

# 2012: What Does it Mean?

## John Major Jenkins in conversation with Doghead Cola

*"In Maya Cosmogenesis 2012, Jenkins has shown that this precessional alignment of the winter solstice sun with the galaxy is the phenomenon in nature to which the ancient Olmec/Maya anchored their great calendar. Maya Cosmogenesis 2012 sets the stage for us to ask the deeper question: 'Why?' This would be an interesting question under any circumstances; for us in these times it is doubly interesting, for we, by chance or design, actually live in the end time anticipated by the ancient Maya shaman-prophets. Their bones and their civilization have long since gone into the Gaian womb that claims all the children of time. Indeed, their cities were ghostly necropoleis by the time the Spanish conquerors first gazed upon them, five hundred years ago. Yet it was our time that fascinated the Maya, and it was toward our time that they cast their ecstatic gaze, though it lay more than two millennia in the future at the time the first Long Count dates were recorded."*

Terence McKenna  
from his introduction  
*Maya Cosmogenesis 2012*

In recent years, John Major Jenkins has come to be renowned as one of the leading independent researchers investigating ancient Mesoamerican cosmology. His latest effort in that study, *Maya Cosmogenesis 2012: The True Meaning of the Maya Calendar End-Date*, from Bear & Company Publishing, specifically explores the Mayan end-date which has emerged as a point of Apocalypse for some New Age doomsayers, and remains a fascinating enigma to serious researchers. Jenkins isn't new to the subject of Mayan calendrics and culture, having authored 4 other books on the subject previous to his most recent outing, including *Journey to the Mayan Underworld*, *Mirror In The Sky*, *Tzolkin: Visionary Perspectives and Calendar Studies*, and *The Center of Mayan Time*.

I caught up with John in the RadioValve studios for a lengthy wine-laden, tobacco-hazed conversation about Mayan cosmology, the academic and underground tour circuits, his books and adventures in Mexico, and other bits of verbal bandering about. This interview represents the first in a two-part series which will conclude in the next issue of *The Deadly Type*...

**Doghead Cola:** So let's just sort of talk about the orientation of where this book has come from. I know you've written several other books previously, and uh, I remember that the first night that you and I met, you ended up meeting Terence McKenna...

**John Major Jenkins:** Mm-hmmm. Yeah, I remember that; that was back in 1996, actually the first time I met Terence in person. [Shortly after that] I participated in an event that he did up at the Gold Lake Mountain Ranch up in the mountains west of Boulder. At that time I was very much engaged into this research that I was doing into the Maya Calendar... And, uh, my interest in the Maya stretches back to 1986 when I first visited Guatemala, and I was really

amazed at this Maya civilization, and the fact that the Maya people were still around certainly was important to me, and uh... Upon returning from that first trip south of the border, I really started looking into the unanswered questions in the ancient Maya thought and civi-

questions, and the biggest unresolved question in Maya studies is 'Why 2012?', what's the big deal? Y'know, is it just some random artifact, or is there some empirical reason behind it?

And the answer to my question actually came pretty early on in my



**...Why did the Maya pick 2012 to end this vast cycle of time? And why did they believe the years around 2012 would be a time of great change and great transformation unprecedented in human history..?**

lization.

As many people are aware, there's this intriguing date in the Maya system of time that is December 21, 2012 a.d. And this is the end of a large cycle of time called the 13 Baktun Cycle. It's never been clear in the academic literature or the popular literature about what this date is about. Why did the Maya pick 2012 to end this vast cycle of time? And why did they believe the years around 2012 would be a time of great change and great transformation unprecedented in human history, at least as far as we know. And I kinda took it upon myself to do some research at the university library to track down some of these

research. Back in 1993 I already had a couple of books under my belt, and um, this 2012 enigma was very present for me. Through some of the writings of Terence McKenna I encountered this idea that we are approaching this time when the December Solstice sun will be lining up with the center of the galaxy. It's an astronomical fact. It's caused by the precession of the Equinoxes, which is the slow wobbling of the earth on its axis. And, uh, this seemed to be the reason why the Maya picked 2012.

I didn't want to sort of rest with that as a statement, and, uh, I wanted to go deeply into the information of the 6 Maya, mostly drawing from academic

studies, to demonstrate how the Maya incorporated this concept into their basic institutions, such as the Ball Game, and King of Session Rites, and so on...

Um, but yeah, a lot of my interest in the Maya developed from trips that I took to Mexico and Guatemala, stretching over 5 or 6 years. I basically returned almost every winter and lived and worked among the Maya in the highlands of Guatemala. Very traditional groups of Maya people, different groups of Maya—Cakchiquel, Ixil, Quiché Maya. Basically there's 6 groups of pure-blood Maya living in the highlands of Guatemala, and many, many of the ancient traditions still survive. I felt that the Maya of today are heir to a very profound understanding of the cosmos; a very profound understanding of the cosmological forces that contribute to and stimulate the evolution of consciousness on this planet.

This idea of the solstice sun lining up with the galactic center—the center of the Milky Way Galaxy—seemed to be a very profound thing that should be looked at more closely. Not from just, y'know, a very popular point of view, but also from the standpoint of science. There seemed to be a real science behind this. We can call this alignment a Galactic Alignment. The cosmic center is the center of our Milky Way Galaxy; it's the center and the source of the galaxy of which we are members. In a sense we can think of it as that place in the sky out of which everything, in the local galaxy at least, including us, has come.

So this work, in trying to decode the galactic alignment and its presence in the ancient Maya system of thought was really what I took on. And I lived in Boulder for many years, and sort of led a maverick, independent-scholar lifestyle living in a small garage—actually at the time I was living in Louisville—and, um, I set up my life so that I would have a lot of free time to do this research. And it was really an amazing time of discovery for me. My work with the Maya and the Maya cosmology has sort of been my own gnostic path to understanding some deep principles that have to do with the situation that we are in today as a civilization...

Oh, let's see, what can we sort of... There's a lot to talk about here, really, yeah...

**DC:** Right, because clearly within all of civilization right now we're at a head with a lot of systems which have been proven to be archaic in many ways. Um, war-driven, economically-driven, that have very little to do with the substance of who we are, and how, and why we're here, and what it means to be alive. I mean, obviously, like, being alive means that you're constantly on a path towards death. And you can look at that in a negative way, or you can look at it in a positive way—

**JMJ:** Hmmm.

**DC:** —and be, uh, generating energies, y'know, towards that... It seems like, in a sense, the calendrical studies that you've become involved in seems

to reflect that idea—that we're moving towards a death and a rebirth of this state of civilization.

**JMJ:** Mm-hmm. Right. A lot of times in the presentation that I give, the question comes up, 'Is this the end of the world?' And, uh, there's really no definite answer to that.

I'd like to emphasize that indigeneity is cyclic, and, um, espouses a doctrine of renewal. But of course that is based upon the idea that something will be coming to an end. So it's kind of unavoidable to confront the spiritual transformation that comes from confronting our imminent death. Instead of shying away from that, and trying to sort of evade the issue that maybe the world is going to end. I dunno—I mean, we live in a really crazy time. I mean, look at what's going on right now with Kosovo. The nuclear threat certainly is not a done deal. It's not over with.

Also, we're approaching the Millennium—the millennial turning of our own Judeo-Christian calendar, which, y'know, as a social-historical phenomenon, uh... Always at the end of a decade, the end of a century—and now we're approaching the end of a millennium—human beings react in very, very strange ways. [some laughter] And there is this feeling that something very big is coming to an end.

I think that one of the biggest things that human beings can confront is death. And death can be a very transformative thing.

So, um, there are many prophecies and many predictions that seem to be converging upon the time that we currently live in. And these prophecies come from, basically, cultures and traditions around the globe. Some of them very ancient, some of them more recent. We have work by visionaries such as Nostradamus, or Edgar Cayce, we have prophecies in the Judeo-Christian tradition like the Book of Revelations... All of these prophecies and predictions seem to be pointing towards our time as a time of endings, and, I would add, probably new beginnings. But what is beyond the ending of a civilization with which we have become accustomed to is unclear. I think that it's a great opportunity for creating. It's a great opportunity for co-creating—

**DC:** Mmmm...

**JMJ:** —for working together and getting real with each other, and building what the world is going to look like in the next phase, or the next chapter of human unfolding on this planet.

But really, what's fascinating for me is that, it's only in the Maya material that identifies the underlying empirical reason why we're in a time of such great, transformative change. And it seems to be this astronomical alignment with the galactic center.

**DC:** Well, along that line, I'm curious, because based upon some other reading that I've done, um, there's the concept of 2012 being Year Zero—

**JMJ:** Mm-hmm.

**DC:** —and that's both kind of promising and kind of, y'know, horrifying in a sense. Y'know, obviously the Cambodians called 1973 Year Zero for themselves because their civilization was completely destroyed—

**JMJ:** Right.

**DC:** —by the Nixon campaign to dis-

cover the "secret" VC encampments within Cambodia. And so that's kind of a model that we can work with in terms of total devastation of a society. So I'm curious, in terms of this Year Zero potentially being a new beginning, is there anything in the calendrical system that kind of fortells of things that may come beyond that. Y'know, is there a set-up for calendrical ideas that also deal with community that transcend the 2012 date?

**JMJ:** Yeah, I can't be really specific about predictions. I think we need to understand this from the point of view of systems-dynamics. What we're approaching is Year Zero. But Year Zero in what? Um, a little background on this concept, um... The 13 Baktun of the Maya is this period of 5,200 years, and in the Maya doctrine of World Ages, there's 5 World Ages—there's 5 periods of 5,200 years. So 5,200 years times 5 is 26,000. 26,000 years is the cycle of precession, it's the cycle of the earth's wobble. This is a very, very important concept. It's been neglected in scientific discourse. In many, many ancient traditions including Egyptian cosmology and Vedic cosmology—the doctrine of the Yugas—this 26,000 year cycle is recognized as a vast period of human spiritual gestation on this plan-

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et. So even in the western astrological tradition, you have the 12 Zodiacal Ages, and, y'know, we're supposedly entering the Age of Aquarius, and all that, and um...

The Maya divided up this 26,000 year cycle into 5 periods whereas the western astrological tradition divides it into 12. Also, the western astrological tradition is not very clear on where the beginning point of this gestational cycle should be. I mean, if it is a gestation, there must be a birth moment somewhere. Well, the Maya information provides that, and it's the birth moment, our collective birth moment into the next phase of our collective unfolding as a species is the moment, or the era, in which the December solstice sun is lining up with the galactic center.

It kinda makes sense too, just from the point of, y'know, understanding that the galactic center is that point in the sky that is very, very energetic. I mean, it's a place that is dense with radiowaves, it's a place where quasars are found. In fact, astrophysicists believe that there's a black hole residing in the center of our galaxy. This, this, uh, trans-dimensional portal that can move us into other dimensions. So in the Maya material, they

provide us with an answer to the question of when the 26,000 year cycle of human spiritual gestation ends and begins anew...

So it's really hard to be more specific about that in terms of predictions. It's sorta funny because it's sort of analogous to understanding the yearly cycle. It's like, we as human beings—and our consciousness is evolving—we're struggling to grasp these larger cycles of time of which we are a part, of which our species is slowly unfolding through.

Imagine 20,000 years ago, 30,000 years ago, when human beings did not have the capacity to conceive of the yearly cycle. Y'know, their time-concept was limited to the task at hand. And probably some intrepid shaman came along and said, 'Hey, if we put these seeds in the ground now, they're going to sprout in 6 months, or 8 months,' or something. Basically, it was an enhancement of the time-concept of human beings to the level of the year so that we could anticipate. And then they could say that, y'know, let's say that today it's like spring-time, right. Well, human time-concept became enhanced to the point that they could project forward and say that 'in 6 months, it's going to be cold.' They could anticipate and plan for events

along the Milky Way... For example, there's the Dark Rift caused by intergalactic dust clouds that runs along the Milky Way. You can see it if you're out there on a dark mid-summer's night. That area of the Milky Way that contains the galactic center is very bright and very wide. And that is how the Maya were able to recognize and understand that part of the Milky Way as what they call the Cosmic Womb. They conceived of the Milky Way as the Cosmic Mother, the fertile road of light. And that bulging, wide part of the Milky Way that contains the galactic center, they called that the Womb of the Cosmic Mother. Which is a real good label for it. I mean, the galactic center is that creation place in the sky.

What's interesting to me is that a real understanding of the mindset of the Maya sort of has **congealed** in this research. They were basically shamans, and they were engaging in psychedelic journeys into the full multi-tiered levels of the universe. And as shamans, of course, they were accessing psychoactives—sacred mushrooms, DMT extracted from the *Bufo marinus* toad species—there's evidence for all of this in the pictographs of the Maya. Well, that's really fascinating then, because it seems that the Maya thought is much, much in advance of the most cherished notions of our own science. And because of that, it seems like we could learn a lot from the Maya.

I try to share this material with astronomers and with straight Maya scholars, but had a really hard time convincing them that this alignment is important, and that many, many ancient civilizations have recognized this alignment that we are in right now as the transformative moment for Earth.

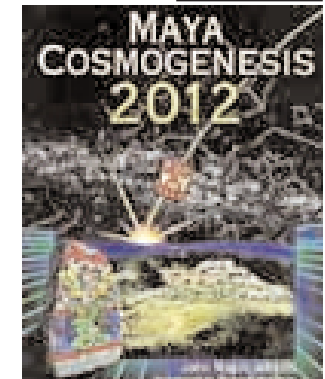
Uh, it's really strange to me. It's almost analogous to the density that the powers-that-be had in relation to Galileo and his telescope, y'know.

**DC:** Sure.

**JMJ:** He pointed his telescope to Jupiter and saw moons revolving around Jupiter, and said 'Hey, look, proof that there are things out there that are not revolving around the earth!' And the Church responded to that with excommunication and just a horrendous attack against Galileo.

**DC:** In fact, one of the most humorous facts about that story is that, uh, he spent pretty much the remainder of his life from that point on in imprisonment because of his ideas. And on his death bed was given his last rites, and was offered a chance to *confess*. And just before he died he said, 'Of course, it's actually more true my way.' [laughter] Which is a funny story, y'know, it's a great way to approach your last rites—you're no longer excommunicated, you now go into the Heaven of doctrinal Christianity, and then at the last

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that would be taking place in the future.

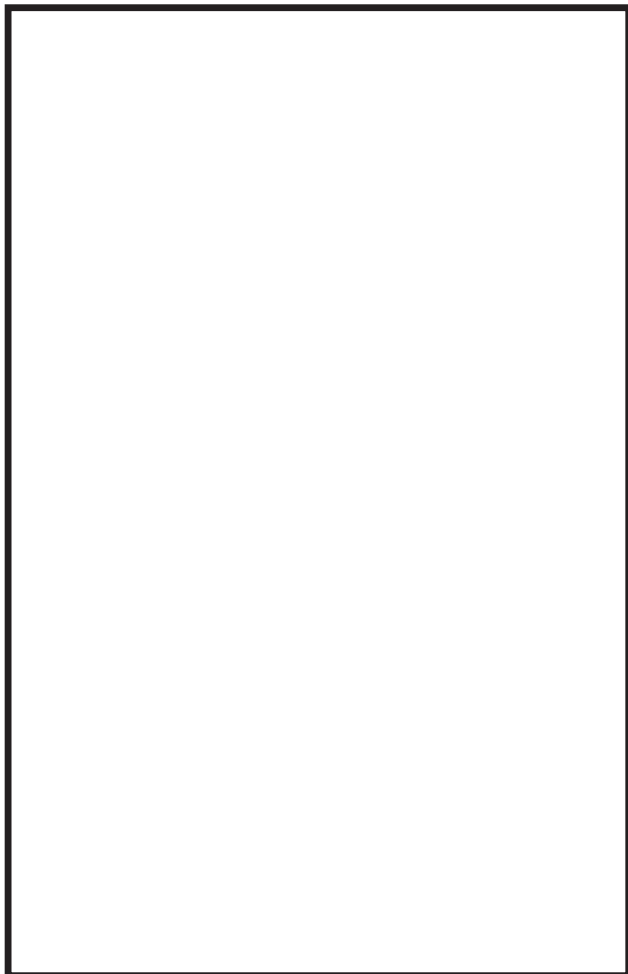
Well, that's just a very short yearly cycle. Now we're dealing with this vast great-year cycle of 26,000 years. And we have to start seeing ourselves as beings that are participating in a *life-wave*. The life-wave of humanity, a life that is beyond our own individual lives. And the amazing thing is that we are the ones who live in this time of great transformation. It's almost like we are the ones who can plant the, uh, concept-seeds that can come to fruition 26,000 years from now.

**DC:** And certainly some of the things that we're discussing here plug in with Terence McKenna's concept of Timewave Zero, and previous to this interview you and I have talked about that to a degree. Um...

**JMJ:** Anywhere you wanna go.

**DC:** Yeah. [laughter] Um...

**JMJ:** I'm not even sure it's a question of what we can do or what we can expect. I think getting back to the idea that we're approaching this birth-death nexus... I'm mean, the imagery of the sky, this area of the sky that contains the galactic center, there're features



# An Open Letter to Astronomers

John Major Jenkins / June 30, 1999

Did the Maya know where the Galactic Center is located?

Yes.



Now, brace yourself, because I'm going to show you how and why without resorting to speculation or guesswork. The question to ask is this: Did the Maya understand the region of the sky

Associated iconography with the "underworld portal" concept includes caves, monster mouths, and birthing portals. In general, the Milky Way was conceived as a Great Goddess and the dark-rift was her birth canal. This demonstrates that the Maya understood the region of the Galactic Center as a source-point or birth place.

2. The cross formed by the Milky Way with the ecliptic near Sagittarius has been identified at Palenque and elsewhere as the Mayan Sacred Tree. In the Popol Vuh, it is the Crossroads. The cross symbol, according to accepted epigraphic and iconographic interpretation (e.g., on thrones), denotes the concept of "center" and usually contextually implies a "cosmic" or "celestial" center. The concept of "cosmic center" and the principle of world-centering, was important to Mesoamerican astronomers, city planners, and Maya kings - who symbolically occupied and ruled from the "cosmic center." Thus, the Maya, via the Sacred Tree/Cosmic Cross symbolology, understood the region of the Galactic Center to be a center.

**Center and birthplace** - understandings that are true to the Galactic Center's nature. This is not speculation, but assemblage of academic evidence. I repeat here the evidence available in my book *Maya*

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occupied by the Galactic Center in a way that is metaphorically and conceptual equivalent to what the Galactic Center is? In this way we can answer the related question of "did the Maya know where the Galactic Center is located." So, what is the Galactic Center?

**In most basic terms, it is:**

1. A center.
2. It is also a source-point, or "creation place."

The first thing is to recognize is that the region of the Galactic Center contains several features - visible to the naked eye - that call attention to it as a unique place along the Milky Way. These are:

1. The Milky Way is filled with brighter stars and is wider in the region of the Galactic Center.
2. The dark-rift, or Great Cleft, of the Milky Way extends to the north of the Galactic Center.
3. The cross formed by the Milky Way and the ecliptic.

**Two Factual Indicators**

Now we can access established, academic (not my own), identifications in Mayan ethnoastronomy and starlore.

1. Among the modern-day Quiche Maya, the dark-rift is called the xibalba be. This mean "road to the underworld." In the ancient Maya Creation text, the Popol Vuh, this same feature serves as a road to the underworld and is also called the Black Road.

*Cosmogenesis 2012*, which contains 24 pages of bibliography and 20 pages of academic documentation in end notes.

I speak of "region" in referring to the Galactic Center because the visible "nuclear bulge" of the Galactic Center is not an abstract, invisible point, is not limited to high frequency radio spectrum, but rather covers a large area or "region" in the night sky. Now, my book argues, as its primary thesis, that the Maya intended 2012 to mark the rare alignment of the solstice sun with the band of the Milky Way. In astronomical terms, this is the alignment of the solstice meridian with the Galactic equator - an astronomical fact. Notice that my thesis does not require knowledge of the Galactic Center in order for it to be accepted. Nevertheless, knowledge among the ancient Maya of the Galactic Center as a "creation place" and "cosmic center" is strongly implied, indeed demonstrated, by established Maya concepts, as outlined above.

Ancient Maya knowledge of the precession of the equinoxes is the hitch that most closed-minded scholars invoke to discredit my work. The evidence for precession knowledge is found in the academic data, in archaeoastronomical realignment of temples, in the Creation monuments and texts, in the structure of the Long Count calendar, and in the work of respected Mayanists like Gordon Brotherston and Eva Hunt. Appendix 2 of my book surveys the evidence. Citations to the work of Brotherston, Tedlock, Schele, Smiley, Hunt, Aveni, etc. etc. are available upon request (electronically) and are also contained in my book. Important points

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# A Hardcore Reaction



By Deadly Buda

After I had written "The Hardcore Situation" in Deadly Type #1, I was confronted with a number of dilemmas.

1.Despite the positive response the article received, and the general agreement on my re-definition of the original idea of "Hardcore Techno" the name had been accessed and assimilated by the commercial powers that be, and there is simply not enough communication power currently to counter-act the commercial definition.

2.The word hardcore is essentially a conservative description that I was using to describe what is essentially not a conservative attitude towards music or culture.

3.The realization that the definition itself created all the problems that I had identified as being it's anti-thesis.

In most people's minds, "hardcore" is this-, a bunch of suburban skin-head teenagers moshing to loud, fast, noisy guitar music. The rave version of this is the same people doing the above to 4/4 cheezy gabber tracks or fast noisy techno. No matter how much I and everyone involved with the original rave scene argues otherwise, there is no way to effectively counteract this impression because the major record companies that have decided to market hardcore techno see it primarily in these terms and have enormous recourses to push that agenda.

The recent issue of the Aug.99 issue of Spin Magazine contained an article on Hardcore by Pat Blashill. I was interviewed for this article, and it was an extensive in-depth interview lasting approximately an hour and a half. He did this with Dan Doormouse, Lenny Dee, Tron, and Ron D. Core among others. Most of the information never makes it into these types of articles, so a question arises as to what is deemed important to convey.

"Hardcore" was portrayed as loud fast and noisy, fair enough, as much of the music in the scene is, especially Deadly Systems in particular. What did not make it into the article was the social-political angle that this magazine and others advocate. Instead, drug use was concentrated on as if it was somehow indicative of "Hardcore" in particular.

I for one do not find Blashill's observations totally inaccurate. There are many within the hardcore scene that share and are promoting this vision of Angel dusted kids (by the way, where the hell did they get angel dust?

Has anyone seen any since the early 80's? Can he get any? This was completely inaccurate) drinking beer doing their best to imitate Iggy Pop, and barfing everywhere in between making nihilistic, fatalistic statements calculated to offend daytime talk show viewers. Even I find this a bit of fun from time to time, but this is by no means the scene in its entirety, as this and the last Deadly Type easily prove.

If you compare this commercial idea of "Hardcore" with the idea shared by most of the original ravers demonstrated in "The Hardcore Situation" article, you find some vast differences of opinion. Unfortunately, the major commercial forces are destined to win this battle of definition, and I personally see no good reason to fight it any longer, for two reasons in particular...

A) Hardcore can be defined in a very conservative manner, and the hardcore ravers were not conservative by any stretch of the imagination. Therefore, the adjective "HARDCORE" though initially fitting, increasingly becomes more limited in scope as this-and-that is not

abstraction would overwhelm anyone new coming into the raves, and so it was easy to play to the new ravers' fear of change. Offering the mundane and giving it a new name and characterizing the Hardcore scene as stuck up, for not being "into" the imitation. So "Hardcore" was merely the first inane pigeonhole, pre-dating all the equally silly sub-genres such as Trip-hop, Jungle, Funky-Breaks, Gabber-House, Trance, Goa-Trance etc. etc.

So now the question arises, if everyone except you is defining what you do in a manner that misrepresents what, in fact - you do, What do you do? Obviously people need some sort of definition or category they can easily communicate. This process will constrict that "thing" to a prescribed sense of rules. This is only a problem when what you are describing doesn't have or want very many structural formulas. Obviously, you would want a very amorphous term that would lend itself to open representation. My first attempt at this was "The Morphing Culture" which was re-printed in Deadly Type 1

**...So now the question arises, if everyone except you is defining what you do in a manner that misrepresents what, in fact - you do, What do you do..?**



deemed "hardcore enough", which is the anti-thesis of what was "Hardcore" rave.

B) The realization that the definition itself created all the problems that I had identified as being it's anti-thesis. As I bemoaned the sub-dividing of the rave scene, I realized that I was on the forefront of this particular development to some extent. Though Hardcore was originally used to separate itself from the commercial techno scene, it also drove a wedge down that was easily exploited by commercial powers. Essentially, the initial diversity and

and was originally in Alien Underground, Massive and some other publications in various different countries and languages. "Morph Beat" is of course, still a pretty good term and the idea has been influential, but Morph Beat just isn't jazzy enough to take on the massive commercial powers aligned against this innocent and unassuming term. A term is needed that has a dynamic impact, that carries the weight of history and culture with it, a legacy of daring and adventure to describe the music and culture being made! That, my friends, is...WILD-STYLE!!!



# Wild Style!!! (part 1)

By Deadly Buda

*"All ancient systems, however, hold one idea in common: writing is divine, inherently holy, with powers to teach the highest mysteries; writing is the speech of the gods, the ideal form of beauty. The Egyptians were taught by Toth, the scribe of the gods, and named the script "The divine"; Jehovah engraved the letters with his finger when he gave the commandments to the Hebrews; the Assyrian god Nebo revealed the nature of cuneiform to his people; Cagjje, the four-eyed dragon-faced wizard, modeled the Chinese characters after the movements of the stars, the footprints of birds, and other patterns that occurred in nature; and in India the supreme god Brahma himself gave knowledge of letters to men." John Stevens-Sacred Calligraphy of the East(c)1981 Shambhala publications*

Many of you are probably familiar with the term "Wild Style" in relation to Hip-Hop culture and especially related to graffiti art. The very complex, adorned with arrows, doodads, and generally incomprehensible Byzantine interlocking letter schemes is the common interpretation of Wild Style. Yet this is not the full story by any stretch of the imagination. Wild Style encompasses more than only the visual arts and has a colorful past that should be known to any serious scholar of underground history. Furthermore, no discussion of Wild Style can truly be complete without mentioning Tracy 168, a lot.

Simply put, Tracy 168 was Wild Style, is Wild Style, and started Wild Style. Wild Style as per Tracy 168's definition is:

**Wild Style (t)\***  
is what you do in your life.

**Whatever you do,**  
do it to the best of your ability.

**If you re not the best,**  
then find your purpose and be the best at that.

**If you re an artist, postal carrier,**  
plumber or salesman, just be the best.

Wild Style was originally a graff-

iti crew in the early 70's that Tracy started. It grew to be the biggest crew in New York City at the time. If people kept records of such things, Wild Style would probably hold the record as the graffiti crew with more members than any other in the history of graffiti. I can't say whether the crew came first or the mantra above, but one thing I know is that the crew came before the labeling of complex graffiti styles- "Wild Style".

In the mid-to-late 70's, complex styles were often called mechanical letters, and were pioneered by a number of writers - most notably Phase 2 and Tracy 168, plus many members of Wild Style. The Wild Style crew just happened to be the crew with more writers doing the complex style, so people just started calling the complex styles "Wild Style", in reference to the close association.

My first contact with Wild Style came about from meeting the infamous and famous, T-Kid. I was hanging out in the Mecca of graffiti - New York City, for a week in the winter of '84-85. At the time, there was no bigger writer in the city than T-Kid, and the crew he

gently trying to perfect my own original style to be able to hang with the then developing worldwide graffiti scene. I stumbled upon a way to make regular lettering styles with internal designs and color patterns look cool with 3-dimensions while going in different directions, with a large emphasis on giving the illusion of organic movement. I nick-named this style "Monster-Rock," after an obscure Electro record that Bobby Orlando did (My first big Monster-Rock piece appears in "Spray-Can Art" by Henry Chalfant and James Prigoff it has since been adopted now by many writers, and I must say, has been taken miles of steps further than my original designs). It was a big step forward in the graffiti world, and I now had some style that could "passably" hang with the kings. I was looking forward to that summer, when I would return to NYC.

I would stay that summer at Henry Chalfant's old studio at 64 Grand St. right between Soho and Chinatown. Henry's studio was the main meeting place for all the writers in the city to check out his photo collection and

meet up later that night to possibly paint and Tracy would show me some styles in his sketchbook.

That night I took the 6 train up to something like 3000th St. in the Bronx, I mean, it was way up there, anyway, I get to Tracy's place and he asks me if I want to paint, excited I said "yes". He proceeds to hand me a paintbrush and a can of white paint and convinces me it's a good idea to start with his bathroom, and after I do that he will show me some styles. Fair enough I thought, and he even put on Red Alert's Friday night KISS-FM mega-mix on the radio! Boy! I thought I was in fucking graffiti heaven...

Meanwhile, Tracy is laughing with his girlfriend about how he just got some kid to paint his toilet. After I slopped paint all over Tracy's wash room, he then busted out some styles, and I must say, I was not disappointed, showing me some new letters and various cool techniques. We arrange to meet the next day so I can hang out with more of the Wild Style crew, like Nomad, his main protégé at the time.

This day has been alternately called "That Day" or more commonly, "Oh my God, THAT DAY". I had that year been quite obsessed with Carlos Casteneda books, shamanism and reports on the psychedelic experience in reference to alternate states of reality. At the time, mescaline and Angel Dust was popular among graffiti writers, and I asked Tracy if he could get some mescaline. "Mesc" came in the form of small purple "Tiny-Tart" shaped candies nick named "Double-Barrel Purples". Unbeknownst to myself at the time, street mesc was definitely not the same stuff Casteneda had written about, meeting spirit animals and all... street mesc pretty much clouded your retina so that everything was tinted purple, and you could not stop laughing hysterically. Eventually, laugh lines would burn themselves into your face after six hours of wearing a Cheshire Cat grin, and your stomach muscles got worked like you would not believe just from doubling over in laughter. This discrepancy would have all been fine had it not been for the mysterious entrance of "Joe Tobacco".

Up to this day I am quite convinced that Joe Tobacco (quite possibly a code-name) was a hippie-C.I.A. operative planted in our lives for that very moment. Early 50's, 5'7", glasses, gray beard and moustache, rather reminiscent of Groucho Marx in his later years, and wearing a Yankees cap, Joe Tobacco was the connection for the mesc. But that was not all! In fact, he said if we wanted to trip, he had some good acid we might be into. He fronted it to Tracy to try out, and myself, Tracy, Nomad, his older brother, Dasez (also from Pittsburgh at the time), who had joined me on the trip to NYC, and some guy who somehow just started walking around with us for no particular reason except he kept talking about Kung-Fu, meandered over to "Nomad's Mom's House".

While our mysterious Kung Fu



**...The very complex, adorned with arrows, doodads, and generally incomprehensible Byzantine interlocking letter schemes is the common interpretation of Wild Style. Yet, this is not the full story by any stretch of the imagination...**

was down with, T.A.T. ("Tough Ass Team", in fact, to this day T-Kid and T.A.T. are super strong names in graffiti, and definitely some of the all-time kings of style). Naturally, I was pretty psyched to meet T, and was even more psyched when he handed me a red "Wild Style" card. He added that there was another card, "the Black card" that you could only get from Tracy 168. The cards meant that, basically, the crew liked your style, and invited you to write W.S. or Wild Style with your pieces. This was a big honor because everyone who knew graffiti knew of the fabled history of Tracy 168 and Wild Style. Tracy was one of the original "old school" style masters in the company of all-time luminaries like Phase 2 and legends like Stay High 149. This was a guy that put a lot of "style" into the styles we knew in the mid eighties!

Anyway, T-Kid was Tracy 168's number one protégé. So much so, that even though the "T" in T-Kid was supposed to stand for "terrible", most people thought it stood for "Tracy", like, "Tracy's kid" (which, if mentioned in his presence, would invariably provoke him (T-Kid) to beat the slob out of whoever said this).

After this, I spent the rest of the winter and spring of that year dili-

pieces and to generally just hang out and wait for the gossip to pour in from all over the world. He was working on a piece book that would become "Spray Can Art" at the time, and so every writer in the world, practically, was calling his studio to tell him about a piece they just did, so that he could get flicks. One of these people happened to be Tracy 168. He had just done a handball court wall in the Bronx and called Henry to get a picture before the wall got painted over. Henry asked me if I wanted to tag along, and of course I said yes at the prospect of meeting the original Wild Style king!

The next day we drive up to the Bronx and meet Tracy. We got along pretty instantly, which with Tracy isn't that hard, because besides being a great writer, he has a well-deserved reputation of being one of the funniest, most energetic people you'll ever meet. Tracy asks Henry and myself if we could help him tear the plywood off the wall, after Henry gets flicks. So, we proceed to tear the handball court off the wall and pitch it down the river. I think it was agreed on that it was better to dismantle the piece itself, rather than let some slob from the city park division paint over it with whitewash. So here I was, helping Tracy throw one of his pieces down the river. We agreed to