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Source: *Moveable Type*, Vol. 15, 'Movement' (2023-24)

DOI: 10.14324/111.444.1755-4527.1783

Moveable Type is a Graduate, Peer-Reviewed Journal based in the Department of English at UCL.

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Enter the Luciferous Hexichasm: On the Savage Theoryfiction of Gruppo di Nun in *Revolutionary Demonology*

Jordan Casstles

Revolutionary Demonology. By Gruppo di Nun. 2022. 1st edition. 345p. £20.00. Urbanomic Media Ltd. ISBN 978-1-913029-90-6

Theoryfiction: weird, reality-warping hybrid born of critical theory, esoterica, Qabala, cyberpunk and Gothic horror. More than mere academic auto-fiction or an intellectual strain of hysterical realism, theoryfiction deliberately attempts to actively infect and colonise the ‘real world’ with its own twisted vision: it is ambivalent *in extremis* towards the limitations of consensus reality, proving to be capable of incubating accelerationist philosophies and acting as a vehicle to reshape conscious reactions to culture simultaneously. In 1940, Jorge Luis Borges’ short story *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius* predicted the form; between 1997 and 2003, the experimental cultural theorist collective Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU) brought it into being, only for English philosopher Nick Land to lead the group from a state of cyberfeminism to a growing neoreactionary cyberfascism.

Now in the age of ‘fake news’, theoryfiction has been given a vicious new edge by the Italian collective Gruppo di Nun (GdN), first recorded to have emerged in 2019. The group’s name takes Italian far-right philosopher Julius Evola’s collective Gruppo di Ur and stands it on its head, inverting the fiery masculine into the chthonic and watery feminine of the Egyptian goddess Nun. GdN present within their latest text, *Revolutionary Demonology*, their attempt to ‘respond to nihilism [...] without succumbing to either despair or fascism’. In so doing they stand in stark defiance to the growing cyber-fascistic leanings espoused by Land’s ‘Dark Enlightenment’ movement and its adherents, from former White House strategist Steve Bannon to Brenton Harrison Tarrant, the manifesto-penning mass shooter of Christchurch.

The book’s introduction alone acts as both invocation and gateway into the unsettling yet liberating new dimension of reality that GdN invite the reader to enter. This is a world in which our conception of a singular, comprehensible reality in which stability exists is no more than ‘a thermodynamic abomination we have nurtured for too long’ and where all hope of civilisation’s continuation is ‘nourished on the blood of the ancient dragon, wailing, crucified in the heart of the world’. We bear witness to a grand synthesis, wherein Babylonian (and Babalonian) mythology, combinatorial algorithmic analysis, cultural theory and the Hindu concept of the Kali Yuga unite within a mere six pages in order to create a near-hypnotic induction into the rest of the text to come, and establishes the foundation upon which the other mysterious members of GdN will proceed to build.

Due to the mysterious nature of the formation, function, and eventual disbanding of the group, the specific identity of each piece’s author is unknown—at best, gnomonic initials at the end of each essay act as a brand upon the work, providing the secrets only to those in the know. Despite this, however, the collected writings do point towards some more

general concepts and ideas that GdN are repeatedly drawn towards. In ‘Catastrophic Astrology’, the near-apocalyptic arc of the asteroid (99942) Apophis leads into a discussion of the constancy of destroyer-deities across history and humanity’s collective fascination with its own inevitable demise. Elsewhere, in ‘Spectral Materialism’, the slow-burning tale of an alchemical stellar death-cult that has taken root within an experimental chemistry laboratory intertwines with an in-depth comparative analysis of the Right and Left Hand Paths within the occult as equivalent to physics and chemistry respectively (i.e. the outlining of the physics experiment as Hermetic ‘confirmation or refutation of a theoretical hypothesis formulated in advance’, in contrast to the ‘intrinsically productive and transformative nature’ of the chemical experiment in ‘[generating] a new form of matter’). It also interrogates H. P. Lovecraft’s approach to terraforming in his short story ‘The Color Out Of Space’ (1927) and combines this with an exegesis on the concept of the *azoth*—both the Italian name for nitrogen and the alchemical code to understanding the Great Work of occultism—and its circularity across history.

Perhaps the two most provocative pieces that *Revolutionary Demonology* has to offer for the discerning scholar of theoryfiction are ‘Gothic Insurrection’ and ‘Lifting The Absolute’. The former piece is a direct and aggressive attack on modernity, declaring in the very first sentence that ‘we are sinking into a new Middle Ages’ and detailing how ‘the Promised Land, peacefully and skilfully governed by cybernetics, is turning into a cybergothic nightmare marred by conflict, bigotry, and superstition’. Rather than turning to fascism or despair, however, the author instead invokes the potency of the barbarian—the ‘warrior-shaman’ dwelling on ‘the wrong side of the boundary’ demarcating civilisation—as conveyed through European black metal, Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, and the savage poetry of Rimbaud. Over the course of the piece, three metabolic processes of development—the rewriting of barbarian genealogies, ‘lycanthropic proliferation’ and ‘atmospheric metamorphosis’—are presented as methods by which those destined to become barbarians of the cybergothic age may generate the ‘double vampiric-hauntological spiral’ needed to destabilise and upend the neoreactionary theoryfictions currently at work within our culture.

‘Lifting The Absolute’ is a curious anomaly within *Revolutionary Demonology*, and a testament to GdN’s dedication to the theoryfictional form. It poses not as an essay, but rather as an extract from the fictional book *The Search for Absolute Fitness: Plato as a Bodybuilder*, complete with a date of release and the non-existent publisher ‘Agharta’—the legendary kingdom contained within the Hollow Earth of Theosophist thought. ‘Lifting The Absolute’ presents the reader with a unique challenge. The authorial voice in this piece is not merely strong but as undeniably muscular as its imagined source: “‘Bronze Age Collapse’”, a pseudonym created to be the ‘catastrophic Nemesis to the Sun of erstwhile alt-right Internet phenomenon and bodybuilder “Bronze Age Pervert”’. The material does not so much straddle the line between bombastic pastiche and sincere declaration of cosmic devolution as execute Van Damme splits across the void while performing barbell reps with primordial iron: ‘If God were a lobster, and if the lobster were the yardstick for every human action and every rule of law, every true hero would prefer to be a star, a supernova or a black hole—to be able to glow from a great distance, or to devour the whole world with his soul’.

If there is a single key element that elevates *Revolutionary Demonology* above and beyond other works of its ilk (e.g. Reza Negarestani’s *Cyclonopedia*, the CCRU’s *Writings*, and Cergat’s *Earthmare*), it is the sheer poetry of the pieces that are contained within it. A description of Bram Stoker’s depiction of Dracula’s castle determines it to not simply be a

Gothic structure or metaphor for power, but rather ‘an alien catastrophe suspended in time’. The readers are not merely invited to attempt initiation through understanding apocalyptic futures and lost potentialities simultaneously, but are instead reminded that ‘to become chrono-warriors, we must strive to acquire both magical eyes.’ In a synopsis of the movie *Halloween* (2018), the character Michael Myers is described as having ‘been locked up in prison for decades, perpetually engrossed in his luciferous hexichasm’. In a similar—though arguably more gilded, yet energetic—style to the works of the CCRU, the linguistic pyrotechnics on display within this book are worth the price of admission alone.

Yet to commend the text on its dynamic stylisation alone would be to ignore a crucial factor: that is, that *Revolutionary Demonology* marks a distinct movement within the theoryfictional current as a whole. Between 1997 and 2019, the current flowed through the CCRU and the neoreactionary ‘Dark Enlightenment’ movement, taking it from a state of cyberfeminism and cultural exploration to a harsh form of cyberfascism and hyperracism. Now, as this text clearly demonstrates, this conceptual current is shifting and moving beyond the bounds of Anglocentric accelerationist philosophy and becoming something wilder, weirder, and possessing infinitely more potential to change the wider culture in ways as yet unimagined. Whilst one may find oblique references to CCRU texts in sources as varied as the notes of an ex-White House strategist or the screed of a manifesto penned by a mass murderer in New Zealand, determining where references to the works of GdN may emerge in the future is near-impossible—in part due to their subversive co-opting and undermining of the methodologies practised by those original parties.

The final page of the book provides a coda to the existence of GdN: though they ‘disbanded only a short time after the period of intense and sustained collaborative effort that furnished these texts’, they are said to have succeeded in ‘tracing a path toward an alternative esotericism, questioning the fundamental premises of the Western magical tradition [...] and offering a model of cosmogenesis based on an entirely different logic to that of the heterosexual desire that has for centuries inhibited the ability of magical practitioners to really and truly “traffic with the outside”’. Indeed, this text provides a gateway for the works of theorists, occultists, and theoryfiction writers seeking to tap into the queer, the alien, and the inorganic, in order to flourish and bloom like eldritch cancers in the gradually decaying body of the status quo. Such a hypnotic declaration of the power held by the truly unknown and the glorious Cosmic Love can be witnessed only in absolute dissolution.