The *Collected, Contradictory, and Highly Questionable Papers of Sheikh Majnun*

(Volume I)

Edited and Annotated by Dawoud Kringle,
The Sole Custodian of the Music and Legacy of Sheikh Majnun
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Introduction to the Present Edition

"*In the beginning of the Ordeal was Intolerable Noise, and the Intolerable Noise was with Sheikh Majnun, and the Intolerable Noise was Sheikh Majnun.*"
— From the Apocrypha of the Modular Synthesizer, 86:420 (an elephantine tome discovered in a dumpster behind a Best Buy in 2019, believed to be the work of Sheikh Majnun. The citation "86:420" is itself suspect. When I asked the Sheikh about it, he cryptically replied, "You'll understand when you're ready," and then began tuning a theremin with a tuning fork he claimed was forged from a meteorite originating outside the Milky Way galaxy. I suspect he was lying or intoxicated).

It is with great pleasure and horrifying trepidation that I present this collection of the writings, anecdotes, philosophies, and musical analysis of the most controversial figure in the history of music and perhaps the universe, Dr. Ustad Sheikh Hieronymus Hecubus Majnun.

I was exposed to the music of Sheikh Majnun when we met in 2002. He and I were making salat (Islamic prayer) at a now-defunct mosque called Masjid Hassan-i-Sabbah. The mosque was located in the basement of a halal cab stand in Staten Island, NY, not far from where hip hop legends Wu-Tang Clan got their start (there is no evidence to support Majnun's claim that RZA bought a used Buick Firebird from him). Sheikh Majnun was, as I was later to learn, one of three members of the congregation. After the prayer, I noticed a most striking figure on the carpet next to me. His clothing stood out; an ill-fitting Chinese knockoff Armani suit, blue sunglasses, black leather top hat, Laurie Anderson t-shirt, blue and orange striped socks, combat boots waiting for him when he left the mosque, and a lifejacket evidently stolen from the US Coast Guard. His hair was shoulder length, his beard was dyed an unnatural shade of magenta, and he wore an excessive amount of silver jewelry. The air around him was filled with his unique aroma; Tunisian red musk, with a touch of civet and vinegar.

For reasons I was never clear about, he immediately took a liking to me - I distinctly remember him saying that I have "*Mythic Resonance*." He invited me for dinner at his home that night.

I made my way to his apartment in the then upcoming neighborhood of Williamsburg Brooklyn. At the time, the neighborhood was in the midst of a profound transformation. It was no longer the gritty, dangerous area of decades past, but it was also not the luxury-brand it is now. It was a cultural epicenter defined by a vibrant arts scene, socioeconomic tensions, and the early stirrings of the massive development that was soon to follow. This would be a perfect crucible from which Majnun's artistry would emerge.
As I entered his loft apartment, I was almost overcome by the smell of cooking and stale incense. There were several rugs scattered about which I could not determine with any certainty if they touched the floor. The walls displayed several framed certificates whose issuing institutions were probably fictitious. Several paintings created by the hand of the Sheikh himself adorned the walls, all of which could produce terrifying nightmares if viewed too long. In one corner was what I initially took to be a large potted plant that bore a remarkable resemblance to a dionaea muscipula he called "Audrey." I later learned that the Sheikh had trained the plant, through methods he refused to disclose, to respond to specific frequencies of specific commands he would combine with Tuvan Throat Singing. Fearing for my life, I never investigated the matter and refused to go near the plant.
He introduced me to three of his wives: a Chinese woman named Huài Nǔrén, a native Siberian named K'yrgyn-nyk, and a West African named Fatou Bouti. They were openly hostile to me, and on several occasions

attempted to sabotage my work with the Sheikh. He thought this was hilariously funny. As of this writing, the Sheikh's three wives are still alive, and occasionally send me threatening letters. They believe I have exploited their husband's legacy for personal gain. They are not entirely wrong. If anyone knows their current whereabouts, please do not tell me. I have had enough of them.
(*FOOTNOTE: I have since learned that these names translate, respectively, to "Evil Woman," "Mother of Rotten Ice," and a physiological insinuation that the rules of common decency do not allow me to elaborate upon within serious academic circles. The Sheikh, when asked about this, insisted that these were simply common names in their respective cultures. He was lying*).
The Sheikh had a small recording studio in his home that consisted of the most improbable assemblage of equipment. Many of the tools of his music were hybrids he'd assembled from found parts. A few examples of this include a hydro powered Theremin, a Soviet military surplus oscilloscope wired into a pink noise generator, a damaged Synclavier connected to a Van Der Graff Generator, and a factory rejected Buchela synthesizer triggered by an Edison Amberola Cylinder Phonograph and an Officine Elettrotecniche Italiane Ing. electroconvulsive therapy device. He offered to demonstrate his instruments (I declined anything physically invasive). The English language has no adjectives to describe their sound.
That night, he insisted I stay for dinner. It was not well documented that the Sheikh was a master of the most arcane culinary arts. He claimed to have authored a cookbook, but no evidence of this was ever found. Among the dishes he served that night were Shirako (a Japanese dish made from the sperm sacs of male cod fish), Jellied Moose Nose, Guangdong province monkey brain soup, Ortolan (a dish that is illegal in France), and Casu Marzu (sheep's milk cheese that is deliberately left to be infested by live insect larvae. The maggots were still leaping from the cheese when he placed it before me, saying, "Eat quickly, before they lose their enthusiasm." I declined, and he ate the entire wheel himself, complimenting the chef—himself—in the third person throughout).
During that dinner, his wives refused to join us at the table, and went to a nearby taco stand.
This began a working relationship between the Sheikh and I that would span the rest of my life.

Very little is known about Sheikh Majnun. He has been known under various aliases, including Octavius Kilroy, Dr. Hecubus, Uncle Maj, Peregrine T. Witherspoon, and The Man in the Blue and Orange Socks.
He claimed to be a student of Sheikh Yerbouti in the Sheikh Rattlnroll Madrasa. He was a man of boundless wisdom tempered by a blatant disregard for reality.
It is said that he lived in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, for a time. He would wear Bermuda shorts, Hawaiian shirts, and straw hats to prayer services at Masjid al-Haraam and spend days at a time arguing with religious scholars over meaningless triviality.
An avid mountaineer, he attempted to climb K2 in the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan-administered Kashmir in 1996. He was the only survivor and was feared dead when nobody heard from him for four months. Another account related that he was never actually part of the expedition, and had, in fact, spent the four months in an opium den in Nepal.
Some claim he earned a Ph.D in astrophysics (others maintain that he merely snuck into the graduation ceremony to try to steal someone's diploma and claim it as his own). He went on to design a workable model for faster-than-light space travel. Others claim he made it up in an effort to gain access to the CERN Supercollider for reasons yet to be determined.
He said he'd worked for a time as a spy, but could or would not verify what country or corporation he was working for. Whether there is any truth to this or not, it cannot be denied that the Sheikh made enemies across many national borders.

Over the years that followed, I assembled—from the Sheikh's own accounts, from scattered witnesses, and from documents of highly questionable provenance—the following portrait of his works. I present it with the following caveats: the surviving biographical documentation is contradictory, incomplete, and in several places almost certainly fabricated. It remains under active scholarly dispute.
Several more caveats will be offered shortly.

Sheikh Majnun's music defies categorization. It has been described as something that cannot exist in this universe. Similarly, the instruments the Sheikh intended this music to be performed on do not (and probably cannot) exist.
In 2003, he recorded an album titled The Earth Must Be Destroyed. It is the only known recording of him. Its release caused great controversy. Listening to recordings of his music have produced results ranging from questionable facsimiles of spiritual enlightenment to frolicsome psychosis. The original master and multitrack tapes disappeared under mysterious circumstances.
Rumors circulated that he had found mathematical patterns encoded in the text of William Burroughs' book Naked Lunch and E.L. James's Fifty Shades of Grey, and used them as the motif of a grand symphony. The Sheikh insisted that this was conclusive proof - of what, he refused to disclose. Others claim that this is a lie and he used this as an excuse to apply for a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts. Funding was denied on several grounds concerning violations of decency and morality. E.L. James, upon learning of the project, threatened to sue for 'unauthorized use of her narrative energies.' The Sheikh responded by sending her three tarot cards from Aleistar Crowley's Thoth deck—The Tower (reversed), The Prince of Swords, and The Hierophant (Reversed)—in a black envelope sealed with a single drop of red wax, and no return address.
Most of his known music was composed when I knew him in Williamsburg, but was never published or performed (*FOOTNOTE: Professor Filbert van Waalskond rejects the Brooklyn Period entirely, arguing that Sheikh Majnun could not simultaneously have been living in Williamsburg and mediating a border dispute between two colonies of aboriginal cannibals in Papua, New Guinea*). His chronology has not been widely accepted.
Commercial success, alas, would elude Sheikh Majnun. His towering genius was incomprehensible to lesser minds. Opinions differ as to whether he regarded this as a professional setback or evidence that humanity was progressing as expected.
The audience he did attract responded to his music with mixed reactions. Some hailed him as the greatest musician in history. Others denounced him as a fraud and charlatan. Some became murderously resentful of him. He survived several assassination attempts by people who loved him as well as those who hated him. One admirer, a Lithuanian woman known only as Ugnė, attempted to assassinate him with a poisoned icepick. She later told police that she tried to kill him because she was "deeply in love with him."

Shortly before going into hiding in 2008, Sheikh Majnun placed upon my weary shoulders the great honor and responsibility of being the only representative of his music until such a time when he decides to return. The present whereabouts of Sheikh Majnun remain unknown. However, I occasionally receive communications from him in the form of emails, carrier pigeons, and telepathic intrusion.
On Christmas Day, 2025, I received one of his messages in the form of words carved into the tiles of the shower stall in my bathroom. It simply said, "Publish my writings. M" (The authenticity of the inscription has since been challenged by several scholars, none of whom have asked to inspect my bathroom. The words have since mysteriously disappeared from my bathroom, leaving me wondering if the Sheikh had somehow inserted a post-hypnotic suggestion wherein I had imagined I'd seen it).
With that, I present the literary works of one of the most brilliant and unhinged minds of our time.

I would like to thank the following people.

The Sheikh's three wives, who remain hostile to me to this day. The staff of the Portland laundromat, who have never returned my calls and who rescinded their lawsuit against me. The National Endowment for the Arts, for denying funding and thus preserving my sanity, and yours. The Lithuanian woman who tried to kill the Sheikh, and who recently offered me a proposal of marriage.
Finally, I would like to thank the Sheikh himself, who I suspect is reading this over my shoulder as I write.



Recovered Archive No. 187

Believed to be the last known photograph of Sheikh Majnun before his disappearance (Authentication remains disputed).

Date uncertain (estimated between 1999 and 2007).

Source: Private Collection.

A Treatise on the Hidden Forces That Govern the Universe.

By Dr. Ustad Sheikh Hieronymus Hecubus Majnun

Translator's Note: No original language survives.

I was born in a small town. It was small in the way only really small things can be small. And yet, there was a melancholy flavor in the way the flamingos, with their brightly tinted bonnets and tattered Broadway musical scores, would parade up and down the street until the wee hours of the morning. Their only food they had were the veal cutlets and Hershey's Chocolate Kisses dispersed by Old Slappy Jackson's cropduster fleet.

But even then, things were changing. The low bleating of the Great Sheep of the Ages softened to a dull roar, gradually, year by sadly imperfect year, until at last it was all over. No more would the flamingos dance naked in celebration of the Blue Moon. Brutal big-eyed badgers with meat cleavers and finely tuned pasta launchers, dressed in riot helmets, Kevlar vests, and rustic black leather dusters roamed the streets of the small town. An ant wasn't safe in his own home town any more.

The town fair was a haven of relative peace. Here the badgers dared not go, not yet, not until the Great Shaving. Every spring, as the days lengthened, and the toads swelled to enormous size in anticipation of the seasonal junkets, a little sunshine would rejuvenate the flamingos' bleak, pathetic lives. They would bet merrily on their eel-driven chariot races... raucous laughter would fill the air at the weevil fartathon... and it would be as it once was, for a time, until the twilight came, and with it, the soft rustle-rustle-THUMP of the creeping badger stormtroopers, hauling their rickety pianos out to the town square in ominous fashion. Then, they would play deconstructed John Cage compositions in the wrong key.

Why, oh why do the badgers play this abominable music? A time honored question, to be sure. But what is not known is that they once had a secret deal with the Empire of the Llamas. After the Great Invasion where the Empire of the Llamas was overrun by genetically engineered snails things were never the same. But some llamas escaped and lived for a time in exile. That is, until the opening of the Forbidden Llama Scrolls, and the brewing of the tannis leaves in the Great Forbidden Llama Tea Ceremony.

Much is made of the llama, that frisky little critter who is frequently glimpsed chewing on large distended sacks of corn husks abandoned by the side of the highways and byways of this great land. But how much do we really know about this rakish knave, this whimsical creeper in the twilight world of the underbrush, this harbinger of a quixotic paradigm? What are his habits, his dreams, his preoccupations, his intimate hygienic problems, his credit card numbers?

In the privacy of his home, the llama is a savage brute, fond of rubbing ferns on his bottom while playing the kazoo in a pathetic imitation of Ornette Coleman. He is an accomplished cinematographer, and occasionally poses for modeling shots that would make any upstanding citizen cringe in fear and loathing. On weekends, and during periods of heavy downpours, he will go from door to door collecting newspapers, which he then laboriously molds into tiny replicas of deadly aquatic life.

We are left, after examining the evidence, feeling that we have never really gotten to the soul of this dashing charlatan of the woods. He remains, as ever, an enigma, aloof, forbidding, and perpetually infected. Perhaps man was never meant to know the dark secrets of this peripatetic "Mime of the Deep". We can only peek at his majestic towering form behind the safety of our custom blast shielding and wait for him to get out of the driveway, all the while silently marveling at the crimes he commits against acceptable society.

And who, do you ask, is the Most Legendary of All Llamas? It is Aleistar!

Aleistar, poor Aleistar, woe to poor Aleistar, who hath installed Windows Vista on his Dell PC; and Lo! his Dell PC was aroused and did begin to spout, vibrate, orbiculate, and perform other unsavory acts. And Aleistar went forth into the kitchen to get some whey, for with whey, truly none shall defeat a pious llama. And he returned to find a spot of purple light on the carpet. Greatly afeared he was. The spot of purple light spoke unto him, thus saying, "You have served me well, Aleistar, and now I shall raise you up, and make mountains out of your molehills, and shiver your timbers, and coat you with passion fruit juice."

And Aleistar was enlightened.

So Aleistar went out into the lawn and began threatening his neighbors. "I have a great big pineal gland, bigger than all of yours put together, and thus it is with my pituitary gland as well! Oh ye confluence of churlish rapscallions! Look upon Me, and despair!" he would shout. But the neighbors ignored him, setting railroad flares aglow in the soft twilight, and the residue of their nocturnal emission reflecting in lustrous blue and silver in the light of the full moon.

Eventually there was an earthquake, and everybody forgot about Aleistar. At last the batteries were drained, and Aleistar's neighbors elected some poor slob to go up and turn the crank some more, which he did uneventfully. Upon finishing his task, verily did he fill his bathtub with can after can of pickled octopus, and did jump in naked, lasciviously writhing in fleshy tentacles.

And thus spoke Aleistar;

"You think you've got problems? My house is infested with tiny Dalmatians. They're all over the place. My wife's afraid to come out of her box, and she even wakes up screaming in the middle of the night because while we were asleep they set up little factories in the closet. I try to sweep them out, but they keep rebuilding. I don't know what the hell they're making, but it can't be legal.

"So don't come whining to me. I exhort you to enter into this altercation with the utmost circumspection. Your litigant, being a man of elephantine proportions, threatens to inflict considerable debasement and wreckage upon the corpus of your mortal frame. My heart bleeds at the prospect of this unpropitious and calamitous contingency of irredeemable spoilage. I implore you to circumlocute the qualitative quiddity and quintessence of your asomatous discarnate, and ethereal, extramundane calamitous animus stands fraught in peril!

"Deny my council? Mock me?? Sir! I take strong exception to your balderdashery! I, sir, am a cosmic love pulse matrix becoming an expanding and collapsing Möbius vortex! Prostrate yourself; for I am the highest embodiment of earthly life."

And nothing was ever the same.

He knows there's magic in the air. The soft piles of flying manatee dung that dot the earth catch the rays of the rising sun, and glint with the promise of a new day. Peacocks strutting lasciviously about the tops of pink Cadillacs driven at breakneck speeds by monkeys clandestinely employed by quantum psychologists. Millions of tiny turkeys in straw hats dance in perfect unison to heavy metal versions of Al Jolson hits of yesteryear. The world is new, and like all new things, still has a few bugs.

I will quote from Erratica II 3:4-7:

"Ye ants, ye daintily dancing denizens of the arboreal dells, where are your gardens now? Your amateur Shakespeare productions? Your pixilated pulsations of putrid propagation of puerile pomposity? The badgers are nigh! Bulging eyes and meat cleavers and pastas hot on thine heels! Heed me, ye sitters on the gilded patios! For the Sheep of the Ages hears you not, and is not mindful of you. When the hooting of the pastas draws near, your pleas will avail ye not. And this is because know not that dinosaurs became extinct because they forgot to talk to God!"

You're on your own. I can't help you after Porky Pig ran into the living room of an auto mechanic and exclaimed "Since my house burned down, I now have a better view of the rising moon"? Or are you facing an even bigger problem?

I know the problem you have,,,,

The craving that can never be satisfied, only temporarily slaked. It gnaws at your being, like a crazed rodent of the soul, until the irresistible urge climaxes once again and you are sent wildly hunting in the museums of the night for the only fruit that will quench your desire: the Fleshy Orchid.

You must continue your quest, snuffling and snorting like a demented swine rooting for pearls in the muck and mire. Searching with all your senses, even though your disconnected intellect knows that the Fleshy Orchid is not here.

After many long hours of searching, your mortal body is worn out, goaded unmercifully beyond the limits of its endurance by the immortal, immoral, crushing lust for the Fleshy Orchid. You collapse exhausted, but deep within your swollen skull, neurons fire restlessly. Your brain, having cut itself off from the outside world in its paroxysms of need, achieves what few can: reality is subjectivized, yours to manipulate. The hunger stays in control, guiding the world, shaping your existence, and for a brief time, you awaken in the garden of the Fleshy Orchid. Hungrily you suck on its bitter petals, knowing that this is the only way to exorcise the dreadful demonic longing, and that the bliss that will shortly be yours is the only compensation for the pain in its achievement.

And you who are hopelessly addicted to the Fleshy Orchid, you are but a shadow of those from beyond. Hyperdimensional entities of terrifying power, incomprehensible intelligence, and intolerable loathsomeness.Yet you are not gonna put up with their shit.

You face the unfaceable one. You grab him by the collar of his scruffy black leather motorcycle jacket and throw him against a wall. You look him in one of his eyes, and say "You make me sick. You damn ancient evils are all alike, all full of hot air. Go ahead, rise up and smite me, why don't you. You pansy. Are all of the Old Ones little sissy-boys like you? That's why you're all hiding, you dumbass. I ain't afraid of you. Ya see, I'm working with Them. And those damned Llamas don't scare me either! We'll come down on you so hard you'd think you were getting a proctological examination from Godzilla. Now either give me my lottery ticket or give me my dollar back, damn you and your slimy prehensile tentacles, or I'm calling The Manager!"

But there's something you don't understand.

You ask "Where's the Elixir?"

It's all around you! It is in the grassy knolls where the cows, its hosts, play tournament chess with tiny men in day-glo tuxedos of Many Colors.

It is in the theaters, in broad release, raining down like mental manna on the minds of the common people.

It is in the underwear of the rich and famous.

It is in the fevered dreams of the night.

It is in the flesh of the gods, which is frivolously added to everything "as a preservative".

It is in the tinkle tinkle tinkle of a dog as he pees on your leg.

It is in the sequel to the antecedent.

It is in the noise you make when you discover you have applied too much grease to your crankshaft, or tried to crack walnuts in your blender.

If you find it, you should rejoice, for it is ubiquitous in its rarity. If you keep it, you will be hunted for it, and your life will be sold at auction. If you give it away, it will menace you in your dreams. If you eat it, you will have good muscle tone, and lots of girlfriends.

Remember its special virtues. It is not venison, nor is it veal, nor is it that holiest of holies, mutton. Do not treat it as any of these, or it will spurn you. Use only the proper fork, and go gently with the seasonings, lest you offend it. Taste it. Drink it. Swallow it. Feel it coursing through your unmentionable passageways. Absorb it, and ascend to heaven.

Sing with us:

O ye who quaff thy marbled Elixir!

Quantize thyself in fabulous mixers!

Coconut shells and Christmas bells

Elixir save thee from a culinary hell!

Bean pies and parsley doth garnish thine plate.

Vengeful potatoes seething with hate!

Cholesterol perfume in thine hair;

Small fuzzy kittens fly through the air.

Fear the oolong! Espresso is thy friend;

Verily Elixir! Unto the end.

[*FOOTNOTE: I have spent the past seventeen years attempting to make sense of this document. After consulting with experts in entomology, anthropology, theology, and llama husbandry, and cross-referencing every known source on every relevant topic, I have found nothing.*]

And a Splendid Time Was Had by All

The lost review of a concert Sheikh Majnun performed under the alias Octavius Kilroy

Written by Peregrine T. Witherspoon
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As a music reviewer, I have endured years of talentless, unaccomplished, and unskilled musicians striving with might and main to make their dent in the world. In retrospect, it all seems so innocent now that I have crossed paths with the very spawn of hell itself.

It was a dark, storm-tossed night. Sheets of freezing rain slashed down upon my broken umbrella while peals of thunder crashed like Thor's hammer. After a 40-minute train ride to a neighborhood where rats competed with homo sapiens to be the dominant species, I walked into a music venue. It wasn't one of those clean, overpriced jazz spots. It was a run-down cafe that would never be trendy. Unspeakably ugly eyesores that drug-addled minions of some demonic muse called "paintings" hung on nearly every inch of the walls. Denizens lost in abominable fantasy worlds of their own devising congregated in a desperate search for intoxication, self-congratulatory artistic masturbation, and the possibility of lurid and pestilential sexual encounters. The proprietor slumped behind his bar; his face grotesquely frozen in a blank stare through eyes like burned-out fuses.

On the badly lit stage where old sound systems went to die, the unhinged mind of an avant-garde musician and pompous lunatic was playing.

His name is Octavius Kilroy.

There he stood, hellbent upon performing cacophonous and incomprehensible musical improvisations. Peals of terrorizing musical obscenities vomited from the speakers. The tortures of the damned were made manifest in songs unfit to exist on this earthly plane. It sounded like a mad scientist under the influence of a weaponized hallucinogenic drug, lost in some introspective Gehenna. Shrieks and flatulent moans in waveforms not found in nature came from Kilroy's violated modular synthesizers, mixing dementedly with anti-rhythms that seemed bound with iron determination to disjoint every molecule of the listener's brain. My stomach gurgled and churned in synchronization with the diabolical pandemonium excreted by the sound system. It was more chaotic than the nightmares one has after eating chili peppers and mixing LSD with prescription-strength laxatives before going to bed.

Making no effort to hide his delusional narcissism and serial killer tendencies, Kilroy "danced." At least that's the only adjective that can describe the epileptic seizure he made in sync with the hellish din that assaulted the hapless listener. St. Vitus himself would have been horrified. This was augmented by his ceaseless howling of quasi-poetic drivel into a slime-encrusted microphone like a self-absorbed gasbag vacillating between psychosis and demonic possession. His lyrics exceeded the combined insanity of Heath Ledger's Joker and Anthony Hopkins' Hannibal Lecter torturing each other with jumper cables while screaming improvisational poetry about plumbing emergencies in the lavatories in the Ninth Circle of Hell.

There was something inherently sadomasochistic about his performance, but I couldn't tell who he enjoyed torturing more, the audience or himself. This is the soundtrack of psychotic meth addicts performing unnatural sex acts upon genetically engineered dinosaurs giving birth to unrecyclable scrap metal. The noise he sadistically wrenched from his tools of torture performs unspeakable crimes upon your neurons, resulting in synaptic disintegration of all left-brain activity, a breakdown of motor functions, nosebleeds, tooth decay, sexual dysfunction, aneurysms, irrational rage, and spontaneous combustion. If you wish to violate several Geneva Convention protocols and more UN Security Council Resolutions than Israel, leave the AK-47s, IEDs, sarin gas, and suitcase nukes at home. Kilroy's music is all you need.

Despite being the musical embodiment of pure evil, it is unlikely he will be arrested and taken to The Hague to be tried for crimes against humanity. Let us pray that Kilroy retires from his reign of terror before it's too late and his music causes the collapse of human civilization.

[POSTSCRIPT FROM THE EDITOR: The above review was originally submitted to The Farnsdale Earworm in 2004 but was rejected after being deemed "too hostile" and "potentially libelous" by the editorial board, and was never published. The editor at the time, Horatio P. Fingerbottom, wrote in his rejection letter: "While I appreciate the ferocity of your prose, I cannot in good conscience publish a review that compares a local musician's performance to 'the soundtrack of psychotic meth addicts performing unnatural sex acts upon genetically engineered dinosaurs.' I have also consulted with our legal counsel, who advised that the phrase 'crimes against humanity' may be actionable. I regret to inform you that we will not be running this piece."

The author, "Peregrine T. Witherspoon," responded with a single sentence: "You lack intestinal fortitude." He was never heard from again.

Several scholars have noted the striking similarity between the prose style of this review and the more unhinged passages of Sheikh Majnun's Treatise on the Hidden Forces That Govern the Universe. The Sheikh, when asked about this, replied, "Octavius Kilroy is my cousin. Peregrine T. Witherspoon is my stock broker. Or perhaps I am Octavius Kilroy and/or Peregrine T. Witherspoon. That's my story and I'm sticking to it." He then produced a copy of the review from his jacket pocket and read it aloud with evident delight. The authenticity of the connection between Octavius Kilroy, Peregrine T. Witherspoon, and Sheikh Majnun have never been definitively established. However, it is worth noting that the Sheikh's signature magenta beard and blue sunglasses appear in a blurry photograph taken at the same venue on the night in question. The photograph was discovered in the Sheikh's personal effects after his disappearance. On the back, in his handwriting, are the words: "The critic is a fool.— M."]

ASSORTED REVIEWS

"The Sheikh's music is fake craziness! It is empty and devoid of sincerity. It is not rebellious at all, it is for lazy potheads who dream of being revolutionaries while wallowing in a smoke filled world of lame daydreams" - Che Stadium

"A friend played me a recording of Sheikh Majnun's music at 3 AM in a dimly lit apartment. Halfway through the first track, I felt an overwhelming urge to stand up and leave. I could not move. I was pinned to the couch by a force I can only describe as an acoustic violation. When the piece ended, I realized I had been crying. I do not know why. I have never felt more alive." — Anonymous

The Sheikh's music is a true reflection of the disconnected and imaginary world of modern culture, a work of genius. This is the music I would make if I wasn't such a raging egomaniac." - Lestat de Lioncourt

"I received a promotional copy of The Earth Must Be Destroyed in the mail. I did not request it. The package had no return address. The CD was wrapped in brown paper and sealed with what appeared to be candle wax. I have not yet listened to it. I am afraid to. I keep it locked in a drawer. At night, I hear it trying to escape. I called an exorcist. He took one look at it and said, “You’re on your own!" and ran away. — Marcus Thorne, The Wire Magazine (submission rejected for publication)

"All the great songs have already been written by me." - Kanye East.

"I was assigned to review the Sheikh's album for my college radio station. I played it once, wrote my review, and submitted it. The review was a single word: 'Why?' The editor rejected it. I have since dropped out of college and joined a monastery. I am still not entirely sure which decision was more reasonable." — Former DJ, *KRUD-FM Los Angeles* (name withheld)

"Sheikh Majnun is not a musician. He is a medium through which the void speaks. If you are prepared to hear what the void has to say, listen to this album. If you are not prepared, listen to it anyway. You can never be prepared." — Billie Stylish

"Sheikh Majnun once sent me a postcard. It had no message, only a single stamp placed upside down. I have spent the past sixteen years trying to interpret its meaning. I am no closer to an answer. I suspect this is the point." — Contessa di Montefeltro, Private collector of musical ephemera

"The 'music' of Sheikh Majnun sounds like an analog synthesizer having illicit sexual congress with a malfunctioning MRI machine. It's perfect for torturing POWs" - J. Zee

“Kill it with Fire!” - Wednesday Addams

"Sheikh Majnun's work is the sonic equivalent of a fever dream experienced by a dying computer. It is deeply unsettling, completely inaccessible, and utterly necessary. I have listened to it once. I will never listen to it again. I cannot stop thinking about it. I have begun to hear it in my sleep. Please help!" — Dr. Helena Krauss, Department of Comparative Musicology, University of Copenhagen

"TURN IT OFF! FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, TURN IT OFF!!!" - Jay S. Boch

"I have never heard Sheikh Majnun’s music. A friend of mine did and won’t stop talking about it. My doctor prescribed medication so that his incessant babbling wouldn’t bother me anymore." — Vito Corleone III

"I say, this Majnun fellow is delightfully abstract. His musical peregrinations have very effectively upset my digestion." - Stewie Griffin.

"I attended a private listening session of Sheikh Majnun's music in a basement in Berlin. The room was cold. The lights flickered. I have no memory of the music, but I woke up three days later in Kraków with a tattoo of a geometric shape I cannot identify and a profound craving for pickled herring. I have no recollection of how I got there, how I was tattooed, or why I want pickled herring. I have heard it. I have survived it and I am not who I was before. I am not certain who I am now." — Sven Ødegård, Oslo Underground Review

RECENTLY DISCOVERED NEWS ARTICLE

[*The following article was printed in the Police Gazette in Hoopkeefanookee, Louisiana on page 23. The following day, the editors printed a retraction and apology, claiming they have no idea why the article was posted.*]

UPI - 11/27/27 - NASA issued a live video stream of a duet performance between reclusive and controversial musician Sheikh Majnun and legendary guitarist Jimi Hendrix. Hendrix announced something about celebrating his 85th birthday "in style." Sources close to Hendrix' management team said he'd stowed away on the rocket, and flew 150,000,000 miles to the red planet to do the concert. Hendrix claimed the concert was Majnun's idea

The two musicians played a two hour rendition of Third Stone from the Sun, Little Wing, and ended with Voodoo Chile. For an encore, Hendrix tuned the low string of his guitar to 132hz, and amplified it to 180db. Sheikh Majnun, who was playing his hyperzither, improvised a massive chord using the first 786 harmonic overtones (with different timbres on each note) over Hendrix' fundamental.

The resulting sound thickened the Martian atmosphere to 1023 millibars, separated the elemental components of 67% of the carbon dioxide of the atmosphere into solid carbon and gaseous oxygen, raised the average surface temperature to 18° C (65° F), melted the equatorial permafrost and 26% of the polar ice caps, formed oceans, and triggered the formation of a Martin biosphere. NASA scientists are unanimous that Mars is now capable of supporting human life.

In a press statement, Majnun was quoted as saying "You'll get my bill at the end of the month."

After the concert, Hendrix sent a text to his management saying "Somebody get me the hell out of here! It's cold!"

THE LOST INTERVIEW

The following transcript was allegedly recorded in 2005 at WFMU studios in Jersey City, NJ. The interview was never broadcast for reasons that remain unclear. The Sheikh later claimed that the station's management 'lacked the spiritual fortitude' to air it. The station's management later claimed that the Sheikh 'refused to stop singing about cheeseburgers.' Both accounts are probably true. The interviewer is believed to be the late underground radio personality Gryce "Grease" Witherspoon. The master tape was reportedly destroyed in a fire, but a cassette copy surfaced in 2024 at a yard sale in Hoboken. Its authenticity has not been verified.

[TAPE BEGINS. INTERMITTENT TAPE HISS. DISTANT SOUND OF A TELEPHONE RINGING IN THE STUDIO, UNANSWERED.]

WITHERSPOON: We are joined tonight by... Well, I'm not entirely sure how to pronounce this. Sheikh Majnun? Is that correct?

SHEIKH MAJNUN: That is one of my names. I have several. They are all incorrect.

WITHERSPOON: I see. Tell us where and when you were born.

SHEIKH MAJNUN: Once upon a time, long ago, in a galaxy far, far - No. I better not say it. I don't need lawsuits from Disney or Lucasfilm. Suffice it to say I am here. I have always been here. I was here before you were born, and I will be here after your great, great grandchildren have forgotten your name.

WITHERSPOON: *(pause)* I'm sorry, Did you... did you claim to have never been born?

SHEIKH MAJNUN: As I was too young to remember the event of my birth, I can neither confirm nor deny it. The concept of linear time is a limitation I have chosen to transcend. I am present. That is all that matters.

WITHERSPOON: That’s a little frightening...

SHEIKH MAJNUN: The fear of Sheikh Majnun is the beginning of wisdom.

WITHERSPOON: Surely you have parents.

SHEIKH MAJNUN: Yes. My mother was a French existentialist. My father was a Bedouin astronomer. They met during a sandstorm in the Gobi Desert and were later married in a tent hastily pitched on the bank of the Yangtze River. For my 13th birthday, my father violated the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and gifted me with a star. He paid for the premium package. I was very proud of it, until he learned that he had bought the wrong one. This traumatized me, and I’ve been having nightmares about it ever since.

WITHERSPOON: Okay. Okay, sure. So, your album—*The Earth Must Be Destroyed*—I've been listening to it. It's...

SHEIKH MAJNUN: Yes.

WITHERSPOON: I was going to ask you about it.

SHEIKH MAJNUN: Questions are the crutches of the intellectually infirm. But please proceed. I am in the most magnanimous mood tonight.

WITHERSPOON: *(audible sigh)* The opening track, "*The Dance of the Small Fuzzy Things*,"—what inspired that?

SHEIKH MAJNUN: I was walking through the Black Forest in Germany. I encountered a being made entirely of the static electricity that is produced when one pets a cat. It was a small being, not unlike a squirrel. It had no face, but it had a voice. It spoke to me in frequencies that would have shattered the sanity of a lesser man than I. It said—and I quote—"You have forgotten to clean the litterbox." I returned to my studio and recorded that piece in one hour, eleven minutes, and seventeen seconds. The rest was editing.

WITHERSPOON: Did you edit it?

SHEIKH MAJNUN: No. The tape edited itself. I simply observed. It was like wood sprites frolicking merrily through fields of lavender growing wild in the arboreal dell.

WITHERSPOON: *(long pause)* Okay. Tell us about the track titled *A Painful Ordeal.*

SHEIKH MAJNUN: It is my interpretation of the subtextual message of the initiatory experience encoded in Screaming Jay Hawkins' classics *Constipation Blues* and *Alligator Wine*.

WITHERSPOON: (*long pause*) So, the title track "*The Earth Must Be Destroyed*"—there's a vocal sample in there that sounds like a woman ordering a cheeseburger. Is that intentional?

SHEIKH MAJNUN: Everything is intentional. The cheeseburger is a metaphor.

WITHERSPOON: For what?

SHEIKH MAJNUN: For cheeseburgers. What else would it be? Do they not call you 'Grease?' Think about it! This moment is the culmination of forces that had been set into motion centuries ago and cannot be stopped. It is the reason for your very existence!

WITHERSPOON: I'm... I'm not sure how to follow that.

SHEIKH MAJNUN: No one ever does. That is why I am the teacher and you are the student.

WITHERSPOON: I'm not a student. I'm a radio host.

SHEIKH MAJNUN: You are both and neither. Your microphone, for example. Do you know what it truly is?

WITHERSPOON: It's a microphone.

SHEIKH MAJNUN: That is what you *call* it. But what it truly *is*—that is a different matter entirely. It is a silent scream from the throat of the universe demanding a cheeseburger. And you speak into it as if it were nothing! Blasphemer!

WITHERSPOON: Uh, okay… The track *I Love It, I Can't Stand It*, what does that mean?

SHEIKH MAJNUN: It don't mean shit.

WITHERSPOON: I'm going to wrap this up. Last question. Why did you title the album *The Earth Must Be Destroyed*?

SHEIKH MAJNUN: Because it is true. But I am not the one who will do it - I have no such power. I am merely warning everyone. The destruction, when it comes, will sound like a wrong note played on an instrument that hasn't been invented yet. It will be beautiful, and it will be terrible, and it will be like a Cb played in a B# Concerto!

WITHERSPOON: *(exhales)* I'm ending the interview now.

SHEIKH MAJNUN: You cannot end a cheeseburger that never began! I have seen the revelation of the ultimate universal dilation! It will be a beautiful and terrible thing! I have backstage passes available for the low introductory price of…"

[TAPE CUTS OUT. SILENCE. THEN A SINGLE, LOUD, UNIDENTIFIED NOISE BEFORE THE TAPE ENDS. SEVERAL AUDIO ENGINEERS HAVE ANALYZED THE FINAL MOMENTS ON THE TAPE. THE UNIDENTIFIED NOISE HAD BEEN INTERPRETED AS ANYTHING FROM A DOOR SLAMMING, A MICROPHONE FAILING, AND THE SOUND OF A MAN WHO REALIZED HE'D JUST MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE. NO CONSENSUS HAS EVER BEEN REACHED]

[FOOTNOTE: The Sheikh's account of his parentage has been disputed. A competing version, which he offered to a different interviewer in 2006, claims his mother was a Serbian opera singer and his father was a Mongolian sheepherder who won a lottery and used the proceeds to fund his son's first theremin. The Sheikh, when confronted with this contradiction, replied, "Both are true. I have many parents. None of them are real." The late Gryce "Grease" Witherspoon, who conducted the Lost Interview, never fully recovered from the experience.]

THE LOST LECTURE

"On the Ontological Status of the Cheeseburger, with Digressions on Love, Modular Synthesis, and the Improbable Existence of the Fleshy Orchid"

Delivered at the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture, 2004
Transcribed from a damaged MiniDisc recording
Authenticity disputed

[RECORDING BEGINS. AUDIENCE MURMUR. SOUND OF SOMEONE TAPPING A MICROPHONE. A SINGLE COUGH, FOLLOWED BY SILENCE.]

SHEIKH MAJNUN: Good evening, you beautiful disasters.

[Laughter. Applause. A voice from the audience shouts "WE LOVE YOU, SHEIKH!"]

MAJNUN: Of course you do. That is your tragic flaw. That is the crack in your cosmic teacup through which all meaning drains, leaving stains upon your carpets that you will never remove. But we will address that later. I see some of you are already confused. Good. Confusion is the first step toward enlightenment. The second step is addiction to drugs that do not exist. The third step is calamity. After that, the path becomes murky, but that is also the point.

Now. The cheeseburger. What is it?

[Long pause. The audience waits.]

MAJNUN: It is not food. That is the first lie. It is also not a meal. That is the second lie. What is it, then?

[He picks up something. The sound of a burger being unwrapped. Audible gasp from the front row.]

MAJNUN: I will tell you. It is a question. A question wrapped in a bun. A question that has been grilled to perfection and topped with provolone. I have chosen provolone tonight because this question asks you, with every bite: What the hell are you doing with your life?

[The room is silent. He takes an audible bite. Chews slowly. Swallows.]

MAJNUN: That, my friends, is the ontological status of the cheeseburger. It is a mirror. It is a prayer. It is a tiny edible Ouija board through which the universe spells out its most embarrassing secrets. If you are lucky, it will tell you that you are loved. If you are unlucky, it will tell you that the world will end on Tuesday at the precise moment you have a dentist appointment. But either way, you cannot escape it. It is in you. It is of you. It is, dare I say, you.

[Audience laughter. Someone claps. He takes another bite.]

ON MODULAR SYNTHESIS AS A FORM OF THERAPY

MAJNUN: Now. I know what some of you are thinking. You are thinking, "Sheikh, what does all this crap have to do with my Eurorack system? What does it have to do with my patch cables? What does it have to do with the $3000 oscillator that I bought but have not yet learned how to use because I am too busy scrolling Facebook?"

[Audience laughter. A woman shouts, "HE'S RIGHT!"]

MAJNUN: Of course I am right. I am always right. That is my other tragic flaw. The first is my magnificent beard, which, by the way, was not always magenta. It was once blue. It was once chartreuse. It was once a shade of green that has no name in any known language, because the language it belonged to was destroyed in the War of the Nuclear Hookahs. But that is a lecture for another day.

[Audience gasps. He pauses to adjust his blue sunglasses.]

MAJNUN: I want to tell you about the synthesizer. Not the module you bought. Not the one you sold. Not the one you are currently listing on Craigslist. No. I want to tell you about the real synthesizer. The one inside you. The one that has been patched incorrectly since birth.

[He taps his chest. It makes a hollow sound.]

MAJNUN: Listen. Do you hear that? That is the sound of your own resonance. It is imperfect. It is filled with noise. It is occasionally interrupted by gastrointestinal malfunctions. That is the music you do not hear. That is the symphony of the soul, played on an instrument that cannot be tuned, and should not be tuned, because perfection is the enemy of authenticity. Have you ever noticed that the finest music is made by people who do not know what they are doing? That is because they are not doing anything. They are being. They are the patch cable. They are the voltage. They are the crackle. They are the divine grounding issue that makes everything beautiful and terrible. Is the rain aware that it makes the flowers grow? No!

[Sound of a single note, sustained. He is playing a tiny keyboard hidden somewhere.]

MAJNUN: That note. That note, right there. It is a C-flat. No. It is a B-sharp. Which is an enharmonic paradox that someone formulated in their mother's basement because they couldn’t work out the math. That is where truth lives. Not in the university. Not in the concert hall. Not in the Moog factory. It lives in the basement. It lives in the static. It lives between the notes, where the little fuzzy things dance to their neighbor’s Yamaha DX7. Go home to your basements. Therein lies your enlightenment. If you do not have a basement, you are doomed.

ON LOVE AND ITS PERILS

MAJNUN: Now. We must speak of love.

[Audience murmurs. Someone groans.]

MAJNUN: Yes. I know. You do not want to hear about love. You are here to hear about synthesizers. But I have loved three women. Three wives. Each of them has tried to kill me. Not metaphorically. Literally. One attempted to poison my tea. One attempted to disembowel me and sell my organs on the black market. The third used a poisoned icepick. That is a story for another time. But the point, you beautiful disasters, is that I loved them anyway.

[Silence. You can hear the hum of the projector.]

MAJNUN: Do you know why? Because love is not about safety. Love is not about comfort. Love is not about the nice house in the suburbs and the two-point-five children and the minivan. Love is about staring into the void and saying, "I am going to vent my inner turmoil in your presence, and if you do not like it, I will not care, because I am too busy loving you."

[He takes a deep breath. The room is silent.]

MAJNUN: This is what I have learned after one hundred and seventy-three years on this mortal plane. I will not say my exact age, because the concept of linear time is a lie and I may have lived some of these years concurrently. But this is what I have learned: The gas pump does not solve anything. The speculum is not a cure. The Van Der Graff Generator is a companion that sits with you saying, "I will not judge your imperfections." That is the divine, ridiculous, heartbreaking photosynthesis of love. Think of this when a pigeon shits on you.

ON THE FLESHY ORCHID

MAJNUN: Some of you may have read my treatise on the hidden forces that the custodians are still trying to make sense of. I do not blame them. I have been trying to make sense of it myself.

[Audience laughter.]

MAJNUN: But there is something I must tell you about the Fleshy Orchid. The Fleshy Orchid is real. It is not a metaphor. It is not a symbol. It is not a cautionary tale. It is real. I have seen it. I have touched it inappropriately for research purposes. And I say unto thee that it is not like the sunflower. The Fleshy Orchid is a challenge. It demands everything from you. It demands your sleep. It demands your sanity. It demands that you dance naked in the light of the full moon while the badgers watch with their meat cleavers and their finely tuned pasta launchers.

[Audience laughs nervously]

MAJNUN: You should not seek it. But if you find it, you should not run from it. Run toward it. Embrace it. It is the only thing that will prepare you for the bane of my existence. The symbol of everything that is wrong with the universe.]

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Is the it real?

MAJNUN: (long pause) That is an excellent question. It is as real as you are, which is to say: not very.

[Audience murmurs. He continues before they can process this.]

MAJNUN: They want you to obey, to conform, to sit in your cubicle and not ask questions. And I say to you: NO. Never. Do not let them win. If you see them coming, do not run. Do not hide. Hold your ground and watch as they are consumed by their own confusion.

[He claps his hands together.]

MAJNUN: That is the power that defeats the anxieties that gnaw at your soul like tiny, bespectacled badgers.

ON THE FINAL QUESTION

MAJNUN: Now. I will take questions.

[Audience applause.]

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Sheikh! What is the meaning of life?

MAJNUN: I have no idea. I have never known and wouldn't care if I did. I have been making it up as I go along. And that, my beautiful disasters, is the point. You now know the secret to life, the universe, and nothing. Go into the world as elevated beings, and don't take any crap from anyone.

[Applause. He takes a bow. He is gone before they finish clapping.]

[RECORDING ENDS.]

[*FOOTNOTE: This lecture was discovered on a damaged MiniDisc found in a storage unit in Queens in 2022. The disc was labeled, in the Sheikh's distinctive handwriting, "LECTURE: THE MEANING OF NOTHING, ETC." The final thirty seconds of the recording contain the sound of a door opening, then closing, then the faint sound of singing in a language that I do not recognize. Several linguists have attempted to isolate and identify the language. None have succeeded. It remains a mystery.*]

The Poetry of Sheikh Majnun

Sheikh Majnun dictated these poems to me via Zoom in 2023 while I was eating lamb vindaloo at an Indian restaurant on the North Side of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He refused to commit them to paper or allow me to record them, insisting that "poems are like birds—if you cage them, they forget how to sing." I transcribed it from memory, my attention divided between his words and the gradual cooling of my curry. He later claimed that the transcription was "approximately 73% accurate" but refused to specify which parts were incorrect. My own statistical analysis suggests that the true accuracy rate is closer to 61.4%, though this figure is itself contingent upon a definition of "accuracy" that any reasonable person would likely reject.
I have therefore concluded that the Sheikh's poetry is, like his music, best experienced rather than analyzed. This conclusion has brought me no peace.

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Advice to Young People

Behold! The talkative little box
Marvel at its flickering blue lights.
Tell me, do you wonder why the sage's gaze discombobulates you?
He knows your malfunctioning emotions.
Everything under the big, ugly umbrella
Desperately implores:
Why do you even bother?
The world is filtered through horrible demographics
As pixelated faces of questionable reality clutter my screen!
Many friends, but friendless.
It is futility, delivered like DoorDash!
I wrap myself in a blanket of despair in the evening,
A shroud cold as the night air - meant to protect me from darkness!
As the forces of mediocrity try to force me to devolve into an asexual hybrid;
Colorless, Odorless, Tasteless - soft white underbelly,
A steel-reinforced cotton swab of unwholesome propaganda jammed up my nose.

Yes, the world is awful,
But pizza is awesome!
So shut up and stop being so melodramatic!
Counteract your existential dread with the simple, cheesy, greasy, glorious truth that no algorithm can replicate and no propaganda can corrupt!
Weaponize your memories and tears!
Force the swaggering martinet to terminate his sleep paralysis demons!
Flush your medication down the toilet,
And punch that ninja in the face!
~~~~~

[FOOTNOTE:The Sheikh suggested that I "read this poem at funerals." An alternate version of this poem ends with a single line that appears in no other manuscript: "Don't forget to take out the garbage." Scholars remain divided on whether this line was original or added later by one of the Sheikh's wives.]

Art Thou My Laylah?

Wherefore dost thou go?
For what dost thou reject me?
What twist of lemon did sour thy reason?
Look'st thou upon my foul continence
Like unto a proctologist
Who cannot distinguish which end is what!
Forsooth!
The viands thou preparest
Are poison!
Like unto hemlock and cyanide!
Thou wishest to geld me and render me unmanned!
Unsinew'd is my spirit after thine ministrations!
Oh, but thy beauty!
Thy peach!
Thy twin coconuts!
Thine eyes like unto frying pans!
Are a baited hook
That led me to the gates of perdition!
Serpent of the Nile!
Though fair and more false, I die as
Thou wound'st me in sorceries most foul,
With a voice that could bend the oscillator's wave,
And left me thus—
A Majnun, frantic, bound to thine sweet curse.
Art Thou My Laylah?
No.

[FOOTNOTE: The line "Thine eyes like unto frying pans" contains a simile that has puzzled scholars for decades. Professor Emeritus Horatio Y. Lorgenstein of the University of Wessex suggests it may refer to a lost Kurdish folk tradition in which frying pans symbolized the domestic trap of marriage. Others, less charitably, attribute it to the Sheikh's notorious fondness for hallucinogenic cacti. In our conversations, the Sheikh strongly insinuated that this was about one of his wives—though he would not specify which. However, being personally acquainted with all three, I imagine the description to be interchangeable.]

He Wept Into His Modular Synthesizer

He wept into his modular synthesizer.
Not because the world was ending—
that was scheduled for Tuesday,
and he had a dentist appointment.

No! He wept because the patch cables
had become entangled with his magenta beard,
and the Matrix-green light of the oscilloscope
reminded him of a girl he once knew
in a city that does not exist
found only on maps that were never drawn.
Ah, the torment of unrequited passion!
None have loved and lost like he has!

He pressed a single key.
Violently twisted the dials on random oscillators.
The note hung in the air -
and smelled of singed hair and freshly cut grass.
like a question no one dared to ask.
"Is this music?" he whispered,
"or is this just the sound
of a soul who is unaware
of his own perplexity?"
The synthesizer answered
with a low, square-wave frequency
that vibrated painfully in his teeth
and reminded him of the voice
of a schoolteacher who singled him out
for undeserved punishment.
Alas! The schoolteacher had never spoken a word of English
and he had never learned his teacher's language.
But the pain remained as he turned a knob.
And the universe bent like the pink plastic straw
In a sippy-cup.
"Ah," he said.
"There you are, you rascally rabbit!"
And there was no one there to hear the sound,
Of misfiring synapsis
And gastrointestinal malfunctions
In a large porcelain bathtub.
So he recorded it on tape that would later be eaten by a goat.
But the sound remained.
Carved into the ether like street gang graffiti,

in the hollow bones of extinct carrion birds,
and in the static between radio stations
where truckers speak of lot lizards and pit-woffies
as if they were virgins.

He unplugged everything.
He sat in silence
for the first time in forty-three years.
And in that silence,
he heard it:
the sound of the universe
laughing at its own joke.
He wept at the self-created illusion
of his own magnificence.
He wrote it down on a napkin.
And forgot where he put it.
Then he had lunch.

[FOOTNOTE: The identity of "the girl he once knew in a city that does not exist" has been the subject of much speculation. Some scholars believe she was a fellow student at the Sheikh Rattlnroll Madrasa. Others maintain she was entirely fictional—a rhetorical device, like the city itself. When I asked the Sheikh about her, he became agitated and wept inconsolably for hours. Then he went to his kitchen and cooked Spaghetti all'Assassina, insisting that I eat it with him (it was, I must admit, delicious). The "dentist appointment" is referenced in no other known Majnun document. However, his third wife, Fatou Bouti, once mentioned in a violent and unprovoked argument with me that the Sheikh had "a complicated relationship with dental hygiene." She refused to elaborate. Fearing for my life, I did not press the matter.]

I'm Majnun

I am a man, I do as I please,
With feet of clay and skin like cheese.
I'm unkempt and raggedy most of the time,
Spend too many hours online.
My money leaves no paper trail
My ego's as big as a humpback whale
But when I pluck my old guitar
The stars are near that once were far.
I’m Majnun.

I flirt with girls, I eat too much,
A lazy, selfish such-and-such.
I’m mean and cruel, vain, and violent,

Yelling when I should stay silent.
I cuss, I fight, I cause much strife
Never worked a day in my life.
But when I play my melodies
The universe is my symphony.
I’m Majnun.

I'm nasty, foul, and paranoid
To pay bills and taxes I avoid
I'm clumsy and ugly, I snarl and stink
And I'm always right; or so I think!
I seek fame and fortune with no success
I have no class and no finesse.
But when I place plectrum or bow to string
I have no fear of anything.
I’m Majnun.

My hair is gray, my teeth are rotten
My diatribes and jokes should be forgotten!
I act like I am high on drugs;
My beard is a luxury home for bugs.
A dirty old man who never shaves
Does no laundry and seldom bathes
But when I speak my words so clear,
Great and Noble Truths appear.
I’m Majnun.

[*FOOTNOTE: The reader is to be congratulated for making it this far. As for the poem,... I have nothing. You’re on your own.*]

The Book of Hecubus.

Chapter 1

1. And it came to pass in the kingdom of Mordblorg, King Hecubus the Emulous did summon to his presence Snavely the Groveling.
2. And King Hecubus the Emulous did speak unto Snavely the Groveling, saying, “Thou art commanded to build for me a wedding band.”
3. And Snavely the Groveling did reply, “It shall be done my king.”
4. And King Hecubus the Emulous did speak unto Snavely the Groveling, saying, “First thou shall find me a keyboardist. He shall have skills in jazz and classical. He shall know every song and refuse to play them correctly. He shall have more gear than he needs and not know how half of it works. Thus sayeth your king.
5. “Next, thou shall find me a guitarist. He shall be a shredder. He shall play tapping, sweeping arpeggios, and whammy bar dive bombs without stopping. He shall have an amplifier like unto an industrial refrigerator, a pedalboard like unto a mad scientist’s laboratory, and hair dyed an unnatural shade of iridescent puce. He shall insist upon playing louder than anyone else. He shall say he can read music, but he cannot.
6. “Next, thou shall find me a drummer. He shall have a drum kit that shall take up half the stage. He shall play fills everywhere like unto Keith Moon and think himself like unto Billy Cobham. He shall regard tempo as optional.
7. “Next, thou shall find me a bass player. He will be overweight and wear an ill-fitting tuxedo. He shall not be able to find the One but think himself like unto Jaco. He shall have an offensive odor of body and breath and drink beer all night. Thus art thou commanded.”
8. And Snavely the Groveling did marvel, saying unto the king, “It shall be done, your Majesty.”
9. And King Hecubus the Emulous did smack Snavely the Groveling upside the end, saying, “Silence! Interrupt me not!
10. “Next, thou shall find me a horn section; a trumpet and two saxophones. They shall be “jazz purists,” and bebop themselves into a lather on every song, yea, even unto the Celine Dion covers. They shall be disdainful of the others in the band and think themselves better than everyone. They shall dress like bums and get high during the breaks. Thou shall obey me in this and all things.
11. “Next, thou shall find me a string section. They shall be four: two violins, a viola, and a cello. They shall each be Juilliard dropouts and be bitter about not being famous classical musicians. They shall not know the music and fake parts in every song. And they shall attach badly made pickups to their instruments that shall feed back and cause intolerable pain. Ask not why.
12. “Then thou shall find me two lead singers and three backup singers. The lead singers shall be a male and a female. The male shall be a prima donna, and think himself like unto Freddie Mercury, but shall not be able to sing in key. The female shall try to steal the spotlight on every song. She shall be a drama queen and create chaos everywhere. The three backup singers thou shall find in a church. They shall be resentful that they are not singing lead. Thus are thou commanded.”
13. And Snavely the Groveling did continue to marvel, but spoke not, out of fear of being smacked upside the head by the king.
14. And King Hecubus the Emulous did speak, saying, “Finally thou shall find me a manager. He shall foment dissent and distrust among the band. He shall persuade the band to sign shady contracts and steal as much money as he can. Ask not why.

15. “Go. Search the towns and villages for what I require. Rest not until your task is complete.”
16. And Snavely the Groveling did as King Hecubus the Emulous had commanded. To his astonishment he had little difficulty in accomplishing his task.
17. And it came to pass that the wedding band did play many weddings. They ruined many weddings and were hated by many people.
18. Soon, the wedding band did rage out of control and ravage the land like a horde of Berserkers with bellies full of mead and amanita muscaria.
19. And lo, it came to pass that Snavely the Groveling did regret what he had done.

Chapter 2

1. And it came to pass that the wedding band did accept a gig at the Great Hall of Lord Pastrami the Swiss, whose daughter Victoria the Secret was to be wed to Studley the Fabulist, a merchant of spices and opium from across the eastern sea. Lord Pastrami very much wanted this wedding to take place. It would secure much power and wealth from trade for his kingdom.
2. And the band did set up their equipment.
3. The hum from the guitarist's amplifier was like unto a malfunctioning lawn mower. He did insist upon using a ring modulator that sounded like a flatulent dinosaur.
4. The drummer's kit did occupy the space of twelve men and had many drums and percussion from exotic lands that were untouched and which he knew not how to play.
5. The keyboardist did spend forty minutes searching for a power cable he had left in another city. And this was a mercy, because he was going to use it to power the broken Casio he used on “Tainted Love.”
6. And the wedding guests did gather, arrayed in fine garments and hopeful hearts. They knew not what awaited them.
7. And the band did play the first song, a cover of "Celebration" by Kool and the Gang. And lo, it was a trainwreck.
8. The guitarist did play a solo in the wrong key. The drummer did rush the tempo like a horse fleeing a burning barn. The bass player did lose the One entirely and wandered in the wilderness of wrong notes for the duration of the song. And he drank so much beer there was hardly any left for the guests. The keyboardist did load a sample of a cat in heat into one keyboard and a sample of Kanye West asking “How, Sway?” into another. No one knows why.
9. And the horn section did play up-tempo bebop over “Thinking Out Loud” by Ed Sheeran. And the backup singers did “go to church” and sang "HOLYGHOST" by Sons of Sunday. And Victoria the Secret’s slow dance with Studley the Fabulist was ruined.
10. And the lead male singer did sacrifice his dignity and did a stage dive onto the wedding cake. The cake did not survive. And lo, he attempted to lead the guests in the Electric Slide. Many people were hurt.
11. And the lead female singer did seize the microphone and announce that she was leaving the band to pursue a solo career. This she did declare during the second verse of "Uptown Funk."
12. And the backup singers announced that they were leaving the group to form their own group and then began singing the greatest hits of the Pointer Sisters.
13. And the string section did fake their parts so obviously that a child of seven did point, saying, "Mother, their bows are not touching the strings."

14. And the manager did appear from the shadows, saying unto Lord Pastrami, "For an additional fee, I can make them stop."
15. And Lord Pastrami did pay the manager seven hundred pieces of silver, which he did pocket.
16. And it came to pass that before he ran off, he instructed the band to play "Free Bird" for forty-five minutes. So, they did, except the keyboardist, who played Favorite Melodies of Sun Ra, and the horn section, who used the time to practice Bird licks. And the people did weep, though not from joy.
17. Thus, the wedding was ruined. Victoria the Secret did flee to a convent and took her vows and became Sister Mary Bromhilda of the Holy Pancreas. Studley the Fabulist did go out of business and signed on to a pirate ship. Lord Pastrami did curse the name of King Hecubus the Emulous and swear vengeance.
18. And Snavely the Groveling did hear of this and did hide in a wine cellar for three days.

Chapter 3

1. And King Hecubus the Emulous did summon Snavely the Groveling before him. And Snavely the Groveling did stand before him, cowering, weeping, begging for mercy, evacuating his bowels, and other things to disgrace himself.
2. Seeing this, King Hecubus the Emulous laughed and said, "Thou hast done well."
3. And Snavely the Groveling was confused and did say, "My king, I do not understand. We have destroyed a wedding. We have made enemies of a powerful lord. How have I done well?"
4. And King Hecubus the Emulous did laugh, saying, "Thou art a drooling idiot. The kingdom's enemies are brought low without ransom or bloodshed. Lord Pastrami shall trouble us no more. Seest thou not that the wedding band was truly a weapon in my royal hand? And thou hast made it true. I am pleased."
5. And Snavely the Groveling did marvel greatly and spoke not, for fear of what he might learn.
6. And it came to pass that the people did say among themselves, "Better to pay tribute to King Hecubus the Emulous than to host a wedding at which this band might appear."
7. And the kingdom of Mordblorg did know great power and wealth, and an uneasy peace, bought at the price of ruined receptions, shattered dance floors, and deflowered bride’s maids.
8. And the wedding band did continue to ravage the land, not as entertainers, but as instruments of royal statecraft.
9. And Snavely the Groveling did drink much wine and did wonder whether he was a servant of the crown or a servant of evil.

10. And he found no answer.

Appendices.

Appendix A: Lost Musical Works

- Concerto for Seven Dentist Drills and Uncooperative Patient
- Variations on a Theme for Broken Elevators and a Tax Audit
- Concerto for Non-Existent Instruments (Performed on Existential Dread)
- Monkey with his Finger on The Button: A Cautionary Tale in Four Movements
- Mano Meilės Ledo Kirtiklis (The Icepick of My Love)
- You are Doomed: An Improvisation for Casio VL-1, Stun Gun, and Kazoo of Humiliation
- Dangled By Sitar Strings: A Cross-Cultural Violation (With Apologies to Ravi Shankar)
- Don't Open That Door! (An Opera in One Terrifying Act)
- Fantasia on a Theme by Lawrence Welk (For Orchestra, Theremin, and Champagne Bubbles)
- Suite for Amplified Bassoon, Ring Modulator, and Nuclear Meltdown
- Three Chorales for the Bewildered
- Requiem for a Forgotten Cheeseburger (For Chorus, Harpsichord, Gamelan, and George Foreman Air Fryer)
- The Wrath of the Modular Synthesizer (A Tone Poem of Offensive Contours)

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Appendix B: Bibliography

- The Theory and Practice of Xenomorph Husbandry: A Practical Guide (*1998*)
- How to Found Your Own Nation Without Money, Military Conquest, or Ambition: A Step-By-Step Manual (*2001*)
- Method for Musical Recalibration of DNA for Fun and Profit (*date unknown, probably apocryphal*)
- An Autohagiography of Sheikh Majnun: Why I am Better Than You (*perpetual work in progress*)
- Uncle Hecubus and Laylah's Evil Twin From A Parallel Universe: A Story of Forbidden Love, with Offensive Illustrations by the Author (*Privately published. 2007*)
- Taste: A Phenomenology of Flavor in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (*unpublished, rumored to exist only as a scratch-&-sniff coloring book*)
- On the Proper Care and Feeding of One's Enemies (*out of print, banned in Argentina, Sweden, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, The People's Republic of China, and anywhere fine books are sold*)
- Conversations with Myself, Volume I-CXXXVII (*NOTE: volumes XXIV through CXIII are identical. Volumes XII, CXIV, and CXXVI are blank*)

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Half the Sheikh's books don't exist. Nobody can be certain that this book exists.

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Appendix C: Chronology.

No accurate information about a timeline has ever been verified. Every date contradicts another. Despite assembling the events of the Sheikh's life in chronological order being a complete waste of time, I have attempted a precursory list.

1962 — Sheikh Majnun is born in a tent in the Gobi Desert, in a slum in Havana, Cuba, or in a hospital in Cleveland, Ohio. All existing records are contradictory.
1962 — Sheikh Majnun appears, as a young adult, in a recording studio in Berlin. Records three compositions that were later confiscated and destroyed by the German government.
1975 — Claims, without evidence, to have written his first symphony at age thirteen.
1978 – Briefly works for a fireworks manufacturing company in Idaho. Discharged for "*blatant disregard for safety and inability to understand the purpose of fireworks displays*."
1980 — Becomes the youngest person ever to win the Nobel Prize in Physics. Returns it, claiming the Nobel committee "misunderstood the assignment."
1984 — Briefly works as a circus clown. Meets his first wife Huài Nǔrén while she worked as an accountant for the circus. Majnun was discharged for "*philosophical incompatibility*." Huài Nǔrén was discharged for altering the circus' financial records.
1988 – Meets K'yrgyn-nyk in Siberia. She and Huài Nǔrén, after several failed attempts to murder each other, decide to cooperate and focus their efforts on murdering their husband.
1990 – Meets Fatou Bouti while attempting to smuggle several metric tons of cassava out of Senegal and sell it on the Ukrainian black market. They were married in a ceremony in the Wakhan Corridor in Northeastern Afghanistan, and honeymooned in Badakhshan. They barely escaped with their lives.
1996 — Attempts to climb K2. Alternatively, spend four months in an opium den in Nepal.
2002 — Meets the editor in a mosque in Staten Island.
2003 — Records The Earth Must Be Destroyed. The location of the sessions have been reported to have occurred in a Williamsburg loft, a condemned building in Bismark, North Dakota, or in a hideout in Jangmadang, North Korea. Witness accounts and photographic evidence are contradictory and inconclusive.
2005 — Conducts the Lost Interview at WFMU.
2008 — Goes into hiding with no explanation and no apparent motive.
2023 — Dictates poems via Zoom from an undisclosed location (most evidence points to Milwaukee or the moon).
2025 — Allegedly carves a message into the editor's shower tiles.
2026 — Present whereabouts unknown. Cheeseburger consumption continues unabated.
2027 – Allegedly performs a concert on Mars with Jimi Hendrix. Terraforms the planet. The Sheikh sends a bill, and Hendrix catches a cold.

APPENDIX D: Verified Discography

The Earth Must Be Destroyed (2003) — The only known recording. Original master tapes lost. Surviving copies are available only through the Custodian.
The music has been known to cause euphoria, unpredictable skin pigmentation, digestive problems, tooth decay, sporadic lycanthropy, sexual abnormalities, and in one documented case, a temporary inability to recognize the color orange. Listen at your own risk.

The Final Message from Sheikh Majnun

Destroy every expectation!
Break every waveform!
Break the fourth wall!
But whatever you do, don't break character!
Be the prank, the prankster, and the victim of the prank!
Make no distinction between them!
And don't forget to take out the garbage.
I love you, you beautiful disasters!

- *Dr. Ustad Sheikh Hieronymus Hecubus Majnun.*



Note from the Custodian: if you don't laugh, the joke's on you.