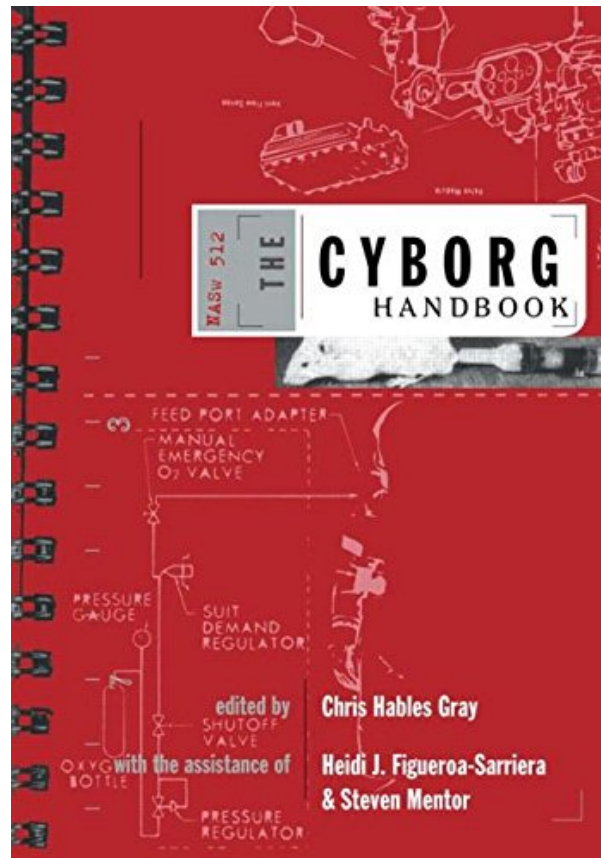
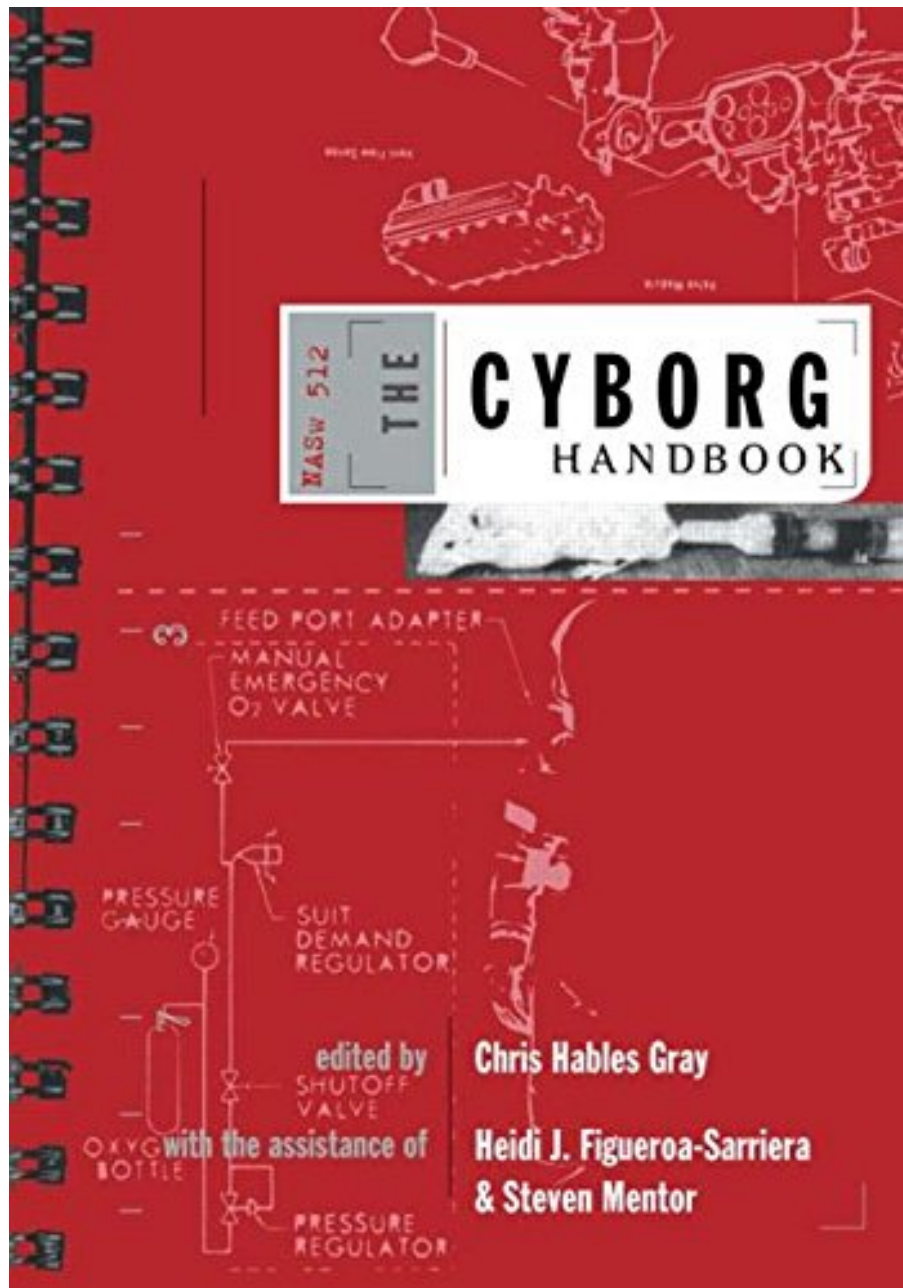


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One of society's oldest dreams has been to create a living machine. To most of us, cyborgs are Terminator or Robocop types who combine artificial robotic strength and firepower with human intelligence/cunning. Yet Gray, a 1994-95 NASA Fellow in Aerospace History, has collected writings that explore real cyborgs (or cybernetic organisms) as any entities that mix the mechanical with the organic. Thus, humans with prostheses or implanted pacemakers qualify as cyborgs. This fascinating assemblage of essays, short stories, and research findings covers the role of this incredible modern technology through its varied uses in medicine, space research, and military applications. Articles are written by experts in the field of cybernetics, including Donna Haraway. This unique work combines scientific fact and science fiction. The bibliography and filmography are invaluable additions. For large public and academic libraries. ?Joe Accardi, Northeastern Illinois Univ. Lib., Chicago

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From the Back Cover

The Cyborg Handbook is an initial look at cyborg society and at the range of cyborg technologies, from the restorative and normalizing to the reconfiguring and enhancing. These technologies can restore some to health and they can prolong horrible deaths, but they can also remake humans into more effective killers. Cyborgs, good, bad, and indifferent, are with us.

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Five Stars

By Alvaro Sanchez Gonzalez

FOR THE FUTURE AND TODAY

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Indispensable Anthology Offers Best Overview of Cyborg Origins, Unique Interviews + Seminal Texts

By SRenan

This classic anthology, first published in 1995, remains the definitive collection of material covering the history, culture and academic consideration of cyborgs. For me, the most impressive accomplishment of The Cyborg Handbook is the inspiration with which Chris Hables Gray shapes many divergent views of cyborgs

into a coherent recognition of life entering a radical new stage of evolution.

I admit to being seduced from the first page by the extraordinary language and vision of Donna Haraway's Foreward -- "Cyborgs and Symbionts: Living Together in the New World Order". Of course if you are new to cyborg texts, her words may feel more like "a warning shot fired 'cross your bow". In a style that is wildly and poetically evocative, Haraway introduces the impossibly high stakes strategy of merging biologies with technologies in the service of survival. She suggests it may be the only strategy that can sustain our species (while also possibly altering us forever.) "This handbook", Haraway explains, "is a valuable guide to the cyborg worlds we willy-nilly inhabit, whether we want to or not."

The Cyborg Handbook offers us 43 separate pieces published between 1960 and 1995. Gray has staged them in a narrative arc that tracks emergence of "the cyborg impulse" resulting from a global convergence of biologies, histories and technologies. Mythological & metaphorical models for cyborgs appear long before technologies arrive to enable it. It is the space program and the demands of modern warfare, as well as increasingly intrusive medical practices, that finally make inevitable the technological augmentation of biology. Perhaps most exciting is the special view provided of "the cyborg genesis" via interviews with pioneer engineers as well as the papers and reports they wrote. From there, this book documents the growing proliferation of cyborg memes in space, in war, in medicine and in imagination production. It goes on to introduce the future with texts on cyborg anthropology and cyborg politics. And now... 20 years after it was first published, with augmented realities and augmented identities rapidly becoming the new normal, The Cyborg Handbook seems more relevant than ever. And while editor Gray has carefully avoided the sensationalism that stains other cyborg-themed book, we must now recognize a reality more shocking, more radical, and more future-altering than any story about the Star Trek humans facing The Borg. I mean (with apologies to Walt Kelly and Pogo) that we have seen The Borg and they is us.

The Cyborg Handbook, though compelling, is not exactly an easy read. Cyborgs were (and still are) a comparatively new subject. I had the sense of multiple new vocabularies being created in front of me as I read -- sort of like taking a train trip on a railroad while it is still being built. Plus there is the thud factor -- 560 pages, 54 of them the index. I found it necessary to allow myself extra time to work through the multiples voices and vocabularies of the diverse and divergent texts. I had an especially hard time navigating the post-modern, poly-syllabic worded socialist/marxist/feminist academic texts. I was thankful for Alan Hill's playful and edgy book design that added visual adventure to often-dry text.

And there are disappointments. Missing, for example, is Donna Haraway's iconic 1985 text "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century". You can still buy it on Amazon in several books by Haraway -- in The Haraway Reader as well as Haraway's Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature.

If you prefer a more reader-friendly introduction to cyborgs -- one you can read in hours instead of days -- I highly recommend Amber Case's An Illustrated Dictionary of Cyborg Anthropology -- just out and also available through Amazon. But even that book, in a list at the end, recommends you also read Chris Hablas Gray's The Cyborg Handbook. And for good reason. There is no other book like it.

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

Holding a coveted spot on my shelf

By A. Turner

I would not suggest this book for someone looking for a quick, easy answer to the world of cyborgs. There are papers here from dozens of authors, each talking about a wholly different aspect of the cyborg - some cover the idea that technology has already turned many of us into cyborgs, others that fetuses are cyborgs,

some stick with the traditional notion of the cyborg as half-man half-machine, some examine the role of the cyborg in film. It takes all kinds. And, in sturdy academic practice, some of the authors even give gentle jabs to other papers in the book, noting flaws or the overlooking of some fine point. Most of the research draws from Donna Haraway's original research into cyborgs, but there are a few people that are trying to break away from her hegemonistic mold. For a very entertaining and much needed example of this, try to find the two or three digs at Donna Haraway's definition of cyborg.

This book is one of the most invaluable resources for anyone doing serious research into the idea of the cyborg. Though there is a great interview with Clynes, co-inventer of the term "cyborg," *The Cyborg Handbook* won't do for primary source material. The bibliography is wildly extensive, however, and the book functions as an excellent starting point for the researcher. For those who aren't afraid to work for it, but who have a more casual interest, this book can be both a starting and ending point.

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