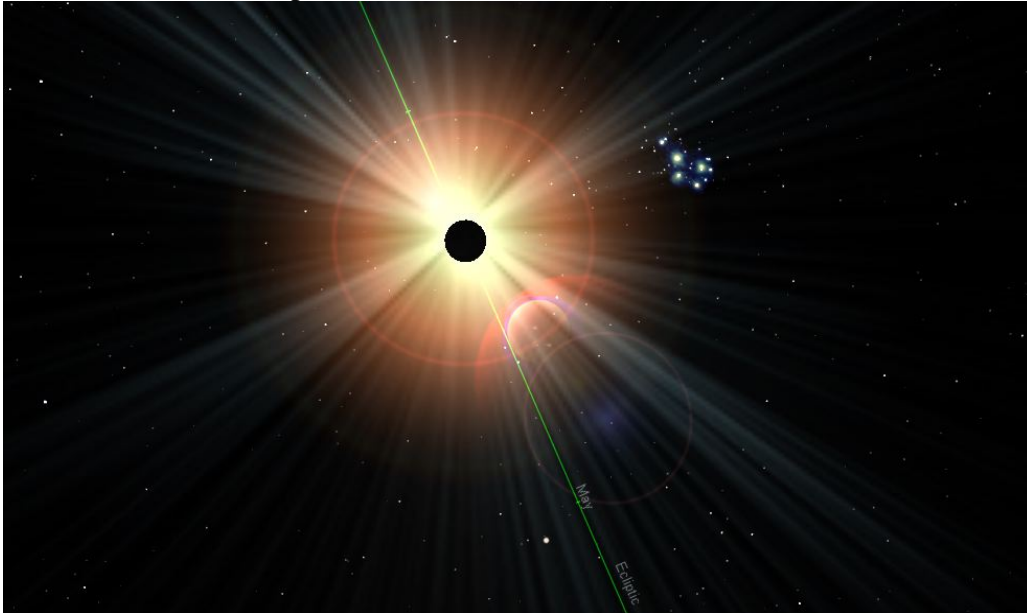


Reflections on the [*Symbiosis Gathering*](#) at Pyramid Lake, Nevada, May 19-21, 2012

John Major Jenkins. May 26, 2012

I was scheduled to speak just after the author Starhawk, and just before the eclipse would begin. I drove west on May 19, leaving at 4:50 a.m. from Windsor, Colorado. On I-80, up through Laramie, it was 400 miles to the Utah border, another 200 to the Nevada border. By 6:30 p.m. I stopped in Winnemucca and got a divey hotel room downtown for \$55. Next morning I continued toward Reno and then north to Pyramid Lake. I parked and checked in, and bumped into [Mark Heley](#), author of *The Everything 2012* book. We agreed that he would join me on stage for a dialogue, on the theme of “transformation.” I walked back to my car for the box of CDs—30 of them—I’d give away. Starhawk went late, I started around 4:20 p.m. I was in the bamboo construction called Sirius.



As I expected, no projector was useful as it was full daylight, so I spoke off the top of my head. I explained the eclipse and the Pleiades alignment, the zenith cosmology, gave my background, mentioned Izapa, the Creation Myth, and briefly Tortuguero. I only had an hour-and-a-half, but this was in effect cut short because we started late, and no spill over seemed possible. Mark came up at 5:15 and he launched into his rap about transformation, thanking me for my work. It was indeed a bit amazing since I’d written about this day 16 years ago; there were about 35 people in attendance while the space could hold about 120 easily. Mark also associated me with McKenna and Argüelles, saying we all spoke about 2012 as a transformation. This was technically not quite accurate, as I explained in *The 2012 Story*. I explained the Maya ideology for Long Count period-endings (such as 2012) as a transformation and renewal that required deity sacrifice. Argüelles spoke of getting on the beam by following the 13:20 code (and Dreamspell) to engage a reality “beyond our wildest dreams”. Terence’s novelty theory proposed a sudden, mathematically determined, hyper-dimensional object or eschaton

would arrive, on schedule according to his I Ching derived time-wave. Very different ideas here. Of course, advocates of “transformation” can have all kinds of methodologies in mind, not always good. Hitler envisioned a transformation and purification of the species through eugenics, favoring his Aryan ideal. In any case, it wasn’t much of a dialogue but it was good that Mark spoke his mind and emphasized my decades of pioneering work to a younger audience, and we are on the same page in many respects.



John Major Jenkins (left) with Mark Heley at the Symbiosis Gathering, May 20th, 2012

I then concluded with a truncated reading of tryptagonals that I intended to announce the eclipse. As it happened, I read only the seven “eclipse” tryptagonals I composed last week:

Eclipse

The sun and the moon do a dance
in the sky above
Every month the moon is renewed
enter the trance
and taste of the food
Offered by a celestial love

The ancient Maya knew the times
when cosmic deities meet
We see planets as *things* in the sky
but when thinking in rhymes
the human eye
Generates all that we greet

Every so often the cosmic mirror
meets the solar force
We may choose to hide our gaze
and not see clearer
how darkening days
Reveals our transcendental source

Here we are in twelve and twenty!
the Moon and Sun are one!
The Maya knew what we don't know:
alchemical plenty
will help us grow
As long as we don't run

From shadows casting down the light
that's made of you and me
The two that join were always here
our silly plight
is that we fear
The thing that makes us free

Man and Woman come together
just as sunning and mooning
Sometimes make a spectral vision
what can better
heal the incision
Than cosmic lights attuning?

The Maya said the sun gets bit
by the jaguar lord
Who opens up Xibalba's cave
dive into it!
so you can save
All that's been ignored

Then an hour later during the 5-minute eclipse maximum (6:36 – 6:41 p.m.), I composed two additional tryptagonals:

The ring of fire cools the earth
silencing with awe
The Pleiades whisper secretly
about rebirth
setting free
The magic that we saw

The moon now hides the face of sun
for a moment true
The other side is blazing hot
and we are one
inside the dot
Where cosmic love is flowing through

I did not feel compelled to compose more because the energy of the eclipse did not stimulate activity; it made me go within and seek silence; a sacred space.

After my talk, several people had approached me and five or six people were very happy I was there. This was heartening. I announced the free offering of 30 copies of the 3-CD program (*Unlocking the Secrets of 2012*) and they were quickly gone. A young man named Michael Armstrong (Georgeann Johnson's acquaintance) introduced himself. We had been in email contact and he was producing a film. He asked if he could interview me after the eclipse, in his traveling bus. I said yes. I also met Ver Dar Luz, a young author and astrologer from Evergreen, Colorado, who said he was inspired by my work. He gave me two of his books; I gave him my copy of *The 2012 Story*. His books, which I read parts of that night in my tent, struck a chord in me, as they dealt with the Wounded Healer archetype of Chiron.

After the talk I walked toward the beach with Mark Heley, chatted and then split up. Our mutual friend Geoff Stray had written, last year, a wonderful study of the 13-Baktun cycle and the 20-Baktun cycle. But he, like myself, had become disenchanted with the entire 2012 carnival, and was retreating from doing events and interviews. I realized I'd been at this, with writing, travels, research, books, speaking engagements, and promo events, for longer than most. I could rightly feel burnt out, as I indeed did. If I included my larger journey I'd say it's been going on since 1982; perhaps better said "beginning in 1985" --- when I started to plan my first trip to Mexico.

I sat among hundreds of eclipse watchers. With dark plastic glasses, I observed the moon orb slowly swallow the sun (most of it; it was an annular eclipse). The minutes went by; I watched the young people wandering around, sitting in meditation, some chanting. Many very beautiful girls, scantily clad, perhaps tripping and preparing to dance the night away. The music at the gathering was techno-trance of a modern variety — deep bass walls of sound driving rearrangements of charkas and auras. I had a sense that this newer generation — most of them no doubt coming up from California and Oregon — had grown up inside of the ongoing "consciousness revolution." As such, they had *normalized* a weekend of transformative tripping and dancing. It was part of an ecstatic, tribal, tattoo-ornamented summer that would end in returning to lives and school and jobs. Yet something else seemed afoot, like the final days of the Roman empire or something. Most were clearly coming from places of some wealth; late model cars and

campers, and high-tech camping gear, filled the parking lots. There has also been a sense, for me, of hedonistic and rather unconscious drug taking at these kinds of events — not universally, but it is there. But there is also some striking things happening, with ecstatic dance and creative play. It was, in essence, a mini-Burning Man.

I watched the eclipse move through the sun for five full minutes. I lingered, staring at three beautiful girls nearby. They had many ornate tattoos, wore silver jewelry and beads and retro woven dresses, loose and open to bikinis or tight shorts. Bunches of silken hair braided or piled up in — to offer a contrast — an almost elegant gypsy ballroom dancer effect. Very appealing. Tanned skin, barefoot or with sandals. One wore a lace shawl over a tiny ripped T-shirt that revealed her luscious figure as she swayed, eyes closed, pointing her face to the preening rays of the magical eclipse. It was beautiful on many levels; moving even. Youth, experiencing the magic of being alive.

As the eclipse waned I walked back up through the tents and food stalls to find Michael's bus. It was now about 7 p.m. I was there first so we set up and did an informal interview. I spoke of the current state of the 2012 discussion, new breakthroughs, the appropriation of my work and its distortion by debunker-priest scholars. He wanted to know what I could say about Terence's work. I did my best; spoke of the transformative power of sacred plants. The tail end of the eclipse was occurring as I did the interview. People kept interrupting, knocking on the door of the bus. Michael got what he needed and I excused myself to seek food. I went to the Indian food stall and got a plate with a coupon Guzel (one of the organizers) had given me. I'd call that breakfast at 8 p.m.

It was growing dark now, and Jupiter was setting after the sun. I sat and watched people for awhile, then wandered around to the various music stages, galleries, and events. It was interesting; I also felt old and a bit out of place. I know these kinds of events; had been to Rainbow gatherings and music festivals, tripping with Liz at Harbin Hot Springs, and spoke years ago at the Harbin Festival in San Jose and the Coalescence Festival in Arkansas. But something here, now, just seemed sad, lonely. I watched a gloriously svelte woman doing a snake dance to the deep bass music, a bliss bunny transported to another realm — pure Eros. Other young women did amazing things with hoola hoops, gyrating their bodies and arms while spinning the hoops in hypnotic ways. By 12 midnight I was tired, wandered back to my tent, read for a little bit, and fell asleep.

I didn't have to set up my tent because they let me use a staff tent for the night — the one Starhawk and David Miller had used the night before. I met David when I had arrived to check in and he gave me a copy of his book on the ball game; it looks interesting and he offered supportive assessments of Aveni's critiques, and the pioneering nature of my reconstruction work. All night long the music was loud and pulsing the ground, but I had ear plugs so slept reasonably well. As the sun came up, I packed up my stuff and walked straight out to my car in the lot — about a mile. It was dusty and already getting hot. I drove at 10 m.p.h. on the dirt road, 3.7 miles out to the highway, then north 23 miles to Fernley on I-80.

I had prepared a power point for the *Symbiosis Gathering*, which might serve as an archival expression of what could have been conveyed, if circumstances and time had allowed. It's just sort of the way things happen at some events. In the following days I've received three and four emails of thanks from people who attended. It was a special occasion, bittersweet perhaps to be there traveling alone, and I'm not sure how many knew that I wrote about this eclipse date 16 years ago.

Later that morning I visited the printing office at the [Mark Twain Museum](#) in Virginia City, south of Reno, and hunted down an old Miehle cylinder press in a dump that someone in town had told me about. It was rusty, missing pieces — a sad shame.



The printing office in the museum was very interesting; it's where Joseph T. Goodman worked as owner/editor. The shop has a Linotype, a Hoe cylinder, a Prouty platen, a Gordon, and other equipment that was preserved *in situ*.



I went through Reno and down through Auburn, where I found some great books at a used bookstore (Clark Ashton Smith's home town), and down into California, arriving at my friend Robert's house near Berkeley by 6 p.m.

West Coast and home via Sedona and New Mexico

Car running well, although it seems the brakes are just starting to squeak, so I need new pads soon. 1350 miles to Berkeley. Hung out at Robert's for two nights; first night was a



riot talking and laughing with [Austin](#) (insightful astrologer) and [Kaitlin](#) (talented web designer). Next day [Robert](#) and I went to Moe's bookstore and had lunch in Berkeley. That night we watched a few movies. Robert retired and I talked late into the night with Kait, about websites, relationships, and things. Amazing young woman, very smart and adorably pretty.

The next day (yesterday) I drove to Los Angeles — about 6 hours. Along the way I learned of the underground gardens and caverns in Fresno — a Vincenzo parallel — I must look into this. At [my brother Bill's in L.A.](#) we talked, drank a few beers. He had picked up an old Poco press for me last December. It's cool — will be a nice addition to my collection; worth at least \$500 after cleaning up. Poco no. "0", 12 x 18. I bought it on eBay for \$100.

I just confirmed that Honshin in Sedona will indeed be around — so heading there tomorrow. Bill had to do a job on Thursday, so I hung out at his place all day, working on websites and some writing (including this). I set up the press quickly and pulled two

prints; the first was a light impression; the second one was perfect. [A sweet 12 x 18 table-top proof press that I'll do my book covers on.](#) Bill got home late, after 8 p.m. We ate and had a few beers, crashed about 11 pm. Yesterday (5-25) we had breakfast (eggs from his chickens!); he showed me his three-ring binder with many of his short stories and essays. We are so similar in that way, as story tellers, archivists, pursuing creativity. I'd really like to see him consolidate and edit his collection for publication, as a digital or print book. So, on Friday we loaded the Poco press in the back seat of my car and I drove east on I-10 at about 11 a.m.



The road from LA to Sedona was windy and at times hot. Eight + hours of driving. I got to Honshin and Krystal's place about 8:30 p.m; we had a glass of wine, talked, and watched Honshin's film — really cool and it so clearly depicted his artistry, poetry, and philosophy. I slept well downstairs in a spare room. Today I'll visit their galleries, wander town, hang out, spend another night. Then tomorrow I'm off to Santa Fe, where I'll probably spend the night and head home on Monday.

It was fun hanging out with Honshin and Krystal for two days. I was inspired by [Honshin's expanded artistry and offerings.](#) So many great images, striking and mystical. We watched the film documentary that was done on his work --- really happy that someone appeared and did that for him. And Krystal is such a beautiful soul; she is my age and Honshin is very blessed to have someone to co-create a beautiful shared reality with. They currently have three galleries in Sedona; although they are in the process of closing down the uptown store. The other two stores are in Tlaquepaque, a nice spot of shops and restaurants and wine stores by the river. They sold two high dollar items while I was there. We convened on both evenings at their house; they have a cat named Purrba that Honshin rescued from a wood pile, a straggly runt abandoned by its mother. We

drank some nice high quality wine and talked and laughed into the night. Seeing some of Honshin's linocuts, I'm inspired to do some things and print them on my Poco 12 x 18 proof press.

In the morning I lingered a bit in Sedona, reading. Couldn't access internet. Went the long way around to I-17, up to I-40, east to Grants and Albuquerque. Car's running good. Up to Santa Fe by 8 p.m., Red Roof Inn for \$57. I drove out, looking for food but things close early in Santa Fe. I have a lot of history in this town. Stayed here in June 1986, on my motorcycle camping trip to Bandelier (on quick 3-day weekend vacation from my night-shift job at Valley Labs). Again in '88 on motorcycle and with Sane-Freeze (lost my '64 Dodge Dart on that trip) and on a separate trip with Mike Howard (with Dart!), visited with Pat and Chad in '93, other times too. Of course, Bear & Co. was here and I spoke at the Ark in '98 and visited David Frawley; later I spoke at a conference in town with Karen Bolander in 2006, lots of memories here.

It was my first little taste of old Mexico (in 1986), the central plaza town and Pueblo Indian culture. Wow, it feels bittersweet. Feeling stiff and sore from all the driving. Gone about 2500 miles on this trip so far. My nose is dry and in the morning I blow bloody snot. Weird. And my hemorrhoids are acting up. I'm like spewing blood from both ends. Santa Fe, the Holy Faith. Here I am again. On Memorial Day. Memories. So close to Denver, yet so far. I'll probably wander around tomorrow and have lunch, then head north. Maybe stop off in Walsenburg or Colorado Springs. I'm planning to avoid traffic in Denver and home by 8 or 9 p.m. It's been a decent trip.

Sat at café next to Pasquales, had breakfast, and wrote three tryptagonals:

Santa Fe, May 28

A taste of bygone Mexico

here in the USA

The Holy Faith established here

so long ago

instilled the fear

That is bearing fruit today

Artistic gay-boys wand'ring around

with clueless blingy divas

The healthy wealthy make me sick

in the central ground

is the plaza's prick

I know it isn't Shiva's

Chaco Canyon was their home

the Pueblos then were made

Around the holy Sipapu

the blue sky dome

is what they knew

And no one was afraid

Before leaving Santa Fe, I went up to the [Mirador Gallery](#) at 616 Canyon and met with Daniel Palmer, business partner of Georgeann's nephew. We talked and he had seen me speak at the San Francisco event in 2008; lived in Boulder. Good connection. He offered to host a showing of the film, "2012: The Beginning," so that could happen this summer (August?). I left Santa Fe at 2:00 pm, drove north non-stop; gassed up near Walsenburg Colorado (the Raton/Trinidad area continues to fascinate me for some reason), continued through Co Springs and Denver at high speeds and arrived home in Windsor at 8:30 pm. 6.5 hours — very good time considering it was the last day of Memorial Day weekend and people were heading home.

So, 3135 miles in 10 days, averaging 313 miles a day. I am exhausted. I made money solely on the Symbiosis engagement (\$1500). With gas, two hotels, food, books and CDs given away at a loss, other expenses along the way, total profit comes in just under \$600. My Saturn 2000 4-door car survived, now has 155,000 miles on it. Whew. I leave for Izapa in three weeks: <http://alignment2012.com/IzapaJune2012.html>.