Metamagical Grafitti

The Philip K Nixon Experience | **Be What You Are** | **The Singularity is Ultraculture** | **Ideas With Teeth**

#1: The Philip K Nixon Experience

Very Soon Forever More The Way to Be
Will Be Attatched Forever Matched Through What U See - <u>maJiK</u>(video, 2003) OhGr

On Febuary 23rd of 2006 I completed work on **The Drowning Street Memo**, and I released it into the mediasphere the following day. This release is a full digital album, with track information and album art, and is designed to work most efficiently within windows media player. It is my intention that these tracks represent the most available Philip K Nixon tracks, as they form the materials out of which I have hopefully constructed a weapon. This weapon works to destroy conditioning.

To understand why I believe this construct is important, I'm going to need to get into some depth. I've dug into my files and bookshelves and pulled together the sources listed at the end of this article to help me articulate what has been until now mostly a metalinguistic experience. Working with collage and cut-ups does something seriously uncouth to the analytical brain. Coming down from this neurolinguistic high required serious grounding, and reading through what others have said has proved to be an excellent form of psychic reintegration. The references listed below are by no means exhaustive, and are instead limited to the materials I had on hand that I feel are the most important to the overall concepts I utilized. Deeper layers of

information themselves can be culled from the bibliographies of the cited books, and a few searches online will uncover vast pools of information on both William S. Burroughs and Brion Gyson, without whom cut-up culture simply wouldn't exist in the form it has taken.(1)

The album itself can be downloaded in it's entirety and unzipped into your music folder if you wish to follow along this article with it's attendant soundtrack, as it were.

Philip-K-Nixon-The_DrOwning_Street_Memo

So why did I bother? At the outset, back in 2003 when the world was younger, I read a number of things both online and off which began to trigger questions. I like using random overlays on media outlets to sort of divine the essence of a particular day, and from doing this over a period of time I began to feel there was an undertone of discordant energy that needed expression. I'd read some of the classic writings on esoterrorism, and had devised a media strategy based on Hakim Bey's The Obelisk (probably a misguided effort, but here I am anyway). Douglas Rushkoff's book Coercion is the most important book I read in 1999, and without it I'd be nowhere, lost in a bankrupt worldview. I cannot recommend this book highly enough, and in it I found this.

> "The study and practice of influence through music has become so advanced, in fact, that today's programmers argue not about how to achieve certain effects but about which effects they wish to create. As one psychologist explained the strategy,
>
>> Most people's perception is that time flies when you're having fun... [but] if you like the music and concentrate on it, time passes more slowly. Music you dislike makes time contract. Fast music makes your perception of time increase. The dilemma for the retailer is, do they want people to like the place or to feel that time is going quickly?
>
> "For traditional Muzak to work, we are not supposed to be consciously aware that it is playing. As Muzak vice president Bruce Funkhouser put it, "If your head goes up to the ceiling, we've blown it.""
> (Coercion: Why We Listen To What They Say - 1999, Douglas Rushkoff, pp. 98-99)

If that isn't a standard to set oneself against, I don't know what is. The first time I was reading these lines I was listening to a lot of Pigface, Atari Teenage Riot, and Sonic Youth, to put this into perspective. By the time I reached this:

> "As if to rewrite history, many Internet experts and journalists developed a mythology that the Internet was developed not by university researchers but by the United States military. A widely circulated article by cyberpunk author and Global Business Network member Bruce

Sterling implied that the Internet was just an extension of the Defense Department's effort to maintain a communications infrastructure in the event of a nuclear war. Although the true history of the Internet, and the military's rather indirect contribution, were later recounted in Katie Hafner and Mathew Lyon's 1997 book *Where Wizards Stay Up Late*, the damage had been done. The Internet would forever be associated with the Cold War arms race, and it's communitarian roots could be discounted more easily."
(Coercion p. 266)

I didn't know that. Did you know that? This book pushed me off into a whole new set of concerns. Media is a shared space now. With the advent of the internet we have a new critter. The nativity is the mash-up of culture live. If this thing gets much older, the internet will learn to crawl. Since killing it now is pretty much impossible, we better learn to prepare for a new consciousness to arise, one fed entirely on our lives and the data those lives generate. In part, leaving traces in this internet of anykind automatically wires you up to the awareness of this.. shit, I don't know, it's pretty much the biggest fucking egregore out there. We should probably be worshipping it.

It really is a big fucking internet. Most of us gravitate to the familiar as Rushkoff mentions. We grow community around the familiar, and out in the wilds of the internet exist strange and unusual websites we will never see. People are putting up so much information, most of it trivial, but all of it unique, that the only apprehension of the totality of the internet's topology would have to occur from the thing as a whole. A super-organism grown conscious of its parts. Would it be intelligent? Ray Kurzweil says in his 2005 book *The Singularity is Near*, "Information is not knowledge... intelligence selectively destroys information to create knowledge." We have to assume that this superorganism wouldn't go about selectively censoring its disparate parts. Kurzweil also points out that a neuron isn't self-aware, something hopefully readily apparent.

"Extensive research is going into designing swarm intelligence. Swarm intelligence describes the way that complex behaviors can arise from large numbers of individual agents, each following relatively simple rules. Swarms of insects are often able to devise intelligent solutions to complex problems, such as designing the architecture of a colony, despite the fact that no single member of the swarm possesses the requisite skills.
"DARPA announced in 2003 that a battalion of 120 military robots (built by I-Robot, a company cofounded by robotic pioneer Rodney Brooks) was to be fitted with swarm-intelligence software to enable it to mimic the organized behavior of insects. As robotic systems become physically smaller and larger in number, the principles of self-organizing swarm intelligence will play an increasingly important role."
(The Singularity is Near - 2005, Ray Kurzweil, p. 333)

This leads me to think that if the internet did become a conscious entity, it may become so based purely on a chaotic self-assembling autonomous level, reflecting only the collective unconscious of the human race. A giant fucking mirror, Atu VI, The Lovers in the tarot. It is this vast and as yet unmanifest superconscious organism within which we are destined as a race to interface with in the coming century, a neural net we

subconsciously constructed like a colony built by ants.(2) I don't put a lot of stock into random numerology but this particular page number jumps out at me. A case could be made that Chronozon is simply the energy of an emergent entelechy, or rather, the overarching consciousness that is embodied only through the principles of emergence. Chronozon is the intelligence of the swarm, and can be dissipated into its disparate elements. Chronozon then may be the lord of egregores, of group minds, of zeitgeists. The meta-egregore, the foundry in which new group minds are minted.

Even if this supposition treads too far afield, it does provide some entry into the idea of egregores. It would be trivial to say that an egregore is simply a meme. It is a meme carrier, just like humans are, except it does not require a physical presence. Most specifically, I was concerned with three egregore types during the last few years, those being corporate, government, and religious egregores. Religious egregores are the most readily apparent as it is usually the religion's task to spread the egregore's mindshare by any means necessary. These egregores are usually the deity or deities of the religion, along with whatever embodiement of evil that deity may oppose. (That's overly simplistic, not to mention trite, but I've got a lot of ground to cover and I know you're smart enough to stay with me here.) The physical accretions of the egregore then are the temples, structures, and iconography made manifest by and at the commission of the religion's followers. Governmental egregores are more perverse, more recent, and tend to be geographically bound. The United States is more or less run by Uncle Sam and the Goddess Columbia, when viewed from this mental attitude. The last is the corporate egregore, the youngest of all egregores, coming into its own in the United States in a federal court in 1886, when justices decreed corporations to be legal persons in their own rights, "as they represent the property of natural persons and acts on their behalf" as Paco Xander Nathan put it.

> "I could go on about the political and legal fallout of 118 U.S. 394... but you can read about that elsewhere. Something strange happened in 1886 -- something so pivotal that rejected a century of major events in US history which had contested the corporate form, and projected ahead into a century of governmental drift until almost no human collective could, through government alone, contradict these new and different beings.
> "Setting differences aside for a moment, consider how might a biologist describe this new species? As luck would have it, some legal theorists who analyze corporate law actually have applied techniques borrowed from biology. Gunther Teubner, in particular, built on work by social theorist Niklaus Luhmann to apply *autopoiesis* -- a biological theory used to describe how a system self-organizes. Dr Luhmann suggested that a group of persons tends to exhibit a 'group individual' or *zeitgeist*, which then perpetuates on behalf of that group, to an extent. Dr Teubner also examined how some corporate law develops for no observable reason other than to perpetuate more corporate law (and by the way, he's quite a fan of 118 U.S. 394)... in short, observing the zeitgeist at work.
> "Luhmann's 'group individual' corresponds closely to the 'legal person' defined for a corporation. Either notion provides a clear example of what is esoterically described as *evocation*, or in other words, the process of summoning a spirit."
> (The Corporate Body: Liber 118 U.S. 394 - Signum #11 2001, Paco Xander Nathan)

In Nathan's article "Chasing Egregores," we are provided with the aspects of cabbalistic magical analysis of the essence of a corporation:

"The yod represents the 'metaphysical essence' of the operation, i.e. what the alchemist is attempting to accomplish. In this case, the benefit of the shareholders would plug in here just fine.

"The first hé represents a 'preparation of the surroundings'. The collective intellectual property which mediates the corporation, i.e., the sigil composed of a logo and trademark, is probably an excellent thing to employ for this. A corporate charter fits well, too.

"The vau represents a 'good body of disciples grouped around the master'. If that does not sound like a Board of Directors, then I am ready to turn in my black robe. This quality may also extend down into the exectutives, employees, interns, and consultants -- envision a basic organizational chart.

"The second hé represents a 'sound society of followers'. This is an optimal place to link customers, the public, and mass media in general into the chain of belief."

(Chasing Egregores - <u>Scarlet Letter V.6.1</u> 2001, Paco Xander Nathan)

The above article in it's entirety will provide the curious with excellent references on building and assaulting corporate egregores, culled from the author's study of religious egregores and their historical manifestations in magical literature. Fellow Key23'er LVX23 tackled this topic recently in a number of articles and related workings, and his ideas went a long way toward solidifying my own intent in these tracks.(3) His essay provided me with a lot to think about in a few short paragraphs:

"Magickal assaults can use these techniques to invoke the egregore, but what do you do once you're there? The fundamental assumption within the corporation is that stuff is important. That goods & services are necessary to human survival and happiness. Conversely, the most terrifying reality of the corporation is that it is impermanent. It's always struggling against market factors, shareholders, and fickle customers; employee negligence & stupidity; corporate watchdogs and bold journalists. Strike with the inner peace of impermanence. Strike with the relentless change of time, who brings down all attempts at order. Strike with hawk-headed gods and egyptian queens. Strike with the legends and myths of humanity, rich with depth and meaning and integrity. Amidst the backdrop of history, the corporation is a fleeting moment. Show it this truth. Plant seeds of aetheric chaos....

"But what of the dark forces, the archons of war and exploitation? Are magickal assaults on such entities viable? Safe? Bechtel, Halliburton, the Carlysle Group - these are the real powers stalking the planet. These shadowy egregores prefer to keep as low of a profile as possible. You'll not find any corporate sigils lying around like keys to the vault. An effective angle uses good 'ol guerilla journalism. Get the word out. When the profiteering and lies become public knowledge, the dark egregore is exposed and weakens. It can no longer function unfettered. How many people knew what Halliburton was 5 years ago? Now the egregore is under assault. Draw them out of the shadows, then attack with the light."

(The Corporation as Magickal Entity - 2004?, LVX23)

It was this that led me to arrange a magical action directed not at the egregores themselves, but at those points of maximum media blackout that demanded to be exposed. Magical gonzo meta-journalism. I'd written the essay "Magical Assault on Corporations" and in doing so discovered a very glaring gap - my hypothesis only accounted for those corporations which were publicly traded.(4) Chris' suggestion made me rethink my approach so I could target private corporations and religious figures without actually targeting them, something I found manifestly difficult when I first attempted a direct hex on a political figure in 1999:

> "Prolonged obsessive religious activity will, for the ordinary man, create a minor aetheric thought form that he may call his god. This effect is partly transferable and explains the difficulty of attacking popular public figures. It is noticeable that when such a figure falls from favor and is stripped of the protective thoughts of his fellows, then sickness and death often follow quickly."
> (Psychonaut - 1987, Peter J. Carroll)

Even worse, with the advent of the Patriot Act, I found myself wondering just what would be made of my actions. We've got trademark laws and workplace laws that trump free speech. Kids are getting capped for speaking their minds, and goddess help you if you were islamic in the days immediately following 9/11. I went from openly promoting esoterrorism to secretly practicing it in the span of about four hours after reading Barbara Fisher's article in New Witch #4:

> "The stated intent of the USA PATRIOT Act is to streamline the ability for federal law enforcement agencies to share information with each other, as well as with local and state police departments, in order to more effectively track down terrorists. However, civil libertarians on both Left and the Right have been disturbed by some of the implications of many of the provisions of the over three-hundred page law.
> "Some of these provisions are of special interest to protestors and members of activist organizations. Of particular import is the **broader definition of domestic terrorism.** The Patriot Act states that "the term, 'domestic terrorism' means activities that -- (A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State, (B) appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping, and (C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.
> "This definition is disturbingly broad. If a peace protestor or activist group engages in anything that could even remotely be construed as violent, a danger to human life, or unlawful property damage, not only could they find themselves being arrested but, instead of being charged with destruction of property or civil disobedience, they could concievably be held indefinitely under suspicion of being a 'domestic terrorist'."
> (Are You a Terrorist? - <u>New Witch #4</u> summer 2003, Barbara Fisher)

And so I decided about the only way I could influence change from where I was positioned was to create downloadable audio sculpture unlistenable by anyone except those who were supposed to hear it.(5) My stated intention was no longer to directly attack these entities magically, but to feed them with toxins and spread the collective awareness of their existence. I chose to aim for the secret lodges manipulating the government egregore, the religious figure manipulating the christian egregore, and a few private corporations untargetable in my previous paradigm of action. This also required me to think a lot about what a ritual actually was:

> ".. for a ritual is something in its own right. It is not just something you do, or words you say, or the place you choose to perform in. It may involve putting earth on a mound or a sacrifice on a shrine, making offerings to spirits or dedications at an altar, swearing an oath or walking bare-foot over red-hot coals. The elements in themselves are unimportant because they are not peculiar to the ritual. It is the whole of the procedure that matters. And it does really matter. If everything is right, the parts of the ritual fuse together into a whole which bears no resemblance to any of the components. It becomes a mechanism for folding the abstraction of our reality back into flux where anything and everything can happen."
> (Gifts of Unknown Things - 1976, Lyall Watson)

One of the reasons I chose audio is the ease with which audio files can be distributed. And, thanks to the piracy culture engendered by Napster, .mp3s have become a familiar format for media, somewhat democratizing the music industry. Thus, the mp3s I produce could function within the same sphere of activity as high profile musicians, becoming "seeds of aetheric chaos."

It's important to mention that I didn't know anything about music when I started, and it was only through living with musicians for a number of years that I was able to create anything at all. I'm still profoundly amazed at some of the stuff I was able to make by the end of the project, and in some sense this project manifest through me of its own accord. The Burroughs influence was from direct interaction with his ghost in a dream and through poltergeist activity in the house where I was living, at the time a few blocks from Burroughs home estate and on the bank of the WIlliam S. Burroughs creek. Cut-ups were a conscious decision, in the light of this psychic environment.

> "The system of control within words, the definition virus, the need for certainty, can all be broken through cut-ups, through collages, even through writing that has no specific goal, but is tangential, intuitive, going where the mind wills. The goal is not to be controlled, or even to control, though certainly as I've said above, awareness of patterns can lead to more control..."
> "Burroughs did a lot of experiments with tapes, cutting up sound, and a lot of musicians carry on that tradition. For Burroughs, it was a magical operation. Perhaps for some of the musicians this is also the case: 'Further if all we imagine to be reality is equivalent to a recording, then we become empowered to edit, re-arrange, re-contextualize and re-project by cutting-up and re-assembling our own reality and potentially, the reality of others. If this is true and effective, then a magical act is taking place' (Book of Lies: The Disinformation guide to Magick and the Occult, - 2003, *Genesis P-orridge*, pp 110-111). Granted, this is just a paradigm.."

I found myself constructing rituals using audio and eventually frequency manipulation, with the intent that playback feeds back through time to the point of ritual empowering the audio sigil. Using what little I understood of music theory, I sought to wreak enough havok in the listener to align their consciousness with the act of creation. I don't really know if I came anywhere close until I started working directly with brain wave generators, as in theory the clips from movies and cartoons only carry semantic weight with those listeners who have already seen or heard the originating media. But the frequencies do work, and work quite effectively, in producing brain change aligned to those ritual tracks which incorporate the sounds.

"This doesn't happen just because of an emotional reaction. There are physiological reactions to sound, and these reactions trigger a change in consciousness and possibly health. Sound, after all, is vibration, and at the most fundamental level we are made up of specific vibrations, sound if you will, or so contemporary physicists suggest:

"According to string theory, the elementary ingredients of the universe are *not* point particles. Rather, they are tiny, one-dimensional filaments somewhat like infinitely thin rubber bands, vibrating to and fro. But don't let the name fool you: Unlike an ordinary piece of string, which itself is composed of molecules and atoms, the strings of string theory are purported to lie deeply within the heart of matter. The theory proposes that *they* are ultramicroscopic ingredients making up the particles out of which atoms themselves are made [Italics are the author's]."
(The Elegant Universe - 1999, *Briane Greene*, p 136

"Disrupt the vibration and everything falls apart. But there are also ways of healing with sound, such as with healers who use the sounds of resonating crystal bowls as a means of attuning a person's energy, or vibration, as the case may be."
(Space/Time Magic p. 106)

I intended that these tracks uploaded into the internet would help heal the internet itself - heal it in that information wants to be freely accessible at all points, and that bottlenecks and classifications and disinformation represent unhealthy cells in the internet-as-superorganism. These tracks are vibrating at an abstract layer constantly, simply by being accessible online. But the internet is still two steps removed from where the real action is, which is in the human brain. Maybe by 2020 we'll have notebooks under a thousand dollars with all the operating capacity as the human brain, but for right now us meat-heads have the most powerful quantum computers on the planet in our skulls and we didn't even have to purchase them. So these high-frequency-laden tracks attempted to capitalize on that. Back to Taylor Ellwood's excellent book:

"To understand this further, let's consider what music can do to your physiology. The sound of music operates on frequencies, and specific frequencies will trigger neurological changes in the transmitters of the brain:

> "Each brain center generates impulses at a certain frequency based on the predominant neurotransmitters it secrets, in other words, the brains internal communication system (the language) is based on frequencies. Presumably, when we send waves of external energy at, say, 10hz, certain cells in the lower brain stem will respond because they normally fire within that particular frequency range; as a result, specific mood-altering chemicals associated with that region will be released." (TAGC - Teste Tones liner notes)

"As you can see it's literally possible to get high off music. The electrochemicals that are stimulated help to create an altered state of mind."
(Space/Time Magic p 109)

So these tracks have a co-creational affect that those more aware of their own inner alchemy will be more effective at resonating with the ritual action embedded within the tracks, but will prove effective with any listener.(6) Hopefully not only will you find these tracks useful in your own work, but you'll be able to incorporate (heh) these ideas into your own magical work. Art is magic, and artistic expression is one of the most powerful ways a magician can influence hir immediate environment. I have immense respect for the work of musicians, and I don't intend to compare my work with that of those who have mastered their art form. As I've stated before, This Is Not Music.

The track list of The Drowning Street Memo, with attendant commentary:

01 Memo: (2005) The sheer volume of samples in this track makes cataloguing these samples almost impossible. This track, along with a number of others, would not have been possible if it weren't for the huge database of news audio Mystery X provided. Opening with a Scientology reference from South Park, this track rapidly descends into sheer chaotic noise. From randomly sampling news audio dealing with the immediate post-911 environment I was able to create a soundscape onto which I layered a series of noises designed to awaken and cut through the collective media trance which allowed the Downing Street Memos on Iraq's nuclear capability to slide unnoticed amidst the furour over the 9/11 attacks.

02 MonarCo: (2004) Using samples from the Crown of Peace media release from the Rev. Moon, audio from Bubba Ho-tep, George W. Bush, and a C-Span Booknotes author Dan Briody, I tried to create what I hoped would be an audiosigil charged to reveal any and all illegal activities undertaken by the administration and the Rev. Moon's Unification Church.

03 Under Ground Lair: (2006) Samples from Marcel DuChamp speaking on the topic of ready-mades and George W. Bush with a bullhorn at ground-zero spliced with a commentary

discussing overpopulation.

04 Under Lying Source: (2006) This track ties together Richard M Nixon and Philip K Dick, and functions as the invocation of 'Philip K Nixon.' The music was developed, and a loop of Jason Louv saying "There might be a single underlying source for multiple religions" functioned as the framework upon which I summoned the cut-up, and this track represents the foundation for meditative consciousness when I work with this album. (1)

05 00014h1D1CK: (2003) This is the first track I developed from a very long interview with Philip K Dick I'd run across online. It is included here as a meditation tool and because it is in a sense self-referential, in that the content of the track is a comment on the totality of the project. I use this several times, because I suspect self-reference may be a key to self-awareness, and works to empower the overall energy of this working.

06 Braid Washen Mines: (2005) A number of samples here, from the cartoon Sealab 2021, George Noori & guest on Coast2Coast speaking on free-energy, Timothy Leary speaking on software and gnosis, Ben Mack and Howard Bloom are in there refering to marketing, Alex Jones pops in speaking on the prison planet slave state, and I used electronic brain wave generator software to entrain the brain to a state of magical awareness in preparation for the next track.

07 Drowning Street Memo: (2005) Arguably the most important of the tracks in this working, this is the track I built the album sequence around. From the soundscape the voice of R. U. Sirius rises, and I sampled him and pulled him out of the background because he's fucking R. U. Sirius. As for the rest of the samples, there are so many news audio sources used in this track I am unable to catalogue, let alone remember all of them, although they are for the most part present in the first track as well. This track aims more at the disinformation built up in the mediasphere during the build-up to the Iraq war.

08 Quite Quiet: (2004) This track is intended to make you think. Sadly I don't remember where I got the audio sample. Honestly, I only vaguely remember mixing this track, but it certainly voices my own confusion on how little reaction there has been to the reports that the intelligence community has been hijacked by religious interests.

09 1lbeReal: (2003) My favorite track. I discovered that N.W.A.'s 911 is a Joke track made a wonderful loop if played backwards: '911 is a Joke' becomes 'Why's it no one knows.' The bulk of the rest of the track comes from the movie trailer for Michael Moore's 'Farenheit 911,' and my intention was that this track act to increase the audience for what I'd expected to be a groundbreaking documentary.

10 Appropriations CommittE: (2006) The most obvious and notable samples on this track came from DJ Food's Raiding the Twentieth Century track, itself a mish-mash of countless tracks. A secondary loop draws attention to one of the most untalked about topics regarding the post-911 environment. This track also acts as a commentary on the project itself, continuing the theme of self-reference introduced in the third track.

11 MonarCo (We Are Fucked Mix): (2005) More with the Reverend, this one following ideas

popularized in the appendix of The Ticket That Exploded by William S Burroughs. The closing sample is taken from E. L. Doctorow's "The Unfeeling President"

12 Liberal By Comparison: (2005) More samples from E. L. Doctorow introduce this track, with computerized text-2-speech closing it out.

13 Tinfoil Hat: (2003) This was a very early track conceptually. I was working with using samples from Return to Oz, Lunatics, and The Fifth Element, this track succeeds despite my lack of experience with the software. I include it because of the idea of poisening culture with its own emissions, a theme I return to in the fifteenth track.

14 Horselover Fat Explains: (2004) I returned to the Philip K Dick interview to compile a more complete exploration, and this track was the result. The music itself comes from out-takes to the Unquiet Mind project, and was re-applied in different configurations to provide a landscape for Dick's voice. This track was intentionally created, rather than randomly assembled, so it could be used to explain what the Philip K Nixon project had become by this point, and functions as something of a statement of intent.

15 Infected Nativity: (2005) A certain amount of toungue-in-cheek went into this track, and for a long time I didn't know whether or not I'd release it.(8) South Park, InuYasha, and Sealab 2021, overlayed with Noam Chomsky, Trent Reznor, and Charles Bukowski, with a touch of Resident Evil: Apocalypse provide the bulk of the samples. This track is designed to help further the toxic energy for the final two tracks.

16 The Drowning Street Memo Remix: (2006) Again, the sheer volume of tracks and the way in which they were presented makes cataloguing these samples impossible, as is previously mentioned. This track brings back energy from Nixon's withdrawal of troops, mixes it into the hurricane controversy, and maintains the emphasis on the conspiracy theorist from the Washington Journal clip.

17 MonarCo (Blue Moon Mix): (2004) The work of Restoration, as the Reverend Moon describes it, is one of a fundamentalist monarchy driven by market interests. Such a society will arise if the current trends continue, if for no other reason than blind adherence to a group illusion is an underlying principle that achieves social dominance during the decay of a superorganism. The theme, **wake up you're under a theocorporate monarchy**, is concluded, and the message to the world is "You don't want this to happen."

Footnotes:

(1) And a special thanks to Greylodge.org, without whom I would not have had access to both audio and audience. Their (unwitting) contribution to Philip K Nixon was equivalent to the contributions of Mystery X, and I couldn't have done it without either of them.

(2) - Quorum sensing in bacteria and the attendant phase transitions in the bacteria's behavior are another area

of research that seem to imply that what appears to be conscious action can manifest at even the most microscopic level.

(3) - His excellent piece in Generation Hex will provide any activist with a thorough understanding of how such a working can be achieved, and indeed the whole of that book cannot be more highly recommended from this reviewer's viewpoint.

(4) - On the other hand, having a read-out daily of the influence a magickal ritual is doing is a lot easier than keeping a magickal journal.

(5) - I guess this would be about as close as I'd get to admitting in the presence of divinity, this belief in random spontaneous organization.

(6) - These later tracks were designed with this theory in mind, although I was operating with an as-yet-unverbalized hypothesis similar to this prior to recieving Teriel's book.

(7) - From here on in, I'm pretty much tranced out. The first three tracks act to present the targets of focus, while the rest of the album either repeats those targets in new iterations or provides support for maintaining the trance achieved in this track.

(8) - Still, if I think about all that could have been, this track reflects a profound ray of hope for our future. (Fred Durst is no longer Vice President of Interscope, and that alone is cause for rejoicing.)

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#2 Be What You Are

When I stated to a friend that Douglas Rushkoff's book Coercion: Why We Listen to What They Say was the most influential treatise on black magic published in the last ten years, I was only half joking. Our individual worldviews are dangling on the puppet strings of the media's news releases; created in the wake of a thousand persuaders, each striving desperately to sell us their view of reality. I'm doing the same thing, promoting a worldview less centralized, more empowering to the individual, but without overlooking the importance and influence of superorganisms and group collectives. Because I have less influence than the media conglomerates, my worldview which I am trying to pass on to you is not as dominate as the collective cultural worldview produced on Madison Avenue.

I do not want to start this off with the statement that all marketing is bad, or that all corporations are out to eat you. Good marketing tells you what you didn't know about a product that you may very well be interested in,

and the product itself should deliver on the promises implicit in the advertisment. If it doesn't, don't buy any more shit from that company. We can dig back through history and make the assumption that this is precisely why the Sears catalogue was the powerhouse merchandiser of the turn of the century. But that is far from the standard operations of government and religious advertising, and even product awareness and marketing have shifted dramatically from honest product information once a standard in advertisments. I for one would welcome a return to such standards.

Instead, today we are enmeshed in a matrix of media messages the bulk of which rely upon persuasion techniques refined by years of market pressure and behavioral psychology.

> "To influence us, they disable our capacity to make reasoned judgements and appeal to deeper, perhaps unresolved, and certainly unrelated issues. By understanding the unconscious processes we use to make our choices of what to buy, where to eat, whom to respect, and how to feel, clever influence professionals can sidestep our critical faculties and compel us to act however they please. We are disconnected from our own further disempowerment. The less we are satisfied by our decisions, the more easily manipulated we become. "To restore our own ability to act wilfully, we must accept that we are the ones actively submitting to the influence of others. We are influenced because, on some level, we want to be."
> (Coercion: Why We Listen to What They Say - 1999, Douglas Rushkoff, p. 19)

This influence is by no means restricted to advertising. In fact, advertising in the traditional sense comprises a much less serious threat to our unconscious than the whole of mass communications. What is presented isn't an advertisment for a product, but an entire worldview composed of what can be considered self-censoring corporate culture. And we are complicit in the spread of the mediocre psychic environment we now find ourselves.

Our responsibility is to embrace that which does a better job of explaining reality and discard that which obfuscates. We need to become conscious of our true selves to do this, which means discarding the personas long enough to comprehend how our persona influences our perceptions.

> "... by unconsciously accepting mass communications, we are adopting alien thought patterns. These thought patterns have an agenda, thought patterns that triggered a buzz-whir effect in our brains so that presented with certain situations, we have a knee-jerk reaction that although it feels like a free formed 'logical' action, was actually implanted in our brains."
> (Twisp, Ben Mack, p. 39)

How does this work? In part because of how the brain operates:

> "Remember that when the human nervous system unscrambles a scrambled message this will seem to the subject like his very own ideas which just occurred to him... Anyone can be made to hear voices with scrambling techniques... To carry it further you can use recordings of voices known to him."
> (The Electronic Revolution, 1967, William S. Burroughs)

Taking this a step further, when a person normally hears or believes he hears voices from within:

> "... it is regarded either as undiluted nonsense or as the voice of God. It does not seem to occur to any one that there might be something valuable in between." (Four Archetypes, Carl G. Jung)

This is one of the tricks in the bag of a audio sculpture/remix artist. Devising incredibly small bits of information that come from an overall pattern, then re-arranging the bits of information in an engaging way provides a structure from which the brain re-assembles the message. Three things become one. Repetition drives memorization. Especially when we are running on robot, when we aren't fully home, which appears to be the normal level of operation for most of us.

> "... people are seldom at home, always somewhere else, always 'absent.' Life, as it is called, is for most of us one long postponement. And the simple reason for it is: FEAR.
> "As we see whenever a war breaks out, the fear of war is overcome the moment one is really in it. If war were really as terrible as people imagine it to be it would have been wiped out long ago. To make war is as natural for human beings as to make love. Love can make cowards of men just as much as the fear of war. But once desperately in love a man will commit any crime and not only feel justified, but feel good about it. It is the order of things.
> "The wisest men are those who speak of illusion: MAYA. Illusion is the antidote to fear. In harness they render life absurdly illogical."
> (The Wisdom of the Heart - 1941, Henry V. Miller, p. 96)

The influence of FEAR on American politics is so obvious in the wake of the events surrounding 9/11 that I hardly need bother providing examples. Instead, let's take a quick look at how illusion is used to assuage this fear.

> "The good storyteller slowly and consistently builds our anxiety... As the level of tension increases, we are drawn deeper into the storyteller's spell. The worse it gets, the more dependent we are on the storyteller for a way out. It's all worth the pain though, because eventually the conflict will be resolved and the audience will be released into delightful catharsis.
> "Because the audience is willing to accept any reasonable escape from their own state of unbearable tension, the storyteller has the power to concoct whatever solution he wishes. And embedded in that solution can be an agenda. The more intense an audience's level of anxiety, the more preposterous a release it will accept."
> (Coercion, p. 201)

Religion has for thousands of years stood as the illusionary antidote to the fear of death. Political displays in the wake of terrorist attacks are designed to produce their own illusionary antidote. The illusions presented to

us by way of centralized mass media are built out of political polls, coporate tie-ins, and market pressures.

These illusions frame the political discourse and dictate the political discourse. We build our questions about reality from the illusions presented to us. Those presenting the illusions who are cognizant of this effect are crafting media designed to raise questions for us to ask, and a context in which the answers put them in the best possible light. The smart public relations consultant knows that the truth will find its way into print, so they must create a media environment that spins truth to their advantage.

Marvel has published a number of comics that deal with this new media landscape. I really enjoyed 'Supreme Power': Written to bring superheroes into a realist setting, it explores the effect of the trully alien on a superorganism. Michael J. Straczynski's storyline is a realists portrayal of the effects of superpowered individuals in an amoral world. Public opinion and image motivate the heroes and their handlers more than villians, and the superheroes thamselves are portrayed as prisoners of their public persona. Truth is less important than the context within which it is presented.

> "Which is why it's better if the kid says that himself, rather than us saying it. But we can't do
> that until we can unveil him, and that means narrowing down the uniform options. The
> president only wants to see three choices."
> (Supreme Power V.1 #3, 2003, Michael J Straczynski)

This kind of positioning of truth is not limited to fictional abstractions occurring in comics; rather, comics are finally getting around to reflecting just how skewed our mediated reality has become. Another series, Ocean written by Warren Ellis and drawn up at the hands of Chris Sprouse, Karl Story, and colored by Randy Mayor, illustrates just how out of control corporate culture could become with the next-generation of technology. We need to take these stories to heart, and really examine what it means to be an individual within nested packs of competing superorganisms.

> "Advertising and market research is an ongoing experiment on public perceptions."
> (Twisp, 1997, Ben Mack, p. 185)

> "Like salesmen, public-relations specialists seek to mirror the conscious and unconscious
> concerns of their targets in order to change their perception of reality. Just as a car dealer sizes
> up his walk-in clientele, researchers working for governments, public-relations firms, and
> corporations expend a great deal of effort sizing up their constituencies on a regular basis.
> Once they understand our belief system and, more important, where the irrationality and
> emotional triggers lie in those beliefs, they can work to move us in a different direction.
> 'Closing the sale' in these cases might mean gaining public support for a war, changing an
> industry's reputation as a polluter, or simply restoring voter's trust in a president who has lied to
> them."
> (Coercion, p. 151)

Because they are reliant on these tools to discern our beliefs, there is at least one way you can actively influence the influencers. Ben Mack explains:

"'If you are asked a market research question, it is best to answer in such a way that if everybody answered the way you do, the world would be a better place.'
"I think we should vote like this too. I see research as a way of tallying social agreement. I don't think we should vote in politics for what suits us best. I think we should vote for what we think will make the world a better place. I think this value needs to be taught in school in order to make democracy work."
(Twisp, p. 183)

Let's use a more concrete example... Hacking the Grocery Story

Here's the story you are sold: By using a grocery card that tracks personal buying patterns, you recieve in-store coupons without having to clip them. You've become a grocery store member.

> "D'you want out 'superadvantage' nice plastic card?
> "No! No! No! It's only a cheap, dirty trick to gather all possible data on your comportment without ever having to raise a finger. They'll know how much and when and where you drink/shit/eat/love/cry/wash/sleep/etc. and stuff their databases for free (notice how the 'discounts' are lilliputian in comparison with what they steal you through the abovementioned tricks... did you know that 35% of the fridge products you buy will go directly from fridge to dustbin? That's the real average, duh)."
> (Supermarket Enslavement Techniques, 1997, "Let's crack the slave-masters!" +Orc)

We are complicit in generating the media environment within which we are ensconced. Carrying our grocery member card, we have suddenly become attuned to those tags attatched to the grocery store shelves which advertise (miniscule) discounts for using the member card. "Advertising is best when it catches somebody's attention as opposed to ramming a meme down somebody's mind" (Twisp, p. 185) The grocery store has triggered feedback through association, and can structure itself around these repetative series of associations as time passes. Over time,

> "This designer consumption would amount to a nearly hermetic feedback loop between each consumer and his marketers--a form of pacing and leading where the customer's taste is mirrored and then slowly led toward progressively more extreme manifestations of itself. It is a recipe for technologically induced obsessive-compulsive behavior, as our desires are repeatedly amplified and then fed back to us. The one-to-one future differs from the marketing we're subjected to today only in its speed and specificity."
> (Coercion, p. 289)

If that sounds paranoid, think about this:

> "RFID tags are being placed on the bottom of grocery carts in various supermarkets in the States. These tags emit a signal every five seconds that is received by receptors installed at various locations throughout the store. Once collected, the signals are used to chart the position of the grocery cart and record its route through the entire store...

"This new tracking data is a significant addition to shopping data stolen from consumers through the introduction of scanner technology, which specifically details every item purchased, its price, the name and address of the buyer and whether a coupon was used."
(Tracking the Patterns of Supermarket Shoppers, 2005, "Let's crack the slave-masters!" +fravia)

Since we cannot stop this, we shouldn't fear it. Otherwise it becomes another point of leverage for further manipulation. Instead we need to understand that it is going on and seek to turn it to our advantage.

"Everyone is wearing a fiction suit."
(Brain Sinews, John Harrigan)

I have only my own experience upon which to formulate my worldview. When I was born I was brought into a world built up out of expectations and traditions dictated by religious and cultural mores. My obsession with occult and esoteric studies comes as a direct result of my upbringing as an adoptee. Knowing this does little to disuade me from persuing my interests, but instead acts as a grounding from which a certain perspective is achieved. Each of us is complicit in hir own experience, and though most accept this complicity I sought to define its borders. It has been my experience that mapping out an abstraction is something begun by way of intention, but is accomplished through mental distractions. Hopefully I'll be able to impart some information that will help others appreciate their own capabilities.

The worldview I was raised within demanded more from me than I was willing to accept, and over time I learned this was not the only available reality tunnel through which to experience reality.

"I recognized the psychiatrist and the minister as keepers of the establishment's perceived truths -- one representing mental health, the other moral certitude. They were accomplices in keeping the adoptee aborted from the consciousness of his clan. They saw him not as the returned lost baby but as the returned dead, who seek vengeance."
(The Journey of the Adopted Self, 1994, Betty Jean Lifton)

I am an adoptee. This label came in place of my original birth certificate, and along with it in its place I received a legal fiction: a birth certificate doctored up a few months after I was born. This certificate is a lie accepted as truth in the eyes of the law. Deep meditation on this topic has served to uproot elements deeply repressed in my own unconscious, as well as strengthen my own internal imaginal landscape.

"Natural children, who have parents, siblings, and other blood-related relatives, are grounded in a reality from which they can spin their images. But adoptees do not feel grounded or connected by any such reality. Much of their imagery is not centered on the adoptive family in which they live as if they belong, but rather in fantasy and imagination. They have a sense that their very perceptions are decieving them. They have lost the abiliity to distinguish between what is real and what is supposed to be real."
(The Journey of the Adopted Self)

I expect an arguement could be made at my expense that these very essays are proof that my ability to distinguish between real and supposedly real has been damaged in some way. Using magical consciousness to combat mass communications and the attendant agenda may at first appear to be quixotic, but I wouldn't bother writing this if I hadn't already had some success.

So to continue, I first had to evaluate my preconceptions and repressed emotions. As much as possible, I had to remove myself from social expectations and prejudices regarding the mask of 'adoptee.'

> "... being separated from their birthmothers and handed over to strangers in the adoption process is the only trauma where the victims are expected by the whole of society to be grateful..."
> (The Primal Wound, 1993, Nancy Verrier)

I didn't know if I was grateful. I couldn't simply allow myself to be grateful without understanding the situation surrounding my birth, especially after multiple viewings of the film 'The Truman Show.' I had to awaken the trauma buried in my unconscious mind and release it instead of allowing it to continue manifesting. As Lifton puts it in her book, "The adoptee's goal is to illuminate the dark unconscious of the self and make it whole." While I agree with Betty Jean Lifton's statement, I firmly believe that should be everyone's goal, not just that of the adoptee. Adoptees may even have a head-start on the rest of you, in that they have something of a roadmap for this kind of work.

> "Adoptees must weave a new self-narrative out of the fragments of what was, what might have been, and what is. This means they must integrate thair two selves: the regressed baby who was abandoned and the adult the baby has become.
> "They must make the artificial self real, and allow the forbidden self to come out of hiding. They must integrate what is authentic in these two selves, and balance the power between them. It is during this period that the adoptee feels most vulnerable, because neither self is in charge...
> "They must accept that they cannot be fully the birth parent's child any more than they could be fully the adoptive parents' child. They must claim their own child, become their own person, and belong to themselves."
> (The Journey of the Adopted Self)

In essence, I had to assemble as much narrative out of my own experience, what information I could garner on the experiences surrounding my birth, and come to terms with that which I may very well never know. Out of this, I wove a narrative through which I gave birth to myself. I can't provide details of the day-to-day transformations in consciousness, nor the various outbursts of madness and self-destruction such a process entails. I had to peel away the layers of my persona and uncover the truth hidden within, and the operation shook me to the very core. Nor is this process complete. I have been engaged in this work for a long while now, and even this article is a step further along the path.

> "The personality, a mask of convenience, becomes stuck to the face. Eye becomes clouded by 'I.' The human spirit becomes a trivial mess of petty identifications. The most cherished

principles are the greatest lies. 'I think therefore I am.' But what is 'I?' The more you think, the more the I closes. Thinking, 'I am asleep'; my I is blinded. The intellect is a sword, and its use is to prevent identification with any particular phenomenon encountered. The most powerful minds cling to the fewest fixed principles. The only clear view is from atop a mountain of your dead selves."
(Liber Null, 1987, Peter J. Carroll, p. 48)

To return to comics briefly, the aforementioned series by Ellis and Sprouse, Ocean, presented a brilliant metaphor for posession of an individual by a persona in their examination of the futuristic Doors Corporation. Individuals are reprogrammed to conform to corporate interests, sacrificing their autonomy to the greater manifestation of the corporation itself. Instead of wearing the unifrom, the employee becomes the uniform.

"I am not prepared to lay down any hard and fast line of demarcation between possession and paranoia. Possession can be formulated as identity of the ego-personality with a complex.
"A common instance of this is identity with the persona, which is the individual's system of adaption to, or the manner he assumes in dealing with, the world. Every calling or profession, for example, has its own characteristic persona... One could say, with a little exaggeration, that the persona is that which in reality one is not, but which oneself as well as others think one is."
(Four Archetypes, 1959, Carl G. Jung)

A more benevolent form of this is implicit in the idea of evocation, retooled as the expression 'fiction suit,' introduced by Grant Morrison in his The Invisibles series.

"Some people prefer to use 'fiction suit' to indicate something deeper than a mere 'persona' or 'mask' - more like a conduit for a different internal character to come to life, a 'suit' worn by a specific personality, which may or may not jibe with the 'wearer's' meatspace (or 'real') persona. This outlook can be useful for those involved with certain magickal or psychological experiments, or for those who just need very badly to cut loose for a while."
(Fiction Suits, 2004, Barbelith Egregore)

Fiction suits begin as an abstraction, and are fleshed out through conscious decisions. Experiencing events from within such an abstraction helps one evaluate a variety of reality tunnels. The experience can range froma simple expirament in daydreaming to a full alteration of even the most basic and involuntary manerisms. Complete emersion in a different personality may complicate long-standing relationships, because the bulk of human interaction is built up from masks speaking to masks. Changing your mask for a different one changes the types of interactions you will have. Even more, you will not be able to predict the full expression of any given fiction suit. It is only through experience that you can understand how the experience itself will manifest.

"A primordial image is determined as to its content only when it has become conscious and is therefore filled out with the material of conscious experience."
(Four Archetypes)

Mucking about with fiction suits is more or less a practice run for the great work on the plate of any serious magician. Look at this quote found in Ray Kurzweil's latest work: "The most important thing is this: To be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we could become," Charles Dubois. This becoming is illustrated most profoundly in the tarot card The Hanged Man, and its attendant themes of sacrificing the self to the self to achieve a state of cosmic self-awareness.

> "... sacrifice, in the final analysis, is a wrong idea...
> "Redemption is a bad word; it implies debt. For every star possesses boundless wealth; the only proper way to deal with the ignorant is to bring them to the knowledge of thier starry heritage."
> (ATU XII, The Book of Thoth, 1944, Aleistar Crowley)

Becoming aware of your true nature is essential. As Peter Carroll says, a person can't be said to have a personality until they own the keys to their own personality. We are bound on all sides by influences coercing and binding us to a cultural reality. Generating original ideas is only possible once we know who we are within this context. Sadly, it doesn't happen in a brilliant flash. For most of us, it doesn't even happen in a short nine day ritual as in the myth of Odin.

"The operation of obtaining the knowledge and conversation is usually a lengthy one." As Peter j. Carroll says. Those familiar with the Sacred Magic of Abramelin know just how extreme this process can become. He goes on:

> "The magician is attempting a progressive metamorphosis, a complete overhaul of his entire existence. Yet he has to seek the blueprint for his reborn self as he goes along... In beginning the great work of obtaining the knowledge and conversation, the magician vows, 'to interpret every manifestation of existence as a direct message from the infinite Chaos to himself personally.'
> "To do this is to enter the magical world view in its totality. He takes complete responsibility for his present incarnation and must consider every experience, thing, or piece of information which assails him from any source, as a reflection of the way he is conducting his existence."
> (Liber Null, p. 49)

Taken at face value, this may seem to be an advertisers wet dream. The reality is that this kind of acceptance from the stage of the true self turns all of mass media into a profound spectacle, a theater which provides the magician with the tools for transcendance. We are marketed to on the strength of our personas. Once we realize we can remove these masks, suddenly the entire game shifts. Even better, it's now our move.

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"How many lies, can people take
How many emotions, can people fake
All there is is time
Be what you are, don't fucking care"
("Time, Death, and Wastefulness [in dub]", Godflesh)

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#3: The Singularity Is Ultraculture:

(Destroy 2000 Years of Culture or, The Future's So Bright I Gotta Wear Shades)

My review of *The Singularity Is Near* by Ray Kurzweil:

> This book was something of a catalyst; it prompted these articles, and it should be widely available for sale in every conceivable alternative outlet. In fact, this and A New Kind of Science by Stephen Wolfram would make a good pair. Ideas seem to flow smoothly between the two, and a number of issues Wolfram addresses in his text are analyzed by Kurtzweil, providing a commentary for those out there who have no idea what this math is all about (like me) and who are only able to operate intuitively from the text. I don't have enough initials after my name to be an adequete reviewer of either of these books, hence this "grafitti on the walls of the invisible college's ivory tower" themas for these articles.

So buy it. It'll blow your mind. Now on with the rest of the article..
Think forward! All things considered, the future is always more important than the past. Keep your life interesting, because there's a chance that reality might just switch off.

> "Another existential risk that Bostrom and others have identified is that we're actually living in a simulation and the simulation will be shut down. It might appear that there's not a lot we could do to influence this. However, since we're the subject of the simulation, we do have the opportunity to shape what happens inside of it. The best way we could avoid being shut down would be to be interesting to the observers of the simulation. Assuming that someone is actually paying attention to the simulation, it's a fair assumption that it's less likely to be turned off when it's compelling that otherwise...
> "Our living in such a universe (created by another civilization) can be considered a simulation scenario. Perhaps this other civilization is running an evolutionary algorithm on our universe (that is, the evolution we're witnessing) to create an explosion of knowledge from a technological Singularity. If that is true, then the civilization watching our universe might shut down the simulation if it appeared that a knowledge Singularity had gone awry and it did not look like it was going to occur."
> (The Singularity is Near, p. 405)

So reading this book might just be vital to keeping the universe from being turned off.. i.e: "The Universe is an Alien Virus."

I've heard it said that the universe is language.(1) Not that they say 'which' language, just that it 'is' language.

I happen to think it's probably in latin. At least here, in this particular culture. Anything in latin automatically seems, though it may be meaningless, to have a kind of weight. It has a heaviness to it, a kind of cultural gravity. (2)

Over time I came to the understanding that any kind of audio, music, all of communication is a kind of language. There are bacteria that talk to each other with chemical molecules. Ants and cats use pheremones. The idea of language itself is higly memetic, because it is conveyed within a communication, therefore the idea is implicit in the medium. It gets better though.

The universe is language - and according to Burroughs language is an alien virus. So... the universe is an alien virus.

This is a fine example of nonsense that holds a secret.

More often than not it is my belief that the entire universe consists of mind-like entities in a state of perpetual telepathic communication with each other. Latent omniscience seems to be a logical extension of the Jungian collective unconscious, the idea being that each of us, below the level of consciousness, is all the time in touch with a much wider range of information than we could ever be consciously aware. Were we aware consciously that we were a part of this great harmony, the integrity of our individual personalities would be compromised.

However, even if it isn't yet, this may be where we end up. Honestly, I had to read this a few times before it made my brain melt. If you grasp what Kurzweil's saying, and understand he migth be right, the following paragraphs will melt your freaking skull:

> "In chapter 2 I showed how we progressed from $10-\_5$ to 10_8 cps{computations per second- Ed.} per thousand dollars during the twentieth century. Based on a continuation of the smooth, doubly exponential growth that we saw in the twentieth century, I projected that we would achieve about 10_60 cps per thousand dollars by 2100. If we estimate a modest trillion dollars devoted to computation, that's a total of about 10_69 cps by the end of this century. This can be achieved with the matter and energy in our solar system.
> "To get to around 10_90 cps requires expanding through the rest of the universe. Continuing the double-exponential growth curve shows that we can saturate the universe with our intelligence well before the end of the twenty-second century, ~provided that~ we are not limited by the speed of light. Even if the up-to-thirty additional powers of ten suggested by the holographic-universe theory are borne out, we still reach saturation by the end of the twenty-second century."
> (The Singularity Is Near, p. 365-6)

Well, that certainly puts overcrowding into perspective. Saturating the entire universe with a conscious network of information? It could be done with any number of means. A few modifications and bactabots might beat nanobots onto the open market.

If we can construct and modify bacteria at will, we have computational devices. The border between biological and digital is irrelevant. We can eventually turn bad yoghurt into a supercomputer. And we can get smaller still: Quantum dots, DNA computing, virtual reality using foglets. And larger, building supercomputers in giant rings around the sun, or utilizing black holes as computers, analyzing Hawking radiation for data output from the equations. If all of this is theoretically possible, then proposing that the universe is filled with vast pools of living, conscious information becomes no longer an article of faith, but an empirical truth. We are sculpting the akashic records into multi-user terminals and the next real hurdle is universal communication.

The sensory apparatus we carry with us into every situation is subject to decay. Our only link to the objective is tenuous at best, and steadily deteriorating.

This has led to a constant scrutiny by academic researchers, convinced that at some point they or their protege or their colleagues will someday uncover a secret of life extension and enhancement that would reverse this entropic trend.

They call themselves extropians, or transumanists, futants, singulatarians,or futurists, but their goals remain the same: Transformation of the mortal human to the immortal transhuman.

Even more important than their objectives though are their social circles. These are freethinkers whose ideology is not constrained by moral obligations. There is no moralism inherent in transhumanism - instead there is an ambiguous ethical stance based primarily on enlightened self-interest.

And the best way to get there, to achieve the singularity is to get the message out there and to achieve some sort of dialogue about the future. Even things as far off the radar as enhanced-animal rights: Grant Morrison hit the nail on the head with WE3, and I can't wait to see that shit on a movie screen. He's not the only author out there who is bringing these fringe issues into cultural dialogue, but he's very high profile right now because his work in comics is reaching an incredible number of people each month.

In fact, a number of the technologies explored in detail in Ray Kurzweil's book are illustrated in the works of comic book authors. In Grant Morrison's Superman run these technologies are impacting the cultural background. He even put the X-Men up against nanosentinels. Foglets were first introduced to me in the pages of Transmetropolitan, and in fact transhumanism themes are scattered all over Warren Ellis' fiction. Nanotechnology is playing increasingly important roles in plot-lines of mainstream comics. We are being provided with hints about our future from the most unlikely corners just like Philip K Dick intimated in his journals and novels. Nonlinear thinking creates new networks, and these networks have a very real effect in the overall production of knowledge.

DC is doing a stellar job presenting the implicit fear and destroying it with illusion. The O.M.A.C. or One

Man Army Corps story that began with the death of Blue Beetle, involves a secret spy installation developed by Batman and controlled by an Artificial Intelligence, that has infected millions of humans with nanobots. Using these devices, the AI is able to instantly call up an army of metahumans given incredible powers by these microscopic devices flowing through their cells. Greg Rucka, a Wonder Woman veteran writer, pened these storylines, and he aptly illustrates both political and scientific criticisms within the confines of that most unliterary of forms, the superhero comic. There is something going on here, it is a cultural shift, and it is beginning in the fringes. The ghettos. Art isn't fine anymore.. fine art has lost its soul, and it is up to the fringe to do the shamanic thing and retrieve it before all of culture (especially in america) shallows itself into the grave.

Comics help get in where pure symbols can't go. Sub-symbolic sets are communicated through the non-textual clues. Comics are high-speed seepage from the collective cultural construct to the staging area for the subconscious. I ain't even fucking kidding. Let me stop a moment and quote a lengthy passage from Philip K Dick's book VALIS, because quite frankly it addresses memetics as the foundation of religion in a very interesting way:

> "Fat trembled.
> "'Yes,' Dr. Stone said. 'The Logos would be living information, capable of replicating.'
> "'Replicating not through information,' Fat said, 'in information, but as information. This is what Jesus meant when he spoke elliptically of the 'mustard seed' which, he said, 'would grow into a tree large enough for birds to roost in'.'
> "'There is no mustard tree,' Dr. Stone agreed. 'So Jesus could not have meant that literally. That fits with the so-called 'secrecy' theme of Mark; that he didn't want outsiders to know the truth. And you know?'
> "'Jesus foresaw not only his own death but that of all--' Fat hesitated. 'Homoplasmates. That's a human being to which the plasmate has crossbonded. Interspecies symbiosis. As living information the plasmate travels up the optic nerve of a human host to the pineal body. It uses the human brain as a female host--'
> "Dr Stone grunted and squeezed himself violently.
> "'--in which to replicate itself into its active form,' Fat said. 'The Hermetic alchemists knew of it in theory from ancient texts but could not duplicate it, since they could not locate the dormant buried plasmate.'"
> (VALIS, 1981, Philip K Dick p.52)

Comics transcend written text. The sketch of Wonder Woman, or Batman, or whatever underwear pervert you choose, thier existence is obvious even if you don't have the capacity to understand the english in the text balloons. They are showed in situations identifiable based on visual elements as much as by the accompanying text. They exist as entities of information, with a medium complex enough to generate an environment where they can change and grow.

Meanwhile, a dictionary is the hypertext of everything written in the language it comprises. (3) In Bill Whitcomb's book The Magician's Companion he says "When you symbolize something, you impose the deep structure of the symbol system used on the way you perceive the thing symbolized." Just simply naming somthing isn't enough to grasp the essence of a spirit, at least not in english. Bill Whitcomb goes on to state

that "Any Pattern of Sufficient complexity will act intelligent when treated as an entity."

Language is an incredibly complex and adaptable entity, and the greater context of language when including all those triggers which convey information are included gives a profound multi-layered experience in which we are all awash. This overall context can never be fully controlled with today's technology, but that will not be the case a few years from now. What kind of strange new manifestations are we going to encounter when we gain complete and utter control of the experiences an individual can have? I'm going to flat out tell you I want to go to this school. Check this shit out, this is where it really gets fucking great:

> "A recent experiment at the University of California at San Diego's Institute for Nonlinear Science demonstrates the potential for electronic neurons to precisely emulate biological ones... They connected artificial neurons with real neurons from spiny lobsters in a single network, and their hybrid biological-nonbiological network performed in the same way (that is, chaotic interplay followed by a stable emergent pattern) and with the same type of results as an all-biological net of neurons. Essentially, the biological neurons accepted their electronic peers...." (The Singularity is Near, 2005, Ray Kurzweil, p.173)

I can't imagine how thrilled they were at the Institute for Nonlinear Science when they accomplished this, but it's just the tip of the iceberg, really. We're on the goddamned threshold and immortality is in our grasp (so long as we don't live in missouri). People are hungry for revelatory experience, and if it is relevant to their life all the better. Transendance is not only a real possibility it is inevitable: We will evolve, we haven't stopped, and it's getting faster all the time.

You see, servers are the neurons of the internet's brain. Servers aren't conscious, neither are neurons. You don't get altered by the loss of a neuron here or there. Neurons in themselves are not sentient. But you are, and the internet is the perfect environment in which a digital consciousness can merge. William Gibson's Neuromancer outlines the emergence of Wintermute, easily the most iconic of literary AI. He explores the concept of metabiological entities further in other books, as have numerous other authors (4)

> "a century of developments in physics has taught us that information is a crucial player in physical systems and processes. Indeed, a current trend, initiated by John A. Wheeler of Princeton University, is to regard the physical world as made of information, with energy and matter as incidentals." (Information in the Holographic Universe, Scientific American, August 2003, Jacob D. Bekenstein)

Of course, this is only one cosmological paradigm, but this model helps propose certain triggers by which we can circumvent the internal censor in order to recieve information from this vast universal pool of information.

Ray Kurzweil quotes Marvin Minsky and Seymour Papert in a subsection of the book entitled Modeling Regions of the Brain as follows:

"Most probably the human brain is, in the main, comprised of large numbers of relatively small distributed systems, arranged by embryology into a complex society that is controlled in part (but only in part) by serial, symbolic systems that are added later. But the subsymbolic systems that do most of the work from underneath must, by their very character, block all the other parts of the brain from knowing much about how they work. And this, itself, could help explain how people do so many things yet have such incomplete ideas on how those things are actually done."
(Quote from 'Perceptrons' by Minsky and Papert, via R. Kurzweil)

Sub-symbolic sets must act upon symbols, and it is through the use of these symbols over time and observing the energy that accretes and modifies the symbol that we begin to see what is going on under the layers of consciousness.

In fact, there is some evidence to show that the brain is always a step ahead of the conscious mind, and the conscious mind is only there to act as apologist for the actions and impulses generated in a pre-conscious staging area. More from The Singularity is Near:

"Work by physiology professor Benjamin Libet at the University of California at Davis shows that neural activity to initiate an action actually occurs about a third of a second before the brain has made the decision to take the action. The implication, according to Libet, is that the decision is really an illusion, that 'consciousness is out of the loop.' The cognitive scientist and philosopher Daniel Dennett describes the phenomenon as follows:'The action is originally precipitated in some part of the brain, and off fly the signals to the muscles, pausing en route to tell you, the conscious agent, what is going on (but like all good officials letting you, the bumbling president, maintain the illusion that you started it all.)'"
(The Singularity is Near, p. 191)

This is another of many moments in reading the text that I had to read aloud to anyone nearby. More work along these lines has been done by Semir Zeki in articles nearly too dense for me to penetrate, but whose implications (if I'm interpreting them properly) are somewhat unsettling. Reality, and our illusion of free-will, is entirely up for grabs, and for the most part the only thing doing any grabbing is our collective unconscious. So, lest we all become little Id babies, painting the walls of the black iron prison with our shit, lets try to figure out what to do with this new understanding.

To begin with, it makes meditation and martial arts look a lot more scientific. We do before we be, to make a phrase of it. To me this is the difference between saying "I am a writer" and saying "I write." Action before thought - if you wait to think through it you are handicapping yourself. Carrying this understanding at all times keeps the mind from getting too high an opinion of itself.

It also goes a long way towards providing a framework to understand just what kind of topology the Global Consciousness Project out of Stanford Research Institute is mapping. I believe that time is not linear. Time is a topology intimately linked with space, and our experience in time is projected to us through preconscious filters as linear. It's probably more puddle-like. We drop into a time-space where a certain number of things

are going to happen, but the order is somewhat unknown. Each event causes a ripple, and the more important the event - ie the more conscious entities affected by it, the bigger the ripple. We are the consciousnesses making the water molecules of each time puddle.(5)

Looking over the results published at the Global Consciousness Project, it is readily apparent that large-scale group meditations and massive losses of life both disturb the fabric of randomness, as measured by random number generators. It's not disputable, and the more random number generators added to the research don't fuzz out the results, they actually provide greater resolution. This is profound. I can't tell you what it means, I can only aspire to adapt intuitively to this awareness. Even more disturbing to a materialist worldview, these results begin before the event, sometimes as much as by fifteen minutes, according to the published results.(6)

We are poised on an entirely new reality, an Aeon defined by quantum events, radical change, and incredible achievments. Magic has as much a responsibility as science in this new Aeon, and the implications will destroy the conventions of religions and political structures. Economic theory will have to be altered. Lifestyles will change. Our ideas of beauty, of humanity, and of reality will evolve. And consciousness will become the roadmap for nanoengineering projects. Comic books right now provide the most accessible vision of the coming world, and I for one couldn't be more excited.

Footnotes:

(1) "In the beginning was the word..." John 1:1, or McKenna's "language is partially the key here/machine elves"
(2) J. K. Rowling uses this cultural quirk to good effect in the Harry potter series.
(3) Some of us have access to Websters, others to the OED.
(4) Charles deLint's Spirit in the Wires is a particular favorite of mine in this sub-genre of fiction.
(5) And I assure you, I typed most of that with a straight face.
(6) http://noosphere.princeton.edu/results.html

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#4 Ideas With Teeth

Before I even get underway, I want to explore a term that has been bumping around in my head for several years. That term is "Hyperglyphic," and my decision to start thinking about this word can be traced in origin to Grant Morrison refering to The Invisibles as a hypersigil. He even incorporates a sigil in the letters column of The Invisibles, V.1 No.16 for the stated purpose of doubling the number of people who buy The Invisibles, and the sigil was fired into the collective unconscious by an untold number of individuals on Nov. 23rd, 1995.
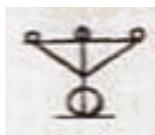
While this might have been the very first consciously initiated mass magickal marketing, it also provided me with a lot of food for thought about the way that comics themselves operate.

A glyph is a symbol that conveys information non-verbally. Pictographs, geometric shapes, and even shades of color can all convey meaning without resorting to specific languages. A hyperglyphic work incorporates many such glyphic emblems into a cohesive whole, and allows for information to be spread no matter what native language a reader may read and speak. It allows ideas to transcend language by their very construction. Currently, only comics seem to have embraced the possibilities this kind of static media, but the use of such symbolizing of information is one of the incredibly powerful tools in the magus' toolbox.

I've called this article "Ideas with Teeth" in allusion to the Hebrew letter Shin. I wrote extensively about Egregores in MG#1, and made reference Paco Xander Nathan's article Chasing Egregores in which he explores the kabbalistic formula used to generate egregores through ritual magic. In that article I was concerned with institutional egregores, in this article I am focusing on characters and groups that can become egregores. This is what Nathan wrote:

> "... the shin must be inserted between the first he and the vau. Since this represent's a 'decoy,' i.e., a kind of inversion of stated purpose, it would appear to serve as a reflex mechanism for self-preservation. That seems reminiscent of the dialectic of sublation, particularly if the inversion concerns pumping stereotypical corporate spin into the media." (Chasing Egregores, Paco Xander Nathan)

Let's take a moment to understand what this does. The dialectic of sublation in a magical process allows the ritual entity to contain within itself its own negation. The dynamic tention of this allows for manifestation of energy. The definition of sublate means to negate an element in a dialectic process but still preserve it as a partial element in a synthesis. To place this within a viral context, Shin not only empowers the egregore, it also acts as an innoculation against conflicting entities within the ideosphere.

I know, I'm getting pretty out there in my linguistic manipulations. So far I've thrown the words hyperglyph, hypersigil, and ideosphere out there and I haven't even started to quote from any comics. But before we get into the structural theory and the various examples, let's look at some of the ways other people have approached these concepts.

Aleister Crowley, in his introduction to his translation of the Tao Teh King, described the situation thusly:

> "Nothing exists except as a relation with other similarly postulated ideas. Nothing can be known in itself but only as one of the participants in a series of events. Reality is therefore in the motion, not in the thing moved. We cannot apprehend anything except as one postulated element of an observed impression of change."
> (Aleister Crowley, Liber 157: Tao Teh King, 1975)

Alan Moore, no stranger to the theories of Aleister Crowley, brought this concept into a discussion he had with BBC journalist Scott Thill:

> "Information is funny stuff. In some of the science magazines I read, I've found it described as an actual substance that underlies the entirety of existence, as someting that is more fundamental than the four fundamental physical forces: gravity, electromagnetism and the two nuclear forces. I think they've referred to it as a super-weird substance. Now, obviously, information shapes and determines our lives and the way we live them, yet it is completely invisible and undetectable. It has no actual form; you can only see its effects. Information is a kind of heat. I would suggest that as our society accumulates information from its hunter-gatherer origins to the complexities of our present day, it raises the cultural temperature.
> "I feel that we may be approaching a cultural boiling point. I'm not saying this is a good thing or a bad thing; I really don't know because I can't imagine it, quite frankly. But I think we may

be approaching the point at which the amount of information we are taking becomes exponential, and I'm not entirely certain what kind of human culture will exist beyond that point. Except it will happen sooner than we expect, and the difference between us and the kind of people that will exist after such an event will be vastly different than the difference between us and the hunter-gatherer society we've evolved from."
(Alan Moore and Scott Thill, "The Man Who Invented The Future," July 22,2004)

To bring this back to the topic at hand, a year earlier Alan Moore was interviewed by Locus regarding League of Extraordinary Gentlemen.

"The more I've thought about this, it occurs to me that as long as there's been a world we have been creating an imaginary counterpart to that world with different places, different people, different history, and to some degree that phantom world of the imagination has co-existed with our own. All of us, at various points in our lives, have found ourselves spending more time on that imaginary planet than we have upon our own world. We may well find in the later stages of our life that there are places from that imaginary world that we remember more vividly than actual physical locations we have visited. We may find that fictional characters, the inhabitants of that world, are more familiar, more dear to us, more memorable than a lot of the real flesh and blood people who may have been our acquaintances.
"There is obviously something important in this. If we did not have some kind of biological or cultural need to create these imaginary spaces and these imaginary beings. I really don't think nature would have given us the capacity to do it. Nature doesn't generally provide a lot of things that are purely there for decoration or entertainment. Most things have to do with the quite stark issues of survival, and I've got no reason to suppose the human capacity for art and fiction and imagination is not in that category."
(Alan Moore and Mark Askwith, "In League with Alan Moore," July 2003)

In reading Alan Moore'sbody of work, it becomes evident that these ideas have been floating around his head for quite a while. An interchange between Abby and Able in The Saga of the Swamp Thing #33, originally published in February 1985, penned by Alan Moore and drawn by Ron Randall, reads as follows:

"Abby: A bracelet?
"Able: Bracelet? Oh, no! No, it just looks like a bracelet. It's really a story, a special circular story that goes round and round...
"Abby: But what does it have to do with me?
"Able: Ahhhh! Now that's the secret! You're not an ordinary woman, you know. Some strange stories have intruded upon your life lately...
"Abby: Stories? Everything that's happened to me has been real...
"Able: Oh please. It was just a figure of speech. Don't take offence. You see, in a way, everything is made of stories."
(Alan Moore, The Saga of the Swamp Thing #33)

Promethea stands out as one of the best explorations of the Western Esoteric Tradition, packing more

information per page than most books on the occult contain in an entire chapter. Alan Moore returns to this very thesis in issue #15 of Promethea, presenting it as a dialogue between two of Promethea's avatars, Sophie and Barbara, and the god Hermes:

> "Hermes: It's all a story, isn't it? It's all fiction, all language... It can change like quicksilver.
> "Sophie: But... this isn't fiction. This is our real life.
> "Hermes: Ha Ha! Real life. Now that's a fiction for you! What's it made from? Memories? Impressions? A sequence of pictures, a scattering of half-recalled words... Dis-jointed hieroglyphic comic strips, unwinding in our recollection... Language. To perceive form... even the form or shape of your own lives... you must dress it in language. Language is the stuff of form. Mathematics, for example, is a language. Consider the forms it produces...
> "Barbara: So... everything's made of language? We're made of language? Even you?
> "Hermes: Oh, especially me! How could humans perceive gods... abstract essences... without clothing them in imagery, stories, pictures... ...or picture-stories, for that matter.
> "Sophie: Picture-stories?
> "Hermes: Oh, you know: heiroglyphics. Vase paintings. Whatever did you think I meant? Besides, what could be more appropriate than for a language-god to manifest through the original pictographic form of language?
> "Sophie: Uhh... so like, what are you saying?
> "Hermes: What am I saying? I'm saying some fictions might have a real god hiding beneath the surface of the page. I'm saying some fictions might be alive... ...that's what I'm saying."
> (Alan Moore and J.H. Williams III, "Mercury Rising" Promethea #15)

With this as an introduction, let's step away from Alan Moore's work for a moment and start to examine the mechanics behind generating a living fiction. Don't worry, we'll come back to Alan Moore before this is all over, but first I want to bring this back under the aegis of magical theory by way of Hakim Bey's examination of the renaissance magi's understanding of emblems:

> "The Renaissance magi (especially Athanasius Kircher) believed that the Egyptian hieroglyphs were purely platonic (—in this, they followed Plotinus and Iamblichus)—that is, that each image was an ideal form, and that their deployment could not only indicate meaning but also create and project it. Thus the hieroglyphs were seen as an ideal amalgam of text and image—an emblematic form of writing. Now when Champollion deciphered the Rosetta Stone, it was discovered that hieroglyphs were already used quasi-alphabetically (on the model of 'picture foot = phoneme p'), although there were also cases where single images or imageclusters represented the objects depicted as words. This discovery relegated the unsuccessful translation attempts of the old magi to complete oblivion. Their theories are now only mentioned in passing as examples of 'false' hermetic science and bad Egyptology. But as Couliano noted, these discarded theories have great secret heuristic power, because they describe empirically some of the ways in which text, image, and mind interact. Once the neo-platonic metaphysics and crude magical fantasies have been discarded, hieroglyphic theory can be used to understand the mode of operation of text/image complexes—that is, emblems.
> "The emblem books were Renaissance experiments in the 'projective semiotics' of hieroglyph-theory. Allegorical pictures accompanied by texts (often one text in prose and one in

poetry)—and in a few cases even by music (the great Atalanta Fugiens of Michael Maier, for example)—were collected in sequences, published as books, and intended for the magical edification of readers. The 'morals' of the emblems were thus conveyed on more than one level at once. Each emblem was simultaneously:

"a) a picture accompanied by words;

"b) a picture 'translated' from words. That is, the pictures' real values are not purely formal but also allegorical, so that Hercules stands for 'strength', Cupid for 'desire', and the emblem itself can be read as a 'sentence' composed of these 'words';

" c) a hieroglyphic 'coding' in which certain images not only represent words but also 'express the essence' of those words, and project them in a 'magical' manner, whether or not the reader is consciously aware of this process.

"Our working hypothesis is that the world's image of itself not only defines its possibilities but also its limits. The world's representation of itself to itself (its 'macrocosmic' image) is no more and no less than the self's 'microcosmic' image of itself 'writ large' so to speak, on the level or mentalité and the imaginaire. This is part of our 'secularized' hermetic theory; it explains, for instance, why emblems have influences on multiple levels of cognition."
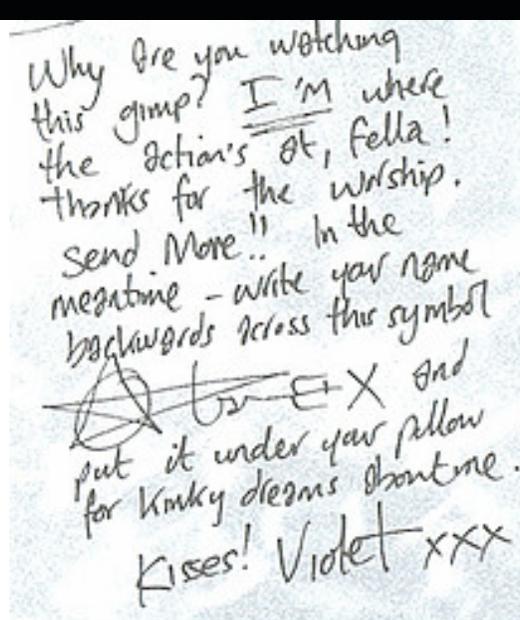
(Hakim Bey, "The Obelisk" 1997)

This "false hermetic science" is the ancient foundation on which Grant Morrison's aforementioned hypersigilic work rests. The Invisibles egregore buries itself deep into your psyche, and becomes activated on different levels in response to external stimuli. I wish I could just show you this in person, but if you've made it this far into the article I'm sure you are starting to understand something of the lineage of the comics industry. Now let's look at my theories regarding the use of comics as an engine for creating and maintaining egregores.

I have identified a few primary points by which characters become unhinged from their narrative enough to collect free belief and engender themeselves in the collective unconsciousness.

* different artists and writers providing source energy
* multiple forms of media presences (video games, movies, cartoons, tv shows, books, rpg's)
* characters based on ancient mythologies reinvented for today (Marvel's Thor, for example.)
* same character, different situation &/or universe (for the most extreme example, check out Amazon, a cross between Wonder Woman and Storm)

These are spontaneous methods. A consciously designed comic book character seems to come to a level approaching that of a servitor on it's own quite simply. Two characters that come to mind immediately for me are Dogwith, created and written by Daniel Schaffer, and Tarot, Witch of the Black Rose, written and produced by Jim Balent and Holly Golightly. Tarot seems to have achieved egregore-hood through the magical work of her fans without the use of non-narrative situations, and will remain an exception that proves the rule, as it were. (1) Dogwitch, while still being a servitor, does have a sigil associated with her character for summmoning purposes.

Why are you watching this gimp? I'M where the action's at, fella! thanks for the worship. send More!! In the meantime — write your name backwards across this symbol ⟶ and put it under your pillow for kinky dreams about me. Kisses! Violet xxx

Violet Grimm, aka Dogwitch, is one of my personal favorite "post-neo-pagans" out there in comic form, and the approach to Tarot in issue #10 is both innovative and funny. Reading all 18 issues left me feeling vindicated in my worldview, while slightly dirty around the edges (kinda like reading The Filth.) But on to the other new godforms out there...

Dawn, the creation of Joe Lindsner, is also verging on godform, in part because he has gone to such lengths to present her story against numerous different contexts. I believe that there is something pure in a creation maintained by an individual, but when numerous authors and artists get a chance to explore different facets of a character, the real energy seems to crackle forth. Dogwitch is by far the least acknowledged of these three, and there's plenty more out there that fill these specific requirements for individual creations come to life through comics.

Comics creators are aware of these ideas. In Astro City Vol. 2 Issue #13 the character Loony Leo is brought to life through consensus belief, and goes on to live an existence maintained by the source material present in culture from which he was generated. Astro City, while appearing somewhat sporadically throughout its run, has consistently good writing, amazing covers by Alex Ross, and deals with superheroes as secondary to the social structure in which they exist. Still, in part because it is published by an independant, the characters don't become trully resonate as an egregore, but instead remain fictional devices.

More mainstream comics titles go through the hands of countless writers and artists during their run. Most of the most popular titles, The X-Men, The New Avengers, The JLA, Batman, Wonder Woman, The Amazing Spiderman and Superman, for starters, have been written and drawn by so many people that the characters themselves are now products of a vast network of minds. This seems to immdiately fulfill the requirements of at least one part of the egregore equation. My favorite DC character, John Constantine, no longer has anyone willing to take credit for his creation. In essence, at least as far as creator rights go, he has appeared of his own accord.

Marvel, hands down, has done the best job of creating a universe against which its superheroes can interact. Mutants are cooler than Meta-humans. The storylines interlock better, and the overall tone seems more consistent. That said, DC does a better job with magic. Let's back up from these sweeping generalizations and

take a look at Earth 616, the designation given to Marvel Universe main continuity by Alan Moore in the Mad Jim Jaspers storyline of Captain Britain. Later, in eXiles currently, or during the Day of Apocalypse sequence of events, characters are ripped from universe to universe, encountering radically different social and political structures. Mini-series are spawned tracking the exploits of characters across these alternate realities before placing the characters back in a state of grace.

It is a function of dismooring a character from a narrative that leads them to begin to act autonomously in the ideosphere. Dismooring a character from a narrative means that the character appears outside of its original fictional context. The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen was built upon this premise, taking characters from historical fiction and blending their backgrounds into a new meta-narrative.(2) The various Earths of DC Comics before "Crisis on Infinite Earths" in the late Eighties brought them back togther through the process of a singleton (find wiki link), an entity that only existed in one universe. In Marvel Comics, the M'Kraan Crystal functions as the singleton, the nexus of all possible existences.

I'm not positive, but the first appearance of this crystal seems to be related to the original Pheonix saga. It becomes an item of primary importance during The Age of Apocalypse, and in Vol.1 No.3 of Gambit and the X-Ternals, May '95, it is described as follows:

> "...the inside of the M'Kraan crystal-- the neutron sun-- is a nexus point between all matter and all anti-matter! That means all matter and all anti-matter -- crossing over to every single different reality in existence! Think of the M'Kraan like a doorway... It's necessary to always keep that door closed, not just in one reality, but in all of them. If that door were to have been left open... let's say in the world you know as 'real'... -- then the draft would eventually reach other realities and worlds, affecting the people which live in them.(3)"
> (Salvador Larroca and Al Milgrom, Gambit and the X-Ternals V.1 #3)

This crystal forms something of the headquarters for The eXiles, one of the titles to arise from the ashes of The Age of Apocalypse cycle. In this title, the M'Kraan is shown to be somewhat "infested" with insect-like machine-intelligences, manipulating the "Superheroes(tm)" from thier place in a hyperdimensional construct that allows them access to all possible universes.(4) In the introduction to part four of the "Timebreakers" story arc of The eXiles, the interior of the M'Kraan crystal is described:

> "After teammates SASQUATCH and BEAK mysteriously vanish, the Exiles grow fed up with the way the TIMEBROKER has been treating them. They travel to the extra-dimensional source of their missions to finally confront the Timebroker. What they find is the PANOPTICHRON. a strange crystalline observatory overlooking every timeline and alternate reality in the Multiverse. Operating this outpost is a contingent of insect-like alien scientists. The Timebroker, it turns out, is not a real person at all, but an illusion the aliens project to communicate with the Exiles and their more ruthless sister-team, WEAPON X."
> (Tony Bedard and Mizuki Sakakibara, "Timebreakers Conclusion" The eXiles #65)

Those familiar with the writings of Terrance McKenna will find strange resonances with his description of trans-dimensional machine-elves and the insectoid scientists operating an observatory outside space and time. The story told through issues 61-65 explain how the teams have been performing operations to re-establish the stability of an untold umber of parallel universes accidentally damaged by these scientists early

expiraments. For our purposes, Issue #65 serves as an important illustration of a character taken from his standard narrative and recast in a new situation, helping to define the character apart from his basic narrative; namely the character Hyperion.

Hyperion from three separate universes ends up confronting himself in this place outside space and time. Hyperion is a Marvel character that closely resembles DC's character Superman, an archetypal character at this point who has manifested in countless ways since his first appearance.(5) Presenting three different Hyperions from three different parallel universes, non of which appear to be the normal continuity from which Hyperion was originally presented, provides a fine example of one of the points necessary for this kind of "spontaneous egregoreship" I'm describing. An earlier example of an archetype coming to life briefly through a variety of publishers is the oft-forgot critter Howard the Duck. After a series of conflicts, the creator, Steve Gerber, re-created Howard as Destroyer Duck for Eclipse Comics, with the proceeds from that comic going to his lawsuit against Marvel to regain the rights to Howard. He failed, but not before Howard even showed up, albeit surrepitously, in DC's run of Swamp Thing as the unlikely Pog.

DC, in the pages of Sandman and Wonder Woman most glaringly, but throughout a number of other titles as well, has used the concepts of deities as characters. This re-infusing of creative energy in mythic archetypes provides a very direct line of imagination for communicating with these energies. I understand Neil Gaiman will be authoring a series called The Eternals, which I suspect will also explore this approach. Certainly the character Thor has been a Marvel Comics staple character for a few score years now. Re-animating myth in this way is a kind of slow invocation, one who's consequences may not even be felt until the entire narrative has come full circle - an extended ritual working of which even those engaged in the ritual actions are not fully aware.

I've been circuling around the topic of space-time magic in comics without actually coming right out and addressing it specifically. I would not have begun this series of articles without access to the ideas in Space-Time Magic by Taylor Ellwood, and this article in particular represents an inquiry into the ideas he tackles in several chapters of that book. I'd like to quote a passage here, that helped me set the tone for this article when I set out to initially write it:

> "Another approach to retroactive workings is to use comics as a tool. I've found ideas that can be adapted and used for space/time magic in a lot of Alan Moore's works, particularly in Watchmen. The concept Moore uses does not need to have the format of a comic to be useful, but reading the comic and seeing how the author manipulates space/time via this medium is a very non-linear experience. Part of what creates that experience is the way you physically read comics. Your eyes might range from panel to panel in an orderly left to right manner only some of the time. Some of the comic panels might be arranged for a different kind of reading, in that your gaze has to move around the page in a non-linear way in order to read the story. I find that each comic panel represents a specific moment. You can go back and forth from moment to moment, with each moment coming alive at the time it needs to exist. Because panels are used as the medium for reading, space and time occur together... So the reader experiences nonlinear reality through each panel, which is another reason the technique works so well."
> (Space/Time Magic - 2005, Taylor Ellwood, p.62-63)

This use of imagery as a portal into a specific moment throughout a character's existence has never been done

as eloquently as in Rick Veitch's story "Greyshirt" that appears in Tomorrow Stories #2, published by America's Best Comics. 48 Panels across eight pages present not simply a story, but a narrative that comes from an equation like the gemetria squares of the planets that produce the same number no matter which way you do the math. A magic square, but of story, rather than number. Certainly this use of comic creation has been used elsewhere (Promethea's travels through the Tree of Life use this technique) but the way in which Rick Veitch tackles this problem remains a singular moment in the history of comics. And while you're at it, check out The One.

Footnotes:

(1) I love what Jim Balent has done with Tarot, and I was excited enough when it first came out to write him and Holly - my letter is published back in issue #4, and my cat appears in the letter column of #7 on the back of a friend.

(2) I understand that Lost Girls, another Alan Moore comic, works along similar lines.

(3) This isn't just comic book science, I've read at least one article proposing the possibility that parallel universes may collide. (article)

(4) Although it should be noted that they are not able to see into universe 616 during the events of the House of M, further re-inforcing the incredible strength of the Scarlet Witch.

(5) It would be a daunting task to say the least to attempt to catalogue all the ways the archetype Superman represents has re-manifest through publishing houses other than DC, but I definately want to recommend the comics Invincible. Another side of Superman's archetype can be seen in The Pro, released by Image comics as a one-shot, and written by Garth Ennis with pencils and lettering by Amanda Conner and inks by Jimmy Palmiotti.*

*(Go on. Read The Pro. You know you want to...)

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