

Archetype 2012 and our Global Mid-life Crisis

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Emergence - the Occupy Movement and Tahrir Square

Every now and again in history, our collective psyche needs re-balancing. This does not happen easily and usually involves a social convulsion while something emerges from our collective consciousness. An emergence usually involves an emergency. It falls to brave and inspired people, a mixture of young and old, from different sections of society, to make a visceral demand for change. These people are the cutting edge of our collective psyche. They help us to self-regulate and they bring us towards a better version of ourselves as we evolve as a species. They are the antennae for what is wrong with us, for where we are going. They help bring to awareness our dark side, our collective shadow, to make it available to be worked on. As this happens, the darker parts of our collective psyche tend to intensify, and the resistance to change mounts a reaction. There is some pushing and some pulling as the tension between progressive forces and reaction intensifies.

We have seen tumultuous events in 2011. Starting in Tunisia, there has been a wave of protest throughout the Middle East. The peaceful protest in Cairo's Tahrir square seemed to show the world that the peaceful and determined will of the people could uproot repression, corruption and injustice. It seemed to shine a beacon of hope and there was a moment of euphoria. But regimes fight back and shoot their children. Bloodshed continues. The shift in the collective psyche does not come easily; it is not an event but a process.

The Occupy movement in the West took shape in late summer 2011, inspired by the Arab spring and the Spanish Indignados. Two months later it has spread to over 60 countries. This is a globally based emanation from our collective unconscious. It holds great importance for us. We need not only to listen but to honour it. We should hold it, allowing it to take its shape. We should nurture it. This is the function of a civilised and democratic society, even if we do not like some of the things that we are being shown. Our young people, our protesters are performing a service of great value to us and we need to take good care of them.

Of course the voice of protest will not always get it right. The rule of law applies and boundaries will need to be maintained. But something is gestating; something will coagulate from the movement. We must listen to it.

This period of history may be one of those pivotal eras. Some of the challenges are obvious, some less so. As well as the external challenges to do with our physical

environment, our society and our economics, we need to tend to our psyche, our collective consciousness and unconscious. Something very powerful is stirring in our depths, something greater than ourselves. The following is an attempt, using a Jungian or transpersonal perspective, to make some sense of a deeper layer of meaning, an archetypal current which may help shed some light on our task and our direction.

2012 - The prophecy of the Maya

The Mayan astronomers calculated that in 2012 the winter solstice sun on December 21st would come into alignment with the Galactic centre. This rare and cyclical event occurring every 25,920 years was predicted to be associated with significant events on earth.

The 2012 myth has been the subject of debate, books, films and conferences, usually focussing on potential physical destruction of ourselves and our planet. Roland Emmerich's film '2012' depicts waves crashing over the Himalayas. This has a resonance with apocalyptic movements predicting the end of world and salvation for the chosen few. However Stanislav Grof (2009) reminds us that the Greek word *apokalypsis* means the lifting of the veil or revelation, implying a psychological rather than a physical change

Most scholars do not believe the Mayans really thought the world would end on 21st December 2012. A more helpful interpretation, such as Grof's (2009) may be that 2012 represents a symbolic transformation, a period of crisis with the usual danger and opportunity that crises present.

The meaning of the Mayan 2012 prediction is simple and profound. The alignment marks the end of a cycle, followed by the beginning of the new. The winter solstice sun was interpreted by the Maya as the male principle, the cosmic father. The galactic centre (where modern astronomy places a black hole) is the cosmic mother, the womb; so the 2012 alignment represents a coming together of the masculine and the feminine principles.

Thus the astronomical event has a powerful and pure archetypal significance, without the personification of archetypes found in myths and legends. There are three themes that seem important and which are the focus of the following discussion: firstly, the cycle of renewal, of death followed by a rebirth; secondly, the creative integration of the masculine and the feminine; lastly, a meaningful connection between the cosmos and humanity

Archetypes and the transpersonal psyche

There are two main theories as to the structure of psyche and nature of consciousness. The first holds that consciousness is an epiphenomenon of neural activity and cannot exist without it; that we are isolated beacons of consciousness in

an inert and meaningless universe. This model with its Newtonian and Freudian heritage is the prevailing scientific and psychological model.

The second model, resonant with Jungian psychology, the world's spiritual traditions and quantum physics, holds that there is a deeper layer of consciousness extending beyond the personal and that the universe is a web of connected energy and essentially meaningful.

This second model can be endlessly subdivided with various religious and psychological interpretations. The model, which I suggest has most relevance to the 2012 theme, is a composite of the Jungian / transpersonal model based on the work of the quantum physicist David Bohm and his concept of the Implicate Order. In this model, the universe is an undivided whole which is organised by meaning. Bohm calls this 'soma significance', with meaning being inherent in the physical structure of the universe. Thus soma, which is physical, and significance, which is mental, are not separate but are but two aspects of an all embracing reality.

The implicate order has been called different names by different people, but it has a range, depth and intensity of which is beyond the capability of our cognitive apparatus and our comprehension. Archetypes are structures expressing meaning at different octaves of intensity, which transgress the boundaries between personal and collective. Archetypes are ineffable, numinous structures, while archetypal images are expressions available to us through our cognitive and perceptual apparatus. An image is beautiful in as much as it participates in the archetype of beauty. Archetypes are teleological in that they pull us in, draw us towards them. They can make their presence felt more obviously to us as synchronicities where there is a coincidence between the external world and the internal, one that is often profound and numinous. One school of thought that believes that both the spiritual experience and the psychotic experience derive from the archetypal layer, the expression of which is mediated by the bio-psycho-social apparatus.

The understanding of 'archetypes' has challenged great minds over millennia. For Plato they were a fundamental reality informing matter - absolute essences that transcend the empirical world and give the world its form and meaning. Hillman (1975) describes them as the deepest patterns of psychic functioning. Tarnas (2006) writes of them as a universal principle or force that affects, structures, impels and permeates the world of human experience on many levels. Words paint a picture that struggles to do justice to the concept. Jung articulated a bio-psycho-socio archetypal model of a collective unconscious, acknowledging the contribution of our mammalian and genetic inheritance, merging into a larger matrix of being and meaning which extends beyond the physical world.

Great historical figures often have an archetypal quality. Some, such as Gandhi, Mandela, and the Dalai Lama typify that of the wise old man. Others such as Bin Laden capture a particular hero/villain quality depending on perspective. Churchill characterises the bulldog spirit for us. Marilyn Monroe, Queen Elizabeth and Mother Theresa convey a range of meaning associated with the feminine. The death of Princess Diana and the attack on the Twin Towers were deeply archetypally

flavoured events that held an extraordinary intensity of meaning, punching above their weight. Further, there is an archetypal quality associated with certain historical periods, such as the 1960s.

There is a synchronicity between the 2012 myth and the world situation in which we find ourselves. It captures the current archetypal climate as a metaphor for the way in which many feel that the world has lost its way. No matter if the astronomy of the Mayas was not entirely accurate or if we think astrology is bunk - the myth of the Maya fits our time.

2012 – Our moment in history

The Western world faces a triple challenge of ecological challenge, the financial crisis and a global restructuring whereby we are losing the financial, technological and military pre-eminence that we have taken for granted for the last five hundred years or so. This is forcing us to confront ourselves and the structures that have previously served us in a way that is painful, difficult and uncertain.

‘Time running out’ says the International Monetary Fund. ‘The world is in a danger zone’ says the World Bank. ‘New world – new ideas’ was the logo of the November 2011 G20 conference. As we approach the beginning of 2012, the economic crisis seems to have overtaken the ecological crisis as the way in which humanity is about to be sorely tested. The financial world, one of the foundations of our civilisation, seems characterised by inadequate governance, structural flaws, blank morals and unbridled greed.

Is this the crisis predicted by Marx that would bring down the capitalist system? Or is it one of the cyclical changes, a coming together of ‘tectonic plates’ that allow a more stable settling of underlying structures? The economist Kaletsky (2010) predicts a fourth transformation of capitalism - Version 4.0 – to follow the liberal free trade capitalism of the early 1800s, the Keynesian welfare state model in the 1920s and 30s and the Thatcher/Reagan free market monetarism of the 1980s.

The current, troubled version of capitalism has an overvalued ideology assuming that the markets are always right. The market is a god-like figure. Perhaps we have become over identified with a particular archetype of what market means. An improved version, maybe in gestation, would value the market’s energy and rigour but would seek to harness it to prevailing social and moral values while engaging with global anxieties about rising inequality, debt and environment.

Clearly, there are political as well as economic risks. Economic hardship predisposes to social unrest, political extremism and fundamentalism. Democracy will come under pressure. Germany knows this better than most and has a major role in continuing the move towards integration and harmonisation of the Europe that arose out of the ashes of 1945, while avoiding the inflation of the Weimar republic after World War One that still haunts the German collective psyche.

The Euro archetype and the decline of the Nation State

As nation states struggle to regulate forces unleashed by globalisation, they are declining in importance. Supra-national structures are emerging and consolidating bringing new systems of global governance. Inevitably this will be painful and fraught, hence the European experience.

As well as obvious political and socio-economic aims to improve governance, avoid war and enhance prosperity, could it be that the European ideal captures something of the more archetypal ideal of peace, love and unity? It seeks to build something that is greater and bigger than the individual, something that transcends the pettiness of the nation state.

The Euro has an archetypal quality that has a dazzling emotional significance. Perhaps too dazzling, as the Euro's supreme symbolic importance masked the structural economic and political flaws in its design! Now the European ideal is also under threat as a chaotic fragmentation becomes a real possibility. We face the prospect of people pulling apart rather than coming together, the shattering of the ideal, and the end of the supranational vision.

There are other risks. Our attempts to address the economic situation may exacerbate the environmental damage triggering ecological crises. There is a risk of a devastating world crisis that would take us by surprise and set the tone of the following generation in the way of 9/11. The most widely predicted possibility is the pre-emptive strike on a nuclear-armed Iran, leading to closure of the Persian Gulf and a new oil crisis. That is a 'known unknown'. There are 'unknown unknowns'. What else lurks beneath the surface?

Crisis implies great danger, but also the opportunity for growth and renewal. Crisis can be an evolutionary lurch to overcome accumulated psychosocial debris, a barrier to growth in our collective human journey. Collective crisis can be just as turbulent as those occurring in an individual person, but having more momentum. A crisis of the collective is 'oil tanker rather than dinghy', harder to turn around, less manoeuvrable. A small deviation in course may make a great difference to final destination. This may be one of those crucial moments in history when we need to raise our game, make the right decisions on new challenges, take a step forward as a species, and evolve consciousness a little further.

Globalisation and the world-centric position

There has been a significant transformation of our collective consciousness over the last 20 years, led by the end of the Cold War and the advent of the internet. We have a better understanding of the ways in which we are united as a global community. The major world powers talk to each other and accept that their interests largely coincide. We have a world wide web which mirrors our everyday consciousness. The concepts of uploads and downloads to and from the web are widely understood. We

can store the fruits of our consciousness in remote servers as cloud computing becomes more commonplace.

We have become a more united and connected version of humanity than has ever existed before. There is no guarantee that it will remain so, but it gives us an advantage, a solid platform, while trying to negotiate the next developmental challenge that we face together as a human race.

Wilber describes humanity as moving progressively from the ego-centric position (me) to ethno-centric (us) to world-centric (all of us). While nationalistic and religious leaders may seek to hold us in more ethnocentric positions, it may be that one advantage of any global crisis we all face together will be to increasingly break down these barriers and move us progressively towards a more compassionate, world-centric position where it is no longer acceptable for one section of humanity to prosper at the expense of another. However it is the nature of crisis that there is the potential for movement in either direction.

The archetypal landscape of 2012

Richard Tarnas, author of 'A History of Western Philosophy' and student of historical archetypal patterns, is the most prominent spokesman for the correspondence between specific planetary alignments in our solar system and archetypal weather systems which influence our political, psychological and social structures. Of course this is controversial and astrology is outside the usual boundaries of what is considered acceptable in academic and professional circles. But it is entirely compatible with the concept of the universe being an undivided whole, where meaning is an integral part, and in tune with Bohm's model of soma significance. The 2012 prediction is an astrological prediction based on an alignment with the galactic centre. Can alignments with the planets in our solar system tell us more?

Tarnas' book 'Cosmos and Psyche' traces the correlations between planetary alignments and epochal events throughout western history. He predicts that the period which we are entering, 2010 to 2020 will have similarities to the 1960s with its heightened creative and destructive tensions between conservative and progressive forces. The key archetypal forces during both periods are represented by Pluto and Uranus forming a geometric alignment in the solar system. Pluto represents what is subterranean, the mythic descent into the underworld, the transformational encounter with the shadow. Pluto has a cathartic, sometimes overwhelming intensity. The Uranus archetype is associated with revolution, sudden unexpected change, intellectual and spiritual awakening.

The archetypal tensions between Pluto and Uranus are likely to be strongest between 2011 and 2015. The last time there was a similar 'square' 90 degree alignment between these planets was from 1932 to 1934 with the great depression and political extremism leading to the cataclysm of the Second World War and the holocaust. Our socio economic and political systems have matured greatly since and afford us considerable protection, but the lessons from the past show the power of

the archetypes and illustrate the forces that could be unleashed if our systems of governance fail us.

Archetypes and film – 2012 and the Hunger Games

Film is the medium that most immediately reflects the prevailing archetypal climate, holding the imagination of a developing generation in a way that captures an archetypal climate system.

This crisis preferentially affects the young. They will have to cope with our political and economic failures, the ecological fallout. They face being economically disenfranchised. At some stage they will no doubt tell us how they feel and we may not like it. In late 2011, protest is coagulating around the Occupy movement. Our children are less rooted in the 20th century but are natives of the internet era. They could surf the internet before they could ride a bike. Their childhoods and the way in which the world was presented to them, makes them very different to their parents. The film series which nourish and reflect their archetypal environment should tell us something important about their collective psyche. Many adults will not be familiar with these films that I am going to briefly discuss unless they have watched them with children or grandchildren. Some are recommended more than others; consider it, perhaps, as anthropological field work.

The battle between good and evil is inevitably the major background to children's dramas and speaks to one of our fundamental human dilemmas. The Narnia series and The Lord of the Rings trilogy are rooted, in very different ways, in the war against Nazi Germany and tell us less about the modern generation. The Lord of the Rings is very rich in archetypal imagery and fully develops the theme of the hero's journey, described by Joseph Campbell as a metaphor for our human archetypal journey to psycho-spiritual wholeness. The Star Wars series beginning in 1977 continues the theme but is rooted in the space exploration era and the period of the cold war. These series all have recognisable wise old men as animus figures (in Narnia, it is Aslan the Lion) and evil villains representing the shadow.

Star Wars features the 'Force' an energy field created by all living things which surrounds us, penetrates us and binds the galaxy together. The Force is responsible for psi effects such as psychokinesis and can enhance physical prowess such as speed and healing. People can increase their Force through training and can use it for good or evil. Star wars was released in two trilogies, the first from 1977 to 1983 and the second from 1999 to 2005. Thus two separate generations were reared on the Force. Concepts such as Bohm's implicate order and fields of consciousness pervading matter will be instinctively familiar to them.

The Harry Potter films (2001 - 2011) continue the lineage of good against evil, where the hero undergoes rites of passage, eventually prevails and finds redemption. The Twilight series (2008 – 2012) makes a quantum step forward by internalising the battle between good and evil. These are deeply moral tales of an anguished and sexually repressed love affair between a young woman and a vampire. The vampire

represents an archetypal figure of a higher octave of man, with extraordinary physical powers, exquisite empathy and perception, highly tuned moral compass and an interest in the afterlife. The shadow and animus are no longer entirely projected onto outside figures, but largely recognised as part of the player's psyche. Goodness and evil lie within.

The major release in this genre for 2012 is likely to be 'The Hunger Games', the first of a trilogy of books that will be made into four films. This film is of particular interest as an archetypal weather forecast for the year of its release. What does it signpost?

The Hunger Games captures a different mood altogether. It is unremittingly bleak. Set in a post-holocaust North America where poverty stricken provinces are subject to despotic rule by a shallow, frivolous and cruel 'Capitol', inequality and humanitarian abuse are shown at their most extreme.

Each year children are chosen from each province to take part in a reality TV show where they have to fight each other to the death. A televised gladiatorial arena is enhanced by technology and special effects. The child who emerges victorious becomes a celebrity. Indeed the only position of any worth that anyone can achieve in this morally deprived landscape is that of a celebrity. The televised gladiatorial reality show called the Hunger Games serves as an opiate for the masses and as an instrument of control by the ruling elite.

In the Hunger Games, there are no wise elders. It is largely a story of the brutalisation of youth by the elders. There are no nurturing mothers and the only wise man, animus figure, is an alcoholic prone to relapse, with an unsavoury past. There is no moral compass except the family values of impoverished family life. Shadow is dominant and overwhelming. The only bright light in the darkness is love. Love is a rare commodity in this brutal world and the love which illuminates and eventually transforms is a high form of altruistic love seemingly untrammelled by personal interest or lust. But the scale of the trauma is so severe that love can only partially heal.

Death and rebirth

The death/rebirth motif features prominently in our mythological and religious heritage. Rebirth implies a transformation in consciousness as shown in the crucifixion and resurrection story. The death of Osiris and Persephone's descent into the underworld are earlier Egyptian and Greek variations on the theme. Psycho-spiritual rituals to elevate our consciousness often re-enact the encounter with death and symbolic rebirth, the most important historical example being the mysteries of Eleusis in ancient Greece, a potent and stylised ritual in a dark place, aided by the psychedelic potion kykeon.

Jung described this using alchemical analogies. There is the descent, the moving into a dark and difficult place in the psyche. This is the darkening, the 'nigredo'. There follows the phase of illumination, an inrush of something from beyond the ego,

which inspires and holds potential for transformation (albedo). The final phase, the reddening (rubedo) is the rebirth process, bringing it back home. This involves the integration of the unconscious material into the ego in a way that is unique to the individual and predisposed towards growth – individuation.

The process of ego death and rebirth implies a painful process where attachment to ego structures is withdrawn. This ultimately enables the ego to make more mature and functional attachments and flow with greater freedom and less impediment to further growth. A different kind of person emerges. The capacity for radical change in crisis is probably related to personality factors, the stage of development, the intensity of the crisis and the support systems modifying and integrating the aftermath.

Death and rebirth is like the weeding of a garden. The constricting and growth depleting parts of ego, like the weeds, have a powerful tendency to grow back. Often the same type of weed reappears and the process needs repeating. Perhaps careful tending of the garden, regular psycho-spiritual practice, meditation or similar, can keep it largely weed-free.

An element of ego death normally occurs as we age and die to that part of ourselves that we used to be. We try to lose gracefully the identification with the narcissism of youth, although Silvio Berlusconi shows us that there are exceptions. Sometimes the evolving process gets arrested and the adjustment is more abrupt. Sometimes it takes a crisis to force a person to face the choices. Sometimes the person cannot make the adjustment required and the crisis intensifies. Sometimes there is physical death.

A hard-living, middle-aged man suffers a heart attack. This life threatening crisis forces him to consider his lifestyle. He's advised to stop smoking, drink less, eat sensibly and take some regular exercise. The tension between his characteristic psychological defences of denial and the physical reality intensifies. Instinct encourages him to carry on as before and ignore the mortal risk. But the heart attack and encounter with death is difficult to ignore.

For the first time, he considers radical change. This is difficult, requiring serious thought and effort and a decathecting from pastimes and a certain relationship with lifestyle that gave pleasure in the past. Ideally he could transform his attitude to life and make the obvious lifestyle changes, becoming a little older, a little wiser. The encounter with death often causes an alteration in relationship with the world around him – perhaps being kinder, gentler, more conscious to people. There may be a movement from consumption to contribution. He may even develop spiritual interest and practice. If he was one of the 12% or so who had a numinous Near Death Experience after a cardiac arrest, then the changes would be more pronounced.

If he had made those lifestyle changes earlier, he wouldn't have needed the heart attack. But once he has had the heart attack triggering a more profound crisis, there may be more scope for much deep structural changes than would otherwise have been the case.

Our collective situation could be likened to this man... let's call him Adam. Are we going to have a soft death rebirth process and make the lifestyle changes before we damage our coronary arteries? Or do we need our infarct? How much of a collective death experience do we need to have before we can make that decisive movement forward?

Morality and spirituality

This is a new type of crisis. There is no pestilence or famine. There is no blood on the streets in the West. It is not the challenge to the survival of the tribe or nation state with which we are familiar. We will not be called upon to fight on the beaches or capture the Dunkirk spirit. No doubt we could do that if need arose – it is deeply ingrained. It seems more in tune with a need for a new moral compass, a new psycho-spiritual interpretation of where we are and where we think we are going.

Richard Dannatt, former chief of the armed forces in the UK spoke to this in the 2011 Theos lecture, suggesting that a moral dimension needs to be underpinned by a spiritual dimension. If morals belong to the head, then spiritual values are very much a thing of the heart. Dannatt gives a definition of spiritual belief as the belief in 'something more than this, something far bigger than ourselves, something bigger and deeper than we can imagine or rationalise'. This is a nice description, simple and un-muddled by ideology.

Dannatt emphasises the important link between the proximity of death in active service and spiritual opening, noting that even the toughest of men, when chips are down are reaching out to a spiritual dimension. The implication is that political leaders need to know something about this and speak from this place.

This leads us into very uncomfortable territory. The combination of political leaders and moral certainty sounds deeply unattractive. Morality and spirituality has unpleasant connotations for many, with historical intolerance associated with religion, and misguided military adventurism. While religion has its adherents, there are many of us for whom religion holds little attraction. It seems more likely that in our post-modern world that there may be a multiplicity of expressions of the broad spirituality described by Dannatt - the key idea is that of something bigger and something unfathomable. But how do we understand this in more psychological terms and what has it to do with 2012?

Mid-life crisis and Mother Earth

A classical mid-life crisis occurs when the basic structures and goals of life may have been achieved and the themes of power, sex and money cease to be the primary motivational energies. Sometimes the trigger is an ego death-type crisis. Often there is nothing specific, more an ennui, a vague but destabilising lowering of mood and subtle impairment of function. The moment of death is nearer to us in time than the

moment of birth and the undertow of the knowledge of our mortality subtly changes our perspective. There may be an increasing disconnect from the persona and life that we have constructed for ourselves. What indeed are our lives about?

Michael Washburn has a particularly interesting perspective on the mid-life period as a crisis of alienation of the ego from its source. Washburn's transpersonal model describes a psyche of two poles, the ego and the 'dynamic ground'. The ego evolves as a structure from the underlying dynamic ground but is blind to its origins and builds its ego structures, which serve a purpose but which are inherently unstable, a house built on sand unless anchored by integration with the dynamic ground. I suggest that the dynamic ground is essentially the same as Bohm's Implicate Order.

Like Jung, Washburn identifies the mid-life period as holding powerful potential for psycho-spiritual renewal as the ego seeks to reconnect with its source. In mid-life, the ego's defences weaken and become more permeable to percepts from the deep interior. The doors of perception begin to open. The process is often complicated by a turning away from the world and some impairment in function which Washburn terms 'regression in the service of transcendence', in other words a necessary hurdle, with growth as the ultimate aim. This is essentially a model of spiritual emergence with teething problems, perils, side effects, some dysfunction and the possibility of emergency. Spiritual emergency is an intensification of the process of spiritual awakening.

Nothing illustrates this process better than Jung's mid-life crisis nearly 100 years ago, where for a 4-year period he developed visions, quasi-psychotic experiences, impairment of function and required a great deal of support. Jung's gift to humanity was his persistence in fully exploring the depths of his psyche, finding a way of integrating his experience, bringing it to the surface and passing on his accumulated wisdom so that 50 years after his death in 1961, he remains an inspirational figure.

I do not suggest that we need to have a period of collective near psychosis or gross impairment of function; rather to illustrate that mid-life holds a potential for opening to a deeper, fuller layer of consciousness emanating from the collective. This may be gradual or sudden. It is rarely straightforward, sometimes highly problematic, occasionally overwhelming but potentially deeply enriching.

Protest, St Paul's and transformation in 'O'

My guess would be that any flourishing of a spirituality associated with this crisis will be counter-culture, will challenge us profoundly and may involve consciousness-raising methods which will not meet universal approval. Expect outrage from middle England and reaction from politicians. This is certainly what happened in the 1960s, where the combination of the Vietnam War, psychedelic drugs and exposure to Eastern religion were driving forces of the age. No one could have predicted from the early 1960s how the spirit of the times would evolve. The youthful counter-culture gradually found its voice, its spokespeople and its own distinct powerful message.

What began as a social revolution turned into a psycho-spiritual revolution and was profoundly uncomfortable for the Establishment.

Could we be seeing the beginnings of something similar today? The protest culture in the West is typified by the Occupy movement. The message is that something is rotten in Capitalism; young people are camping out in public places in their thousands. The movement is peaceful, as in the vicinity of St Paul's Cathedral, and Gandhian in quality, although the response by the establishment may be less so. The signals and messages from the Occupy movement are inchoate and inarticulate in late 2011. They do not have compelling or rational arguments. The movement has yet to mature. Does this matter? Probably not yet, indeed it may be a necessary prerequisite.

The psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion (1897-1979) knew something about life and death as a decorated tank commander at the close of World War One. After the war, he transferred his attention to the world within and became a highly respected, conservative psychoanalyst of the Kleinian school, also noted for his experiments in the analysis of groups of people. In his 'late' phase he became an analytic heretic, to the point where he left London to live in California to develop his ideas further.

Bion knew that psychic change occurred in psychoanalysis in the rational thinking mind, attached to brain and body with sensory input, object relationships and biological imperatives. His point of departure with psychoanalysis was his discovery of an entirely different sphere of mind, the 'O' zone. This is an undifferentiated germ cell layer of mind with much greater transformative power than rational mind. Bion considered that geniuses such as Leonardo and Shakespeare were nourished by the 'O' zone.

Bion attempted to convert the analytic couch into a setting more conducive to transformation in 'O'. He recommended a turning away from rational thought which he considered restrictive and recommended a receptive reverie where there is 'no memory, no desire, no coherence, no understanding. This is heresy for psychoanalysts but very familiar to people conversant with meditation and non-ordinary states of consciousness (NOSC).

Bion's 'O' zone may sound familiar. His description of a living subterranean flow of power and mystery is similar to Bohm's implicate order, Washburn's dynamic ground, and Jung's collective unconscious. Bion was influenced by Kant and Plato's theory of forms or archetypes. Bion even found evidence of a pre-natal and hallucinatory zone linked to the 'O' zone, which resonates with Grof's model of the psyche with perinatal and transpersonal layers.

Bion, who liked mathematical constructs, thought that there was movement in the 'O' zone along a vector from infinity to the finite. Thus something manifests from an infinite zone and the key point in the process is the birth of the finite, the point of emergence from the infinite zone (Vermote 2011). This is valuable point which Bion emphasises – the key is the point of emergence from O, the birth of the idea. Try to

articulate the emerging thought too early and words become a form of constriction, a strangling at birth.

Bion's task was difficult indeed, applying a transpersonal concept, the O zone, to the psychoanalytic setting, which is not conducive to it. Experience from work in states of non-ordinary consciousness, where emergence from the 'O' zone is commonplace, shows us that fundamental determinants of outcome are not only the set and setting, but the very careful integration of the material that emerges, so that it is incorporated as much as possible into ego function. The integration occurs using a variety of means, often non verbal – witness Jung's Red Book and his use of artwork to capture the symbolism of his experience. Words are difficult to apply to the deeper psyche.

How does this apply to our global dilemma? We need some people, a sub-group of society, to be safely held in a state of reverie. There should be no immediate pressure to come up with a manifesto. It's like a gestation; something will emerge when the time is right if the process is supported and held in the right way. The point of emergence is important to capture and then it will need to be very carefully worked on and integrated in the body of consciousness. Expect non-verbal forms such as art, music and film to lead the way.

Does this hold true with the Occupy movement, this collection of the high-minded, the altruistic, the alienated and the dispossessed? Are they the sentinels of our collective shadow? They have occupied an empty building in London vacated by a large bank. It has been recast as the 'Bank of Ideas'. Could this symbolise the womb like structure? Could it be our role to hold them firmly but gently, to value what they can birth for us as they emerge from their state of reverie?

Global spiritual emergency

If 2012 is the archetype of a global spiritual emergency, what would this look like? Would it be hard or soft? How steep will be the descent? What will be the nature of the illumination and how can the process be worked through and supported?

Revolutions and historical convulsions have an element of spiritual emergency as well as the bio-psycho-social-background (history). Take the Nazis with their views of cleansing the fatherland; the blood of the Aryans was steeped in death/rebirth archetypes with a Nordic flavour. Hitler's rallies had a numinous quality. The French, Russian, Chinese and Iranian revolutions all had a religious or anti-religious slant and were carried by a transformational tide that can only have happened with a highly charged archetypal component. The Arab revolutions have been an expression of freedom from dominant and corrupt patriarchies. They show no signs of wanting to swap secular dictators for religious ones.

The current crisis has some good prognostic signs. The world is interconnected and cooperating as never before and consciousness seems to be rising. Journalists that I respect, and economists too, complain that the politicians, particularly in the West, do

not seem to be effective or to know what they are doing. But impairment of function is a hallmark of a mid-life crisis/spiritual emergency and is almost certainly better than 'strong' leadership (for strong, read masculine / phallic).

Spiritual emergencies need time to allow the process to unfold and this requires support. Support would include a coming together of forces to hold and nourish, to facilitate good developments and discourage bad ones. This would mean international cooperation, presumably with an enhancement of global governance, law, global policing, holding the boundaries.

Support also involves the psychoanalytic concept of 'holding', describing the devoted attention that a mother gives a baby, and being a 'good enough mother' to foster development. Continuing the psychoanalytic analogy, the concept of 'containing' helps us to understand the containment of a toddler's temper tantrums through the mother's ability to metabolize indigestible and primitive emotions and return them to the infant in more digestible forms. This is an important part of the role of wise elders in modern society. Certainly we should not be shooting our children, or asking the Police to treat them roughly.

The process of emergence is complex and there will be emergencies. Stanislav and Cristina Grof describe the broad categories of spiritual emergency in individual human as including ego inflation, the dark night of the soul, confusion of levels and self neglect. The psychiatric disorders which overlap with these conditions would be grandiose or manic states, depressions and psychosis. Extrapolating from the individual to the collective psyche, we can predict a number of ways in which the prognosis could worsen. A failure to address the ecological issues could be likened to self neglect combined with gluttony and substance misuse. A worsening economic situation, depression, predisposes to political instability where the leaders ride archetypal currents leading to paranoid regimes with an inflated sense of their importance in the scheme of things. Signs of a descent into an altogether darker place would include a fundamentalist president in the White House, a nationalist leader in Europe, or a lurch towards Islamic fascism in the Middle East.

Are our political and supra-national structures up to the job? We need wise heads, we need our elders and maybe we need a rediscovery of the feminine principle.

Illuminating the darkness, integrating the shadow

The shadow is a Jungian term to describe the part of ourselves of which we are unaware. This is often a deeply uncomfortable process which involves self examination and a peering into the darker parts of ourselves. To become complete, we need to bring the shadow more into our awareness. We need to learn to see and hear the world in new ways and cleanse our lens of perception. This involves discovering more about the ways in which we are both blind and deaf.

An examination of the global shadow involves owning the way in which we are greedy, aggressive, exploitative, contemptuous and ignorant. It involves those

Western foibles such as selling arms to dictators, asylum for kleptocrats, obeisance to the profit principle and oppression of the poor. But it is more than that.

Owning the shadow as a global and world-centric consciousness involves a different challenge, reaching out to the parts of darkness lying beyond our previous boundaries. The heart of darkness is part of us all. It should no longer be projected onto remote and abandoned parts of the planet and disowned; where the light doesn't shine and the media do not venture, where there is desperate poverty, millions killed in war that no one remembers and where unimaginable violence is commonplace. The war in the Congo continuing since 1996, involving 8 nations and many more armed groups is the largest conflict since World War Two. It is responsible for over 5 million deaths and counting... The drivers of the conflict are ethnic tension and demand for minerals by foreign industrial interests.

The Congo is part of us all and the dramas being played out there are our dramas. The Congo is a living and vivid representation of our collective shadow. Their pain is our pain. Where they hurt, we should hurt too. It is not just a matter of making stronger physical barriers to keep them out of Europe, but breaking down our internal, non-physical barriers so they can join us in our hearts.

Integration with the feminine

The Mayans considered that the galactic alignment of 2012 represented an integration of Masculine and Feminine principles. The coming together of the solstice sun and the Milky Way represents a sacred marriage between the male and female energies.

In Jungian terminology, the masculine is associated with the animus archetype and the anima with the feminine. Integration with anima/animus is considered the bridge to the collective unconscious, taking the psyche to a deeper more functional level, a greater level of maturity where there is flow with less blockage and disturbance. It is the stepping stone to the Self archetype, the transcendent centre, the Atman, which is independent of our ego structures.

Tarnas predicts that a major feature of the coming period will be a re-emergence of the feminine in some form so that 'another feminist propulsion will infuse itself into the culture and that women will emerge from the next decade and a half with considerably more economic and political power than before'.

Returning to our films as indicators of archetypal weather systems, Lord of the Rings, the Narnia series and Star Wars have females as peripheral, almost incidental creatures apart from glimpses of anima archetype in Lord of the Rings. In the Harry Potter series, Hermione Granger breaks with tradition as a girl who emerges as a stronger, wiser figure. She is entirely necessary to the hero's mission.

In Twilight the girl is centre-stage but in a rather old fashioned, Mills and Boon sort of way until she undergoes her transformation, integrates her wilder, darker side, has a

sexual awakening, faces another encounter with death and transcends humanity to become the pure form of Vampire representing a higher octave of development.

The Hunger Games, released in 2012, will take the emergence of the feminine a crucial step further, with a girl as the undisputed lead character. She is a violent but compassionate, warlike but ultimately a generative, home-maker figure. This is not the hero's journey but the heroine's journey.

Masculine and feminine archetypes operate at a higher octave than male and female stereotypes and do not entirely equate to gender. Archetypes, by definition are ineffable, so impossible to adequately capture and describe. The masculine is more phallic, appetite-driven and active. The feminine is more womb-like, orientated towards the nurturing, containing and slowly growing. The masculine tends to be more individual while the feminine is more collective and cooperative. The last 2 millennia have been the age of the masculine. The major religions have been patriarchal and tended to suppress the feminine. Women are oppressed in many ways in many places.

Our moment in history as we approach 2012 shows a widespread disenchantment with the attitude of taking and being rapacious, with insufficient regard as to the consequences. This applies most obviously to the ecological and financial crisis. Our institutions have been orientated towards taking what we think we need. An intensification of the profit motive moves us towards an identification with pillaging in a competitive way in order to survive.

Walking around the tent city at St Paul's Cathedral, admiring the rich mix of people and a tangible feeling of energy, I believe the protest concerns rapaciousness, the dark masculine unbalanced by creative feminine. Short-term profiteering over long-term investment. Of course the masculine tendency will resist this change and testosterone will play a part in this reaction. On 15th November 2011, the New York police cleared the camp in Zucotti Park and Boris Johnson, Mayor of London advised that Judges should have the 'cojones' to remove the St Paul's protesters. Boris, your cojones are a major part of the problem!

Re-connecting with the Cosmos

Modern medicine and psychology is still rooted in the Newtonian Cartesian model. Our models of brain are mechanical and assume that consciousness is an epiphenomenon of biological process. The dualistic model of mind and matter assumes that the universe is inert and that we live in not so splendid isolation in a dead machine.

We have gained much from the Newtonian model, but there is a deeper layer. Atoms are not like marbles – physics has long told us that the nature of our physical environment is so much more complex. The material world that we see is an artefact of our perceptual apparatus. We and everything in the cosmos exist as part of a web of energy in which everything is connected.

Evidence supportive of a field effect of consciousness, one that is in conflict with the prevailing mechanistic model, tends to be ignored. Research from parapsychology (psi) is the most obvious example of this effect. Research using psychedelic drugs, energetic approaches to healing, thanatology, anthropology and work in non-ordinary states of consciousness, show us the limitations of conventional model on mind.

When and how do paradigms change? The modern pioneers of consciousness research have been predicting a 'consciousness revolution for some time. Thomas Kuhn 50 years ago described three stages of change of scientific paradigms. The first stage is one of denial - any data that does not fit the prevailing model is ignored or attacked. Then as evidence mounts that cannot easily be ignored, the existing model is modified, stretched to fit. It is only when that fails to work that a radically new model is devised.

Our medical and scientific establishment is still firmly rooted in the denial phase. For example, the evidence for psi has steadily accumulated (Radin, 2006) over the last 30 years and any objective analysis would conclude that there is very likely to be a field effect of Mind; that there is a process of energy transfer, which is replicable and significant. Dean Radin and Darryl Bem suggest that quantum entanglement is part of the process, that psi is the human experience of the entangled universe. But hostility to these ideas is intense and Bem tells us that 34% of the psychologists in a survey of professors in the USA firmly believe that psi is impossible.

To take a recent example, the work of Bem, showing clear and sophisticated experimental evidence for precognition, attracted major hostility (Dossey, 2011). Evidence for anomalous transfer of information backwards through time has been accumulating for some years, but this was the first such publication in a premier league journal. Precognition and premonition are particularly threatening concepts as they challenge our notion of the unidirectional march of time.

The world of academic physics is very different to psychology, being much more open to shifting foundations of accepted fact. Evidence from CERN in 2011 shows neutrinos travelling faster than the speed of light. This should not be possible, according to the established model. If true, this means a remodelling of physics. The studies have now been repeated removing possible design flaws, the data has been made available and the results seem to stand.

As 2012 dawns, science is opening some very interesting new windows on the nature of time and of our being. New paradigms will undoubtedly take shape, which in turn will shape our consciousness. What else will emerge as the natives of the internet age become adults? How will their instinctive familiarity with uploads and downloads affect their understanding of consciousness, life and death?

Call it what you will, implicate order, 'O' zone, 'A' field, dynamic ground, collective unconscious. If there is a collective, generative field of consciousness then we need to know more about it. This could be a new frontier for technological advance, a technology of the interior rather than the external world.

What is the paradigm shift being birthed? It is the end of the Cartesian dualism, the notion that mind and matter are separate. Will we accept that consciousness is an integral part of the physical universe, existing outside of the bony confines of the skull and that we participate in something far bigger than ourselves? Will we move, in Wilber's terminology from a world-centric position to a cosmo-centric position?

This could be one of those revolutionary eras when a number of factors come together to cause a shift of the tectonic plates of our consciousness. Will the combination of archetypal climate, socio political crisis and scientific advance fuelled by globalisation of communication bring about a structural change in our collective psyche?

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