizens reside in realspace while they sense a cyberspace. An interesting passage about this advanced technological censorship involves an old camera:

'Adrian Wu, from *Ares Herald*.' He takes out an old-fashioned camera from his bag – another trick to get around *gevulot*

Gevulot is the name of the protocol used to set the privacy settings of the *exomemory*. Because *gevulot* only blocks access to *exomemory*, any other means of recording or viewing the blocked event will work. A citizen cannot view a private conversation, but a device that is neither connected to nor depending on *exomemory* will record the event just like in reality. While Nadar the Balloonist was in a sense the first *cyberflâneur* because he was armed with a camera, a camera in *Quantum Thief* lets you see through the veil of the simulation and into reality. A camera is what allows you to be a *flâneur* – not a *cyberflâneur*. It lets you savour the actual moment and go botanising on the asphalt. Without a camera here, the *flâneur* is unable to see actual people. Therefore, reality in the Oubliette allows for both *flâneurs* and *cyberflâneurs* side by side. The former can observe the masses uncensored like Baudelaire, and the latter can surf through the representational *exomemory* by hacking people's *gevulot*. Interestingly, the only place where people do not hide behind a veil of *gevulot* is the Avenue:

Almost no one hides behind a full *gevulot* privacy screen here. This is the Avenue: you are supposed to flaunt it (Rajaniemi 67).

The only place in the Oubliette that is not ostensibly a cyberspace because of people generally denying access to them, is a commercial avenue much like a Parisian arcade. On a side note, the area is described as a "*belle époque* Paris" (Rajaniemi 66).

Although the entire Oubliette is a form of cyberspace, there is a colony of people in the Oubliette that is obsessed with virtual spaces. These are called the *zoku*. They are the descendants of ancient computer game guilds (or teams). They go to "virtual reaches of the

Realm” (Rajaniemi 102) to raid and to challenge themselves. They bring things back from these virtual places which they then give physical form so that they can behold them with their own eyes and senses. They have the means both to create virtual worlds to fit their needs, but also manifest things from those worlds in their own reality. This obscures the borders between reality and fiction, but also cyberspace and realspace. When we use the internet, we upload and download and print images, and we have now begun to print 3D models. This contemporary blurring of spaces is nothing like that of the *zoku*. For example, they have the ability to print “a strange, glittering beast, like a feathered serpent” that is as animated as any living thing (Rajaniemi 103). When there is apparently no limit to what one can manifest from cyberspace into realspace, the relationship between realspace and cyberspace becomes mutual: Cyberspace is not only the representation of realspace – the reverse is also true. Jahshan already pointed out this mutual relationship which also becomes apparent in *Neuromancer* (158), but *Quantum Thief* shows how it is still relevant in post-internet fiction. A person who indulges in *flânerie* of a city inhabited by people printed by a machine akin to that of the *zoku*, would be a *flâneur* in one sense, and a *cyberflâneur* in another.

In conclusion, because of the potential in fiction, fictional cyberspaces do not only blur the lines between realspace and cyberspace, but can even make realspace into a form of cyberspace. In *Quantum Thief*, the computerised materials make physical objects cyber (in the sense that they are connected to computer network and artificially designed). In *Neuromancer*, cyberspace has inherited many traits from reality: it appears three-dimensional and is presented in a way that replicates real-life places, although this representation seems unnecessary. Because of the properties of these fictional cyberspaces, which are just as real as the internet for the literary *flâneur*, the theories regarding cyberspaces should be reviewed in regards to the *flâneur*. The remaining distinction between reality and cyberspace is that cyberspace is representational, which means that the *cyberflâneur* indulges in *flânerie* of a representation (or an apparent representation). This representational space may be physical as long as it represents or mirrors another space or an imagined space. If mortar can be as malleable and dynamic as pixels, there is little reason to distinguish between the two in definitions of cyberspace. This means that Jahshan is right when he writes that “cyberspace is the simulacrum par excellence” (13), but it requires him to acknowledge that such a perfect simulacrum does not need to be digital. Furthermore, many representations allow for spatial *flânerie* although they do not appear spatial. A hypertext, a false memory and a database all

allow for a form of *flânerie* of these representations because they allow for navigation in information.

Chapter 4

The Characters of *Neuromancer* and *Quantum Thief* as *Flâneurs* and *Cyberflâneurs*

While the cyberspaces in *Neuromancer* and *Quantum Thief* provide important perspectives on the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur*, the novels also provide characters who inhabit these spaces. These characters, too, provide important perspectives on the literary type and his iteration. The characters show how the cyberspaces can be utilised to indulge in the different types of *flânerie*. Because of the hybrid nature of many spaces in the novels, some characters, like the AI *Neuromancer*, Henry Case, and the detective Isidore Beaufort, are seemingly ambiguous *flâneurs*. Nevertheless, a close inspection of the characters and the spaces based on the previous discussions on the *flâneurs* and cyberspaces, allow us to limit the ambiguity and define the characters more specifically as either *flâneur* or *cyberflâneur*. Consequently, I will emphasise an interpretation in which the *flâneur* is seen as more complex than just “a wandering figure” (Hartmann 116). I will in other words distinguish between the *flâneur* and the dandy stroller. I will not, however, strictly relate the places to specific interpretations of the *flâneur*. For example, Sigrid Weigel in her reading of Benjamin’s theories, writes that “the body- and image-space of the collective is transposed into the arcades and passageways of the city which the author enters as a reader to decipher them” (Weigel 21). This would imply that a space needs to be collective or represent a collective for the *flâneur* to decipher what it represents, be it a city or a something else. This is not always the case, as a cyberspace does not necessarily represent a collective, but may represent an individual.

In *Neuromancer*, there are several characters that are *flâneurs/cyberflâneurs* in the different spaces in the novel. The protagonist Henry Case comes across as a *cyberflâneur* because he longs for cyberspace when he is unable to access it due to a neural complication:

A year here and he still dreamed of cyberspace, hope fading nightly. All the speed he took, all the turns he’d taken and the corners he’d cut in Night City, and still he’d see the matrix in his sleep” (Gibson 4).

Furthermore, when Case finally gets the opportunity to access cyberspace again, he “resents having to leave the deck to go to the toilet” (Gibson 59). These passages show how he has a propensity for the matrix much like how Baudelaire’s *flâneur* has a propensity for crowds in his essay *The Painter of Modern Life*. Also related to this essay, Case is a professional but criminal hacker, and is good at what he does. In that sense, he is a *cyberflâneur* in the sense

that he is in his right element when in cyberspace. He knows every nook and corner and shortcut online. Much like how Murray Skees describes pre-internet hackers, he is an individual “who feel[s] at home in code as the flâneur felt at home in crowds” (Skees 286). The fact that he is a hacker also means that he rebels in a sense. Although his rebellion is active compared to the passive rebelling of Benjamin’s *flâneur*, his skill in coding separates him from the typical end-user a bit like how the *flâneur* is separated from the commoner: “the programmer knows how things work and the end-user does not” (Skees 277). Case also enjoys the sensation of speed when online:

Headlong motion through walls of emerald green, milky jade, the sensation of speed beyond anything he’d known before in cyberspace (Gibson 256).

Case is thus a *cyberflâneur* in many definitions of the term. Moreover, the cyberspace he longs for, the matrix, is computer-based, collective and three-dimensional. Jahshan grouped Henry Case together with *cyberflâneurs* in his descriptions of them (158), which seems to be warranted.

What Jahshan did not take into account, is that Case belongs in cyberspace. Although the *flâneur* feels at home in crowds, the *flâneur* does not belong in the crowd. “The flâneur is both of the street and removed from it” (Shaw 13), and “he is a displaced native. Present and not present” (Pope 8). Case, however, belongs to cyberspace to such an extent that he feels lost when outside of it. As Bart Simon puts it, although you are in a cyberspace, “the metaphor of the cyberspatial flâneur no longer seems appropriate” if you live there rather than visiting and observing (Simon 64). Case, much like the cybergamers that Simon describes, lives in cyberspace. Therefore, he is presumably not interested in cyberspace as a blueprint, or mirror, of reality. He is interested in it because he feels at home in it. When he enters into it after the year of absence, he refers to it as his “distanceless home” (Gibson 52). It is his home, regardless of what it represents. He is not interested in deciphering it in order to reveal truths about reality. If he seeks to decipher it, it is in order to gain knowledge about the space itself. There are many passages in which it becomes clear that Case lives in and prefers cyberspace over realspace: he forgets to eat (59), he finds non-digital novelty items perverse (75), and the landscape of the actual city wakes confused memories (85). The moment in which he seems the most alienated is possibly this:

“What’s that smell?” he asked Molly, wrinkling his nose.

“The grass. Smells that way after they cut it.” (128)

Therefore, because Case in a sense lives in cyberspace, he is a *flâneur* of reality if he is a *flâneur* at all. Jahshan points out that the two spaces are mirrors of each other, and that this is especially true in *Neuromancer* (158), which means that Case can observe reality to decipher the cyberspace which is his home. After all, the buildings in the city of realspace do resemble the tall RCA Building that he has seen in the city of cyberspace. To Case, or anyone who lives in cyberspace, reality is the simulation of cyberspace. Because he lives and belongs in the simulation, Case is not a *cyberflâneur*. On the other hand, because the place he visits and observes as “a displaced native” (Pope 8) is reality, he is in many ways a *flâneur*. To draw on Weigel here, we can turn her sentiment upside-down: the body- and image-space of cyberspace is transposed into the arcades and passageways of the city which the author enters as a reader to decipher cyberspace. Case reflects this when he goes to the orbiting space-city of Freeside:

Freeside suddenly made sense to him. Biz. He could feel it humming in the air. This was it, the local action. Not the high-gloss façade of the Rue Jules Verne, but the real thing. Commerce. (Gibson 146)

He suddenly sees the beauty of Freeside when he is able to relate it to the inherently commercial cyberspace. Freeside reflects cyberspace in that it is a commercial non-place, as Boomkens would put it (29). Like cyberspace, “It’s just a big tube and they pour things through it (...) Tourists, hustlers anything” (Gibson 124)

Case’s perception of cyberspace being more real than realspace is explained by Goldate in his article *Spaces and Places on the Internet*, in which he postulates that

The spaces and places that we experience in Cyberspace remain as memories in our mind, over time metamorphosing into a multitude of potentially experienced realities.

The same sentiment is claimed in *Neuromancer* by the cyborg sidekick Molly. One of the Zionites tells Case a story of how a baby burst out of his forehead “and scampered through a forest of hydroponic ganja”. Molly proceeds to explain the trueness of his story:

“It’s the ganja,” Molly said when Case told her the story. “They don’t make much of a difference between states, you know? Aerol tells you it happened, well, it happened to *him*” (Gibson 106).

Aerol’s experience of having a baby burst through his head is no less real to him than what cyberspace is to Case. This also means that reality appears as real to a ganja-user as it does to a cyberspace-jockey like Case. Reality, cyberspace and a ganja-induced state of hallucination are all spaces that may or may not metamorphose into experienced realities.

Case’s perspective on reality and his residence in cyberspace therefore demands a very specific definition of cyberspace. To Case reality is the representation while cyberspace is the original. In the end of the novel, Case may have stopped distinguishing between the two, as Jahshan implies, but it is nevertheless the case that he is so immersed in cyberspace that it has become his vantage point. Cyberspace is not always his object of focus, but it is his desired vantage point throughout. This means that cyberspace is not always experienced as the representation. As I argued in the second chapter, cyberspace is inherently representational. In this case, reality in a sense becomes a cyberspace when it is perceived as representational. Thus, defining cyberspace becomes a subjective matter depending on what the viewer thinks is representational. However, this subjective definition is quickly rendered futile by Jahshan’s notion of cyberspace being the mirror of realspace *and vice versa*. Both are representations. This is also reflected by both Goldate and Gibson (through the character Molly). No space is more or less real than any other.

The *flâneur* needs to “proceed to a critical appreciation of the falsehood, fabrication and replication at the heart of postmodernity’s volatile network of meaning – so often symbolised as the ‘city’” (Jenks 36). For the *flâneur*, this is done by observing the crowd. The *cyberflâneur*, on the other hand, as I argued in chapter one, does not depend on the crowd to decipher the city. To paraphrase Chris Jenks’ sentiment above, the *flâneur* must distinguish the simulation from the simulated. The novel *Neuromancer* does not create a hybrid space in which cyberspace enters into reality. Nevertheless, it shows how the two spaces are both mirrors. Therefore, the task of the *flâneur* becomes impossible, but is equally impossible for the *cyberflâneur*. According to Jahshan, both the *flâneur* and the *cyberflâneur* decipher the city-as-text (155), which requires an ability to distinguish between the simulation and the simulated for the *cyberflâneur* too. In this regard, Case fails to be a *cyberflâneur* because he does not reflect on his affinity for cyberspace – his affinity for the simulation. Hartmann writes that the *cyberflâneur* is one who has not been hypnotised by the

new media, despite being a stroller (122). Case, on the other hand, is hypnotised.

Alternatively, he is a cyber-dandy who is not capable of reflection.

Because Case lives in cyberspace, he can be regarded as a *flâneur* of realspace much like how Benjamin's *flâneur* was a *flâneur* of the arcades. The *flâneur* was curious in the arcades. Case, too, exhibits an extent of curiosity in realspace that he does not exhibit in his native habitat of cyberspace. This curiosity is seen when he wonders about the smell of recently cut grass, but he also exhibits a *flâneur*-like empathy and ability to enter other's perspectives after having "walked until morning" (Gibson 155):

He seemed to become each thing he saw: a park bench, a cloud of white moths around an antique streetlight, a robot gardener striped diagonally with black and yellow (Gibson 155-156).

This intoxicated walk of his resembles that of a traditional *flâneur*, but emphasised by Case being an inhabitant of cyberspace rather than realspace. Therefore, the simulation (or information space) provides a space for the *flâneur* to become a detached observer not only of a city or a crowd, but reality as a whole. The *flâneur* who resides in the phantasmagorical dream-world of a cyberspace enters realspace as he would enter the arcades. Case is a detached observer of all things in reality. In this regard, Case is not a *cyberflâneur* because he observes reality from reality. He does not seek to decipher the city-as-text from the vantage point of cyberspace.

Another being who resides in cyberspace, but does utilise the panoptic possibilities cyberspace provides, is the AI Neuromancer. Like a *flâneur* par excellence, he is able to read the fluctuations of the street, as he calls it, to reproduce people much like how Baudelaire as a *flâneur* reproduced people he saw in the street by writing about them in poems. Neuromancer describes this ability to Case:

I saw her death coming. In the patterns you sometimes imagined you could detect in the dance of the street. Those patterns are real. I am complex enough, in my narrow ways, to read those dances (Gibson 259).

Neuromancer also describes his profound ability to observe people as being able to "read the book of [someone's] days" (243). By reading this book, he derives enough information to make a simulation of the person in a cyberspace of his own, described in chapter three. He

uploaded a copy of Linda Lee, Case's ex-girlfriend, into the cyberspace and claims that "If your woman is a ghost, she doesn't know it. Neither will you" (244). He thereby expresses that he is aware of the relationship between the spaces, and that she is a ghost although she is not aware of it herself. Linda Lee, not being able to tell if she is a ghost (or computer software) is completely oblivious of the fact that she lives in a representation. As Chris Jenks would put it, Linda is not able to "shake off the 'blasé attitude' and proceed to a critical appreciation of the falsehood, fabrication and replication" (Jenks 36) of Neuromancer's simulation. Neuromancer is very aware of the fabrication of his own cyberspace.

Nevertheless, he is no pure *cyberflâneur*. He has access to information about reality through all the digital sources there are: presumably security cameras, GPS location markers or any other possibly means. He is thereby supplied with enough information to be able to decipher the city in such detail that he can produce perfect digital replicas of people. We can compare Linda Lee's presence in Neuromancer's cyberspace to that of the woman in Baudelaire's informational space of his poem "À une passante". Both Neuromancer and Baudelaire observe the women from a distance and reproduced them to be able to behold them for longer than the brevity of the encounter. This goal is apparent in Baudelaire's poem, but Neuromancer also points out this agenda: "I call up the dead" (244). He resurrects those who have passed to behold them again. This makes him a *flâneur* although he resides in cyberspace. On the other hand, he is a *cyberflâneur* in the sense that he does not linger. He instantly flicks between security cameras, or maybe he even watches all security cameras simultaneously. Regardless, he quite certainly cannot be said to take a turtle for a walk. He is also a *cyberflâneur* because he knows the ropes of the matrix. In that sense, he is similar to the very first hacker-*flâneurs* that Skees mentioned. The very act of accessing security cameras is a form of rebellion, although he does not rebel against the production system and consumer culture itself. Also akin to a *cyberflâneur*, Neuromancer does not engage with those he observes, which separates a *flâneur* from a *cyberflâneur* (Hartmann 138). Nevertheless, I postulate that Neuromancer is not a *cyberflâneur* because he is fixated upon individuals among the crowd and reproduces them. Much like both the Baudelairian and Benjaminian *flâneur*, Neuromancer collects the physiognomies of the street and sells them back, as Debra Benita Shaw described it in relation to the physical *flâneur* (9). One of Maren Hartmann's sentiments on the *cyberflâneur* is notable here:

He needs other people in order to see his reflection, but he does not have any interest in them as individuals. The constant need to move is compensation for this inability to engage – and the people become pieces to add to his memories (Hartmann 138).

Depending on the motives of *Neuromancer*, this may be true for him as well – that he has no interest in individuals, but simply collects them for his own benefit. Regardless, the crucial difference here is that *Neuromancer*, unlike a casual *cyberflâneur* like for example William Mitchell, actually creates seemingly sentient software versions of people. He does not remember them like a human *cyberflâneur* would. A *cyberflâneur* rarely indulges in creative acts (Hartmann 139), which means that *Neuromancer* is not a typical *cyberflâneur* if recreating a sentient being is a creative act.

To summarise, the spatial cyberspaces of *Neuromancer*, both the “consensual hallucination” and *Neuromancer*’s replica of reality, allow for such immersion that a user can become alienated from reality. Furthermore, the amount of information accessible from these cyberspaces is so great and precise that the cyberspace users become walkers of the labyrinth of cyberspace, but viewers of the labyrinth of reality, to draw on Veel’s idea of the walker/viewer.

A *flâneur* can therefore reside in cyberspace. His aim remains the same, which is to observe the crowd, but his methods change. He becomes anonymous and quick and does not engage with the other. In other words, he gains some of the qualities of the *cyberflâneur*. However, merely sharing some of the qualities of the *cyberflâneur* is not enough to completely redefine the type. The fundamental difference remains; the *flâneur* goes botanising on the asphalt while the *cyberflâneur* enters and observes the representation. The AI *Neuromancer* is an example of this. Simultaneously, the protagonist Henry Case resides in cyberspace without being a *cyberflâneur*, but the reason for this differs from the example of *Neuromancer*. Case is not a *cyberflâneur* because he seems completely native to cyberspace. He does not indulge in creative acts, which makes it difficult to pronounce him a *flâneur* in a Baudelairian sense, but he is nevertheless no *cyberflâneur*.

The novel *Quantum Thief* by Rajaniemi offers other perspectives on the *flâneur* in a hybrid space. For the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur* the problems of Rajaniemi’s universe are that people are software; physical and digital are indistinguishable; and memory is completely unreliable software. The issues are similar to those of *Neuromancer*, but they provide novel perspectives on the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur* nevertheless.

Access to *exomemory* means that a *flâneur* does not have to speculate when he deciphers the city-as-text by reading the crowd and empathising with people. Baudelaire speculated about the individuals he describes in his collection *The Flowers of Evil*, but a *flâneur* with access to the very memories of his subjects would know everything about them without having to engage. Access to *exomemory* lets a *flâneur* download people's memories into your own memory. Based on Maren Hartmann's idea of a *cyberflâneur* who is not interested in other individuals, I argue that a cyberspace user who is interested in the memories of others becomes a *flâneur* rather than a *cyberflâneur* because downloading people's raw memories is akin to going botanising on the asphalt.

However, a problem arises if *exomemory* is not trustworthy – i.e. if people's memories are not raw and unrefined. Observing them is in that case akin to observing the simulation itself. The King of Mars, Jean le Roi, has the means of changing *exomemory*, as noted in chapter two. He has access to the memories of others, but does not use it to decipher the city. On the contrary, he is the architect of people's memories. Because memories can be altered this way, it makes the crowd useless when as a means to decipher the city-as-text. The people populating the city do not live lives that necessarily reflect the city, but reflect the mind-design of the architect. When collective memory becomes a tool of the intelligentsia, the *flâneur* has a close to impossible task of deciphering it. Nevertheless, that is what the detective Isidore Beaufort aims to do. At one point in the novel, Isidore understands how difficult his task is when he realises that *exomemory* is misrepresentative:

Unless exomemory itself is flawed.

The thought makes him blink. It is like saying that gravity may not be a constant 0.6g, or that the sun might not come up tomorrow (Rajaniemi 178).

It is apparent that people have trust in the *exomemory*, and that its infidelity would be controversial. Nevertheless, Isidore has a moment of revelation akin to a *flâneur* who discovers the infidelity of phantasmagoria. The difference here is that the phantasmagoria is not merely of the marketplace, as Benjamin put it, but as profound as people's memories. On a side note, citizens also have their own private memory, but this memory is also distorted by having them upload their minds into Quiet robots and back again. Everything that people hold true may or may not be true.

Therefore, deciphering the city requires the *flâneur* to decipher *exomemory* without being able to depend on the crowd. Traditional *flânerie* is therefore futile. Deciphering the

city and discovering the true history of it and its citizens becomes a completely technical operation. It becomes clear to Isidore how the King of Mars has access to people's memories and can change them:

We know how it works now: they have a master key of some sort that lets them read anyone who has been a quiet (Rajaniemi 318).

Traditional crowd *flânerie* is thereby reduced to using a key to read people's memories. If you do not have the key, however, access to *exomemory* is not enough because it is a false representation. Moreover, the representation is not a mirror of reality, as Jahshan put it, but a mirror of the design of the King of Mars (amongst others) who can change the memory. Deciphering the city by the use of false *exomemory* is therefore also futile. Because of this inherently representational quality of people's memories, traditional *flânerie* of walking and observing becomes similar to *cyberflânerie* in which one observes the representation. In that sense, *flânerie* not only becomes futile, but impossible: there is nothing but the representation to observe because people's lives are constructed by a third party. In effect, what a *flâneur* would do when observing such people, is engage in a form of *cyberflânerie* because he empathises with a constructed representation.

In addition to the flaws of *exomemory*, the *gevulot* privacy filter makes *flânerie* inconvenient. In the Oublette, it is considered indecent to not hide yourself behind *gevulot*. Isidore's flatmate is a bit messy, but "at least she has the decency to stay hidden *gevulot*" (Rajaniemi 135). This means that Isidore cannot decipher the city as a text by reading the crowd, because the crowd is invisible by default. You must be invited by an individual to see him or her. Therefore, traditional *flânerie* is made even more futile, and Isidore needs to rely on other means to discover what is going on in the city.

In terms of *flânerie*, the representational (or simulated) memory and the ubiquitous privacy make the city of the Oublette a cyberspace in that it is solely representational. For the *flâneur*, this means that the phantasmagoria of the marketplace is unavoidable. Much like how the *cyberflâneur* delves into the representation to decipher what it represents, a *flâneur* in the Oublette is also inside the representation because there is no authenticity. By seeing through the veil of phantasmagoria, the *flâneur* sought authenticity. However, like Isidore's endeavour, the only way to unveil the truth is by circumventing *exomemory* and *gevulot*, which would require skill akin to that of a hacker.

In conclusion, the two novels show that neither the *flâneur* nor the *cyberflâneur* can be defined by their location alone. Cyberspaces and realspaces come in so many shapes and sizes that neither the *flâneur* nor *cyberflâneur* is banished entirely from either of them, which both Benjamin and Morozov implied. *Neuromancer* shows how cyberspace can host a *flâneur* while *Quantum Thief* shows how realspace can host a *cyberflâneur*. Moreover, although the cyberspaces in both novels are hybrid spaces in the sense that “physical space and informational space” are collapsing into a hybrid space (Kluitenberg 6-16), both these hybrid spaces can host a *flâneur* or a *cyberflâneur* without having to rely on a new hybrid iteration, as suggested by McGarrigle. In his article, “Forget the Flâneur”, he suggests that the *cyberflâneur* is not able to indulge in *cyberflânerie* of the now hybrid internet because of the ubiquity and control of companies like Facebook and Google. Also, he suggests that the hybrid nature of the now location-aware internet requires a new iteration of the *flâneur*. This is, however, not necessary. The *flâneur* and its iteration have never been governed by whether the space they occupy is cyber, real or hybrid. They define themselves, and can do so in a hybrid space, too. Therefore, if our contemporary internet does not allow for *flânerie* or *cyberflânerie*, it is not because of its hybrid nature in general. It is because the *flâneurs* are not able to indulge in their respective activities. McGarrigle is right in that the ubiquitous gaze and control of Facebook and Google make *flânerie* impossible because one is rarely incognito online, and an internet user has lost much of his or her own agency to those companies. However, the idea of *Neuromancer* as a *flâneur* problematises his argument. If *Neuromancer* is all-seeing, does that mean that no one else can be *flâneurs* because they cannot avoid his gaze? The implication of this is a form of *flâneur* hierarchy, where the truest *flâneur* is the one who is observed the least. Regardless of the implications, my point is that it is difficult or even near-impossible to argue that a place as diverse as the internet is unsuitable for *flânerie*. One of the reasons for this, as shown in this chapter, is that the *flâneur* is not concerned with cyberspace, realspace or hybrid space. He is concerned with collecting raw physiognomies. Likewise, the *cyberflâneur* is only interested in decoding the representation.

Conclusion

Discussions and theories about the *cyberflâneur* usually place him in cyberspace or generally revolve around cyberspace. This is possibly because the *cyberflâneur* is seen as the figure who deciphers such a place in the form it usually takes: the internet. Therefore, Maren Hartmann's doctoral dissertation, *Technologies and Utopias: The Cyberflâneur and the Experience of 'being Online'*, and Paul Jahshan's book *Cybermapping and the Writing of Myth*, deliberately and appropriately connect the *cyberflâneur* to cyberspace exclusively. This close connection between the internet and the *cyberflâneur* prompted Evgeny Morozov to write the eulogy of the *cyberflâneur* in the New York Times, bluntly titled *The Death of the Cyberflâneur*. Morozov argued that the contemporary internet was not fit to host the *cyberflâneur* because Facebook and Google had made *cyberflânerie* obsolete. Those companies do the searching and wandering for you. Although academia, too, places the *cyberflâneur* in cyberspace, I argue that Morozov's eulogy is an exaggeration. The *cyberflâneur* is not dead if he is banished from the internet. He has an unlimited range of other places in which to thrive.

The broadness of the term "cyberspace" is controversial, as I argued in chapter two. However, because the *flâneur* is both literary and real, fictional cyberspaces that have strikingly different characteristics than our contemporary internet should be considered cyberspaces in regard to the *flâneurs*. Fictional cyberspaces blur the lines between realspace and cyberspace, and forces the already vague definition of "cyberspace" to encompass more than the Oxford dictionary definition which requires a cyberspace to be hosted by computers. Due to the vast differences between cyberspaces, it becomes clear that the *cyberflâneur* has qualities that do not directly relate to the space he is in. He is anonymous, quick, and disengaged, and seeks to decipher a representation by observing the representation itself. A cyberspace is inherently representational, but may still manifest itself physically in realspace. Moreover, a cyberspace may be observed from realspace. Therefore, a *cyberflâneur* does not depend on presence in a cyberspace, especially not a specifically digital or computer-based cyberspace. Because the *cyberflâneur* proved this point, the same appears to be true for the *flâneur*: he has certain qualities that can manifest themselves in reality as well as in a cyberspace as long as that space allows them to.

Thus, although scholars seem to focus on the dichotomy of realspace and cyberspace in regard to the *flâneurs*, the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur* do not. The *cyberflâneur* has a propensity for the representational, which often corresponds to a cyberspace, but the

cyberflâneur can reside in realspace as well. The *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur* are defined by their inherent qualities rather than their whereabouts because cyberspace and realspace can host both *flâneurs*.

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Pedagogical Relevance

This dissertation deals with the relation between the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur* in hybridised spaces. Contemporary society is becoming an increasingly hybridised space, and the relation between the *flâneur* and *cyberflâneur* is therefore more relevant than ever. As such, this dissertation shows how nineteenth-century literature (for example Charles Baudelaire) is no less relevant today than it was almost two centuries ago, despite the significant developments in communication and technology in general since that time. Thus, this dissertation provides teachers with an example of how to make nineteenth-century literary canon feel relevant for students today.

Also, this dissertation helps connect the significant literary figure of the *flâneur* to the fantastical and speculative. It shows how concepts from realistic fiction can and should be applied to speculative settings to enable further analysis. As such, it shows the value and potential of speculative fiction and fantasy fiction, which are genres that young adults and teenagers often value without being aware of their literary significance.