

In my review of *The Multiversity: Pax Americana #1*, I said that the Greek prefix "meta" sums up much of the teeming multitude within Scots writer Grant Morrison. That prefix certainly applies to *The Multiversity #2*. But another word perhaps pertains even more, "fecund." This issue barely holds on to the explosion of ideas and images that stream out of Morrison's ever-fertile creativity. We see the last of the Monitors, twisted into a mockery, then redeemed into a symbol. We see a dark universe protected by the rhyming super demon Etrigan. We see a harsh western world, and a harsher realm of knights and apocalypse. There are eight-foot rabbits and tiny, treacherous androids. There are the gleaming cubes of trans-dimensional portals, and the whirling afterimages of an army of speedsters. And with the images come the themes. Or, in this case, the theme, for the book really has one message, the corruption of the multiverse, of the realm of imagination from which it arises, by evil. There is the evil of the cute, seemingly innocent inhabitants of Earth 42, revealed to be the spies of the Empty Hand than menaces the multiverse. There is the evil of the Gentry and all they represent, pain and darkness and blood and corruption. There is the evil that comes from us, from Earth 33, flowing out to darken all of reality through the power of our perverted dreams. Yet, at this point, you have to scratch your head and ask, "Just what is the evil?" Just what do the spy robots of Earth 42 represent? Are they symbols of the subversion of all that was once innocent and joyous in comics? Are they representatives of the use of glad and bright images for corporate power and profit? Or do they just stand for the insidious and hidden nature of wickedness in general? And the Gentry, what are they? Evil thoughts, yes. But what evil thoughts? Violence and revenge? Blood and pain? At this point, it seems that we are confronted with representations of modern comics in all their dark complexity. And, it must be fairly admitted, Grant Morrison has done his share in shaping them in this direction. But, it's hard to believe he is not attempting to invoke a brightness and purity, a power of innocence and faith, against the rot inflicting comic reality. The avatars of victory are the Marvel Family, arriving with a literal trumpet chord to hurl mountains into the fray. They are joined by Captain Carrot, who cheerfully pops his severed head back onto his shoulders and proves the worth of cartoon physics. And the foreshadowing of victory comes from an unlikely moment on Earth 13, the world of magic and shadow, where a witch defeats a vampire invasion by making the undead long for coffee rather than blood. And who is the Empty Hand? Who is the leader of the Gentry, the being who has decreed the cycle of crises and reboots across the multiverse? Is he a symbol for corporate publishing? Is he the insatiable demand of readers? Is he the darkest impulses of writers? We discover he has already destroyed Multiverse 2, and that he will be returning. Is he maybe just the personification of that most hated and loved of traditions in superhero comics, the illusion of change? The post *The Multiversity #2* appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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