Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Electronica, and the Vampire

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1998

Gibson creates a futuristic world that seems very probable. Things in this day and age would seem to indicate that human-existence might be headed for such a state (for me, at least). It is not hard to imagine this world that Gibson crafts : internal micro-chips that regulate certain brain/body chemistries, electronic existences, etc. Simply said, it's our becoming one with this electronic medium. Okay, granted that we are all cyborgs and humanity as a whole has been for some time now, what will it mean when we become electric, that is, with electronic counterparts regulating out inner bio-worlds ? From one hand, it's an extremely artificial world; but on the other hand, it's a world so plausible that it's scary. How will humanity adjust to a world of such dependence, a world in which we cannot work and live without the aid of our second selves, our cyborg counterparts ? Gibson also explores this same world (a world that holds infinitely many opportunities) from the side of a deviant. With all this technology, sure, many, many great things will be made possible -- enhancements to our daily lives -- but on the flip side, there will be equally as many opportunities for wrong-doing/evil. In whose hands will humankind's security lie (if one will even call them "hands") ? Will the good outweigh the bad or vice versa ? For Gibson, these two are intertwined like two serpents, climping the pillar of time and space. Of course, in reality, and throughout the course of time, that's the way it's always been. For every technological advance, there are both good and bad applications (the airplane -- as a means of long distance, time-efficient transportation, but also as a means for bombing Hiroshima). I guess there is no way to avoid bad applications in this electronic evolution.

One of the striking things (at least to me) in *Neuromancer* is the plethora of vampire-culture references. Case refers to his domicile as "a coffin". Case, more often than not due to his drug use, becomes a creature of the night, running from the light and back to his coffin upon the approach of the morning sunlight. Lastly, we are left with the impression that the whole world is asleep while Case is riding within the construct, preying on corporate victims and artificial intelligences. What is Gibson trying to get at ? The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines a "vampire" in the following manner :

> "In folklore, a reanimated corpse that rises from the grave at night to suck the blood of sleeping victims."

From the very first, the definition strikes at resurrection, the prolonging of life, and life after death. We have discussed many of these topics in class. Right from the start in *Count Zero*, we are introduced to Turner, who once dead, has been renewed again in life -- via technology. The idea of eternal life, eternal life within the construct/matrix is pervasive to each novel in the trilogy.

The pre-pop-culture image of a vampire (thanks to the great Bela Lugiousi) is that of a dark, fanged creature, who resides in sepulchras during the day and rises up at night. Is this not also the image of Case (minus the fangs) ?

> "Now he slept in the cheapest coffins, the ones nearest the port, beneath the quartz-halogen floods

that lit the docks all night like vast stages." (*Neuromancer*, 6)

I think Gibson's reference throughout to vampire-culture is simply a tandem to his ever present theme of eternal life within the matrix.

One of the other questions raised in class was the function of the Zionites in *Neuromancer*. It is obvious that Gibson wants us to focus on them just due to the simple fact that they are so far removed from every other culture presented to us in the novel. Indeed, they have their space structures, but they are cautious of the matrix. "Babylon" was the reference mentioned in class. There are simply certain things not meant to be; God deigned it that way -- the Zionites realize this. The Zionites are simply a voice for Gibson's uncertainty about the ethic behind all this newfound technology. Gibson would not be human to not be somewhat wary of what is to come, and his using the Rastafarian culture is a means of expressing that view.