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## Lemurian Time War

*Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (Ccru)*

The account that follows charts William S. Burroughs's involvement in an occult time war, and considerably exceeds most accepted conceptions of social and historical probability. It is based on 'sensitive information' passed to Ccru by an intelligence source whom we have called William Kaye.<sup>1</sup> The narrative has been partially fictionalized in order to protect this individual's identity.

Kaye himself admitted that his experiences had made him prone to 'paranoid-chronomaniac hallucination', and Ccru continues to find much of his tale extremely implausible.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, while suspecting that his message had been severely compromised by dubious inferences, noise, and disinformation, we have become increasingly convinced that he was indeed an 'insider' of some kind, even if the organization he had penetrated was itself an elaborate hoax, or collective delusion. Kaye referred to this organization as 'The Order', or—following Burroughs—"The Board".

When reduced to its basic provocation, Kaye's claim was this: *The Ghost Lemurs of Madagascar*<sup>3</sup>—a text dating from 1987 which he also referred to as the Burroughs Necronomicon—had been an exact and decisive influence on the magical and military career of one Captain Mission, three centuries previously. Mission appears in historical record as a notorious pirate, active in the period around 1700 AD; he was to become renowned as the founder of the anarchistic colony of Libertatia, established on the island of Madagascar. Kaye asserted that he had personally encountered clear evidence of Burroughs's 'impact upon Mission' at the private library of Peter Vysparov, where Kaye worked most of his life. The Vysparov collection, he unswervingly maintained, held an ancient illustrated transcript of *The Ghost Lemurs of Madagascar*, inscribed meticulously in Mission's own hand.<sup>4</sup>

Kaye assured us that the Board considered the 'demonstrable time rift' he was describing to be a 'matter of the gravest concern'. He explained that the organization had been born in reaction to a

nightmare of time coming apart and—to use his exact words—spiraling out of control. To the Board, spirals were particularly repugnant symbols of imperfection and volatility. Unlike closed loops, spirals always have loose ends. This allows them to spread, making them contagious and unpredictable. The Board was counting on Kaye to contain the situation. He was assigned the task of terminating the spiral tplex.<sup>5</sup>

## HYPERSTITION

Vysparov had sought out Burroughs because of his evident interest in the convergence of sorcery, dreams and fiction. In the immediate postwar years, Vysparov had convened the so-called Cthulhu Club to investigate connections between the fiction of H. P. Lovecraft, mythology, science and magic, and was at this stage in the process of formalizing the constitution of Miskatonic Virtual University (MVU), a loose aggregation of non-standard theorists whose work could broadly be said to have 'Lovecraftian' connotations. The interest in Lovecraft's fiction was motivated by its exemplification of the practice of hyperstition, a concept that had been elaborated and keenly debated since the inception of the Cthulhu Club. Loosely defined, the coinage refers to 'fictions that make themselves real'.

Kaye drew Ccru's attention to Burroughs's description of viruses in 'The Book of Breathing' segment of *Ah Pook is Here and Other Texts*: 'And what is a virus? Perhaps simply a pictorial series like Egyptian glyphs that *makes itself real*' (APH 102). The papers Kaye left for Ccru included a copy of this page of the *Ah Pook* text, with these two sentences—italicized in the original text—heavily underlined. For Kaye, the echo of Vysparov's language was 'unequivocal evidence' of the Russian's influence upon Burroughs's work after 1958. Whether or not this is the case, such passages indicate that Burroughs, like Vysparov, was interested in the 'hyperstitional' relations between writing, signs and reality.

In the hyperstitional model Kaye outlined, fiction is not opposed to the real. Rather, reality is understood to be composed of fictions—consistent semiotic terrains that condition perceptual, affective and behavioral responses. Kaye considered Burroughs's work to be 'exemplary of hyperstitional practice'. Burroughs construed writing—and art in general—not aesthetically, but functionally—that is to say, magically, with magic defined as the use of signs to produce changes in reality.

Kaye maintained that it was 'far from accidental' that Burroughs's equation of reality and fiction had been most widely embraced only in its negative aspect—as a variety of 'postmodern' ontological skepticism—rather than in its positive sense, as an investigation into the magical powers of incantation and manifestation: the efficacy of the virtual. For Kaye, the assimilation of Burroughs into textualist postmodernism constituted a deliberate act of 'interpretivist sabotage', the aim of which was to de-functionalize Burroughs's writings by converting them into aesthetic exercises in style. Far from constituting a subversion of representative realism, the postmodern celebration of the text without a referent merely consummates a process that representative realism had initiated. Representative realism severs writing from any active function, surrendering it to the role of reflecting, not intervening in, the world. It is a short step to a dimension of pristine textuality, in which the existence of a world independent of discourse is denied altogether.

According to Kaye, the metaphysics of Burroughs's 'clearly hyperstitional' fictions can be starkly contrasted with those at work in postmodernism. For postmodernists, the distinction between real and unreal is not substantive or is held not to matter, whereas for practitioners of hyperstition, differentiating between 'degrees of realization' is crucial. The hyperstitional process of entities 'making themselves real' is precisely a passage, a transformation, in which potentials—already-active virtualities—realize themselves. Writing operates not as a passive representation but as an active agent of transformation and a gateway through which entities can emerge: 'by writing a universe, the writer makes such a universe possible' (AM 176).

But these operations do not occur in neutral territory, Kaye was quick to point out. Burroughs treats all conditions of existence as results of cosmic conflicts between competing intelligence agencies. In making themselves real, entities (must) also manufacture realities for themselves; realities whose potency often depends upon the stupefaction, subjugation and enslavement of populations, and whose existence is in conflict with other 'reality programs'. Burroughs's fiction deliberately renounces the status of plausible representation in order to operate directly upon this plane of magical war. Where realism merely reproduces the currently dominant reality program from inside, never identifying the existence of the program as such, Burroughs seeks to get outside the control codes in order to dismantle and rearrange them. Every act of writing is a sorcerous

operation, a partisan action in a war where multitudes of factual events are guided by the powers of illusion. Even representative realism participates—albeit unknowingly—in magical war, collaborating with the dominant control system by implicitly endorsing its claim to be the only possible reality.

From the controllers' point of view, Kaye said, 'it is of course imperative that Burroughs is thought of as merely a writer of fiction. That's why they have gone to such lengths to sideline him into a ghetto of literary experimentation.'

#### THE ONE GOD UNIVERSE

Burroughs names the dominant control program One God Universe, or OGU. He wages war against the fiction of OGU, which builds its monopolistic dominion upon the magical power of the Word: upon programming and illusion. OGU establishes a fiction, which operates at the most fatal level of reality, where questions of biological destiny and immortality are decided. 'Religions are weapons' (WL 202).

In order to operate effectively, OGU must first of all deny the existence of magical war itself. There is only one reality: its own. In writing about magical war, Burroughs is thus already initiating an act of war against OGU. The throne is seen to be contested. OGU incorporates all competing fictions into its own story (the ultimate meta-narrative), reducing alternative reality systems to negatively marked components of its own mythos: other reality programs become Evil, associated with the powers of deception and delusion. OGU's power works through fictions that repudiate their own fictional status: anti-fictions, or un-nonfictions. 'And that', Kaye said, 'is why fiction can be a weapon in the struggle against Control'.

In OGU, fiction is safely contained by a metaphysical 'frame', prophylactically delimiting all contact between the fiction and what is outside it. The magical function of words and signs is both condemned as evil and declared to be delusory, facilitating a monopoly upon the magical power of language for OGU (which of course denies that its own mythos exerts any magical influence, presenting it as a simple representation of Truth). But OGU's confidence that fiction has safely been contained means that anti-OGU agents can use fiction as a covert line of communication and a secret weapon: '[h]e concealed and revealed the knowledge in fictional form' (PDR 115).

This, for Kaye, was 'a formula for hyperstitional practice'. Diagrams, maps, sets of abstract relations, tactical gambits, are as real in a fiction about a fiction as they are when encountered raw, but subjecting such semiotic contraband to multiple embeddings allows a traffic in materials for decoding dominant reality that would otherwise be proscribed. Rather than acting as a transcendental screen, blocking out contact between itself and the world, the fiction acts as a Chinese box—a container for sorcerous interventions in the world. The frame is both used (for concealment) and broken (the fictions potentiate changes in reality).

Whereas hyperstitional agitation produces a 'positive unbelief'—a provisionalizing of any reality frame in the name of pragmatic engagement rather than epistemological hesitation—OGU feeds on belief. In order to work, the story that runs reality has to be believed, which is also to say that the existence of a control program determining reality must *not* be suspected or believed. Credulity in the face of the OGU metanarrative is inevitably coupled with a refusal to accept that entities like Control have any substantive existence. That's why, to get out of OGU, a systematic shedding of all beliefs is a prerequisite. 'Only those who can leave behind everything they have ever believed in can hope to escape' (WL 116). Techniques of escape depend on attaining the unbelief of assassin-magician Hassan i Sabbah: nothing is true, everything is permitted. Once again, Kaye cautioned that this must be carefully distinguished from 'postmodern relativism'. Burroughs-Sabbah's 'nothing is true' cannot be equated with postmodernism's 'nothing is real'. On the contrary: nothing is true because there is no single, authorized version of reality—instead, there is a superfluity, an excess, of realities. 'The Adversary's game plan is to persuade you that he does not exist' (WL 12).

#### KAYE AND BURROUGHS

Kaye's story began in the summer of 1958, when his employer Peter Vysparov met William S. Burroughs whilst conducting occult investigations in Paris.<sup>6</sup> As a result of this meeting Kaye was himself introduced to Burroughs on 23 December of the same year, at Vysparov's private library in New York.

It is clear from public documentary material that Burroughs was predominantly a resident in Paris and London at this time. Ccru found no evidence of any trip to the US, although his biography is

not sufficiently comprehensive to rule out an excursion to NY with confidence. There is no doubt, however, that shortly after the winter of 1958 Burroughs starts writing cryptically of visions, 'paranormal phenomena', encountering his double, and working with cut-up techniques.<sup>7</sup>

As Burroughs hunted through the library's unparalleled collection of rare occult works, he made a discovery that involved him in a radical, apparently unintelligible disorder of time and identity. The trigger was his encounter with a text that he was yet to compose: '[A]n old picture book with gilt edged lithographs, onion paper over each picture, *The Ghost Lemurs of Madagascar* in gold script' (Burroughs 1987:30). He could not then have known that Captain Mission had taken the very same volume as his guide three centuries previously (already describing it as 'old').

Flipping through the pages, Burroughs entered a momentary catatonic trance state. He emerged disoriented, and scarcely able to stand. Despite his confusion, he was more than willing to describe, with a strange sardonic detachment, the anomalous episode.<sup>8</sup> Twenty-nine years would pass before Kaye understood what had occurred.

Burroughs told Kaye that, during the trance, it felt as though silent communication with a ghostly non-human companion had flashed him forward to his life as an old man, several decades in the future. Oppressed by 'a crushing sensation of implacable destiny, as if fragments of a frozen time dimension were cascading into awareness', he 'remembered' writing *The Ghost Lemurs of Madagascar*—'although it wasn't writing exactly', and his writing implements were archaic, belonging to someone else entirely, in another place and time.

Even after his recovery the sense of oppression persisted, like a 'new dimension of gravity'. The vision had granted him 'horrific insight into the jail-house mind of the One God'. He was convinced the knowledge was 'dangerous' and that 'powerful forces were conspiring against him', that the 'invisible brothers are invading present time' (now in *TE* 209). The episode sharpened his already vivid impression that the human animal is cruelly caged in time by an alien power. Recalling it later, he would write: 'Time is a human affliction; not a human invention but a prison' (*GC* 16).

Although there is no direct historical evidence supporting Kaye's description of events, the immediate period after the 1958 'episode' provides compelling symptomatic evidence of a transformation in



Burroughs's strategies and preoccupations during this period. It was then that Burroughs's writing underwent a radical shift in direction, with the introduction of experimental techniques whose sole purpose was to escape the bonds of the already-written, charting a flight from destiny. Gysin's role in the discovery of these cut-ups and fold-ins is well known, but Kaye's story accounts for the special urgency with which Burroughs began deploying these new methods in late 1958. The cut-ups and fold-ins were 'innovative time-war tactics', the function of which was to subvert the foundations of the pre-recorded universe.<sup>9</sup> 'Cut the Word Lines with scissors or switchblades as preferred ... The Word Lines keep you in Time...' (3M 71).

Burroughs's adoption of these techniques was, Kaye told Ccru, 'one of the first effects (if one may be permitted to speak in so loose a way) of the time-trauma'. Naturally, Kaye attributes Burroughs's intense antipathy toward pre-recording—a persistent theme in his fiction after *Naked Lunch*—to his experiences in the Vysparov library. The 'cosmic revelation' in the library produced in Burroughs 'a horror so profound' that he would dedicate the rest of his life to plotting and propagating escape routes from 'the board rooms and torture banks of time' (NE 43). Much later, Burroughs would describe a crushing feeling of inevitability, of life being scripted in advance by malign entities: '[T]he custodians of the future convene. Keepers of the Board Books: Mektoub, it is written. And they don't want it changed' (GC 8).

It was in the immediate aftermath of the episode in the Vysparov library that Burroughs exhibited the first signs of an apparently random attachment to lemurs, the decisive implications of which took several decades to surface.

Burroughs was unsure who was running him, like 'a spy in somebody else's body where nobody knows who is spying on whom' (cited by Douglas 1998:xxviii). Until the end of his life he struggled against the 'Thing inside him. The Ugly Spirit' (GC 48), remarking that: 'I live with the constant threat of possession, and a constant need to escape from possession, from Control' (Q xxii).

#### THE ESCAPE FROM CONTROL

In Burroughs's mythology, OGU emerges once MU (the Magical Universe) is violently overthrown by the forces of monopoly (WL 113). The Magical Universe is populated by many gods, eternally in conflict: there is no possibility of unitary Truth, since the nature of reality is constantly contested by heterogeneous entities whose

interests are radically incommensurable. Where monotheistic fiction tells of a rebellious secession from the primordial One, Burroughs describes the One initiating a war against the Many:

These were troubled times. There was war in the heavens as the One God attempted to exterminate or neutralize the Many Gods and establish an absolute seat of power. The priests were aligning themselves on one side or the other. Revolution was spreading up from the South, moving from the East and from the Western deserts. (WL 101)

Also, the OGU is described as 'antimagical, authoritarian, dogmatic, the deadly enemy of those who are committed to the magical universe, spontaneous, unpredictable, alive. The universe they are imposing is controlled, predictable, dead' (WL 59).

Such a universe gives rise to the dreary paradoxes—so familiar to monotheistic theology—that necessarily attend omnipotence and omniscience:

Consider the One God Universe: OGU. The spirit recoils in horror from such a deadly impasse. He is all-powerful and all-knowing. Because He can do everything, He can do nothing, since the act of doing demands opposition. He knows everything, so there is nothing for him to learn. He can't go anywhere, since He is already fucking everywhere, like cowshit in Calcutta.

The OGU is a pre-recorded universe of which He is the recorder. (WL 113)

For Kaye, the superiority of Burroughs's analysis of power—over 'trivial' ideology critique—consists in its repeated emphasis on the relationship between control systems and temporality. Burroughs is emphatic, obsessive: '[I]n Time any being that is spontaneous and alive will wither and die like an old joke' (WL 111); he notes also that '[a] basic impasse of all control machines is this: Control needs time in which to exercise control' (AM 117). OGU control codings far exceed ideological manipulation, amounting to cosmic reality programming, because—at the limit—'the One God is Time' (WL 111). The presumption of chronological time is written into the organism at the most basic level, scripted into its unconsciously performed habituated behaviors:

Time is that which ends. Time is *limited time* experienced by a sentient creature. Sentient of time, that is—making adjustments to time in

terms of what Korzybski calls neuro-muscular intention behaviour with respect to the environment as a whole... A plant turns towards the sun, nocturnal animal stirs at sun set... shit, piss, move, eat, fuck, die. Why does Control need humans?

Control needs time. Control needs human time. Control needs your shit piss pain orgasm death. (APH 17)

Power operates most effectively not by persuading the conscious mind, but by delimiting in advance what it is possible to experience. By formatting the most basic biological processes of the organism in terms of temporality, Control ensures that all human experience is of—and in—time. That is why time is a 'prison' for humans. 'Man was born in time. He lives and dies in time. Wherever he goes he takes time with him and imposes time' (GC 17). Korzybski's definition of man as the 'time-binding animal' has a double sense for Burroughs. On the one hand, human beings are binding time for themselves: they 'can make information available through writing or oral tradition to other SAP humans outside [their] area of contact and to future generations' (GC 48). On the other hand, humans are binding themselves into time, building more of the prison, which constrains their affects and perceptions. 'Korzybski's words took on a horrible new meaning for Burroughs in the library,' Kaye said. 'He saw what time-binding really was, all the books, already written, time-bound forever.'

Since writing customarily operates as the principal means of 'time-binding', Burroughs reasoned that innovating new writing techniques would unbind time, blowing a hole in the OGU 'present', and opening up Space. 'Cut the Word Lines with scissors or switchblades as preferred... The Word Lines keep you in Time... Cut the in lines... Make out lines to Space' (3M 71). Space has to be understood not as empirical extension, still less as a transcendental given, but in the most abstract sense, as the zone of unbound potentialities lying beyond the purview of the OGU's already-written.

'You can see that Burroughs's writing involves the highest possible stakes,' Kaye wrote. 'It does not represent cosmic war: it is already a weapon in that war. It is not surprising that the forces ranged against him—the many forces ranged against him, you can't overestimate their influence on this planet—sought to neutralize that weapon. It was a matter of the gravest urgency that his works be classified as fantasies, experimental Dada, anything but that they should be recognized as what they are: technologies for altering reality.'

### THE RIFT

For almost 30 years Burroughs had sought to evade what he had been shown to be inevitable.

Yet numerous signs indicate that by the late 1980s the Control Complex was breaking down, redirecting Burroughs's flight from pre-recorded destiny into a gulf of unsettled fate that he came to call 'the Rift'.

Kaye consistently maintained that any attempt to date Burroughs's encounter with the Rift involved a fundamental misconception. Nevertheless, his own account of this 'episode' repeatedly stressed the importance of the year 1987, a date that marked a period of radical transition: the 'eye' of a 'spiral templex'. It was during this time that the obscure trauma at the Vysparov library flooded back with full force, saturating Burroughs's dreams and writings with visions of lemurs, ghosts from the Land of the Dead.

1987 was the year in which Burroughs visited the Duke University Lemur Conservation Center, consolidating an alliance with the non-anthropoid primates, or prosimians.<sup>10</sup> In *The Western Lands*—which Burroughs was writing during this year—he remarks that: 'At sight of the Black Lemur, with round red eyes and a little red tongue protruding, the writer experiences a delight that is almost painful' (WL 248). Most crucially, it was in 1987 that *Omni* magazine commissioned and published Burroughs's short story *The Ghost Lemurs of Madagascar*, a text that propelled his entire existence into the Rift of Lemurian Time Wars.

For some time previously Kaye's suspicions had been aroused by Burroughs's increasingly obsessional attitude to his cats. His devotion to Calico, Fletch, Ruski, and Spooner<sup>11</sup> exhibited a profound biological response that was the exact inversion of his instinctual revulsion for centipedes. His libidinal conversion to a 'cat man' (see *CI*) also tracked and influenced an ever-deepening disillusionment with the function of human sexuality, orgasm addiction, and Venusian conspiracy.

'Cats may be my last living link to a dying species' (*CI* 67), Burroughs wrote in his essay *The Cat Inside*. For Kaye it was evident that this intensifying attachment to domestic felines was part of a more basic drive, manifesting an intimate familiarization with the 'cat spirit' or 'creature' who partakes of many other species, including 'raccoons, ferrets and skunks' (*CRN* 244) and numerous varieties of lemurs, such as 'ring-tailed cat lemurs' (*GC* 3), the 'sifaka lemur',

'mouse lemur' (GC 4), and, ultimately, 'the gentle deer lemur' (GC 18). As initiatory beings, mediumistic familiars, or occult door-keepers, these animals returned Burroughs to lost Lemurian landscapes, and to his double, Captain Mission.

Kaye was highly dismissive of all critical accounts that treated Mission as a literary avatar, 'as if Burroughs was basically an experimental novelist'. He maintained that the relation between Burroughs and Mission was not that of author to character, but rather that of 'anachronistic contemporaries',<sup>12</sup> bound together in a knot of 'definite yet cognitively distressing facts'. Of these 'facts' none was more repugnant to common human rationality than their mutual involvement with *The Ghost Lemurs of Madagascar*.

'We offer refuge to all people everywhere who suffer under the tyranny of governments' (CRN 265), declared Mission.<sup>13</sup> This statement was sufficient to awaken the hostile interest of the Powers That Be, although, from the Board's perspective, even Mission's piratical career was a relatively trivial transgression. Their primary concern was 'a more significant danger [...] Captain Mission's unwholesome concern with lemurs' (Burroughs 1987:28).

'Mission was spending more and more time in the jungle with his lemurs' (GC 11)—the ghosts of a lost continent—slipping into time disturbances and spiral patterns. Lemurs became his sleeping and dream companions. He discovered through this dead and dying species that the key to escaping control is taking the initiative—or the pre-initiative—by interlinking with the Old Ones.

The Lemur people are older than Homo Sap, much older. They date back one hundred sixty million years, to the time when Madagascar split off from the mainland of Africa. They might be called psychic amphibians—that is, visible only for short periods when they assume a solid form to breathe, but some of them can remain in the invisible state for years at a time. Their way of thinking and feeling is basically different from ours, not oriented toward time and sequence and causality. They find these concepts repugnant and difficult to understand. (Burroughs 1987:31)

The Board conceived Mission's traffic with lemurs, his experiments in time sorcery, and his anachronistic entanglement with Burroughs as a single intolerable threat. 'In a prerecorded and therefore totally predictable universe, the blackest sin is to tamper with the prerecording, which could result in altering the prerecorded future. Captain Mission was guilty of this sin' (Burroughs 1987:27).

'Now more lemurs appear, as in a puzzle' (GC 15). Lemurs are denizens of the Western Lands, the 'great red island' (GC 16) of Madagascar, which Mission knew as Western Lemuria,<sup>14</sup> 'The Land of The Lemur People' (NE 110), a Wild West. It was on the island of Madagascar that Captain Mission discovered that 'the word for "lemur" meant "ghost" in the native language' (GC 2)—just as the Romans spoke of lemures, wraiths, or shades of the dead.<sup>15</sup>

In their joint voyage across the ghost continent of Lemuria, interlinked by lemurs, Mission and Burroughs find 'immortality' through involvement with the native populations of unlife. In describing this process, Kaye placed particular emphasis on Burroughs's 1987 visit to the Duke University Lemur Center. It was this colony of lemurs that introduced Burroughs to the West Lemurian 'time pocket' (GC 15), just as 'Captain Mission was drifting out faster and faster, caught in a vast undertow of time. "Out, and under, and out, and out," a voice repeated in his head' (GC 17). If time travel ever happens, it always does.

He finds himself at the gateway, inside the 'ancient stone structure' (Burroughs 1987:28) with the lemur who is 'his phantom, his Ghost' (29). He is seated at a writing table ('with inkpot, quill, pens, parchment' [29]). He uses a native drug to explore the gateway. Who built it? When? The tale comes to him in a time-faulted vision, transmitted in hieroglyphics. He 'chooses a quill pen' (29).

It is difficult to describe where the text comes from, but there it is: '[A]n old illustrated book with gilt edges. The Ghost Lemurs of Madagascar' (Burroughs 1987:29); '[A]n old picture book with gilt edged lithographs, onion paper over each picture, The Ghost Lemurs of Madagascar in gold script' (30). The vision echoes or overlaps, time-twinning waves where Mission and Burroughs coincide. They copy an invocation or summoning, a joint templex innovation that predates the split between creation and recording, reaching back 'before the appearance of man on earth, before the beginning of time' (GC 15).

'When attached to Africa, Madagascar was the ultimate landmass, sticking out like a disorderly tumor cut by a rift of future contours, this long rift like a vast indentation, like the cleft that divides the human body' (GC 16).

They feel themselves thrown forward 160 million years as they access the Big Picture, a seismic slippage from geological time into transcendental time anomaly. The island of Madagascar shears away from the African mainland,<sup>16</sup> whilst—on the other side of time—Western Lemuria drifts back up into the present. The Lemurian



continent sinks into the distant future, stranding the red island with its marooned lemur people. 'What is the meaning of 160 million years without time? And what does time mean to foraging lemurs?' (GC 16-17).

Time crystallizes, as concentric contractions seize the spiral mass. From deep in the ages of slow Panic<sup>17</sup> they see the 'People of the Cleft, formulated by chaos and accelerated time, flash through a hundred sixty million years to the Split. Which side are you on? Too late to change now. Separated by a curtain of fire' (Burroughs 1987:31).

*The Ghost Lemurs of Madagascar* opens out on to the Rift, 'the split between the wild, the timeless, the free, and the tame, the time-bound, the tethered' (GC 13), as one side 'of the rift drifted into enchanted timeless innocence' and the other 'moved inexorably toward language, time, tool use, weapon use, war, exploitation, and slavery' (GC 49).

Which side are you on?

As time rigidifies, the Board closes in on the lemur people, on a chance that has already passed, a ghost of chance, a chance that is already dead: '[T]he might-have-beens who had one chance in a billion and lost' (GC 18). Exterminate the brutes ... 'Mission knows that a chance that occurs only once in a hundred and sixty million years has been lost forever' (GC 21), and Burroughs awakens screaming from dreams of 'dead lemurs scattered through the settlement' (GC 7).<sup>18</sup>

According to Kaye, everyone 'on the inside' knew about the bad dreams, certain they were coming from a real place. In this, as so much else, Kaye's reconstruction of the 1987 event depended centrally upon *The Ghost Lemurs of Madagascar*, an account he cited as if it were a strictly factual record, even a sacred text. He explained that this was an interpretative stance that had been highly developed by the Board, and that to respect the reality even of non-actualities is essential when waging war in deeply virtualized environments: in spaces that teem with influential abstractions and other ghostly things. Kaye considered Bradly Martin, for instance, to be entirely real. He described him as an identifiable contemporary individual—working as an agent of 'the Board'—whose task was to seal the 'ancient structure' that provides access to the Rift.

The Board had long known that the Vysparov library contained an old copy of *The Ghost Lemurs of Madagascar*, which dated itself with the words 'Now, in 1987' (Burroughs 1987:34). It had been catalogued

there since 1789. The text was a self-confessed time-abomination, requiring radical correction. It disregarded fundamental principles of sequence and causality, openly aligning itself with the lemur people.

What the Board needed was a dead end. Burroughs was an obvious choice, for a number of reasons. He was sensitive to transmissions, amenable to misogyny and mammal-chauvinism, socially marginalized, and controllable through junk. They were confident, Kaye recalled, that the forthcoming 1987 'story' would be 'lost amongst the self-marginalizing fictions of a crumbling junky fag'.

On the outside it worked as a cover-up, but the Insiders had a still more essential task. They had inherited the responsibility for enforcing the Law of Time, and of OGU: defend the integrity of the timeline. This Great Work involved horrifying compromises. Kaye cited the hermetic maxim: strict obedience to the Law excuses grave transgressions. 'They're speaking of White Chronomancy', he explained; 'the sealing of runaway time-disturbances within closed loops.'<sup>19</sup> What Mission had released, Burroughs had bound again. That is how it seemed to the Board in 1987, with the circle apparently complete.

Confident that the transcendental closure of time was being achieved, the Board appropriated the text as the record of a precognitive intuition, a prophecy that could be mined for information. It confirmed their primary imperative and basic doctrine, foretelling the ultimate triumph of OGU and the total eradication of Lemurian insurgency. Mission had understood this well: 'No quarter, no compromise is possible. This is war to extermination' (GC 9).

It seems never to have occurred to the Board that Burroughs would change the ending, that their 'dead end' would open a road to the Western Lands.<sup>20</sup> Things that should have been long finished continued to stir. It was as if a post-mortem coincidence or unlife influence had vortically reanimated itself. A strange doubling occurred. Burroughs entitled it *The Ghost of Chance*, masking the return of the Old Ones in the seemingly innocuous words: 'People of the world are at last returning to their source in spirit, back to the little lemur people' (GC 54). The Board had no doubt—this was a return to the true horror.

Yet, Kaye insisted, for those with eyes to see, *The Ghost Lemurs of Madagascar* announced its turbular Lemurian destination from the beginning, and its final words are 'lost beneath the waves' (Burroughs 1987:34).

Kaye's own final words to Ccru, written on a scrap of paper upon which he had scrawled hurriedly in a spiderish hand that already

indicated the tide of encroaching insanity, remain consistent with this unsatisfactory conclusion: 'Across the time rift, termination confuses itself with eddies of a latent spiral current.'

## NOTES

1. Ccru first met 'William Kaye' on 20 March 1999. He stated at this, our first and last face-to-face encounter, that his purpose in contacting Ccru was to ensure that his tale would be 'protected against the ravages of time'. The irony was not immediately apparent.
2. We have recorded our comments and doubts, along with details of his story, in the endnotes to this document.
3. This story was commissioned and published by *Omni* magazine in 1987. The only constraint imposed by the magazine was that there should not be too much sex.
4. Kaye was adamant that the existence of these two texts could not be attributed to either coincidence or plagiarism, although his reasoning was at times obscure and less than wholly persuasive to Ccru.
5. The concept of the 'spiral templex', according to which the rigorous analysis of all time anomalies excavates a spiral structure, is fully detailed in R. E. Templeton's Miskatonic lectures on transcendental time travel. A brief overview of this material has been published by Ccru as 'The Templeton Episode', in the Digital Hyperstition issue of *Abstract Culture* (volume 4).
6. Kaye insisted, on grounds that he refused to divulge, that this meeting was not a chance encounter but had in some way been orchestrated by the Order.
7. See Burroughs's letters from January 1959.
8. Kaye noted that both Vysparov and Burroughs had been mutually forthcoming about their respective experiences of a 'mystico-transcendental nature'. Although this openness would seem to run counter to the hermetic spirit of occult science, Kaye described it as 'surprisingly common amongst magicians'.
9. Burroughs described his production methods—cut-ups and fold-ins—as a time travel technology coded as a passage across decimal magnitudes: 'I take page one and fold it into page one hundred—I insert the resulting composite as page ten—When the reader reads page ten he is flashing forwards in time to page one hundred and back in time to page one' (*WV* 96).
10. There are two sub-orders of primates, the anthropoids (consisting of monkeys, apes, and humans) and the prosimians, which include Madagascan lemurs, Asian lorises, Australian galgoes (or bushbabies), and the tarsiers of the Philippines and Indonesia. The prosimians constitute a branch of evolution distinct from, and older than, the anthropoids. Outside Madagascar, competition from the anthropoids has driven all prosimians into a nocturnal mode of existence.
11. The extent of Burroughs's attachment to his feline companions is evidenced by his final words, as recorded in his diaries: 'Nothing is. There is no final enough of wisdom, experience—any fucking thing. No Holy Grail. No Final Satori, no final solution. Just conflict. Only thing can resolve conflict is love, like I felt for Fletch and Ruski, Spooner and Calico. Pure love. What I feel for my cats present and past' (*LW* 253).
12. Ccru was never fully confident as to the exact meaning of this pronouncement. Kaye seemed to be suggesting that Mission and Burroughs were the same person, caught within the vortex of a mysterious 'personality interchange' that could not be resolved within time.
13. Burroughs writes of Madagascar providing 'a vast sanctuary for the lemurs and for the delicate spirits that breathe through them' (*GC* 16). This convergence of ecological and political refuge fascinated Kaye, who on several occasions noted that the number for Refuge in *Roget's Thesaurus* is 666. The relevance of this point still largely escapes Ccru.
14. Puzzling consistencies between rocks, fossils, and animal species found in South Asia and Eastern Africa led nineteenth-century paleontologists and geologists to postulate a lost landmass that once connected the two now separated regions. This theory was vigorously supported by E. H. Haeckel, who used it to explain the distribution of Lemur-related species throughout Southern Africa and South and South-East Asia. On this basis, the English Zoologist Phillip L. Sclater named the hypothetical continent 'Lemuria', or Land of the Lemurs. Lemurs are treated as relics, or biological remainders of a hypothetical continent: living ghosts of a lost world. Haeckel's theoretical investment in Lemuria, however, went much further than this. He proposed that the invented continent was the probable cradle of the human race, speculating that it provided a solution to the Darwinian mystery of the 'missing link' (the absence of immediately pre-human species from the fossil record). For Haeckel, Lemuria was the original home of man, the 'true Eden', all traces of which had been submerged by its disappearance. He considered the biological unity of the human species to have since been lost (disintegrating into twelve distinct species). As a scientific conjecture, Lemuria has been buried by scientific progress. Not only have palaeontologists largely dispelled the problem of the missing link through additional finds, but the science of plate tectonics has also replaced the notion of 'sunken continents' with that of continental drift. Now bypassed by oecumenic rationality as a scientific fiction or an accidental myth, Lemuria sinks into obscure depths once again.
15. In the late nineteenth century, Lemuria was eagerly seized upon by occultists, who—like their scientific cousins—wove it into elaborate evolutionary and racial theories. In the *Secret Doctrine*, a commentary on the Atlantean *Book of Dzyan*, H. P. Blavatsky describes Lemuria as the third in a succession of lost continents. It is preceded by Polarea and Hyperborea, and followed by Atlantis (which was built from a fragment of Western Lemuria). Atlantis immediately precedes the modern world, and two further continents are still to come. According to Theosophical orthodoxy, each such 'continent' is the geographical aspect of a spiritual epoch, providing a home for the series of seven 'Root Races'. The name of each lost continent is



used ambiguously to designate the core territory of the dominant root race of that age, and also for the overall distribution of terrestrial land-mass during that period (in this latter respect it can even be seen as consistent with continental drift, and thus as more highly developed than the original scientific conception).

L. Sprague de Camp describes Blavatsky's third root race, the 'ape-like, hermaphroditic egg-laying Lemurians, some with four arms and some with an eye in the back of their heads, whose downfall was caused by their discovery of sex' (1978:58). There is broad consensus among occultists that the rear-eye of the Lemurians persists vestigially as the human pineal gland.

W. Scott Elliot adds that the Lemurians had 'huge feet, the heels of which stuck out so far they could as easily walk backwards as forwards'. According to his account the Lemurians discovered sex during the fourth sub-race, while interbreeding with beasts and producing the great apes. This behavior disgusted the spiritual Lhas who were supposed to incarnate into them, but now refused. The Venusians volunteered to take the place of the Lhas, and also taught the Lemurians various secrets (including those of metallurgy, weaving and agriculture).

Rudolf Steiner was also fascinated by the Lemurians, remarking that '[t]his Root-Race as a whole had not yet developed memory' (2002:68). The 'Lemurian was a born magician' (73), whose body was less solid, plastic, and 'unsettled'.

More recently, Lemuria has been increasingly merged into Churchward's lost Pacific continent of Mu, drifting steadily eastwards until even parts of modern California have been assimilated to it.

Although Blavatsky credits Sclater as the source for the name Lemuria, it cannot have been lost upon her, or her fellow occultists, that Lemuria was a name for the land of the dead, or the Western Lands. The word 'lemur' is derived from the Latin *lemure*—literally, 'shade of the dead'. The Romans conceived the lemures as vampire-ghosts, propitiated by a festival in May. In this vein, Eliphas Levi writes of '[l]arvae and lemures, shadowy images of bodies which have lived and of those which have yet to come, issued from these vapours by myriads' (Levi 2001:126).

16. According to current scientific consensus, Burroughs's figure of 160 million years is exaggerated. Burroughs's geological tale is nevertheless a recognizably modern one, with no reference to continental subsidence. With the submergence of the Lemuria hypothesis, however, the presence of lemurs on Madagascar becomes puzzling. Lemurs are only 55 million years old, whilst Madagascar is now thought to have broken away from the African mainland 120 million years ago.
17. Burroughs remarks of Mission: 'He was himself an emissary of Panic, of the knowledge that man fears above all else: the truth of his origin' (GC 3).
18. Burroughs drifts out of the White Magical orbit as his lemur commitments strengthen—to the Board, his support for the cause of lemur conservation (the Lemur Conservation Fund) must have been the final and intolerable provocation.
19. The physical conception of 'closed time-like curves' invokes a causality from the future to make the past what it is. They work to make things

come out as they must. If this is the only type of time travel 'allowed' by nature, then it obviously shouldn't require a law to maintain it (such as the notorious 'don't kill granny'). The rigorous time-law policies of the Board, however, indicate that the problem of 'time-enforcement' is actually far more intricate.

20. 'The road to the Western Lands is by definition the most dangerous road in the world, for it is a journey beyond Death, beyond the basic God standard of Fear and Danger. It is the most heavily guarded road in the world, for it gives access to the gift that supersedes all other gifts: Immortality' (WL 124).

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