



Connected: Or What It Means To Live In The Network Society (Electronic Mediations)

Steven Shaviro

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In the twenty-first century, a network society is emerging. Fragmented, visually saturated, characterized by rapid technological change and constant social upheavals, it is dizzying, excessive, and sometimes surreal. In this breathtaking work, Steven Shaviro investigates popular culture, new technologies, political change, and community disruption and concludes that science fiction and social reality have become virtually indistinguishable.

Connected is made up of a series of mini-essays on cyberpunk, hip-hop, film noir, Web surfing, greed, electronic surveillance, pervasive multimedia, psychedelic drugs, artificial intelligence, evolutionary psychology, and the architecture of Frank Gehry, among other topics. Shaviro argues that our strange new world is increasingly being transformed in ways, and by devices, that seem to come out of the pages of science fiction, even while the world itself is becoming a futuristic landscape. The result is that science fiction provides the most useful social theory, the only form that manages to be as radical as reality itself.

Connected looks at how our networked environment has manifested itself in the work of J. G. Ballard, William S. Burroughs, Philip K. Dick, William Gibson, K. W. Jeter, and others. Shaviro focuses on science fiction not only as a form of cultural commentary but also as a prescient forum in which to explore the forces that are morphing our world into a sort of virtual reality game. Original and compelling, *Connected* shows how the continual experimentation of science fiction, like science and technology themselves, conjures the invisible social and economic forces that surround us.

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