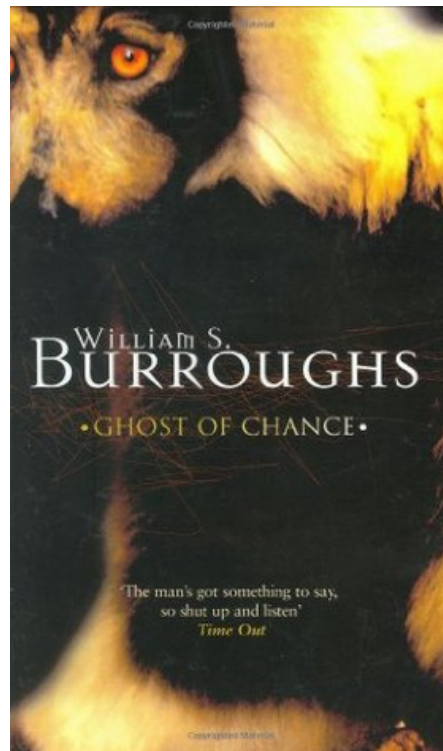




Ghost of Chance

William S. Burroughs

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Ghost of Chance William S. Burroughs

Ghost of Chance is an adventure story set in the jungle of Madagascar and filled with the obsessions that mark the work of the man who Norman Mailer once called, 'the only American writer possessed by genius.' While tripping through the author's trademark concerns—drugs, paranoia, and lemurs, this short novel tells an important story about environmental devastation in a way that only Burroughs can.

Born in 1914, **William S. Burroughs** is the author of *Junky*, *Naked Lunch* and *The Soft Machine* and many other contemporary classics. A major figure of 20th century American literature, Burroughs died in 1997.

Ghost of Chance Details

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No Books says

Nel suo *Critica della democrazia occidentale*, l'antropologo anarchico David Graeber ricorda che le comunità dei pirati atlantici nel XVIII secolo furono per certi versi una formulazione precoce di quelle che oggi ci piace definire, a volte solo formalmente, come democrazie occidentali: *“Era lo spazio perfetto per un esperimento interculturale. Di fatto, non c’era a quel tempo in tutto l’Atlantico un terreno più adatto per impiantare nuove istituzioni democratiche”* (ed. elèuthera 2012, p. 81). Non sorprende quindi che un libertario autorevole e consapevole come William Burroughs si sia ispirato alla vicenda, peraltro storica e accuratamente ricostruita nella nota biografica conclusiva, del “pirata filosofo” Mission, fondatore in Madagascar della libera colonia di Libertatia. Burroughs preferisce l'Oceano Indiano all'Atlantico, il Madagascar ai Caraibi. Ci sono brani bellissimi sulla *“grande isola rossa”*:

Quando era attaccato al continente africano, il Madagascar sporgeva come un tumore disordinato, percorso da una spaccatura, il contorno dell'isola futura, [...] simile a una grande incisione, alla fessura che divide il corpo umano. La spaccatura era larga un miglio in alcuni punti, in altri si restringeva a un centinaio di metri. Era una zona di cambiamento e di contrasto esplosivo, percorsa da violente tempeste elettriche, incredibilmente fertile in alcuni punti, completamente sterile in altri.

L'esperimento di Libertatia *“minacciava di dimostrare che era possibile per trecento anime coesistere in relativa armonia tra di loro, con i vicini e con l'ecosfera di flora e fauna”*. Tra gli Articoli stabiliti da Mission, uno vieta l'uccisione dei lemuri, pena l'espulsione dalla colonia. E, fatalmente, il romanzo si apre con la morte violenta di un lemure, un atto che è anche un'insurrezione politica. Ma invece di curarsi della minaccia più o meno imminente, o forse proprio per comprenderla a fondo, Mission decide di cercare una droga. Il suo ragionamento è impeccabile e perfettamente burroughsiano: in un'isola piena di specie endemiche, deve esistere una droga tipica del luogo. Scopre che esiste e che si chiama *indri*, ovvero “guarda bene”. Mission la prende ed inizia a vedere. Capisce che il tempio di pietra abbandonato nel cuore della foresta, verso il quale prova una profonda fascinazione, è in verità *“l'entrata al biologico Giardino delle Occasioni Perdute”*.

In *The Cat Inside* (ovvero *Il gatto in noi*, pubblicato sempre da Adelphi) Burroughs descrive il gatto, creatura delicata, misteriosa e magica, come suo compagno psichico, di cui si considera Guardiano: creatore e custode di un'ibridazione tra umano, animale e un che di «ancora inimmaginabile». E dal punto di vista letterario il passo è breve dai gatti ai lemuri, che figurativamente sembrano l'anello di congiunzione tra i primati, uomo incluso, e altri animali più ferini e primitivi.

Mission ne tiene in casa uno, che chiama Fantasma. E già nella prima pagina del libro Burroughs si premura di spiegare che nella lingua locale è il termine stesso *lemure* a significare “fantasma”. Ed è forse il caso di ricordare a questo punto che il titolo originale è *Ghost of Chance*, che nella sua indeterminatezza potrebbe significare “spettro della sorte” ma anche “(l') ombra di (un') opportunità” (la febbre del ragno rosso nel libro c'è ma è secondaria, e credo sia stata scelta principalmente perché ad Adelphi torna comodo avere un colore nel titolo).

Il libro è un'elegia alle occasioni perdute; non solo biologiche ma anche politiche, verrebbe da dire. Perché, come mostra la prosa onirica di Burroughs, le due questioni sono connesse. Staccandosi dal continente, centosessanta milioni di anni fa, il Madagascar ha creato delle condizioni uniche, un ambiente privo di

predatori e adatto al Popolo dei Lemuri, il cui *“modo di pensare è fondamentalmente diverso dal nostro, non orientato verso il tempo, la sequenza e la causalità”*.

“Hanno il pollice opponibile ma non fabbricano strumenti; non hanno bisogno di strumenti. Sono indenni dal male che riempie l’Homo Sapiens quando afferra un’arma—ora è *lui* ad avere il sopravvento. Una terribile sensazione di trionfo viene dalla consapevolezza di essere il più forte. La bellezza è sempre destinata alla sconfitta”.

Ed ecco la metafora, la sintesi poetica:

“C’è una spaccatura dentro l’organismo umano, la spaccatura o fessura tra i due emisferi, quindi ogni tentativo di sintesi resta irrealizzabile in termini umani. Faccio un parallelo tra questa fessura che divide le due parti del corpo umano e la spaccatura che ha separato il Madagascar dal continente africano. Una parte è scivolata dentro un’incantata innocenza senza tempo. L’altra si è avviata inesorabilmente verso il linguaggio, il tempo, l’uso di strumenti, la guerra, lo sfruttamento e la schiavitù”.

La prosa di Burroughs è costellata di simili illuminazioni. A volte apparentemente sconnesse, e in realtà portatrici di una verità più profonda. E d’altro canto non c’è, semplicemente, un altro scrittore che sappia illustrare con altrettanta efficacia gli effetti delle droghe, lo spostamento di prospettiva (*“come se i suoi occhi si muovessero su cardini diversi”*) e il turbine di immagini dotate di una propria logica. Probabilmente non c’è, semplicemente, un altro scrittore che abbia sperimentato con altrettanta metodicità tutte le droghe mai create. E sia sopravvissuto per scriverne.

La narrazione a volte sembra prendere direzioni del tutto inattese, come nelle pagine bellissime, esilaranti e profondamente vere, sull’ipocrisia di Gesù; il punto è che, come credo di aver dimostrato, questo è un libro che va citato più che recensito, perché le mie parole non saranno mai efficaci quanto le immagini evocate dall’autore. E anche solo quella dei lemuri, delicati, dolci e indifesi, varrebbe il costo del biglietto — del *trip*. I lemuri, destinati alla sconfitta...

“Non era sicuro di voler vedere quello che gli avrebbe mostrato l’indri; sapeva già che sarebbe stato insopportabilmente triste”.

Prenderete anche voi l’*indri*?

Graham says

Burroughs was one of the first writers I ever really loved, and this was the first book of his I ever read. When I was a kid, I didn't think reading was particularly cool, but having bands I liked (Sonic Youth, Nirvana, Throbbing Gristle, Patti Smith) back then name-drop him made me give his stuff a chance and it really turned my head around as far as what words could do. I'm glad this was my first exposure to him as well, as it's one of the easiest of his works to read.

That said, it's not entirely indicative of his body of work as a whole, though certain elements and phrases he had previously employed are utilized (most notably the libertarian pirate theme from "Cities Of The Red

Night"). The language, though it switches between narratives, is considerably drier and more direct than much of what he's known for. Those who enjoy the more disassociated style for which he's better known might find this one watered-down, but those who want a typical Burroughs-ian atmosphere in a slightly more comprehensible form would do well to give this one a shot. Still one of my favorites

Marc Pastor says

El meu primer contacte amb Burroughs ha estat molt decebedor.

La història de la comunitat utòpica de Libertatia a Madagascar dura un parell de pàgines, abans de donar pas una sèrie de digressions sense solta ni volta, reflexions d'heroïnòman i idees inconnexes. La conspiranoia sobrevola el relat(?) i, sincerament, no sé què volia explicar-me. No entenc on vol anar a parar. M'ha agradat la història (?) de la plaga de pèls que surten del paladar, ni que sigui per la imatge pertorbadora, però encara no sé què hi pinta.

El llibre es tanca (o el completa, perquè l'extensió és la mateixa) el relat sobre les aventures del capità Misson (o Mission, tampoc queda clar) que en teoria va escriure Daniel DeFoe. Crec que aquest text hauria d'haver anat el primer perquè acaba on comença l'altre, i almenys l'ordre cronològic hauria dotat de certa coherència a tot plegat. La vida del capità Misson es resumeix en què era molt bo amb la gent que capturava, que tothom l'aplaudia sempre, que s'enfrontava a un bon grapat de vaixells de molts canons i que va fer un Yojimbo a les costes de Madagascar. Quan es posa interessant, s'acaba alla Soprano.

Misha says

This was the first Burroughs I read, and I loved it. It's a short novella about a pirate captain and lemurs and Burroughs' cranky, yet beautiful, musings on society. There were passages that made me sigh they were so beautiful, and that surprised me because I didn't expect that kind of lyricism from Burroughs. But there's a sublime grotesqueness to the latter passages that seems more in line with what I knew of him. Altogether a brilliant, engaging novella that earned its five stars from me for lifting me out of a terrible mood the night that I read it.

Filippo says

Racconto delirante, che contiene riflessioni ispiranti e provocatorie, ma soprattutto involute.

La trama procede a sbalzi, e mischia apertamente realtà e allucinazione.

Personalmente ho trovato il libro poco scorrevole, poco chiaro e poco finalizzato. Tuttavia mi rimasto il desiderio di approfondirlo.

Anna says

last book of burroughs, at first it was a bit too much for me but in the end it was challenging enough and brought food for thought

JoLene says

This book really was not my cup of tea --- although I completely agree with some of the message and can admire some of the writing. This is a short work and I think one of the last from Burroughs. I have not read anything else by him, so I'm not sure if it is typical. For a short work, it takes on quite a bit including how man is the worst thing to happen to the planet, how Jesus was the ultimate trickster, and governments are corrupt. There is not a real narrative, although it begins with the story of a pirate named Mission who establishes a utopian colony on Madagascar in the 1700's --- this part is based on a true story.

If you like stream of consciousness style or take psychedelic drugs, this may be a book you would enjoy.

Alexandra says

A really short read and a strange one... It's actually a little bit of everything. A little bit of environmental and ecology issues, a little bit of history with the story of Captain Mission and then the spread of disease by the dead Captain Mission... I enjoyed the new diseases that he mentioned especially the Christ Sickness and the «essay» about Homo Sap that «with his weapons, his insatiable greed, and ignorance so hideous it can never see its own face».

It's more of a poem in which Burroughs addresses a lot of serious issues.

Lawrence says

<http://gnomeship.blogspot.com/2018/05...>

Megan says

This is a story about a man named Mission who loves his little lemur and will go great lengths to protect him from the big bad world with big bad evil people who will destroy Cap's lemur and everything else by mass consumption and .., I get it, Billy, I do. I love me some pirates and little furry friends and hate when people are unnecessarily cruel. I don't know whether he should've been told to stop the drug use or get into even heavier stuff..?

Daniel Genís says

El meu primer Burroughs, i de moment m'està costant entrar-hi... Per cert, com quedem: Misson o Mission?

George K. says

Βαθμολογία: 7/10

Τελευταία φορά που διβασα Γουλιέλμο Μπρούζε ήταν τον περσινό Φεβρουάριο, τότε που διβασα σε μια μύρα το "Αδερφ". Ήτσι, λω απ' μ'σα μου, καιρ'ς ήταν να διαβ'σω ξαν' κ'τι δικ' του, οπ'τε και πιασα το "Μιας στις χ'λιες", μια πολ' μικρ' νουβ'λα που διαβ'στηκε σε περ'που μι'μηση ρα.

Πολ' περ'εργη νουβ'λα, σε σημεία σ'ως λιγ'κι ακαταλαβ'στικη, αν και μικρ' σε μ'γεθος απαιτε' αρκετ' προσοχ' για να πι'σει κανε'ς τα μην'ματα που κρ'βονται π'σω απ' την (ποια) πλοκ' και τις προτ'σεις. Προσωπικ' δεν πιασα και τα π'ντα, μ'ως κ'τι κατ'λαβα. Γι'αυτ' δεν ευθ'νεται τ'σο η γραφ', που ε'ναι μια χαρ' κατανοητ' και σχετικ' ευκολοδι'βαστη, 'σο η εναλλαγ' των θεμ'των και οι αλλαγ'ς στον τρ'πο εξιστ'ρησης. Με λ'γα λ'για ο Μπρούζε πετ'γεται απ' το 'να περ'εργο θ'μα στο 'λλο. 'χουμε τον Κ'πτεν Μ'σιον, την Μαδαγασκ'ρη και τους Λεμο'ριους, 'χουμε κ'τι... τριχωτο'ς ιο'ς (μεταξ' 'λλων), 'χουμε την καταστροφ' του περιβ'λλοντος με επ'κεντρο τον 'νθρωπο, 'χουμε και 'να μικρ' χ'σιμο στον Χριστιανισμ'... και 'λλα πολλ'. Και 'λα αυτ' μ'σα σε πολ' λ'γες σελ'δες.

Π'ντως οφέ'λω να ομολογ'σω 'τι η γραφ' ε'ναι πολ' ωραία -για 'λλη μια φορ'-, με μπ'λικο φιλοσοφικ' β'θος. Για πρ'τη επαφ' με τον συγγραφέα δεν προτε'νεται σε καμ'α περ'πτωση, μ'ως 'σοι 'χετε 'δη "εισβ'λλει" στον παρανο'κ' και ψυχεδελικ' κ'σμο του, 'λο και κ'τι καλ' θα βρε'τε σ'αυτ'ς τις σελ'δες.

Mat says

Ghost of Chance is a scathing lambastic indictment of the madness of mankind and a dire warning that we are all heading towards our own destruction.

With this in mind, i want you all to know that I'm giving this 5 stars because of the **importance** of Burroughs' message in this book. If I were to rate it purely on narrative structure, I would probably only give it 3 stars but it's really really important for people to read this.

Everyone is familiar with Burroughs' acidic sardonic sense of humour and hard-boiled prose. While there are elements of that in *Ghost of Chance* as well, this is more of an 'essay' on ecological destruction at the hands of mankind which Burroughs (and Brian Gyson) call an 'ugly animal'. After reading this book, I agree with them completely. Man IS an ugly animal seen through the eyes of other creatures on this planet, Mankind is 'threat number one' and the blame for the destruction of the planet and the near-extinction of species like the lemur in Madagascar, where this 'story' is set, can be placed at our door. I had this image in my head while I was reading this book - Mother Nature was going around pinning up wanted signs of us.

The story of *Ghost of Chance* is loosely based around Captain Mission or Mison (nobody knows his first name) - a Provencal pirate who ended up founding a society called Libertatia on the island of Madagascar, a settlement which laid down certain practical, tolerant and non-interfering articles in its 'constitution' such as the freedom of religion, sexuality, no capital punishment etc. Sounds utopian? You bet it is, and like all 'utopian' ideals, they never last very long in the harsh day-to-day reality of Planet Earth. Immediately plans are put into motion to destroy the society. Incidentally, these articles have already resurfaced in another Burroughs' book - *Cities of the Red Night* which is an absolutely fantastic piece of work.

Then Burroughs took me by surprise. He winds in another 'thread' into the story, and this is where it gets confusing. Enter Jesus Christ. Burroughs argues, and quite convincingly, that Christ was a first-class

magician who cornered (or monopolized) the miracle market. I thought 'where is Burroughs going with this?' but over the next few pages follows a brilliant stream of verse on how 'loving your enemy' and 'turning the other cheek' can be used with lethal effect like a mafia don having someone 'whacked'. He categorizes this problem as the 'Christ sickness'. But what is the link? A tenuous one but one which recurs throughout Burroughs' extensive oeuvre - the theme of the **virus**. First we had the 'word virus' which Burroughs set out to destroy or at the very least put off balance through the cut-up method (in *The Soft Machine*, *The Ticket that Exploded* and *Nova Express*). Now in this book we see mankind as a kind of 'virus' or certain ideas that he espouses (like the Christ sickness) as viruses which can threaten the well-being of the planet. Therefore, this short novella is also a moralistic essay which not only condemns the evils of mankind but also encourages us to think about these pressing issues of the modern world and challenge them. And let's not forget that Burroughs has a Masters degree in anthropology. And in this book he definitely comes across as a misanthropic anthropologist.

What I found most interesting and moving about this book was the closing lines of the book (a footnote) in which he encourages readers to check out a society in the US which is devoted to the preservation of lemurs and other endangered species. Towards the end of his life, William really became an animal lover and environmentalist and the last decade of his life when he wrote this book and *The Cat Inside* were indeed golden ones. Everybody who is serious about saving mankind owes it to themselves to read this book.

Brie says

there are two things that really intrigued me about this book. first was the pirate captain mission who set up a free colony on madagascar with many of the same values that the french and american revolutions would emphasize nearly a century later. second was the mention of a lemur/octopus. what would this creature look like? i'm picturing an octopus with big beautiful lemur eyes, and i like it. altogether a good book, although a bit too much rambling for me, and also i would say that burroughs falls into the same trap that conservative christians do when they interpret the bible literally, and that his tirade about jesus doesn't hold up when you consider the verses that he uses in a historical context. if you dont believe me then read walter wink's book on jesus and non-violence!

tENTATIVELY, cONVENIENCE says

I was somewhat reluctant to read yet-another Burroughs bk given that I've already read so many & that there're so many other writers out there to read.. BUT, it was worth it! Burroughs' incisive, acerbic imagination held my attn once more. The bk's plentifully interspersed w/ black & white repros of paintings wch I reckon must be by Burroughs - since they're not credited otherwise. These are mostly busy energy patterns, semi-abstract-expressionist, probably more than a little influenced by Burroughs' pal Brion Gysin - they lurk w/ spirits needing the right frame-of-mind (or drug-induced expanded consciousness) to see dancing about.

One of the freshest parts for me (insofar as I don't recall any of Burroughs' other bks putting forth this idea) is where Christ is lambasted as someone who tried to corner the miracle market, tried to monopolize a capability held latently by all. Footnotes placed at the bottom of the pages (as opposed to the back of the bk) add further scholarly spice to the whole vision - grounding the fiction in 'factual' reference - that, in turn, often takes off in extrapolative fantasy. Take this, eg:

"11. Consider the history of disease: it is as old as life. Soon as something gets alive, there is something there

waiting to disease it. Put yourself in the virus's shoes, and wouldn't you do the same? [..]

"And the fearsome SEPs. Some organ of the body sets up shop and grows on its own: huge brains in fifty-five gallon oil drums, a monster kidney that can be used for dialysis,

"It's an ill fart that farts nobody any good.

"The most dreaded SEP is the Pricks. Not a tumor, mind you, just a big prick and it keeps getting bigger."

Once again, I'm stimulated to return to Burroughs & to read everything I can by him.

Perry Whitford says

Interesting but undeveloped morality tale of Swiftian nastiness from literary outlaw Burroughs, like a tasty but thin slice of his regular (naked) lunch.

Inspired by a French frigate captain turned pirate who founded a utopian society named Libertatia in Madagascar, around 1700, many of the writer's typical obsessions get a brief airing, supplemented with some odd and largely didactic footnotes.

A curse leads to diseases both destructive and darkly comic, humanity suffers the vengeance it deserves for abusing animals and the ecology, and because it won't readily allow you to ingest the exotic drugs that Burroughs loves so much.

More a hardback chapbook than the short novel as advertised, *Ghost of Chance* is above all a good introduction to what Burroughs is all about.

Pity the abstract art prints interspersing the story, also by Burroughs, weren't reproduced in colour.

Franz B. says

Estremamente interessante e con numerosi spunti di riflessione. Peccato sia così breve da non riuscire ad approfondire niente.

In ogni caso credo che necessiti di diverse riletture per comprenderlo appieno.

Eric Cartier says

Technically his final novel, this is far from Burroughs' best text, although I read it a second time (it's short). The reason for a fan or interested reader to see this is for its black and white reproductions of his abstract paintings (the hardcover was first published by the Library Fellows of the Whitney Museum of American Art). Burroughs began knocking out oils in his golden years, and they're remarkable for their structural balance, hypnotic lines and depth (like his best writing: see *Naked Lunch*, *Exterminator!* or *Cities of the Red Night*). Concerning the writing, however, there are a number of hilarious routines, as well as Brion Gysin's all-purpose nuclear bedtime story:

"Some trillions of years ago, a sloppy, dirty giant flicked grease from his fingers. One of those globs of grease is our universe, on its way to the floor.

Splat."

Bartolomeu De Bensafrim says

o último quarto do livro perde-se num mastigar pouco original e saboroso - como se o fantasma de um editor chicoteasse por mais.

os três primeiros quartos são muito bons - por vezes geniais.

é espantoso como com pouquíssimas linhas Burroughs consegue solidificar Mission e a colónia, e tornar credível e fundamental a busca espiritual do capitão, e a sua relação com as criaturas extintas.

igualmente boa a personagem de Martin e todo o nojo (característico à nossa raça) que ele evoca.

a estupidez humana e a devastação do planeta são pintadas com a cor que merecem: cor-de-merda.

parece haver mais sensibilidade ecológica nos devaneios sujos do Burroughs do que na típica choradeira ou amálgama de factos trágicos.

qualquer criatura, à medida que existe, mata, suja, destrói. mas nós fazemo-lo de uma forma feia, mesquinha e egoísta. a dupla maldição. *o bicho-feio possuído pelo espírito-feio.*

.

Burroughs sempre conseguiu embrulhar as palavras numa força descomunal; e dentro do embrulho, muitas vezes, escondeu uma poderosa linguagem mística e visionária; mas sempre lhe faltou tudo o resto.

mais de metade do que o homem escreveu é lixo - seja por falta de bom-senso, vontade ou capacidade.

o combustível que o alimentava não lhe permitia grandes esforços para limar arestas às visões que lhe eram entregues.

este livro ilustra bastante bem a boa metade de Burroughs. sobretudo na subtil e misteriosa linguagem onírica (que os mortos nunca compreenderão).

Glenn Russell says

"Panic is the sudden realization that everything around you is alive." William S. Burroughs, *Ghost of Chance*

Last summer at a street fair in Portland, Oregon one of the booths displayed a banner: "Stop Breeding." I picked up one of their postcards, which read: "Not having kids may be the best thing you can do for the environment."

Reading *Ghost of Chance*, author William S. Burroughs is undoubtedly of similar mind. He alerts readers that on the island of Madagascar the human population is growing out of control (as of today, nearly thirty years after the author's warning, the human population is twenty-five million strong). Meanwhile deforestation on the island continues apace - mining, logging, wood for fuel, along with the major culprit, slash-and-burn for agricultural, has reduced a once spacious jungle overflowing with life down to next to nothing.

Ghost of Chance, a novella of less than sixty pages published in 1991 as part of the *High Risk*

Books/Serpent's Tail series, is a tale of adventure set in the Madagascar jungle. If you look hard you might detect the bare outline of plot. But don't look too hard, for the author's artistry isn't so much in linear narrative as in well-tuned observations on the plight of modern homo no so sapiens expressed in tough, hardline Burroughs-ese.

This being the case, here are six direct quotes, six Benzedrine Bill tabs, along with my comments in the hope that you get hooked enough to read this short work from the master of *Naked Lunch* and *The Soft Machine*:

"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. 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." ----- The word lemur derives from the word lemures (ghosts or spirits) from Roman mythology. Thus the strong connection between lemurs and the book's title. Captain Mission, the tale's protagonist, possesses a strong affinity with the lemurs of Madagascar. For millions of years prior to the arrival of humans on the island, some lemurs grew to the size of gorillas. Lemurs have always enjoyed a great diversity. Even today, after the destruction by humans of vast tracts of jungle, there remains over one hundred species of lemurs.

"Mission set out walking rapidly. Half an hour later, he took a small amount of the crystals with a sip of water from his goatskin water-bag. In a few minutes he experienced a shift of vision, as if his eyes were moving on separate pivots, and for the first time he saw Lizard-Who-Changed-Color." ----- As readers we have come to expect any work of Burroughs to be chock-full of drugs of some variety. Here Captain Mission takes a specialty of Madagascar producing in him visions akin to a shaman on a vision question. Indeed, many the time reading *Ghost of Chance* I linked the insights of Burroughs with the world of Shamanism.

"Time is a human affliction; not a human invention but a prison. . . . And what does time mean to foraging lemurs? No predators here, not much to fear. They have opposing thumbs but do not fashion tools; they have no need for tools. They are untouched by the evil that flows in and fills Homo Sap as he picks up a weapon – now *he* has the advantage. A terrible gloating feeling comes from knowing you've *got it!*" ----- The author detects Homo Sap's rage and resentment at having being cast out of the present by the sickness of time. Not a happy combination – a species on the planet with seething, bitter anger combined with all those powerful weapons. Watch out animals and plants, here comes Homo Saps, an instrument of mass destruction and extermination!

Beauty is always doomed. Homo Sap with his weapons, his time, his insatiable greed, and ignorance so hideous it can never see its own face. Man is born in time. He lives and dies in time. Wherever he goes, he takes time with him and imposes time." ----- In a footnote William Burroughs asks if Homo Sap thinks other animals were there just for him to eat. I hear echoes of poet Gary Snyder observing when the Protestants came to America they judged the natural world as the stage for man working out his relationship to God. (Women and children being inferior versions of man). The animals and trees and lakes and rivers were but stage props. So, to answer your question, William S. Burroughs – yes, many peoples and cultures hold that animals exist for one sole purpose – food for the table!

"To distract their charges from the problems of overpopulation, resource depletion, deforestation, pandemic pollution of water, land, and sky, they inaugurated a war against drugs. This provides a pretext to set up an international police apparatus designed to suppress dissidence on an international level." ----- I can just imagine what this statement sounds like when read in William S. Burroughs' gritty, gravelly voice. Can come off as a bit preachy but it does ring of truth. In another footnote, it is stated that a high ranking U.S. official

said anyone who suggests a tolerant attitude toward drug use should be considered a traitor. Of course he wasn't thinking of those large corporations distributing millions of pills to get people hooked so their profits skyrocket. OxyContin flooding small towns in the US is but one example.

“Whoever needed a majority? Ten percent plus the police and military is all it ever took. Besides, we’ve got the media, hook, line, and blinkers.” ----- Wise words, Bill! Nowadays in 2018 the powers that be can even chortle, cackle and yodel as they make this pronouncement. After all, they have a long standing track record of success going for them.

William S. Burroughs, age 76, reading *Ghost of Chance*
