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APOCALYPSE NOW!

In the beginning ... the earth was without form, and void; ... And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. ... And the evening and the morning were the first day [*sic*].¹

Genesis [KJV]

The Saviour rose from the ashes of the Jewish state and the Word began its slow colonisation of the world, but the new language of *The New Testament* took the story in a new direction, and something was left behind. There is more, for example, to 'the first day' than the English or Latin suggests. In Hebrew, the phrase is '*yom echad*'. *Yom* means day, but *echad* does not mean 'first'. It means 'one'. It is cardinal, not ordinal. The following days, '*yom sheni*'² and '*yom shlishi*'³ are the 'second' and 'third' days respectively, but 'day one' is different. An ancient commentary explains that it is not the **first** day, because 'the Holy One, blessed be He, went on creating worlds and destroying them until He created this one'.⁴

Catastrophes have periodically reset the clock since life began. In *The Sixth Extinction*, Richard Leakey sketches an account of evolution through five 'biotic crises'⁵ that repeatedly wiped out up to 96 percent of species.⁶ As the title suggests, he is gloomy about our future, but he is a materialist and an ecologist, and there is not much in our planet's ecology to be optimistic about. The evolution of consciousness, however, is a different matter.

Life begins as a wisp of code whispered in the void, the first word worth repeating. Cells are chattered into form, symbioses negotiated, organs and ecosystems described, and the word echoes down through the aeons into a chorus of complexity. Periodically an asteroid or ice age dampens the racket, but the whisper begins again, and with each extinction the story takes a new turn.⁷ Eye, ear and hand found shape, space and sound; warm words replaced the cold-blooded conversations of the dinosaurs. 12,000 years ago the shaman emerged as the ice retreated, leading *homo sapiens* out of the thaw with a new thought in his mind. Families coagulated into settlements and states, and the saga of catastrophe continues in a new, abstract sphere, with each crisis reworking meaning.

A catastrophe always approaches from the blind side, but man is no dinosaur at the mercy of a meteor. This time, when Death swings his scythe, the defiantly imaginative will slip past the blade into a fresh beginning, and a new dimension that today's words cannot describe.

Now 1: Wavy gravy

To Dr Albert Hoffman, R.I.P.

There is nothing new to be discovered in physics now. All that remains is more and more precise measurement.⁸

Lord Kelvin, 1894

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Newtonstein's monster was crushing the final chunks of the world into particles. Newton would have been horrified, but his maths measured out a grid for mechanism, and Paracelsus' essences evaporated from the crucible, leaving only the fool's gold of materialism. Darwin (1809-1882) described laws driving evolution, Pasteur (1822-1895) found germs behind symptoms, and Freud (1856-1939) applied the metaphor of a steam engine to the psyche, describing psychodynamic drives, sinks and sources, filling, repressing and discharging. Soon Skinner (1904-1990) would put behaviour in boxes, and social scientists would begin collecting our vital statistics, breaking society down into classes with predictable tendencies.

Social and demographic changes atomised parishes and neighbourhoods where countless cousins had slept five to a bed, where neighbours were in and out of each other's kitchens, nursing each other's babies, harvesting together, catching chickens and chicken pox

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together. Communities disintegrated and reformed around the nuclear family, stabilised and domiciled in council flats and semi-detacheds, supported by a centralised welfare state rather than the local church or baron, and powered from the centre by the national grid. Time was standardised at Greenwich in 1884, and everywhere else fell into step as railway lines arrived with the timetable, breaking rural rhythms and synchronising town clocks. This was the age of standardisation, when franchises like Woolworth's pushed their way onto the high street and began selling the same generic items on different continents. Henry Ford (1863-1947) divided up the manufacturing process, assigning each job to a worker on a line. At the same time, gender divisions were being undermined, and women finally won the vote in 1918, giving each unit of society equal political force.

But a new tidal wave was already rolling. A new aesthetic began to spread through the arts in the nineteenth century, and the object faded into the effect. Baudelaire (1821-1867) and the symbolist poets set synaesthesia to metre, creating entire works from metaphor. Debussy's (1862-1918) melodies were lost amongst the harmonies, and the still life began to move. Realism faded into a Romantic dream as Impressionists opened up space for Post-Impressionist pixels, Expressionist screams and the Cubist time-phase. Soon life became as confusing as art. The First World War was the first mechanised conflict, with tank corps, artillerymen, airmen, sappers, and saboteur units replacing the muskets, swords and cannon of the Colonial Wars. An infantry company comprised a radio operator, a machine-gunner, a grenadier, a flamethrower, a mustard gas expert, a medic and more, each a specialised part of a machine that caused casualties unlike any previous era, to the tune of ten million.

The dark absurdity of industrial society was reflected in art. James Joyce began his assault on prose, ending in the complete literary chaos of *Finnegan's Wake*. Dada was an ugly war baby, spitting inky nonsense with neither rhyme nor reason, making an art of randomness with poems of words drawn from a hat, bizarre theatrical performances with naked men banging on pianos, montages of magazine pictures, and ready-mades from rubbish tips signed and pondered over in galleries. Critics were unable to make sense of it, as artists were unable to make sense of the war and the world that fought it. The surrealists preferred to escape into the dream world, and art and life have been on a slippery slope towards complete abstraction ever since.

But just as the particle became stuck in the eye of twentieth century man, Einstein's gravitational wave washed it away. Physics had been puzzling since the early nineteenth century, when electrons were spotted passing through two-slits at once. Early twentieth century research meshed space and time together into a continuum rather than

distinct dimensions, made time and mass relative rather than absolute, and merged mass and energy into one another as two sides of the same equation. In 1922, Eastern texts lead Bohr to the quantum theory of atomic structure, and Louis de Broglie bound the electron to its wave. Five years later, Heisenberg increased the vagueness with his uncertainty principle,¹ commenting later that ‘what we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning’.⁹ Soon Bell found non-local connections binding every particle to the whole, and brought us into a different world altogether.

The foundations of determinism were crumbling, and questions arose about what was real and what was possible, and whether Schrödinger’s cat was dead or alive or both. In physics, as in art, reality was melting. It continues to melt into super-strings in ten dimensions and worlds where particles are processes or packets of information. We’re not sure what we are anymore. There is even an Oxford professor weighing up evidence and writing logical formulae on the hypothesis that our world is a simulation engineered by an advanced race.¹⁰

Mechanistic determinism was completely sunk by a handful of Nobel Prize winners within fifteen years, but the new theories remained of only academic interest as the world crisis worsened. After the Great War, a ‘flu epidemic tore through the ruined power blocs of Europe and beyond, infecting one fifth of the planet’s population, and killing an estimated 50 million.¹¹ In 1929, the global financial system crashed and the Great Depression began, and soon the spectres of communism and fascism spread over destitute states in a series of bloody uprisings. Hostilities reopened in 1939, and 55 million deaths later the first truly global conflict ended with a bang over Nagasaki. Suddenly, physics meant far more than just weird paradoxes in the lab. For Sartre, the bomb marked the end of history.¹² Indeed, where do we go from here, with morality blown to bits, with international relations measured in megatons, with a city snuffed out at the touch of a button? In society, as in art and physics, rationalism was incapable of explaining what was happening.

As in previous apocalypses, our relationship with information is changing. As the 19th century drew to a close, telephone wires were laid

¹ For a window into the world of quantum physics, check any of the quantum weirdness websites, or the last section of my third favourite book *Cosmic Trigger. The Tao of Physics* is very good, *Quantum Enigma* is shorter and simpler, but whatever Hawking is doing with those poor Greek letters in *A Brief History of Time*, it’s all Greek to me. Anyway, the Reverend does not require a page of calculations to explore non-locality and the hidden influence of the mind. Just give me a tuft of my enemy’s hair, a ritual dagger, and an unbaptised virgin, and we’re away. To explore the space-time continuum, *Salvia Divinorum* is quite sufficient (See *Appendix Salvia*)

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in New York, and the wireless telegraph, the cinematograph, the gramophone and the loud speaker announced a radically different world. Soon radio messages were sent, followed by radio broadcasts, TV programs, and trans-Atlantic phonecalls. The moving image brought the legend of Ned Kelly to life in 1906, and from then on anything from a moon landing to a war in the jungle entered collective consciousness differently. His master's voice was once all that was heard, but now the dog is barking back, with citizen journalism and weblogs, media terrorism, self-publishing, and pod-casts giving a megaphone to anyone with a voice.

In the early forties, the boiling crucible of Europe cooked up a series of boundary breaking technologies. In October 1942, the V-2 rocket broke through the atmosphere, and both space travel and intercontinental missile tennis became a possibility. The M.A.D. conclusion to such a game became a threat two months later, when Allied physicists initiated a self-sustaining nuclear reaction. LSD was discovered less than six months after. Like Galileo's telescope, LSD and the new psychedelics opened up new worlds to explore, bringing hidden processes into focus, and throwing into doubt prevailing assumptions about reality. As Galileo's critics refused to look through the telescope, sceptics refused to test LSD, whilst arguing that the worlds revealed were illusory artefacts of an untrustworthy tool. The Nazi final solution, beginning the month before Hoffman's discovery, revealed new depths of civilised depravity, as well as taking both the war and Judaism in a new direction. It also started a cascade of events leading to the establishment of Israel, fulfilling a Biblical prophecy,¹³ and setting the scene for ongoing conflict and nuclear tension in the Middle East.

By the end of 1943, the first programmable computer was running,¹⁴ and the first mobile phone went into operation in 1944. With such technologies, and with the LP record, the portable camera, and the videotape, the message was morphing. It became abstracted from its content altogether with Information Theory, also developed at this time. It became a mathematical string, subject to generalisation and manipulation, whether it was a radio broadcast, a sentence in Russian, or the soon to be discovered DNA strand, and communications engineers, biochemists, and linguists such as Chomsky soon began seeking structure behind their codes.

Back in the day, the only message urgent enough to be passed on was a Hebrew legend, spread in Greek words along Roman lines and Roman roads, cutting through the chaos of the Barbarian world. Lines were written and lines were lost, and the message changed as it wound into our informed world. Some of today's information technologies make it possible to ingest a message without actually learning anything or gaining anything at all, just more code to fill space. A few generations

ago, a day began with morning prayers and perhaps a chapter of the Good News, but for most London commuters on the tube, the first story of the day is Bad News distributed free. Meditations on Paul's journeys gave way to speculation about Garry Glitter's movements around Southeast Asia, and London's frequent stabbings draw the sympathy the martyr at the centre of our civilisation once did. Gnostic texts unearthed in the mid-40s threw Christianity into a new light, but by this time people were already losing touch with *The Bible*. The original message has been lost in the process of dissemination, and ours is the first generation in Christendom to be ignorant of the text upon which it was built.ⁱ

The message is almost unrecognisable, but look what we have done with the medium! Text has gone hyper and holographic. Whereas the linear format of a book practically forces an outlook based on causal relationships, a computer puts information into a web we can wander as we wish. This generation peers through Google goggles, through Windows into a network where holographic nodes are linked in a place beyond space, where data on a drive on the other side of the planet is closer than the bookshelf in your bedroom.

The hologram was invented just in time to supply a well-needed metaphor for a strange new world. It works by breaking up data and embedding it across the surface, so it can be viewed from any angle. In neurobiology, for example, memories were assumed to be located at specific sites in the brain, as they are in an encyclopaedia. When, in an attempt to find the sites, rats were trained to complete a maze before having parts of their brains removed, it became clear that no single area retains the information. It doesn't matter what part of the brain it loses, the rat still remembers the maze. An incredulous sceptic soon discovered that salamander brains work the same way.¹⁵ Pribram and Bohm theorised that memory is stored holographically across the brain, and others have expanded this idea.¹⁶ⁱⁱ

The holographic model is also incorporated into transpersonal psychology, where every thought is part of a web. What Einstein called 'spooky action at a distance'¹⁷ and Schrödinger called quantum entanglement is more hologram than billiard table. The hologram helps us think about how a shock given to one twin causes measurable

ⁱ This recalls the prophesy of *Hosea* 4.

ⁱⁱ Pribram describes the non-local synchronicities surrounding his meeting with Bohm in *Quantum Implications*. Pribram was told about Bohm twice in the space of a week, and when, in the same week, he mentioned the name to his secretary, she told him that Bohm had already sent him an invitation that week to visit Krishnamurti with him.

changes in the physiology and brain waves of the other, in a separate soundproof room.¹⁸

In *Jürgen's World*, the universe went from artwork to clockwork, and now it is becoming a network. From the Tesla coil grew an electric Tree of Knowledge that rapidly covered the planet. The first visionary to see the potential of wireless was Hitler, who used it to unite the German-speaking world behind him, but after the war, the story moved to the screen. A few decades ago, Indian kids began walking from their mud shacks to the house of the only shopkeeper for miles, to sit in front of the box with a bottle of pop. Over the other side of the world, billionaires in cowboy hats were driving around Dallas in limousines, seducing each other's diamond studded women in lavish bedrooms overlooking a city filled with skyscrapers and potential. Here is the Knowledge of good and bad, and of better. They sip whisky on the rocks from crystal glasses by the pool, but Billoo's Fanta is warm, because there is no fridge. There is shame in his nakedness. He begins to struggle and sweat to manifest what he has glimpsed.¹⁹ The first bite of the fruit of Knowledge is a leap into the branches of the tree, and he climbs, tirelessly. Indian horizons are expanding, and potentials are exploding. Billoo learns about the wars and sicknesses of this other world on the news, but his world is catching up. Soon he can cycle to town through the smoke and buy a dish of Discovery, and the local is made global with *The Jerry Springer Show*. The future is bright, and dark, and divided, with the promise of New Dallusalem drawing him higher, but the first bite brings only shame and jealousy, brother striving against brother, and sooner or later JR gets shot.

New physics was making waves in the classical sciences, nukes and computers were proliferating, and Hoffman's can of psychedelic worms was open, painting coloured trails followed wherever they slithered. Aldous Huxley, a critically acclaimed author even before he got mashed, opened *The Doors of Perception* in 1954, and two years later Steven Szara synthesized DMT, perhaps the most mind-blowing three letters on the planet. The following year, an article in *Life Magazine* on the Wassons' trip to Mexico introduced the magic mushroom to Middle America, and Hoffman isolated psilocybin from samples they brought back.²⁰ This new alchemy catalysed the transformation of the first generation with any sort of youth culture from straight-laced baby boomers of the 50s into longhaired hippies of the 60s. The pinstripes of straight society melted into tie-die streaks, and Enlightenment morality went the way of Enlightenment science and art. With boundaries breaking down, holism and reductivist science came together, Eastern texts tickled the Western intellectual, and hedonism was mixed into spirituality. As in first century Jerusalem and seventeenth century Europe, shifting currents in the depths of

culture cracked the crust of society, and revolutionary philosophies came seeping from the fissures.

But at the same time, the reaction was firming up. In the West, McCarthyism, racial segregation and the Vietnam War drew a sharp line between hip and square, and as the Cold War spread, new values and new technologies pushed the world in a sinister new direction on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Surveillance technologies proliferated, prison populations swelled,²¹ bureaucrats crept into every transaction and medics into every cell. The developed nations became sicker, fatter, and more fraught, but they also grew more powerful, raising a dark banner for developing countries to follow. The optimism of the Kennedy era was crushed by the cynicism of Nixon's state, and governments both east and west have never recovered their former credibility.

In 1957, Sputnik scared the pants off the Western World, and two years later Russia launched the first space probe. Scale was expanding, as in the seventeenth century. Grote Reber had already constructed the world's first radio telescope in his garden in 1937,²² and Eli Franklin Burton's electron microscope opened up the nano-world the same year.²³ In 1949, two inventions magnified time. The atomic clock divided it into tiny chunks,²⁴ and radiocarbon dating meant that an object's age could be estimated with much greater accuracy than before.²⁵ The age of the planet grew to 4.5 billion years, and the universe is now thought to be 13.7 billion years old, whilst also being unbounded by time.

History has been redefined, again. Until the mid-twentieth century, the stories told were of great men doing great things, overcoming superstition and building the perfect society. This 'Whig' history is the intellectual heir of Protestant eschatological history, and was first attacked in 1931.²⁶ Others soon began thinking more critically, such as Arnold Toynbee, who framed history in terms of the rise and inevitable decline of civilisations. This was part of the deconstructionist agenda, which swept through the arts and humanities in the 60s. Texts began to be examined critically, in terms of the biases of the writers and the assumptions of their cultures. Again, focus is widening from the individual to the process it is part of.

Meanwhile at the local level, demographic changes, urbanisation, and the new gadgets described above, as well as the microwave oven (1945), the credit card (1950), the barcode (1952), and the oral contraceptive (1954), continue to transform our lives and our minds. Developing primate brains evolved to run around with a gaggle of siblings, tormenting frogs, fiddling with things and smashing them up. *Homo urbanis* cubs have the same instincts, but no freedom to indulge them. The sweets in the shops and traffic cones on the street are owned by somebody else, he climbs fences instead of trees, and wherever he

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explores, he trespasses. He grows up indoors, often alone, in symbiosis with his machines, his hungry yellow face endlessly consuming, seeking power pills, pursued by ghosts around digital mazes. The nuclear family is stranded, where neighbours are strangers and paedophile bogeymen haunt every neighbourhood, but spiralling divorce rates, patchwork families, and the breakdown of conventional morality are signs of a change. Self-organised communities are spreading along Spanish hillsides, through disused factory districts and transition towns, where people opt out of what they object to.

At the same time, the local is going global. In the rapidly expanding empire of BlackBerrydom, digital nomads socialise on Facebook rather than at their local pubs, and there is software to translate the messages of foreign friends. Multi-functional spaces are replacing office blocks and halls from King's Cross to Cairo, and some firms have dispensed completely with the formality of premises. 20th century order is breaking down into a new type of chaos. Twice daily traffic rhythms are breaking down, and industrial, service, and residential zones are merging as the spheres of our lives run together.²⁷ Almost everywhere is becoming part of the whole, and the pace of change is particularly intense as wireless IT opens up a second dimension in the Third World, where wires will never need to be laid. Fancy phones allow anyone to instantly find out where they are, when their train is, who the third emperor of the Han dynasty was, and how to make a lethal mantrap. Whilst the potential is enormous, in most third world Internet cafes, whether desert tents or jungle shacks, by far the most popular pastime is *Grand Theft Auto*, the fastest selling computer game ever. After a day cutting sugar cane or herding goats, what could be better than cruising around a shiny metropolis in stolen sports cars, stamping on prostitutes and selling contraband?

Meanwhile, CrackBerry addicts mainline the system on the edge of decorum, surreptitiously wiping their inboxes clean in the loo. Whereas the printing press standardised and normalised language, these new technologies are roughing it up. @, <g>, ;-), and other new symbols are thought up and loaded up into the collective mind, new verbs such as 'to google' or 'to ping an e-mail to you' are spreading through the wired world like coded quicksilver. 'TXT if yr gonna B L8 4 T' says all that needs to be said. Whether this is degradation or evolution of the language is under debate, but it clearly influences our thoughts. If we express ourselves in snippets, do we think in snippets too? Any schoolteacher knows that computer game fiends have poor attention spans, but in Tesla's dystopia it is becoming impossible to think anywhere, with adverts and announcements, MIND THE GAPs and GET IT NOWs every few seconds on screens and speakers. Public and private space and time are redefined whenever a phone-call interrupts a

romantic moment; we can, and often must, log on at the drop of a text. Public and private property merge together in an age of file-sharing, and we are life-sharing as well, with a constant flux of texts and photos, bringing personal experience into the collective. Cyborg babies grow up with permanent digital umbilical chords to a parent, they learn to love screening lovers through online profiles, and dumping them by text. In sociological terms, strong ties are growing stronger but weak ties are weakening, as commuters contact acquaintances rather than strangers at the bus stop. Mobiles bring people together, but they also push people apart. They can even blow people apart; the Madrid bombers detonated their bombs with their phones.

Materialism went rampant in the 80s. Environmental exploitation accelerated and an oppressive cynicism set in as the Cold War continued. We are capable of far more than our forebears, but we are unsatisfied. Building a pyramid used to take generations, a cathedral many decades; now we can whip up a Millennium Dome in months, but no one is remotely impressed. Mediaeval monks spent their lives copying libraries which can be burned onto a CD in minutes, but literacy rates are declining in the developed world,^{28 29} and though we can bootleg music with a click, the days when every Tom, Dick and Harriett could tinkle the ivories or sing a close harmony are gone. With our time divided into chunks, with constant deadlines to meet, with e-mails to answer and Big Brother contestants to detest 24-7, there just aren't enough hours in a day to master an instrument, nor the Sicilian chess defence.

Though the neo-Newtonian grip is tightening and consciousness is being dragged into the mud, there is another side to the New World Order. During the twentieth century, political power was centralised, and colonies and tiny nations were absorbed into the embrace of the Superpowers, but webs have grown over the borders of the nation state. Her secrets are out, her sons are increasingly independent from her. 4 million CCTV eyes monitor 60 million Brits, electronic ears tap our phones and digital memory remembers our correspondence,³⁰ but new technology may weaken the grip of this amorphous beast rather than strengthen it. The civil process is becoming democratised even as it is centralised. New World Disorder means that as the state hardens up, it becomes brittle to stresses within and without. Filipinos rose up and overthrew their government in 2001 with a text campaign. After Iraqis, Americans, and anyone else online had seen photos of the torture at Abu Ghraib, an exasperated Donald Rumsfeld commented on the difficulties:

in the information age, where people are running around with digital cameras and taking these unbelievable photographs and

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then passing them off, against the law, to the media, to our surprise, when they had not even arrived in the Pentagon.³¹

People are clawing control back. Freethinkers are rethinking their realities. Scientific heretics investigate a world far more malleable than we have been lead to believe, a world which follows intention, where the apparently random is nothing of the sort. An archaic revival is underway, with meditation, tai chi and yoga more popular than ever, with faith healing and shamanism staging a comeback. People are learning magick again. The London Psychic College has never been busier. There are tarot readers in Selfridges, acupuncturists on the National Health, and a trickle of ayahuasca from the Amazon swelling into a healthy stream. Apocalypticism is the new rock and roll, and as in previous apocalypses, visionary apocalyptic art abounds, both doomy and utopian.

The End was nigh 2,000 years ago, it is nigher still today. The seeker grows sick of his cave, bored of the wonders he has built. He has been scratching at the walls for millennia, and wherever he looks, a smug face in a mirror beneath the silt smirks back at him. Thousands of years of philosophy passed in a cacophony of bickering sophists, and now the row turns in on itself, with deconstructionism crippling arguments on their own terms and quantum physics throwing questions back at the questioner, asking what consciousness is, and what experiment the researcher is part of. Historiography turns on the historians, anthropology explores the explorers, anti-psychiatry puts shrinks on the couch,³² and doctors discover that medicine makes us sick. The seeker blasts off into space to gaze back at a planet scarred and polluted, whilst back at home he smashes his atoms together and picks his DNA apart.

Everywhere, strands are converging towards a vanishing point, and knowledge is working back to self-knowledge. Fashions decorate our conceit, politics reflects our selfish desires, policemen and soldiers protect the boundaries we impose upon ourselves. Technology is substituting nature, producing robots to replace miners, waiters, pets, and lovers.³³ Pharmacology is replacing our immune systems. Imbeciles from Ramsay Street to *Emmerdale Farm* live the lives we waste flicking between hundreds of different channels of sewage. Captain Birdseye fishes for us, Heinz bakes beans for us, Harvester harvests our memories for some mythical past when we still cooked. Pop is eating itself, gorging itself on a smorgasbord of tasty samples from old tunes.³⁴ Computer programs condense thousands of years of craftsmanship into drop-down menus, sepia tints from the nineteenth century and smudging from the Renaissance, linear perspective calculated with a click. Art is fast disappearing up its own arse, chased by half a shark soaked in formaldehyde. Even the established churches are peering up

their holes. There are communities of openly gay priests,³⁵ thank the Lord, and atheist rabbis amongst us.³⁶

The seeker is cantankerous, his actions muddled, his legends half-forgotten, his muscles tight and mind confuzed. He can't get it up anymore. Beneath a wisp of hair, beneath wrinkles upon wrinkles are his forgotten balls, where the *bindu* of a thousand generations continues to accumulate, driving ambitions, pushing him to finish the job. He has seen it all and done it all, he finds no fun in it any more, but he keeps going to the end, building suicidal weapons and luxury apartments, scratching at the silt until finally his hideous old face is staring wildly back at him from every direction, and he screams, and the hall of mirrors explodes. Systems fracture and beliefs shatter, and the seeker disintegrates into his parts. The desperate grab at shards, dazzled by a thousand reflected suns. Fools cower as glass rains down, but some remain calm with open eyes, dodging splinters until the sky clears, and they are bathed in the brilliant light of another first day.

And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.³⁷

Ω

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Crazy Horse dreamed and went into the world where there is nothing but the spirits of all things. That is the real world that is behind this one, and everything we see here is something like a shadow from that world. He was on his horse in that world, and the horse and himself on it and the trees and the grass and the stones and everything seemed to float. His horse was standing still there, and yet it danced around like a horse made only of shadow, and that is how he got his name, which does not mean that his horse was crazy or wild, but that in his vision it danced around in that queer way.³⁸

Black Elkⁱ

You think the shadow is the substance.³⁹

Rumi (13th century Sufi poet)

The sage sets her sight on the substance and not the surface, on the fruit and not the flower⁴⁰

The Tao Te Ching

ⁱ Note that neither Black Elk nor Crazy Horse used psychedelics.

Now 2: EM and ME

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. ... and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

On day one, there was only light and darkness, and on the second only waves:

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land [sic] appear:

On the third day, something crystallises in the water, but there is no 'land' in the original. It is the 'dry' that appears where the waters gather. In quantum physics, consciousness causes the wave to collapse into a particle in a place. In *Genesis*, the wave is gathered together by *Elohim*, there a whole chapter before Adam and his soul, before even the sun and the moon. Above the firmament in Heaven, there are only the waves of the waters, but here in our world something solidifies where intelligence is focussed. On the next day, the earth brings forth grass where the wave has dried out.⁴¹ And that, as God says, is pretty damn good.

With the Knowledge of good and evil, the crystallised was divided and history began. Abel got caned, Cane got disabled, and the rest is a story of division cutting through the world, carving languages, identities, and sciences, chopping nature into smaller and smaller chunks, until eventually even the atom was split. The once mechanical and predictable universe has been diced and blended into a slippery sauce, a fluid mass of possibles waiting to be things, a world of hidden connections within itself and to the people probing it, who are as saucy as the rest. An observation organises both the particle and the rest relating to it instantly, via non-local connections outside of space and time. The fluid is primary, and the fluid contains the information.

Mystics often describe the physical world as a reflection, a shadow, or a secondary manifestation of something subtler, and despite the vicious boots of the Scientific Inquisition, increasing numbers of scientists are developing ideas along such lines. Work in the field has aroused suspicion and hostility in other disciplines as it did in physics when things first went spooky. Neither Pribram's neurobiological engrams⁴² nor the Princeton telekinesis experiments have been well received, scientists dismiss telepathic twins and laugh at Hagelin's crime-fighting yogic flying. One of the most outspoken is Rupert Sheldrake, a Harvard graduate and fellow of both Cambridge University and the Royal Society. Much of his early research was into telepathy. One experiment monitored with video cameras the time dogs spend at

the front window. In a typical case, the owner was told to go home at a time selected by a die; eleven seconds later, his dog, which spends an average of five percent of the day at the window, runs over and spends 55 percent of the next ten minutes waiting there until his owner arrives. Sheldrake reports telepathic monkeys, cats, horses, sheep, parrots,⁴³ and many humans. In 571 trials, subjects guessed 45 percent of the time which of four friends was phoning them.⁴⁴ Other data suggests that subjects can sense when they are being stared at (valid to $P < 10^{-37}$).⁴⁵

Telepathy is taken for granted in many cultures. It is an everyday occurrence amongst ayahuasqueros, and the ayahuasca Sheldrake drank with Terrence McKenna may have been what lead him to his morphogenetic theory. He proposes a field that tackles biological anomalies the biochemical paradigm struggles to explain. Bodily regeneration, for example, is currently explained in terms of natural selection favouring those cells capable of regrowing parts that have been lost. This does not, however, explain how losses that could not naturally occur are recovered. If the lens of a newt's eye is surgically removed, for example, it regenerates from the cells of the iris, which is situated in front of the lens. The iris would almost certainly be lost in any natural injury severe enough to destroy the lens, so how would a lens-generating iris mutation have conferred an advantage?⁴⁶ Similarly, if one of the cells in a two-cell sea urchin embryo is killed, the organism grows into a small but fully formed sea urchin, not half a sea urchin, and if two embryos are fused, the result is a large sea urchin, not a Siamese twin. These observations suggest that the order of development is regulated not by factors internal to each cell, but by something external acting upon the entire system.⁴⁷ That something, he argues, is the morphogenetic field.

Sheldrake argues that behaviour may also be stored in the field, and that information passes between fields across space and time. As evidence he cites several experiments, including one with one-day old chicks, which were punished whenever they pecked a yellow LED. They soon learned not to, as one might expect, but subsequent batches were born with an innate aversion to yellow LEDs, even before they had been trained.⁴⁸ In another experiment, rats could take one of two gangways to escape from water. They were given an electric shock if they took the brightly lit gangway, and eventually learned to take the other one, but the trick was also passed to other batches. Over 32 generations, the number of shocks required for naïve rats to learn decreased, from an average of 56 in the first eight generations to 41 in the second eight, 29 in the third, and finally 20 in the last eight generations. Furthermore, the control group also showed an increasing aversion to the lit gangway, though none were ever shocked.⁴⁹ Sheldrake's explanation is that the fields of those rats and chicks that learned the hard way resonate with

existing fields, and influence behaviour. Whilst this theory does not deny natural selection, it suggests that it is not the whole story.

He notes repeatedly that nothing has been proven. Sheldrake raises questions and suggests experiments to test his theory. His hypothesis is testable, and therefore perfectly scientific, but the scientific press has been viciously hostile. *Nature* called his book 'the best candidate for burning there has been for many years'.⁵⁰ A prominent writer of textbooks commented that 'there is absolutely no reason to suppose that telepathy is anything more than a charlatan's fantasy',⁵¹ before going live against Sheldrake in a radio debate:

Interviewer: He said 25 percent was what you would expect, but what he got was 45 percent, that is remarkable.

Atkins: No, that's just playing with statistics.

Interviewer: Rupert Sheldrake, he says you're just playing with statistics. He doesn't believe a word of it. What do you say to him?

Sheldrake: ... May I ask you Professor Atkins if you've actually studied any of this evidence or any other evidence?

Atkins: No, but I would be very suspicious of it.

Sheldrake: Of course, being suspicious of it in advance of seeing it is normally called prejudice.⁵²

One area where the wave is finally making waves is electromagnetic medicine. We know from the aftermath of Hiroshima and Chernobyl that high doses of radiation cause health problems, and papers on the effects of everyday doses are piling up (see *Appendix EM*).⁵³ Lab studies show that EM radiation disrupts cell signalling, and causes abnormal cell division. Surveys with sample sets of entire countries show beyond a shadow of a doubt that power lines, broadcasting stations, and mobile phones are linked to leukaemia, brain tumours and other cancers, as well as Alzheimer's, diabetes, headaches, and cognitive disruption. As a Nobel nominee professor commented:

I have no doubt in my mind that at the present time the greatest polluting element in the earth's environment is the proliferation of electromagnetic fields.⁵⁴

The Dean of the New York School of Public Health compares today to the days before tobacco was understood to cause cancer. The statistical link was established in 1930, but the public did not hear about the dangers until a *Readers Digest* article 22 years later.

Today it still takes decades for the public to be informed about everyday lethal hazards. The link between microwave radiation and cancer was first established experimentally in 1973,⁵⁵ but the personal

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computer went on the market the following year, and this little cancer box has found its way into two-thirds of American households, while its dark secret remains untold.⁵⁶ Today we are exposed to 100-200 million times natural radiation levels, and malignant cancers have doubled in a generation.⁵⁷ The secret is out, and neo-Luddites have taken to vandalising mobile phone masts in Europe,⁵⁸ but in Southeast Asia, a mini-cell permanently clipped to the ear is a status symbol few cyborg businessmen can resist. Studies funded by the Electric Power Institute found no cancer link.⁵⁹ Will there ever be enough evidence for industrialists and the scientists on their pay-books?

There are fields, and fields. There are fields around objects, and controversy around fields. EM fields are easily measured, as are their physical effects on baked beans or baking brains. The morphogenetic field is not directly measurable, and is therefore something of a ghost in the lab, but neither have gravitational fields been measured directly. Until Einstein, no one had a clue what gravity was; it made sense, so we accepted it. Kirlian photos capture another field, the photoelectric corona discharge. These pictures seem to show super-charged metal fresh from healers' hands, and the ghost of a leaf after it has been cut, but what this means is hotly debated.⁶⁰ We have researched very little about how the various fields act and interact, and few care to inquire in this hostile atmosphere, but whatever the meaning of Kirlian photographs and aura pictures, of healing hands, bad vibes, and the memory of water, a new wave is breaking. The resistance is friction, cogs of society and industry crunching as the mind changes gear.

Physic follows physics into the field, but this is much larger than a paradigm shift. The centre is shifting, as in the time of Galileo. Something is emerging behind the particles, a universe of light, alive and intelligent. Waves affect us because they **are** us. We are them, and so is everything else. Radiation doesn't give you cancer, as if cancer is something like a bad haircut. Radiation distorts the field and the body follows, growing bits in the wrong places. The field organises the physical, mustering matter into form, into a kidney, an orange tree, a bee colony or a Beenie Man. Pheromones and instincts guide groups of bees and Beenie Man's groupies, but these are secondary factors, not the driving force.

The field is fundamental, united behind the lumps of mud. The mud looks solid, but the shapes are constantly shifting, reforming according to the movements of the field. A leaf salutes the sun in a stretch from dawn to dusk, in a season it drops and regrows. A lady's toe thoughtlessly points towards the man on her mind.⁶¹ All manifest particles are like iron filings tracing a magnetic field. The wave keeps flowing, carrying aeons of memory through millions of dilutions and constant agitation. Pay attention and you can feel it all around you, in

the eyes in the back of your head and the fluid between your hands, in the flow of a crowd, in a column of ants, in the magnetic vibe of a yogi. It can be moved with the mind, channelled up the spine out of the hands to heal a headache, or sent across the room to tap someone's shoulder, but only the lightest touch works. Most of the time we scurry about in circles, and the overall effect of our intention is slight, but we can do better if we learn to work the medium, sending Sufi whirls and tai chi pushes rippling through the astral.

Matter dies, but something else is immortal. It is in the push and pull between us, in the wave drifting across the bath, in the streams flowing from our glands, encouraging matter and movement where it flows, and decay where it is still. It is the second world, water flowing over the solid earth, coursing through every creeping thing that creepeth upon the land. It is where memories float and vibes accumulate, where our spiritual bodies move and mix with other entities. It carries momentum. But it is passive, like the muddy world of earth, and it is malleable. It flows where pushed. What whips it up is the wind, the third world of air, blowing where the mind turns. Will cuts out the void, the fluid follows, and the dry arises as the mind imagines, anything from a tranquil garden to a war zone, depending on the thoughts involved. The third world is a turbulent realm of hot air, where ideas are exchanged and wills clash, where hurricane hang-ups with names pass through and wreck our shared space. One will struggles amongst many. Some wills are weak and others strong, some wander and others focus, and many are hibernating in front of the TV, but more and more are waking up and connecting with the currents of the fourth world, the creative fire and life of the universe, the unbreakable WILL of the whole.

A test of wills approaches. Our potential is enormous if we welcome the magick, but for the stubbornly materialistic, it may be a question of adaption or extinction. For now, our minds are confuzed, dividing our love between us and them. We are belligerent, stubborn, and stupid. The God of the spirits of all flesh⁶² is still in charge, this side of the apocalypse, and he exercises his dominion over our world:

I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me... I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things. Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it.⁶³

'And from the west'!?

Now 3: The Flippin' Poles!

Have we of all mankind been deemed deserving that heaven, its poles uptorn, should overwhelm us. In our time has the last day come? Alas for us, by bitter fate begotten, to misery doomed, whether we have lost the sun or banished it!⁶⁴

Seneca

A dazzling sun rises over Rio Branco, casting my apocalyptic concerns into the shade. Yesterday was milder, last week the rainforest justified its name by raining solidly for days, but the sun keeps rising, and always in the east. Common sense tells us that it will continue, as do the principles of inductivism, but can we be sure? Einstein was not so sure. He wrote the forward to a book which proposed that sudden shifts in the axis of the planet's rotation caused temperate zones to be thrown towards the poles. The author cites evidence including mammoth trapped in Siberian ice sheets, which must have frozen extremely rapidly to be so well preserved. The buttercups lodged between their teeth only grow in warm climates, also implying a rapid shift in latitude.⁶⁵

Change in the earth's rotation would also explain why the Nile once wound the opposite way across Africa to empty into the Atlantic, as indicated by satellite radar photos and confirmed by smooth pebbles and river beds uncovered beneath the sand dunes.⁶⁶ There is also the geological record. When certain rocks are formed, iron flecks align with the magnetic field at the time, which depends on the planet's rotation. Lava deposits from prehistoric eruptions in Sicily and Hawaii indicate several flips,⁶⁷ and in the Arctic Circle, different layers of iron ore suggest repeated changes and reversals between 20,000 and 30 million years apart.⁶⁸ One 800 million years ago is contemporaneous with changes in oceanic ecology, and is thought to be due to shifting warm and cold currents.⁶⁹ The most recent flip recorded is 780,000 years ago, within human history but well outside of recorded history.

Since the earth's magnetic field was first measured in 1845 it has weakened by ten to fifteen percent, and the rate of decrease is accelerating. This preceded flips in the past, and some scientists expect another, but a California University geologist shrugs his shoulders about the future: 'It's a very complicated, chaotic system, and it has a life of its own.'⁷⁰ For now, the chaos is increasing. The field was never uniform, it is a shifting sea of charge, and as it weakens new regions of irregularity appear, like slow moving electromagnetic whirlpools. As well as a life of its own, it appears to have a sense of purpose, or of poetry. A leading researcher describes one vortex:

It's a new one, a little thing... Time will tell whether it develops into something significant. But it is here in the North Atlantic, moving towards the Pentagon.⁷¹

Dr. Jackman of NASA speculates that a flip would put the earth at the mercy of solar radiation; the atmosphere would become hostile to life, electrical systems from traffic lights to neurones would suffer, and our immune systems might collapse. She might look on the bright side if she got out more. More widely travelled NASA employees report blissful and spiritual experiences from trips outside the atmosphere, where the field is negligible. As the poles switch, we will pass through a zero charge phase. When our bodies go into meltdown, our spirits could be flying.

A flip in the last few thousand years would be too recent to show up in the geological record, but Isaiah's threat is one of many curious legends. *The Talmud* relates how Noah's flood came seven days after 'the Holy One, blessed be He, reversed the order of nature, the sun rising in the west and setting in the east.'⁷² Another Middle Eastern legend is remembered in a Syrian poem describing a Goddess who 'exchanged the two dawns and the positions of the stars' and 'massacred the population of the Levant'⁷³ (the coastlands and islands of the eastern Mediterranean, which would quickly succumb to rising seas). Socrates describes how there:

occurs a great destruction of them [animals], which extends also to the life of man; few survivors of the race are left, and those who remain become the subjects of several novel and remarkable phenomena, and of one in particular, which takes place at the time when the transition is made to the cycle opposite to that in which we are now living... The life of all animals first came to a standstill, and the mortal nature ceased to be or look older, and was then reversed and grew young.⁷⁴

Not only Seneca, but Herodotus,⁷⁵ Sophocles, Euripides, and Apollodorus tell Greek stories about the course of the sun changing.⁷⁶ The Roman Pomponius Mela notes that these stories come from Egypt.⁷⁷ The Egyptian Sun god was sometimes titled Harakhte, meaning 'west-rising'.⁷⁸ An ancient Egyptian papyrus describes an upheaval of fire and water, when 'the south becomes north, and the earth turns over'.⁷⁹ Another describes the chaotic climate as 'Earth turned upside down', and in another, the sun 'ceased to live in the occident, and shines, a new one, in the orient'.⁸⁰

Chinese sources describe the new order since the stars changed to their present direction.⁸¹ In Mayan legends, the sun sets one day as normal in the East, but rises unexpectedly the following day from the East, as it does today.⁸² The sun's path is different depending on where

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the legend is told. A Native American legend, for example, describes when the sun hovered over the horizon before coming back again,⁸³ whereas the Jewish myths remember how the sun stayed high in the sky. Climactic events are also different. In legends from Mediterranean regions, a flood often accompanies the flip, and this also happens in an Aztec myth.⁸⁴ In the epic *Kalevala*, however, written far north in the chilly wastes of Finland, the sun and moon disappear and a cold dark famine ravages the land.⁸⁵

The Norse *Edda* begins with the end of paradise in Middle Earth, when the sun turns from the south and forgets where his home is, along with the moon and the planets.⁸⁶ The gods gather the planets together and assign names, but why? Had the names been forgotten? Had they never existed? Naming is one of several motifs *The Edda* shares with *The Bible*. Men lose their innocence, they smithy treasures and go to war, recalling the vanity, jealousy and violence of the first Biblical family, and the rest of *The Edda* is a bloody story that ends, like *The Bible*, 'with mighty whoredom'.⁸⁷ The cataclysmic battle of Ragnarök is provoked by Loki, a malicious trickster with much in common with our devil. Loki was once Odin's favourite, as Lucifer was God's. He causes chaos and misery wherever he goes, but he also raises questions, and brings new understanding.ⁱ At the end of *The Edda*, the sun changes course again. Three terrible winters follow without summers, and then Loki attacks Heimdall, the guardian of Asgard and the status quo. Chaos and order annihilate each other. Doomed men die, the heavens split, the earth quakes, crags topple, hot stars fall from heaven, and the Midgard Serpent spits fire which devours the world, all

ⁱ The trickster educates man in Bible stories, Yoruba legends, and the myth of Prometheus, who stole fire from the Olympians to give to man. Loki, whose name recalls fire (*logi*), cut Odin's wife's hair as she slept, and then, as in most of his stories, he attempted to get himself out of trouble. He ordered a well-smithied wig from the dwarves, but also exploited a rivalry to win other prizes, including Thor's Hammer, the only weapon which could kill the giants. Note the parallels with scientific inquiry. He played his initial trick for no reason other than that he could, and then in repairing the damage, he discovers tools to dominate the earth. Scientists do short-sighted things, often simply because they can, and are forced into building water filters and flood barriers to reverse the damage done; avenues of research do often throw up completely unexpected technologies.

Loki's offspring is another symbol of inquiry, the Midgard Serpent who stretches around the world to bite his tail. This is the Ouroboros, with teeth returning to the root. His other child is the Fenris Wolf, who bites off the god of battle's hand, recalling how technological weapons take the skill out of battle. The Fenris Wolf bears Skill and Hati, monsters so mighty that they devour the sun. Eventually one of Loki's tricks kills Odin's beloved son, the god of the sun. Though Loki turns into a salmon to escape, he is caught in a net which he himself had made. The trickster is usually trapped by his own cleverness, as Rumpelstiltskin reveals his own name; and the serpent bites his tail. In another reflexive image, Loki is bound by his own entrails and tortured between heaven and earth, a place where all the best gods and god-men meet their ends and make new beginnings.

of which parallel events in *Revelation*. The earth sinks into the sea and base urges take over, but finally 'I see the earth anew rise all green from the waves again'.⁸⁸ The trials are over. The world is reborn perfect, and without suffering, as in the close of *Revelation*.

In *Revelation*, the grand finale is announced by 'an angel standing in the sun',⁸⁹ and the saviour is Jesus Christ, whose solar nature is discussed in *Exu's Journey*. In our dark times, a ray of hope is breaking through the smoke, as the system reminds us it is solar. Scientists forecast an imminent drop of about 0.2°C in the sun's temperature.⁹⁰ The high sunspot activity of the last 50 years is expected to crash in the next decade as it did during 'the little ice-age', which chilled Protestant hotheads and ruined harvests during the last upheaval. Solar winds are already blowing colder.⁹¹ As ever, salvation comes from beyond the scope of the perceived problem.

The sun also has another trick, which may push the balance in the next decade. Like the earth, our sun has a magnetic field, but it flips once every eleven years, regular as clockwork, at the peak of the sunspot cycle. The last flip took place throughout 2001, when its magnetic north moved to our south, into a configuration that stabilises our field. The earth's field continued to weaken, however, and in 2012, when the sun flips again, the pressure will increase again. Models predict that the cycle we have just entered will produce EM storms 30 - 50 percent stronger than in the last cycle, sending out sudden surges in EM fields, and physicists predict issues with electronics.⁹²

What might happen to us if the field collapsed? The brain is an electromagnetic system with measurable waves and magnetic compounds distributed throughout,⁹³ so something would happen, surely. Magnetic disturbances mess with computer memory, and perhaps our brains would be wiped, but the fact that there *are* legends recalling a flip suggest that something is remembered at least, and that some people survived.

A global epileptic fit might be dreadful, but it might be fantastic, with every insult forgotten, every hang-up unhooked, every habit dissolved. We might have no idea what a cigarette is, what NATO means, or what writing is for. We might be struck dumb, and we might not care. We might become cosmic babies floating through synaesthetic chaos, savants inspired with genius. EM irregularities around power lines can induce headaches, and the high field of the electroconvulsive shock has powerful mental effects, but the 'God helmet' produces various spiritual experiences with EM stimulation (See *Neuro-apocalypse 3*).⁹⁴ The EM field is one of an unknown number of fields, and others may react differently or not at all. Quantum fields have nothing to do with EM radiation. According to researchers into mind over matter, will works

through non-EM pathways, through magnetically sealed rooms and over hundreds of miles.⁹⁵ A flip could be heaven or hell depending on your state, and the parts in hidden dimensions.

The timing of the sun's flip is ominous, because 2012 is the year the Mayan calendar ends. The Mayans were the multi-function Casio watches of the ancient world, with a calendar comprising cycles for the moon, for Venus and other planets, for various gods, for civil, ceremonial, and sacred occasions, and for auspicious days. Already in use 3,000 years ago, it is by far the most accurate calendar humanity has ever produced. It would lose only one day in 6,000 years if it were endless like most calendars, including our Gregorian system, which is shamefully inaccurate in comparison, despite being only half a millennium old. The cycles, however, finish neatly on December 21st, 2012, on the winter solstice. This is also the day the plane of the earth's orbit crosses at right angles the plane of the Milky Way. It is also, of course, a special day for various boundary-crossing god-men, each bringing their own version of the sacred tree to the birthday party.

There is more going on on this day, according to apocalypitics and astronomers alike, but to be honest, I know very little about Mayans, except that their calendar was stunningly accurate. How the Mayans or their ancestors produced it is a matter of speculation. Presumably they had neither telescopes nor calculators. But they did have spirits and magick mushrooms. Further south, the Incas used coca leaves, yopo seeds, possibly ayahuasca. They produced a different calendar, but one which also predicts an immanent transformation. Their descendents in the Andes call this *patcha-kut'i*. *Patcha* is earth, space and time all rolled together into a wrap Einstein would have eaten. *Kut'i* means 'reversal', and a *patcha-kut'i* is the period every 500 years or so when the upper and lower worlds exchange positions.

Half a millennium ago, as Europe was slipping into chaos, Spaniards destroyed the Inca Empire, which had itself been founded another half-millennium before. Eleventh century Europe was, however, at a low point. The Byzantine Empire collapsed suddenly, leaving a power vacuum for Norman and Holy Roman to grow into. As the last pagan kingdoms fell in Scandinavia, the Great Schism was tearing the Eastern and Western Churches apart. The papacy was corrupt. Christian scholarship was at an all-time low. Almost the only history to survive is written in shoddy Latin at a time when most monks could barely write at all. It chronicled how Vesuvius was exploding often and with devastating force, St. Anthony's Fire was killing droves, and 'a most mighty famine raged for five years throughout the Roman world'. Fires scorched cities across Gaul to Rome herself, where St. Peter's church burned. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was overthrown.⁹⁶

Amidst apocalyptic signs, the first Crusade set out towards the Holy Land, but whilst the body count was impressive, crusaders were no match for a Muslim world at the height of its influence. Whilst the Muslim polymath Avicenna was compiling his encyclopaedic works on life, the universe and everything, Muslim troops pushed south into India and Africa, and west into Asia Minor, crippling Byzantium. The eleventh century was also the apex of classical Chinese culture, during which her population doubled and her technologies proliferated.

Winding back another 500 years, as the Anglo-Saxons were becoming established in England, Byzantine princes finally emerged from the ruins of the ruptured Pax Romana. Justinian codified the law and kick-started a 500-year expansion, sending Goths and Vandals back to their chilly homelands, and sending his politicised Christianity across Europe. In 571, Mohammed was born and Islam exploded onto the scene, with a new holy book and a talent for conquest.

Back one more click to the birth of the Common Era. Rome had been democratic for five centuries, and had grown from little more than a town to a republic covering the whole Mediterranean region, from the Britons at the edge of the world to beardy weirdies of Judaea, whose renegade prophet would eventually become hers. The Caesars subverted the republic in the early decades of the millennium. Emperors began murdering and impregnating their closest relatives, whilst massacring both citizens and conquered peoples. The empire soon went into decline. As a rash of Jewish apocalyptic literature was emerging in Israel, Cicero (106-43BC), Virgil (70-19BC), Ovid (43BC-c.17AD), and Plutarch (c.46AD-120AD) were writing with optimism about the emerging New World.⁹⁷ The first century was cataclysmic for the people of the book, and eventually world changing for the rest of the planet.

Another half-millennium before, Rome overthrew her monarchy, and the slow expansion of the republic began, whilst at the same time la Tène culture was spreading a new level of thought through the Gallic world, from Russian steppes to British Isles. Greece was entering what has been called 'the most decisively productive century for the maturation of man's mind in the history of the world.'⁹⁸ As Athens was emerging as the political centre of the Greek states,⁹⁹ Pythagoras (c.580-500BC) mixed maths into cosmology, and removed rapture from religion. Gautama (c.563-c.460BC) ate Buddhism for pudding in India, and Confucius (551-478BC) and Solon (638-558BC) put the Chinese and Athenian states in order. Cyrus the Great (?-c.530BC) brought the end of the world and the mark of Zoroaster to the Middle East, as well

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as a new cosmopolitan empire, where foreign gods and kings were respected.ⁱ This universalism echoes the teachings of his contemporaries Buddha and Xenophanes (c.570-c.480BC), and it would develop amongst the Hellenistic and Roman conquerors after him. Cyrus also brought the rule of law to pagan Israel, laying the foundations for a meta-culture that has waxed and waned through the ages and *patcha-kut*'is until today.

Records become scarce looking further back...

Reverend...

... but King David arrived in Jerusalem around 1000 BC.¹⁰⁰ Meanwhile the Iron Age began in Europe and the Bronze Age ended. These were all small *patcha-kut*'is, but sometimes a great big *patcha-kut'*astrophe comes along...

But Reverend!

... and this is the bus which is due, bearing down on the bus stop at the crossroads of the galaxy.

*But Reverend, stop!
You are too hungry for signs!*

Was that two and a half thousand years in four paragraphs? Whig-wag history, told backwards?

Wait, my child, I ...

*What about all this Mayan gobbledigook?
Patcha-flippin'-cooties?*

Yes, I see ...

ⁱ Zoroaster himself may also have lived in this period, but his dates are disputed.

*Come back to your flock lest you stumble,
Reverend! The paths of the Andes are not the
paths of your cloister, nor do the gods of the
Mayans know your prayers.*

... no, my child.

I mean... polar flips?

What are you, a bleedin' geologist as well?

An astronomer?

Eh?

Yes... No... I see. Thank-you.

What the last day meant for the Mayans is also a matter of speculation, but the calendar stops and does not start again, suggesting that time might be different. This would be the case if the earth's rotation changed. The nature of such a world stretches the imagination. If we are not bound by time's arrow, like certain quanta in particle physics, could we move into a place where dead people are still alive? Is this the resurrection of the dead, foreseen by Greek and Jewish philosophers?¹⁰¹

Terrence McKenna apparently calculated the same end date independently, using maths based on an insight into the *I Ching* gained during an ayahuasca session.¹⁰² Whilst this is fascinating, it is at this point that I step back from the abyss, lest I be swallowed up. A little heavy fretting is about as far as Nemu goes on a first and final date, maybe some pole-exchange fantasies if he's really Revved up, but swapping numbers is just a bit too much commitment. There are a bewildering number of books on 2012, gigs and gigs of websites, some accompanied by spacey digital music, many completely bonkers. The apocalypse fast approaches, my brothers and sisters, and I have more important things to do with my time than read the rantings of madmen. I have my own rant to reveal. I have spent a furtive night trawling through the web, and as the sun rises in the east once again, apparently unconcerned by the recent scarcity of sacrificial hearts, I believe I have hit upon a winner, an earlier date to satisfy my impatient nature:

If the prophetic Mayan Calendar... is primarily based on material processes, then matter would be primary to consciousness and this would affect also our view of ourselves as a lump of matter rather

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than a spirit. On the other hand, if we are primarily consciousness, evolving according to a cosmic divine time plan, then we are aspects of the divine coming into existence, and the purpose of human evolution will gradually manifest as we approach the end of these creation cycles on October 28, 2011.¹⁰³

I'm too tired to understand what he is on about, but I'd rather be an aspect of the divine than a lump of clay, and October 28th is my birthday. I'm throwing a party to trash my house. All invited, bring everything you own.

For now, back to The Book:

it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished. And I heard, but I understood not¹⁰⁴

Neither did I. This is cryptic, in both English and Hebrew. Newton was perhaps the greatest mathematician who ever lived, certainly the most apocalyptic, but despite 4,500 pages of calculations, he could not resolve this fraction.ⁱ Apocalypse predictions have an ignoble history. The millennium bug was humbug, bringing havoc to nothing more than a few best-before labels. Nostradamus' '1999 and seven months' passed without any sightings of Genghis Khan.¹⁰⁵ The Jehovah's Witnesses are dispirited and have stopped guessing. No one is sticking their neck out. Sebastião Mota de Melo's great transformation of the twenty-teens approaches, when money will buy nothing, and only those who plant will eat, but according to *The Talmud*, we have 230 odd years left until our 6,000 elapse.¹⁰⁶

At the slower end of the scale, the odd Buddhist who gets fired up about such passing concerns as the end of an aeon has the Maitreya to look forward to, but he is only the nth of a series of man^{ry}. The *Kali Yuga* mash-up continues for another 400,000 years, according to orthodox Hindus, until the universe is a dead grey soup, and Brahma finally closes his weary eye to sleep it off for 12 million years. I suspect we will be gone long before then. The date depends on what end you await, but between the ears our individual apocalypses await, and our categories can collapse at any time. During the *Kali Yuga*, *moksha* (liberation) is closest. When there isn't much worth clinging to, opinions are easier to ditch, and brain waves are most unstable in an irregular field. 'But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night'.¹⁰⁷

Nemu knows not, but the planet is wobbling. The Middle East is as volatile as ever, Christian and Islamic fundamentalists square up for a

ⁱ There is an intriguing '2060' scrawled in a margin, but no evidence that that was his final figure.

rumble, and no tin-pot dictator worth his salt is without a nuclear program. Inequality soars and social tensions mount, as the dystopian dream of a New World Order fast becomes a reality. Freak weather abounds, sperm counts slide, species disappear, along with their habitats.

Ecologists speak in terms of the half-life of the planet, and there is an unending series of doomsday books and films to keep the 'lypse is on our lips. After 9/11, 59 percent of polled Americans thought the prophecies of *Revelation* would come true,¹⁰⁸ and the imagery of the Antichrist was used in presidential campaign adverts.¹⁰⁹ Whilst William and the Witnesses knock on doors, ask facile questions, and get told to bugger off, apocalyptic Christians gather on the Mount of Olives, and others fill secret bunkers with tinned beans and ammunition. New Age Hassids cry for the *Mashiyach* as they bounce to tekno music at Israeli traffic lights. Muslims of various stripes await the Imam Mahdi, from Sufis whirling their way through hippy festivals in clouds of love and incense to subversives in sleeper cells, plotting jihad from London flats. Meanwhile, the defiantly unimaginative are coasting on autopilot through a sick society, assuming that everything is going to be alright, that normal service will continue, that the sun will rise tomorrow as it did today.

'As above, so below.' It looks like we are facing distinct environmental and social problems, and upheavals in the nature of thought, but might it all be part of the same imbalance, different vortexes of irregularity in a collapsing field? The field is around us, between us, and within us. We are the field, and the field is going wobbly, but there is something deeper which directs the flow, which cuts, but is not pulled. Stop babbling. Concentrate. And prepare yourself for something completely different.

Ω

And now, for something completely different...

APPENDICES

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