Future City: Tokyo After Cyberpunk

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Abstract

Surveying the debates around William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) almost forty years since the moment of cyberpunk, this essay proposes a new reading of Gibson's fiction, and treatments of Tokyo in post-cyberpunk SF more generally. Drawing on, and critiquing, insights from Marxism and Asian/American studies, this essay locates in Gibson's representations of Tokyo a neoliberal ambience. Gibson's novels, with their fascination for commodities, gadgets, and the consumer details of consumerism, create in Tokyo an image of a potential American future, but this is a vision undercut intermittently by their anxieties around the status of the American presence in Tokyo, and of its reminders of a history of occupation. This argument is developed, finally, by way of a comparative reading of some post-cyberpunk SF texts, Misha's *Red Spider White Web* (1990), Pat Cadigan's *Tea from an Empty Cup* (1998) and Eli K P William's *Cash Crash Jubilee* (2015)

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Cyberpunk finds in Tokyo a future at the very moment the American version for the first time seemed threatened.[1] U.S. defeat in Vietnam; the ramifications of the oil shocks and the contractions of the 1970s; the success of the Reaganite counter-offensive against the social and political gains of the 1960s; the calcification of once dynamic and dominant American corporations in automobile production and manufacturing all generate anxieties, both popular and at the level of theory, that the 'American century' is coming to an end. Nostalgic styles proliferate, from *American Graffiti* to Reagan himself, his campaign speeches studded with lines from old film roles, and postmodernism, the 'cultural logic of late capitalism', erases from the record both concrete historical pasts and collective imaginings of the future. 'It's morning again in America', Reagan's 1984 slogan ran; Bob Dylan, in contrast, just a year earlier announced 'sunset on the Union', listing commodities from Asia – Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan – as a threat to the viability of the United States.

Neuromancer (1984), the foundational text of cyberpunk, emerges from this context, and its feverish visions of 'the neon shudder of Ninsei' (15) illuminate the decay and stasis of the United States by way of the lights and intoxication of Tokyo. If, for us now, the postmodern moment has passed, *Neuromancer*'s account of Tokyo remains as a constant in the American imaginative vocabulary for the future, being endlessly

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reworked, finessed, fused and cited in everything from the Wachowski siblings' *Matrix* films to computer gaming and advertising. A cyberpunk literary and visual archive exists, with each Tokyo recycled and repackagd in an ongoing creative dialogue between texts. *Neuromancer* and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1983) between them set up a remarkably stable set of signs through which the culture narrates Tokyo and, with it, the future: skyscrapers, an excess of neon, crowds, bewildering stimulation, urban crush and blight at street level. Japan is, Joshua LaBare notes, 'omnipresent in contemporary science fiction' (23), and it is Gibson's Japan that is endlessly cited and recycled. Or, as Gibson himself puts it, 'Japan is the global imagination's default setting for the future' (*Distrust*, 124). This is not the Japan of the Kobe suburbs, however, or the dawdle of rural Kyushu, but rather *Pattern Recognition*'s (2003) 'manically animated forest of signs' (125) in Shinjuku, the 'brightly lit cityscape of Neo-Tokyo' in Alexander Besher's *Rim* (1994), with its 'keiretsu mega-towers and blazing holo-lights' (272). Tokyo stands, in cyberpunk, as a synecdoche for Japan as a whole; and Japan, in turn, is the future. This is a future of a curious kind, however, both anticipating American development and signaling American decay and exclusion. It is promise and threat, dream and diagnosis. It expresses itself, above all, in narratives of *images*. 'What characterizes Tokyo', writes Scott Bukatman in his discussion of Chris Marker's film *Sans Soleil* (1982), 'is the domination of the image; not simply the static, oversized posters with the staring eyes […] but the endless flow of images across the television screen and the endless televisions […] Tokyo exists as pure spectacle; that is, as a proliferation of semiotic systems and simulations which increasingly serve to replace physical human experience and interaction.' The 'media eruption' of Tokyo shows up, for Bukatman, 'the pervasive domination by, and *addiction to*, the image' that defines 1980s and 1990s postmodern American culture (26, 27). Is Bukatman's text criticism of cyberpunk or cyberpunk criticism? Such distinctions blur in this period, as critics accounting for cyberpunk and science fiction generally drew on it as a diagnostic tool, source of social information and rudimentary cognitive map. Science Fiction, Steven Shaviro claims, is the 'privileged genre […] for contemporary critical theory' (x), its novels doing the same kind of work for critical theory that the realist novel was able to offer Georg Lukács in the 1930s. When Fredric Jameson describes Tokyo as a 'bewildering, infinite, endless series of built things' in which 'some principle of perception gets lost' (124), then, he both evokes and himself contributes to the cyberpunk discourse Gibson initiated.

Tokyo, in *Neuromancer*, by way of its all-but-absorbed satellite city Chiba, is a 'field of data' (15), 'synonymous with implants, nerve-splicing, and microbionics […] a magnet for the Sprawl's techno-criminal subcultures' (6), a node in a new, dystopian post-national future where the US has been reduced to 'the Sprawl', an urban stretch across what was Boston, New York, and Washington down to Atlanta, the Boston-Atlanta Metropolitan Axis, and 'the zaibatsu, the multinationals that shaped the course of human history, had transcended old barriers' and now, 'viewed as organisms', has 'attained a kind of immortality' (203). Case, a 'console cowboy' and hacker operating in the dubious shadow world of cyberspace, and Molly, his collaborator, rival, and companion, are drawn

into a conspiracy taking them from Chiba to Manhattan to Paris, Istanbul and outer space itself. The ramshackle plot is familiar from any number of film noir thrillers rescreened on daytime television; the aesthetic instantly recognizable from any one of the near-future video games, movies, or comics of the 1980s and 1990s, all the way to Sonic Youth's *Daydream Nation* (1988) in music and avant-garde art. Gibson's Tokyo provided the imagery with which to narrate the future in a cultural moment no longer confident of its futurity: long leather jackets and mirror shades (Morpheus in *The Matrix*); Chinese characters flickering from neon advertising; television screens broadcasting without viewers; 'plastic capsules a meter high and three long, stacked up like surplus Godzilla teeth in a concrete lot off the main road to the airport' (1981: 104); the 'glitter, crystal maze of the boutiques' (108) of Harajuku; overstimulation. Gibson's Tokyo has, for the past forty years, been America's Tokyo. If cyberpunk's literary moment was fleeting its structuring power remains.

How to assess, a generation on, this particular vision? Two groups of critical responses have clustered around cyberpunk in general, and Gibson and *Neuromancer* in particular. One, a materialist response, values Gibson's diagnostic power; the other, drawing on the resources of critical race theory and Asian/American studies, is itself diagnostic, reading *Neuromancer* as the latest iteration of a very old, and very familiar, exercise in Orientalist stereotyping and strategies of containment. My own reading, advanced in what follows by way of a self-consciously retrospective account of both text and critical context through what comes *after* cyberpunk, in both fiction and the social world itself, will take issue with both; they set out, however, the terrain in which these texts must be read.

Cyberpunk, for Marxist criticism, has been treated as a kind of twenty-first century realism, its 'euphoria and delirium' managing, in Fredric Jameson's formulation, to send 'back more reliable information about the contemporary world than an exhausted realism' (2005: 344, 384). Gibson's work, for Jameson, 'expresses the truth of an emergent globalization' and sets out 'a mapping of the new geopolitical Imaginary', a 'first crude inventory of the new world system' (2005: 344). Cyberpunk's vocation, in Jameson's materialist aesthetics, is linked to its ability to account for shifts in the organization of American, and global, capitalism. 'Since the 1990s we have entered', he claims, 'a new phase of capitalism in which it is not production as such which creates profit and surplus value but rather speculation' (2015: 232-3) It was, then, 'the unique vocation of cyberpunk to convey in literary form' this 'new postmodern abstraction' which is 'the abstraction of information as such' as 'we thus enter a new era of abstraction and a disembodied state which is indeed the play of signs of signifiers anticipated by the structuralists, and which cyberspace now dramatically embodies in literature and art' (2015: 233). *Neuromancer*, with its protagonist seeing Tokyo 'as a field of data' (16), the cityscape as 'the roads and crossroads scribed on the face of a microchip' (262) and spotting 'vast, brilliantly lit' advertisements for Japanese 'simstim stars' (151), simulations flickering between pure mediation and the consumer world of the real, manages, for Jameson, to narrate and make representable that which threatens to

outpace the speed of our communicative organs:

> [Gibson] offers a new and post-realistic but also post-modernistic way of giving us a picture and a sense of our individual relationships to realities that transcend our phenomenological mapping systems and our cognitive abilities to think them. This is the sense in which literature can serve as a registering apparatus for historical transformations we cannot otherwise empirically intuit, and in which *Neuromancer* stands as a precious symptom of our passage into another historical period. (2015: 234)

For Scott Bukatman, writing twenty years earlier, '*Neuromancer* will render that information field tangible, legible, and spatial. Cyberspace is precisely a *non*-space realism.' Cyberspace, for Bukatman, is 'an abstraction which, diagetically and extradiagetically, provides a narrative compensation for the loss of visibility in the world, the movement of power into the cybernetic matrices of the computer banks [...] The planes of cyberspace enable the activity of spatial penetration and thus produce the subject's mastery of a global data system' (123, 143) Case, working as a console cowboy from Chiba, is 'jacked into a custom cyberspace deck that projected his disembodied consciousness into the consensual hallucination that was the matrix' (5); at that moment, for materialist criticism, he stands as a realist and 'typical' protagonist for the era of the information economy, cybernetics and abstracted speculation in information. Tokyo, in this reading, is an American future, a space refigured according to the new logic of late capitalism and a sign of the kind of class recomposition to come.

If Marxist critics have read cyberpunk as a form of *Ideologiekritik*, scholars trained in critical Asian/American studies have treated it as itself a form of ideological compensation. *Blade Runner* signaled Los Angeles' decay through shots of ramen vendors and crowds of Asian workers at street level; Gibson's Tokyo is strangely sparsely populated by Japanese people themselves to be treated by his narrators as realized characters. Tokyo in cyberpunk, then, is not so much a vision of the American future as a fantasy from the American past, a Yellow Peril dreamspace for nightmares of reverse colonization and threats to white supremacy. 'Techno-orientalism' is, for Lisa Nakamura, a 'high-tech version of racial stereotyping' with Asian imagery deployed 'to establish the distinctive look and feel of a cyberpunk future' (2002: 63). Robotic workers, shadowy conspiracies and inscrutable villains: the poetics of cyberpunk are, for Nakamura, nothing more than older racialized narratives of otherness dressed up in the spacesuits of Science Fiction. Gibson's novels are, for Timothy Yu, 'almost entirely ideological in their operation, representing and evoking the situation of late capitalism, but displacing responsibility for that situation onto a massive conspiratorial network – the 'matrix' – that is ultimately marked as oriental' (2008: 59). 'The ultimate drive of the novel,' Yu contends, 'is to re-embody the white American subject, seeking less to conquer Orientalized cyberspace than to reestablish boundaries between the virtual and the real'(60). *Neuromancer*'s 'dreams [that] came on in the Japanese night like livewire voodoo' (5) do not so much *diagnose* postmodernity but, *contra* Jameson, allow racialized fantasy to displace critical diagnosis. 'Western conceptions of postmodernity are built upon continuing fantasies of – and anxieties about – the Orient' (46) and

cyberpunk serves the purpose, for Yu, of displacing 'late-capitalist anxiety onto the Orient' (66). *Neuromancer* is one of the:

> Foundational texts that establish an orientalist imaginative framework for the period of postmodernity's emergence [...] [and set up] the extent to which an imagining of postmodernism has been grounded in Orientalism and racial anxiety. While these urban fantasies portray fears of postmodernity through the threat of reverse colonization of the West by the East, at times they also propose in response a recolonization that reasserts the hegemony of the white Western subject. (48)

The Orient, in Gibson's work, is 'reduced to its most clichéd signifiers, whose continued presence in the domain of power marks even those white enclaves as orientalized, but whose stereotypical nature reveals their fundamentally Eurocentric perspective' (Yu, 58). Far from gaining any critical distance from the world of its creation, cyberpunk is, on this reading, another symptom of that world's own anxiety and bewilderment, a literary expression of the 'Japan bashing' prominent in economic journalism, trade union organizing, conservative political agitation and, at times, open anti-Asian violence on American streets during the recessions and reorganization of capital through the 1980s.

These twin readings, incompatible with each other when taken separately, seem to me, when taken together, not so much wrong as insufficiently dialectical, each containing an insight it seems to wish to negate or deny. Gibson's Japan has its stereotypes, to be sure, but when Stephen Hong Sohn writes that cyberpunk, casting Japan as 'the site for the projection of futuristic anxieties', operates 'again within the frame of the perceived threat the so-called East presents to the West' and that 'the rise of techno-Orientalism reflects the perceived burgeoning peril to the United States represented by the Asia-Pacific in the 1980s' (7) he complicates only one half of what is necessarily an ideological whole. The 'West' is, of course, no less 'so-called' than the 'East', and both rely, parasitically, on the other for their mutually constitutive discourses of particularity and difference, whether these have been formulated in the service of praise or paranoia. This is not to claim that racism and xenophobia did not structure and motivate many powerful American cultural responses to the transformations of the 1980s – they did, and do – but rather to insist the 'the West' is itself an ideological construct, made of up its own mutually contradictory and competing self-presentations, riven with incompatible discourses and class interests. The nativist paranoia energizing, say, Michael Crichton's *Rising Sun* (1992), a popular thriller linking Japanese corporate domination to weakening US control and, indeed, threatened masculinity itself, operates according to a different logic to the call by Zbigniew Brzezinski in 1988 for the nation's geopolitical strategists to conceive of a two-nation 'Amerinippon' shaping Asia-Pacific rivalries in the 1990s (cited in Palumbo-Liu, 343). David Morley and Kevin Robins, the scholars responsible for coining the term 'techno-Orientalism', flatten out these ideological kinks and wrinkles when they write, in 1995, on 'the contemporary hysteria and panic about Japan' that

> Japan has come to exist within the Western political and cultural unconscious as a figure of danger, and it has done so because it has destabilized the neat correlation between West/East

> and modern/pre-modern. If the West is modern, Japan should be pre-modern, or at least non-modern. That is the case if it is to fit the terms of the established schema by which 'we' order our sense of space and time and allocate it to 'them'. The fact that Japan no longer fits throws the established historico-geographical schema into confusion, creating a panic of disorientation (if not yet, to be sure, of dis-Orientalism) (160)

But in what sense can we usefully conjure the abstraction of a singular 'Western political and cultural unconscious' capturing the imagination and positioning of rust-belt manufacturers in declining Detroit car plants, Silicon Valley tech entrepreneurs, and Strategic Studies Institute military intellectuals planning US bases and reach across Asia, to say nothing of the quite different historical, economic, cultural and social relationships between Japan and the social formations of Australia, Britain, France, and so on? The 'West' is here too blunt an analytical tool to produce insights on such a contested topic. 'Europe was a dead museum', one of Gibson's early stories announces, and cyberpunk courses with the sense of excitement this death brings, and of the shift in cultural and economic power from one zone to another (1981: 110). It is, after all, a long-standing American cultural and literary fantasy to imagine how United States continental expansion westward displaces the European 'West' as the site of progress and futurity. *Neuromancer* may present itself as an anxious text, certainly, but we ought not to take that anxiety on too easy a trust. There is a pleasure, after all, in the shadows and grime of noir, a readerly excitement in peering at 'the sky above the port' that was 'the color of television, tuned to a dead channel' (1) and taking a vicarious tour through the 'closed circuit of the world's black markets' (6). Like the Sony walkman, Nintendo game console or Mitsubishi station wagon, all normal and well-nigh 'Americanized' commodities circulating from the 1980s, cyberpunk Tokyo stands as both an image of anxiety and a reassuring opportunity for the noir pleasures of familiarity, a reordering of familiar Orientalist tropes and a sign of a genuine enthusiasm for new experience and terrain. Andrew McKevitt, in his fascinating history of the place of Japanese commodities in the globalizing of 1980s America, notes that 'since roughly the mid-1970s the consumption of Japanese products has been a central facet of US social and cultural life' (2), producing 'not a single definition of globalization but the varied local experience of many globalizations' (11), from anime to automobiles. Anime, indeed, first brought to the United States by amateur enthusiasts and geek smugglers, developed into a major, and mainstream, cultural form in turn changing its conditions of production in Japan: it was 'this complicated intersection of production and consumption, the free floating of images unmoored from authorial intent and national origins in a global age, the mingling of Japanese and Western aesthetics, genres, and racial and gender categories, that established anime's hybrid nature' (McKevitt, 182-3). Just as anime fandoms have *both* extended and developed far more sophisticated knowledge of Japanese history and culture in US society than ever before *and* at times reinforced and drawn out misogynistic and commodifying fantasies of the racialized Asian Other, so too cyberpunk responds to complicating shifts in the US/Japan client state relationship *and* draws on, and reinforces, existing racialized imaginative vocabularies, particularly in its

representations of women. Indeed, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun has written insightfully of how, far from operating as a form of domination, Gibson's turn 'to old imperialist dreams and tropes' help the (implied Western) reader 'deal with and enjoy vulnerability' (210). This is the vulnerability of shifting geopolitical and economic fortunes, certainly, but also the vulnerability new technologies set off in us, fears of personal redundancy and incomprehension. Gibson sexualizes, and orientalises, what is now the most banal and prosaic of acts – going online – and renders it in the language of orgasm:

> And it flowed, flowed for him, fluid neon origami trick, the unfolding of his distanceless home, his country, transparent 3D chessboard extending to infinity [...] And somewhere he was laughing, in a white-painted loft, distant fingers caressing the deck, tears of release streaking his face. (*Neuromancer*, 47)

There are fears and old stereotypes knitted into the imaginative fabric of the new cyberpunk Tokyo, but they cannot account for the stability of its aesthetic influence and reach, over thirty years now and across very different periods of Japanese-American relations, migration patterns, and political struggles. Critical Asian/American studies, by accepting the idea of the 'West' as coherent, needlessly restricts its object of criticism.

What then of the materialist account? If scholars of American racial identity have pursued too narrow a hermeneutic of suspicion, Marxist critics have, in contrast, been too easily contented with taking cyberpunk at its own word. Jameson, treating cyberpunk as 'the supreme *literary* expression' of 'late capitalism' and as 'the imagination of the multinationals in postmodernism' (1991: 419, 321), elides cyberpunk précis and cyberpunk critique, response to ideology and recognition of new realities. Gibson's characters' announcement in 1981, from Chiba, that 'we're an information economy'(16) and Jameson's 2003 analysis of the ways in which 'the cybernetic technologies of the present [...] can electronically substitute one entire national working class for another, halfway round the globe [...] overnight' (705) share the same rhetoric and the same organizing assumptions, but neither is tested against historical analysis of the concrete situation. Far from being an era of 'the displacement of old-fashioned industrial labor by the cybernetic kind' (2003: 702), as Jameson describes it, the battles of the 1980s and the dot-com boom of the 1990s were over *production* – cars most notably in trade tensions between Japan and the United States – and manufacturing. Online shopping sites such as Amazon have facilitated the growth of the Midwestern and Californian distribution hubs, traditional labor centers all, and Nissan car plants in the United States took decades to build, establish themselves, and be linked to a global network of supply chains in industry. None of this is weightless, and the thinness of Marxist literary criticism's treatment of this extra-textual, empirical context impoverishes its accounts of cyberpunk's thought-world. Materialism, in Science Fiction studies, has too often been insufficiently materialist, insufficiently skeptical. Gibson's Tokyo provides a space for thinking about this contest far more conflicted and internally divided than his materialist critics have acknowledged. The success of his work, I want to argue, is generated out of this very conflict and division.

I. Neoliberal ambivalence

Pattern Recognition (2003), in many ways a sequel to *Neuromancer* in its treatment of Tokyo as a space of imagined futurity, is obsessed not with images but with *objects*, commodities. Blue Ant, the advertising agency initiating the narrative occasion, may be 'more post-geographic than multinational' (6), but the novel's narrative discourse draws insistent attention to the materiality of global trade – the *things* globalization globalizes – and the nation-states connected to the production process. The novel's first chapter opens with a flurry of nationally-bound objects: 'the German fridge' (1), an 'Italian floor-lamp' (2), 'a German filter' (3), 'imported Californian tea substitute' (3), 'Afghani opium supplies' (6), 'a Korean clone of an old Casio G-Shock' (7). Cayce Pollard – her name conjuring *Neuromancer*'s Case, just as her twenty-first century cross-national navigation conjures his late-twentieth-century navigation of cyberspace – is a 'coolhunter' (2), her 'morbid and sometimes violent reactivity to the semiotics of the marketplace' (2) allowing her to intuit what trends and designs will work for clients' marketing plans. The novel's plot sends her on the usual Gibsonian cross-country adventure as part of both a conspiracy and in search of the footage, a fragmentary and enticing work produced outside of the logic of commodity culture dominating the rest of the novel's storyworld. Cayce is hired by Hubertus Bigend, owner of Blue Ant and globalizer, to find the maker of the footage; the quest narrative takes her to Tokyo, London, Moscow. *Pattern Recognition*'s story and its narrative discourse are in productive conflict with one another, the story generating and recording an ambivalence about the process of globalization the narrative discourse itself celebrates and treats with energetic enthusiasm. Cayce's affective immersion in the flows of globalization facilitates a narrative tracking the journey of commodities from one zone to another, and she, with her uncanny ability to spot what will travel and translate from one market to another, 'knows that she is, and has long been, complicit […] in whatever it is that gradually makes London and New York feel more like each other, that dissolves the membranes between mirror-worlds' (194). Cayce worries over globalisation's telos, 'a world where there are no mirrors to find yourself in the other side of, all experience having been reduced, by the spectral hand of marketing, to price-profit variation on the same thing' (341). The 'mirror world' (105) is her term for the variations in everyday life between cultures – in types of tap, forms of plug, public transport – that make up cultural difference. Difference, in Cayce's account, is connected to technology and commodities:

> 'My idea of a mirror-world is Bangkok. Asia somewhere. This [London] is just more of our stuff.'
>
> 'No,' she tells him, 'different stuff. That's why you notice that vent – they invented it here, probably, and made it here. This was an industrial nation. Buy a pair of scissors, you got British scissors. They made all their own stuff. Kept imports expensive. Same thing in Japan: All their bits and pieces were different, from the ground up.
>
> 'I see what you mean, but I don't think it's going to be that way much longer. Not if the world's Bigends keep at it: no borders, pretty soon there's no mirror world to be on the other side of.' (105)

However much the fear of cultural erasure is foregrounded in story and direct discourse, however, the novel – and Gibson's *oeuvre* taken as an aesthetic whole – fairly buzzes with excitement at the possibilities of commodity exchange, a process centred imaginatively in Tokyo. The makers of Cayce's Rickson's jacket have, 'in some very Japanese way' (11), turned their product into 'an act of worship' (11). Japanese cigarettes, Mild Sevens, are 'the default brands of creatives' (11). One of her collaborator's phones, 'cased in candy-apple mango' (107) is nothing less than 'Japan' (107) itself. Gibson's protagonists are the fantasy agents of neoliberal capitalist ideology, 'creatives' connecting purportedly weightless capital globally, and Tokyo is their spiritual home. Laney in *Idoru* (1996), another conspiracy-cum-global-road-trip taking in Tokyo's entertainment world, is 'an intuitive fisher of patterns of information', Chia in the same novel lives a now that 'was digital, effortlessly elastic, instant recall supported by global systems she'd never have to bother comprehending' (25). Tokyo is a kind of fantasy space in these storyworlds, the centre of a global middle-class aesthetic – Muji clothing, Apple computing, a cheerful indulgence in the obsessions and drives of 'weird nerd innocence' (31) and collecting – and it interpolates the ideal subject of the liberal-globalising vision of US capitalism: a Silicon Valley hipster or a start-up creative moving effortlessly across worlds, fossicking in the cultural jumble-market of the open global order. Case's childhood in *Neuromancer* may have conjured American industrial decline – 'the landscape of childhood, on broken slag and the rusting shells of refineries' (85) – and that novel's Tokyo shared this industrial-capitalist social world:

> 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; where you couldn't see the light 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. Port and city were divided by a narrow borderland of older streets, an area with no official name. Night city, with Ninsei at its heart. By day, the bars down Ninsei were shuttered and featureless, the neon dead, the holograms inert, waiting, under the poisoned silver sky. (6-7)

Even here, however, the text is energized by possibilities for restructuring and reform, by the thought of 'burgeoning technologies' that 'require outlaw zones' (11) and the 'root of street cool […] the knowing posture that implied connection, invisible lines up to hidden levels of influence' (203). Far from being a narrative of fear of the orientalized Other recolonizing the United States, Gibson's cyberpunk kits out an aesthetic for the neoliberal ideology of American renewal, with Tokyo as a 'creative capital' and as itself a form of 'creative capital' retrofitting and reworking nationally-bound manufacturing into self-images of spryly transnational, mobile and digitally-based, globalizing capital associated with Silicon Valley, Google, Facebook and, in the case of politics, the Democratic Party and Hilary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign. Cyberpunk facilitated not dystopian visions but a capitalist utopian ambiance, visible everywhere in the Japanese commodity and aesthetic presence in a particular US liberal culture today. The 'mirror world' may be,

for Cayce, a term of ambivalence, but it first appears in Gibson's writing in a journalistic text as a much more straightforward term of praise and marketing possibility. The Japan that 'delights, disturbs, and fascinates us today', Gibson suggested in 2001, is 'a mirror world, an alien planet we can actually do business with, a future' (2010: 125). Tokyo is his 'handiest prop shop' (2010: 158) for facilitating the narrative of this business possibility. Charles Paulk has linked what he calls Gibson's 'garage-sale-in-cyberspace aesthetic' to the 'gleeful ransacking' of the past 'voraciously consumed and redeployed as product' in his vision of Japan, 'trash transmuted into Tokyo real estate' (491). Even disaster and dystopia, in this vision, present opportunities for capitalist renewal:

> 'They're going to rebuild San Fransisco from the ground up, basically. Like they're doing to Tokyo. They'll start by layering a grid of seventeen complexes into the existing infrastructure. Eighty-storey office/residential, retail/residence in the base. Completely self-sufficient. Variable-pitch parabolic reflectors, steam-generators. New buildings, man; they'll eat their own sewage.'
>
> 'Who'll eat sewage?'
>
> 'The *buildings*. They're going to *grow* them, Rydell. Like they're doing in Tokyo.' (1993: 230).

Marxist critics like Jameson are wrong to see this as any kind of mapping of the globalized order; it is, rather, an ideologically concentrated expression of one class fraction's view of that order's dreams, justifications and possibilities. If Cayce suffers 'a species of semiotic agoraphobia' (264), Gibson's own narrative style treats the names of global commodities circulating in and beyond Tokyo with a kind of Melvilleian reverence and excess. It was always things rather than images or abstractions that drove the expansions of the period, as a glance at the vast iPhone production factories in China or the new distribution hubs of the American Midwest can show, and more recent developments in global politics, from Trump's protectionist turn to a newly assertive Chinese state, give Jameson's rhetoric a dated air. But this vision is, equally, no Orientalist response to anxiety about American loss. *Those* visions, in a line from Michael Crichton in fiction to Steven Bannon and the alt-right in politics, set themselves against exactly the order Gibson's prose delights in and draws crackling energy from at the moment is registers nostalgic unease. Cyberpunk's is a neoliberal ambivalence.

II. Tokyo as American history

There *is* a narrative of loss in *Pattern Recognition*, twinned with its giddier exploration of global commodities, and this narrative is Gibson's contribution to occupation literature, linking Tokyo to a wider uncertainty and mourning over America's global position as hegemon, or fading hegemon. *Pattern Recognition* is, among other things, one of the first 9-11 novels; Cayce's father Win, a former CIA asset, goes missing on the day of the attacks, and one of the narrative's strands involves Cayce's attempts to account for his final moments and for her own grief. 9-11 is an 'experience outside culture' (137) for Cayce, its traumatic excess returning unexpectedly and unbidden as she

> exits Shinjuku station […] Looking up now into the manically animated forest of signs, she sees the Coca-Cola logo pulsing on a huge screen high up on a building, followed by the slogan 'NO

> REASON!' This vanishes, replaced by a new clip, dark-skinned men in bright robes. She blinks, imagining the towers burning there, framed amid image-flash and whirl. (125)

A lost father figure who was also a long-serving agent for the global infrastructure of US empire, killed in the most symbolically powerful and socially traumatic threat to that empire this century, is hard to read in anything other than the most overdetermined and symbolically loaded ways. Win stays at 'the Mayflower' (186) in Manhattan, connecting him to an even older American story, and his loss – and the loss and devastation of 9-11 more generally – inflect each of the novel's scenes. The sign Cayce can decode in this 'forest' is American ('Coca-Cola'), a symbol not so much of globalization and the end of the 'mirror world' as of the stability of an American presence in Tokyo. This twinned narrative of loss of parental, and imperial security and the search for an authentic commodity links Tokyo in the reader's mind with American loss, and with its presence and historical resonance as an occupation city. Gibson has written of how 'you can see more chronological strata of future design in a Tokyo streetscape than anywhere else in the world.' It is, he writes, 'like successive Tomorrowlands, older ones showing through when the newer ones start to peel' (2010: 158) Tomorrowland is, however, a peculiarly *American* futurity to spot in a Tokyo street,[2] just one of the many connecting links to American history and American occupation grounding Gibson's Tokyo of the mind: the 'faded American advertising and the greys and the pinks of gum' on a Tokyo wall (*Idoru*, 151); taxi drivers with 'white cotton gloves and a hat like the hats cab drivers wore in 1940s movies' (1996: 169) For Chia in *Idoru*,

> She felt like everything, every little detail of Tokyo, was just different enough to create a kind of pressure, something that built up against her eyes, as though they'd grown tired of having to notice all the differences […] At the same time, she felt that if she squinted, maybe just the right way, she could make all this turn back into Seattle. (140)

This is not, as Michael J. Blouin has it, a 'token mise-en-scene for cyberpunk fiction' (144) nor an expression, in Timothy Liu's phrase, of fears of 'the threat of reverse colonization' (48) but rather a representation of an *American* space, an occupied and colonized zone that has never been separated from American space and American order. David Palumbo-Liu, in a careful and politically sensitive reading, finds in *Idoru* a failure of imaginative sympathy. The strangeness of the text's Tokyo, treated as a sign of the future in the present day, is, for Palumbo-Liu, an anachronism that

> suggests an essential and abiding foreignness to Japan and creates a stereoscopic effect temporally, superimposing one temporality over another even as they share the same psychic quality of alienation. Despite Gibson's immense imaginative vocabulary, the 'shock' of future Tokyo is the same as the shock of present-day Tokyo. (380)

What if this shock, however, were precisely the city's American qualities? As Tomiko Yoda and others have pointed out, the ideologies of Japanese particularity and US presence as a 'model' nation to be emulated and hegemon to accept as dominating presence fit each

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[2] Tokyo Disneyland was in fact the first to open outside of the United States, and so deserves its place in any account of the ideological dream-world of occupation literature.

other as codependent and co-productive rather than as rival nationalisms.[3] In *Pattern Recognition* this shock is to do with re-imagining a new American order in ways not yet possible: a father gone 'missing in New York City on the morning of September 11, 2001' (134) and this memory only thinkable in Tokyo because 'the Japanese sunlight, with the robotic drapes fully open, seems to come from some different direction entirely' (134). Difference and sameness, American loss and Japanese recovery, a globalizing market of American capitalist liberal order and the terrifying fears of disruption to that order, and to American dominance generally: *Pattern Recognition*'s twin narratives tie these contradictory forces together and tether them in a Tokyo of the mind, even if the novel does not have the historical resources at its disposal to work them through to any kind of resolution.

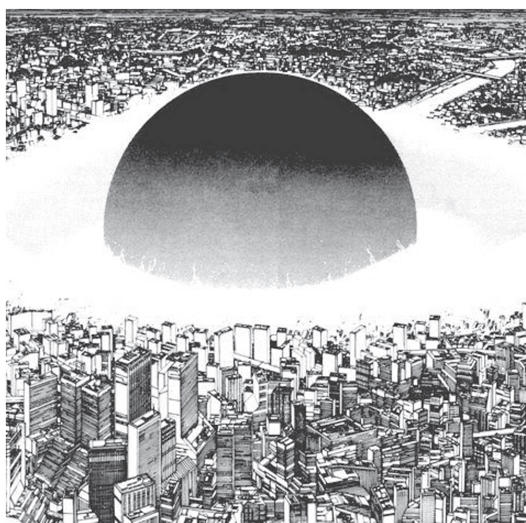
III. After cyberpunk

From the 1990s onwards, shifts in the global economy, and in technological development, draw Science Fiction writers from Japan to China for their settings of some kind of futurity, and from cybernetics to nanotechnology (see Niu). Three works downstream of cyberpunk draw out and complicate Gibson's Tokyo; one through modernistic excess and style; one through humour; and one through a reinvigorated dystopia.

Misha's *Red Spider White Web* (1990) is a 'metal vision' (11) of post-apocalyptic America, an 'industrial puzzle of abandoned factories' (100), 'closed down genetic reservations, frozen deserts and howling winds' (165). The world is so polluted everyone must wear masks, and Kumo, the artist hero, makes her living in the 'factory deserts, wastelands of empty warehouses and strange, rusted towers [...] debris of waste papers, glittering glass, windblown, dry grass and broken hunks of asphalt' (12). The polar ice caps have melted, society has broken down into warring gangs of rich youth and holographic artists, and Tommy Uchida, a metal man hybrid serving the state that has infected him, becomes a focus for millennial religious longings. Misha's style takes its energies from negativity, intensity and excess, and Kumo is a kind of pure negation, her voice 'like a vivisection' (157): 'What do you know? Kimi ga Nihonjin dewaarimasen. You're not human. You're not a man. You're not even white.' (72) *Red Spider White Web* takes the fears of the 'Japan bashing' 1980s but amplifies them into a kind of delirious auto-critique. Japan has conquered American manufacturing, but industrial manufacturing has destroyed the world. The Japanese have colonized the United States, but Kumo, Métis perhaps, or Native American, Other in some textually unspecified way

[3] See Yoda: 'Local cultural variance, far from being expunged, is actively produced and consumed [in globalized postmodernity] [...] but the meaning and function of cultural difference is being fundamentally transformed. The local is increasingly disassociated from specific social space and relations inhabit as it is constituted through the process of commodification. Rather than inscribing a sociocultural boundary between the inside and the outside (that takes the national interiority as the ultimate horizon), the local in the global postmodern operates on a more fluid, affective distinction of familiar and exotic or a visceral sense of proximity and distance that need not presuppose a fixed historical or social point of reference' (661).

apart from in 'her row of American features and cunning eyes […] her healthy animal obstreperousness and gleaming pelzmantel' (158) is outside the gendered and racial order in which this subsequent colonization matters much: 'Yer crazy blood Kumo. You ain't no real human. You ain't Japanese, you ain't even white. I don't even know what you are.' (121) A Japanese vengeance conspiracy to redeem defeat in the Pacific War – a staple and cliché of endless US narratives – is revealed, only for Kumo to revel in its denouement: 'that fucking war. Those Americans and that fucking war […] I admire the Japanese.' (211) The narrative discourse is threaded with untranslated Japanese rendered in roman lettering, from Kumo's name (the Japanese term for spider, referencing the Japanese military flag, '*the rays of the sun formed the eight legs of a red spider*' 127), damaged Japanese signifiers ('the odor of synthetic sushi' 17) and socio-cultural collisions ('a cup of scalding synthetic coffee out of a ceramic sake cup' 154). Tokyo has been translated to the Pacific coast, as Mickey-san, a Tomorrowland of sorts, 'a living recroom for the rich and rotten […] Pacifica Rima – the biggest plastic city in the USA' (102). Mickey-san's domed separate evokes Katsuhiro Otomo's *Akira*:



[Figure One: Otomo, *Akira*]

overlaid with a kind of deranged everyday quality:

> pieces of dawn fell away into the chrome-coloured day. Tommy cocked his head, listening to Mickey-san's hiss, belch, roll, and sirens. Loudspeakers announced the day's words in sing-song Japanese. In between language lessons morphemes and phonemes, ran newsbulletins, (tragedies mostly), trivia or vector sealings of new quarantine areas. (99)

Unlike Gibson's 'creatives', Kumo is an artist driven mad by commodity culture and its ecologically destructive circulation, consumption and re-supply, and her struggle to avoid that 'kikeibutsu' (16) – deformity – is a struggle for survival in the world globalized capitalism made:

> In the cathedral acoustics of the tank, she heard: explosions, animal cries, screaming metal,

> burning buildings, machine gunfire, heavy equipment, protest cries, sirens, airplanes, copters – all ancient sounds she recognized from holovids. Tommy walked over to a box of silvery chips and threw a blanket over it. The sound ceased. Kumo cleared her throat and glanced around the walls, filled with carnages of the twentieth century; windows, auto parts, door knobs, wires, smashed small appliances, adapters, circuits, vacuum tubes, records, disks, rubber boots, tin cans, cprs, tapes, darts, bottles, dried ink, Styrofoam peanuts, books, magazines, computer cards, keyboards, drives, fans, plastic toys, buttons, bulbs, decoys, rubber fish, watches, pocket calculators, games, musical instruments, all piled high in overflowing shelves welded to the walls and boxes on the floor. (68)

Here is American-Japanese exchange not as cultural interaction or misunderstanding, but as an enormous pile of junk facilitated and encouraged by the postwar consumer order fostered under American occupation. Where Gibson sees 'sheer eye candy' (2010: 158), Misha's vision turns to a nightmare of waste that will not biodegrade.

Red Spider White Web is too relentless in its negativity, perhaps, and too intensely itself and outside any legible literary tradition or conversation, for it to have lodged itself securely in the SF or mainstream canon. Despite early championing by Brian Aldiss, and sporadic scholarly attention, Misha's work has not entered the dialogue around cyberpunk in any permanent way. Its vision of North American-Japan relations on a wrecked planet, and its intensity of ecological vision, may well be more relevant to our moment, however, than Gibson's more sanguine ideological projections of the smooth and open spaces of last century's dream globalization.

If *Red Spider White Web* piles intensity upon intensity, Pat Cadigan's *Tea From an Empty Cup* (1998) untugs some of cyberpunk's knots by way of irony and play. Joshua LaBare has noted that 'representations of the Japanese fall into three common science fiction tropes: high technology, the alien, and the apocalypse'(23). Cadigan scrambles all three. Her Japan has been 'all but obliterated' (48), with only three dozen people left living where old Tokyo once stood. The 'real Tokyo' (12) is now a zone in artificial reality, accessible only through drugs and bodily connection to the machine, a promise in a world where 'post-Apocalyptic glamour' (92) is the 'bleeding edge of this-minute fashion' (92) in a world desperate for paid thrills. Gibson's Tokyo has something of the sheen of the glossy magazine or the colour supplement, entranced as it is by the circulation of objects while Cadigan's world is attuned to the alienation and tedium commodification brings with it, 'billable AR time' (132) allowing access to an artificial reality 'even more tiresome than the reality she was used to' (79). *Tea from an Empty Cup* follows the familiar plotting lines of criss-crossed conspiracy – Lieutenant Konstantin searches for the real-life killer of two artificial reality addicts in one narrative line, while Yuki seeks her lover Tom, one of those dead, in the other – but plays up its most clichéd devices to parodic effect. There are plenty of 'geisha' (134) and 'samurai' (125) in this artificial reality, certainly, but they reflect the way what Nakamura calls 'cybertypes' circulate in the alienated spaces of the internet. Authenticity – cultural or existential – is, in this narrative, suspect, and the most 'intense authenticity' Konstantin encounters in artificial reality is opening a doorknob, an experience 'more like touching a doorknob than actually

touching a doorknob' (76). Yuki, meanwhile, far from being an exoticised and eroticized Japanese Other, has her body likened by a friend to 'a daikon radish' (145): her physical existence is not, in this narrative, a vehicle for another's erotic gratification so much as for her own sense of autonomy and purpose, as 'she felt a surge of affection for [it], for all the pleasure she had taken for granted and recognized now as being part of corporeal existence' (145). Pay-per-access artificial reality robs its users of this pleasure, their minds taken up with vicarious apocalypses, a neat turn on cyberpunk consumption in our own world: 'a glitzed-out, gritted up, blastered and blistered post-Apocalyptic Noo Yawk Sitty […] was topping the hotline for the thirteenth week in a row, with post-Apocalytpic Ellay and pre-millenial Hong Kong holding a tie at two and three' (22). The plot to rebuild Tokyo, a post-Apocalyptic Tokyo only the Japanese can find, involves pitting one kind of artifice against another, older crafts of puppetry, collective labour, planning, and human connection working against artificial reality, atomized computer experience, city-as-consumption:

> Not a doll. A puppet, with several living persons behind its movements. *Her* movements. *Bunraku*. Japanese puppet theatre. Not a children's diversion but the classic puppet theatre of Old Japan, as serious as Noh and Kabuki, a demonstration of skill and grace, control and cooperation. Now she could see the outlines of the people moving the puppet if not their faces. See them and feel them – (187)

Cadigan avoids exoticising this vision by opening her novel with a scene making whiteness – the default 'non-identity' of the cyberpunk reader still – visible. In a diner so generic in its features that it could be anywhere in either Japan or America, the 'Japanese guy' (3) and 'the white guy' (3) discuss how to get to the real Tokyo. This opening chapter forces the reader's attention on our ways of seeing both characters, the 'thin, Anglo lips' (3) of 'the white guy' racialized in ways that 'the Japanese guy' seems to manage to avoid, with 'the white guy [] watching the other smooth the front of his Guinness T-Shirt. Not sake, but Guinness, for chrissakes, what kind of an Oriental was he, anyway?' (1) Tokyo is a name for things to come in this novel, a site to be, a place outside of the administered world of artificial reality and corporate-controlled technology. It is a Utopian promise of potential collectivity:

> Abruptly, she realized she wasn't as high up over the city as she had been and she could see the lights more clearly now, flashing, twinkling patterns that resolved themselves into gargantuan signs flashing words, flashing pictures, flashing *kanji* as if in a long and complex display for what universe there might be out there in the dark, over and over, the message: *Japan lives!* (216)

IV. After the crash

'In the beginning, all the world was America….': this citation from Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, overheard amidst conversation amongst 'fetishistic collectors and connoisseurs of printed books, vinyl, paintings, photographs, and all manner of *analog detritus*'(100), links Eli K. P. William's vision of Tokyo in his *Cash Crash Jubilee*

(2015), an astonishing recent intervention into the cyberpunk canon, to both narratives of future Tokyo and to ways of imagining the city's occupation literature. William's dystopia rewrites *Neuromancer* for a post-Bubble Tokyo and a post-Global Financial Crisis United States, offering intertextual homage to his predecessor while bringing a much more skeptical eye to Gibson's neoliberal excitement. Case in *Neuromancer* worked the 'consensual hallucination that was the matrix' (5) and that we have come to call cyberspace, and the characters in *Cash Crash Jubilee* live in the 'consensus hallucination' (209) that is there permanently socially-mediated society of 'adverpromos' (53) and 'datainment' (53). Tokyo is now a 'vast amorphous adscape' (355), 'huge skyscrapers sprawling endlessly in all directions, their every wall and window covered in a motley sheen of entertisement' (32) and 'the infosky […] a cinematic quilt of promotional narratives' (32). After the 'Great Cyberwar' the 'Old Powers of the West' and 'the new Powers of mainland Asia' (45) – Japan's status between these two groups is ambiguous – create 'the action-based global economy' at the 'Tokyo Roundtable' (45), a libertarian, market-driven society where all volitional activities, from blinking to touching to childbirth, have become 'a kind of intellectual property, the usage of which required payment of a licensing fee' (11). Tokyo is thus a vast 'communixchange' (37) ordered by the Twelve and One, a group of 'MegaGloms' (35) that together own the rights to all human endeavor, with 'No Logo, Inc.' owning copyright on 'protesting, subversion, counter-culture, swearing' (35). In this world all available surfaces are commoditized: 'the black clouds that had been hanging over the metropolis finally opened up. First a sprinkle of Korean soap opera fell – crystal tears of drama that splattered onto the pavement into vaguely glowing spots' (316). Free citizens, those with credit and liquidity, are equipped with interpretive technology mediating their vision. There is 'ImmaNet, a global communication network that matched up the world seen by the naked eye with a veneer and graphics information *infoseen* by the eyescreen integrated into every Free Citizen's retina' (17) and 'LifeStream, a recording of […] life taken continuously by all the sensors […] working in tandem' (81). This is, in other words, a world where the privatized internet – the Googles, Facebooks, and YouTubes of our own day – control and order every aspect of human affairs, knowledge being accessible only to the amount that one can afford bronze, silver, or gold searches on Flexipedia, human activity regulating according to the costs of each interaction, social life impossible without a screen of consumer decision making. William's Tokyo is not the site of reverse-colonization fantasies, and immigration after the 'Bubble rewind' (132) has made Tokyo's population more ethnically diverse. Lawrence Barrow, the country's Chief Executive Officer, is the first non-Japanese to hold the position, and looks like a European in a Urasawa Naoki manga: 'his hair was pure white and of just enough length to be pulled back and tied into a tight ponytail; his nose large and commanding; his eyes a piercing blue nearly light as a husky's' (129). William creates a memorable Tokyo narrative not by imagining ways the city might be different and outside of global capitalist flows, but rather by figuring how those flows work in this particular space. His is an art of modernist indirection, travelling in circles round the city – one can trace the protagonists' movements, more or

less circling the inner city and central suburbs, by way of chapter titles – and evoking it in fragmentary detail, as Kim Ha Yong does for Seoul in *Your Republic Is Calling You* (2010) or Joyce Dublin in *Ulysses* (1922). Besides, if citizens do not like Tokyo's reality they can have the ImmaNet overlay it for them with another: 'the membership dues to use subscription overlays, like gaming environments or nostalgic, historical cityscapes, were higher than the flat hourly fee for the default public overlay, but were nothing compared to custom overlays' (51). Tokyo Bay has been filled with rubble and nuclear waste, Mt Fuji hollowed out to store more waste, but the privatization of public space connects to our current reality easily enough.

Amon Kenzaki, William's protagonist, 'of Persian and Japanese descent' (20), is a Liquidator for the Global Action Transaction Authority, responsible for 'liquidating' bankrupts, stripping them of their Free Citizen status and reducing them to 'Bankdead' (87) status. 'Justice was better entrusted to the market wherever possible' (60) through self-regulating fines and compensation, but Amon's job is to remove those who can no longer live in the market. He is not a cool-hunter so much as a subject for the era of austerity, separating the Free Citizen from the irresponsible spender:

> By checking their action-transaction and balance fluctuations over the past few weeks, months, and sometimes years he could begin to see an abstract picture of their routine, their job, their hobbies, and their addictions. Amon almost felt a sort of monetary personality manifesting from the vague bundle of activities like faces spotted in a cloud (47)

Amon is *homo economicus*, a rational economic man and model market subject, text messaging friends rather than talking, a more expensive choice, whenever possible, careful hoarder of credit and prudent self-regulator. He uses a 'SpillBot', a machine designed to masturbate clients to relieve tension and then sell their discharge to sperm banks, rather than waste his spending – the *double entendre* is the text's[4] – on thought, fantasy, and emotional interaction: 'on special occasions, when face-to-face meetings did happen, Amon thought it foolish to waste creditime holding hands, snuggling, kissing, and other behavior with a poor cost-to-stimulation ratio. He understood the need for foreplay, but it was prudent to limit minimally arousing acts' (29). This careful, and unbalanced, rationality, will be Amon's undoing, and the prompt for the conspiracy driving the novel and its two follow-up works. Plot revelations need not spoil things here; what matters, for my analytic purposes, is the way William counterposes *affective* experiences – touch, contact, conversation – with the eroticized Other conventional to so many Science Fiction and popular cultural treatments of Japan.[5] Anton encounters two childhood friends sharing a cuddle before work, and it is the emotional-economic *wastefulness* of the scene, rather than its disclosure of a sexual relationship, that unnerves him. Amon cannot conceive of human relations in terms other than those of the market – 'emotional investment' – and cost-benefit analysis. If Gibson celebrates the 'outlaw zones' of 'burgeoning technologies' and generates narratives for the subject of

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[4] William offers a post-crash commentary on the tradition of libidinal economy David Bennett traces.

[5] As Wendy Hui Kyong Chun points out, the sexualizing and commodifying logic of internet pornography searches has turned the term 'Asian' into a sexual marker. See *Control and Freedom*, chapter 2.

neoliberal discovery, early adopted and 'creatives', William recognizes the mutations in that subject once the neoliberal order has become the orthodoxy, and its spiritual order the norm:

> In his lifetime, Amon had enjoyed heaps of porn, acclimatizing himself to harshly exultant panting, passionate moans, and vulgar pillowtalk. Yet the humming of Rick and his partner had an unfamiliar resonance, suggesting not lust but a kind of tenderness. (29)

Sexuality, or an alienated and transactional reduction of sexuality, is exposed here to a much wider sense of feeling, touch, and imperfect human interaction, lost amidst the digital mediation of the ImmaNet and its populations moved 'like router arteries pumping data clots through junctions of fiber-optic cables' (57). A 'glimpse into the naked world' (175) without advertising filters reveals in Amon a horror of the body and physicality itself. A stock image of Tokyo life – the overcrowded subways - here becomes a kind of Breughel hellscape:

> Yet ImmaNet was limited to only two senses – sight and hearing – and Amon's sense of touch belied the spectacle. Nowhere could he see even a dab of fat; every office lady either voluptuous or slender, every salaryman brawny or slim. But he could feel flab and untoned muscle pressing all around him: a squishy love handle on his side, a soft bicep on his belly, a sagging breast on the small of his back. (17)

These details, markers of abjection at the novel's opening, will become, over Amon's progression through the city and his inevitable crisis, conspiracy and struggle in the Authority, markers of a form of humanism, flab and sag and softness an alternative to the realm of the visual enforced by ImmaNet. Delivery and recovery, plotted in the trilogy's subsequent books outside of official Tokyo, involves not only learning to see again but also how to *touch*, how to imagine human connection.

Because it was the visual, after all, that, for cyberpunk's theorists, defined Tokyo: Bukatman's 'media eruption of Tokyo' with its 'pervasive domination by, and *addiction to*, the image' (27), Barthes's 'empire of signs' cited everywhere across critical theory, Gibson's 'manically animated forest of signs'. William has produced the first major Science Fiction response to the post-Bubble Japan – and to the world living the drawn-on aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis – and, significantly, in this world touch replaces sight and the sense with which to rediscover Tokyo. If his city is less special in one sense, captured as it is by globalized technologies imaginable in any one of the world's major centres, it is more fully imaginatively realized for all that, being a space lived in by people and the place for realization of character – both in the sense of character construction in narrative and the test of character through the quest obligations of the story – rather than the backdrop for visions of American renewal. William moves cyberpunk from optic to haptic, from the delirious representational energy of Gibson's visual order, with its listing of commodities, breathless witnessing of technological bustle and fascination with the lights and advertising of Tokyo's *exterior*, its outside, to a sensuous order organized around touch and the problem of social renewal. *Cash Crash Jubilee* has, unusually for Tokyo Science Fictions, a wide range of Japanese characters, each linked to social (mis) understandings with the others as opportunities for readerly imaginative connection

rather than as illustration of social type. William's is a bleaker Tokyo than Gibson's, to be sure, but, in that bleakness, it offers the reader a city trying, across the 'travelling theatre of the obscene' (320) that is its advertising world and regulatory system, to be taken on its own, human terms.

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