

Jack Mazza
Ms. Ward
AP English Language and Composition [High School 12th Grade]
26 March 2010

Argumentative Research Paper based on *The 2012 Story* (2009) by John Major Jenkins

By Jack Mazza

Section I: Introduction and Context

In John Major Jenkins' most recent piece *The 2012 Story* (2009), he explores ancient Mayan astronomy, calendar systems, and philosophy – which resonates in all the great spiritual teachings throughout the world – and how these elements relate to the crisis that is occurring in both inner and outer realities of the modern era. The Long Count Calendar and The Popul Vuh (Creation Myth) are intrinsic expressions of World Ages, and at the ending of these cyclic World Ages, a sacrifice of old illusions is made to facilitate a successful transformation and renewal into the next age; the most prominent of these cyclic endings occurring on the December solstice of 2012. Jenkins investigates with great depth and minimal bias into the Perennial Philosophy – the universal wisdom, regardless of culture, that goes into omnipresent truths on the nature of reality and consciousness – and how the Mayan spiritual teaching resembles this and what it means to the contemporary world.

Jenkins spends half the book giving the “nuts and bolts reconstruction” of how 2012 arrived in ancient Mayan culture and in modern culture. This first section is very factual and clarifies many misconceptions regarding the complex 2012 phenomenon. This section also deals with the calendar system, the Long Count, and its relation to the sky and stars; the Mayan had a great understanding of the cosmos and how it associates with human consciousness and time. In the later half, Jenkins discusses the first part of the Mayan prophecy, which, indeed, has already come true! He then enlightens the mind with what needs to be done in order for the second part to come true. This section is very eye opening and an interesting component of the book that delves into eternal and universal wisdom that all cultures relate to. Jenkins clarifies many misconceptions around the multifarious aspects of perennial Maya knowledge regarding 2012 and why it is more important than ever before.

Section II: The Author's Background

Having devoted most of his life to understanding ancient Mayan cosmology and philosophy, John Major Jenkins is a freethinking independent researcher who has greatly progressed the 2012 arena into something much more than the utterly misconceived notion of the Maya predicting a “doomsday.” Since 1989, he has written over 7 books, all of which are accounts of Mayan understanding of the cosmos, the world, cyclic time, and spirituality, and has established great credibility over time. Terence McKenna, a brilliant

philosopher and author who passed away in 2000, said to Jenkins: “Congratulations on not only a new book, but a book that actually moves the discourse of human transformation forward” (Jenkins 120). Jenkins did not attend college because he did not “as Mark Twain said, want it to interfere with his education” (Jenkins 294). Instead, he spent a great deal of his time traveling to Central America and Mexico to explore the ancient Mayan ruins and temples, which definitely was no waste of time because he is very intelligent and knowledgeable. In *The 2012 Story*, Jenkins, at times, seems frustrated due to the fact that after all these years things he has been saying have either been dismissed, simply because he was an “outsider,” or completely misunderstood because of the closed-minded attitude of Western science – which does not allow the multidimensional understanding of the universe, or sacred science, to integrate into a reductionistic, Eurocentric perception. Critic Geoff Stray, a credible 2012ologist (as Jenkins calls the study of “all things 2012”), claims that after all the 2012 hype dies down, Jenkins research will slowly become accepted by academia, even though someone will “probably steal the limelight” (Stray).

Section III: The Book's Argument

John Major Jenkins presents a sincere and consistent argument throughout the entire piece: the ancient Maya saw 2012 as a time for a potential human spiritual awakening as we advance into the next World Age. To support his genuine argument, Jenkins considers the astronomical knowledge of the ancient skywatchers, the wisdom tradition of the Maya – also known as the Perennial Philosophy, the Creation Myth and its relation to the modern world, the war on nature, and the ancient partnership cultures. His organization and tone play a significant role in the employment of his argument.

During the first few chapters, Jenkins discusses the background of the Mayan civilization including cosmology, calendar systems, and mythology. He claims that the Long Count Calendar and the mythology of the Maya are “expressions of an underlying World Age paradigm.... [that] both encode astronomy” (148). As Jenkins explores the Long Count Calendar, he makes it very clear that December 21, 2012 is a fact of their calendar system; the Long Count consists of 13 Baktuns which equals about 5125.36 years and represents one World Age cycle. He then articulates a part of his own theory that the Maya “hung their philosophy of time on a rare ‘galactic alignment’ that occurs during the precession of the equinoxes” (138). The galactic alignment occurs once about every 26,000 years and is “the alignment of the December solstice sun with the dark rift in the Milky Way” (140).

In Mayan mythology, the dark rift in the Milky Way is referred to as the “road to the underworld” or the “birth place” which would be undertaken in the visionary quest by the Maya shamans as they went through the “road to the underworld” to visit and communicate with the spirit realms. This symbolism implies that the birth of a new era occurs when the December solstice sun aligns with the dark rift; according to Jenkins' theory, “the Maya believed that galactic alignments are involved in a potential awakening experienced by human consciousness” (164). But, as Jenkins continues, this transformation or rebirth cannot happen without, the most crucial part, sacrifice – in our case, a sacrifice of “our attachment to the illusions that keep our consciousness fixated to domains of limitation” (354) and the inefficient perception of the ego in relationship with

our eternal self.

In the second part of the book, Jenkins delves into Maya philosophy and insights which "should be meaningful to any human being, especially as we approach 2012" (285). The Maya achieved a very deep metaphysical understanding of consciousness, life, and the nature of cycles. One of the deep points in their understanding of life and change, as Jenkins says, is "change springs from within, beginning with the free will act of sacrifice made by the individual" (289). Then he emphasizes the Perennial Philosophy which is the "essence of all multifarious variations on enlightenment, shamanism, religion, and spiritual awakening" (292). The Perennial Philosophy has four distinct features:

1. The physical world is a temporary manifestation of an underlying Divine Ground that is eternal, infinite, and formless. The temporary material world would not exist without the infinite within which the material world arises from.
2. Humans can conclude that this Ground does exist through reasoning, but it requires a shift in consciousness to directly experience it. This is a nondual awareness that mystics around the globe are aware of.
3. This state is accessible to all human beings and, once experienced, places the ego in correct relation with the eternal self. Each person has a double nature, a temporary ego and an eternal self.
4. The highest spiritual purpose is to realize that the limited ego is a temporary extension of the eternal divine self.

These insights into the nature of life are very profound and the Maya, along with many other cultures, share these principles. A very important facet of these principles is that it is not a belief system. It is a direct experience. Jenkins then claims why he believes the Maya so often get misinterpreted: it is like "force-fitting a multidimensional nondual cosmology into the confines of a shortsighted linear flatland" (308).

After this, Jenkins brings up the Hero Twin myth, from the Popol Vuh, which contains two characters: One Hunahpu (a mythological archetype of the eternal self) and Seven Macaw (a mythological archetype of the ego). In this narrative, which Jenkins summarizes, Seven Macaw tricks One Hunahpu and slices his head off, which temporarily puts One Hunahpu behind the scene. Then Seven Macaw begins to rule and deceive the people on earth. He uses fear, lies, and distractions to keep control of the people; a reign of spiritual darkness takes place in the earthly realm. Then One Hunahpu's sons, who are twins, and essentially are One Hunahpu because he is eternal, trick Seven Macaw, thus resurrecting One Hunahpu back to his correct place in the cosmic center. What this fundamentally is saying is that as "2012 approaches, self-serving egoism will be ruling and ruining the planet" (319). In the narrative, the ego (Seven Macaw) is inimical, but what it is expressing is that the ego is harmful when it concludes that it is the true nature of humanity, when really it is not. The eternal self is. The ego is like a mask; a part of the person wearing it but not actually the person. Jenkins then adds that the modern world has mistaken the "ego mask" as the eternal self, which is why the modern crisis is happening. He continues by giving hard proof of the Seven Macaw emissaries in our world, all of which use fear mongering and lies to try to control and gain power: politicians, bosses, corporations, and many other smaller forms. The biggest

problem with fear, as Jenkins suggests, is that "it keeps consciousness stuck to the surface of reality and discourages deep reflective thinking" (324).

Jenkins proceeds and discusses the war on nature, which basically is a war on humanity, because we are nature. Destructive attitudes toward nature, "territorial expansion, land parceling, habitat destruction and species extinction, [and] resource damage" (341) is primary evidence of the war on nature, which we have been waging on ourselves. He discusses the Seven Macaw archetype which "is a monster of our own creation, a direct consequence of deputizing ego as the sole sovereign of All Reality. We feed and enable Seven Macaw" (342). After this, he asks a few very interesting and perplexing rhetorical questions: "Why does it thus seem we are fated to be, on the whole, aggressive dominators? Is it evolutionary fate, or a choice? Is it our nature or our training?" (346). To give the reader something to contemplate upon to answer this question that challenges our very basic assumptions of life, Jenkins brings up partnership cultures and the bonobo. Partnership cultures existed around 5000 BC and exhibited very opposite traits of the dominator culture like ours; in these cultures, there was an "emphasis on peaceful relations, cooperative strategies, expressive art, pottery, painting, poetry, mutually beneficial trade, religious rituals at birth and death, even early script has been identified" (347). The bonobo is a relative of the chimp, and just like chimp, is very closely related to human beings, but not behavior wise; it is a very gentle, creative mammal that basically prefers love over war. Jenkins recommends that we need to divest our inner chimp, sacrifice our inner Seven Macaw and awaken our inner bonobo and bring the partnership culture back into play.

As the book comes to an end, Jenkins offers some perennial techniques to transcend the ego and sacrifice the illusions of the old; something that many mystics, shamans, and visionaries have already been doing for thousands of years. He recommends the practice of meditation, yoga, or the use of sacred plants to start the inner transformation which is necessary in order for the outer transformation to occur. These mediums are efficient ways to integrate the lower self to the higher self, the West to the East – each of which are missing something the other one has. Jenkins brings encouragement to the reader by pleasantly saying that the grassroots culture, full of "farmers, solar panel innovators, alternate-fuel inventors, poets, musicians, writers, artists, traders, and health food entrepreneurs" are at the base of this transformation and has already achieved some change and renewal by becoming more conscious.

Jenkins ends the book, discussing about the transformation, by sincerely saying: "If we don't do it before 2012, it will be waiting for us afterward" (413).

Section IV: Opposing Points of View

Within the last 20 years, 2012 has been increasingly gaining popularity in pop culture, the New Age marketplace, and in many other locations. This very enigmatic date produces a wide range of interpretations on what exactly it means, some of which relate to the Maya and other indigenous cultures. Other interpretations do not. A very popular notion in popular culture is that of a doomsday that will occur on December 21, 2012.

According to some doomsayers, the earth is subjected to a severe cataclysm due to polar shifts and magnetic reversals (Geryl); an idea of which that does not relate to Mayan philosophy. Patrick Geryl, an author, suggests that upheavals in the sun's

magnetic field will generate large solar flares causing a reversal on earth, which would result in catastrophe or "pure horror on life on Earth." This conception is much different from Jenkins argument in many different aspects. Critics of Geryl's idea claim that this reversal would take over 4,000 years to fully take place.

Another fascinating notion is Terence McKenna's Timewave Zero graph, which graphs time and history in correlation with the ebb and flow of novelty in the universe. This complex graph, constructed by mathematical formulas, was based off of the King Wen sequence of the I Ching, a classical Chinese text. Around 2012, the graph reaches a singularity to "infinite complexity at which point anything and everything imaginable will occur simultaneously" (Grey). This idea has a few differences compared to Jenkins' theory. One of which is that, according to McKenna, something definite is going to happen around December 21, 2012, but Jenkins' concept is more process orientated. Jenkins established a 36-year window (when the Sun is passing through the galactic equator in the dark rift) for the transformation to potentially happen. Another distinction between the two is that Jenkins argument has a lot to do with human free will and the choice to sacrifice old illusions and actually be the change, whereas McKenna's idea says that something definite is going to occur. Besides those differences, and the origins of these ideas, both offer the notion of transformation or change in human culture and consciousness.

A similar notion to that of Geryl's "geomagnetic reversal" idea is the Web-bot predictions. The Web-bot Project was created in the 1990s to predict stock market crashes and it made a indefinite prediction of the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center, which some believe to be a genuine prediction (Chivers). In the article written by Tom Chivers, he then discusses the errors in this project: its vagueness and its incapability to predict events that are not caused by humans, the 9/11 attacks and stock market crashes are human caused events, not natural ones. This project idea for the world to end is not accepted nearly anywhere, except among online conspiracy-theorists. Like Geryl's idea, this is very divergent from Jenkins' theory.