

A Mayan Philosophy of Time

Katie Brown

Senior,

Broadcast Journalism & Philosophy

Philosophers and scientists have studied the concept of time for thousands of years, yet nevertheless questions still remain. Modern theories of time, such as Einstein's theory of relativity or quantum theory, are riddled with inconsistencies, contradictions, and unexamined paradoxes. Our problem with time is due to both the ingrained assumption that lies at the root of the modern scientific conception: that time is always defined in terms of the dynamics of the three dimensional geometry of space and our adherence to an irregular calendar as a measurement of time. Adopting this paradigm and practice has limited the way the human mind is able to experience and relate to itself. Cosmology is, as it always has been, a testing-ground for philosophical ideas, lying at the limits of our notions of space, time, and causality. This essay will address an alternate notion of space and time, that of a pre-Columbian civilization—the Maya—in order to counter the covert imperialism of our own conceptions of space and time.

The Maya emerged as a civilization around 300 AD, in the jungle region

known as Peten, which lies between Guatemala and the northern Yucatan. The revered Classic Maya (435-830 AD) recorded the most extensive and precise calendar science in all of humanity. By tracking the movements of the Sun, Moon, the planet Venus, and other heavenly bodies, the Mayans created calendars of remarkable accuracy and complexity with dates reaching into the distant past and approaching the future with astonishing accuracy. It is said that the Classic Mayan civilization devised a way to incorporate higher dimensional knowledge of time and creation. They achieved their superior understanding all without the use of telescopes or any other form of external material technology, including metallurgy and the wheel. The Maya had a temporal perspective very different than our own. Miguel Leon-Portilla has called a passion for time “the soul of Mayan culture.” After years of research on the Mayan calendar system, chief investigator Jose Arguelles, Ph.D., had concluded that “the scientific superiority and galactic sophistication of the Mayan calendarics was due to the fact that they were based on an entirely differ-

ent standard of measure and mathematics than any time keeping devices now known or in use world-wide today.”

Our mathematics uses the decimal, or 10-count, whereas the Mayan mathematical code uses a vigesimal, or 20-count, expressed as a 0-19 radial matrix. The vigesimal count is capable of a positional mathematics with flexibility, powers, and qualities far superior to our own. The vigesimal in the Mayan system also had a subset, a cyclic thirteen-count constant. Combined, these two elements created the frequency ratio 13:20. This ratio is the foundation for the principle of Mayan measurement, the Tzolkin sacred calendar. On this topic, it is important to keep in mind the concept of a radial matrix.

The system of Mayan time science is one of holonomic resonance, as much of the future as it is of the past. That is, the Mayans held a tenseless theory of time in which the past, present, and future all exist. Time exists as a circuit; future and past flow equally, always meeting and being united in the present moment. Mayans believed time repeated itself in cycles within cycles of elevating proportion until it became almost linear in appearance. (Think of a large spiral spreading out until it looks flat.) The endless web of cycles was connected by an infinite spiral of the

eternal now: the Zuvuya. The Zuvuya is the source of the objective “now point” that accommodates subjective experience. It is called eternal because the Mayans thought the present existed at all times, as did the past and future. This union almost reflects the traditional tensed theory of time, which defines the present as where the past meets the future. However, it would be incorrect to say that the Mayan theory was tensed because the future is already real, as is the past and present. The present state, then, is rather a subjective view from where one exists on the circuit of time.

At the basis of the Mayan mathematical and calendar systems, there exists what Arguelles has named “The Law of Time.” The Law of Time is a scientific and mathematical function of fourth-dimensional time which holds that there is one natural timing frequency that unifies the whole galactic order, from its largest constituent to its smallest. The 13:20 frequency, as mentioned earlier, operates in radial, fractal, and holonomic mathematics—a totally different construct from the mathematics of third-dimensional space, which are fractional, algebraic and infinitesimally reductionist. Third-dimensional science operates on the artificial 12:60 frequency, established by the Gregorian

calendar and the sixty-minute hour of the mechanical clock. Arguelles claims that “it lies in this reason that, while admitting that time is the fourth dimension, Albert Einstein and all other researchers have been unable to formulate the actual law of fourth dimensional time.”

Unlike our culture, which is obsessed with matter (i.e., physical science and materialism), the Maya based their understanding of reality on frequencies, vibrations, and harmonies. The Maya understood that everything comes from and returns to one source: divine consciousness. Divine consciousness manifests itself in an infinite number of forms throughout all dimensions. Each possible form is a frequency vibration; indeed, all matter is essentially interconnected with waves of energy. In the basics of Mayan time keeping, the numbers of the days do not specifically relate to quantity, as is usually assumed. All numbers, including zero, represent different frequencies and tones.

The classic Maya believed time to be a universal synchronization factor and were able to harmonize different cycles in nature and consciousness with their calendars. Calendars function as instruments for measuring time. The Maya understood and used at least seventeen different

calendars; however, I will only be addressing the Tzolkin and the Long Count.

The key calendar, called the Tzolkin is a perpetual 260-day calendar created by the permutations of twenty symbols (day glyphs representing different tones and frequencies) and thirteen numbers (resonant pulsations) based the natural mathematical frequency 13:20, mentioned previously. The 260 unit matrix of resonate frequencies create a nonlinear holographic pattern. It is nonlinear because the entire pattern is infinitely interconnected with itself. Consistent with the fundamental properties of holograms, each unit also essentially contains the pattern of the whole. The Tzolkin cycle reflects a numeric common denominator of the orbits of the Sun, Moon and the planets Earth, Mars, Mercury and Venus. The base harmonic cycle of 260 is also a fractal of the 26,000 year cycle of Earth's precession through the equinoxes and our Sun's orbit around the central star of Pleiades. The Tzolkin is synchronized with the movement of energy and consciousness within our galaxy.

The Long Count was a linear system capable of tracking extended cycles in time. This aspect of their calendar system is based on counting the number of days that have elapsed since the beginning of

the cycle (3114 BC, Gregorian time). The count is represented by a master fourth-dimensional 13:20 matrix. Long count dates are expressed in a place-notation system. The most important function of the Long Count was to track the Great Cycle, also called the 13-Baktun cycle. A Great Cycle can be considered equivalent to a world age. Within the 13-Baktun cycle exists a wave harmonic view: a characteristic patterning of historic activity with astonishing accuracy. The Long Count extended nine baktuns into the past of the Maya, yet still recorded events during each era with precision. For example, in the “Baktun of the Mind Teachings” (747-353 BC), the Maya knew of the Persians, Confucius, the Peloponnesian War, the Greeks, Aristotle & Plato, and Buddha. The coming era is named the “Baktun of the Transformation of Matter.” According to Mayan calendrics, December 21, 2112 is a critical juncture of galactic cycles, indicating the culminating point of the 26,000 year cycle of human evolution. On the winter solstice of 2012, the precession of the equinoxes will lead the sun to align with the Milky Way in a region known as the dark rift—created by interstellar dust clouds. The result of this alignment will orientate the Milky Way in such a way that it will rim the hori-

zon at all points around, thus opening the cosmic sky, and energy will progressively increase. The ancient Maya were aware of this impending alignment and considered it to be the dawn of the sixth world age. The accuracy of this prediction, confirmed by NASA, suggests a cosmological understanding which modern scholars have yet to explore.

Whereas the calendar of the Maya was a tool for synchronization, our calendar today is merely an artificial convention. Conventionalism entails that there are no objective facts about our units for measuring time—including calendars. Our definition of measurement is not true, but merely convenient. Thus, we have established arbitrary agreement to decide the matter. What if this has led us to false beliefs?

The calendar we use today is the Gregorian calendar, an approximation of a solar calendar. It was last modified in 1582 by Pope Gregory XII as a variation of the Julian calendar and the earlier calendars—schedule of taxation—of the Roman Empire. Pope Gregory XII had modified the calendar by removing ten days from the year and renaming the New Year’s Day.

The era in which our calendar was last modified was one of conquering and colonization. European sea and technological

power was invincible, making it easy to impose a European sense and measure of time upon the rest of the world. The Gregorian calendar was unilaterally instituted by the Vatican, because the Christian armies of Europe had conquered most of the indigenous people on the planet and needed to have a mental time-framing device to impose all of their new practices, such as religious holidays. Within 200 years of its modification, everyone in Europe and the colonies was using the Gregorian calendar. Today, nearly all nations and groups of people have instituted this practice/calendar for official governmental and financial affairs. Thus, the Gregorian calendar still exerts a mental time frame on today's society.

The core problem of the Gregorian calendar is that it institutes an artificial standard of time that deviates from any natural cycles on the planet. The calendar is at odds with the natural prevailing timing frequency governing the natural order of the biosphere. In modern philosophy of time, there exists physical time and psychological time. The Gregorian calendar has distorted both. The Gregorian twelve month calendar is made up of units—that is, months—of unequal measures created by a division of a geometrical circle form—a two-dimensional plane in space.

The inequity results from dividing 360 degrees into twelve equal 30-degree measurements. The product of such a calculation is not compatible with our traditional measurement of the year. Thus, the Gregorian calendar is not dividing real time into equal chunks of duration.

Our adherence to its systematic disharmony of physical time has created complexity in psychological time—being conscious of physical time—as well. The Gregorian calendar has instituted an irregular and artificial unconscious mental timing frequency identified as the 12:60, for the twelve month calendar and the mechanistic sixty-minute hour. This uneven standard of measure, being neither natural nor harmonic, reinforces a psychological tendency towards irregularity and artificiality thereby creating a social order that has frustration built into it. In chemistry, there is a state called Brownian motion, in which all particles are agitated because they do not create a form of order. This can be used as an analogy for today's world society: six billion humans are all agitating, but they cannot create a whole consistent form of order that provides happiness. At the base of this problem is the measurement of time we are using and our inability to recognize the need for change.

Presently, there is a huge collective movement occurring around the world which is based on the teachings of natural time and universal peace. This movement's primary objective is to actualize a complete calendar reform, replacing the Gregorian calendar with the 13 Moon calendar. The 13 Moon calendar is based on nature's time science, which the Maya were aware of and recorded. The effort began more than seventy decades ago. In 1931, a 28-day calendar was actively supported by the International Chamber of Commerce because it made accounting simple. In 1933, the League of Nations actually voted the 13 Moon Calendar to be the new world standard, in recognition of its continuity and reliability. Before implementation, however, the Vatican was able to create enough skepticism about the calendar's "Day Out of Time" to successfully oppose its acceptance. Efforts in calendar reform continued into 1956, and as of 1992, are currently being furthered by the World Thirteen Moon Calendar Change Peace Movement-Planet Art Network.

The 13 Moon calendar has been in use for more than 5,000 years! From the Incan, to Druidic count, to the Egyptian, the Essene, to the Mayan, to the Polynesian, this calendar has been used through-

out history as the harmonic standard. It is a logical and natural way to count the 365-day year. It would have thirteen evenly dated months of 28 days. Any day will be the same day of the week, year after year. There will still be four weeks to each month; only each week will represent one of the four directions (north, east, south and west). In addition to the thirteen months of twenty-eight days, every year will have one "Day Out of Time" on the Gregorian date July 25. This date is neither a day nor part of a month. It is a time for forgiveness, love, and a worldwide celebration of peace, culture and art. The New Year will begin July 26, in correspondence with the helical rising of Sirius, the brightest fixed star in the sky.

Unlike the 12-month calendar which corresponds to no natural cycles, the thirteen moon calendar is a solar-lunar calendar: 365 days is the measure of the earth going around the sun (solar); 28 days is the average measure of the moon's synodic and sidereal cycles (lunar). The calendar will reflect universally occurring energy cycles by operating on the 13:20 timing frequency. This is the same frequency the wise Maya noted in systems of cyclic time keeping and fourth dimensional oracles.

Just as societies in the past have lived in greater harmony, we too can find the

natural flow of time and peace of true rhythms. Natural time is based on the relationship of organic and natural processes, such as the motion of the stars, planets, and galaxies; the biological rhythm of plants and animals; as well as the subtle inner-dimensional movements of consciousness and mind. It is my theory that the perception of linear time is an illusion. With the introduction of the Maya paradigm, I hope I have shown that there are alternate philosophies for the notions of time and space.

Notes

Arguelles, Jose. *The Mayan Factor: Path Beyond Technology*. Santa Fe: Bear & Company, 1987.

Boiles, Charles & Fernando Horcasitas. *Time and Reality in the Thought of the Maya*. Boston, Beacon Press: 1973.

Edmonson, Munro S. "The Mayan Calendar Reform of 11.16.0.0.0" *Current Anthropology*. Vol. 17, No. 4 (Dec., 1976), 713-717.

Jenkins, John Major. *Galactic Alignment: the Transformation of Consciousness According to Mayan, Egyptian, and Vedic Traditions*. Inner Traditions International, 2002.

Leon-Portilla, Miguel. *Time and Reality in Maya Thought*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1973.

Morley, Sylvanus Griswold. *The Ancient Maya*.

Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1956.

Schrenk, Laura Mues de. "Latin America, pre-Columbian and indigenous thought in." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. London: Routledge, 1998.

Thomas, Cyrus. "Mayan Time Systems and Time Symbols." *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Jan., 1900), 53-62.

Wantanabe, John M. "In the World of the Sun: a Cognitive Model of Mayan Cosmology." *Man*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Dec., 1983), 710-728.

Waters, Frank. *Mexico Mystique: The Coming Sixth World of Consciousness*. Chicago: Swallow Press, 1975.

<http://science.msfc.nasa.gov>

<http://www.tortuga.com>

<http://www.usu.edu/anthro/originsofwriting/mayan>

<http://www.utm.edu/research/iept/time.htm>

<http://webexhibits.org/calendars>