



Home » Author's Picks » Living a Nomadic Lifestyle

Living a Nomadic Lifestyle



Living a Nomadic Lifestyle

A nomadic lifestyle may seem like heaven to some of us, but it may seem unrewarding and bitter for others. Just like everything else in life, being a nomad has its advantages and disadvantages, so let's go over some of the major characteristics of a nomadic lifestyle.

- A nomad constantly changes locations, switching from one place to another. Most nomads have some kind of place that they can call home, which is usually where their family or childhood friends are located, but they wouldn't spend more than a few months a year there. Nor would they settle down in a new home, they just keep on changing a place, never feeling really at home, change is home. This actually might be tough since everybody needs some stability and a private *comfort zone from time to time*. Being a nomad, you never really have a feeling of a real home – something you've been upgrading, decorating, and designing. It always belongs to *someone else* (i.e. a hostel, short rental, a friend's place) and is always temporary.
- The nomadic lifestyle is more important than anything else, including career, relationship, or assets. Once this is not the case, it is not a sustainable lifestyle since it is quite hard to maintain. Once you

have decided that your nomadic lifestyle comes first, you will figure a way to sort all other aspects of life accordingly. You can read more here about why would you like to take the decision and become nomad- The advantages of becoming a nomad.

- **Avoiding attachments-** A nomad breaks away from her/his attachments before taking the journey, and stays away from attachments while realizing this unique lifestyle. So, what is an attachment? The answer is clear, anything that keeps you away from realizing a nomadic lifestyle. Let's make it even clearer, it is anything you have (or usually think you have) and can't give up on. The perfect job that you can never find again, the dog you love so much and can't leave behind, the amazing girlfriend that will not agree to join you traveling. A quick interesting insight- if you have those, and feel happy, don't give up on them. But if they are not perfect and don't really make you happy, say goodbye to all your fake attachments and either find better attachments, or choose the nomadic path instead.
- Nomads usually become quite smart, with fresh perspective (A consultant or a guru in a way). The reason for that is clear, they are exposed to many lifestyles, cultures and situations. This constant process of change is a great learning experience, and when you learn, you become smarter.
- Nomads don't take life very seriously. Think about it. If you keep on changing, and keep on losing everything you had in a prior place after you changed to a new place, then the basic understanding dawns on you: "everything is temporary and nothing is yours". After you understand that, you can't really take life too seriously, even if you tried... When I was younger, I had a big problem with accepting life's "little surprises" (*the negative ones*), since I was used to my routine, and things working out. Alas, even if you are not a nomad, everything is changing and some for the worse. Every time there was just one thing that didn't go according to plan, I became very frustrated. Since I've become a nomad, life taught me that it was an illusion. In a way, this nomadic journey changes you from within and is recommended for people who have some kind of a problem accepting things the way they are (even though the journey may be difficult).
- Nomads travel light, your bag is your home, but since home is not that important, you better off be free and "things" are attachments as well (if you can't afford to lose an item in your bag, you can't leave it alone, thus you are not free).
- Nomads are respectful, smiley and above all curious. If this is not the case, why would you choose a path of a constant learning process? But even more than that, one of the greatest enemies nomads have is loneliness. Humans are social animals, which means that without company, we wither and become disconnected from ourselves. If you are not smiling, happy, and curious, by all probability, you will be lonely. Unlike most of us that are loved by our families no matter whoever we are, and by our friends that learn to appreciate us over time, a nomad has to "prove" themselves socially quite fast, since soon they will leave to the next location. You get the point, be happy,
- Nomad think and adjust fast. As a nomad, you are with an inherit lack of information problem – everything is always new. You don't know what's cheap, you probably can't speak the native language, you are most likely unaware of any special ways of saving money, and so on. It means that is you can't make quick calls in an environment of constant lack of knowledge, life will become quite expensive and unsafe. The good news is that experience shapes you up, and give you learning tools to make you better at this. So, if you are scared of your own shadow and find it really hard deciding about anything, it might be quite a beneficial experiment for you to become nomad for a while.

This was a brief review of the main characteristics of living a nomadic lifestyle, now it's time for you to decide if this is something that is worth the risk for you, and if so, just make it happen.

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Advantages of a Nomad Lifestyle



Advantages of Nomad Lifestyle

The decision to become a Nomad and roam the earth for an extended amount of time (or even for life) can be made for a variety of reasons. Regardless of the reason that may have brought you to consider making such a choice, there are some key advantages to making the world your home. Being a Nomad:

- **Is fun.** Social media sites such as Facebook are a prime example of how the average person narrows down their public posts to the elite experience of their life – the fun moments, the times where unique experiences were had. But how many of those moments do most of us have? The lifestyle of a Nomad is generally an endless stream of constant change that bring you from one experience to the next, enriching your life, making you feel alive..
- **Awakens you.** This is not in reference to a religious awakening, but related to breaking free of the every day mundane. There was a time when I had a life with a job where I took the same bus every day at the same time with the same people on that bus. Each day looked exactly as the one before and at no point was my life enriched by the people that I saw on that bus to and from work every day. Being a nomad changed that. The lifestyle of a Nomad is one of a constant spark, freeing you from the confines of regularity.
- **Gains you knowledge.** The knowledge you gain from being a Nomad isn't the same as sitting in a University class and learning from a textbook. You get to see first hand how the history of a country shaped the culture of the people that live there. You have the opportunity to experience a variety of beliefs (religious or not) from all corners of the globe. You have the ability to pick up foreign languages and learn from people what they do and how they think.
- **Builds you.** By gaining knowledge through your experiences as a Nomad, this allows you to take the best of the people, cultures and countries around you in order to build yourself. However, being a

Nomad isn't always easy. There are many challenges and problems you will face. Living in an environment of constant change where situations can be quite hectic at times can be tiring, but all of this also pushes you towards personal freedom. The very challenges that will try and bring you down are also the thing that will give you the opportunity to truly be free in who you are and the life you live. By not having a home in the traditional sense (more often than not, your bag becomes your home) and the basic understanding that nothing is yours and everything is temporary – you will reach freedom and learn to accept the hardships of life with ease. The notion of being a Nomad is the very definition of freedom in many cultures.

- **Gives you the freedom to redefine yourself.** The brilliant part of breaking free from the constraints of a "normal life" is that it gives you that freedom to become who you want to be. No longer do you have expectations of people, society or even yourself limiting what you are able to be, achieve or choose to do in your life. As a Nomad you have the ability to travel the world and with each new location you get to, you are able to redefine yourself and start from scratch. Try something new. Take a risk. Do something you never thought you would do – be you.
- **Creates a story.** Being a Nomad is a journey through life that can take you around the world and back again. With so many experiences jam packed into your every day, it's only natural that such a life would create an interesting story to share with others. Your entire life and every waking (and sometimes sleeping moment) has added value. People become attracted to that, whether in your business or personal life and as a result, the story of your life as a Nomad is definitely an advantage in itself, as it creates contacts and benefits.
- **Develops your connections.** Naturally, a life as a Nomad will bring you many encounters with people from all walks of life. These encounters will develop your relationships that will build your network of contacts without even trying. Whether you are keen to start your own business, aim to work on your career in different countries or otherwise, being a Nomad is a great way to fast-track your networks to a global scale. Sometimes it truly is more important who you know rather than what you know.
- **Allows you to "hack life."** In this modern day, life is no longer restricted to the classic story of living your entire life in one place and taking over the family business. Internet has been one of the great tools to help the world connect on an international level, but also expand our idea of what a "normal life" looks like. The choice to be a Nomad allows you the opportunity to potentially find your own home somewhere around the world, but it doesn't restrict you to working from there as well. Part of the total freedom of being a Nomad is that you could live in a location where living expenses are incredibly low, but then work for international companies that pay well through the luxury of internet. Who says the world needs to exist in black and white perspectives? Being a Nomad is an opportunity to expand your mind on the other possibilities of a fully enriched lifestyle.

Overall, there will always be different perspectives on what it means to be a Nomad and how that is good or bad. Your choice to live this lifestyle will be made for a multitude of different reasons, but know that the benefits of that choice are not as simple as just getting the opportunity to see a different country. It's so much more than that. The benefits of being a Nomad may change the course of your life forever.

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How to Pack Like a Nomad

by Kit Whelan

<http://www.seeknewtravel.com/author/Kit/>

August 30, 2011

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Back in March I wrote a post on [how to pack clothes](http://www.seeknewtravel.com/ladies-this-is-how-you-pack-clothes/) (<http://www.seeknewtravel.com/ladies-this-is-how-you-pack-clothes/>) that quickly became the most-read post in the history of the blog.

Because packing is something we all struggle with at some point.

Nothing's worse than staring at an empty bag and thinking "No way I can fit everything I need in there!"

So I promised to give you a full outline of **everything** I bring with me as I travel the globe, and I *swear* that post is coming soon! But for now I thought I'd lay some of my packing knowledge on you.

Here are the best tips I've picked up over the years for how to pack like a nomad:

Be minimalist

Just like that cool furniture store that you can't afford to walk into, you must de-clutter yourself!

- No one other than you is going to notice if you wear the same outfit over and over while traveling. So pick out all the outfits you want to bring and get rid of half of them.
- Bring versatile items that can be worn in many combinations to avoid looking the same in every photo. Or be like my boyfriend (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/notenoughrice/tags/nick/>) and don't care. :)
- Know the use of everything you're bringing. If you can't think of why you need it off the top of your head, you probably don't need it.
- If you have some bulky items you absolutely **MUST** bring like hiking boots or a heavy jacket,

wear them on the plane/bus/train,
don't pack them.

- Do laundry on the road. You can buy special laundry soap (<http://www.rei.com/product/785917/sea-to-summit-pocket-laundry-wash>), use regular bar soap, or pay someone to do it for you! Bring less, wash more.

Invest in gear and clothes that pack small

If you want to cut down on bulk and weight, don't just throw your entire closet into your luggage. Choose your clothes based on what packs up small and weighs very little. Sweater dress: no. Jersey dress: yes.

- You don't need the sweater your grandma knitted in order to stay warm, there are plenty of lightweight base layers that pack in just as much warmth with a fraction of the bulk. I'm kind of obsessed with Icebreaker (<http://www.icebreaker.com/site/catalog/range.html?gender=Woman&range=Bodyfit>) wool tops, even though they're a little tight for my taste.
- Need a daypack for hiking? Don't bring your high school backpack. Look for something lightweight and easily packable.

Unless you're doing some serious trekking, a simple pack like the REI Flash 18 (<http://www.rei.com/product/778466/rei-flash-18-pack>) or the Sea to

Summit Ultra-Sil

(<http://www.rei.com/product/799600/sea-to-summit-ultra-sil-packable-day-pack>) (which packs up to the size of a child's fist) will do you just fine.

- As I've said (or rather gushed) before: compression packs (<http://www.rei.com/product/739705/eagle-creek-pack-it-compression-set>) are your friend. Suddenly a huge pile of clothes is no more than a few inches high! It's a freaking miracle. Get some.

- If you really can't stand the wrinkles that come with the compression packs, roll your clothes up and put the heaviest stuff at the bottom. And stuff socks and underwear into shoes.

You *can* buy stuff there

Unless you're heading into the backcountry you do not need to be prepared for thousands of situations. They do in fact have stores in other countries that carry extra razors, shampoo and even sweaters. Crazy, I know.

Keep an eye on your liquids

Of course we all need shampoo and lotion, but there are places to cut back so you can keep it all in that damn quart-sized Ziploc.

- Bring a bar of soap instead of liquid. There are lots

<http://www.rei.com/product/407178/dr-bronners-pure-castile-bar-soap>) of
<http://www.lushusa.com/shop/products/bath/soap/>)
choices (<http://soaptopia.com/>)
out there for those who are prone
to dry skin, and they smell great!

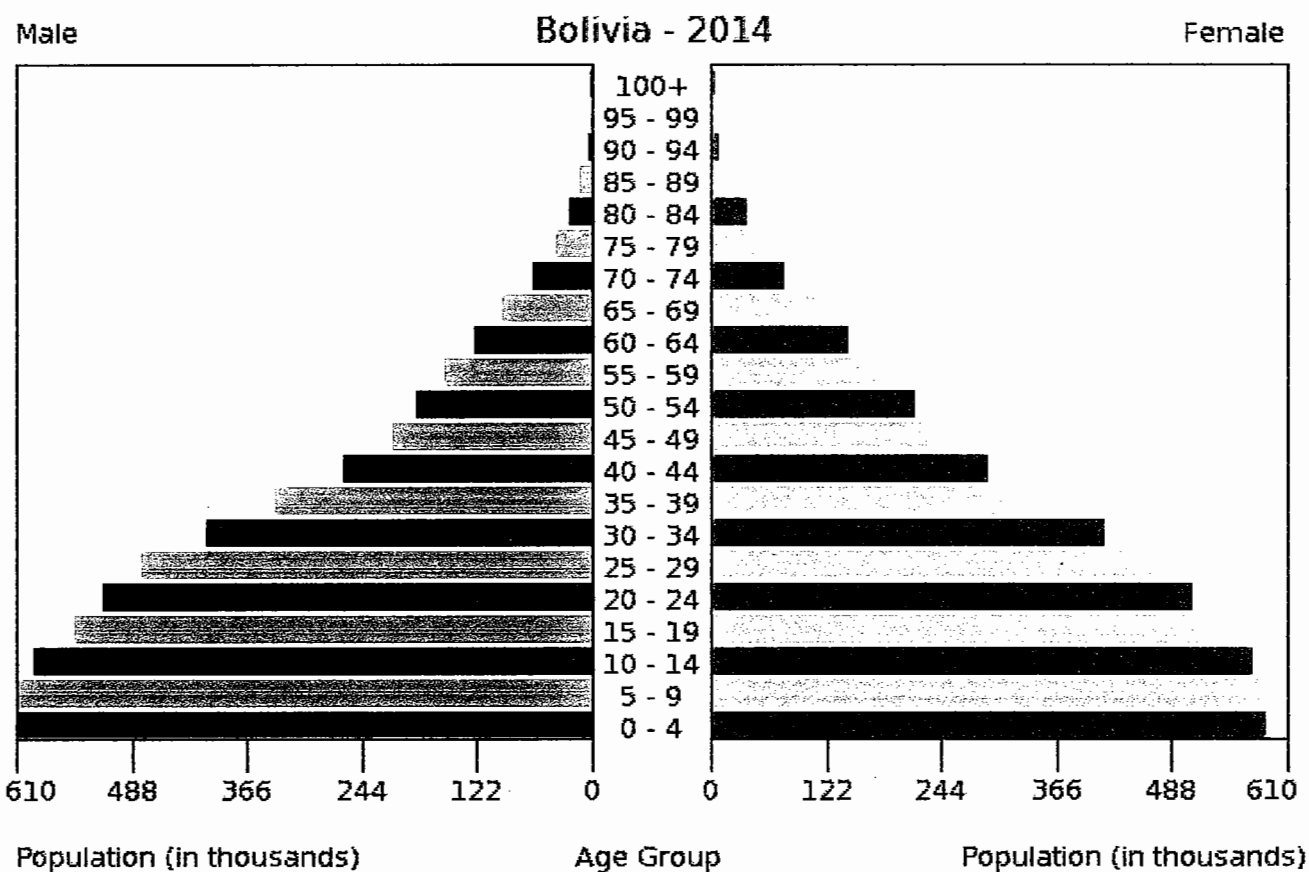
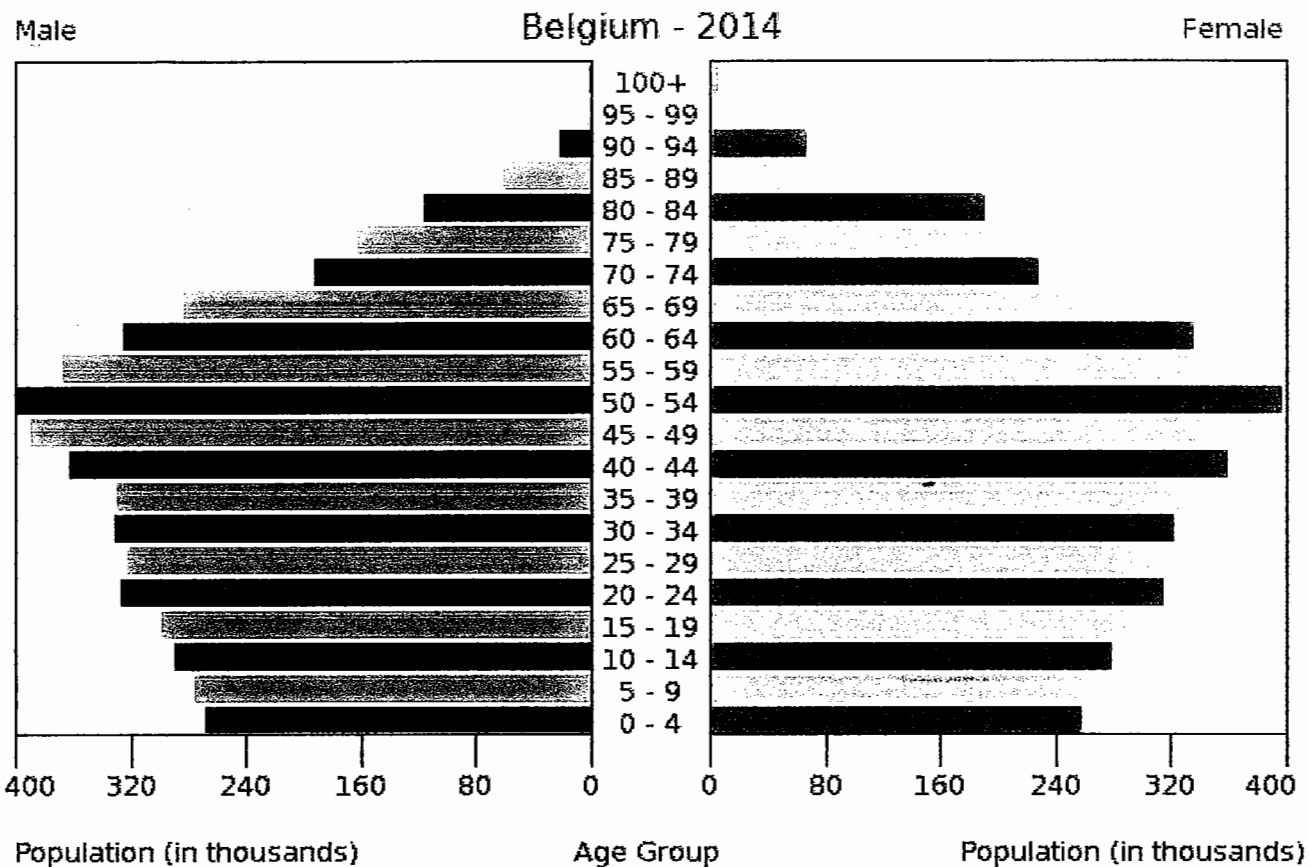
- If your going somewhere buggy,
bring some [bug wipes](#)
(<http://www.rei.com/product/815479/repel-sportsmen-30-insect-repellent-wipes-package-of-15>) instead of
bug spray.
- Leave liquid makeup at home
and bring the powder.
- Shave with soap or buy razors
with the [cream built in](#)
(<http://www.amazon.com/Schick-Intuition-Razor-Normal-1Razor/dp/B0000AJ3QB>) to them.
- If you're going somewhere for a
while you can even buy the big
bottles once you arrive, treating
your travel-size items as
emergency back-up.

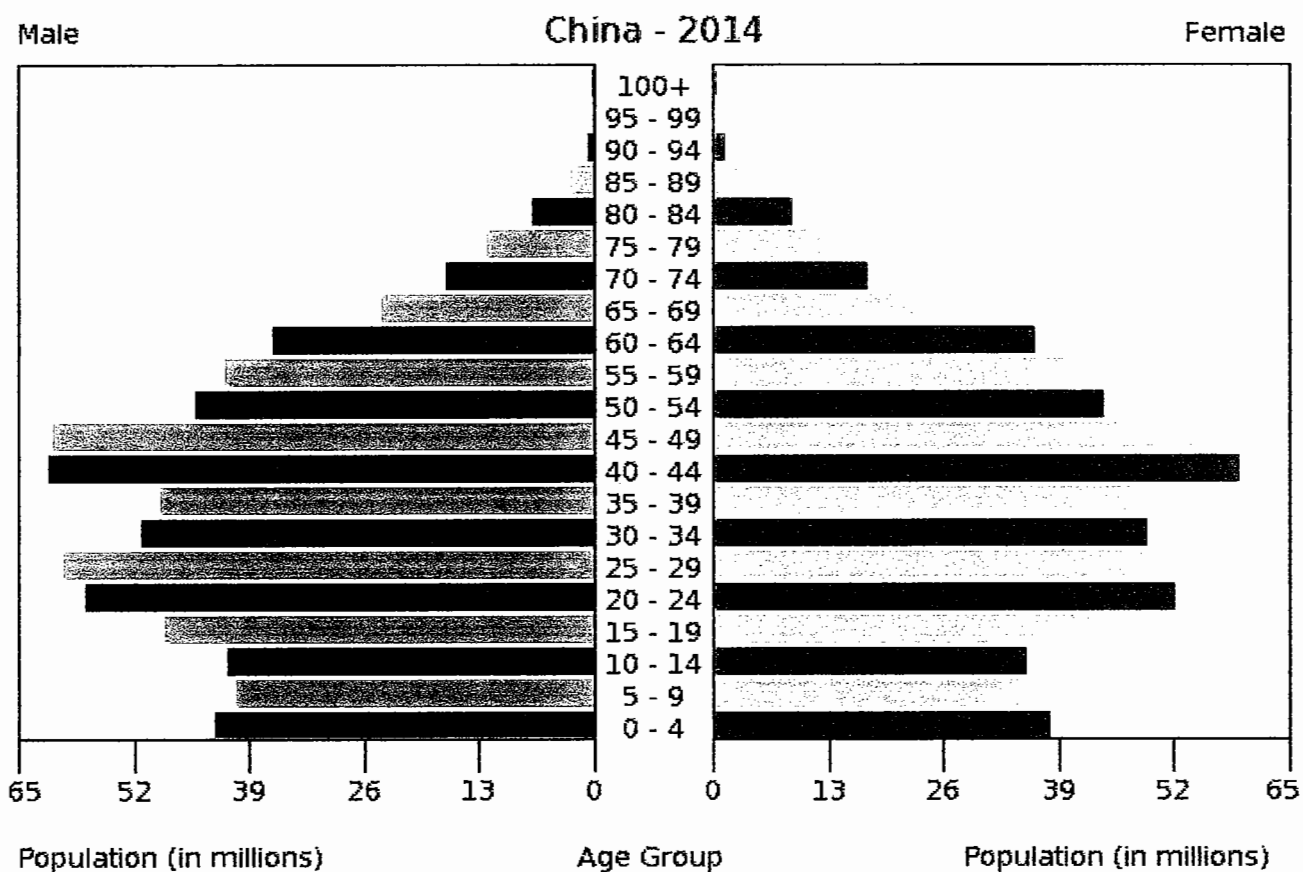
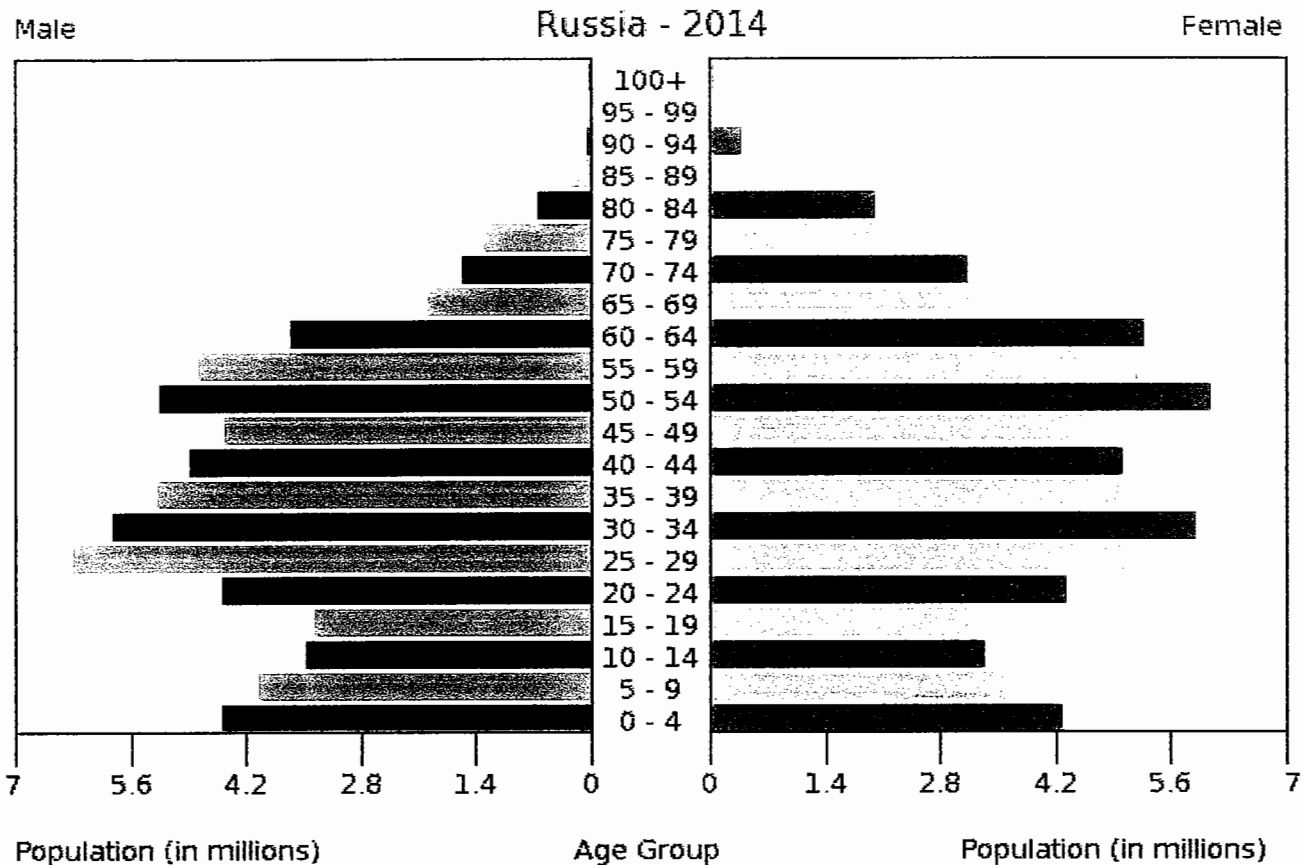
Be honest

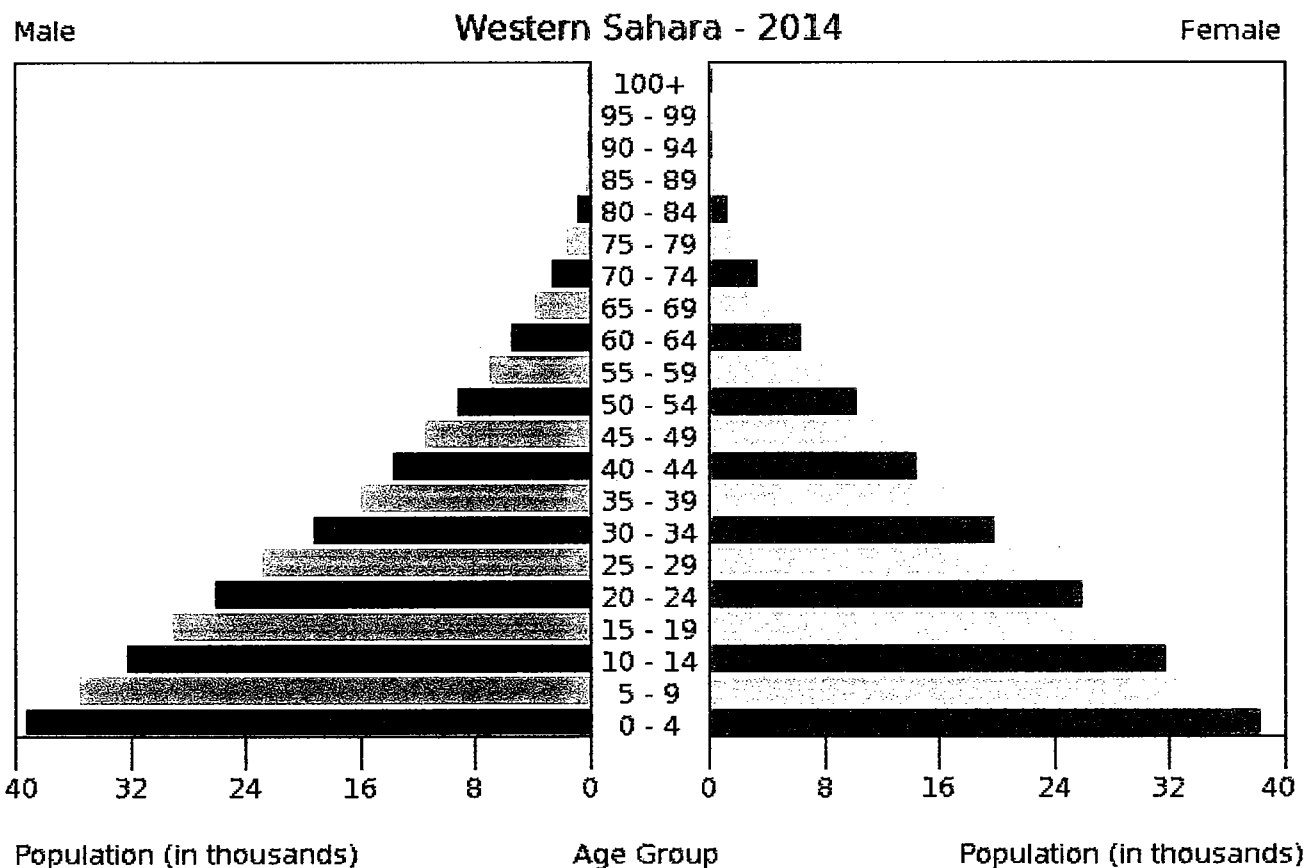
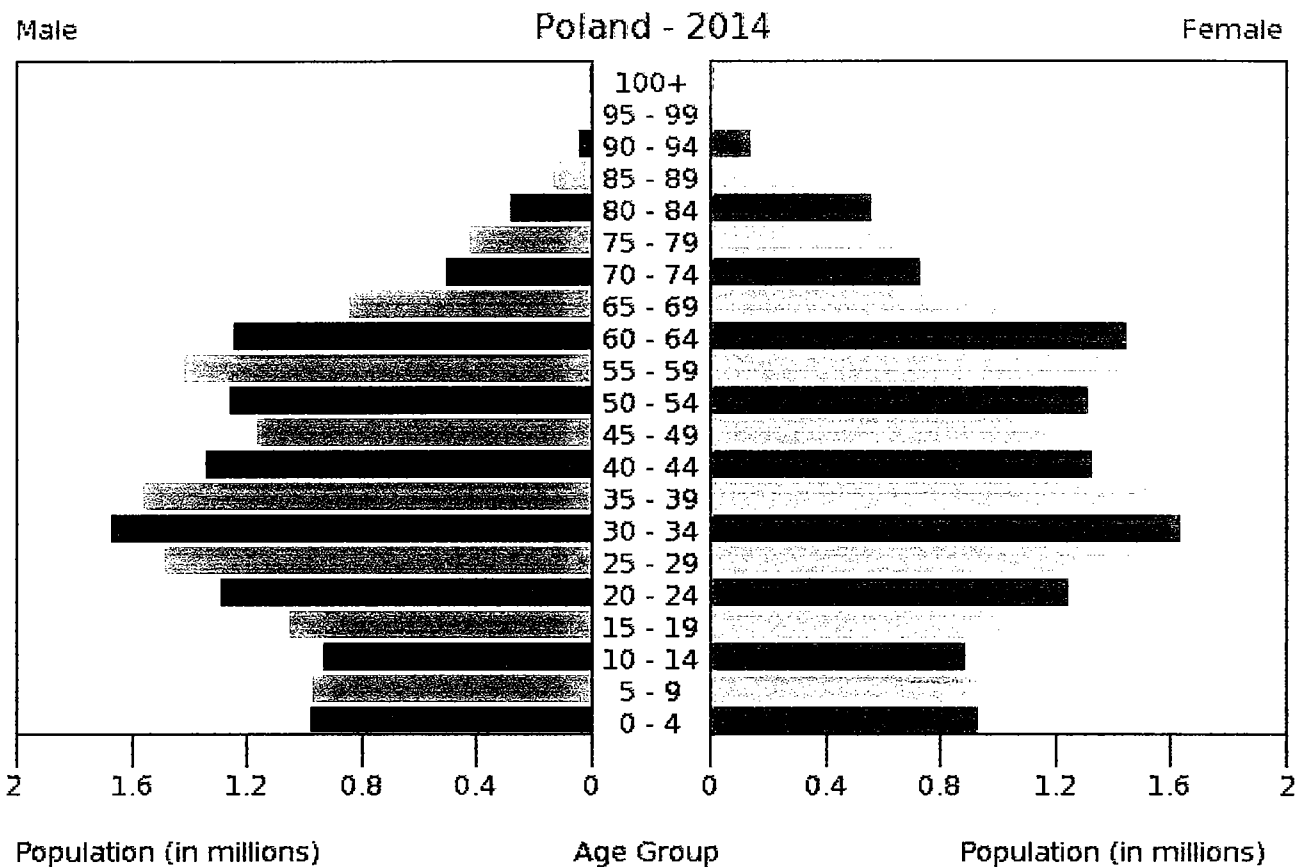
Do you really need a third pair of pants? Are you actually going to wear those heels? Are you going to use that umbrella or are you just over-preparing? Be honest

about what you will use on your trip. Most of your "just in case" stuff can probably stay behind. Your bag will be lighter and you'll be happier. They sell umbrellas there, I promise.

*What are your best packing tips?
Add them in the comments!*









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The End of the River

A critical view of Linear Apocalyptic Thought, and how Linearity makes a sneak appearance in Timewave Theory's fractal view of Time...

by [Gyrus \(.../about/gyrus/\)](#)

First published in *Towards 2012 Parts 4/5: Paganism/Apocalypse (.../projects/2012/#paganapo)* (The Unlimited Dream Company, 1998). The project was initially inspired by Terence McKenna's Timewave theory, and the 2012 concept was used as a broad umbrella under which I could place all the transformative ideas and perspectives I was interested in—shamanism, paganism, psychedelics, magick, new technologies, the revival of archaic paradigms and their affinity with the cutting edges of contemporary culture. This is slightly adapted to make sense outside the context of its original place of publication. There are also amendments based on correspondence with Peter Meyer, who coded the Timewave Zero software, and on whose [website](#) (<http://www.serendipity.li/>) this article was formerly hosted.

So many people have asked me in consternation: "Why aren't you doing the last part of *Towards 2012*?" Well, I've decided to include 'Apocalypse' as a section at the back of this issue for a few reasons. When I initiated and planned out this project in 1995, I had no idea that it'd become a tome of these proportions. Those of you with a copy of the first issue will be able to see that I optimistically set the release date for the last one at April 1997! At the rate it's been going, that's over 2 years off course. It's been a great project to do, but frankly I don't want to be still doing it this time next year. Other Things beckon...

That's a mundane reason. Beyond that, my ideas and feelings about the whole '2012 scenario' have radically changed in the past three years. I'm still influenced by most of the people I absorbed my postmodern eschatology from—Terence McKenna, William S. Burroughs, Robert Anton Wilson, Arthur Koestler, Norman O. Brown, Philip K. Dick, Wilhelm Reich—but I simply wouldn't feel honest and passionate now about doing a whole issue devoted to apocalyptic ideas. As it is, I'm very happy that's it's ending with 'Paganism', as this is where the larger part of my heart has been all along.

Naturally, the most common question I've been asked has been: "So what's all this '2012' business about then?" Sometimes I've actually been stumped! To be honest, it's actually been quite a while since I was *really* interested in why this could be such a 'special' date, and I've had to trawl my memory and summon up enthusiasm to explain it on occasions. Cue expressions of mystification at why someone who spends all their time doing a mag called *Towards 2012* goes "Er..." when asked what the title means!

When I sat down to write this piece, I was all set to just reel off my reasons for not being really taken by the '2012 scenario' anymore. Ironically, within days I was more fascinated by McKenna's theories than I had been in years! So for those of you still baffled by the title, here goes...

Amazonian time & the I Ching

In 1971, Terence McKenna, then a former student radical and wanted hash smuggler, made his way into the depths of the Amazon jungle with a small group of friends, including his brother Dennis. They had intended to search for a rare plant psychedelic containing dimethyltryptamine (DMT), but ended up mostly feasting on *Stropharia cubensis*, a type of psilocybin mushroom. A bizarre psychoactive experiment was formulated between the brothers, wherein they attempted to bond harmine DNA (harmine is another psychedelic compound they used synergetically with the mushrooms) with their own neural DNA, through the use of vocal techniques(!). This, they reasoned, would give them access to the collective memory bank of the species, as well as manifesting the fabled alchemists' Philosopher's Stone—which they visualized as a UFO-like hyperdimensional union of spirit and matter. If you want to see what did happen, read McKenna's excellent *True Hallucinations*. For now, it's enough to know that McKenna's experiences led him to spend night after night gazing at the stars pondering the nature of time (it comes to us all), and this in turn led him to study the ancient Chinese divinatory system, the *I Ching*, for a few clues about time from the Orient.



His basic conclusion was that the sequence of hexagrams in the *I Ching* are ordered in a highly structured, artificial way—one that codified the nature of time's flow in the world. A hexagram is a combination of six lines, each being either yin or yang (example to the right). There are 64 hexagrams in total, in a set sequence. McKenna mapped out the inner structure of the sequence by calculating how many lines changed from yin to yang, or vice versa, from hexagram to hexagram. He then filtered this data through a complex series of tables and graphs, and finished up with a wave-form that he called 'Timewave Zero' (figure 1, below). This is all laid out in detail in *The Invisible Landscape*.

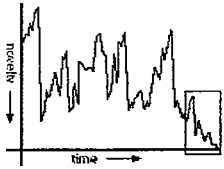


Figure 1. A section of the Timewave. The boxed portion to the right encloses a sub-section that figures 3-7 are fractal correlates of.

I have to admit that the *precise* reasoning behind this process eludes me; even more beyond my comprehension is the mathematical formulation of the theory, put together by Peter Meyer for the software. I think you have to be pretty well-versed in maths to understand—and hence criticize—the *underpinnings* of the Timewave. I asked Terence about the slightly elitist nature of this situation, and he simply replied: "Go back again and study it carefully, it's quite straightforward." Either he was being a bit obnoxious, or declining educational standards have affected me more than I thought!

There are actually several variations of the Timewave. The Timewave Zero software is based upon the numerical series originally generated by McKenna from the *I Ching*, as documented in *The Invisible Landscape*. When analysing the construction of the original timewave from the *I Ching* numbers in 1994 Peter Meyer found a step, named by him "the mysterious half-twist", which McKenna had not mentioned (and of which, when asked, he said he knew nothing). The deletion of this step produces a slightly different timewave (named after the mathematician Matthew Watkins, who also made a study of the timewave which was severely critical of its foundations).

Proceeding from a quite different perspective, John Sheliak developed an alternative series of numbers, which gave rise to what McKenna called "Timewave One". McKenna described this as a "correction" of the original Timewave; however, Peter Meyer regards the Sheliak construction as unfounded and erroneous. Presumably, in a speculative arena such as this, with no orthodox laws to govern the 'correct' way of doing things, we should see alternate versions of the wave as just that, alternatives. There is yet another alternative set of *I Ching* numbers that generates what is known as the "Huang Ti" wave. All work here is based on the Timewave Zero software (called "Fractal Time" in its final 1999 version), but I don't think the discrepancies between this and other versions will affect my general criticisms.

The Timewave graph is supposed to depict the ebb and flow of 'novelty' and 'habit' in the universe. When the timeline climbs up, *habit* (routine, convention, ruts to get stuck in) increases. When the line dips down, *novelty* (creativity, connectedness, weird shit) increases. An in-built feature of the wave is that at a certain point it hits the bottom of the graph—it goes off the scale. Novelty is maximized, as far as the variables of this system (the universe) go.

With this graph in his hands, McKenna tried mapping it onto the historical record, looking at key points where things seemed to have really taken off, and matching them to the big dips in the line. Specifically, he opted for the bombing of Hiroshima as an unarguably 'novel' event. The structure of his Timewave dictated that extremely novel events unfolded in cycles of $6 \times 64 \times 64 = 24,576$ days (67.29 years). Adding this sum to the date of Hiroshima gave him an end-date in November 2012 CE. It was well *after* settling on this date that he found out someone else had come to a very similar conclusion. The calendar of the time-obsessed Mayan culture appears to come to the end of a 5,125-year cycle on 21st December (the winter solstice) of the same year, and McKenna adjusted the end-date to conform with this venerable tradition.

The Novelty of End-Times

What will actually *happen* on 21/12/2012? Many possibilities have been suggested: time travel, 'universal enlightenment', alien landings, the Second Coming... If McKenna's theory is correct, we won't be able to even conceive of the event until it arrives. An easy way to understand this is to make a graph with an exponential curve on it—here's one I made earlier (below).

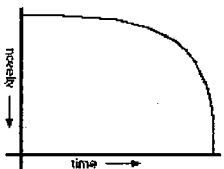


Figure 2. A simple graph showing how in the Timewave, novelty (or the acceleration of evolution) proceeds at an exponentially increasing rate.

I've made the vertical axis *increase* in value as it goes *down* to correspond to the Timewave. Novelty in the Timewave graph ebbs and flows, with peaks and troughs, but *overall* it increases. This increase is shown in the simplified curve in fig. 2. The increase does not proceed at a steady rate—it increases *faster and faster and faster and faster...* until it eventually 'goes vertical', corresponding to the Timewave line going off the scale.

Now, imagine that the line on this simplified graph is a tube, and you're inside it, hurtling along like some crazy species trying to escape from the dead weight of the past... *How far can you see ahead? There's always a certain view down the tube before it bends round out of sight. But as you approach the vertical part*—where novelty keeps on increasing despite the flow of time having 'ended'—you never really see around the corner until you're on top of it.

But to truly understand the Timewave, you have to grasp its fractal nature. Look at figure 1. At the far right of the wave, there are two tiny peaks, huddling against a slightly larger one. If this bit is magnified and stretched out a bit, you get something like this:

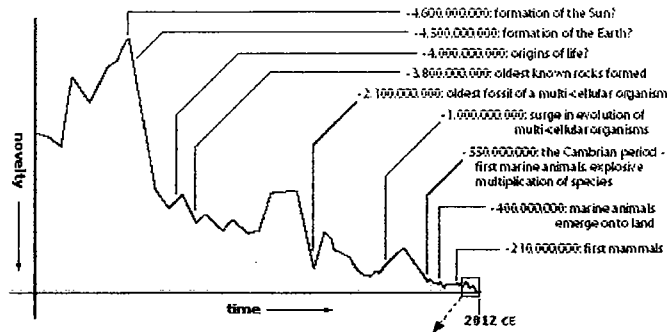


Figure 3: The last 6 billion years as seen through the Timewave. Key events depicted here are the formation of Earth and the rise of life. The box to the right is shown with an arrow to indicate that the next graph, figure 4, is a magnification of this portion. Dates are shown in years before present.

The section of the wave in fig. 1 can be seen again (though not in much detail) as the near-level part on the far right. So you can blow up that very last bit again and get the same shape, describing a much shorter span of time. These descending nests of fractal hierarchies carry on *ad infinitum* (or rather, *ad 2012*). This is the part that really got me into it again. The Timewave gives a shape to history and, whether it's the 'true' shape or not, playing around with it got me much more fascinated and excited by the past than I've ever been with a 'flat line' image—time as 'simple duration'—informing my idea of history's form.

So does the Timewave's description of "the ingression of novelty into the universe" tally with what we know about the appearance of novel events in the past? Look for yourself.

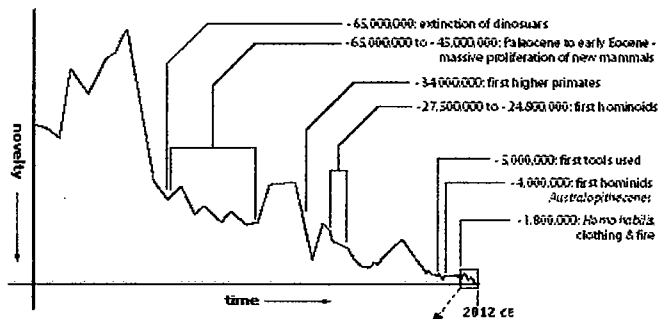


Figure 4: The last 94 million years: the emergence of humans. Dates are shown in years before present.

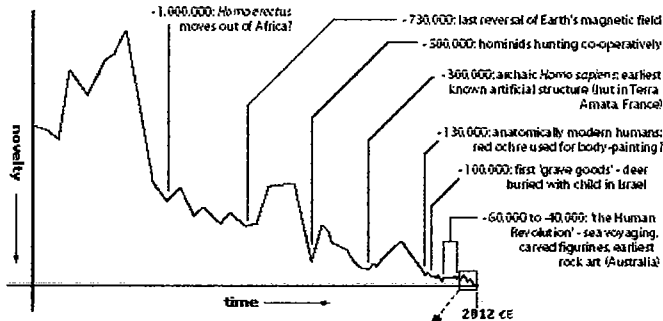


Figure 5: The last 1.5 million years: the development of human culture. Dates are shown in years before present.

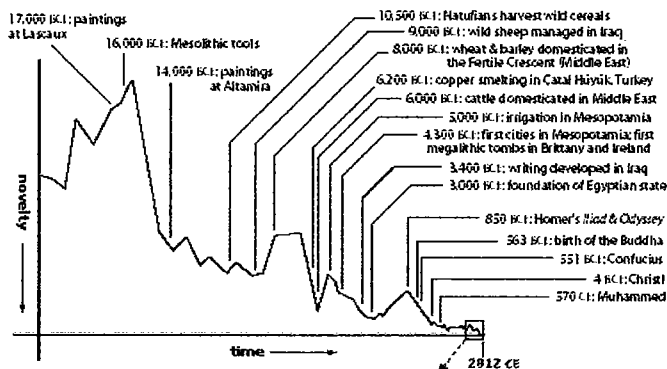


Figure 6: The last 23 thousand years: agriculture, metallurgy, writing, civilisation and the genesis of world religions.

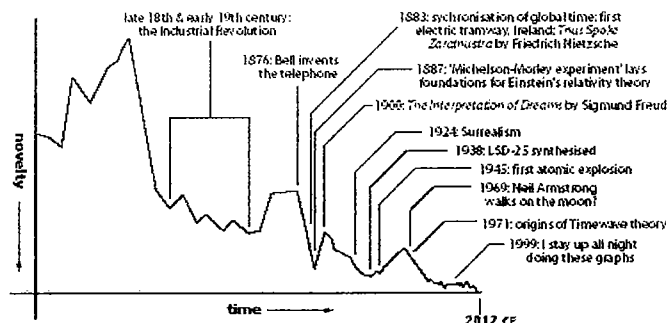


Figure 7: The last 360 years: the Industrial Revolution, telecommunications, atomic energy and space travel.

These snippets of 'key events' in history are naturally a bit selective; and because the unfolding of evolution on Earth *has* proceeded at an ever-accelerating rate, it is natural that in each snapshot of the wave, many significant events are bunched up on that last little plateau. But some very interesting correspondences emerge.

According to Timewave theory, each section of the wave *resonates* with every other section that has an identical structure. So the development of the first tools among pre-hominid apes, and the emergence of our ancestor *Homo habilis* (figure 4) resonate with the first recorded deliberate deposition in a human burial, and the 'Human Revolution'—which saw *Homo sapiens* spreading across the globe and developing art (figure 5). Likewise, the first appearance of *Homo sapiens* and the first recorded human-built structure (fig. 5) archaic ploughing scenes resonate with the rise of dynastic Egypt and the flowering of European megalithic culture (figure 6). Perhaps most significantly, the first glimmerings of human intervention in nature for food production, i.e. the start of the Agricultural Revolution (fig. 6), occupies the same 'novelty trough' as the Industrial Revolution in figure 7.

Criticism time!

These are just a few examples of the Timewave's 'successes', and there are many more—just pore over the graphs for a while, and maybe grab a few of those dusty history books off your shelves. But does it trip up at all? McKenna's said that if it fails once, it fails utterly; so let's check it out.

In his own work he's highlighted the trough starting at 14,000 BCE (fig. 6) as showing the 'Magdalenian Revolution', the explosion of cave art in the late Palaeolithic. Yet some paintings at Lascaux date back to 17,000 BCE, and this date, along with the invention of Mesolithic tools, appears near the peak of a steep climb into *habit*. Perhaps these acted as catalysts for the impending plunge into novelty?

Well, this brings up what I feel to be a major glitch in Timewave theory, which I came across while searching for historical correspondences. Look at the last large peak of *habit* in fig. 6. On the tape that comes with the Timewave software, McKenna says that Homer's epic poetry appeared here as a trigger for the steep descent into novelty—classical Greek civilization, a prime catalyst for the modern world. A similar type of event may be seen in fig. 7, where the invention of the telephone in 1876 seems to plunge us into an increase of novelty, which only abates twice before the full bloom of global telecommunications in the late 20th century.

Isn't this having it both ways? When a novel event appears at the bottom of a trough—like cattle domestication in 6000 BCE—that's fine, novelty's high at that point. But when one appears on a 'habit peak'—Bell and the phone, Homer and his epics, or the appearance of Mesolithic tools—that's fine too. It's a 'trigger' for the next descent into weirdness. You can't lose!

By the way, it's important to note that 'novelty' doesn't necessarily imply 'good'. The first atomic bomb being detonated in 1945 was pretty novel, but not so great. So novelty maximization in 2012 could end up being something like the sun exploding!

Given that the wave is derived from the proto-Taoist *I Ching*, I also find it strange that the Timewave has a definite end built into it. To my understanding, Taoism, before it developed into a full-blown formal religion, was profoundly anti-eschatological—not at all bothered about 'final destiny' or 'a singularity at the end of time'. It's deeply concerned with *change*, yes; but the 'maximization of novelty' points to something more than just 'the next step'. It hints at something 'final' and 'complete'—notions that don't seem to fit well into the Taoist sense of flow.

McKenna's pretty consistent these days in his cheerleading for the Eschaton, but such was not the case when he was laying the foundation for his philosophy. In *The Invisible Landscape*, he and his brother write:

As moderns and necessarily skeptics, we have assumed that although the hypothesis points toward an eventual involution of the temporal manifold, a concrescence, there is little likelihood of such an event occurring in the immediate present.

Some pages later we find them saying: "The nearness of a major concrescence to our own time is a self-evident fact..."!

We also find a potentially refreshing self-critical line being taken:

The question of the moment of this true rupture of plane is difficult; it seems most millenarian speculations decode as giving critical importance to the age in which they were composed.

But nothing is ever made of this. Obviously, for this point is probably the best objection to apocalyptic thinking there is. The End is always just around the corner, *from where you're standing*—making it a pretty subjective affair, not 'universal' at all.

As it stands, the Timewave's predictions for the run-up to 2012 are staggering. Comparing our own age in fig. 7 to the other graphs, we can see that the start of the 90s resonates with the emergence of life onto land 400 million years ago, and the hominids' debut 4 million years ago. And we've *just* entered a 5 year period that resonates directly with the Human Revolution (fig. 5), when sea-faring and art first crystallized. Furthermore, McKenna states that, due to the acceleration of novelty's ingress, about *half* of the *total* evolution of our 72-plus-billion-year old universe will occur in the last 0.3 seconds before 6.00am on 21/12/2012! If we take the formation of the cosmos, the rise of life, or the discovery of language as examples of key 'barriers' that universal evolution passes through, McKenna's calculations tell us that *thirteen* such barriers will be passed in the last 0.0075 seconds!!

This theory is staggering, unimaginable, and inspiring in a way that's intense but very hard to grasp (until you smoke DMT I suppose). It's also amazingly 'West-centred' (never mind human-centred). Post-industrial cultures appear to be going through an ever-intensifying series of changes that *could* point to a

major transformation in the next 15 or so years. But what about 'undeveloped' cultures, and those whose religious/calendrical systems have nothing special on the cards for the near future? Were the hidden forces that dish out the inspiration for sacred calendars having a laugh when they gave these people 'wrong' time-scales? "Look at those dorks, they don't know what's gonna hit them!" And what about the (admittedly very few) indigenous tribes still relatively untouched by the 'progress' of the last 10,000 years?

McKenna's answer to this at his presentation of the Timewave at the ICA, London, in 1996 was that "history isn't politically correct"—i.e. it's untouched by our liberal concern for humans who haven't been caught up in its vortex. Well, neo-Nazis aren't PC either. What makes History—as in the evolution of technology since the Agricultural Revolution—worth going along with unto its final conclusion?

*History is an angel
Being blown backwards
Into the future
History is a pile of debris
And the angel wants to go back
And fix things
To repair things that have been broken
But there's a storm blowing from paradise
And the storm keeps blowing the angel backwards
Into the future
And this storm
This storm is called Progress*

Laurie Anderson, 'The Dream Before'

Time & Tantra

You may have noticed that all the people I listed at the start as inspirations for my eschatological leanings were men. Is eschatology a gender issue? It's not really discussed, is it? I'd be interested to find out about any exceptions, but as far as I can see, all the cultures and religions that are big on apocalypses are pretty patriarchal.

The idea of a *point* at the end of history, or the universe—McKenna's "conrescence of novelty"—is the flip-side of everything exploding out from a singularity at the beginning. The Omega Point and the Big Bang are like bookends of unification at either end of the flow of time. They can also be seen as Vast Ejaculations (now *there's* an album title). Douglas Rushkoff first pointed out to me the masculine sexuality underlying apocalyptic ideas. And as I created that 'simplified curve' graph in fig. 2, I noticed the sexual innuendo in the idea of human knowledge 'going vertical' (fnarr, fnarr). The Big Bang isn't really that far from Egyptian creation myths where gods bring things forth by beating off. And the Timewave is breakneck rush towards a crescendo of connectedness and barrier-dissolution—a Cosmic Climax.

This all sounds great, but I also wonder: where's the female orgasm? What about continuous waves of full-body, non-linear ecstasy, with no focal point and no singular 'explosion'? Not that all women experience this, or that it's exclusive to women. (Then again, ejaculation isn't strictly exclusive to men, but let's not complicate our metaphors more than necessary!) Such experiences of wave-orgasm are the focus of most sexual mysticism, for both sexes. There's no *Point* to this ecstasy, but it ain't 'pointless'! Does it have no place in eschatology? Would the concepts of the Omega Point, the Apocalypse, Judgement Day, Timewave Zero, etc. even *exist* if this experience was more common than the "sneeze in the genitals", as Alan Watts has called the average male orgasm? Well, there's only one way to find out!

Are we yearning for a quick and catastrophic explosion to relieve the tension—the tension of information overload, the tension of tightly measured time, the tension of too much undigested history? Dare we step back for a moment amidst this frantic rush towards the Climax, and question the assumptions behind linear masculine eschatology—even as we approach the Deadline? As Mogg Morgan says,

If you feel yourself approaching the point of 'no return', maybe ask your partner to pause, and make any adjustments necessary to prevent ejaculation or climax ... As the urge for ejaculation or release subsides, you may feel the warm sexual glow spreading throughout your whole pelvic region, opening out other energy centres sometimes called chakras. A strange thing happens: you become like an erotic landscape, a sea of sensation. Try to regard the time you have spent in this 'build up' to ejaculation as part of the orgasm. Viewed this way, perhaps you can see that an orgasm, for both men and women, is actually a lot more intense than those few moments of ejaculation or climax.

'The Erotic Landscape ([./eroticlandscape/](http://eroticlandscape/))'

The aim of sexual mysticism and magick isn't always the total inhibition of coming—it's more to do with *intensifying* the orgasmic trance through *diffusing* the 'explosion' of coming throughout the body, and relaxing more fully into every nuance of psycho-physical sensation that arises. A key part of it is perhaps one of the great Keys to Magick—avoiding Lust of Result, a.k.a. attachment, goal-oriented consciousness, striving, or 'pushing the river'. Paradox time again. Orgasmic trance is more intense if you don't *try* to intensify it, or even *try* to reach orgasm at all. This is the heart of Taoist philosophy: *wu wei*, 'not pushing'.

McKenna's well aware of all this, but here I'm trying to address the general way that our goal-oriented culture reacts to impending mega-events. There's also the issue of whether McKenna's right in his assumption that the creators of the *I Ching* believed in some sort of grand conrescence at the end of time. He argues in *The Invisible Landscape* that the *I Ching* originated with proto-Taoist shamans in Neolithic China, and functioned as a lunar calendar system as well as a divinatory device. His arguments here are convincing, as is his insistence on the importance of fractal-based models and resonance to the developers of this oracular artefact. Not quite so convincing is the idea that the shamans who gave birth to Taoism would have put a Full Stop or an Exclamation Mark at the end of their universe, and carefully knitted it into the structure of their sacred symbol system. A Comma, maybe—or a Question Mark?

This isn't to say I think that there *definitely* is not a stupendous hyperdimensional object hovering 14 years ahead of us, inexorably drawing all matter and consciousness into its pulsating heart of light. When I decided to make this 'Apocalypse' bit a mere section at the back of this issue, I jokingly told a friend that I had 'Cancelled the Apocalypse'. He told McKenna this when he met him, and the reply was, "That's a bit presumptuous!" And that it is. Well, I haven't really cancelled it. I've merely tried to stop pushing the river.

Let it flow...

End and goal.— Not every end is a goal. The end of a melody is not its goal; but nonetheless, if the melody had not reached its end it would not have reached its goal either. A parable.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Wanderer and his Shadow*




Books used

- *The Invisible Landscape: Mind, Hallucinogens and the I Ching* by Terence & Dennis McKenna
- *Timewave Zero* software & documentation by Terence McKenna & Peter Meyer
- *Synesthesia* by Terence McKenna & Tim Ely
- *True Hallucinations* by Terence McKenna
- *The Archaic Revival* by Terence McKenna
- *Tao te Ching* by Lao Tzu
- *The Book of Life* edited by Stephen Jay Gould
- *Timewalkers: The Prehistory of Global Colonization* by Clive Gamble
- *Encyclopaedia of Dates and Events* by L.C. Pascoe & B.A. Phythian
- *The Cassell Atlas of World History* (I highly recommend this, especially the Atlas of the Ancient World section, covering 4,000,000 to 500 BCE, which is, like all the other sub-sections, published in a separate, affordable edition.)
- *The Way of Zen* by Alan Watts
- *Blood Relations: Menstruation and the Origins of Culture* by Chris Knight
- *The Prehistory of Sex* by Timothy Taylor

Note from Peter Meyer: The Timewave Zero software is no longer available, but you can read Dr Matthew Watkins' essay [Autopsy for a Mathematical Hallucination?](http://serendipity.nofadz.com/ft/autopsy.html) (<http://serendipity.nofadz.com/ft/autopsy.html>).

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