

My emails to Ed Krupp, June 2015

Compiled June 11, 2015. John Major Jenkins

June 8, 2015:

Subject: Greetings from John Major Jenkins

Dear Ed Krupp,

As I recall, we last communicated in 1998 or 1999. I read with interest the recent anthology *Cosmology, Calendars, and Horizon-Based Astronomy in Ancient Mesoamerica* (eds Milbrath and Dowd). I was hoping you could clarify your comments in your preface. I note that you cited Aveni's 2009 book and mentioned the Xultun murals. Fascinating stuff! You also mentioned the 2012 "End Times Follies."

In your recent article of 2014, ("Archaeoastronomical Concepts in Popular Culture" in *Handbook of Archaeoastronomy and Ethnoastronomy*) you critiqued my work within the context of this "End Times Follies" (p. 278). In the more limited space of your recent preface you didn't mention me or my work, and I'm wondering if you still hold this association between my work and what you refer to as the End Times Follies. In addition, in another of your previous articles published in late 2012 (an updated version of your *Sky & Telescope* article, in *iQ Magazine*, Vol. 1 No. 5, December 2012, First Citizens Investment Services, titled "Time's Up: 2012 and the Maya Calendar End Times Follies") you depicted and critiqued my 1998 book, and also clearly portrayed me as a primary choreographer of the said Follies.

But just so I can be clear as to what your intended allusion in your recent preface was, I'd appreciate your quick response. Perhaps something in your thinking has changed. If space had allowed would my work also have been mentioned there, as being part of the End Times Follies?

Sincerely,

John Major Jenkins
The Center for 2012 Studies
the2012story@gmail.com

June 9:

Subject: Cirque du Calendar [he kept changing the subject lines]

[...]
Post-apocalyptically,
Ed

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June 9:

Dear Ed,
I think you did answer my question, in your second paragraph --- that you firmly place me under the umbrella of your "2012 Maya Calendar End Times Follies." I appreciate the clarification. However, something remains unclear. While the 2012 "End Times" phrase suggests that those under this umbrella are engaged in making doomsday predictions, in your penultimate paragraph you seem to make a distinction in *not* mentioning my work in an article you wrote in 2013 about "predicted cataclysms." But including me in the 2012 Maya Calendar End Times Follies seems to suggest this,

given how you discuss this umbrella in previous articles. So, do you hold the position that my work advocates that the Maya believed the world was going to end in 2012? Or no? That's the clarification I'm seeking. Thanks,

John

June 9:
Subject: Life After 2012

Dear John, [...]

Calendrically correlated,

Ed

June 9:

[To Ed]: Okay, interesting. In your first email you mentioned "The shelf of 2012 books in the Griffith Observatory library and the file of 2012 articles." Have you read my 2009 article that was published in the anthology by a New York City publisher, called "You're Still Being Lied To"? The article is called "Fear and Loathing in 2012-Land." I critiqued many voices and theories in the 2012 phenomenon. Is this Griffith Observatory library, and the articles files, open to the public? I'd be happy to mail you a few articles I wrote for inclusion. What do you say?

John

Also, do you have a copy of my 2009 book *The 2012 Story* on the Griffith Observatory library shelf? I can mail one of those too.

June 9:
Subject: Life After 2012

Dear John, [...]

Collecting documents,

Ed

Dear John, [...]

Confirming astronomically,

Ed

June 10
Subject: A Center for 2012 Studies [this was my subject line change]

Dear Ed, June 10, 2015

I'm assembling a package of articles for mailing to you. I'm not so much interested in the 2013 article of predicted catastrophes that you mentioned, but I have been curious about your Time's Up program for Griffith Observatory, which debuted in May 2012. Do you have a written script for this that you could share? Or, at least, I'm curious if I was mentioned by name. I'd suspect that, more likely, at least my 2012 alignment work was mentioned, and I'm curious how it was characterized and discussed. I suspect that it

would be similar to how you've depicted it elsewhere, conflating it with a smorgasbord of other ideas that I don't advocate (bowling pins, rogue planets, etc).

I'd like to return to your comments in your first and second emails. I'm glad you acknowledge that I *haven't* argued that the Maya predicted apocalypse in 2012. You quoted me writing about "a tremendous transformation and opportunity for spiritual growth, a transition from one world to another." The operative word here is "opportunity". My interpretation is that the Maya did not expect a sudden, predetermined "thing" or "prophecy" to "happen" on the period-ending date in 2012. The doctrine, or ideology, I identified and fine-tuned explicating, is that the Maya believed that, at period-endings like 2012, "deity sacrifice is necessary for world-renewal." And yes, it's a transformational process. For the ceremonialists engaging the deity sacrifice rituals, it can be experienced as a spiritual awakening or "spiritual growth".

There is a very important term missing in the quote from my work you provided. The accurate quote is: "*a time of tremendous transformation and opportunity for spiritual growth, a transition from one World Age to another*" (MC2012, 1998:XLI). (BTW, in 2011 Sven Gronemeyer characterized 2012 as an "era transition"; and Barb MacLeod described it as a "great return" of a cycle.) Notice that in my correct quote the transition is from one **World Age** to another. I realized early on in my work that a distinction had to clearly be made in the terminology used to discuss 2012 --- the difference between "end of the world" claims and reconstructing an "end of a World Age" doctrine in Maya thought. In fact, this distinction is clearly discussed in the pages prior to my quote given above.

However, my discussion from the Intro to my book *Maya Cosmogogenesis 2012* is precisely where you, in your Beckman Center presentation of November 2009 (which was done concurrently with the release of your *Sky & Telescope* article) have offered a misleading presentation about my work --- one that definitely conveys the sense that I adopted and advocate an "end of the world" interpretation of 2012. Let's take a look. Here is a quote from your Beckman Center talk:

"In this book [*Maya Cosmogogenesis 2012*] Jenkins, in restating an unfounded belief, asserts **'the Maya believed the world will end in 2012.'** You will find that passage in that book. The Maya *didn't* believe that." — Ed Krupp, "Time's Up," The Beckman Center, November 2009. Mark 49:40. It's important to hear the inflected emphasis and tone of voice in your actual delivery of this passage: MP3: <http://alignment2012.com/krupp1.mp3>

You basically took a partial-sentence truncated passage out of context and conveyed a false notion about my work. The word "end" in the bolded quote above *is in quotes in my book* (p. XXXIV), which of course didn't get conveyed in your voicing of the line. This is the visual clue to the reader that the "end" is a provisional or questionable attribute given by whoever believes it to be true, like air quotes implies. And the "whoever believes it" is clearly referential *to the two authors I was just previously discussing*, where I said there was uncertainty or "doubt" about their sunspot flare theory. But "one

thing is for certain” (this was my very next sentence, note the counterpoint between “doubt” and “certain”; I’m still characterizing their dire theory here): “The Maya believed the world would “end” in 2012.” This was my sardonic *paraphrase* of *their* belief (the belief of the previous two authors). You should appreciate and not have a problem with this kind of theatrical mimicking of a dubious belief, because you’ve employed it yourself. For example, in your *Sky & Telescope* article you wrote:

“The ancient Maya of Mexico and Guatemala kept a calendar that is about to roll up the red carpet of time, swing the solar system into transcendental alignment with the heart of the Milky Way, and turn Earth into a bowling pin for a rogue planet heading down our alley for a strike.” — Ed Krupp, “[The Great Doomsday Scare](#),” November 2009.

Aha! *You will find that passage in your article.* The very next sentence in my book, however, after your selective partial quote, should have given you pause: “But what does this mean?” I then go on to make the distinction between “end of the world” and “end of World Age,” and identify my position (in reconstructing Maya beliefs) as belonging to the metaphorical application of the phrase (that it’s an era birthing, ultimately about transformation and renewal). This is made clear throughout the five sentences that follow your extraction of part of a sentence, forcing it out context and misleading your audiences into getting a totally pejorative and wrong take on my work. The full passage (beginning after my statement that “I concluded that some doubt hung over the sunspot hypothesis” [of Cotterell and Gilbert]) reveals *the exact opposite* of what you conveyed to your audience:

“One thing is for certain: The Maya believed the world will “end” in A.D. 2012. But what does this mean? The end-times doctrine can be interpreted in two ways: metaphorically and literally. **My metaphorical interpretation is that the Maya believed that around the year we call 2012, a large chapter in human history will be coming to an end.** All the values and assumptions of the previous World Age will expire, and a new phase of human growth will commence. Ultimately, **I believe the Maya understood this to be a natural process, in which new life follows a death.**”
[This is, essentially, an early languaging of my interpretation that, in Maya thought, sacrifice and renewal, death and life, go together and are both present at a 13-Baktun period-ending; the end of one World Age and the beginning of another]

As a litmus test for how listeners would likely receive your portrayal of my work, I sent the mp3 clip of your Beckman Center talk to some random acquaintances, and every single one got the impression you were arguing that my work advocated doomsday. If that wasn’t enough, you also stated in your talk that:

“Jenkins is probably more responsible than anybody for the current flurry and character of the interest in 2012 – although you gotta hand it to Arguelles for really lighting the fuse.” Audio clip: (mp3 <http://alignment2012.com/krupp2.mp3>).

This clearly refers, in the context of the 2012 doomsday movie just coming out (when you were giving your talk) and your overall portrayal of the 2012 topic, to the ubiquitous doomsday-2012 meme. And “lighting the fuse” is evocative of triggering a bomb going off, causing great destruction. Yes, others have hijacked my ideas for their own dubious theories and doomsday devices, and I’ve tirelessly spoken out against these misinterpretations. The media and documentary production houses have violated contracts and micro-edited my interviews to suit their purposes and distort my work. You don’t adequately distinguish what my own stated intentions and findings have been from the unfortunate hijacking of my work by doomsday pimps and others. Like many critics of the “2012 phenomenon”, you never mention that I’ve been critiquing the Maya calendar / 2012 pop marketplace for longer and more tirelessly than most. The very phrase “the 2012 phenomenon” was being used by Geoff Stray and myself long before it was appropriated by academic 2012 critics. (See my review-essay in *Zeitschrift für Anomalistik*, 2014: <http://update2012.com/Jenkins-Zeitschrift-fur-Anomalistik-1-2014.pdf>.)

You are basically blaming me (making me “responsible”, see quote above) for the 2012 doomsday mess --- for what exploitative fools did with my work. This is why I believe you perceive me as a primary choreographer in your “2012 Maya Calendar End Times Follies.” The problem with your interpretation is that you are employing undiscerning guilt-by-association constructs. In other words, you don’t acknowledge how I’ve written extensively against the doomsday mess, as well as ridiculous ideas such as we find in Arguelles, Calleman, and others. I have even long disagreed with McKenna’s “sudden change” idea (see my discussion in *The 2012 Story*.)

In your narrative, my work is a smooth continuation of early and quite dubious ideas about 2012 proffered by others. And you don’t acknowledge a fundamental difference between my 2012 work (beginning in earnest circa 1993) and what came before. Which is that I took 2012 seriously as a legitimate topic of rational inquiry, regarding that the ancient Maya thought about it. Many scholars, including perhaps yourself, have been unwilling to entertain that rational investigators might be able to reconstruct what the ancient Maya thought about the 2012 period-ending date. I was doing this as an extended investigation at a time when almost all scholars and academic publishers treated 2012 with derision. And many still do, *despite the two 2012 inscriptions we now have at hand*. My approach was to examine the pre-Classic culture, and site, that informed scholars had already credited with formulating the Long Count calendar. My logical and reasonable approach to the topic thus followed, with striking and potentially revolutionary results (revolutionary in terms of how we understand the level of astronomical knowledge among the pre-Classic people of Mesoamerica, and the sophistication of their integrative religious ideologies, as in their Creation Myth).

Thus, much of my work springs from my interdisciplinary analysis of the Izapa civilization. My two-part interpretation is simply stated: **the creators of the Long Count intended the 2012 period-ending date to target a rare astronomical alignment within the cycle of the precession of the equinoxes, and saw this alignment as signaling (not definitively *causing*) the need for deity sacrifice in order to facilitate worldrenewal.** There it is in one sentence, less than 50 words. This is, in essence, what I

reconstructed at Izapa and argued in the mid-1990s, while also drawing from other sites and evidence elsewhere. I've been happy to fine-tune this definition of my work over the years, but the ideas are there, in *Maya Cosmogenesis 2012*. And sure, some of the languaging in that book is not as clearly expressed as I would now prefer, but that's the nature of evolving writing skills and honing the clarity with which ideas are expressed, over time. And there is a lot of post-1998 writings and research, including my 2010 SAA presentation (<http://www.thecenterfor2012studies.com/MEC-Facebook-Discussion-2010-ON-Jenkins-SAA-TRT-Astronomy.pdf>), that critics have overlooked. For example, your later articles and presentations don't cite my 2009 book, *The 2012 Story*, which came out the month before your *Sky & Telescope* article and provided exhaustive critiques and discussions of the 2012 milieu. That book sold widely and internationally and was translated into several languages, in paperback and hardback. I suspect that at least some critics ignore that book because I also took to task Maya scholars (someone had to do it) for their ridiculous and fallacious assertions about 2012 (notably, Aveni at Tulane).

Now, I'd like to point something out. I'm not trying to convince you of my findings. However, what is striking is that other Maya scholars have been recently echoing my own two-part interpretation, which I originated some two decades ago. For example, in the same anthology that you wrote your preface for (*Cosmology, Calendars, and Horizon-Based Astronomy*, 2015), John Carlson offers an interpretation for how the ancient Maya thought about 2012. He writes that it involves *deity sacrifice as a necessary prelude to world-renewal*. Clemency Coggins advocates for a pre-Classic precession awareness, and explicitly reiterates my model for how the cosmic center deity evolved as human groups migrated into the Tropics (*MC2012*, 1998, 31-40). She also echoes certain ideas I've reconstructed about Izapa, but she neglected to note the Izapa ballcourt's alignment to the December solstice sunrise. (In addition, elsewhere Michael Grofe is finding that the ancient Maya could accurately track the Sidereal Year and the Tropical Year --- supporting evidence for my 2012 "galactic alignment" reconstruction. See his peer-reviewed essays posted on his Academia.edu page). So, as part of your Follies narrative you would likely have critiqued and dismissed my ideas in your Preface, if space had allowed (your citation to Aveni in any case serves this purpose), but meanwhile two other scholars *in the same anthology* echo key ideas in my two-part 2012 interpretation --- in both the astronomical and ideological aspects. (Not to mention that curious book jacket image, which seems to depict a pre-dawn version of the sun's alignment with the nuclear bulge of the galaxy, a.k.a. the galactic alignment.)

So, how do you reconcile these facts:

- In the mid-1990s I emphasized that my work was about reconstructing what the ancient Maya believed about 2012. I found evidence and an astronomical key that was symbolized in Maya Creation Myth concepts and other evidence, and this was a departure from what came before in the work of others. (Arguelles's "galactic synchronization" is NOT at all the same as the precession-based galactic alignment. McKenna's definition of it was quite loose, and he didn't explicitly connect it to a Maya intention with 2012 in his 1975 book (he gave it a 200-year range)).

- A simple definition of what my findings are is available in my many articles, presentations, web pages, interviews and books, but has never been accurately portrayed by my critics, despite direct communications with them over twenty years. More usually, my work is conflated through guilt-by-association allusions with doomsday theories or other writers in the marketplace.
- My two-part interpretation (a precessional alignment of the solstice sun with the Milky Way/ecliptic Crossroads & southern terminus of the Dark Rift that signals the time for deity sacrifice in order to facilitate world-renewal) is now being echoed in the statements about 2012 published by Maya scholars (not as a coherent integration, but elements are found in Coggins, Carlson, Callaway, MacLeod, Grofe, Dowd, Barrientos, Gronemeyer, and others).

That third point is a far cry from where Maya Studies stood on 2012 when I first published my pioneering 2012 work in the mid-1990s. Acknowledgment or cognitive dissonance? Well, mitigating comments by critics continue to be published. Your own allusions to the 2012 Maya Calendar End Times Follies indicts my work as dubiously part of the same marketplace mess that I've actually critiqued and exposed the fallacies of. And you do, in your preface, cite Aveni's 2009 book as support for your dismissive attitude. My critique of Aveni's book will open up another can of worms, perhaps best reserved for a separate discussion. Do you believe that Aveni's critiques of my ideas and position, in his 2009 book, are accurate and reliable? It seems you do.

I should close here, and this will have to serve as an overview. It's very difficult to offer a brief recapitulation of the issues I've seen with your critiques of my work. Some are just purely factual corrections (can send if you like) but many are conceptual, in terms of your forced narrative of where my efforts fit within the evolving 2012 discussion, my presumed "influences" and associations. There is increasing cognitive dissonance within Maya Studies as the ideas I've long articulated with good evidence and argument (but which are rarely accurately summarized or even acknowledged) are slowly being subsumed into the general consensus. This is, of course, the three stages by which breakthroughs in a field of study are integrated: 1) the originator of breakthrough work is ignored, 2) the ideas and the originator are vehemently attacked, and 3) the breakthrough ideas are accepted as if they were known all along. Sincerely,

John Major Jenkins

The Center for 2012 Studies <http://thecenterfor2012studies.com>

emailed to Krupp after initial cordial exchange, 6-10-2015

June 10

Subject: Centered in 2012

Dear John, [...]

Best celestial wishes,

Ed

Ed,

Since "the 2012 Maya Calendar End Times Follies were the hook" of your Time's Up planetarium show, and you said that it would be "folly" to not mention my work in a run-down on that topic, it was reasonable for me to ask the question, for clarity. And I wasn't believing anything in particular; that's why I asked. Thanks for the clarification.

I'm surprised you don't have any time for my direct questions about your various comments on my work, which I spent a great deal of time reading, viewing, assessing, and responding to. Other forums would not be an appropriate place for me to pursue this (I think that's called outsourcing), because it pertains to your own misleading presentation of my work to your audiences. And, again, as I mentioned, I am not here trying to convince you of my work. Rather, I'm pointing out to you that you took a truncated sentence from my book out of context in order to convey a demeaning and wrong portrayal of my work to your unsuspecting and trusting audiences. Specific details were provided to you. No comment? Since you otherwise confirmed that you don't think my work argues for doomsday, then why did you do that in your 2009 Beckman Center talk? (Also in your Pomona College talk, also online.)

As for the galactic alignment and the earth as a bowling pin destined for demolition, this too came across as a way of lampooning a core idea in my work and, like your other comment, it was associated with doomsday. Sure, it can be fun to lampoon all the silliness in the marketplace. But your liberal use of loose lingo is like reporting what 3rd-Graders think about Einstein's Relativity Theory as a means of debunking it.

Well, I'm not going to repeat my points and questions that were clearly articulated in my previous email. Here we are, almost 17 years after I sent you my 1998 book for review. You haven't provided a critical review of my work, but a menu of your misunderstandings about it. I can only ask that you please try to be better informed about what I've actually written through the years. I have been easy to reach by email since our last communication in 1999. Try to understand the categorical distinction between my approach and the folly dancers you've associated me with. Try to accurately portray the effort I have made to reconstruct ancient Maya astronomy, rather than lampooning me through guilt-by-association constructs. Such un-discerning debunkery is extremely unwarranted given that, as I pointed out, *my core ideas are now being echoed by various professional Maya scholars writing about 2012*. Perhaps some of the essays I am sending will be helpful, so that in future discussions and publications you can accurately portray my work before offering your comments on it. Sincerely,

John Major Jenkins

June 10:

Subject: Centered in 2012

Dear John, [...]
Taking a time out,
Ed

Note: I've redacted Krupp's emails; he was cordial until I got to the point of responding to his under-informed and denigrating critiques. He ended by begging off. I sent the package of materials with an invitation to respond to my open letter, to be posted online.