A conversation between William Gibson and Bruce Sterling

Bruce Sterling : Bruce Bepkie, who wrote a short story called "Cyberpunk" coined the term; he's a moderately known science fiction writer. But the use of Cyberpunk as a literary critical term started by a guy called Gardner Dozois, the editor is *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* now. He's also a well-known critic. He wrote an article in the *Washington Post* about Cyberpunk which mentioned my name and Gibson, John Shirley, Rudy Rucker, some of our crowd; - that stuck. This was around 1983 or so.

William Gibson : He was aiming to do that as early as 1981, cuz that's when I met you.

Bruce Sterling : We've had lots of names. Ever since we started people have been giving us one kind of title or another. I had a list of like a dozen once; Radical Hard SF, Techno Punk, 80's Wave, Outlaw Technologists...

William Gibson : They've used them all up, so now people in England are starting to come up with new names. They have like Techno Goths, Techno Goth fiction.

FAD magazine : How would you define Cyberpunk ?

Bruce Sterling : I always thought it was the realm where the computer Hacker and the Rocker overlap. High Tech having its impact on Bohemia.

FAD magazine : Sort of like sex, drugs and Rock and Roll with computers ?

Bruce Sterling : More or less. Bohemia is an old thing, and Science Fiction is an old thing, and every once in awhile they just overlap. They're both products of industrial society, it's a very natural thing it's not very far-fetched it's very functional. It's hard to say whether we invented these people or these people invented us. You want to look at what Cyberpunk has become, read *Mondo 2000*. It's just as demented and just as strange. But it's very much a happening scene, it actually gives people something they really need.

FAD magazine (to Gibson) : And how would you define it ?

William Gibson (long pause) : I can't (laughs). Somebody once asked Jimmy Page what he thought of Heavy Metal, and he said, I didn't call it that when I invented it.

FAD magazine : What did you call it ?

William Gibson : I didn't call it anything.