

Theories of Creativity: The Significance of the Insignificant. A Graphic Novel

Benjamin Schiemer*^{ib} ^a

Roman Duffner^{a, b}

S.R. Ayers

^a Institute of Organization Science, Johannes Kepler University, Linz (Austria)

^b Institute of Theory and History, Anton Bruckner Private University, Linz (Austria)

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Abstract

This graphic novel offers an insight into various theoretical approaches in creativity theory. In their search for approaches that provide the best possible explanation for how ideas come about, the main actors (scientists) of our story encounter a wide variety of allegories (in the form of superheroes) representing creativity theories on a fictitious distant planet. They end up in remote areas and finally encounter theories that, at first glance, cannot make a significant contribution to creativity. These theories are our contributions to the topics of incompleteness, temporal structuring, and trivial objects that we have developed in recent years as part of ethnographic research on creativity in music. The initial assumption that these theories have less explanatory value for the emergence of ideas turns out to be a fallacy in our story.

Keywords: Graphic Novel; Creativity Theories; Temporal Affordance; Trivial Object; Incompleteness.

* ✉ benjamin.schiemer@gmail.com

THEORIES OF CREATIVITY: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INSIGNIFICANT

WRITTEN BY
BENJAMIN SCHIEMER
& L. ROMAN DUFFNER

ART BY
S.R. AYERS



A NIGHT LIKE ANY OTHER IN THE UNIVERSE,
CALM AND PEACEFUL. EVERYTHING IS IN ITS PLACE,
EVERYTHING REVOLVES AROUND SOMETHING,
EVERYTHING SPREADS OUT.



THOUSANDS OF PLANETS REVOLVE AROUND THOUSANDS OF SUNS.
THE EARTH MOVES AROUND THE SUN.



EARTH

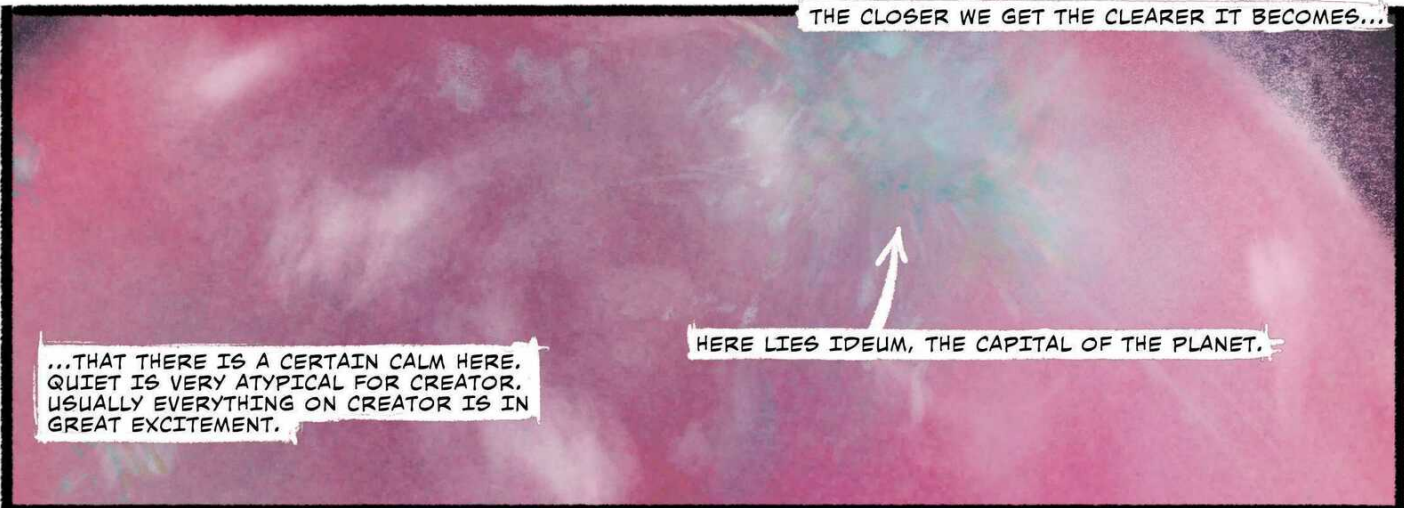


WHILE EVERYTHING IN THE UNIVERSE ROTATES AROUND SOMETHING,
THERE IN THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE...

...THE PLANET CREATOR ROTATES ONLY AROUND ITSELF.



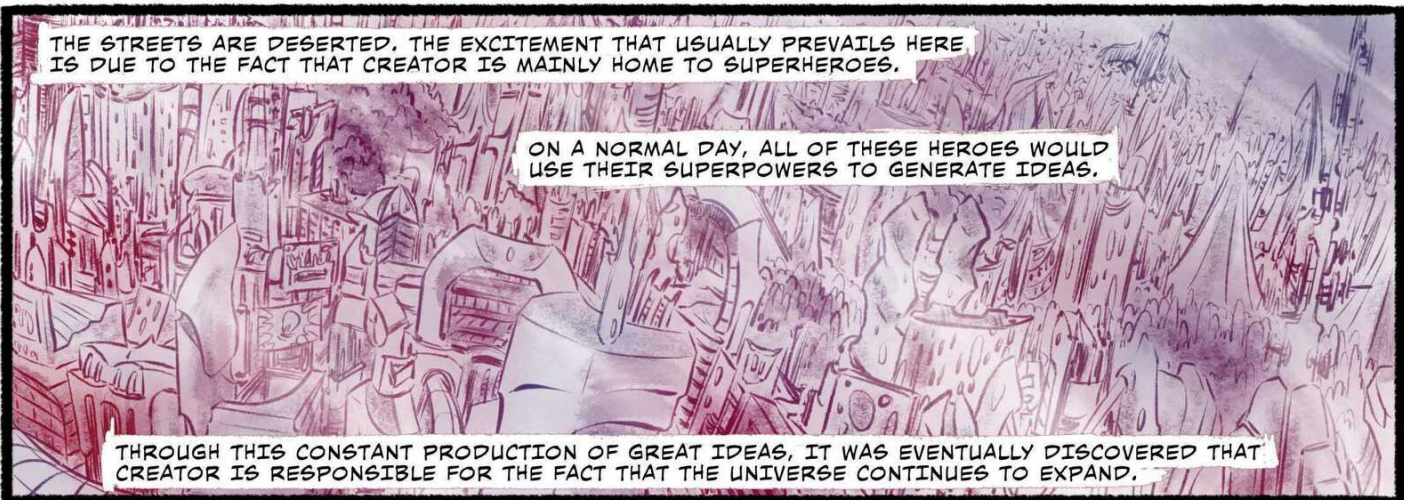
THE CLOSER WE GET THE CLEARER IT BECOMES...



HERE LIES IDEUM, THE CAPITAL OF THE PLANET.

...THAT THERE IS A CERTAIN CALM HERE. QUIET IS VERY ATYPICAL FOR CREATOR. USUALLY EVERYTHING ON CREATOR IS IN GREAT EXCITEMENT.

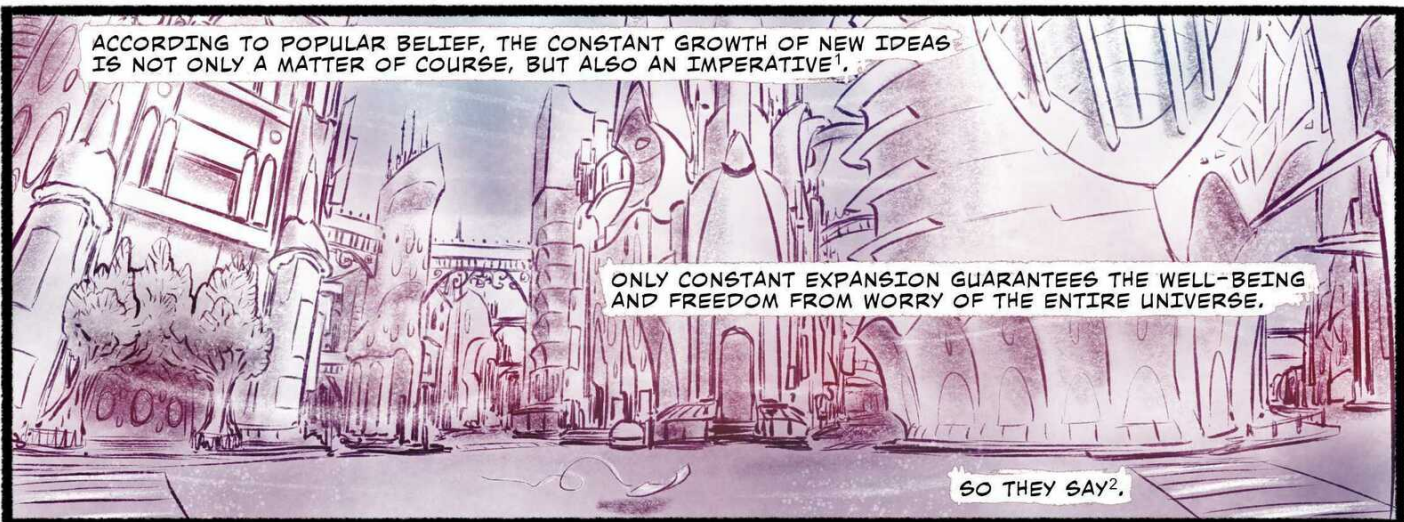
THE STREETS ARE DESERTED. THE EXCITEMENT THAT USUALLY PREVAILS HERE IS DUE TO THE FACT THAT CREATOR IS MAINLY HOME TO SUPERHEROES.



ON A NORMAL DAY, ALL OF THESE HEROES WOULD USE THEIR SUPERPOWERS TO GENERATE IDEAS.

THROUGH THIS CONSTANT PRODUCTION OF GREAT IDEAS, IT WAS EVENTUALLY DISCOVERED THAT CREATOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FACT THAT THE UNIVERSE CONTINUES TO EXPAND.

ACCORDING TO POPULAR BELIEF, THE CONSTANT GROWTH OF NEW IDEAS IS NOT ONLY A MATTER OF COURSE, BUT ALSO AN IMPERATIVE.



ONLY CONSTANT EXPANSION GUARANTEES THE WELL-BEING AND FREEDOM FROM WORRY OF THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE.

SO THEY SAY².

TODAY, SOMETHING DISRUPTED THE NATURAL COURSE OF THINGS ON CREATOR.

EITHER THAT HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE, OR IT HAS BEEN SO LONG THAT NO ONE ON CREATOR CAN REMEMBER IT.

THERE IS A DENSE CROWD AND EXCITED MURMURING IN THE LARGE CONFERENCE HALL OF THE IDEUM PARLIAMENT. THE COUNCIL OF THE WISE WAS CONVENED BECAUSE DRAMATIC NEWS HAS REACHED "THE OFFICE FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE INTERGALACTIC FUTURE" FROM THE EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE.

THE MESSAGE WAS RECEIVED BY AN OLD FAX MACHINE, AND LOOKS LIKE THIS...

THE UNIVERSE COULD NOT BE FURTHER EXPANDING

WHY SHOULD THE UNIVERSE STOP EXPANDING? THIS MESSAGE MUST BE WRONG! HAS IT BEEN CHECKED? IT IS UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE THAT IT CAN BE TRUE.

SUCH A THING HAS NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE, NEITHER IN OUR TIME NOR IN THE TIME OF ALL DOCUMENTED ANCESTORS.

WE HAVE CHECKED IT AND CAN GUARANTEE ITS AUTHENTICITY WITH A HIGH DEGREE OF PROBABILITY.

IT COMES FROM THE EDGE OF THE UNIVERSE AND IT CONTAINS THE INFORMATION THAT THE UNIVERSE HAS STOPPED EXPANDING.

THAT'S OUT OF THE QUESTION.

REGARDLESS OF HOW INCREDIBLY UNLIKELY THE TRUTH OF THIS MESSAGE MIGHT BE, WE HAVE TO ASSUME THAT IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE.

WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

IF IT IS TRUE, WHAT CAN BE THE CAUSE?

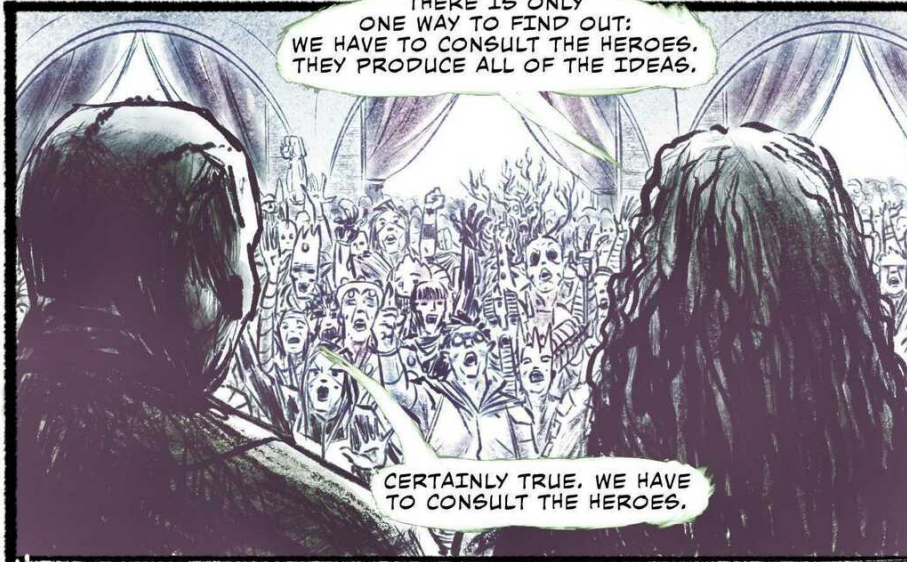
HAVE WE RUN OUT OF IDEAS?



THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT: WE HAVE TO CONSULT THE HEROES. THEY PRODUCE ALL OF THE IDEAS.

SEND SCHOLARS OUT TO FIND THE BEST SUPERHEROES.

MAKE SURE THAT THERE ARE NO PROBLEMS IN THE CREATION OF NEW IDEAS.



CERTAINLY TRUE. WE HAVE TO CONSULT THE HEROES.

AN HOUR LATER, THE COUNCIL HAS PUT TOGETHER A GROUP OF SCHOLARS TO SEEK THE MOST PRODUCTIVE SUPERHEROES ON THE PLANET.

SURELY WE AGREE THAT THE MAIN SUPERHERO RESPONSIBLE FOR GENERATING IDEAS IS THE ORIGINAL NOVELER.

WITHOUT IT, NOTHING WOULD WORK.

EVERYTHING IT TOUCHES BECOMES A NEW IDEA AS SHOWN IN MY BEST-CITED PAPERS.

NOT JUST THE ORIGINAL NOVELER! IT'S SELDOM SEEN WITHOUT THE VALUABLE USEFULLER⁸.

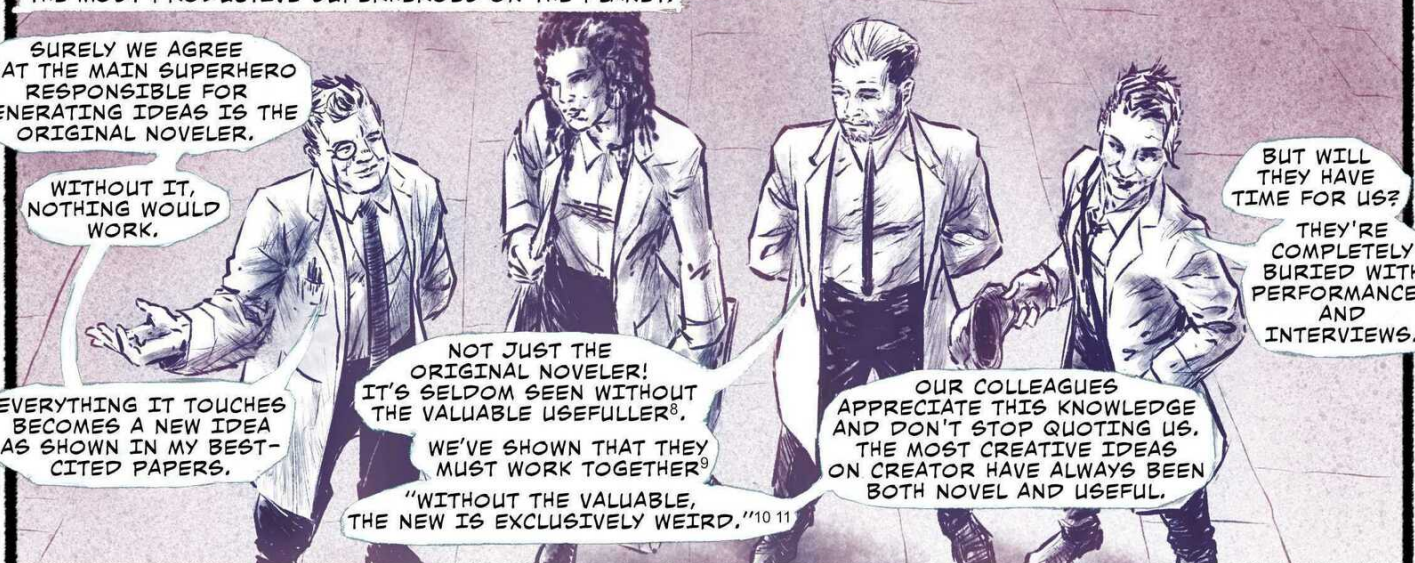
WE'VE SHOWN THAT THEY MUST WORK TOGETHER⁹

"WITHOUT THE VALUABLE, THE NEW IS EXCLUSIVELY WEIRD."^{10 11}

OUR COLLEAGUES APPRECIATE THIS KNOWLEDGE AND DON'T STOP QUOTING US. THE MOST CREATIVE IDEAS ON CREATOR HAVE ALWAYS BEEN BOTH NOVEL AND USEFUL.

BUT WILL THEY HAVE TIME FOR US?

THEY'RE COMPLETELY BURIED WITH PERFORMANCES AND INTERVIEWS.



THEY MUST HAVE TIME FOR US. THIS IS THE HIGHEST PRIORITY FOR THE GOOD OF OUR UNIVERSE AND FOR OUR STANDING.

THIS WILL GIVE US DEEP INSIGHT INTO THE SCIENCE OF CREATIVITY!

AND WE CAN'T FORGET THE STAR OF THE PLANET!

WE MUST ASK THE EXCITING BEAUTIFULLER.

I CAN ALREADY SEE OUR THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTION. PEOPLE WILL QUOTE US FOR AEONS TO COME!

THE ENTIRE AESTHETICIZATION¹¹ OF THE UNIVERSE IS BASED ON ITS SUPERPOWER.





THE ORIGINAL NOVELER

GET READY, THERE ARE AMBASSADORS WAITING FOR US FROM THE COUNCIL. WE'VE NEVER HAD THAT BEFORE. MIGHT BE INTERESTING.

I THOUGHT THEY WOULD COME.

THIS IS VERY DRAMATIC, POTENTIALLY UNTRUE.

WE'VE HAD AS MANY USEFUL AND VALUABLE IDEAS AS ALWAYS, HONESTLY.



STRANGE INDEED. I'VE HAD MANY RADICALLY NEW IDEAS LATELY, PLUS ALL OF THE INCREMENTALLY NEW IDEAS!... ANYWAY, COME ON LET'S GO. I'M EXCITED WHAT THEY WANT.

IS MISTER WONDERFUL, THE EXCITING BUT USELESS BEAUTIFULLER, COMING TOO?

I CAN'T STAND THAT ARROGANT FIGURE. WORTHLESS KITSCH.

THE VALUABLE USEFULLER

AS FAR AS I KNOW, THEY INVITED THAT PRETTY PET TOO.



CAN'T WE GO SOMEWHERE ELSE? SOMEWHERE LESS BUSY?

BUT WHY? IT'S WONDERFUL HERE.

AGREED. IT'S PERFECT FOR A CONSULTATION. WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?

AND WHERE IS THE EXCITING BEAUTIFULLER? DIDN'T IT WANT TO COME?

IT SHOULD BE HERE SOON.



IN ANY CASE, THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME. BEING THE MOST FAMOUS AND BEST SUPERHEROES IN OUR UNIVERSE, SURELY YOU CAN HELP US.

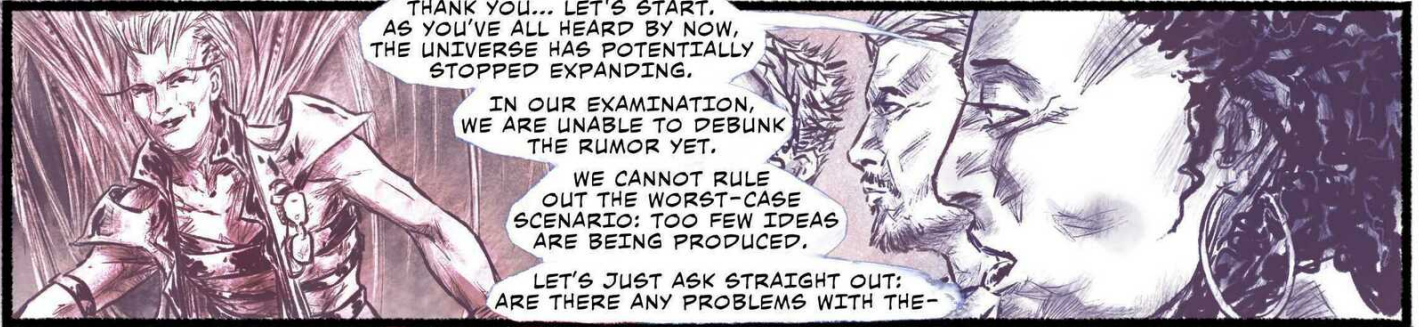
IT'S ABOUT THE WELLBEING OF ALL OF US, ISN'T IT?



I'M SORRY HONEYS, I STILL HAD WORK TO DO.

WHAT ARE THESE BEAUTIFUL THINGS YOU WANT TO ASK ME?

THE EXCITING BEAUTIFULLER



THANK YOU... LET'S START. AS YOU'VE ALL HEARD BY NOW, THE UNIVERSE HAS POTENTIALLY STOPPED EXPANDING.

IN OUR EXAMINATION, WE ARE UNABLE TO DEBUNK THE RUMOR YET.

WE CANNOT RULE OUT THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO: TOO FEW IDEAS ARE BEING PRODUCED.

LET'S JUST ASK STRAIGHT OUT: ARE THERE ANY PROBLEMS WITH THE-



THEY'RE KIDDING! I'VE HAD INTENSE IDEAS LATELY WITH LEVELS OF STIMULATION AND EXCITEMENT BEYOND THE REAL. SOME EVEN SAY THAT MY POWERS AESTHETICIZE SOCIETY AS A WHOLE!¹⁴

THAT JUST CAN'T BE RIGHT. WE TOO WERE PRODUCTIVE LIKE NEVER BEFORE.

TOTALLY MIND-BOGGLING PRESUMPTION THAT IS.



SORRY, WE HAVE TO ASSUME THE WORST.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR SITUATION RECENTLY WITH THE CREATION OF IDEAS? HOW DID YOU PROCEED? WHAT HAPPENED?

MY DEAREST LADY, WE HAVE SUPERPOWERS. HOW DO YOU THINK WE PROCEEDED? WE CREATED FOR THE SAKE OF OUR FORCES!

PLEASE DON'T GET US WRONG...

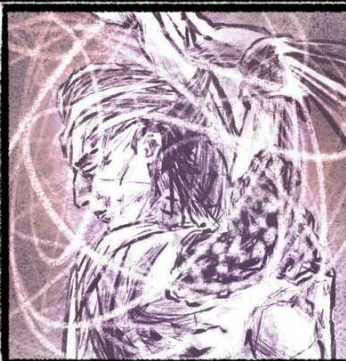
BUT CAN YOU PROVE IT SO WE CAN TESTIFY THAT NOTHING IS WRONG? WE WILL QUOTE VERBATIM.

A DEMONSTRATION?!



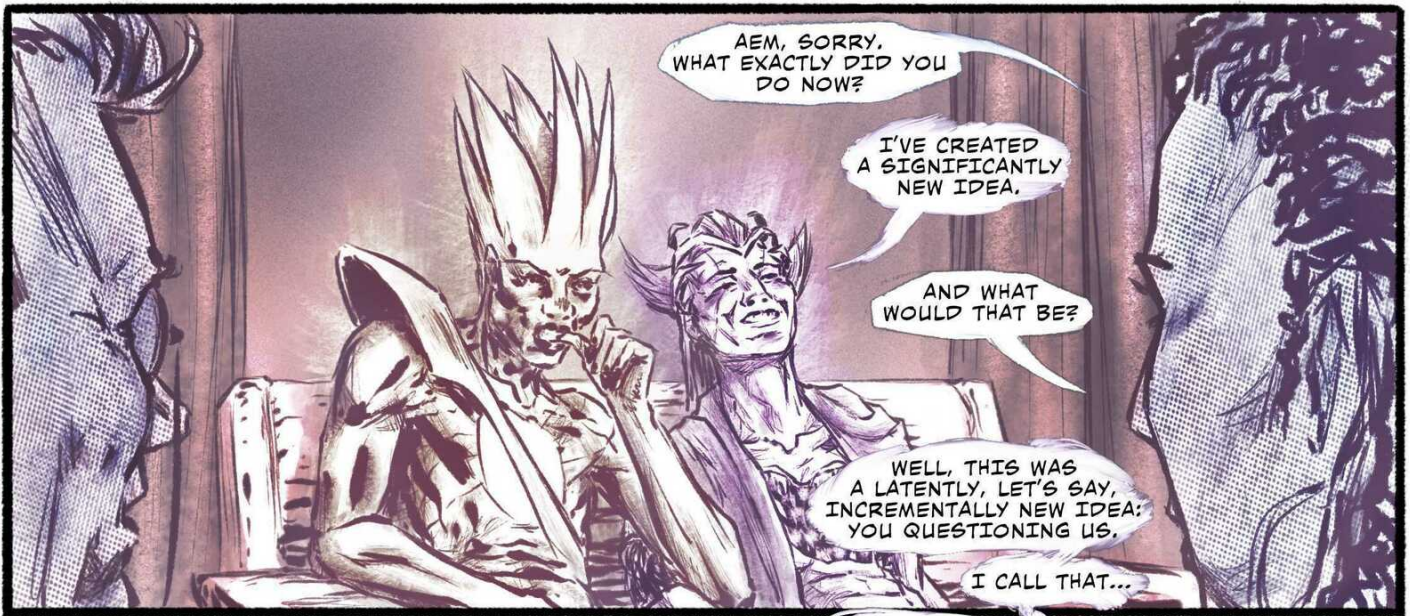
IT'S OK U-VAL. WE WILL DO JUST THAT.

NOW WE GET TO SEE SOMETHING!



NOW?

OK THEN?



AEM, SORRY. WHAT EXACTLY DID YOU DO NOW?

I'VE CREATED A SIGNIFICANTLY NEW IDEA.

AND WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

WELL, THIS WAS A LATENTLY, LET'S SAY, INCREMENTALLY NEW IDEA: YOU QUESTIONING US.

I CALL THAT...



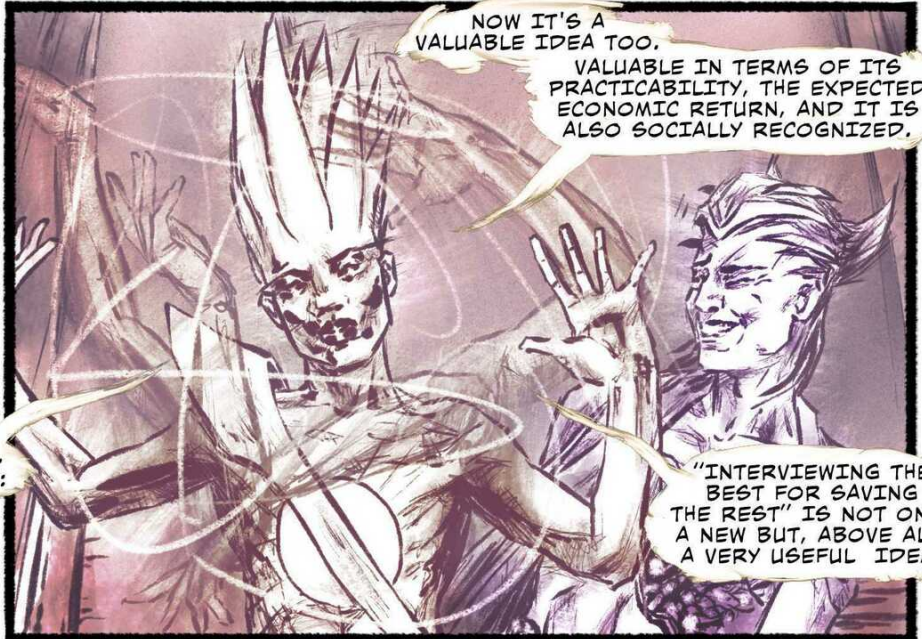
"INTERVIEWING THE BEST FOR SAVING THE REST."

THIS IS QUITE RADICAL ACTUALLY. HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF IT BEFORE?



I BEG YOUR PARDON? I DON'T MEAN TO BE RUDE, BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

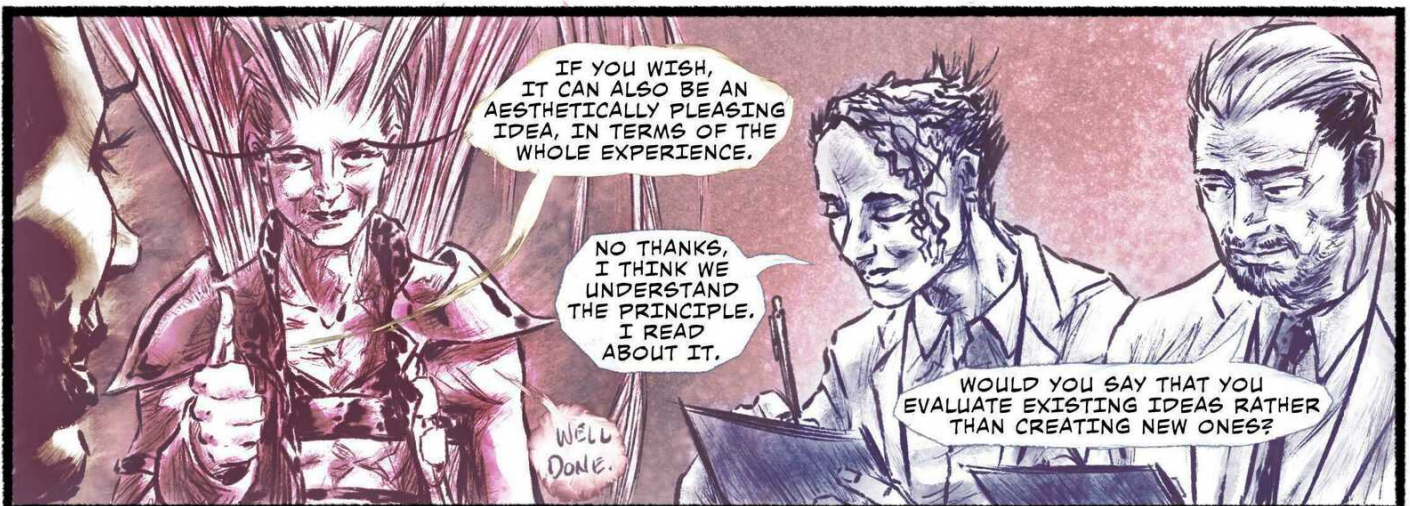
I'LL HELP YOU. LOOK CLOSELY:



NOW IT'S A VALUABLE IDEA TOO.

VALUABLE IN TERMS OF ITS PRACTICABILITY, THE EXPECTED ECONOMIC RETURN, AND IT IS ALSO SOCIALLY RECOGNIZED.

"INTERVIEWING THE BEST FOR SAVING THE REST" IS NOT ONLY A NEW BUT, ABOVE ALL, A VERY USEFUL IDEA.



IF YOU WISH, IT CAN ALSO BE AN AESTHETICALLY PLEASING IDEA, IN TERMS OF THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE.

NO THANKS, I THINK WE UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLE. I READ ABOUT IT.

WELL DONE.

WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOU EVALUATE EXISTING IDEAS RATHER THAN CREATING NEW ONES?



OF COURSE NOT... OR MAYBE YES, NOT DIRECTLY. NOTHING BEAUTIFUL COMES OUT OF NOWHERE. PRETTY OBVIOUS.

YES, YES THAT'S CLEAR. BUT WHERE DO THE IDEAS COME FROM?

WELL, IT WAS YOUR IDEA TO COME HERE.

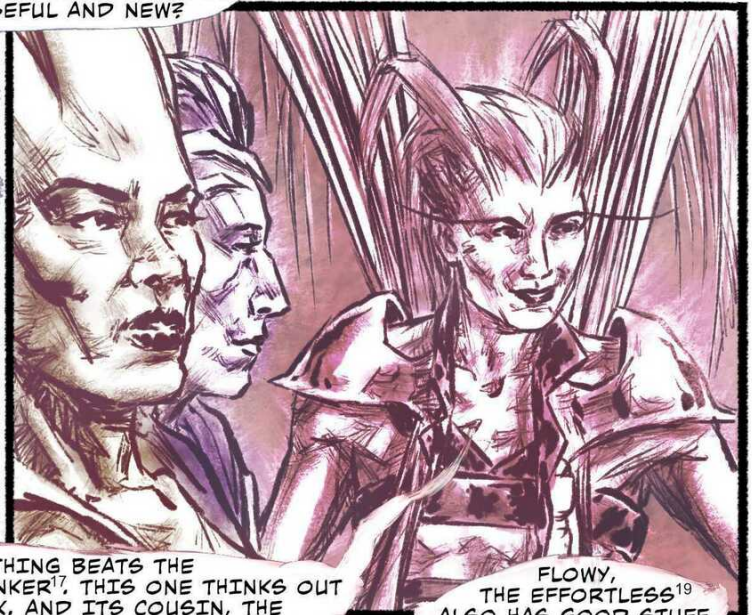
YES, BUT HOW IS IT USUALLY? WHERE DO THE IDEAS COME FROM THAT YOU MAKE BEAUTIFUL, USEFUL AND NEW?



I RECENTLY GOT ONE FROM THE INTRINSIC MOTIVATOR¹⁵. QUITE IMPRESSIVE, THAT ONE.

COMPLETELY SELF-MOTIVATED.

THE STRUCTURAL FOLDER¹⁶ IS ALSO GOOD. A REAL KNACK FOR CONNECTING COHESIVE GROUPS OF INSPIRING PEOPLE THAT NEVER MET BEFORE...



NOTHING BEATS THE DIVERGENT THINKER¹⁷. THIS ONE THINKS OUT OF THE BOX. AND ITS COUSIN, THE SURPRISING BISOCIATOR¹⁸, CONNECTS THE CRAZIEST THOUGHTS.

FLOWY, THE EFFORTLESS¹⁹ ALSO HAS GOOD STUFF. WHEN IT GETS GOING, IT CANNOT BE STOPPED...



WAIT A MINUTE, THEN WE WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT ALL THESE PEOPLE TOO?

ARE THEY ALSO SUPERHEROES?

THEY WOULD PROBABLY SAY SO.

SURE, THEY HAVE NICE POWERS, NOT THAT SIGNIFICANT AND SPECIAL, BUT STILL...

THEY WOULDN'T GET VERY FAR WITHOUT US.



AND DO THEY ACTUALLY PRODUCE IDEAS?

I DON'T KNOW IF THEY DO EVERYTHING THEMSELVES. IN ANY CASE, THEY CLAIM THAT THEY ARE QUITE PRODUCTIVE.

I READ ABOUT SOME OF THEM, BUT CAN YOU MAKE US A LIST OF THE PEOPLE FROM WHOM YOU GET THE MOST IDEAS?



IF YOU THINK THEY CAN HELP YOU, SURE.

THE FAMILIAR NOVELIZER²⁰, 8 IDEAS
THE ENABLING CONSTRAINER²¹, 9 IDEAS
THE CREATIVE DESTRUCTOR²², 19 IDEAS
THE REINFORCING COLLECTIVIZER²³, 8 IDEAS
THE OPEN INNOVATOR²⁴, 20 IDEAS
THE COMPLEXITY ARRANGER²⁵, 5 IDEAS
THE GENERATIVE EVALUATOR²⁶, 11 IDEAS

THE COUSINS OF CREATIVE THINKING
FLOWY, THE EFFORTLESS²⁷, 12 IDEAS; INTRINSIC MOTIVATOR, 7 IDEAS;
DIVERGENT THINKER, 9 IDEAS; SURPRISING BISOLIATOR, 17 IDEAS

THE NETWORK CLAN
MULTIPLE INSIDER²⁸, 14 IDEAS; STRUCTURAL FOLDER, 12 IDEAS;
BROKER²⁹, 15 IDEAS; STRUCTURAL HOLE DIGGER³⁰, 1 IDEA; THE WEAK TIE GUY³¹, 3 IDEAS;

THE MATERIALITY TWINS
THE CREATIVE AFFORDER³², 6 IDEAS; THE OBJECTUAL PRACTITIONER³³, 5 IDEAS

PHEW, SO MANY!
WE CAN MAKE A REVIEW
ARTICLE USING THEM.

OR A CREATIVITY
HANDBOOK.

LET'S SPLIT UP TO
MEET ALL OF THEM.

YES, LET'S SWARM OUT
AND MEET AGAIN IN A WEEK.
HOPEFULLY WE'LL FIND WHAT'S
CAUSING THE PROBLEM.



FLOWY, THE EFFORTLESS



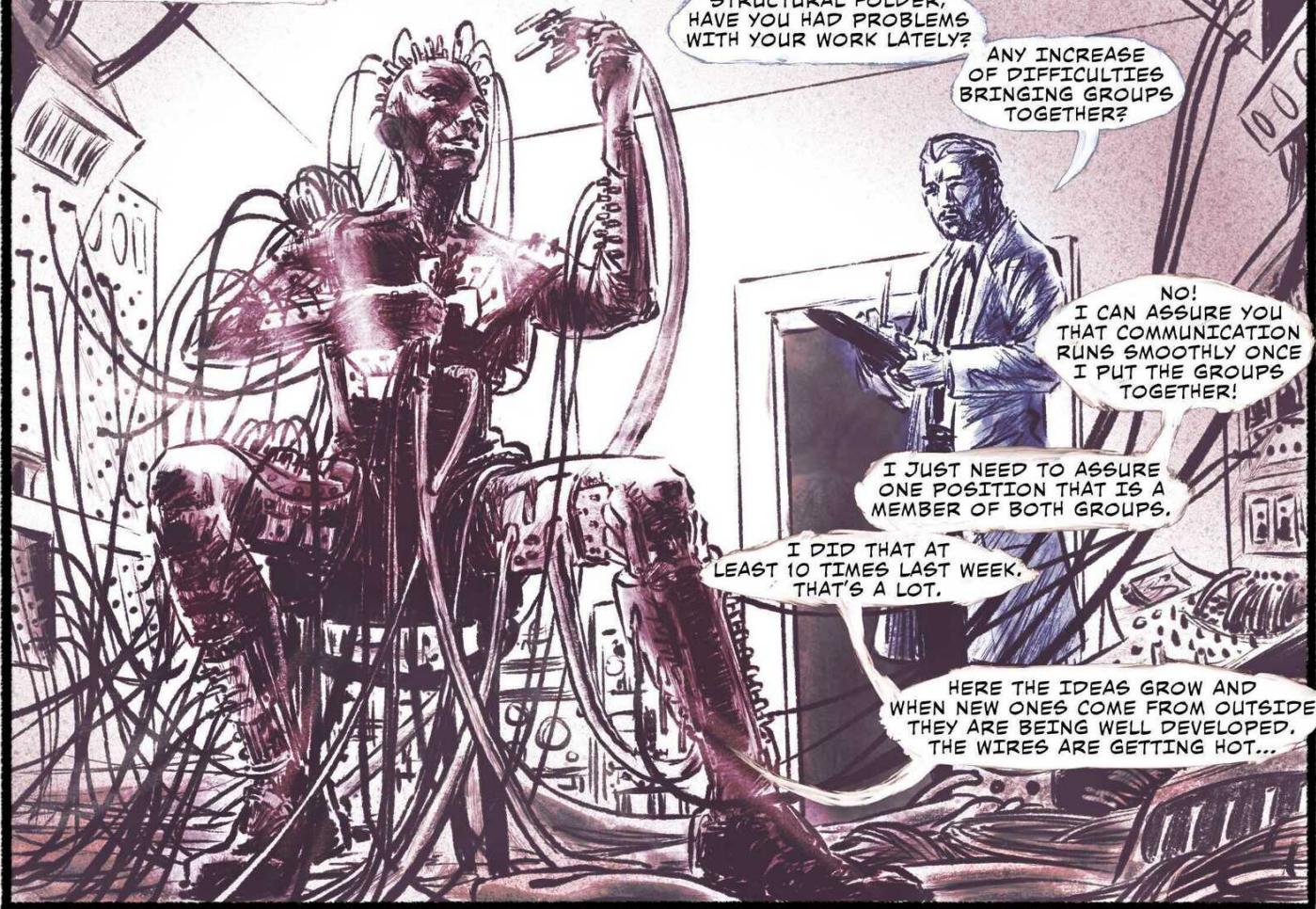
FLOWY,
HAVE YOU NOTICED ANYTHING
UNUSUAL WITH THE PRODUCTION OF
NEW IDEAS LATELY?

NOT REALLY.
EVERYTHING AS ALWAYS,
I KEEP IT EXACTLY BETWEEN VERY BORING
AND SUPER OVERWHELMING.

MY IDEAS
KEEP COMING FROM
INSIDE AND OUT.

THAT'S THE
FLOW MY FRIEND.
KEEP IT GOING...

THE STRUCTURAL FOLDER



STRUCTURAL FOLDER,
HAVE YOU HAD PROBLEMS
WITH YOUR WORK LATELY?

ANY INCREASE
OF DIFFICULTIES
BRINGING GROUPS
TOGETHER?

NO!
I CAN ASSURE YOU
THAT COMMUNICATION
RUNS SMOOTHLY ONCE
I PUT THE GROUPS
TOGETHER!

I JUST NEED TO ASSURE
ONE POSITION THAT IS A
MEMBER OF BOTH GROUPS.

I DID THAT AT
LEAST 10 TIMES LAST WEEK.
THAT'S A LOT.

HERE THE IDEAS GROW AND
WHEN NEW ONES COME FROM OUTSIDE
THEY ARE BEING WELL DEVELOPED.
THE WIRES ARE GETTING HOT...

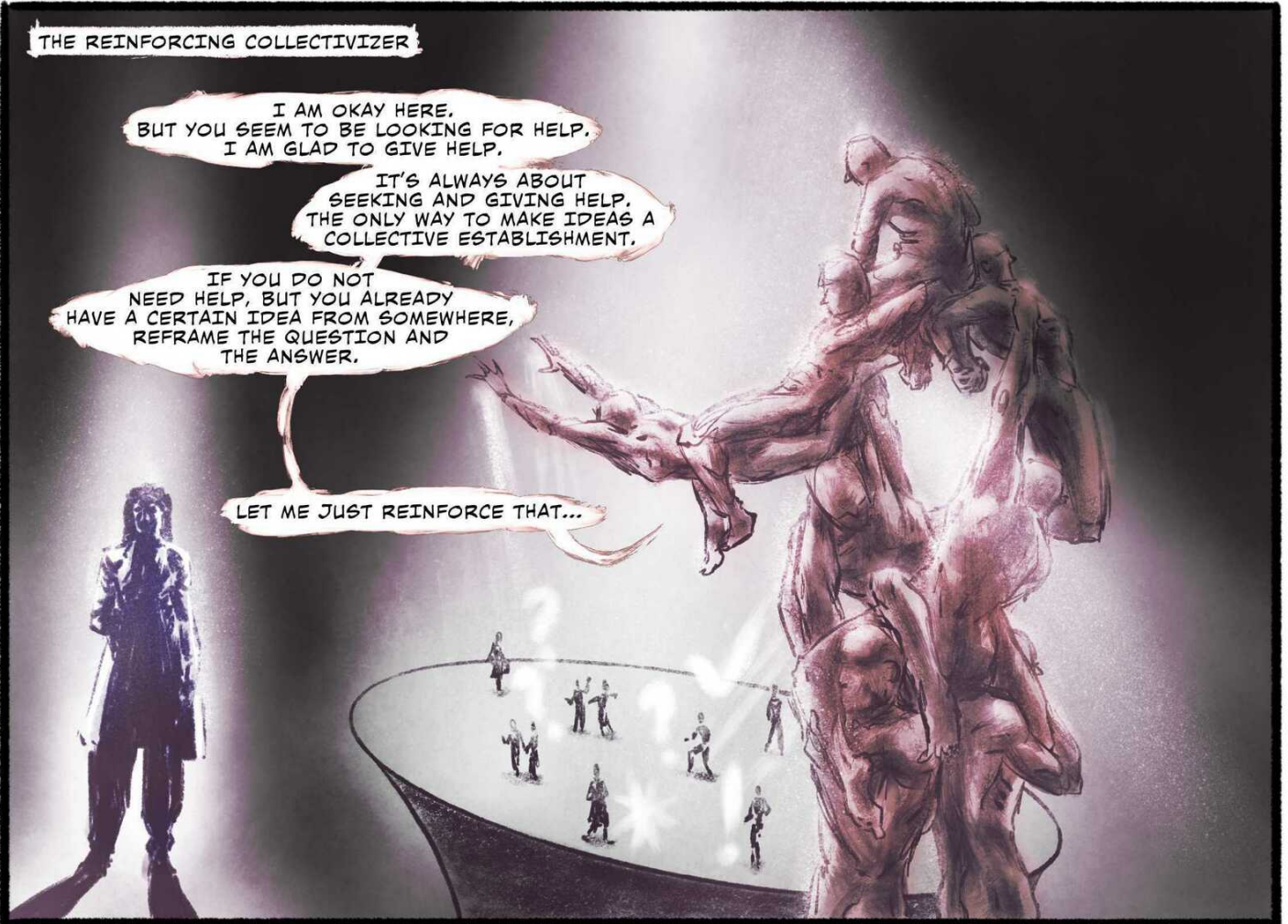
THE REINFORCING COLLECTIVIZER

I AM OKAY HERE,
BUT YOU SEEM TO BE LOOKING FOR HELP.
I AM GLAD TO GIVE HELP.

IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT
SEEKING AND GIVING HELP.
THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE IDEAS A
COLLECTIVE ESTABLISHMENT.

IF YOU DO NOT
NEED HELP, BUT YOU ALREADY
HAVE A CERTAIN IDEA FROM SOMEWHERE,
REFRAME THE QUESTION AND
THE ANSWER.

LET ME JUST REINFORCE THAT...



THE OPEN INNOVATOR

YES, EVERYTHING IS OKAY.
JUST OPENED A LOT OF DOORS AGAIN.
IT'S ABOUT THE LOCUS OF INNOVATION.
IT'S NOT IN HERE.

IT'S SPREAD ALL
OVER THESE ROOMS.

LET ME JUST
OPEN THIS DOOR.
THEN WE WILL GET A
BUNCH OF NEW IDEAS
BELONGING TO NOBODY
SPECIFICALLY.

YOU WILL
SEE...



A WEEK LATER

OK, IN A NUTSHELL,
NO ABNORMALITIES, RIGHT?
EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE WORKING
LIKE ALWAYS.

SOME ARE PRODUCING EVEN
MORE IDEAS THAN USUAL,
RIGHT?

ABSOLUTELY.
INTERESTINGLY, HOWEVER, IT SEEMS
NONE OF THEM PRODUCE ALL THE IDEAS
THEY DELIVER THEMSELVES.

THEY ALSO USE THEIR
SUPERPOWERS TO ALTER
EXISTING IDEAS AND SOMEHOW
PASS THEM ON.

DID YOU COME ACROSS
THESE NAMES TOO?

THE TEMPORARY INCOMPLETER³⁴,
THE AFFORDED MEANTIMER³⁵ AND
THE COMPLEX TRIVIALIZER³⁶?

EXACTLY. I WROTE THEM DOWN TOO WHILE NOTING
THAT THESE THREE HAVE NO REAL SUPERPOWERS.
THEIR POWERS ARE OFTEN DESCRIBED AS RATHER
INSIGNIFICANT, AND EVEN MORE, COULD
BE DESTRUCTIVE.

RUMOR HAS IT
THAT THEY ARE
PRODUCTIVE BUT
STRANGELY
INSIGNIFICANT.

MAYBE THE MOST
PRODUCTIVE ON THE
PLANET. SO MANY OF
THEIR IDEAS ARE
TAKEN UP.

BUT ALSO,
THEY CARE LEAST...

SOME SAY THAT MOST
OF THEIR IDEAS ARE
COMPLETELY USELESS.

I WAS EVEN
ADVISED NOT TO MEET
THEM BECAUSE THEY
WOULDN'T BE VERY
COOPERATIVE, BUT
I THINK WE HAVE
NO CHOICE.

WHEN THE UNIVERSE
REALLY STOPS EXPANDING
DUE TO THE PRODUCTION
OF IDEAS, WE MUST ALSO
CONSULT THESE FIGURES.

BUT WE
CAN'T EXPECT A
PUBLICATION,
THAT SHOULD
BE CLEAR.

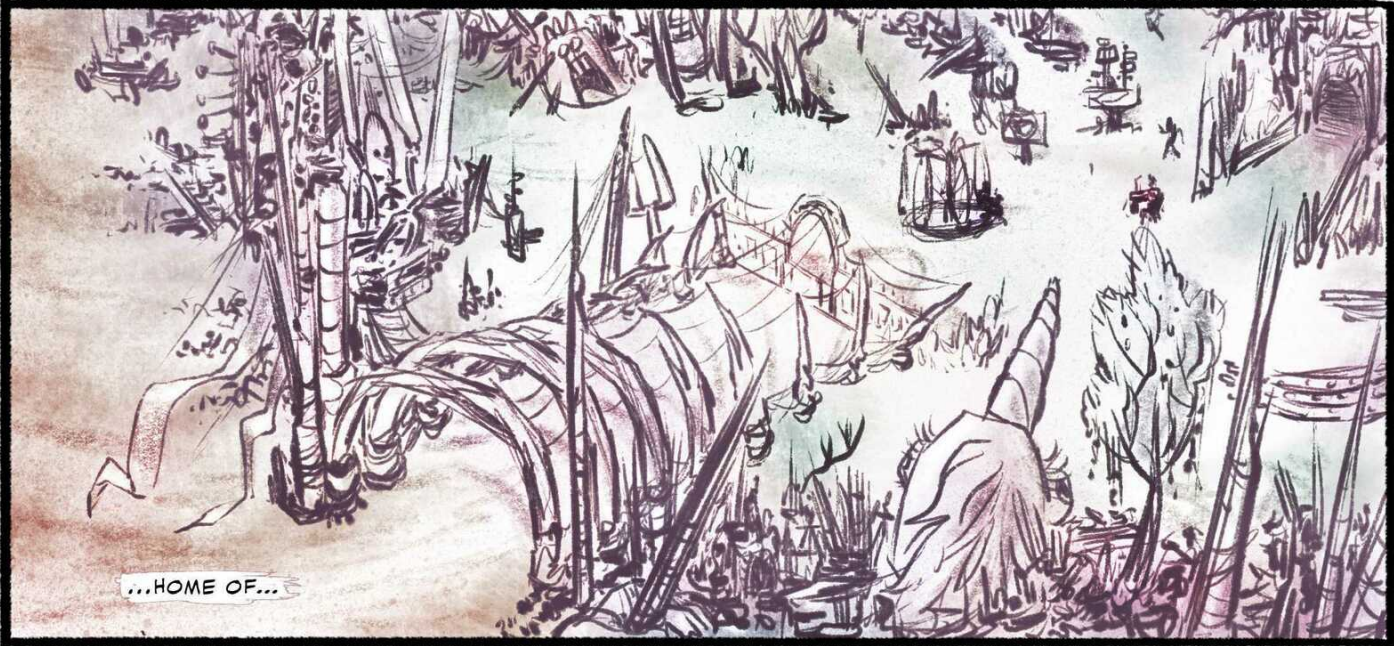
DOES ANYONE
KNOW WHERE
THEY ARE?

WELL,
LET'S GO LOOK
FOR THEM THEN.

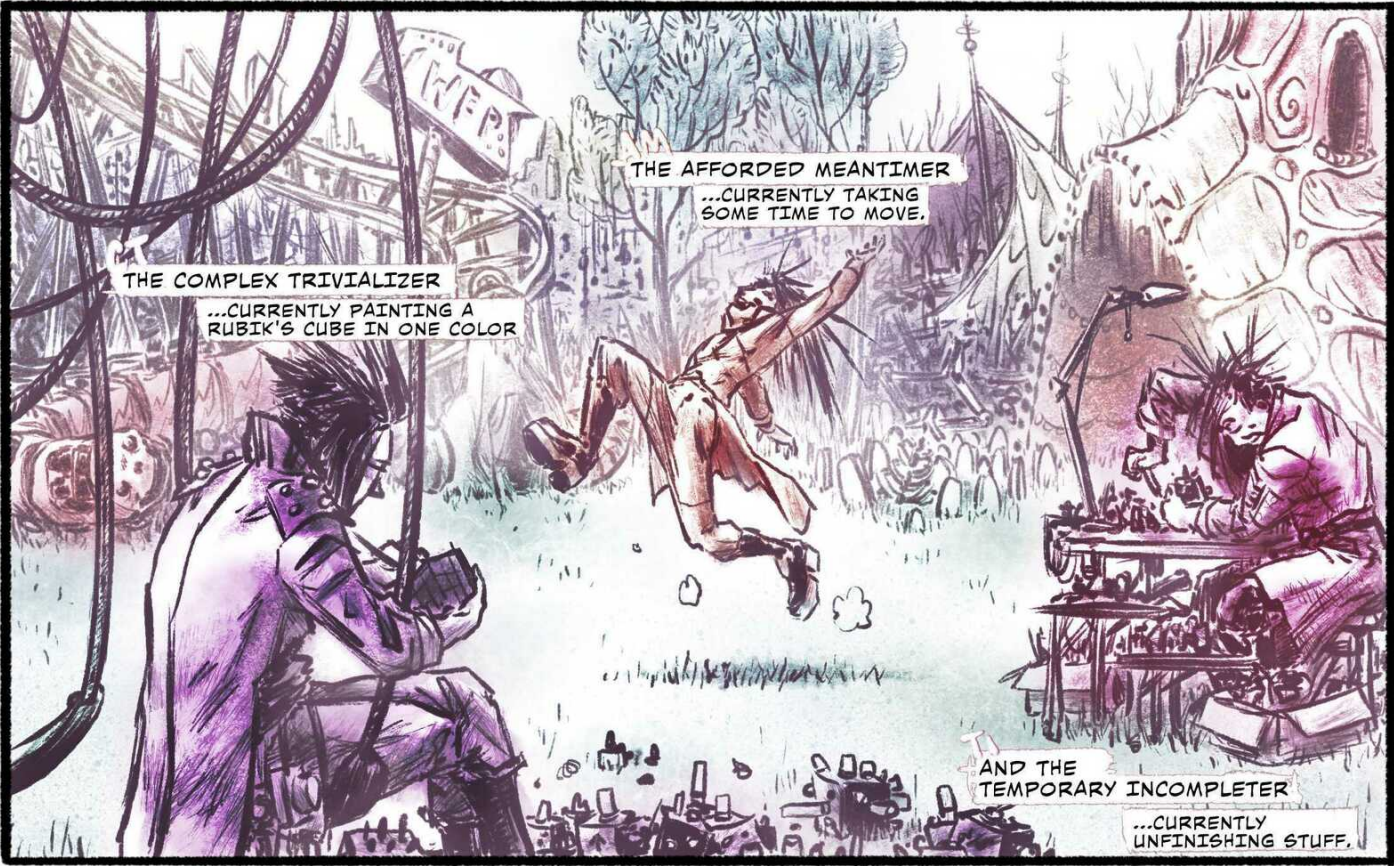
EVERYONE,
PICK A DIRECTION.



FAR FAR AWAY IN AN ABANDONED PART OF THE PLANET...



...HOME OF...



THE AFFORDED MEANTIMER
...CURRENTLY TAKING
SOME TIME TO MOVE.

THE COMPLEX TRIVIALIZER
...CURRENTLY PAINTING A
RUBIK'S CUBE IN ONE COLOR

AND THE
TEMPORARY INCOMPLETER
...CURRENTLY
UNFINISHING STUFF.





LOOK, IF YOU PRESS IT, THEN YOU CAN EASILY.....



YEAH, WHAT THEN?

AEM, THEN SOMETHING HAPPENS.

EXCITING. DOES IT TAKE TIME FOR IT TO HAPPEN?

HM, NO I DON'T THINK SO.

TOO BAD. DO IT.

OK.



OHLALA!

I DO NOT KNOW IF THAT HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH MY BUTTON. BUT MAYBE...

I THINK SOMEONE IS COMING.



EXCUSE ME FOR DISTURBING YOU, MAY I ENTER BRIEFLY?

BRIEFLY? TAKE YOUR TIME.

ENTER? VERY EASILY!



PRESS THE BUTTON TO THE RIGHT OF THE DOOR. THEN YOU MIGHT GET IN. IF IT WORKS.

YOU WILL ALSO GET OUT AFTERWARDS. IF IT WORKS. AND YOU MIGHT BE ENABLED TO DO SOMETHING ELSE TOO.



I BEG YOUR PARDON?



OR YOU CAN COME IN ONLY HALFWAY, ONE FOOT OUT AND ONE FOOT IN. SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

WHY SHOULD I DO THAT?

JUST LIKE THAT, THEN WE WOULD JUST SEE WHAT HAPPENS.

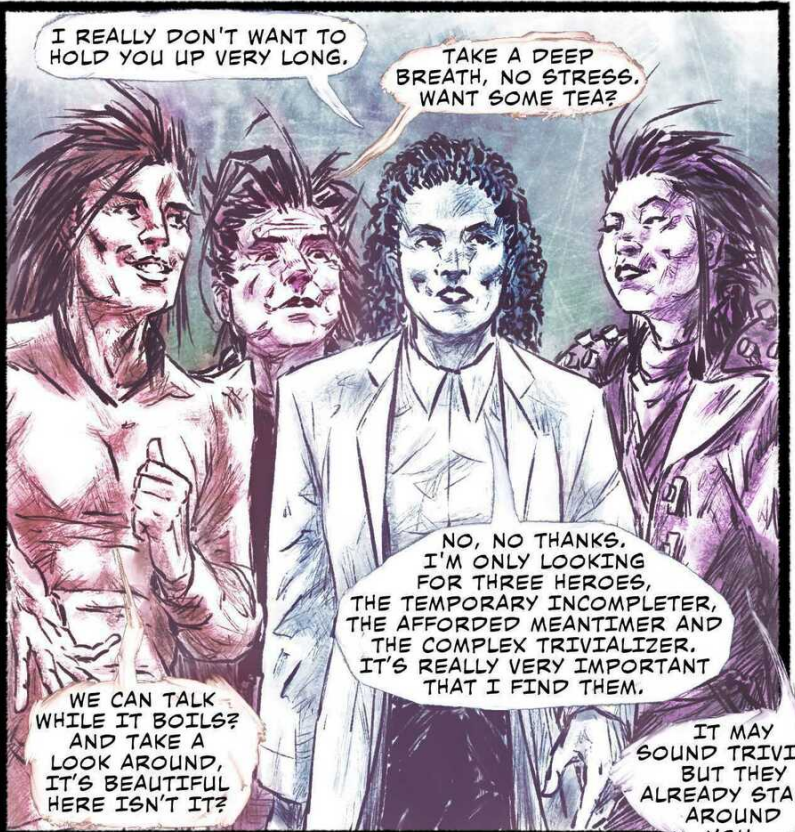
IT'S JUST MORE LIKELY SOMETHING HAPPENS THEN.



AEM, I DON'T UNDERSTAND. ARE YOU KIDDING? MAY I ENTER? I HAVE IMPORTANT SCIENTIFIC THINGS TO TALK ABOUT. IT AFFECTS US ALL.

YES, PLEASE COME IN.

DID YOU HEAR THAT ER'YBADDY? DISCUSS SCIENTIFIC MATTERS! THAT WILL CERTAINLY TAKE A LONG TIME! A LOT CAN HAPPEN IN THE MEANTIME.



I REALLY DON'T WANT TO HOLD YOU UP VERY LONG.

TAKE A DEEP BREATH, NO STRESS. WANT SOME TEA?

NO, NO THANKS. I'M ONLY LOOKING FOR THREE HEROES, THE TEMPORARY INCOMPLETER, THE AFFORDED MEANTIMER AND THE COMPLEX TRIVIALIZER. IT'S REALLY VERY IMPORTANT THAT I FIND THEM.

WE CAN TALK WHILE IT BOILS? AND TAKE A LOOK AROUND, IT'S BEAUTIFUL HERE ISN'T IT?

IT MAY SOUND TRIVIAL, BUT THEY ALREADY STAND AROUND YOU.

YOU? AND YOU...
LIVE HERE? EXCUSE ME,
BUT ALL THE OTHER
HEROES WE WENT TO...
WELL THEY WERE-

WELL, Y'KNOW,
WE'RE NOT REALLY HEROES,
WE'RE MAYBE MORE LIKE
HALF HEROES.

WE ARE
RATHER TRIVIAL
HALF HEROES.

AND ANYWAY
WE ARE ONLY OCCASIONALLY
TRIVIAL HALF HEROES,
OTHERWISE WE MOSTLY WAIT
FOR WHAT HAPPENS.

AEM.
I UNDERSTAND.
MAY I GET STRAIGHT
TO THE POINT?
AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW,
THE UNIVERSE SUPPOSEDLY
STOPPED EXPANDING AND-

FINALLY.

SORRY, WHAT?

WELL, YA KNOW, THE UNIVERSE,
FINALLY THERE IS PEACE.
I WANTED TO TINKER UP
A "HOLD" BUTTON FOR IT.
TO PAUSE IT FOR A WHILE.
I MEAN I WANTED TO
COOPERATE ON THAT ONE.

YOU WANTED TO...
EXCUSE ME, WHAT?
YOU ARE GLAD THAT
IT CAME TO THIS-

TRIVI IS
JUST KIDDING.
PLEASE KEEP TALKING.
WE HAVEN'T HEARD THIS
GROUNDBREAKING
NEWS YET.

YES, WELL... SO, YES...
IT MAY HAVE STOPPED EXPANDING.
AND THAT MUST BE DUE TO CREATOR.

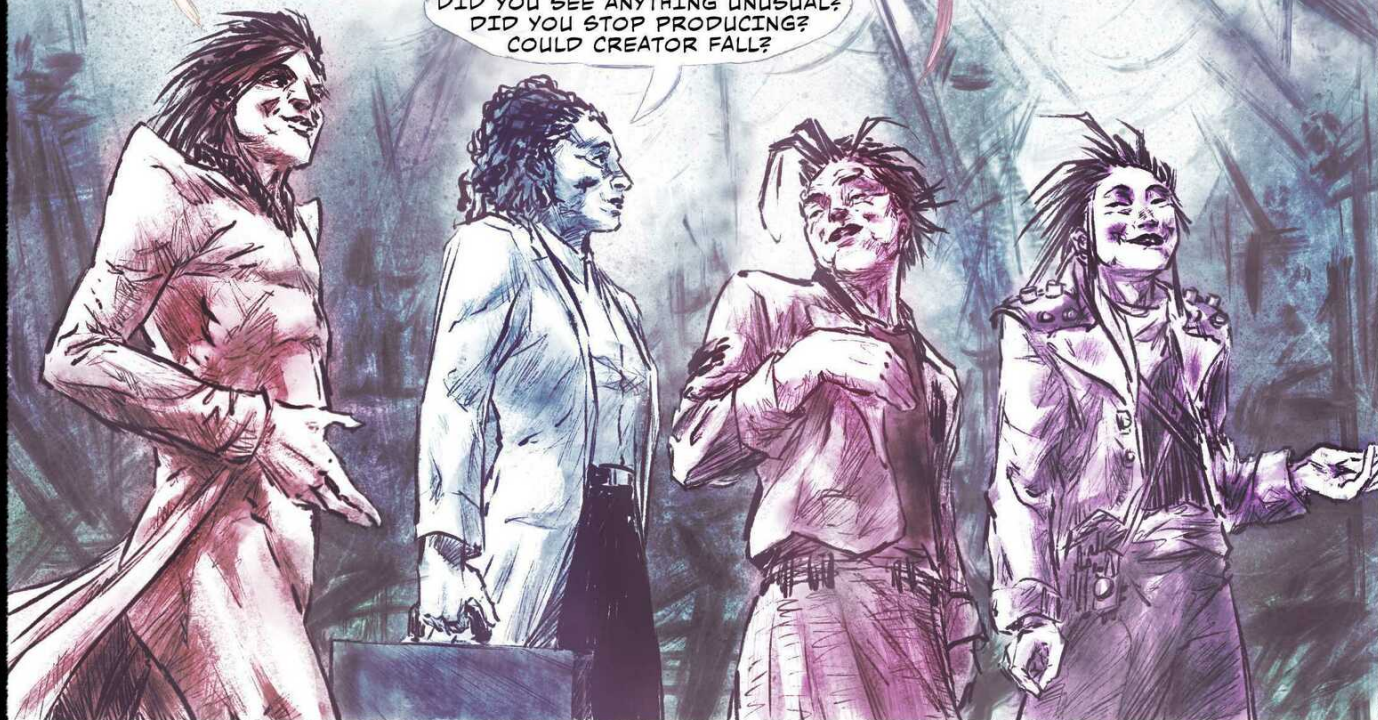
YES, IF THAT'S TRUE,
IT COULD BE DUE TO CREATOR.
NO MORE HALF-FINISHED IDEAS,
OR WHAT?

IT STOPPED,
IT CLOSED AND FINISHED
IN SOME FORM, HAZ?

HOW BORING.
HOW INCREDIBLY BORING.
WHO WANTS THAT?

SO PLEASE,
KEEP TALKING.
I HAVEN'T HAD THE PLEASURE
OF HAVING SUCH AN EXTENSIVE
MEANTIME IN A LONG TIME.

PLEASE HELP ME.
YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE
THE MOST PRODUCTIVE ON
THE PLANET.
DID YOU SEE ANYTHING UNUSUAL?
DID YOU STOP PRODUCING?
COULD CREATOR FALL?



UNUSUAL? EVERYTHING IS UNUSUAL HERE, SOMEHOW.
STOPPED PRODUCING? LIKE AT THE PUSH OF A BUTTON?
THAT WOULD BE AN INNOVATIVE BUTTON!

HELP THE SCIENTIST!
HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?
DO YOU NEED IDEAS?
LOOK AROUND, TAKE WHAT
YOU NEED.

MY GOODNESS,
I AM NOT SURPRISED THAT
WE MAY BE DOOMED.

WHAT SHOULD
I TELL THE COUNCIL
ABOUT YOU NOW?

THE MESSAGE
CAN'T BE WRONG, CAN IT?
WHY WOULD SOMEONE WRITE
SOMETHING LIKE THIS?

LOOK, MAYBE IT WAS
AN INCOMPLETE MESSAGE.
SERIOUSLY, IT HAPPENS.
TEMPORARILY INCOMPLETE STUFF
CREATES PRODUCTIVITY, YOU SEE.

IT PUTS EVERYTHING
INTO QUESTION AND MAKES
YOU GET TOGETHER WITH YOUR
COLLEAGUES AND GO
ON A SEARCH.

AS LONG AS IT
REMAINS UNRESOLVED
IT IS AN ONGOING
JOURNEY.

ISN'T THAT GREAT?

OR THE MESSAGE
ITSELF IS TRIVIAL.

I BEG YOUR
PARDON?

WELL,
MUCH MORE
TRIVIAL THAN
EXPECTED.



YOU KNOW, WE DON'T REALLY CARE ABOUT EXPANSION.

ALL THIS NOISE ABOUT IDEAS. YOU CAN HAVE ALL IDEAS FROM US. WE DO NOT HOARD AND PROTECT OUR IDEAS.

WE'RE NOT EVEN REALLY INTERESTED IN IDEAS AS SUCH.

I SEE. BUT IF YOU CARE SO LITTLE, WHAT IS IT THAT YOU DO?

ALL OF THE HEROES GET IDEAS FROM YOU AT SOME POINT.

WE DO WHAT WE DO BEST. WE KEEP THINGS ONGOING.



YEAH, YOU COULD SAY THAT. WE TRANSFORM UNQUESTIONABLE THINGS INTO QUESTIONABLE THINGS, RIGHT?

WELL, I PREFER TO TRANSFORM QUESTIONABLE THINGS INTO UNQUESTIONABLE THINGS.

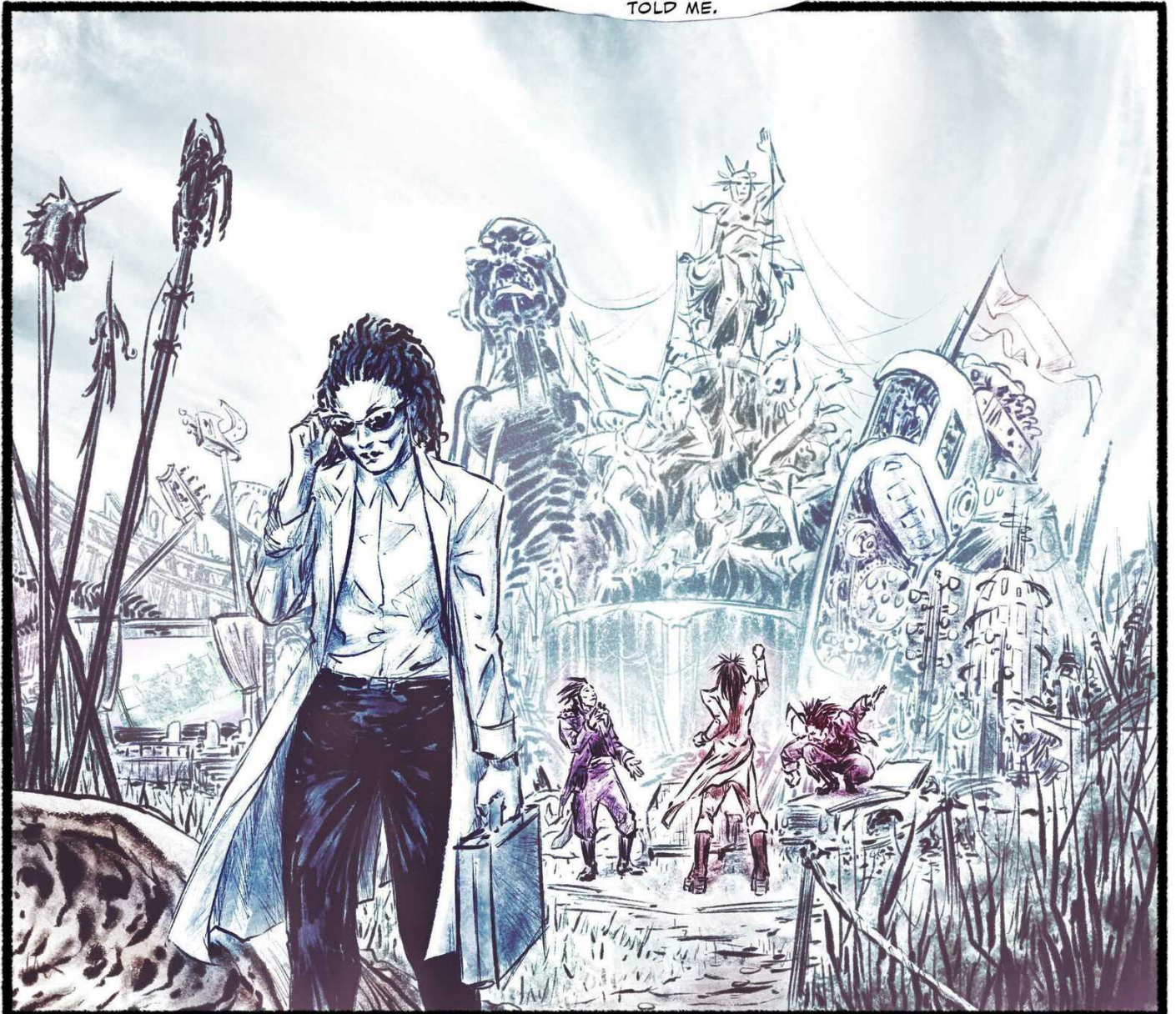
BLACK BOXES, SO TO SAY.

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU GUYS DO.

I JUST LIKE WHEN THINGS TAKE TIME, SO THAT OTHER STUFF CAN (BUT DOESN'T HAVE TO) HAPPEN IN THE MEANTIME

A GOOD FUN MEANTIME IS OPEN FOR ALL AND EVERYTHING, BUT ONLY BRIEFLY.





WELL, WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO REPORT? HOW IS CREATOR DOING?

DEAR COUNCIL, DEAR ATTENDEES, AS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF IDEAS, WE DID NOT FIND ANY ANOMALIES.

THAT'S GOOD, THEN THE MESSAGE IS FAKE NEWS?

MAYBE.

MAYBE? DID YOU FIND ANY OTHER EVIDENCE?

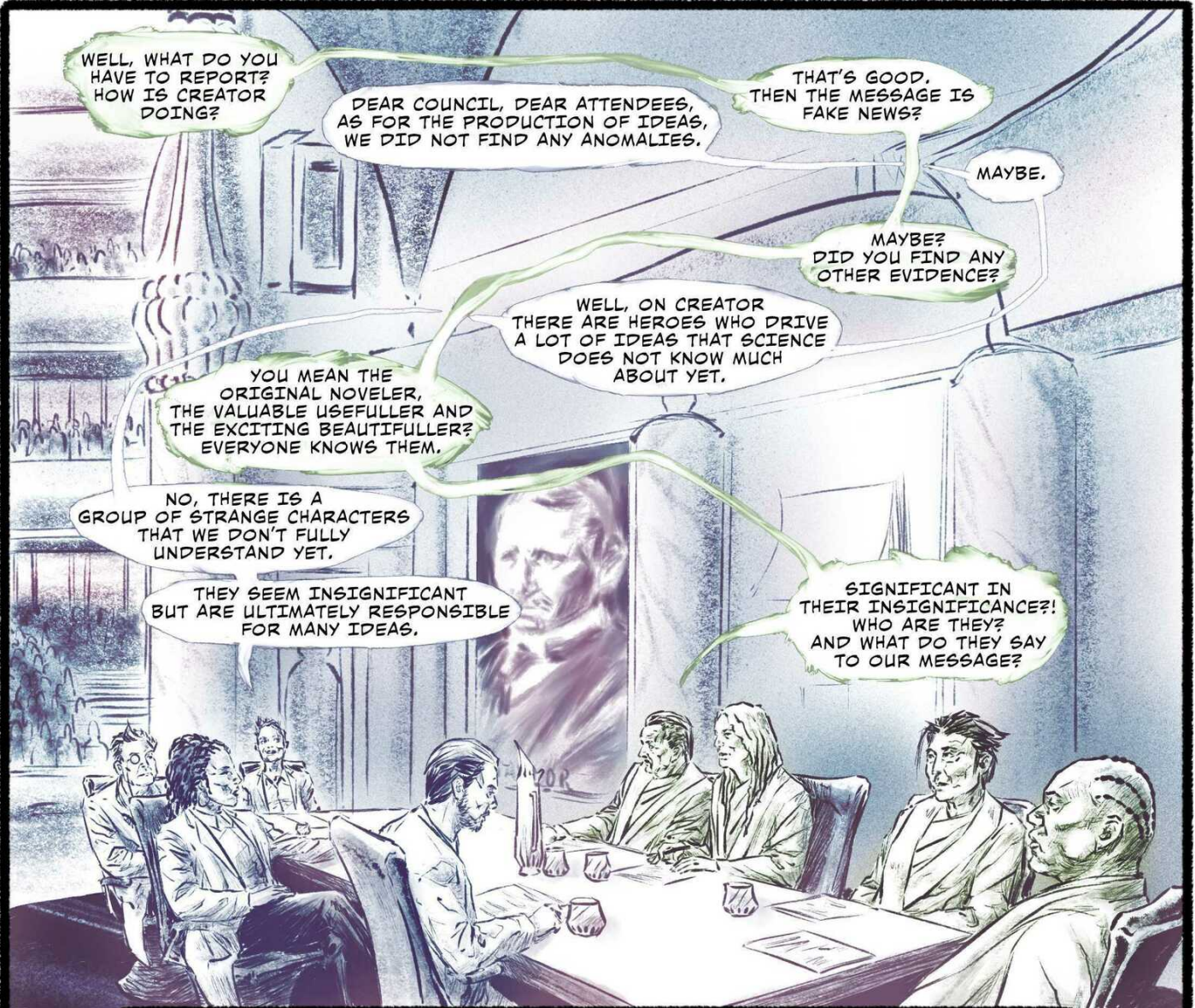
WELL, ON CREATOR THERE ARE HEROES WHO DRIVE A LOT OF IDEAS THAT SCIENCE DOES NOT KNOW MUCH ABOUT YET.

YOU MEAN THE ORIGINAL NOVELER, THE VALUABLE USEFULLER AND THE EXCITING BEAUTIFULLER? EVERYONE KNOWS THEM.

NO, THERE IS A GROUP OF STRANGE CHARACTERS THAT WE DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND YET.

THEY SEEM INSIGNIFICANT BUT ARE ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR MANY IDEAS.

SIGNIFICANT IN THEIR INSIGNIFICANCE?! WHO ARE THEY? AND WHAT DO THEY SAY TO OUR MESSAGE?



I SAW THEM. THEY ARE THE TEMPORARY INCOMPLETER, THE AFFORDED MEANTIMER AND THE COMPLEX TRIVIALIZER.

NOT SURE WHAT THEIR SUPERPOWERS ARE, BUT THEY ARE POWERFUL.

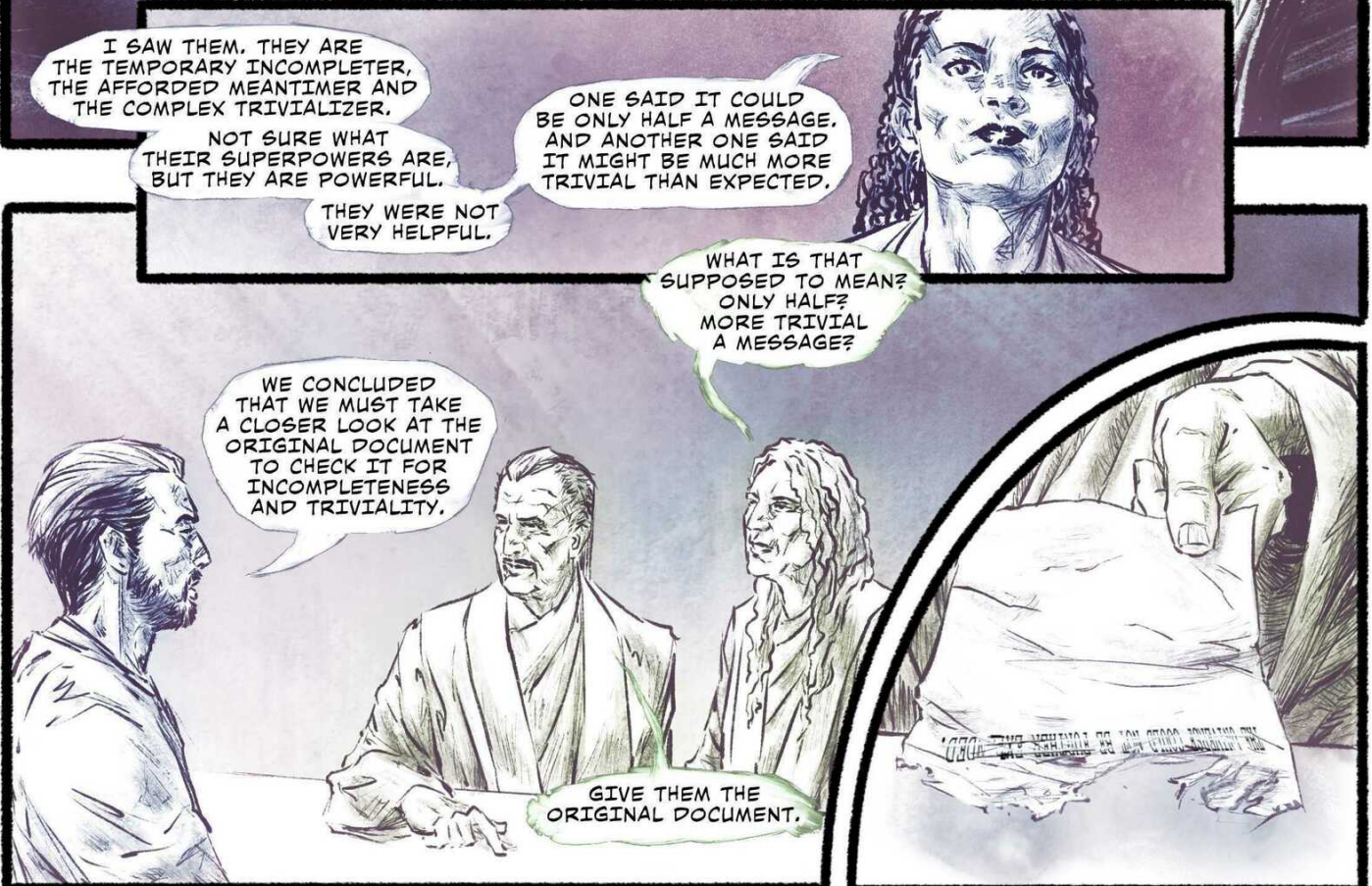
THEY WERE NOT VERY HELPFUL.

ONE SAID IT COULD BE ONLY HALF A MESSAGE. AND ANOTHER ONE SAID IT MIGHT BE MUCH MORE TRIVIAL THAN EXPECTED.

WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN? ONLY HALF? MORE TRIVIAL A MESSAGE?

WE CONCLUDED THAT WE MUST TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT TO CHECK IT FOR INCOMPLETENESS AND TRIVIALITY.

GIVE THEM THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT.



A FEW HOURS AND TESTS LATER...

WE HAVE A SOLUTION.

WE'RE LISTENING.

IT SEEMS LIKE THIS WAS A MISUNDERSTANDING. THERE HAS TO BE A SECOND PART OF THE MESSAGE.

WE DID A DOCUMENT ANALYSIS WITH A FOCUSED SHORT-TERM ARCHIVE RESEARCH. THE RECONSTRUCTED CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE IS:

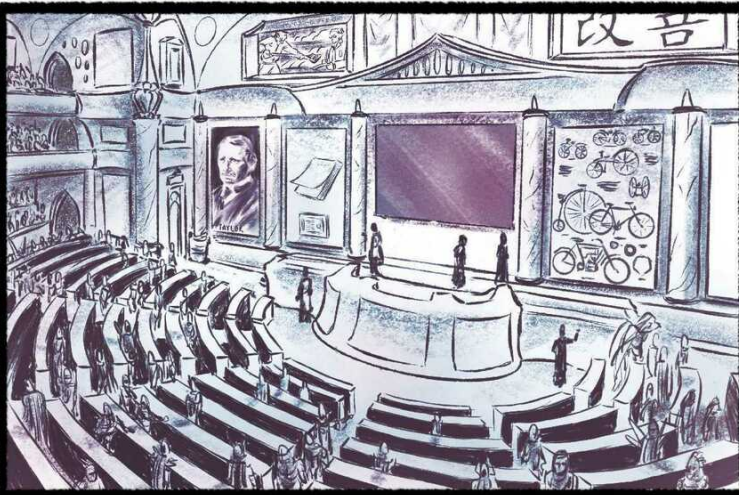


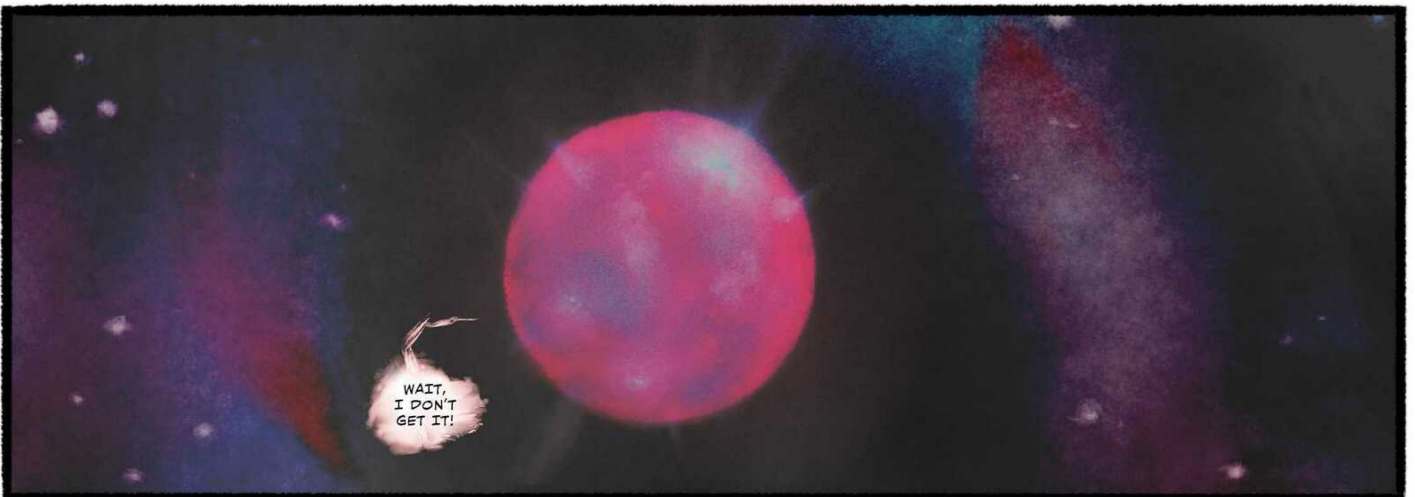
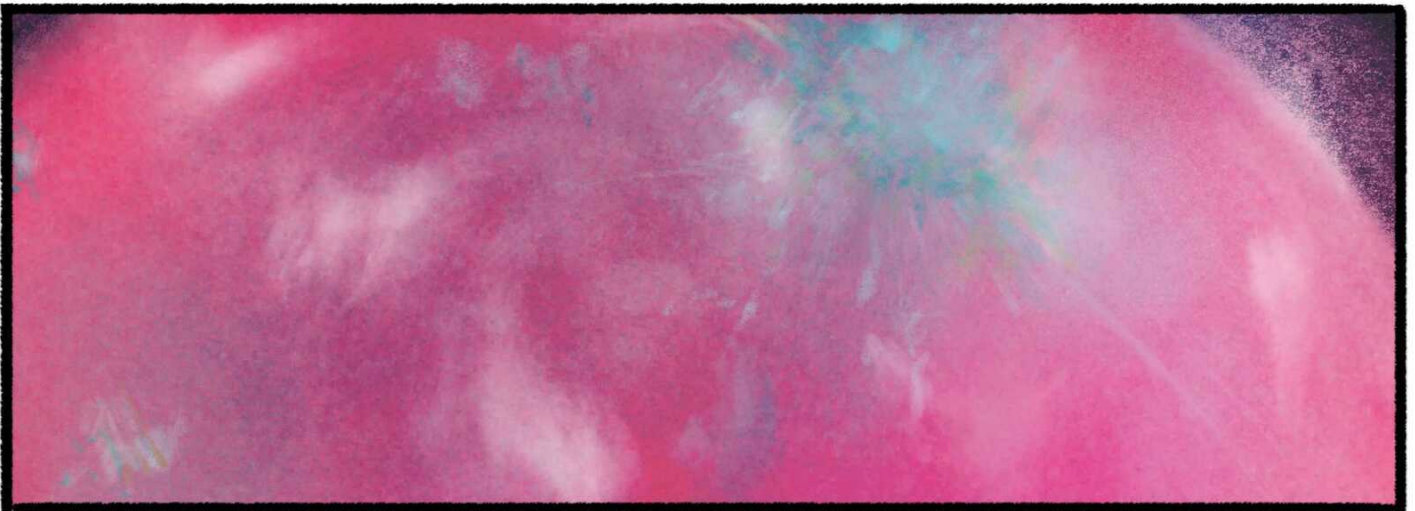
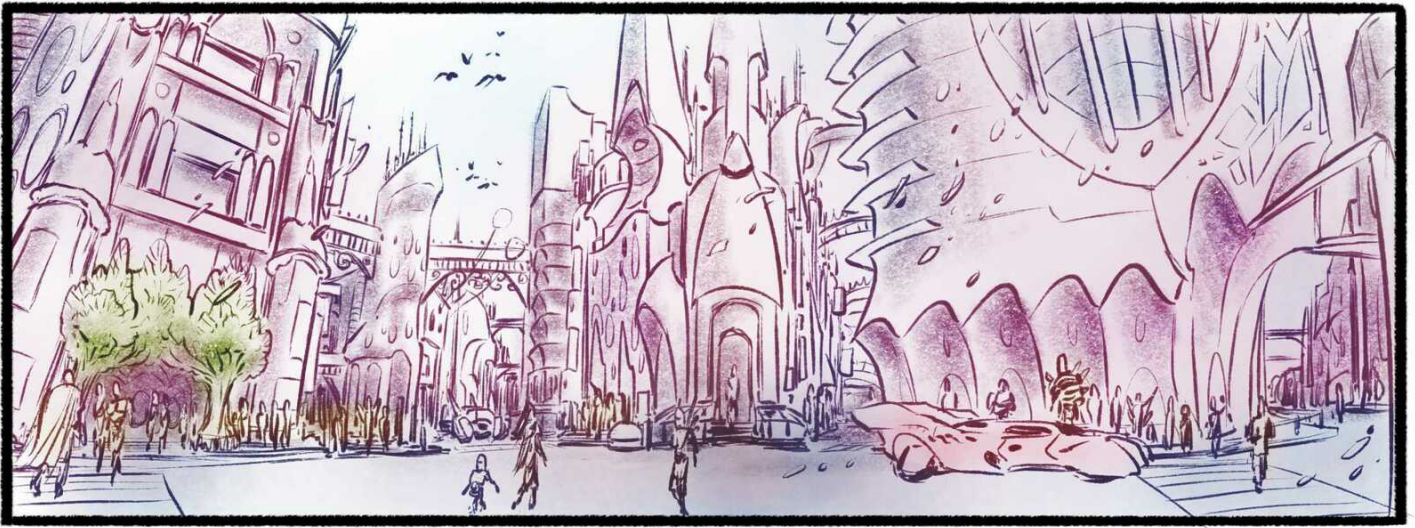
NOTIFICATION:
DUE TO THE ONGOING PANDEMIC, OUR SHOW, BEST ARTISTS OF THE UNIVERSE, COULD NOT BE FURTHER EXTENDED.

THIS MESSAGE MUST HAVE COME FROM PLANET EARTH.

I HEARD ABOUT THE PANDEMIC. EVERYTHING THERE SEEMS TO BE ON HOLD.

WELL... GOOD FOR US THEN, RIGHT?





Endnotes

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12. For the role of aesthetic practices as part of the „creativity imperative” in the late modernity see Reckwitz, A. (2017). *The Invention of Creativity: Modern Society and the Culture of the New*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Polity Press.
13. For radical and incremental innovation see Ettlie, J.E., Bridges, W.P., & O’keefe, R.D. (1984). Organization Strategy and Structural Differences for Radical versus Incremental Innovation. *Management Science*, 30(6), 682–695. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mnsc.30.6.682>
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Benjamin Schiemer – Institute of Organization Science, Johannes Kepler University, Linz (Austria)

📧 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2930-8098>

✉ benjamin.schiemer@gmail.com

Dr. Benjamin Schiemer MSc is a Researcher at the Institute of Organization Science at Johannes Kepler University Linz. His research interests cover organizational anthropology, ethnography, science and technology studies, and processual studies of collaborative creativity in music.

Roman Duffner – Institute of Theory and History, Anton Bruckner Private University, Linz (Austria); Institute of Organization Science, Johannes Kepler University, Linz (Austria)

Mag. L. Roman Duffner MA is a Doctoral Researcher at the Institute of Theory and History at Anton Bruckner Private University Linz and the Institute of Organization Science at Johannes Kepler University Linz. His research interests cover studies of music and society, science and technology studies and practices in creative work.

S.R. Ayers

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S.R. Ayers is a self-taught artist that has been working in comics, illustration & animation for magazines and productions in the US, Austria & Germany for the last fifteen years. Along with printed and animated work he has also performed as the live-drawing artist for multiple music/multi-media bands, always with a socially and politically conscious direction in the storytelling. <https://www.instagram.com/herr.slidetooth/>