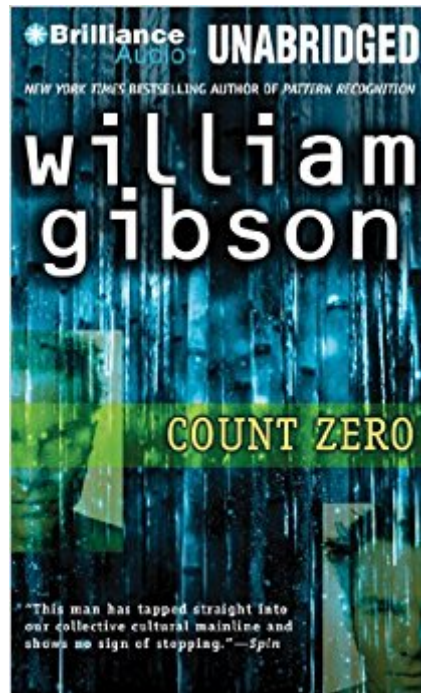




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Count Zero (Sprawl Trilogy)



Synopsis

A corporate mercenary wakes in a reconstructed body, a beautiful woman by his side. Then Hosaka Corporation reactivates him, for a mission more dangerous than the one he's recovering from: to get a defecting chief of R&D and the biochip he's perfected out intact. But this proves to be of supreme interest to certain other parties – some of whom aren't remotely human. Potent and heady. Philadelphia Daily News "An intriguing cast of characters and a tough, glitzy image of computer consciousness and the future of mankind." Richmond Times-Dispatch "Count Zero shares with Neuromancer that novel's stunning use of language, breakneck pacing, technological innovation, and gritty brand-name realism." Fantasy Review "William Gibson's prose, astonishing in its clarity and skill, becomes high-tech electric poetry." Bruce Sterling "Suspense, action, a lively story, a sophisticated version of the sentient computer, a long way from the old models that were simply out to Rule the World." Locus

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Turner, corporate mercenary, wakes in a reconstructed body, a beautiful woman by his side. Then Hosaka Corporation reactivates him for a mission more dangerous than the one he's recovering from: Maas-Neotek's chief of R&D is defecting. Turner is the one assigned to get him out intact,

along with the biochip he's perfected. But this proves to be of supreme interest to certain other parties--some of whom aren't remotely human. Bobby Newmark is entirely human: a rustbelt data-hustler totally unprepared for what comes his way when the defection triggers war in cyberspace. With voodoo on the Net and a price on his head, Newmark thinks he's only trying to get out alive. A stylish, streetsmart, frighteningly probable parable of the future and sequel to *Neuromancer* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gibson's first novel, *Neuromancer*, was greeted with hosannas and showered with awards. This second book, set in the same universe, again offers a faddish, glitzy surface not unlike that of *Miami Vice*. Gibson's central image is the shadow boxes constructed by the artist Joseph Cornell, collections of seemingly unrelated objects whose juxtaposition creates a new impression. In the same fashion, the novel has three protagonists, each of whom is putting together jigsaw clues in pursuit of his separate goal. The corporate headhunter, the art dealer and the computer hacker all find themselves being manipulated just as the author contrives to have their paths converge. This book is less appealing and less verbally skillful than Gibson's first novel, dense and dour as that was, but readers who liked that one will want to see this as well. Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Signature smell of the Sprawl, a rich amalgam of stale subway exhalations, ancient soot, and the carcinogenic tang of fresh plastics, all of it shot through with the carbon edge of illicit fossil fuels.”

The follow up to *Neuromancer*, *Count Zero* is another cyberpunk classic that revisits many themes of his previous book. It follows several interconnected stories: a mercenary hired to attack a corporate fortress that escapes with a girl that has undergone experimental modifications and can hack computers without a deck. A hacker that is almost killed as he is played into testing an experimental deck and discover that there are strange entities roaming the matrix. And a small art gallery owner from Paris that is hired by a eccentric trillionaire to find a series of boxes. The language and descriptions here are top-notch. Gibson has an uncanny talent to makes this now retro-futuristic world come alive, along with several interesting and mind-bending themes. One is how corporations and Big Money end up having a life and will of their own, not only like a living organism, but a colony of different spheres with different agendas that compete among themselves. Another is how artificial intelligences adopt an air of godhood as they incorporate the persona of voodoo gods.

Count Zero is a worthy sequel to "Neuromancer", and is one of those rare works (with its siblings) that seems almost (but not quite) prophetic. Gibson's world is similar to ours in oh so many ways, and the corollaries between the Internet of today and his vision of cyberspace in 1987 are astonishing. One has to wonder if the names of the nations/corporations were just changed a bit, and the dates were just shifted a bit into the future...whether we are getting closer to Gibson's grim and dystopian future? (So maybe it is prophetic after all?) This book is really about introducing "The Count" himself, and describing the events that shaped him for the concluding book of this trilogy: "Mona Lisa Overdrive". The world is fleshed out a bit, and the reader is treated to the unending complexity of Gibson's world. This, like the other two books in the series are fascinating and in many ways plausible look at how the world _might_ end up. Although this truly is a setup book, don't let that dissuade you, the characters are awesome, and the story is engaging. I recall reading this years ago, perhaps about the time it appeared on the bookshelves the first time, and being fascinated with it. Now, with 25+ years between its' publishing and today, it still manages to capture my attention and interest. Gibson is one of those writers who can write stories about characters and technology in such a way that while central to the story the technology doesn't overwhelm the characters and is abstract enough that even 25 years after he penned the book, it doesn't feel dated or implausible, just different. In this, "Neuromancer" "Count Zero" & "Mona Lisa Overdrive" remind me of E.E. "Doc" Smith's Lensman Novels where starships are flown with banks of Levers, Valves and Inertial Navigation systems, or even the great Isaac Asimov's Foundation books, where "Atomics" rule the day. Even though the technology in their works is dated or even absurd, the stories still stand and are considered classics. So too "Neuromancer", "Count Zero" & "Mona Lisa Overdrive" where I think you'll find that the concept of a [Cyber] Deck isn't so far different from modern tablets, cell phones & PC's after all...and Cyberspace absolutely reeks of the modern Internet (aka Cyberspace!). Even without that easy correlation however, like Asimov & Smith, Gibson's books are bonified classics. On top of that, "Neuromancer", "Count Zero" & "Mona Lisa Overdrive" are THE books that began the entire Cyberpunk genre/meme. How cool is that? "Count Zero" is a book I consider a staple of my collection of great Science Fiction. For me, it and its' siblings stand proudly among my collection of Asimov, Foster, Anderson, Anthony, Pohl, Banks, Bova, Smith, Heinlein, Dickson and many others.

Gibson is up there with Asimov, Dick, Clarke, and Herbert. His projections into the future are disturbingly accurate for being written in the 80s. His frenetic writing style also matches the adrenaline that's pumped into the plot of this book. If you're a sci-fi cyberpunk fan with a tilt towards

multiverses, biotechnology, multi-threaded plots and the ilk, then this is the book for you. This is the second of the Sprawl trilogy with Neuromancer preceding Count Zero and Mona Lisa Overdrive coming after. You don't have to read Neuromancer first, but it definitely helps set the stage for the type of world that Gibson immerses you in. Very much looking forward to reading Mona Lisa Overdrive next. Also, if you're deciding between this and Neal Stephenson (Snowcrash) I'd highly recommend the Sprawl trilogy instead.

William Gibson's "Neuromancer" introduced us to the rather dystopian world of his cyberpunk genre; "Count Zero" expands the world a bit. It tends to get a bit metaphysical, even more than "Neuromancer," and expands the theme of the "otherworld" of cyberspace being like the spirit world of mythology and religion ("Neuromancer" treats the theme of AIs - artificial intelligences - as being like demons from folklore who can be summoned and bargained with, responding to identification codes like True Names. "Count Zero" expands the comparison to the "loa" of Voudon). Definitely worth reading . . .

Loved this book, I actually enjoyed it more than Neuromancer. If you liked Neuromancer even a little, I highly recommend you also read this one. Lots of action, a narrative that bounces between the three main characters, and a cyber-mystery that holds your attention up to the very end.

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