

CiTY OF ADAM

At around 9pm, the rain dispersed, leaving puddles on the concrete which reflected the neon streetlights and holograms so clearly as if it were a perfect replication of the world, and to stand on it would feel as if one was floating. If they were to look up, they'd see that the metropolis extended towards the heavens as it was impossible to make out where the skyline ended above the clouds. Stray cats chased after mice on the street while women shrieked when they felt a rogue hand squeeze their backside and were unable to find the culprit as they disappeared further into the masses. Cars sped by overhead as merchants bargained with Japanese tourists on the streets, who sold off stolen goods as ancient artefacts to gullible buyers, keen to bring home some memorabilia of their trip to D.C. Some workers, exhausted from their factory jobs, headed to their bars to drink their sorrows away before returning to the Mrs. While others stared through windows where girls danced and gestured for them to enter before making the decision to spend their day's work on a quick lay. Large TV screens nailed to the buildings blasted constant advertisements, one depicting a commercial for a new spirit.

PETERMEN'S, THE BOURBON FOR YOU, THE CONFIDENCE OF A KING. あなたのためのバーボン、王の自信!!

The red light from a sign displaying *GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS* painted one side of a young man's face, who dragged his feet up the stairs leading out of the underground subway station and was met with a continuous train of people. He joined the line and let the crowd carry him towards home. His jacket, large and almost heavy on his stature, was causing him to sweat and he considered taking it off. But he clutched it to his neck, as if he were embarrassed that someone would notice his Cybercorp coveralls. Too tired to change out of his uniform, he found solace in the fact that he could leave for work in a few hours without having to dress.

Amongst the army of heads Jay turned his attention towards the stars. On any other given day they were non-existent due to the pollution and smog, but the rain had created a clearing above downtown D.C. and he questioned as to why he was the only one bewildered by the sight. Unfortunately for him, the moon was in it's phase of darkness.

One floor below his apartment, Jay began to feel the strain on his legs. The elevator was down so he took the stairs and wasn't used to this much exercise. He reached into his pocket to fetch his keys but they dropped to the floor and the sound he feared had alerted somebody. Apartment 4B opened and out peered a young woman wearing an apron and she watched him for a moment.

“Did you want to come over tonight?” She asked him from behind the door.

“I gotta work.”

“How ‘bout tomorrow night? He’ll be working late.”

“I don’t know, maybe.”

“Maybe we can go dancing? Rodger never takes me.”

“Jane, I-.”

“Who’s out there? Who is it?” From behind her appeared a stubby man, wearing a singlet that failed to shield his beer gut, whose hair only covered the region above his ears.

“What did I tell ya about opening the door to people ya don’t know!” He smacked her right across the head and she disappeared.

“Sorry ‘bout my wife. She don’t know her place.” The door abruptly shut and the window panes shook. Jay, defeatedly, entered his room, the stench causing flies to fall to the mouldy carpet no matter how desperately they attempted to cling to life. His body hit the cheap mattress with such intensity that he heard springs snap under his head.

***NEXT STOP... CYBERCORP HEAD QUARTERS...PLEASE
STAND CLEAR OF THE DOORS...次の停車駅...サイバーコープ本社...
ドアを片付けてください... FROM CYBERCORP...“SERINITY” A.K.A.
SERENA... THE GIRL OF YOUR DREAMS, ANYTHING YOU PLEASE.***

A woman beamed out from the speaker, the hologram was completely blue, her outfit provocative. She swayed around the subway and a group of adolescent boys laughed as they pretended to grope her tits, their hands going straight through her torso.

After work, located under a blue neon sign that spelt out ‘Kenny’s Klub’ wrapped around a lousy looking elephant’s trunk, Jay headed towards the front entrance. Beneath its light leaning up against the brick wall were two hookers, with cigarettes stuck between their long, claw-like fingers. One wore a leopard-print fur coat, and laughed obnoxiously as her friend squealed and kicked away a rat that was nibbling at her heels. It hit some metal bins and its guts spewed out from its tiny mouth.

The other was wearing a silver looking, short skirt, and when her leg swung up to kill the small creature Jay saw that she wasn’t wearing anything underneath. From her legs down and stomach up, her model was cheap and skin was peeling off revealing metal and circuits. But her genitalia had been kept in better condition. Technicians knew the area would be receiving more trauma so they built it to withstand harsh conditions. They weren’t Serena’s but looked like older pleasure models, making it harder for them to get customers. Neither of them acknowledged him so he headed into the bar.

The next day Jay headed over to Jane's. His visits to apartment 4B were becoming more and more frequent.

"We really ought to start doing this at yours, if he comes home early someday he'll kill us both." Jane said as she smoothed out the folds on her dress as he buckled up his belt.

"I told you already we can't."

"Yeah, but you haven't bothered to tell me why not?"

"I have a roommate. He's there all the time." A lie. He didn't want her to see the state of his apartment since she kept her's so tidy.

"You're married aren't you? I knew it, I knew it."

"I'm not, and you're one to talk."

Jay kissed her goodbye, before he realised he shouldn't have when he saw the slightest shock and blush cover her face. It was the first time they had kissed while they weren't in the act. She shut the door behind him without saying a word, and Jay decided then that it would be better if he never kissed her like that again.

Back in his room, his brain went over the last few minutes. He thought about their bodies interlocked and how she had run her hands through his hair and tugged when she was close. He couldn't explain the feeling but his visits had gained some ulterior motive, other than making love to her. He liked seeing, and talking to her. His day got better when he did, even if it was just for a few seconds before getting interrupted.

A couple days passed and Jay did his best to refrain from knocking on Jane's door. The hallway back in Kenny's was pitch black, but he could just make out two figures violently necking and when the guy slipped his hand into the girl's blouse she drew back and slapped him. Against the jazz that slowly crawled into his head, down the hall he heard Kenny yelling, and the sound of glass breaking and chairs being smashed. He considered going back, and spending the rest of the night in his apartment, but he knew that he'd be confronted with mountains of dishes and the smell he avoided best he could. Plus he wanted a whiskey, and felt like it would be less sad to enjoy one in the company of others than in the confines of his room.

"Hell's going on?"

"Kenny caught some bot tryna swipe some money from the counter."

"He call the cops yet or what?"

"Nah no need, it's a Serena."

Two of them were holding onto her arms, one was punching her in the stomach, while the other was throwing drinks in her face. She began to cough and squirm her legs while they ripped parts of her plastic dress off.

"Take it easy with the whisky, she might short circuit and kill us all." The big one grabbed her face till her lips bulged out. "You wouldn't want to hurt us now would ya sweetheart? You weren't built for that now were you Serena?"

He pulled her towards him and pressed his lips into her's and licked where he tasted the liquor.

"Name's... not... Serena" She responded when she had finally caught her breath. "It's Ally."

"You girl's all look the same to me, so you ain't special. How 'bout it fella's, I make a few modifications since you wanna be so different?" He reached into his jean pocket and pulled out a pocket knife.

With a short flick of his wrist it opened and when her eyes caught the shimmer of the blade she screamed under the hand that had moved from her vagina to her mouth.

"Hold it still."

The two men held her limbs tight to their bodies and laughed when they saw his intent. He began to cut off her artificial left breast, sparks flew in all directions as she cried out. The rest of the bar had lost interest and continued on with their evening's agenda. Three women in a booth across the room were sharing gossip over martini's. Eventually the man had fully ripped her breast clean off her model, leaving a crater within her rubber flesh.

"One titted cyborg we got on our hands fellas!" He held it in the air, and the others dropped her arms to jump after it. She immediately made her escape with the little power she had left, and ran off into the night whimpering like a child. "Shame, I was gonna do her cunt next!"

Jay sat at the bar, drink in hand, chatting up the owner while the other patrons began to leave. Parts of Ally still lay beside him on the stained carpet, and despite her commitment to her idea of individuality, all he could see was Jane, dead with organs missing from her corpse on the streets of the city.

He had planned to make some kind of ruckus outside her door, but when he arrived back at his building he found that it was already wide open, and Jane was mopping away at shards of glass that had landed in her living room.

"Jane..." He whispered hoping to grab her attention. She turned towards him but her smile was too ecstatic.

"Hello, and who might you be?" The realisation hit him quickly. She wasn't Jane. Her skin was too shiny, clean, almost brand new.

Rodger appeared and took Jay's confusion for infatuation, he then smugged and commenced to brag. "Newest Serena model they've got! Cybercorp sent it over for free cuz the last one bugged out. Fuckin' things, they've really gotta find a way of fixing the pieces of junk."

"What happened to the old one?"

"I was tryna lock her in the closet, cuz she spilled the dinner all over the kitchenette. But she came at me with a knife, told me that she didn't want me hittin' or touchin' her anymore and was threatening to run away. Wasn't hard

to overpower the bitch.” He grabbed “Jane” in an embrace and she giggled and kissed his cheek.

“Bye now!” She said as she closed the door in Jay’s face, and for a moment he waited for her to come back, and to tell him that it was some kind of sick joke. That she was just pretending and she’d run away with him soon. But the moment never came.

Amongst the garbage in a dumpster, a robot’s decapitated head would remain open-eyed until the next morning, where trash drones would collect it and take it to the tip with all the other spare bot parts. Her synthetic hair would remain in its pristine condition for centuries, in the same state as the night before where she had brushed it with a delicate hand, eager for her neighbour to see how pretty she looked. He slept, awaiting for the day to start and head to work, then come home alone, and do it all over again. Lights flickered in the streets of the downtown district. Flashy colours blinded anyone whose eyes weren’t glued to a tablet.

Across the city, in a grim alleyway, a pleasure model with half a rack looked for a place to spend the night.

RATIONALE:

The modern day issue and purpose that I wanted to address in my story was violence against women. This was then implemented into a futuristic setting, where most women are robots and the question that I wanted to ask is *“Is it still inhumane if this violence is directed towards a machine?”*. In my story I thought it was important to incorporate the literary technique of imagery to create grim and off-putting situations that enforces feelings of empathy on the readers. Which pushes them to confront this question and come up with the answer that it is inhumane, because the violence that takes place is far too cruel and horrific to possibly disagree. How can it not be inhumane to cut off one’s breast?

The three major conventions of the cyberpunk genre Hedonism, Neoliberalism, and Transhumanism are present within this text. Hedonism, the pursuit of pleasure is a key feature in this specific text. The excessive presence of sexual facilities and “instruments” comments on this society’s constant need for sexual gratification to the point where it is common place to commit obscenities and sexual transgressions. They use sex as a way to numb their conscious and remain ignorant from their high-tech, low-life way of being. Jay’s affair with his neighbour starts out solely as way to distract himself from the mediocrity of his job and life, he seeks out this pleasure. Neoliberalism or Reaganomics, are examined through the use of advertisements and product placement located everywhere in the city. The liquor commercial and Serena promotions are an example of forcefeeding the public capitalist agenda as the corporations are in charge, not a government. Transhumanism can be identified in my story when looking at the pleasure models, who appear as human and display very human emotions and behaviour, but are synthetic androids. Those who have been damaged such as the two prostitutes outside of the bar have their cybernetic insides and parts exposed to the world. The effect of implementing these conventions is that it helps the readers identify that this is a cyberpunk

text specifically instead one of the other many sub-genres, and it fulfils their expectations.

The human condition is explored through Jay's sub-plot love story with his neighbour Jane, who turns out to be an android as well. I wanted it to be somewhat of a twist because as the reader learns of their relationship they are confident in their thinking that she is real and that is why he is experiencing those emotions towards her. But when this theory is disproven the reader begins to question the true nature and capabilities of artificial intelligence. His romance with her represents the human condition as loving is the most human thing we can do.

The intertwining of Eastern and Western cultures is portrayed through the idea of English and Japanese serving as the primary languages in the city, allowing for both populations to thrive in that environment. The existence of Japanese tourists gives the impression that there are certain cultural aspects originating from Japan marketed and produced in the city that would appeal to them. The traffic jam is predicted as there is the issue of pollution present, caused by the factories owned by corporations who run society.

I chose to incorporate the literary technique of symbolism into the text. "Unfortunately for him, the moon was in its phase of darkness." A feminine symbol is the moon and when Jay witnesses the new moon in the sky it symbolises how there is a lack of a true female presence in the city, and how feminist ideology is non-existent. Another allegory for femininity is the elephant, whose trunk can be seen on the Kenny's Klub sign. By associating the bar with some sort of female logo, and when the events occur within the club to a woman, it gives the impression that the business also serves as a voyeuristic show, as is the rest of the city. On his journey home, Jay walks past strip shows, whorehouses, even on the subway he is faced with a holographic girl. I

wanted to enforce the idea that all of D.C. has essentially become a brothel. The whole state has transformed somewhat into a red-light district. “He joined the line and let the crowd carry him towards home.” This is symbolic of Jay’s role as the anti-hero, who start out their journey as one with the masses. He represents everyone in his society and bares little uniqueness or need to rise up and make a difference. He is the ‘Everyman’. He has no problem with being a sheep in a herd.

The text that I took the most inspiration from was *Neuromancer*. It was helpful because the other pieces that I took input from were mostly films, so William Gibson’s novel developed my understanding as to how Sci-Fi should be delivered through the medium of literature, as this book serves as the blueprint for Cyberpunk texts. His style of writing is very simple and direct but very descriptive when addressing the environment that Case presides in. “Beneath the quartz-halogen loods that lit the docks all night like vast stages; where you couldn’t see the lights of Tokyo for the glare of the television sky, not even the towering hologram logo of the Fuji Electric Company, and Tokyo Bay was a black expanse where gulls wheeled above drifting shoals of white styrofoam. Behind the port lay the city, factory domes dominated by the vast cubes of corporate arcologies.” (Gibson. W, 1984, p. 9). The other film and game that I was influenced by was *Blade Runner (2049)* and *Detroit: Become Human*. “Serena’s” are taken from “Joi’s”, and in *Detroit* there is the idea of Robot’s being taken in as wives or kids. My narrative was influenced by the social context during the period of *Neuromancer*’s release through examining the relationship existing between the U.S and Japan, and the increasing rise/improvement of technology.

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