



## CYBERMAN ORIGINS

“THEY ALWAYS GET STARTED. THEY HAPPEN EVERYWHERE THERE'S PEOPLE. MONDAS, TELOS, EARTH, PLANET 14, MARINUS. [...] PEOPLE GET THE CYBERMEN WRONG. THERE'S NO EVIL PLAN, NO EVIL GENIUS. JUST PARALLEL EVOLUTION.”

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> “With the defeat of the Cyber-Legions, it may seem a curious time to evaluate the origins of the Cybermen. The fall of the Cybermen, however, has enabled unparalleled access to their records, shedding new light on many previously unknown aspects of Cyber-history. Cross-referencing the new records with existing records of Cybermen encounters can enable the first overall picture of the evolution of the Cybermen.

### The Mondasian Parable

The Mondas account is the most well-documented. The planet, once the twin of Earth, fell out of its orbit (the precise cause of which has been lost to time) and the inhabitants eventually turned to conversion to survive. Until this point the knowledge of how exactly this came about has been unknown, but now finally we have the fully story of the fall of the Mondasians. The Cybermen's records are quite complete, even naming individuals involved in the initial conversion programme including Doctorman Allen and Commander Zheng. Tragically, the records reveal there was a successful attempt to halt the programme, however, as history would go on to prove on numerous occasions, the Cybermen are not easily prevented. Extrapolating from the logical nature of the Cybermen, it would seem logical to infer that the complete nature of these records indicates they regard Mondas as their primary origin point. Perhaps it is simply a matter of the Mondasians being the earliest form of Cybermen, at least that the Cybermen themselves know of.

An alternative hypothesis is the Cybermen deliberately propagate the Mondas creation story as it serves their own argument. The story that the Cybermen arose from a sick and dying humanoid civilisation

and have survived serves their general argument that they are logically a superior form of humanoid life which all others should become. In a sense it has become the cold logical form of a parable. This perhaps explains why the Mondasian origin has gained a kind of primacy, despite the planet meeting its destruction early in Cyber-history, and why the Cybermen themselves continued to identify themselves as deriving from Mondas long after general knowledge of the planet's existence had faded from humanity.

### **The Black Hole of Planet 14**

'Planet 14' remains the least documented origin point of the Cybermen. Planet 14 has never been conclusively identified, some have hypothesised it is actually Cyberman terminology for Mondas, Marinus or even Telos. Planet 14 however can be certified as a distinct faction via the encounters with the Cybermen derived from it. Records of the Planet 14's Cybermen's design, retrieved from the ancient archives of Earth's extra-terrestrial defence organisation UNIT who fought off an invasion, display a clear distinction between those attributed to Mondas and Marinus. Therefore, the logical assumption is that a separate Planet 14 Faction did exist, but its origin remains unclear.

The lack of conclusive evidence is itself perplexing, the Cybermen do not delete records for anything other than a logical purpose. One possible explanation is that their origin somehow exposed a weakness of the Cybermen. Perhaps the nature of the Cyberman's creation on this world was what informed later design flaws, such as their vulnerability to gold. If Planet 14's origin would expose such weakness, it would be wholly logical for the Cybermen to suppress it.

So what might Planet 14 be? The number could refer to its position in its solar system or perhaps simply the fourteenth planet the Cybermen on Mondas charted. Alternatively, Planet 14 could well be a cover story for another, more well-known world. The Cybermen do not appear to refer to any other world by numbers, so perhaps this was an effort to disguise the planet's true identity. Perhaps one of the many tombworlds discovered over the centuries was actually Planet 14 and we were none the wiser to its significance. This is all baseless speculation, and provides no conclusions.

What is clear is that at some point in the late 20th century, in completely unknown circumstances, Planet 14 had ceased acting as the Cybermen's de facto homeworld. It seems that the Cybermen that had originated on it adopted a nomadic existence that would become the Cybermen's norm for coming centuries.

Planet 14 remains a bizarre black hole in Cyber-history. This is clearly by the Cybermen's own design, but the purpose of this subterfuge is utterly unclear. It's a fascinatingly, and frustratingly, vague aspect of the evolution of the Cybermen.

### **The Voord**

The records of the Cybermen indicate a surviving nomadic faction, exiles from whatever event befell Planet 14, encountered a group of Cybermen of a new design, originating from Marinus. The Marinus origin shares some aspects with the Planet 14 conundrum as certain aspects remain shrouded in mystery.

The Marinus group identified themselves as upgraded Voord. As far as the Cybermen's records indicate, the Voord were a tribal group of humanoids who cybernetically enhanced themselves and attacked numerous worlds. A group of Voord were present on Marinus when their evolution was

apparently accelerated by unnatural means, which they themselves do not apparently fully comprehend if the records are accurate. The Cybermen and Voord saw a logic in combining, and thus was birthed the Cyber-Nomads.

The Nomads are, similarly to Planet 14, defined entirely by their skirmishes with humanity, notably invading the Earth's moon and the Wheel space station in the late 21st century. The Nomads came to their most prominent in the 2150s, where they took advantage of the Dalek occupation of Earth to target now vulnerable human colonies. This conflict saw the discovery of the Cybermen's weakness to gold (though it should be emphasised this weakness never applied to all forms of Cybermen). The humans brokered a deal with Voga, known as the planet of gold, and developed the earliest glitter guns. This deal gave the conflict its name – the Vogan War.

Cyber-records of this era are incomplete, likely due to the intentionally disparate nature of the Nomads, and so there is no evidence of them having a homeworld or confirmation of what became of Marinus. The fate of Nomads is clearer; after the Vogan War they continued to harass humanity over the years with occasional colonial skirmishes and wars with colonies over the 23rd and 24th Centuries. Collectively, the Vogan War and subsequent conflicts are considered the earliest campaigns of First Great Cyber-War. Facing extinction from the conflicts, the majority of the Nomads opted to retreat to tombs, the largest of which was Telos.

### **The Telosian Tombs**

Telos is arguably the most famous homeworld of the Cybermen, as the site of the largest Nomad tomb. Cyber-records show the Cybermen usurping and parasitising the native species, Cryons, in order to build it. A common myth is that Telos was the birthplace of the Cybermen, widely presumed to be conflation of Mondas and Telos. One theory suggests there is some truth in the myth however, that perhaps a small colony of humans existed on Telos and turned to cybernisation of their own accord. These colonists would presumably make contact with a group of Nomads and together build the tomb. Records do not seem to substantiate this, but it remains a possibility.

Telos' tomb awoke in the mid-25th century, as a result of an expedition by the Brotherhood of Logicians. Though the survivors of that expedition claimed to have sealed the tomb again, they were either incorrect or simply lying. The Telosian Cybermen managed to contact surviving Nomads and built Cyber-Control. This marked the first occasion that the entirety of the Cybermen was coordinated from one location. The Telosians began to grow the Cyber-race, reawakening other tombs and beginning large-scale attacks on humanity – the Telosian Resurgence as historians have chosen to christen it. The fledgling Earth Empire fought back and the First Great Cyber-War was reignited with a new ferocity. The Fall of Telos brought this renewed campaign to a brutal end, with the destruction of Cyber-Control ending the galaxy-wide coordination of the Cybermen.

Telos itself actually perished in the early 26th century, being shattered by an asteroid impact. The tombs themselves are purported to have survived, adrift intact in the asteroid belt that was once Telos. The Telosian tombs were also far from unique, with other scattered tombs being discovered across the galaxy. Two were uncovered in the 27th century by expeditions from the Braxiatel Collection, the only record of which is a short paper by Professor Bernice Summerfield which, written in highly unacademic (and occasionally profane) language, warns future expeditions against further investigations of Cyber-tombs. The Telos Resurgence was ultimately the only major faction to be propagated from the tombworlds, but was far from the end of the Cybermen.

## **The Neomorphs**

After the Fall of Telos, the Cybermen were left scattered and disorganised. These disparate groups sometimes returned to tombs or continued harassing humanity on a much smaller scale. The divergences in design and evolution these groups underwent from each other has led to them being termed the Neomorphs. The most notable activity by the Neomorphs was during the Orion War, with a human initiative to utilise Cyber-technology against the Orion androids resulting in a brief Cyberman takeover of the Earth Empire government in 2515. This takeover would actually bring the Orion War to an eventual end, providing humans and androids with a common enemy. Ten years after the takeover, a Galactic Congress conference formally resolved the Orion Dispute and founded an alliance between the Earth Empire and the Android Hordes to act against remnants of the Cybermen. It was only afterwards that Earth disclosed that a Cyber-bomb had been discovered on Earth during the conference, which proved the persistence of the Cybermen.

Cyber-records reveal that that some Neomorph groups managed to come together and settled on a planet, which they named New Mondas. Whilst this may seem an illogical choice of name, it does support the parable hypothesis – the Cybermen effectively turn Mondas itself into a symbol of survival to further their logical argument of their superiority. New Mondas perished, the records indicate at the hands of the Daleks, putting an end to this potential new homeworld.

Perhaps in light of their failure to establish a new origin point, the surviving Neomorph faction focused on developing time travel technology to change the past and had done so by the 30th century. Time squads were sent on missions back in time; the success or failure of these missions is not confirmed in the records, but we can assume that they failed to alter history from our own continued existence. As the Cybermen's time travel capabilities increase, the Cyber-records become increasingly distorted and confused. The Cybermen themselves do not seem to know what happened. From the galaxy's perspective, the Cybermen died out. By 3900 they were formally declared extinct. This was proved incorrect and on a dramatic scale.

## **The Legions**

The Cybermen's records indicate whatever disaster befell the Neomorphs failed to destroy them all. At least one small contingent survived, and made contact with another group of surviving Cybermen. It is from here that the records become somewhat incredulous. This surviving group is described as deriving from a parallel universe. The implications from this are chilling. It seems on another Earth, another humanity embraced Cyber-conversion via the work of global corporation Cybus Industries.

The Cybermen on this Earth were driven from it by the efforts of humans opposed to conversion, and set their sights on our universe. From humanity's perspective, the parallel universe Cybermen first crossed into our world in relative Earthtime 2007, appearing in force around the Earth. This takeover was brief, with all the Cybermen seen disappearing mere hours later into Canary Wharf. Redacted official documents tell a more accurate of the Battle of Canary Wharf; that it was brought about by the experiments of the Torchwood Institute, that a group of Daleks were present and fought in the Battle and that the Cyberman seen being pulled into Canary Wharf were actually being sent through the breach they had used to arrive. The Cybermen evidently arrived in another dimension that they could not describe in their logical parameters – they simply could not comprehend it. Their confused records do document that the battle with the Daleks somehow persisted in this indescribable place, which could be taken as a case study of the inherent stubbornness of both races.

Through an unknown phenomenon, which the Cybermen do not appear to understand, a group of these Cybermen escaped the indescribable and managed to arrive in the 51st century. The surviving Neomorphs made contact with this group, saw logic in combining forces and thus a new faction of Cybermen was born-the Cyber-Legions.

## Conclusions

The Cyber-Legions are now gone. The Second Great Cyber-War was long and brutal. It claimed the entire Tiberian Galaxy amongst its casualties, but may have finally seen an end to the Cybermen as a conquering force. My intention of this piece was to emphasise that this is not an end to the danger of the Cybermen; their origins are many and diverse-another origin may easily be in the making. The existence of the Cybermen is not the fault of a single mad man or experiment gone wrong – it is hundreds, thousands of people with good intentions on the same road to hell.

This is why the Cybermen survive. There is not a secret ark or a masterful strategy by a Cyber Super-Controller. The Cybermen survive because we, humans, are all potential Cybermen. The act of trading pain and emotional hurt for logic and purpose is not often made out of madness, but a simple choice made in the worst of situations, with the best of intentions. Technology is intrinsic to modern life; it's not so big a step for us to let it become modern life. That is the true origin of the Cybermen. Not Mondas, not Telos, not Planet 14, not Marinus, not a parallel dimension – the origin of the Cybermen is us.”

*-Recording completed...*

*-File 'On the Origins of Cybermen' has been recorded in the Matrix of the Time Lords*

*The voices of the Matrix laughed at the conclusion of the piece. How quaint, how noble that a human should try to comprehend the full history of the Cybermen. They knew the truth.*

*Long ago, they had predicted a possible future when the Cybermen became the most peace loving race in the universe, and long ago the High Council had authorised an intervention to Marinus to tip the balance in favour of that future. Now the Great Time War was over, that future had become real and codified. The human Kit Davis was not to know of the other group of Cybermen that had survived the War and arrived in the 81st century. The Matrix knew of how those Cybermen would appoint the first Cyber-Emperor, how they would become the CyberLords and how the Lords would transcend physical forms and become a race equal in intelligence, almost, to the scholars of the ancient Time Lord Academy.*

*The voices of the Recorders thanked the Coordinator for uploading the document. It did them well to be reminded of the incomplete understanding that lesser species were cursed with.*

### Author's Notes

The in-universe perspective of this piece did limit some of my theorising, as I couldn't utilise information I felt 'the author' couldn't have reasonably obtained within universe. I feel a few points of clarification are necessary:

- The Second Great Cyber-War is a term of my own for the war depicted in *Ascension of the Cybermen/The Timeless Children* that reduced the Cybermen from the legions seen in *A Good Man Goes To War* to the status quo found in *Nightmare in Silver*.
- The prehistoric Cybermen of DWM's *Cybermen* comic series are omitted as I could find no plausible way for the author to know about them. Essentially they existed as cybernetic-enhanced ape servants of the Lizard Kings (Mondas' Silurians), became independent after the Kings' empires declined and later died out, though I understand the ending of the series does imply the technology was found by future generations, which presumably inspired Doctorman Allen.
- Likewise, I omitted the Cybermen of the Mondasian colony ship. As they never left the ship, there's no way the author could know about them. The novelisation of *Twice upon a Time* suggests they pretty much died out about the detonation of Floor 507 in *The Doctor Falls*.
- The myth about Telos being the origin of the Cybermen is a link to the Target novelisation of *The Moonbase*, which claimed it was. The theory about a human colony on Telos is my attempt to link that to everything else, but the author character himself seems sceptical so take that as you will.
- The details of the Telos Resurgence are my own inferences based on Kroton the Cyberman's origin story, *Throwback: Soul of a Cyberman*, depicting *Invasion*-style cyborgs in contact with Telos; *Attack of the Cybermen* takes place in this period – I assume Cyber-Control was repaired after the explosion and the Super-Controller from *Last of the Cybermen* was installed to replace the fallen Cyber-Controller.
- The Fall of Telos is my term for the events of *Last of the Cybermen*.
- The specifics of the conference in 2526 are my own inferences.
- The Daleks destroying New Mondas occurs in *Cyber-Crisis*, a short story in the *Dalek: The Astounding Untold History of the Greatest Enemies of the Universe* anthology released in 2017.
- The confused records of the Neomorphs as they advance their time travel is linked to my interpretation of the back-story of *The Reaping*. To put it simply, the Cybermen got caught up in the Time War. It didn't go well for them.
- The 'unknown phenomenon' releasing the Cybus Cybermen from the Void is Davros's Reality Bomb weakening the barriers of the universe. It's explained in *The Next Doctor*, but I couldn't think of any in-universe reason the Cybermen would know about that.

**Image source:** Gavin Rymill (<http://www.themindrobber.co.uk/doctor-who-cybermen-3d-models-artwork.html>)