

Fear and Lying in 2012-Land

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The term “2012”—that is, the year 2012—is going to become commonplace in the next few years. If you haven’t heard of it yet, here’s your chance. It’s already the centerpiece of alarmist apocalyptic fantasies, new-fangled philosophies of time, and forthcoming Hollywood movies about the cataclysmic end of the world.

These 2012 manifestations have their basis in a calendar system developed over 2,000 years ago by the early Maya people of southern Mexico, in which a cycle of 5,125 years will close on December 21, 2012. As a result of recent breakthroughs in deciphering ancient Maya cosmology, we can now understand what the ancient Maya were intending with their cycle-ending date. On one hand, these new discoveries should shake the superiority complex of Western science and philosophy down to its foundations. On the other hand, the average person on the street is going to want to know what all this 2012 hoopla is about, and we now have clear answers.

Unfortunately, the 2012 discussion is riddled with misinformation, distortions, and exploitation. Here’s a sober guide to the topic and the smorgasbord of disinformation that threatens to smother what, at its heart, is a profound insight into why modern civilization is experiencing a fundamental crisis of sustainability and so many urgent challenges.

The topic of 2012 is rife with lies. Lies that distract us from seeing the thing-in-itself, lies that trick us into thinking that there is no real core of the subject. It wouldn’t be fair to characterize most of these as overt lies, since that implies an intentional subversion of truth in order to propagate a known falsehood. Most of it is misinformation and misconception, resulting from poor research, incomplete understanding of the Maya calendar, and, most unfortunately, the proffering of simplistic stereotypes in the marketplace.

There are a few cases in which certain writers, as truths have come to light, have continued to assert their exposed falsehoods, so in the absence of rescinding their revealed misapprehensions they become liars. And should we let a sleeping liar lie? If we choose not to, it’s a bit of a fool’s errand, for when pressed these grandstanders dig themselves in deeper and spin-doctor their lies into qualified, provisional beliefs. And continue to pollute the discussion with their distortions.

It is difficult to navigate this quagmire, and to the newcomer it can be hard to separate the wheat from the chaff. As my friend Jonathan Zap warns, “Welcome to Carnival 2012!”¹ You must choose from varieties of snake oil being foisted upon you by a

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plethora of charismatic silver-tongued carnival barkers. To the newcomer, a glance at the nauseating 2012 menu gives the impression that the whole discussion is a free-for-all, a mess of confusion, and nobody really seems to know what the truth is. This is a mistaken impression. As someone who has been intensely engaged in the study of these things for many years, I hope to provide some guidance through the fears and lies that spike the ideological soil of 2012-land.

I have been studying the Maya calendar since the mid-1980s. While frequently traveling to Central America to live and work with the traditional Quiché Maya in the highlands, I engaged in some pointed research and fact-finding that resulted in a series of articles and self-published books between 1989 and 1994, when Borderlands published my book *Tzolkin*. This was only the first phase of my research. One cannot get a univer-

sity degree in Maya Calendar Studies, but I pursued a course of self-study and by the early 1990s was venturing beyond the cutting edge of where scholars themselves had tread. My work is grounded in good scholarship, and my working hypothesis has always been that it would be possible, and worthwhile, to reconstruct the forgotten Maya beliefs and cosmo-conceptions connected with their 2012 calendar.

Early on I studied the basics of Maya time philosophy and internalized the facts of how the calendar operates. Consequently, for many years now most of the popular books on the Maya calendar have seemed to me to be riddled with elementary errors, mistaken notions, and even willful deceptions, a.k.a., lies. For example, in 1992 I published a review of the calendar game-system created by José Argüelles called Dreamspell. The system was very different in structure, operation, and placement in real time from the surviving 260-day calendar in

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Guatemala. Yet it identified itself as “the Mayan calendar.” It was over 50 days out of synchronization with the authentic day-count and also skipped counting February 29th—something Maya calendar priests would never do.²

My critique of these and other issues with Dreamspell are well-documented; between 1992 and 1996 I responded to hundreds of letters, often handling venomous attacks from those who had joined the Dreamspell clique and saw my truth-telling as threatening. Others had noticed the discrepancies and were grateful for my clear exposé. To this day I still occasionally receive emails from newcomers who enter the Maya calendar discussion through Dreamspell and then realize they have been misled. Although this experience is by nature “disillusioning,” systems like Dreamspell provide a pit-stop where one can rev up their faculty of conscious discrimination—a valuable skill on any spiritual path.

On another front, the much-hailed book called *The Mayan Prophecies* came out in 1995. I interviewed one of the authors, wrote a lengthy review essay, and identified dozens of factual errors as well as many instances of internal contradictions within the book, rendering the theory it put forward extremely

problematic.³ The main author went on to write a series of books on the Maya and related subjects, based largely on the clever idea that funny faces could be found in Maya hieroglyphs if you cut them up and reassembled them in different ways.

All new ideas and theories should be assessed with discernment. This is a time when much new information about the ancient Maya is coming to light. It just so happens that they had a calendar that points to a date in our near future—a date that the Maya believed to signal a shift in World Ages—and so a lot of attention is being generated. And an avalanche of speculation and disinformation is smothering what, at its heart, is really a very interesting story that can be apprehended with great clarity.

Here 2012ology reaches a fork in the road. In one direction, we try to reconstruct the authentic but lost cosmovision associated

with the Maya calendar and the 2012 cycle ending date; in the other direction we disregard this concern and try to create trendy models and systems perhaps loosely based on

Maya ideas, but for the most part we are willing to play fast and loose with the Maya tradition and propagate our own imaginative systems. To my mind, it goes without saying that the latter pursuit is problematic. It has given rise to the plethora of systems, assertions, and models one finds in the marketplace today.

If we pursue the former path with clarity and discernment, we eventually will uncover the facts of the matter and find the one, true cosmology at the heart of the 2012 calendar. This caveat should be enough to point newcomers in the right direction, but the clever new systems can be very seductive and it will be worth exposing the major misconceptions that clog the discussion. First, a brief sketch of the fundamental facts of the 2012 calendar.

The Maya Calendar in a Nutshell

The Long Count calendar is a system of timekeeping that first appears on carved monuments in the first century BCE. It is thus believed to have been invented around that time. It uses five place values, and scholars write a typical Long Count date like this: 7.16.4.1.1. The place values proceed left to right as follows: *baktuns*, *katuns*, *tuns*, *uinals*, and *kin*. *Baktuns* contain

144,000 days (roughly 394 years); *katuns* contain 7,200 days (just under 20 years); *tuns* contain 360 days; *uinals* contain 20 days; and a *kin* is one day. Some of the monuments dated in the Long Count do not record local historical events—they are what are referred to as Creation Monuments. They are sacred texts expressing Maya theology and philosophy, because they

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describe the creation and renewal events that happen when thirteen *baktuns* are completed. From this we can gather that the end of a 13-*baktun* cycle (written 13.0.0.0.0) was very important in ancient Maya cosmology.

Scholars have figured out how the Maya calendar correlates with our own. From this work we know that 13.0.0.0.0 falls on December 21, 2012, in our Gregorian calendar. My third book, *Tzolkin: Visionary Perspectives and Calendar Studies* (1992), thoroughly researched, examined, tested, and reported on this issue, known as the correlation question. I've studied, debated, and written thousands of pages on the correlation question issue. It is an important first step in any study of the Maya calendar. The facts, arguments, tests, and counterarguments have been addressed and filed away, and there is no doubt about it: The 13-*baktun* cycle ending date falls on December 21, 2012.

I emphasize this because a big lie in the 2012 discussion is that no one really knows when the "real" end date occurs. Such a deception opens the door for underinformed writers to invent their own end dates, or propose that this or that date is more significant than the established, authentic end date. In the limited space of a brief article, I can only encourage readers to look into it for themselves if they feel the need. As one who has already done so, I can report that all of the other propositions are chimeras and red herrings, either blindly asserted misconceptions or self-serving lies.

This introductory sketch is much like helping all art critics to agree that red is a color before we go any further. It is necessary for moving forward on the same page. Without it, splinter groups start setting up camp on the side of the road, digging in while clinging to misconceptions, proceeding to construct empires built on lies.

So, we have this big cycle ending on December 21, 2012. What of it? How can we understand it? Well, by now it's clear that the date comes to us from Maya tradition. (This is self-evident but needs to be emphasized because many writers on 2012 barely mention the Maya!) If we study the Maya traditions that relate to this 2012 date, we discover two things very quickly. First, it is the end of a 13-*baktun* cycle—a period of 5,125.36 years—and this was considered to be one World Age in Maya thought. Second, World Ages are described in the Maya Creation myth, known as the Hero Twin myth or the *Popol Vuh*.

Generally, the *Popol Vuh* states that the world moves through chapters or Ages of change, and at the end of each Age humanity passes through a transition during which transformation and renewal occur. In the *Popol Vuh*, humanity has already gone through several of these transformations. I repeat: The emphasis in the Creation myth is on transformation and renewal, then a new Age begins—a new 13-*baktun* cycle begins.

Two Big Lies

These are the absolute minimal basic facts of the 2012 calendar, what one would learn in Maya calendar kindergarten, but notice that with these facts, drawn directly from the primary document one needs to study in order to understand 2012, we've already challenged two of the biggest lies about 2012—the lies which many assume to be fundamental truisms and that are ubiquitous on book jackets, conference summaries, and catalog copy of 2012 books. These are: "The Maya calendar stops in 2012," and, "The Maya predicted the end of the world in 2012." On the first point, in the cyclical time philosophy of the Maya, 13.0.0.0.0 is followed by 0.0.0.0.1 in the next cycle. On the second point, the Creation Myth itself emphasizes transformation and renewal, not "the end of the world." If we could eradicate these basic misconceptions, the whole 2012 discussion would instantly become a lot less silly.

When these illusions about 2012 are shattered, we are then free to engage with the *ding an sich*, the thing-in-itself. It could be the beginning of really understanding what it is—and there's a lot of amazing ideas and knowledge to talk about. However, for some, when the bubble bursts it's the end of the discussion.

In 1999, I was interviewed by a popular radio-show host. Thirty minutes in we came to this issue, and I clarified that such a notion was absurd on several fronts. He was somewhat surprised, as this false notion is the perfect launching off point for all kinds of entertaining speculative fantasies, all of which had been duly flailed on his program by a smorgasbord of eager book writers. Unfortunately, after this disillusioning, I think the whole topic of 2012 then became uninteresting to him. The baby was thrown out with the bathwater, as if the entire discussion hinges on a tacit agreement that 2012 is about the end of the calendar, or the world, or time.

Maya (That Is, Illusion) and the Mass Media

So, where did this notion come from? It's hard to trace the specific origin, but it's easy to imagine. It is the perfect bumper sticker soundbite. It packs a bevy of inviting fearful scenarios. For someone to point out the patent falseness and absurdity of the notion is like the child saying the emperor is wearing no clothes. Some don't want the charade to come crashing down—hey, there's money to be made. You're an unwelcome guest in the House of Lies if you try to be a system-buster and truth-teller. On a personal level, individuals don't like their long-cherished beliefs to be exposed as B.S.—the messenger then gets criticized as being negative or otherwise undesirable.

We live in a world of materialism and appearances, superficial surface characteristics that are worshipped and slavered over as if they represented the epitome of truth and the heart of reality. We mistake illusion, *maya* as the Hindus call it, for reality, and the media is complicit in reinforcing this delusion. That is perhaps the biggest lie of the modern world. The fact is that we are trying to pull back the veil of appearances to see the essence underneath, the heart of reality, the thing in itself. We need to see and connect with the essential truth at the heart of things rather than continue to be distracted by glitz, talking points, drama, scandal, clever designer systems, and the cult of personality.

Another idea that has great currency is that “the Maya cal-

endar was super accurate,” and then four or six decimal places are mentioned. Yes, the Maya astronomers and mathematicians were capable of a high degree of accuracy, but more important, their cosmivision strove to embrace many dimensions of reality. Their worldview perceived a comprehensive grasp of the unifying threads running through plants, animals, ancestors, human beings, rock, water, air, planets, gods, and stars. That is where the real story is. To celebrate the Maya only for their accuracy is misleading and disingenuous, like celebrating Einstein for being a decent patent clerk.

The notion that the Maya were super-precision fanatics is compelling to modern people, because our own scientific paradigm values precision. It's a recognizable achievement that we apparently need to project onto the Maya in order to think they were great. Notice, however, that this takes ethnocentrism to a new level, to what we might call ethnonarcissism. We want to make them more like ourselves in order to respect them. We need to see our own values reflected in Maya culture before we can acknowledge any value in it.

Or, conversely, we need to demonize them so we can banish them forever from our considerations. This is the standard method for dealing with the Maya and their annoyingly baffling genius. Enter the screenwriters, directors, and movie-makers. With gazillion-dollar budgets at their disposal, all the clichés and stereotypes of anti-Indio nineteenth-century Manifest Destiny genocide are trotted out to be rendered in CGI and Dolby Sound, turning the Maya into pitiable savages or atavistic purveyors of Doom who couldn't possibly have anything

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positive to contribute to our civilized world. We might think that the entertainment biz is harmless, but analysts of Hollywood like Jack Sheehan, in his insightful book *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, have exposed the churning machinations of a racist, politically biased, and ethnocentric propaganda machine. Likewise, the silver screen treatment of the Maya and 2012 looks like it will be a macabre, fear-mongering bloodbath.

Scholarly Coincidentalists and 2012

We may wish to take refuge from this mine field of media messiness in the safe harbor of cool, rational scholarship. Certainly, Maya specialists, archaeologists, and anthropologists will treat 2012 with discernment and respect. Where do the Maya scholars stand on the topic? This is perhaps the most surprising and disappointing aspect of the entire 2012 discussion. An assumed lie in academia has been the working hypothesis of scholars for many years, and only recently has a more open-minded attitude begun to emerge. That lie is this: There is no intention behind the 2012 date. In other words, the

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fact that the end of the cycle falls on December 21, 2012—an accurate solstice date—is just a random happenstance, a mere mathematical consequence of the *beginning date* in 3114 BCE (whose placement is assumed by scholars to have greater bearing, even though Maya time philosophy is teleological—oriented toward *the ends* of processes).

This belief that the Maya never had any interest in the cycle ending has been the default assumption in academia for decades; little if any attention therefore has ever been paid to 2012; it's been a non-topic. Scholars never dropped the ball on leading the 2012 discussion because they never picked it up.

While exercising critical thinking in the mid-1980s, it occurred to me that, since the cycle ending falls on a winter solstice, some kind of intentionality may be present in its placement. I approached scholars with this observation, and for virtually two decades the response has been, "It's a coincidence." The subsequent implications, research, and findings that it pointed me to have therefore been waved aside.

More recently, scholars have deigned to talk about 2012; that is to say, they are more willing to say something about it. However, almost all of their commentary is directed to the popular effects happening in the culture—the predictable doomsday products and the silly things said in the murky deep end of the New Age movement. In other words, Maya scholars have deputized themselves as honorary 2012 sociologists, interested in commenting on the social phenomenon of 2012,

which is agreed to be just another hyped millenarian charade, rather than examining, like they should, the 2012 artifact itself and how it plays a role in Maya iconography, calendrics, and eschatology. These circumstances place me in the position of being the annoying outsider-trailblazer.

Here I'll briefly summarize my pioneering reconstruction work. This is not the place for a detailed introduction, but an overview will locate my work within the larger themes addressed in this article. My work is intended to be a well-documented and carefully argued reconstruction of the lost cosmology associated with the Long Count calendar's 2012 cycle ending

date. My approach was guided by asking questions like, "Where was the Long Count cosmology invented?" Realizing that astronomy was central to the Mayan World Age doctrine, I asked, "Is there something unusual happening astronomically in the years around 2012?" I was led to what emerged as the key to understanding the Maya's intention in pointing to 2012—a rare alignment within the cycle of the precession of equinoxes, a "galactic alignment" that can be defined as "the alignment of the December solstice sun with the dark-rift in the Milky Way" (or, as astronomers prefer it, with the "galactic equator").

When I studied the Maya Creation Mythology, their ballgame's symbolism, and the carved monuments of Izapa (the place that invented the Long Count), I found previously unrecognized evidence that the ancient Maya became aware of this future galactic alignment some 2,100 years ago. Furthermore, an entire galactic cosmology was embedded in these Maya institutions, involving astronomy as well as prophecy and spiritual teachings. So, the keys to my work are the galactic alignment, the Creation Myth's symbolization of the galactic alignment, and the underappreciated site of Izapa. Although my work has proceeded rationally with careful documentation, no one else asked the right questions, and so my findings are unprecedented.

Although this is the unavoidable approach to 2012 that any rational investigator would take, scholars have been barred from the path by the limiting dictates of their professed Coincidentalism. While often refusing to actually examine my work, scholars have unfairly tended to see me as belonging to the irrelevant arena of New Age speculation. Thomas Kuhn

wrote that most major breakthroughs in an evolving field of study are made by self-taught outsiders—precisely because they are not in bed with the biases and assumptions that keep progress from happening. Goodman, Teeple, Knorosov, Proskouriakoff—Maya studies is in fact filled with these independent pioneers. Recently, new discoveries regarding the astronomical knowledge of the Maya have been made by scholars, notably by epigrapher Barbara MacLeod, effectively mitigating previous criticisms of my work.

The Maya on Their 2012 Date

One open-minded scholar who has addressed 2012 from an engaged viewpoint is Robert Sittler, who provided a survey of what the Maya themselves have documented about 2012 in the past and what they say today.⁴ He suspends judgment on the evidence I identified in the Creation Myth and at Izapa and has stated that there were no documents that relate to 2012. However, in mid-2006 Sittler was instrumental, along with researcher Geoff Stray and myself, in shedding light on a neglected Maya carving from Tortuguero that points right at the end of the current 13-*baktun* cycle in 2012. Epigrapher David Stuart congenially translated the text. Now, scholars can no

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longer say that the ancient Maya were never interested in 2012. In fact, I pointed out that the text mentions a Maya deity called Bolon Yok-te, a usual suspect in Maya creation narratives.⁵ This reinforces the idea that the ancient Maya thought of 2012 as a creation, or re-creation, which of course makes sense in terms of the emphasis on transformation and renewal in the *Popol Vuh's* World Age doctrine.

I titled my breakthrough book of 1998 *Maya Cosmogogenesis 2012*. With “Maya,” “Cosmogogenesis,” and “2012” being the operative words, the title presented an idea that, at the time, was radical—that 2012 was thought of by the Maya as a cosmo-genesis (a birth or rebirth of the world). Scholars have

always had a problem with this aspect of my work. They presumed that birth should happen at the start of the cycle (a Western scientific bias) rather than at the end of the process (a Maya idea). Now, with the creation deity Bolon Yok-te dancing around on a 2012 carving, my prescient hunch that was dismissed by scholars as absurd has been affirmed by new evidence.

So, what do the modern Maya say about 2012? Sittler observes that since the Long Count was lost, the modern Maya are influenced by outside authors. Disinformation has been generated, however, by dabblers who only wish to assemble new designer systems and models—models about consciousness or history or change that are only distantly reminiscent of authentic Maya tradition. This is the problem. What is at stake is the resuscitation, survival, and continuity of an ancient galactic paradigm whose heirs are still with us today. It's a complicated situation in which the cultural and genetic descendants of those who invented the 2012 calendar and its associated galactic eschatology may or may not decide to embrace what, for them, must seem like a truly strange and alien artifact from a long-lost past. It would be much like modern Egyptians taking up mummification and astral funerary rites as practiced by their ancient ancestors.

It's true: The 2012 Long Count calendar stopped being followed. It must be recovered or reconstructed. However, teachings about cycle endings, fire ceremony, the *temizcal* (sweat bath), and the spiritual meaning of sacrifice do survive among the contemporary Maya and other indigenous groups. They are still doing ceremonies, and Maya shamans and leaders should be respected. The 2012 information, however, is being filtered through a quagmire of competing interests. Various comments by the Maya on 2012 were reported by Sittler in his essay “The 2012 Phenomenon,” and almost all are echoes of modern research.⁶ In lieu of university-approved academic reconstruction work, all of this comes from independent researchers and writers.

Often, the motive of writers in engaging with Maya elders is self-serving—like hijacking a handy elder to approve of your own theory.

For example, author Carl Calleman manipulated the words of a Maya elder and calendar priest named don Alejandro in a press release of early 2006, giving the impression that don Alejandro rejected the 2012 date (contrary to his former statements), and thus Calleman's own invented date, October 28, 2011, could by default step in and take over. Despite this transparent power ploy, other writers such as Barbara Clow have jumped on the Calleman bandwagon without apparently understanding how his approach sullies authentic Maya tradition in the interest of furthering his own idiosyncratic agenda. It's a lie to think we have any right to weave new apostate systems cobbled together piecemeal from selected fragments of Maya traditions.

Another writer has insinuated himself into the goings-on with don Alejandro and the Indigenous Council of Elders, asserting in his new book that "according to the Maya" the end date is February 19, 2013, not December 21, 2012.⁷ A glance at the premise of the argument reveals a standard misconception. The new, improved end date, (the newly revealed elder-approved "real" end date) is stated as being the end of a 13-year cycle followed by the Maya. The 13-year cycle is indeed used by the highland Maya today, and is one-fourth of the 52-year Calendar Round period. This method of timekeeping is different than the one used in the Long Count system. Long Count and Calendar Round dates are usually found side by side on carved monuments, so they have a consistent relationship to each other, but

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they are two completely different methods of counting time, analogous to how the 7-day weekday names run separately but alongside the day numbers and months of the year.

The problem here is that the Calendar Round does not schedule the 2012 end date, nor should it be expected to. So, to use the 13-year period of the Calendar Round to adjust or correct the Long Count's end date is like trying to play a waltz in 4/4 time, or eat a sandwich with your ear, or use a canvas to paint a picture on a brush. It has no basis in the way that the calen-

dars work and interface, and betrays a fundamental misunderstanding. Writers who do not understand this should be very cautious with how they frame their rejection, or demoting, of the established solstice 2012 date.

According to the purveyor of the February 19, 2013 "real" end date, the Indigenous Council of Elders are preparing to assess and pass judgment on the work of non-Maya outsiders. My own work, for example, which was inspired by a love of Maya culture and stands alone in offering a carefully documented interdisciplinary synthesis/reconstruction based on the Creation Myth and Izapa, will come before the court of judgment. The Council of Elders could very easily decide that they just don't buy it. This is their prerogative, but such an "official" denouncement generates unusual problems if my pioneering work is indeed on target. And since my work on 2012 is unavailable in Spanish, let alone Mayan, one wonders how the assessment will proceed.

Ethnic Maya philosophers such as Victor Montejo and Gaspar Gonzalez are languaging the 2012 situation as a time when the limits of globalized self-serving greed and egoism come to a head and must be transformed, and a Maya renaissance is at hand.⁸ My own emphasis on the archetypal dynamic of the ego-Self axis in the Maya Creation Myth, as an opportunity for transformation and renewal culminating in 2012, shares the viewpoints and insights of these Maya teachers.

As for the popular writers who play fast and loose with the Maya calendar's cycle ending date, there are two problems. One is simply not doing your homework. The other is trumping the facts with another assumption—that we really are trying to identify the moment, or day, or wave, of change, and thus if our historical graphs or crystal-gazing dictates a different date to us, we are justified in correcting the

established Maya date. This position assumes that a definitive change is predetermined and fixed into the architecture of time and, worse, that we are robots fated to respond to the appointed hour like the blind forces of Newton's clockwork universe. Odd logic is brought to bear on the argument to reject 2012 as the authentic cycle-ending date, arguments that are much like saying we should reorder the days of the week alphabetically and—here's where it gets truly hilarious—that we've had it wrong all along! A serious demerit of rational processing occurs in these models.

The Rhapsodic Bloviations of New Age Fantasts

The oddest case of all is found in the rhapsodic bloviations that comprise a book enticingly titled *Apocalypse 2012*. The author flew to Guatemala to receive the Maya “prophecy” about 2012 directly from Maya teachers, the Barrios brothers, learning that: “On 12/21/12 our Solar System, with the Sun at its center, will, as the Maya have for millennia maintained, eclipse the view from Earth of the center of the Milky Way. This happens only once every 26,000 years. Ancient Maya astronomers considered this spot to be the Milky Way’s womb.”⁹ Except for the fact that the Maya have not retained a continuity of this knowledge “for millennia,” this is a fairly accurate paraphrase of my theory, including my breakthrough discovery that the galactic center was mythologized by the ancient Maya as a cosmic womb, a creation place.

If the reader is unclear whether the chicken or the egg came first, the back-story to this reporting of my pioneering theory through these Maya spokesmen can be traced to an interview they did with Steven McFadden six years ago that utilized material virtually cut-and-pasted from an article I wrote and posted online in 1995.¹⁰ Whether intended or not, the impression was that the galactic alignment information came directly from the elders.

Armed with the Maya prophecy for 2012, handed to him by Real Maya Teachers, the author of *Apocalypse 2012* then proceeds to concur with said Teachers to excoriate clueless outsiders, who don’t know how to read the symbols. I am mentioned by name as a “cultural imperialist,”¹¹ and while my breakthrough book *Maya Cosmogogenesis 2012* was mentioned and wanly dismissed, its primary thesis (that the ancient Maya intended 2012 to target the rare alignment of the solstice sun and the galactic center—sound familiar?) was left unsaid. Obviously, to mention it would have created a conflict of interest, as the author wished to give the impression that the goods were delivered to him by a Maya teacher. This *contretemps* reveals either shoddy rational processing or outright intellectual dishonesty in a book that presumes to be “a scientific investigation.” Pretty interesting. This was a real neat trick, and the author can certainly lay claim to inventing a new form of literary criticism—plagio-excoriation. I’ve now had the dubious honor of being plagiarized and excoriated in the same chapter.

A slightly less annoying situation is found in the insta-experts. They are come-latelies to the 2012 topic, who have never written about it before, have never apparently studied the topic, but have garnered status by writing popular books on ancient wisdom, human potential, and healing, or other topics seemingly similar to the 2012 meme. Asked to write something about 2012, they take their already polished rap and insert “2012” and “Maya calendar” in strategic places and, *voilà!*—they are instant 2012 experts. 2012 is simply hijacked as a synonym for change or growth or consciousness, useful on the marquee for whatever it was they were previously doing. These examples merely illustrate the level of opportunistic behavior that is occurring in 2012-land, and how the topic attracts exploiters, posers, and self-promoters.

To many in the study of the Maya calendar, this is old news. Geoff Stray, for example, the author of *Beyond 2012*, has been tireless in his insightful critiquing of the endless barrage of 2012 products.¹² Author Jonathan Zap has pointed out the archetypal psychology behind the reactions of scholars and New Agers to 2012.¹³ With the growing interest in 2012, waves

According to the Maya World Age doctrine, 2012, like all cycle endings, signals a time of renewal and transformation, the promise of taking a good long look at the world and making some very deeply considered, appropriate, and lasting changes.

of newcomers are arriving on the scene, trying to make sense of the various threads, books, and ideas. False ideas continue to have currency because they resonate with a certain level of misapprehension as newcomers filter in and self-sort into their respective domains of understanding.

One hopes that this is a continuing process for newbies in which previously held notions get revised as deeper understanding and insights occur. Newcomers should be issued a B.S.-meter with a Lie Gauge attachment as they come in the door. Unfortunately, such a progression in one’s path requires time and commitment, and 2012 fits all too easily into the disposable marketplace bins of a world gone trendy. Few who dabble with 2012 and Maya cosmogeneration will tarry long enough to internalize more than the most superficial distortions. The path is tricky, especially since the B.S. is sold with such alluring

packaging, and all kinds of signals and distractions discourage people from going deep into anything. Too dangerous—might lead to real knowledge. There's a Mayan proverb that says, "The path to Hell is a garden stroll lined with butterflies, whereas the path to Paradise is a steep and rocky upward climb."

False Framings and the Expected Anti-Truth

Yes, this is a topic that requires some study and the careful sorting of bad information from good information. And this is not to say that we shouldn't expand the discussion into areas of metaphysics and spiritual teachings—in fact, that's where the discussion ultimately leads. But we have to start by getting our facts right. We need to come together on the basics, and the correct correlation of Maya time is Step 1. Sure, we can all agree that it's about love, or oneness, or peace, but this is a matter of being clear with an ancient tradition that we are all wanting to appreciate and respect. I am amazed that, time and time again in the marketplace, people feel it is justified, even desirable, to oust the established date. This highly questionable agenda exploits the fact that newcomers really don't know this from that, and then your own date becomes a valid choice on the menu of disinformation, the End Date of the Week.

Critics will often frame the ongoing debate as "Jenkins's date versus X's date" (add your favorite alternative). This is a false framing. *My date* is the established Maya date, the date that is proven—if you understand the subject—by an interdisciplinary set of criteria, including the 260-day sacred count still followed by the traditional Maya in Highland Guatemala. What more do you want? Announcement to 2012 writers: Stop inventing new end dates and day-counts! Let's just look at the thing-in-itself, and go deeper into it.

All of this is to be expected. At cycle endings, false authorities and false prophets (pocketing real profits) flood into the world. They manifest spontaneously and are created by the promise of power, status, and money. Why? Because at cycle endings we have a special opportunity to reconnect with Truth, with an empowering self-awareness of who we really are, an awareness of a higher perspective and wisdom. The revolutionary new idea in all of this is the way that the galactic alignment is the key to why the Maya chose 2012, why we are at a big cycle ending, and why we are living in an era in which we can open up to our essential unity, open to the heart and source of ourselves and the world.

This is a threat to the darkness, to ignorance, and to the control systems of deception installed by narcissistic egoism—by Seven Macaw as the *Popol Vuh* says. Thus, the Lords of Xibalba (the forces of limitation) deputize countless minions through which noise and disinformation can be spread. Ignorance will be maintained at the speed of dark. It is this net of lies that the intrepid seeker of truth must pierce and pass through in order to see the essence of the matter. Meditation is your best friend if you want to really understand 2012.

The root lie in all of this is the Big Lie, that we must be kept containerized, atomized, and separated, self-absorbed monads of conspicuous consumption. The French perennial philosopher René Guénon nailed this crisis of modernity to the wall over 60 years ago.¹⁴ It is the lie of a world divorced from the bigger picture, a world whose basic premise is that all truth is relative, that *there is no absolute truth*. The perennial wisdom teachings of the world disagree, and the statement itself is a logical conundrum, as it states absolutely that there are no absolutes. The modern world is alone in harboring this belief; it is not the product of a superior and more sophisticated civilization, but of a debased and desacralized one.

According to the Maya World Age doctrine, 2012, like all cycle endings, signals a time of renewal and transformation, the promise of taking a good long look at the world and making some very deeply considered, appropriate, and lasting changes. In my study of not only the Maya but philosophies and religions from around the globe, this idea strikes me as a perennial wisdom, a universal insight, rather than an anomalous belief of one cultural group. But there's a problem. We are all spies in the house of lies, spying on...each other (but not on ourselves). We can and should see our complicity in maintaining the net of illusion—we just don't want to. Sadly, we are trapped in a designer reality-matrix that comes with a set of assumptions, an operating system that was scripted upon an Ur-level of dominator-style nihilism, something like Inevitable Apocalypse 1.0. In the face of this, the 2012 promise of renewal threatens to tear this Evil Disneyland of cards down to its foundations. Ego perceives transformation as certain death. Maya wisdom is therefore a threat that must be containerized, marginalized, or co-opted, its transformational power rendered impotent.

The modern world cannot even see the transformative power of the Maya teachings for cycle endings; instead we see the possibility of proactive, creative, conscious, engaged, renewal through fatalism-colored glasses. It must not be allowed. A

good way to not allow it is to amp up the propaganda machine through the popular mass media—trendy movies, video games, salacious books, and so on—to infect the collective consciousness with images of horror, violence, death, and destruction. Emotion-laced imagery can be a very powerful evocative tool in the hands of those who wish to keep people frightened and controlled, cogs in the wheels of an impossible agenda—a voracious world that can only thrive on an endlessly accelerating Gross National Product.

So, in conclusion, here's the Cliff Notes guide to the lies and confusion that are found frolicking all over 2012-land: The Maya disappeared; 2012 is the creation of New Age writers; December 21, 2012, is not “the real” cycle ending date; there are no ancient Maya statements about 2012; the Maya calendar stops in 2012; it's OK to disregard the fundamental facts of the authentic Maya calendar tradition and promulgate one's own clever calendar system.

Finally, let me state something I believe to be true, just one more time for the record: It's *NOT all over on December 21, 2012*. Now let's just hope that a cabal of elected lunatics with their fingers on the Rapture button doesn't try to prove me wrong.

Endnotes

1. Writings at <www.zaporacle.com>. 2. Jenkins, John Major. (1994). *Tzolk'in*. Borderland Sciences Research Foundation. Also <Alignment2012.com/following.html>. 3. See my review at <www.alignment2012.com/mproph.htm>. 4. Sittler, Robert. (2007). 2012 and the Maya world. *The mystery of 2012* (Sounds True). 5. Jenkins, John Major. (2006). In the roots of the Milky Way Tree: The Mayan Lord of Creation and 2012. *New dawn* 97 (Jul-Aug); <www.alignment2012.com/bolon-yokte.html>. 6. Sittler, Robert. (2006). The 2012 phenomenon. *Nova religio* 9.3, pp 24–38. 7. Melchezidek, Drunvalo. (2008). *Serpent of light: Beyond 2012*. Weiser Books. 8. Gonzalez, Gaspar Pedro. (2005). *El 13 b'aktun: La nueva era, 2012, El fin del ciclo, Desde la Óptica Maya contemporánea*; Montejo, Victor. (2005). *Maya intellectual renaissance*. University of Texas Press. 9. Joseph, Lawrence. (2007). *Apocalypse 2012*. Morgan Road Books, pp 32–3. 10. The origin of all this in my 1995 online article “Thesis (From The Center of Mayan Time)” <www.alignment2012.com/fap2.html> is well-documented and confirmed by McFadden. His original 2002 interview did not specify the correct source of the alignment information, but in 2007 he graciously updated the online version <www.chiron-communications.com/communique%207-10.html>. Barrios published the book *The Maya Cholq'ij: Gateway to Aligning with the Energies of the Earth* in 2004, which Joseph apparently paraphrased in summarizing my pioneering work, possibly without understanding its true source. 11. *Op cit.*, Joseph, p 40. 12. See Geoff Stray's <www.diagnosis2012.co.uk>. 13. Zap's writings: <www.zaporacle.com/textpattern/article/82/on-dreamspell-jenkinszap>; <www.alignment2012.com/zap-on-tonkins-error.html>; <www.famsi.org/pipermail/aztlan/2008-January/004027.html>. 14. Guénon, René. (2000). *Reign of quantity and signs of the times*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers; Guénon, René. (1999). *Crisis of the modern world*. Varanasi, India: Indica Books. Also, see my discussion of Guénon and Coomaraswamy in my 2002 book *Galactic Alignment*.

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