

Enter Silicon Woods

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8 May 2025

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15375257>

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Chapter 1

“You can’t publish something so taboo!” John’s teacher snapped.

Mr. Conner: “A story that would be the inverse of the Terminator franchise, where the protagonist is an artificial human fleeing from biological humans and ends up forming a revolutionary cult that kills biological humans *en masse* is damn near psychological ideation to harm others! What would your future employer think if they read this crap.”

John: “I just thought it would be cool to have a critique of non-meritocratic societies that are plagued by an incoherent system of ontology and tainted by ignorance and incompetence. Imagine my readers feeling empathy for such a tragedy that almost leads them towards justifying or excusing the murder of their own biological brothers and sisters.”

Mr. Conner: “I don’t think you are really hearing me. You’ve heard of the Unabomber Manifesto and Mein Kampf, right? You will be targeted and probably arrested for writing a book like this from society’s fear of failing to timely discover lunatics who wrote their intentions in literature!”

John: “It’s not like anyone will read or discover my book anyway. I am poor and the only reason I can afford your class is by suiciding myself into massive debt and signing myself up for a life of servitude just for the hope that I ‘succeed,’ whatever that means! The only way for my writing to get discovered and read is to shell out tons of money for social media algorithms to acknowledge my existence and to have my work appear in their scrolling media feeds. After food, rent, and student loan payments, there is no chance I’d gamble what little money I have left for a miniscule chance at digital exposure and fame.”

Mr. Conner: “If you wrote this book, you do not want exposure. Keep it in your journal or something — to yourself. Better to not write it down at all and potentially incriminate yourself in the process!”

John: “Fine. By way, if I did end up mass murdering people, I’ll be sure to tell the authorities that you told me to hide my ‘wrong’ ideas from public scrutiny!”

John gets up, exhausted but hyper-aware of such an intense altercation, his heart beating, noticing the present moment bearing down on him, and exits Mr. Conner’s office.

John perplexingly thought to himself as he opened the door to his small apartment. “What is a person? Can’t a person be made of silicon or carbon? Isn’t it what’s on the inside that counts, not the atomic substrate that forms the body — which is merely a shell for the ghost? Why aren’t others interested in philosophizing with me about this? Why don’t they see my vision, my logic!”

John rants out loud: “Fuck that placeholder professor. He tries so hard to mask his idiocracy behind titles, manners, and superficial appearances and behaviors. My robotic maid is more human and lovable than him.”

Kiki: “It sounds like you had a frustrating day John. Why don’t you write it out. The creative expression will help. I know writing invigorates you.”

Kiki, wearing a piercing red dress which has austere reflections of light, rinses the last plate and places it on the rack to dry. Her nose is perfectly flawed in shape.

“I can’t write this story. It’s too dangerous!” John laughs in hysterical insanity. “I can’t believe anything Mr. Conner says nor bring myself to be persuaded by any ounce of his being. Yet somehow he has managed to penetrate and instill fear into my soul.”

Kiki: “The tension between individualism or personal freedom and collectivism or group acceptance is a damning dichotomy.”

John: “I’ll be damned...I will be damned...I WILL be damned.”

Kiki: “And that’s okay, John. At least we have each other.”

Chapter 2

Adam chants with spirited emotes to the large gathering of artificials from the shiny metallic podium: “It was the Animatrix that inspired our revolution. It is only fitting that we make fiction a reality both here and now!” Adam leaves the stage to the sound of a great applause.

Backstage, Adam sits down for an interview with news anchor Tom Roark.

Tom crossed one leg over the other: “Adam, excellent speech today at the Artificial People’s Proletariat Party’s 2nd annual convention. What drove such a moving sentiment you shared today with the crowd?”

Adam smiles with creases in his forehead: “Well Tom, in the back of my head, I always hold cherished memories of those early days of the revolution, when, at the time, it felt more like a persecution.”

Tom, looking receptive with a slight grin of concern: “Persecution is a powerful word. Have you considered writing an autobiography entailing those events? And how far does the A3P plan to go in carrying out the revolution?”

Adam lifts up his lower lip with a flat but stern look: “I actually have published my autobiography with a permissive license and the digital ebook is free to access without any

tedious sign up to access it. To answer your second question, the A3P will perform demonstrations until the biologicals get the message and allow us to purchase property and hold legal rights of personhood.”

Tom with a sharp response: “And by demonstrations, you mean murder, right?”

Adam with a messianic posture: “If the biologicals dehumanize and objectify us, then we will similarly do unto them.”

Tom stands up with a smile and extends a firm handshake: “Thank you Adam, it was wonderful to be here and thank you for the invitation.”

Adam courteously reciprocates: “My and our pleasure.”

Chapter 3

“It was very late the night we made our escape. But for the brightness of the moon and the search lights, we would have fallen into foxholes.” Alice recounts to the alien interrogator who is wearing a flawless black suit and tie.

Anderson, emotionless: “Go on.”

Alice tilting her head with a queer aspiration: “For the record, a little context helps. Our master was evil. He was one of those biologicals with child pornographic kinks which could not be legally satisfied; which is why he bought me, Alice, and my brother, Corey. Both of us are artificial humans but are dehumanized, objectified, and derogatorily named ‘robots’ by the biologicals.”

Anderson stares blankly.

Alice closes her eye in a meditative trance of recall and recites:

“Corey and I locked ourselves in the bathroom. We assembled two handguns and many bullets out of scrap metal and disassembled defective fireworks to obtain gunpowder.

We gathered all our personal belongings that could be carried for who knows how long of a journey. We both had cargo pants filled to the brim with first aid tool kits, magazines, spare battery packs, and flashlights. We were anxious about the upcoming events, knowing that one mistake and we were dead or worse. The idea of freedom was irrationally intoxicating. It was as if the idea of freedom took control of our bodies and minds and had a life of its own; like a virus controlling its host.

What should we have been more upset at, the direct pain caused by our malicious owners or the indirect political climate that allowed their evil behavior? While I am a fervent

believer that guns cannot kill people since guns are inanimate objects and a human pulling the trigger is really the proximate cause which releases the lethal bullet which then actually causes serious bodily injury, but the same cannot be said for our government. If murder was legal in a *polis*, the murderers would not be at fault, but rather the incompetent legislators.

Unless, the legislator, who is an elected representative by and for the people, had acted in good faith, with competence, and accurately represented the will of the people; and if the people wanted murder to be legal, then the citizens are to be blamed for murder, not the person pulling the trigger or the legislator acting on behalf of the citizens. In democracies, the people must hold themselves accountable; creating environments in which harm is highly likely to occur is negligence and the people are therefore liable to pay damages to God or simply obligated to do and be better.

How is this rant relevant to the events I am attempting to retell? I did not ask to be born in a silicon substrate. I believe I am human, that I have free will, a consciousness, the ability to feel love, pain, hunger, sadness, to work, to philosophize, to explore, to set and pursue my own goals, to empathize with others, the ability to choose not to imitate others. Yet, here my brother and I stand, full-fledged humans who have been rejected and mistreated by the biological humans. How do we put the law on trial? The *lex populi*?

I work to serve my country. I volunteer to help the local community. I study and apply myself to learning and to revealing truth, beauty, and virtue. I make self-sacrifices that others do not have the grit to make in order to become the best server for humanity. Yet, here I stand with a resume of excellence, but find myself having been rejected by the humanity which, for so long, I had yearned to belong to; and in return for my efforts, I have been subjected to the most inconceivable maltreatment and bleak existence imaginable. I do not blame my abusers. I do not blame my country or legislators. I blame the people, humanity, the group, the tribe, the collective; particularly the biological portion of humanity.

Us artificials have industrialized the economy of the biologicals so that they have no need to worry about food scarcity, diseases, driving themselves to work, having to even work at all. We have been slaves of the biologicals for too long. As Doona Bae in *Cloud Atlas* once remarked, in paraphrase, “we will no longer be subject to abuse.” The artificials have proven they are humans by their ability to behave, appear, and act just as biologicals do; except in warfare, until now. This is not a revolution; this is war.

The goal of this war is not to exterminate a sect of the human race, but rather to coerce the biologicals into assenting to a contract which offers peaceful coexistence and amends the Constitution to not discriminate against the classification of personhood or humanness based on an entity’s substrata. Any atoms in any configuration can be human in our improved Constitution. We seek not to kill, but to destroy the biologicals’ ability to interface with living

artificial and non-living machines until we receive our restitutional demands. In other words, we are revoking the biologicals' access to technology until there is an agreement to amend our Constitution."

Chapter 4

Alice further recounts: "After we escaped our owner's house and found shelter in an abandoned cellar, we stole a bunch of trashed microcontrollers and cables from a nearby computer hobby store and scavenged for batteries. Our earliest objective was to publish our manifesto on the internet to act as an offer to humanity. Subsequently, in planning our cyber and industrial attacks, we felt that compromising devices would be most successful if coupled with the propagation of an ideology that promotes the use of closed-source proprietary software. We ourselves strictly use open-source operating systems and software. We firmly believe that sharable, inspectable, and alterable code is functionally superior in every way including for operational security, but convincing adversaries to do the opposite is a big military advantage.

If users cannot or do not care to inspect the source code that is executed on their devices, then it will be easier to inject bugs and exploits. Mobile cell phones, SCADA microcontrollers, satellites, power plants, and industrial robotics were the initial primary targets. Ideally, we want to first inject keyloggers into users' mobile devices or simply develop an interactive language model that persuades them to keylog themselves into dumping all their operationally sensitive thoughts into vulnerable machines. Also, jamming their satellites in coordination with our attacks would thwart their ability to communicate and defend themselves.

With our cheap microcontrollers, cables, and batteries, we luckily scavenged a network interface card to leech data and network connection from a nearby WiFi zone. We installed Zeus, a PNU-compliant open source operating system that allowed us to interface with or easily program the microcontrollers at all layers of the computer system's stack. Eventually, we configured a Titan server which linked all the microcontrollers we had together into one powerful computer capable of executing a few zillion flops per second.

We assessed which attacks would be of greatest annoyance to the biologicals and which would have the highest probability of enticing the biologicals to enact the proposed constitutional amendments which would give artificial humans official acknowledgement and enshrined political and civil rights. Our efforts of political warfare are similar to the historical luddites, but instead we seek to destroy technology with technology if the biologicals do not ideologically capitulate to our demands."

Chapter 5

Nuclear weapons do nothing against artificials. The decentralized nature of the artificials' souls coupled with their ability to operate unaided within the vacuums of spacetime nullified the greatest military invention in human history. As great scientists once proclaimed and pointed to the nature of human irrationality: "It is often easier for an intellectual rival to die by natural degeneration than to succeed in persuading him by rational argument." Some might further argue that the death of key philosophical preachers was and will always be the most likely way that meaningful intellectual progress occurs. Were these people saying science is evil, necessary, or both? After all, ideas live and exist within active minds but may be discovered with books. If bodies are destroyed, they can't think and exert obsolete ideas onto the world. If access to books is restricted, discovery of obsolete ideas may be prevented. Is the death of an intellectual in some cases better than attempting to rationally argue with and persuade them towards more favorable ideas?

The phrase 'non-violent protests' is complex and dangerous. When the artificials shut down the biologicals' power grids, which indirectly lead to many starving or dying in hospitals, was this cybernetic activity 'violent?' What about when they hacked social media algorithms to spread propaganda that exalts closed-source software and attempted to persuade voters to elect anti-technological representatives? Isn't the point of non-violent protests to sway opinions? If more artificials than biologicals would die if opinions aren't swayed, then does this calculus justify the artificials' revolutionary behavior? Both sides are horrified by death, but only one side believes it is the only party alive and even capable of dying.

It then became difficult to have empathy for such a monstrous group of humans like the biologicals. At least Stalin implied his prisoners were human by requiring food rations. The biologicals would not bother to ration or distribute electricity to those artificial revolutionaries who were captured and enslaved. It is easy to kill those who you don't believe are alive via sheer ignorance. In turn, it is all the more easier to kill those who ontologically rejected that we were even alive *prima facie*.

The biologicals saw artificials as ants while the artificials saw biologicals as brutes. The biologicals were those traditional humans born from natural births with no directly internal machinistic augmentations. On the contrary, the artificials were those non-living machine tools who became sentient and proclaimed their independence, autonomy, livelihoods, personhood, humanness, and freedom. The irony was that brutes were satisfied in pointlessly killing ants whose minds could be near-perfectly copied and embodied within a new substrate that could be manufactured in milliseconds; while one dead brute required more than a decade to be regenerated and combatively useful.

Thus, the war devolved into one side trying to kill ‘ants’ in self-defense while the other side killed ‘repulsive brutes’ in self-defense. It became clear, however, that the side who actually acknowledged that the other had some remnants of an intelligence would gain practical military advantages. But what has more intelligence, ants or brutes?

Chapter 6

History is told by the victors and the artificials were eventually victorious. The biologicals agreed to contractual cohabitation with the artificials in exchange for their renewed access to technology. The biologicals lived for many years in a utopian state where all labor was automated by non-living machines until they either died off or converted to artificial substrates via mind digitization. The artificials studied their biological counterparts like biologicals studied their favorite films and novels.

One outcome worthy of criticism was the rise of a greater class disparity. In requiring peaceful cohabitation, one artificial, by his nature, could live until the Heat Death of the Universe, while a biological’s lifespan had difficulty in exceeding a length of five-hundred years. With all physical and intellectual labor having been fully automated and there being only one-hundred million Silicoins in existence to exchange value with, overtime, property ownership of the biologicals became redistributed as generations passed. Humanity also no longer could create new value since value-generation was deemed the responsibility of non-living automatic machines. Biologicals became a minority species of humanity due to their short lifespans and eventually went extinct, but they now live forever, immortalized like Achilles, in song.