

Dirk Vanderbeke: “The Digital Hereafter or a Nirvana in the Cloud”

In the discussion of posthuman encounters, the focus is more often than not on artificial intelligence, robotics, and the implementation of technological features into the human body. Less often explored is the no less uncanny complementary vision of the uploaded mind as a technological promise of life extension or even immortality. The concepts of brain emulation, imaging or scanning raise a multitude of theoretical, technological, philosophical and ethical concerns, and these have, of course, also been explored in literary works. The technological options described range from memory transfer to whole brain emulation or simulation, and, unsurprisingly, the assessment varies from enthusiastic celebration to dystopian visions. In my paper I want to touch upon some of these literary works – probably including Amitav Ghosh’s *The Calcutta Chromosome*, Greg Evans’s *Permutation City*, and Jeanette Winterson’s *Frankissstein* – and possibly also one or two filmic examples like the TV series *Years and Years* or the respective episodes of *Black Mirror*.