

# THE VOICE OF THE APOCALYPSE: TERENCE MCKENNA AS RAVING MEDIUM

— FEATURE ARTICLE —

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## ABSTRACT

The acid house rave scene of the early nineties sought its champions and there was no spruiker more willing, vocal and weird than Terence McKenna, a figure for whom rave was a novelty signal in a forecasted apocalypse. A slate of music collaborations with McKenna in the early nineties had one feature in common. They recorded McKenna speaking in an alien tongue. Releases with The Shamen, Space Time Continuum and Zuvuya featured McKenna emulating the “elf chatter” that had poured from him in entranced states under the influence of powerful psychoactive tryptamines. Subsequently, producers of psychedelic electronica mined the “unEnglishable” *sprechen* of this surreal psychopomp as if it was precious aural ore. Drawing upon in-depth biographical research, I demonstrate that this strange prediscursive realm has proven appealing into the present era in which McKenna has become a *medium*—not of language, meaning or ideology, but of the unspeakable. Over three decades, McKenna’s voice has been adopted by audio alchemists sampling from a vast archive of spoken word material to evoke, affect and burlesque states transcending language and history. While McKenna died in 2000, he remains likely the most sampled individual in the history of electronic music. And as illustrated in this article, electronic artists have adopted his voice as a sonic template for the unknown. What I call *mckennasploitation* intrigues since, as is further demonstrated, it transpires in an era of growing uncertainty. The article suggests that McKenna is the *voice of the apocalypse* in two interrelated senses. First, the sampling evokes the “apocalypse” of the self, mind and culture that is the perennial desire of ecstatic dance movements. Second, McKenna is posthumously prolific in an era of accelerating crisis and novelty, a circumstance with uncanny echoes of his prophesied “Eschaton”. In psytrance and other psychedelic electronic styles, these strands are woven into a *McKennaesque* aesthetic.

KEYWORDS: Terence McKenna, nanomedia, psychedelics, remixticism, sampling, psytrance

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## INTRODUCTION

In the early nineties, psychedelic philosopher Terence K. McKenna (1946-2000) became the figurehead of a scene for which he himself served as midwife. Through that decade, in the wake of his involvement in several music productions and a role as a “raver in residence” at a variety of venues, the “crusty” edges of the acid house rave community comprised the audience most receptive to a prophetic output that McKenna named *Timewave Zero* (in which he predicted the world’s end on 21 December 2012). Exploring music collaborations, live shows, his appearance on the hit parade and the proliferation of voice sampling, this article addresses McKenna’s posthumous notoriety in psychedelic electronica, where his voice has been remediated in a world in which his mind became iconic for going out of one’s mind. The article is indebted to sustained biographical research.<sup>1</sup> That research began excavating the roots and legacy of two interwoven themes looming large in McKenna’s life. These themes permeate an aesthetic appealing within psychedelic electronica: the significance of the “elves” with whom McKenna grew intimate in transpersonal travels in tryptamine “hyperspace”, and the embrace of an apocalyptic sensibility, a mythopoetics concerned with new beginnings (what McKenna deemed “novelty”) as much as endings. As will be demonstrated, these themes are evident in the spoken word sampling of a figure whose haunting of the present has garnered little attention among scholars.<sup>2</sup>

Commenting on a Grateful Dead show he attended towards the end of his life, comparative religionist Joseph Campbell observed that the concert was “the antidote to the atomic bomb”. Dionysus, he imagined, was “talking through these kids”. When asked if he agreed with Campbell, consistent with his prophetic eschatology, McKenna replied that he regarded Dead shows as “mini-reflections of the real party, the real Dionysian revel at the end of time”. Such concerted psychedelic cavalcades were not just responses of activists to the prospect of nuclear Armageddon, but were sparks cast backwards from “the party at the end of the world”. In this way, the Grateful Dead were regarded as “the house band of the apocalypse”. Echoing his reversed reading of Mircea Eliade’s idea that ritual replays cosmic time, McKenna soon applied his logic to nineties raves, which reminded him that “you are really somehow at the end of the world” (Badillion 1991: 27).

According to McKenna’s thorough reading of Alfred North Whitehead, the emergent acid house rave and new edge scene represented a “concrecence” of novelty. As such, this movement echoed what McKenna frequently held to be the “Transcendental Object At the End of Time”. In McKenna’s philosophy of time, as a demonstration of backwards flowing casuistry, the future casts a shadow over the present. According to this model, all events, people and inventions are ricochets of this future Transcendental Object, which amounts to a future Big Bang and a kind of temporal “black hole”. McKenna developed a time chart to measure and predict novelty in historical time, which according to his model, had a definite end coming soon. At times, he imagined the Transcendental Object as a spinning mirrorball that sends out scintillations of light that sparkle throughout the cosmic disco. “All around this transcendental object, and at greater and lesser distances, are all the people

who have ever lived”, its thousands of twinkling, refractive surfaces representing “religions, scientific theories, gurus, works of art, poetry, great orgasms, great soufflés, great paintings, etc”. And if you are a Buddha, a Christ, a Mohammed or a guru, you are just “dumb lucky” to be struck by a divine reflection from the transcendental mirrorball at the end of time (McKenna 1995: 29).

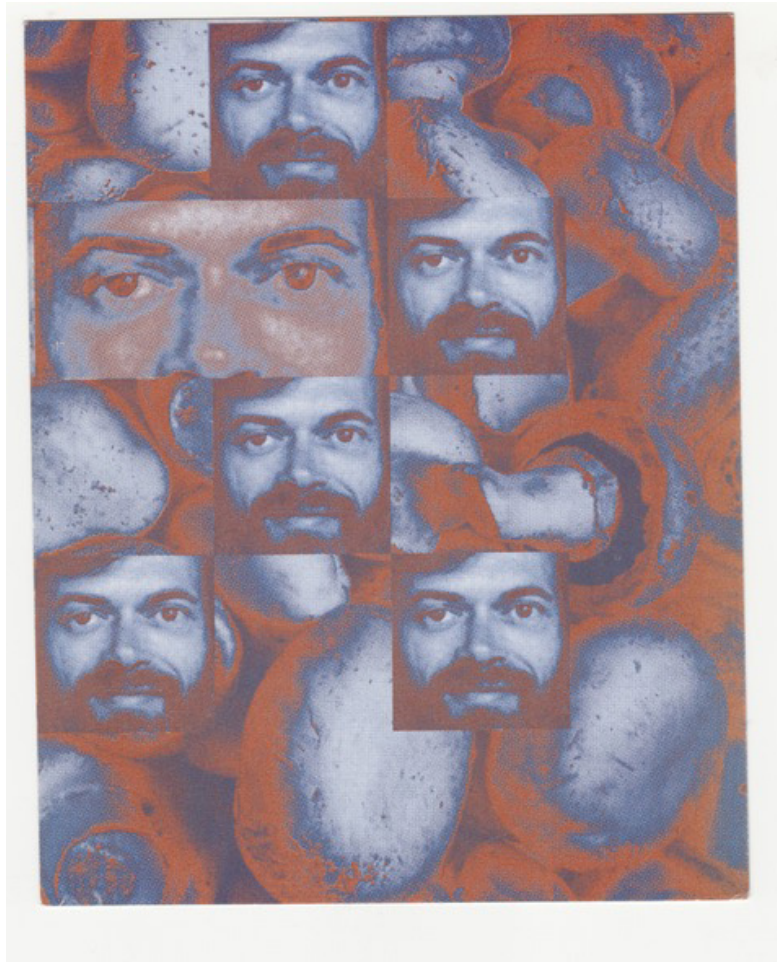


FIGURE 1. ALIEN DREAMTIME PROMOTIONAL CARD. COURTESY MICHAEL HOROWITZ

“Something is calling us out of nature and sculpting us in its own image,” McKenna breathed on “Timewave Zero”, the release produced from a live performance at San Francisco’s Transmission Theatre on February 26-27, 1993. Presaging Captain Morpheus from *The Matrix*, he continues:

You can feel it. You can feel it in your own dreams. You can feel it in your own trips. You can feel that we’re approaching the cusp of a catastrophe, and that beyond that cusp we are unrecognizable to ourselves. The wave of novelty that has rolled unbroken since the birth of the universe has now focused and coalesced itself in our species (Space Time Continuum with Terence McKenna, 1993).

As McKenna became an instrument in the soundtrack for the “apocalypse” in early nineties rave, we are compelled to parse a strange scene. As he himself queried, what should we make of “a 46-year-old man at three in the morning hanging out with thousands of loaded teenagers exhorting them to the eschaton” (Kent 1998: 45)? During 1993, arguably the peak year of his fame, McKenna gave more interviews than any other time in his career. This media blitz was the result of a publicity campaign that seized on his newfound fame in the rave community, which arrived after his UK singles chart appearance and which sought to take advantage of this popularity during an intensive book publishing phase. Via Leslie Rossman, his publicist at Harper San Francisco, McKenna was pitched to niche media where he would rave on a range of subjects, including raves. “Why are these young [ravers] adopting McKenna as their guru?” Scene media reps were enticed by such alluring inquiry implicit to a press package boasting what were understood to be some of McKenna’s distinct attributes: i.e. that his raps had the privilege of being sampled on “rave dance music,” and that he was “the first author to be the center performer at a rave”.<sup>3</sup> Rossman’s dedication to promoting her client and friend was instrumental to the media tsunami upon which McKenna surfed. My communications with some of McKenna’s closest friends and confidantes indicate that he remained ambivalent about these developments, to which he committed due to financial pressures and the need to support his kids. While the media attention generated at this juncture was part of an orchestrated strategy to capitalise on his growing fame, the hype soon receded in accord with his desire to retire from touring. But McKenna’s rave pivot cannot be easily dismissed as hype and self-aggrandizement. Not unlike his hero, Marshall McLuhan, McKenna recognised the role of the artist as seer. It was a genuine recognition that he pursued to his own end, including during his final appearance on Hawaii at AllChemical Arts.<sup>4</sup> McKenna’s sincerity with regard to the visionary potential of art was unimpeachable. Creative play, visionary art and ecstatic dance were all pivotal to what he saw as the coming transit, in which ravers were championed as agents of cultural transcendence and consciousness evolution.

Not only the product of biographical work, the analysis presented here supplements my ongoing research addressing the arts of “remixticism” within psychedelic electronic music scenes. “Remixticism” refers to a DiY digital artifice inherent to psyculture and heir to Surrealism, the Beats and punk; it is the merger of techno and hippy scenes, which Fraser Clark called “zippy” (St John 2012a: 102; 2013a). In fashioning a socio-sonic aesthetic emically understood as the “vibe”, electronic musicians/DJs narrate this sensibility using available digital technologies to select from a vast archive of spoken word and popular cultural material. “Nanomedial” notable in the psycultural dance music continuum include voice grabs from film scripts, radio programs, computer games, podcasts, commentaries or lectures—which McKenna called “raps” and “raves”. This material is exploited for content typically edited and condensed into a few lines carefully chosen to be digitally sutured into eight to ten minute tracks (St John 2015: 344). McKenna’s intellectual nomadism across technology, religion and consciousness has provided a vast archive for artists seeking to project sound that can be seen, read, tasted and felt. Composed for performance on



dance floors that serve morphologically as rites of passage and/or carnivals for the gathering multitudes, this material serves to evoke, affect and caricature altered states. McKennasploitation is observable in this light.

This analysis suggests that the posthumous proliferation of McKenna's voice furnishes the psychedelic vibe with an apocalyptic aesthetic. Here I intend two usages of "apocalypse" that operate simultaneously. In the first, McKenna's voice mediates the desirable transcendence of mind, self and culture associated with altered states of consciousness—including (though not exclusively) states inaugurated by psychedelics (notably tryptamines DMT and psilocybin). This deconditioning was necessary given, as McKenna frequently proclaimed, "culture"—i.e. faith, political party affiliation, celebrity worship—"is not your friend". Second, his voice resounds during an era of mounting crises, global anxiety and deepening uncertainty connected to a profusion of climate chaos, nationalist populism, a global pandemic, US race riots, new wars in Europe and the Middle East, and more. This cataclysm of crises echoes McKenna's lifelong fixation with terminal conditions, right through to his own relatively early end (aged 53) from the aggressive brain cancer glioblastoma multiforme. As McKenna claimed in the early nineties, we are living "in the twilight of a great empire" (McKenna 1991). Inflected with both significances, McKenna samples evoke and affect transcendent conditions that are paradoxically beyond language and yet composed of syntax.



FIGURE 2. RAVING POET OF THE APOCALYPSE. COURTESY OF ALLAN BADINER.

## THE RAVE-O-LUTION

McKenna's mercurial mind, provocative thinking and psychedelic eschatology endeared him to the post-rave milieu. As his spoken commentary on "Re:Evolution"—the 1992 collaboration with UK outfit The Shamen, released on their platinum album *Boss Drum*—demonstrated, rave served to bootstrap the end of history. The release became the subject of the five-track single, *Re: Evolution* (The Shamen with Terence McKenna 1993; see figure 3).<sup>5</sup> Short of achieving the end of history, it would in fact bootstrap McKenna, whose fame grew at this time. Between 1991-1993, he became involved in performance and recording collaborations in London and San Francisco. As raver-in-residence in an international circuit of clubs, conferences and festivals, he became the surrealist psychopomp of psychedelic electronica.

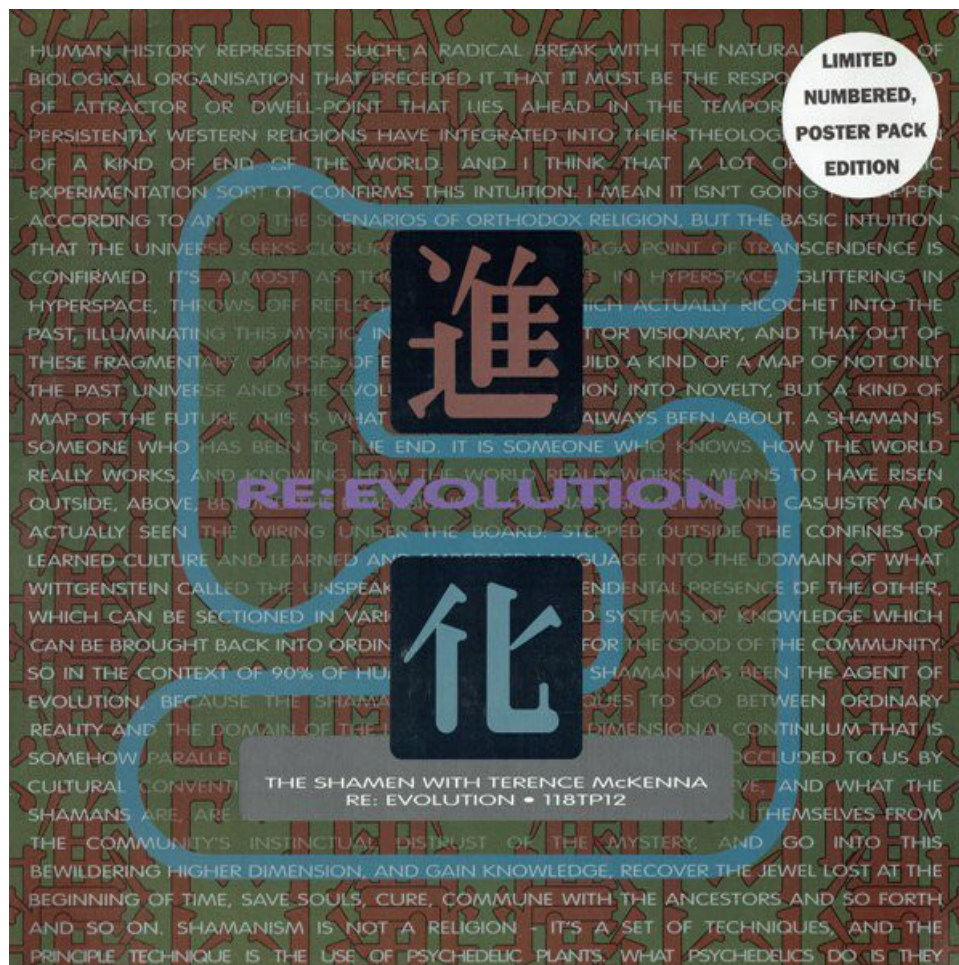


FIGURE 3. THE SHAMEN WITH TERENCE MCKENNA, *Re: Evolution*, SINGLE, 1993.

An important early conduit for McKenna's entry to the rave scene was an experimental filmmaker who was literally drawn to California by the voice of McKenna. A digital media artist dwelling in the East Village of the eighties, Ken Adams was inspired to make for the West Coast to find and capture on film the man who had spoken (over the radio) so elegantly and lucidly about psychedelics. Adams and his then wife and partner in media production outfit Rose X, Britt Welin, eventually rendezvoused with the psychedelic pied piper at Esalen in the summer of 1989, when they decided to collaborate on experimental art films. The couple became McKenna's neighbours in Occidental, where Adams recalls one noteworthy afternoon over at the McKenna house. Terence and his then wife Kathleen Harrison were asked about their music preferences. A box of Grateful Dead live tapes was produced. "This is cool", Adams said, "but there's another kind of thing happening in the psychedelic world called 'raves,' and they make electronic dance music and they do a lot of psychedelics". He looked at Terence. "And they all think that you are some kind of special guy". The entreaty was met with skepticism by McKenna, a self-effacing figure who was lukewarm about parties and even cooler about being the centre of attention at them. Adams began exposing his friend to new sounds, like The Orb's *Little Fluffy Clouds*, but it wasn't easy to plant a seed of possibility in the mind of a man who would rather scoob up in the company of his books than be out on tour. Would he become victim to the ceaseless demands of micro-celebrityhood or adapt his growing popularity to his own ends? It wasn't long before he opened a new chapter in his life and broke through to a much younger demographic.<sup>6</sup>

There was another paver of McKenna's path to micro-celebrityhood: Scotsman, techno-hippie trickster and founder and editor of both the *Encyclopaedia Psychedelica* and *Evolution* magazine, Fraser Clark. The flourishing of acid house in late-eighties UK was received by Clark as the renaissance of sixties idealism. As a techno-tribal revitalization of Albion, the psychedelic edges of this scene resonated with what McKenna was calling, "the Archaic Revival". Clark knew a good rave when he heard one. Running with McKenna's "stoned monkey" speculations, Clark brokered the New Age Traveller/Techno ("Zippy") merger as a redemptive millennial reclamation. In turn, Clark's own utopian zeal towards the "RAVeLATION" did not fail to impress McKenna (Clark 1997: 185–202).<sup>7</sup> When promoting *The Archaic Revival* in London in October 1991, Clark invited McKenna to speak at the proto "festi-club" Evolution. The appearance proved to be a pivotal gear shift in McKenna's career. Armed with DAT machines, a few electronic musicians realised they were in the presence of a golden sampleable resource. McKenna became something of a mascot for "shamanarchists" and others among the "guerilla rave networks of mad jihad dance fanatics and sound terrorists" celebrated on the sleeve of the Clark's *Shamanarchy In The UK* (1992).<sup>8</sup>

At Evolution, two audience members were especially eager to meet McKenna after the show, whereupon they invited the Bard of hyperspace to collaborate on a spoken word "Rave" track. It seems McKenna was made an offer he could not refuse. The duo were



Colin Angus (another Scotsman) and Richard West (aka Mr C) of the Shamen, a pioneer “indie-dance” act akin to a “twenty first century Grateful Dead” (Reynolds 1998: 87).<sup>9</sup> The recorded rave was the protomix for McKenna’s ticket to the world.

Angus was an enabler. In the early nineties, the pioneering indie-rocker turned electronic musician sought to use the Shamen’s growing fame to create an elevated platform for McKenna. “Re:Evolution” encapsulated Angus’ desire to showcase McKenna’s hyperbolic oratory over acidic instrumentation. When they toured the U.S. West Coast in January 1992, Angus and West met with Adams and McKenna at McKenna’s place in Sonoma. Everyone got baked, and they eventually played the demo, now with backing track. “Gentlemen, I hope we shall not be accused of demagoguery,” McKenna announced.<sup>10</sup>

“If the truth could be told so as to be understood, it will be believed”. By 1992, BBC Radio One listeners were tuning in to McKenna paraphrasing William Blake—part of his eight-minute monologue accompanying The Shamen. “The 20th century is the shudder that announces the approaching cataracts of time over which our species and the destiny of this planet is about to be swept”. “Re:Evolution” was on its way to becoming one of the strangest hits to ever make top 20 on the UK Singles Chart. Until then, McKenna was a relatively obscure intellectual whose chief beats were the Esalen Institute and *New Dimensions* radio. On the hit single, among the most popular promotions of his apocalyptica, McKenna claimed that “history is the shock wave of the Eschaton. . . . And what this means for those of us who will live through this transition into hyperspace, is that we will be privileged to see the greatest release of compressed change probably since the birth of the universe”. McKenna’s growing fanbase were informed that rave culture was rediscovering “the art of natural magic with sound”. They were being apprised that “large groups of people getting together in the presence of this kind of music are creating a telepathic community, a bonding that, hopefully, will be strong enough to carry the vision out into the mainstream of society” (“Re:Evolution”, from The Shamen, *Boss Drum*, 1992). On the “Live At The Warfield” version, “rave culture” was championed as “the real new world order”. Its habitués were beseeched directly by a figure coming over like the Jim Jones of pop: “Take back the planet—it’s yours, it’s yours. These are the last minutes of human history folks. The countdown is on. This is not a test. We’re leaving this world behind, for a brighter, better world that has always existed; in our imagination” (“Re: Evolution (Live At The Warfield)”, from The Shamen (with Terence McKenna), 1993).

The Shamen generated controversy and pushback at the BBC, in the music industry and among the tabloids over their chart-topping single and sonic billboard for MDMA, “Ebenezer Goode” (also on *Boss Drum*). Their association with the man who *The List* announced as the “wizened psychedelic guru”, and *New Musical Express* regarded as “not your average acid casualty”, added to the strife (Bush 1992: 9; Fadele 1993: 28). McKenna might have missed out on performing at the Brits Awards, but his celebrity status garnered more press for his book *Food of the Gods*, in which “psychedelic shamans” were observed to “constitute a worldwide and growing subculture of hyperdimensional explorers” (McKenna



1992a: 9). This Golden Age fantasy appealed to shamanarchists assembling under full moons and embracing psychoactive mushrooms as a lifestyle staple. Fictive vignettes in *Food of the Gods* divulged a fantasy of clan members of “the Paleolithic cult of the Great Horned Goddess” who “swallow the body of the Goddess” at primitive full moon parties where “heavy foot stamping channelled the energy of the first wave of visions”. It is not difficult to imagine the audience at the Camden Centre on 15 June 1992—“Alchemical Youth at the Edge of the World”—identifying as participants in reclaimed dance rituals in which they were “dissolved in the higher wordless truth of ecstasy” (ibid: 57, 58). Such depictions were well received by a generation exposed to the psychedelic rave communitas and anxious about the planetary future. Speaking to the disenchanted, “Re:Evolution” amplified the gospel to a wider audience. As McKenna proclaimed from his podium on the Hit Parade, rave “is the cutting edge of the last best hope for suffering humanity” (“Re: Evolution (Live At The Warfield)”, from *The Shamen* (with Terence McKenna), 1993).

McKenna’s next book, *True Hallucinations: Being an Account of the Author’s Extraordinary Adventures in the Devil’s Paradise*, was launched on 26-27 February 1993 with a multimedia collaboration and 48 hour rave held in San Francisco’s SoMa district.<sup>11</sup> The brainchild of Adams, Alien Dreamtime was mounted in a warehouse on 11<sup>th</sup> St near Folsom (see figure 4). The space, then called the Transmission Theatre (later Club Z, now Audio Nightclub), was leased by a real estate entrepreneur who also owned the club next door (in more recent years, Halcyon). Alien Dreamtime gave McKenna the opportunity to belt out his greatest hits supported by techno-ambient arrangement Space Time Continuum, didgeriduista Stephen Kent and live video mixing by Rose X.

Alien Dreamtime was an unlicensed event that the San Francisco Police Dept unsuccessfully attempted to shut down on both nights.<sup>12</sup> Prior to this, McKenna consistently renounced direct action. He did not, for instance, protest the UK’s Criminal Justice Act (which outlawed music with repetitive beats), and he avoided becoming the new psychedelic pied piper of youth, a role that earlier saw Nixon label Timothy Leary as “the most dangerous man in America”. Nevertheless, McKenna became an intellectual apologist for rave, defending it in the face of moralistic attacks. The aggressive police intervention at Alien Dreamtime appeared to be a stimulus. Soon after, in an interview for *TRIP* magazine, McKenna associated officialdom’s violent reaction to raving with “the last gasp of Calvinism”; this was a perverse impulse among custodians of “Dominant” culture “to stand between people and the experience of their own body”. The impulse—that “makes drugs illegal, frowns on rock ‘n’ roll, frowns on dance”—had a long background in the history lesson that McKenna was eager to share with anyone who would listen. “It’s a fear of the unconscious, the power-obsessed do not like people carrying on—but people like to carry on”. And then he gave voice to his own role vis-à-vis ravers. “I’d like to turn them on to the concept that through psychedelics they can actually bring a spiritual dimension back into their lives that isn’t in the hands of the churches or Madison Avenue”. Such commentary prompted *TRIP* to anoint McKenna “the rave generation’s spiritual voice” (McKenna in Anon A, 1993).

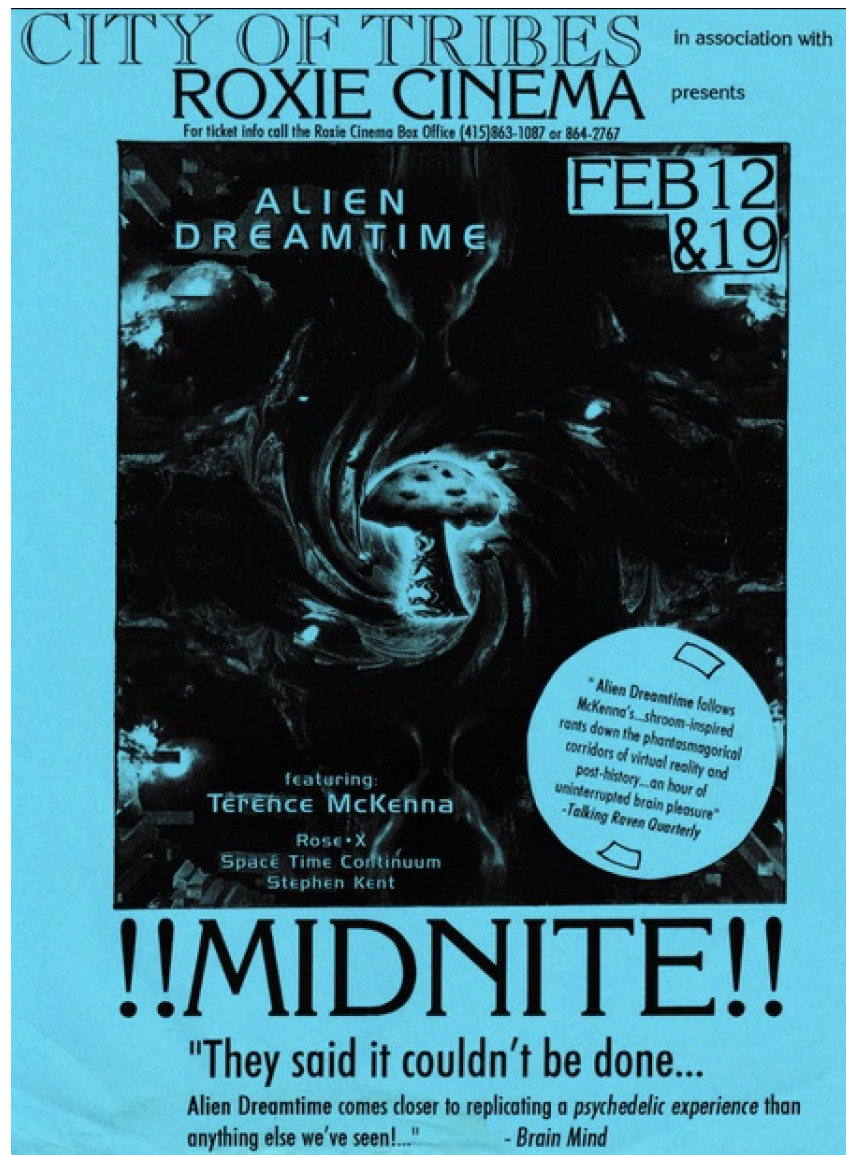


FIGURE 4. FLIER FOR ALIEN DREAMTIME 1993. COURTESY OF MICHAEL HOROWITZ.

Alien Dreamtime was a benchmark event for all concerned, including Jonah Sharp of Space Time Continuum. Sharp transplanted from the UK to San Francisco in 1992 and had opened for Psychic TV. He had witnessed Leary speaking in the chillout room at "Shiva's Erotic Banquet", an otherwise chaotic and surreal mega-rave in downtown L.A. Leary's integration with dance music culture made sense to Sharp. When introduced to the idea, Sharp and Psychic TV manager Johnathan Nelson saw the potential of staging a live music event as a vehicle for McKenna.<sup>13</sup> McKenna's spoken word would feature on Sharp's album *Alien Dreamtime* (Space Time Continuum with Terence McKenna, 1993). On the opening track, "Archaic Revival", a "new myth" is declared to be pivotal for resetting "the compass of the self". As "the last sane moment"—i.e. the Paleolithic era—is retrieved in order to effect "the forward escape into hyperspace", the narrative toyed with McKenna's stock-in-trade paradox: a futurism permeated with primitivist logic.





FIGURE 5. ALIEN DREAMTIME—SPACE TIME CONTINUUM WITH TERENCE MCKENNA.

Signature to McKenna is his recounting of encounters he had in states of DMT entrancement with the “machine elves from hyperspace” from the mid-60s. In one noted performance, he related the story of an interrupted DMT experience in 1966 in a rooming house he managed on Telegraph Avenue, Berkeley. He was mid-trip in his room when a resident, Rosemary, came rapping on his door. The trip was ruptured such that, leaping up from his entranced state, McKenna pulled the inhabitants of hyperspace back into the room with him. He spun around to open the door, “an elf hanging off each hand”. Rosemary was greeted with “wey dukwham waxibo gwani haptigo butix shning” (McKenna 1992).<sup>14</sup>

As illustrated by *Alien Dreamtime*, in which he broke into this unique brogue, the “elven language” became a feature of McKenna’s stage act. In his primary mid-60s states of DMT entrancement—the significance of which is addressed at some length in *St John* (Forthcoming)—the elves had instructed him to use his voice to “make an object”, whereupon a “language” that was “unhooked from English” arose within him. The spontaneous tongue that he had first known in his room in Berkeley two decades before, propelling McKenna on a life-long quest for comprehension, was now emulated in his guise as raving frontman.



He typically declared that while there was no meaning to his “wordblurt”, the enunciation felt satisfying. As was reported from the stage of the Transmission Theatre, following years of reflection, he concluded that “meaning and language are two different things”. The emergent “alien voice” wanted to reveal “the syntactical nature of reality”: “the real secret of magic is that the world is made of words, and that if you know the words that the world is made of, you can make of it whatever you wish” (“Speaking in Tongues”, from *Space Time Continuum* with Terence McKenna [1993]).<sup>15</sup> McKenna was no ordinary channeller, as he was no medium of any identifiable entity (for example, Jane Robert’s Seth). Nor did the “elf chatter” represent meaningful information, intelligible language, or what Wouter Hanegraaff calls an “articulated revelation” (1998: 24-41). If this “elf chatter” revealed anything at all, it was the idea of the syntactical structure of reality. If this wasn’t McKenna’s Everest of the Weird, he had at the very least achieved the Foothills of Kook.

As apparently the only tongue besides English in which he ever gained confidence, the “elf chatter” was a long-time feature of McKenna’s rap. This “translinguistic stuff” enhanced his vocabulary after many episodes smoking what he described in letters to his friend Rick Watson as “NN Unspeakable” (a riff on NN-dimethyltryptamine). He once offered a description of the effect of long hours of the resultant contentless “transmissions”: “Your face, your mouth, is just hanging down to your waist. . . . I mean, it’s like you’ve just done something to the whole front of your head, and all the musculature has dissolved, because you’ve been making all these sounds that you never make” (McKenna 1984). In later stage performances and recorded workshops in relatively sober states he attempted to simulate the syntax and order of these satisfying noetic emissions that felt like meaning but could not be interpreted with any known dictionary—i.e.: “*Nideughey voundwy haxigivitchny moughamvwa takitam didikini hipikekte*”.<sup>16</sup> As he described it, this “very primitive language . . . is the shadow thrown by a hyperdimensional object . . . you are just rotating this thing, going into it, expanding it, taking it apart, melting it, fusing it, remaking it” (McKenna 1988a: 64).

Quite aware of just how ridiculous these simulations appeared wrenched from their context—like observing a raver absent the music—McKenna was nevertheless compelled to reproduce this surreal *sprechen* before wider audiences. It was in these states that he claimed to have discovered “the source of meaning before it is contextually located” (McKenna 2020). He was effectively performing a glossolalian mimicry. This seemed more conscious and controlled in his on-stage antics than in his private trips, or for that matter, than in Pentecostalism, with its trancelike conditions of speaking in tongues. “It’s almost like a kind of spontaneous singing. But your mind steps aside, and this linguistic stuff comes out”. The experience was a source of fascination. It intrigued him that, even though this phenomenon carried an acoustic signal, it was not primarily characterized by that which could be heard. In his view, the “meaning” of this behaviour resides in what happens when the acoustic signal is processed by the visual cortex. “It is a new kind of language. It’s a visible, three-dimensional language” (McKenna 1988b). Transfixed by this xenolinguistics, McKenna once spent a week in a tent on Hawaii taking eight grams of mushrooms almost every night, while recording himself “shrieking in Nostratic”. People, he reported, found these bizarre recordings “extremely alarming” (McKenna 1988a: 64; McKenna 1997).

The collaborations continued in 1993 as, with assistance from Richard Allen of Delerium Records, the psychedelic psychopomp saddled up with UK artists Paul Chousmer, Phil Pickering and Mick West. As ambient techno outfit Zuvuya, they produced the album *Dream Matrix Telemetry*. Zuvuya was a short-lived act entirely dedicated to amplifying McKenna's transdimensional rite of passage. Using fragments from interview material and effects from a Yamaha SPX90, Zuvuya mediated McKenna's rupture of the mundane plane. This hour-long ode to the "ecology of souls" into which he had been transported on DMT was among the molecule's most public celebrations. The performance took up the "sculptured jewelled machines" sung into existence by the "gnome-like artisans" that had crowded forward to offer their "visible language" for inspection. "I somehow shattered the membrane between myself and ordinary space", McKenna announces, referencing the 1966 Berkeley episode recounted earlier. "I carried the trip into the room with me . . . an elf hanging off each hand" (see figure 6; Zuvuya with Terence McKenna 1993).



FIGURE 6. ZUVUYA WITH TERENCE MCKENNA—*DREAM MATRIX TELEMETRY*.



McKenna's elven *sprechen* routine became an anticipated feature of his public performances, delivered in increasingly bizarre contexts and typically the source of much levity. As conveyed on *Dream Matrix Telemetry*, the message was simple. It is "terribly important" that you do what they do and learn how to sing the transdimensional language, for "they are the initiators of the human species into a new ontos of language, where meaning is beheld" (Terence McKenna with Zuvuya, 1993).<sup>17</sup> Amid the tribal breakbeats and didjeridu of Zuvuya's subsequent album, *Shamania* (see figure 7), McKenna announces on "The Whisper in Trees" that on the "other side . . . machine elf gnome creatures speak in a language which you see" (Zuvuya with Terence McKenna 1994).<sup>18</sup>



FIGURE 7. ZUVUYA WITH TERENCE MCKENNA—*SHAMANIA* (1994, SLEEVE ARTWORK BY KATHLEEN HARRISON).



What in the mid-nineties was “glossolalia” emitted during readings in small bookstores in the U.K. had, by the late nineties, transmuted into exotic chanting performed as part of live guest appearances with Maui ethno-trance act, Lost At Last. The freak flag was strung aloft at San Francisco’s Maritime Hall on 12 December 1998. Appearing in a hooded garment, speaking of the “opulescent expressenses of the abyss” and enunciating “the living language that pours from the psychedelic body”, McKenna broke into strange ululations before appreciative fans (see figure 8; McKenna 1998).



FIGURE 8. TERENCE McKENNA WITH LOST AT LAST, SAN FRANCISCO’S MARITIME HALL, 12 DECEMBER 1998  
([SEE THE VIDEO](#): FROM McKENNA, 1998).

## DIVINE MOMENTS OF TRUTH

At that stage, and not long before his final rupture of the mundane plane, McKenna became freak royalty. But the path to eternity featured momentous detours. With that in mind, we now cast our minds back a few years to February-March of 1988 when McKenna made a brief stop in Goa (McKenna 1988). In a short-lived guise as journalist on assignment to the region, our elf-specialist had apparently arrived in the former Portuguese colony of

India courtesy of Mel Ziegler.<sup>19</sup> I am uncertain exactly where he went in Goa at this time, or whom he met, but it is synchronous that McKenna visited the transnational interzone at this time. Regardless of whether McKenna attended a full moon party on Anjuna beach or not, his presence in Goa at this time is intriguing. This was a catalytic moment in the trance dance movement fomented partly as a result of his own interventions. Judging by the frequency in which McKenna's voice has been sampled within Goa trance productions, its psytrance progeny and post-genres like psybient, it is no accident that "psy" is a cultural movement in which McKenna's thought-forms have forged deep grooves.<sup>20</sup>

The Camden Centre rap of 15 June 1992 was a pivotal juncture in McKenna's turn towards rave. At "Alchemical Youth at the Edge of the World", he expressed enthusiasm for 20th-century art forms that strove for new ways of visually processing what is heard. "Ever since jazz and cubism and throughout the evolution of 12-tone row, abstract expressionism, rock 'n' roll, [and] pop-up virtual reality", he claimed, art-making processes have been preparing us "to see what we mean". Rave and its many afterparties were capitalising on this development and were expected to deliver us into "a telepathic society" (McKenna 1992b). And DMT and psilocybin were presaged as the chief means by which meaning was to be made manifest. If made sufficiently intimate with DMT, the emergent youth culture of the nineties would be surfing the crest of the novelty wave.

Among those paying attention was DJ Nik Sequenci, who backed McKenna with ambient sounds on his early nineties UK tours. Compelled to drop into the novelty wave, Sequenci soon found himself custodian of a quantity of transdimensional board wax from Hawaii. During his first smoke of the "pink power", Sequenci had elves and fairies playing psychedelic trance, regaling him to return to Earth and recreate that music.<sup>21</sup> Unable to transpose these visions into sound himself, he sought out Martin Glover (a.k.a. Youth), formerly the bass player of industrial metal band Killing Joke and a studio production dynamo at Brixton's Butterfly Records. Subsequently, Youth invited Raja Ram among others to a ceremonial smoke-out with this pink crystal DMT in the back garden at Butterfly Records. The occasion proved momentous, catalyzing the birth of seminal Goa label Dragonfly Records and the formation of trance-galactic supergroup, Shpongle.<sup>22</sup> Although he was an unwitting midwife, Goa trance and its cultural progeny was inspired by a bag of DMT sourced from McKenna.<sup>23</sup>

With psychedelic culture perceived as a novelty leap, and visionary arts and dance music events attracting strange "agents of evolution", McKenna traversed the globe throughout the nineties promoting his psychedelic shamanism at a host of venues. His discourse was not untypically backdropped by DJed sound sculptures. By the mid-nineties, he had served as intellectual-in-residence at various clubs, venues and dance halls in San Francisco and London, and he had performed with several "authentically impossible to project into the commercial domain type bands" (Gyrus & Eden 1996). And through such commitments, he became the figurehead provocateur of a revitalising movement he had himself championed and energised.

As we already know, Fraser Clark was a principal co-conspirator. In his quest for a “Future Perfect State”, Clark divined that the new club cultures were contexts for inter-dimensional travel. The critical hub was London’s Megatripolis, where McKenna appeared on the opening night in 1993 and returned for a Parallel YOUniversity lecture the following year. Since Clark imagineered Megatripolis as a future memory and learning model for the Megatriopolitan Utopia to which humanity was destined, his techno-organic science-futurism aligned with McKenna’s vision of the “transcendental object”. Back across the Atlantic, speaking at the launch of Clark’s Zippy Pronoia Tour of the U.S. at The Wetlands nightclub in Manhattan on 15 June 1994, McKenna announced that “every fifty years or so, society needs liberation from the forces of fascism”. Fifty years since Hiroshima, “a vanguard of liberators has secured a beach head on the east coast of America, and has begun to work its way inland along the Hudson” (St John 2004: 217).<sup>24</sup>

### MCKENNAESQUE

The “Zippies” may have been flowers destined for history’s dustbin, but not so McKenna. His raving frontman antics were apparently short-lived, but long after his passing, like audiotronic séance masters, DJ-producers have reanimated McKenna’s voice. Steeped in a cut-up heritage, media-shamans and electro-esotericists have sampled McKenna’s voice probably more than any other individual in the history of electronica. Cobbling together repurposed audio from a vast archive of hundreds of hours of raps, his voice is vamped to create epic audio-narratives of dream travel, soul flight and cosmic transit. His voice has been sampled so frequently in psychedelic trance productions that an alien anthropologist landing at a random party could easily conclude that they are witnessing transmissions from the governing authority. At events worldwide from the nineties through to the present, producers and DJs have collaborated with event designers to sculpt a vibe steeped in (or at least lightly audio-airbrushed with) McKenna.<sup>25</sup> His voice would become personally amplified, privately filtered and individually interpreted in a world in which McKenna’s mind became iconic for going out of one’s mind.

The psychedelic progeny of Goa trance and ambient are the chief beneficiaries of McKennaesque. While Leary’s voice was solicited ad nauseam in early productions, the new mood was captured by Eat Static when remixing McKenna’s voice in “Prana”: “We’re not dropping out here, we’re infiltrating and taking over” (see figure 9; Eat Static 1993). Digital alchemists were converting the content of long-form raps into breviloquent gestures. As The Irresistible Force, Morris Gould opted to conclude his watershed ambient album *Flying High* with two words from his sponsor: “true weirdness” (The Irresistible Force 1992). The preference for McKenna within this scene revealed a penchant for tryptamine-derived (over LSD) gnosis. Sonic engineers excavated the archive for a trove of information and associated messages. Experimenting with Goa-breaks on “Skwirm”, Andie Guthrie (as Funkopath) spliced McKenna to cut to the chase: “A psychedelic person is not willing to be a good citizen or a good anything that is defined by somebody else. I mean a shaman is a true anarchist” (Funkopath 1997).



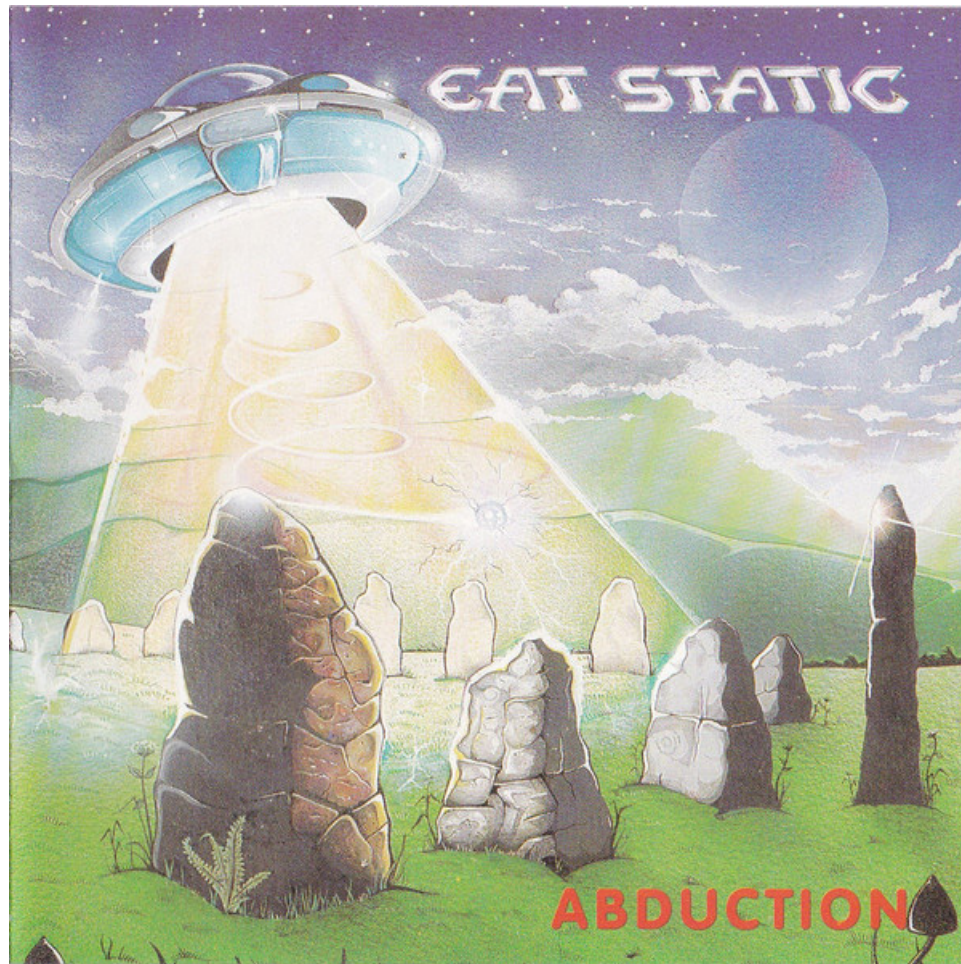


FIGURE 9. EAT STATIC—ABDUCTION (1993).

These sound bites are examples of what was earlier identified as “nanomedia”, sampled content that offers a unique medium for the transmission of what Christopher Partridge has named “popular occulture” (Partridge 2004). While evident across electronic music genres, nanomediation is prominent in psytrance where vocal samples are lifted and often repurposed. Producer/DJs serve as media shamans who craft dance music journeys in which scene tropes like the “monstrous” (St John 2011a), the “outlaw” (St John 2012b), the “alien” (St John 2013b) and the “native” (St John 2013c) animate the dance floor. Here, vocal sampling enables fragmented, albeit persistent, commentary on disparate “projects of the self”, a development that leverages a spectrum of narratives that are “progressive” or “transgressive”; dispositions that are hopeful or nihilistic (St John 2012a: 101). Where McKenna’s rave joins the ravers, the mood is typically optimistic. That is, producers are disposed to mine McKenna for hopeful millenarian prognostications that were often levelled against the pessimistic and exclusivist apocalypticism of fundamentalist Christianity—which he regarded as a “death cult” (McKenna 1987).

As psytrance artists converted his raps into rhapsodies, McKenna's voice was received like a shaman overseeing the initiation of adepts into a mystery cult. "Our world is endangered by the absence of good ideas, by the absence of consciousness", the psychedelic shaman announces on "Transparent", a track by Gustavo Manfroni, a.k.a. Burn in Noise (2008). With the "redemption of the human spirit" at stake, dance floor neophytes are charged to "bring back a small piece of the picture and contribute it to the building of the new paradigm". The primary gnosis amplified by electronic musicians is that humans are divine beings. On another track on another dance floor, a digitized McKenna stands astride an invisible podium championing the "light-filled vegetable" illuminating the darkness. "We are not fallen beings. When you take into your life the gnosis of the light-filled vegetable . . . the first thing that comes to you is: you are a divine being. You matter. You count" (Streamers 2012).

As his very own archive, "McKenna" became a standard device for musicians seeking to craft a transformative audioscape complete with obstacles and trials. "Hypnagogia are dancing mice, little coloured candies, pieces of ribbon, gears, screws, the trivia". Thus spake Terence: "the impedimenta of the phantasmagoria of your mind". On this track produced by Canadian Ryan K. Hanna, a.k.a. Monkey Machine (2011), McKenna riffs on the realm of hypnagogia encountered in the DMT state. "You have to go through what Mircea Eliade called the rupture of the mundane plane". And then the pace of his voice is curbed: ". . . and then visually coherent emotionally information laden high content hallucinations occur, and many people have taken psychedelic drugs and never gotten past the hypnagogia". Musical compositions experimenting with McKennaesque often aim to facilitate transit beyond this phase.

As McKenna's raps have been pillaged by musicians for messages that evoke liminal states of transcendence—passage between realms—under certain contexts the informative content of the original material takes a backseat to its transformative efficacy. In such contexts, to couch this in celebrated terminology paraphrased from McLuhan: "the medium becomes the message". For a host of artists, McKenna became a "medium" for the psychedelic experience. Now, this is not easily navigable terrain, and I make no claim to having undertaken any measurement of audience receptivity. Music (including any nanomedia) is differentially interpreted in the minds of individual beholders. What may amount to the successful transmission of informational content for one listener may, for another, be meaningful less due to a grasp of McKenna's original extemporisations, than to the way his scribbly intonations furnish an extraordinary experience. Additionally, the intent of composer-producers may not translate well to audiences for a variety of subjective and environmental reasons. Downstream from the earlier recording collaborations, the subsequent vocal remixes are designed to transmit the content—the message—of McKenna's visions. And yet, like audio prosthetics, these artefacts are also the functional means to effect transcendent states, with the sound of McKenna's voice carrying the transcendent sensibility desired. In the end, compositions that re-create McKenna's transdimensional voyages become vehicles for future voyagers.

The “elves” gambol in the background of this aesthetic. In the wake of Alien Dreamtime and Zuvuya, artists tapped the seam of McKenna’s elven *sprechen*. While the first artists to sample the elf chatter in a dance track were the Ray Castle-led tribal acid outfit Sonic Sufi—on the title track of their 1995 release *Sacramental*. The standout sample was performed by Shpongole on “A New Way To Say ‘Hooray!’” (Shpongole 2001; see figure 10). Before breaking into his elf chatter, the track has Terence capturing the moment of contact following DMT inhalation.

And you take it, in, and in and in, and there’s a sound like the crumpling of a plastic bread wrapper, or the crackling of a flame. And a tone. A hummmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm. . . . And there is a cheer. The gnomes have learned a new way to say hoooooooooooooraaaay.<sup>26</sup>



FIGURE 10. SHPONOLE — *TALES OF THE INEXPRESSIBLE* (2001).

Since there is no apparent information, no overt meaning, conveyed in these most alien of “small mouth noises”—i.e. the elfspeak—I suggest that their reproduction emphasizes McKenna’s role as medium of the unspeakable. With their chosen name a direct outcome



of the desire to formulate a lexicon for an experience for which existing language was inadequate, over two decades, Shpong led the charge to convert McKenna's voice into a sonic template for the unknown.

While the elf chatter became signature to the McKennaesque aesthetic, McKenna's sampled voice also signalled the desired "unEnglishable" states of consciousness (McKenna 1984). In short bursts, sample-smiths find the words to explicate what words can't explain. "I go to a place where language finds it very hard to pull over, look around", announces McKenna, summoned by Israelis Liquid on Safi (2006). "It's almost as though it takes you to a world that is not English". Deploying the words of McKenna to convey this indeterminate world became a commonplace technique, faithful to revelations concerning language deriving from sufficient doses of tryptamines. In another example, Russian psybass duo Mahaon (2013) conjure McKenna with a slow and deliberate delivery. "Psychedelic drugs are as important to the study of UFOs as the telescope was to the redefining of astronomy. You can meet the alien". As that final line is repeated in a composition that "alienates" McKenna's voice, the work insinuates the self's encounter with the other. Other times the voice is garbled or indistinct, perhaps not unlike audio marked "indistinct chatter" in movie subtitle tracks. But with McKenna the indistinct chatter is distinctly McKenna, a recognizable voice even though the meaning may be occluded.

Sometimes the distinctly indistinct voice is used to distinct effect, as it is on a remix of the collaboration "Liquid Hook" performed by Liquid Soul in 2018 at Psy-Fi Festival in the Netherlands. Interactive Noise's remix of this popular track was performed before thousands during the festival's closing set. For several minutes, McKenna's familiar avuncular voice, chopped up and filtered, offers background noise before an exhilarating crescendo that serves as a memorable sonic representation of a breakthrough event triggered by smoking DMT. What I find curious in this notable example is how McKenna's voice has become inherently meaningful as the backing vocals to psychedelic liminality. In this and many other cases, not only are DJs and producers re-suturing and synthesising the syntax of the wizard of words to express the notion of the world made manifest through sound, but McKenna is also summoned as a kind of "trip sitter" for psychedelic enthusiasts.

As artists committed to these performances, McKennaesque extended to audio-video productions, such as the live transmedia performance of *Alien Dreamtime* that has been produced on CD, VHS and DVD.<sup>27</sup> In an effort to depict the thought patterns inside McKenna's head, Rose X earlier produced the video "Experiment at Petaluma". Ken Adams later produced *Imaginatrix: The Terence McKenna Experience*, a production involving thousands of layered images, motion graphics and private video recordings made with McKenna between 1989–1994 to map the unchartable, mediate the immediate, convey the unspeakable and lift the veils on language itself. Adams adopts the concept of the "Imaginatrix" to describe—sampling McKenna—"a universe inside the human mind", "a place where realities are made of thoughts", a "place that shamans have known of for millennia". Taking up key themes in McKenna's philosophy, the production is a commendable attempt to produce a "visibly beheld topology" of McKenna's speech (Adams 2014).<sup>28</sup>

## THE PARTY AT THE END OF THE WORLD

The Parallel YOUniversity crowd craning their necks to catch McKenna's "small mouth noises" at Megatripolis in 1994 were sequentially delivered the news: this was the most novel moment in all of history; with each passing moment, novelty accumulates; all evolutionary data reveals that the peak of history's trip is "coming soon". McKenna was flier-dropping his audience—a mix of the intrigued, the perplexed and the bemused—datum on this "super-novel" transformative event he named the "zero" moment of his "Timewave" chart, a prophesied commitment revealing a complex personal mythopoetics. Some artists appear to recognize how McKenna's signature project—his philosophy of time—offers subliminal language for the psychedelic deconditioning of cultural programming. This understanding is represented, for example, by collaboration MindZik whose track "S.A.R.P." features samples from *Manual of Evasion: LX94*, a 1994 Dadaist film experiment directed by Portuguese filmmaker Edgar Pêra. Alongside Robert Anton Wilson and Rudy Rucker, McKenna played a revolutionary "temponaut" who breaks free from his imprisonment in clock time. "Forward to the new order of the transtemporal dream", he declares in a lifted soundbite. "History is ending. . . . Science gives us the Big Bang. I give you the Big Surprise" (in Mindzik 2018; see figure 11).



FIGURE 11. TERENCE MCKENNA, LISBON, 1994, ON THE SET OF *MANUAL OF EVASION LX94*, DIRECTED BY EDGAR PÊRA. COURTESY OF EDGAR PÊRA.

It is no coincidence that the psychedelic constituency of the rave scene and its descendants have comprised the audience most receptive to McKenna's Timewave siren, even if many weren't on board with "the end is nigh" sentiments tinged with the Apocalypse according to Revelation.<sup>29</sup> Where McKenna promoted a transformative event akin to the Big Bang on Drugs, it made sense to a community dedicated to manifesting transformative events. It was palatable to an underground scenius populated with crews optimizing events designed as cosmic cavalcades, more transcendent, more novel than those confabulated last season. Event teams within this pre-millennium attention economy vied to cultivate an experience more outlandish than that produced by their competitors. McKenna's discourse on acceleration and complexity was assimilable for those augmenting events with technology and aesthetics designed to inaugurate sensorial experiences more novel than those encountered last year, last week or even just yesterday. McKenna's uber-novel zero event predicted for 21 December 2012 was hyped as the event to end all events, a potential stimulus for action if not a cause for celebration. In his quip saved for enquiries about the nature of "the event" that awaits us at the end of time, the ultimate goal of evolution was "a great party" (Badillion 1991: 27). The comment, "I'll see you at the End of the World", and the Irish toast, "May ye be alive at the end o' the world", were favoured partings. Would anyone want to miss that?

McKenna cultivated a raptured audience for the "bifurcation" event ahead. That it would be an uncertain event in which his audience should expect to experience a transformed consciousness, to become unknowable to themselves and even be completely Othered as a species, lent the event a *je ne sais quoi* appealing to those jonesing to be transported out of their minds. Such transcendent states have long been coveted by seasonal and periodic trance dance movements bent on cultivating disembodiment and annihilation of the self in ecstatic states (see Baldini 2010). These movements understand death and birth as inseparable. In the nineties, McKenna was propagating a new discourse on apocalyptic festivity. Implicit to his mythopoetics on time and inherent to his novelty thesis, the end was at the same time a new beginning—a transition point.<sup>30</sup> It was a motif essential for transformational dance event cultures accustomed to celebrating seasonal transitions. Despite the outlandish implications of his ideas, his mythopoetics can be factored among the reasons why McKenna has been courted by the psychedelic trance scene. That the wave-of-time had a synchronous relationship with the Mayan calendar movement drew more intense associations, as borne out in the obsession with 21 December 2012, when elements within psyculture forged a planetary consciousness movement reliant on the inauguration of a "new time" (St John 2011b). Given he departed a dozen years preceding the main event, McKenna was unavailable for the preparations, let alone the festivities.

"This is a strange thing to happen to a philosopher", McKenna pondered while taking stock of his career when back in the familiar confines of Esalen in August 1993. Like an intrepid returnee from an off-planetary venture, he described how he had recently "found myself in clubs at four in the morning raving at people at high decibel with the perfect knowledge that they couldn't understand a word I was saying" (McKenna 1993). The live rave format was not an ideal context for transmitting McKenna's ideas. That these scenes



were deaf to some of his ideas was a disappointment from which he is unlikely to have been shaken, had he lived passed his early fifties. As he announced in the early nineties, his conviction was that music is the least appropriate context for tryptamine experiments, let alone a dance party. It was his lasting contention that waiting in silent darkness was the right way to approach the “thing in itself”, uncoloured by light, sound or expectation. “Let the pythagorean inner music issue from your soul, then you will be amazed, and then if it bores you, flip on the top of the pops” (Anon B 1993: 18).

## OUTRO

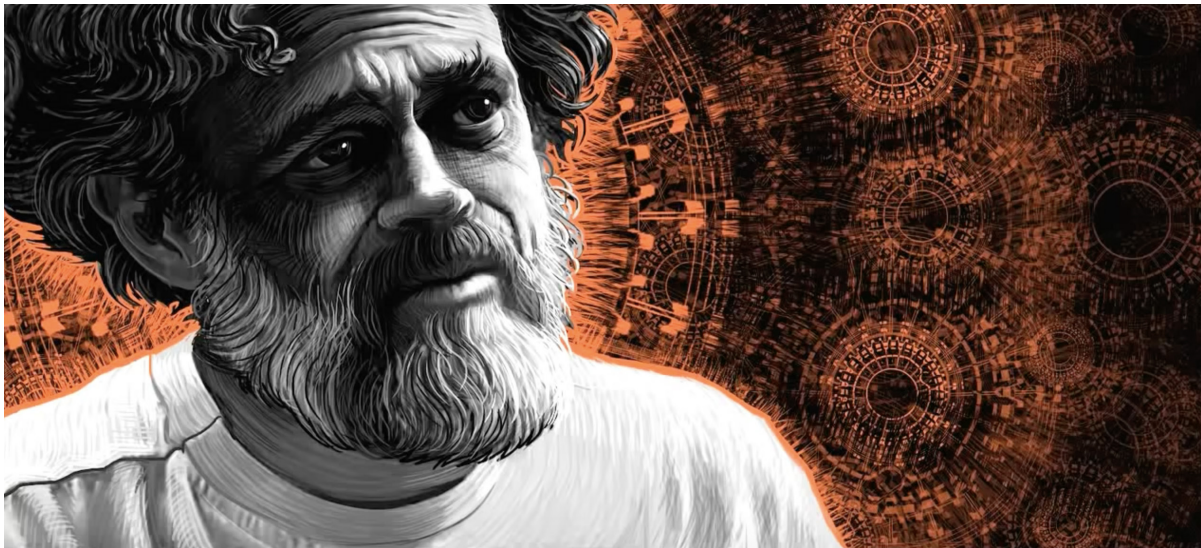


FIGURE 12. TERENCE MCKENNA, BY GEOFF TAYLOR.

The question of how the figure who argued that “culture is not your friend” might have suffered the contemporary dance and festival scene must await further discussion. Despite his ambivalence with dance music events as vehicles for psychonautical experimentation, outside of his career as an amateur ethnobotanist (which I have not addressed here), McKenna evolved from raving frontman to surreal psychopomp for a large population within psychedelic electronica. There, his sampled vocal sound bites evince the most mediated (or nanomediated) voice in the history of electronic music. With the assistance of the cybercultural surround that he championed throughout his career, McKenna retains a disembodied presence in the popular underground of music making and performance. As his voice reverberates in an era of accelerating crisis, complexity and uncertainty—which he devoted his life to comprehending—that he continues to shadow the present with his end-of-history mythopoetics warrants attention. As I have demonstrated, McKenna’s sonorous weight has been felt largely, though not exclusively, within “psy” electronica, from Goa and

psytrance to psybient styles. While many samples echo and address the cognitive libertarian philosophy pursued through McKenna's recorded public performances, a growing weight of samples appear to be sans direct or overt signification. As the digital echoing of his tryptamine-inspired rambling "elven" *sprechen* mixed in dance tracks suggests, the voice is often channelled without any clear articulation. As illustrated in the Interactive Noise remix of "Liquid Hook" performed by Liquid Soul at Psy-Fi Festival in 2018, this rambling, inchoate and sometimes partially audible aesthetic—perhaps the true terrain of *raving*—is deployed by artists to evoke, affect and burlesque non-ordinary states of consciousness, or mini-apocalypses of the self. In such contexts, while the meaning of McKenna's words might not have been quite lost in translation within electronica, it does appear that his voice has become the message.

As illustrated by his influence on a multitude of artists inhabiting the world of psychedelic electronica, and by the impact of his voice dropped on dance floors at clubs, parties and festivals two decades downstream from his departure, McKenna has become a medium of the unspeakable. And with respect to his deference to McLuhan, the medium has become the message. While artists clearly hold a range of motives when electing to sample McKenna, from out-right caricature to a functional means of transcendence, he appears primed to serve in the afterlife as a psychopompic trip sitter for a global community of dance music enthusiasts.

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## NOTES

1 See *Terence McKenna: The Strange Attractor* (St John Forthcoming).

2 Despite the growing interest in McKenna among scholars of religion (see Davis 2019).

3 From a 1993 pitch statement from Harper San Francisco, courtesy of Leslie Rossman.

4 Held on the Kona Coast of Hawaii in September 1999, AllChemical Arts was McKenna's co-founded conference on psychedelics and art.

5 The single featured McKenna's full monologue transcribed on the front and back cover art and accompanying poster.

6 Ken Adams, interview with author on Zoom, 23 June 2023.

7 No-longer available online, Fraser Clark's "BOOK of RAVeLATIONS" was steeped in McKenna. For more on McKenna's influence on dance culture, see Partridge (2006a: 49–51) and Partridge (2006b: 113–9).

- 8 Among the first releases to feature tracks sampling McKenna, the CD version of *Shamanarchy In The UK* includes Psychic TV's "Ecstasy in the UK", which features McKenna commenting on the "partnership society" that worshipped Gaia, and the "reawakening of this feminine ecological Earth-centered awareness that is definitely feeding into the aesthetics of this counterculture that is arising". "What is going on is an attempt to recapture the shamanistic institutions and styles that existed before history".
- 9 Colin Angus, email interview with the author, 2 July 2021. Angus' clarifications: 19 July 2023. To record his voice, the Shamen reached an agreement with McKenna and Clark's label Evolution.
- 10 Colin Angus, email to the author, 20 July 2023.
- 11 *True Hallucinations* was originally published as a "talking book" in 1984.
- 12 For more details on this, see St John (Forthcoming).
- 13 Jonah Sharp, email to author, 6 February 2022. McKenna and Sharp again collaborated on Halloween 1994 at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco.
- 14 The incident is narrated with accompanying animation in the documentary *The Transcendental Object At The End Of Time* (Bergmann 2014).
- 15 Jonah Sharp also produced the *Speaking In Tongues* 12-Inch featuring a remix of McKenna's alien melody on "Speaking In Tongues (Smack Mix)".
- 16 A direct quote from the transcript of McKenna, "Ethnobotany of Shamanism" (1988a).
- 17 McKenna's son Finn contributed artwork to the cover design of *Dream Matrix Telemetry*.
- 18 Material from Zuvuya's interview with McKenna was deployed on *Shamania* and their E.P. *Shaman I Am* (1994).
- 19 In 1988, McKenna was commissioned by Mel Ziegler of Banana Republic clothing to write his own travel column titled "Our Man in Nirvana" for doomed publication *Trips*.
- 20 The influence is not exclusively on psytrance. As illustrated by the prolific tagging of McKenna on Soundcloud, his voice is carried on a diversity of styles, suggesting that the novelty of McKenna has not worm off.
- 21 Nik Sequenci, interviewed by the author, 3 February 2012.
- 22 Formed by Raja Ram and Simon Posford, Shpongle's debut release *Are You Shpongled?* (which features track "Divine Moments of Truth", 1998) is infused with DMT and drenched with McKenna.
- 23 For the story of the fate of the contents of the "pink packet", c/o McKenna, and via Sequenci, Youth and Raja Ram, see St John (2015: 202–11).
- 24 Posted on The Well in 1994.
- 25 For further details on McKenna's influence on the underground dance movement, see, St John (2004: 210–32).
- 26 For the sample, see "Shpongle A New Way To Say 'Hooray!'" (YouTube). The sample is from McKenna (1994). The line "a new way to say hooray" invokes Syd Barrett's lyrics from "The Gnome," from Pink Floyd's 1967 debut album *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn*: "Another way for gnomes to say, Ooooooh my."
- 27 The video *Alien Dreamtime*, first released on VHS in 1993, featured live video mixing by Rose X (Adams 1993). The 2003 DVD was produced by Magic Carpet Media / Rose X Media House (Britt Welin and Ken Adams).



- 28 *Imaginatrix* also uses a long “outro” of McKenna performing the xeno-elven voice.
- 29 Himself raised as a Catholic, from which he struggled to depart as an atheist, McKenna’s views and visions were fraught by similitude with the Christian Eschaton.
- 30 For the centrality of the metaphors of rebirth and metamorphosis to McKenna’s enigmatic philosophy of temporality, see St John (Forthcoming).

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