

## Pattern Level Perspectives On Our Times

There are many pattern level perspectives on our times to draw from. Here I'll be sharing some of the ones that spoke to me, resonated with my sense of truth, and may be helpful to you as well. The overriding one for me is an evolutionary perspective so that's where I'll begin.

The Universe Story came out of a shift in worldview brought about by advances in the science of evolution. The evolutionary worldview sees humanity as the fruit of almost 14 billion years of unbroken evolution, now becoming conscious of itself. It's the knowledge that the atoms that comprise life, right down to the atoms in our bodies, are traceable to the crucible of the Big Bang. We literally do come from the stars. It means we're deeply connected to all of life and that life is evolving through us.

Thomas Berry wrote, "If the dynamics of the universe, from the beginning, shaped the course of the heavens, lighted the sun, and formed the earth... there is reason to believe that this same guiding process is precisely what has awakened our present understanding of ourselves and our relationship to this stupendous process." The fields of cosmology and astrophysics seem to be validating what Berry is saying and what ancient wisdom has taught for thousands of years... that we live in an intelligent and alive universe that is continuing to evolve. Or as cosmologist Brian Swimme has said of the evolutionary process, "four billion years ago our planet was molten rock and now it sings opera." We humans now need to get out of the way of this "stupendous process" and use the brains and heart intelligence this process gifted us with to promote the continued evolution of life, our world, and consciousness, itself.

Along with this, through the Pachamama Alliance and a dear friend, I became aware of and got to meet Arkan Lushwala, a notable shaman, and subsequently read his book, *The Time of the Black Jaguar*. From his ancient indigenous perspective, we are now at the end of a very long cycle of our present humanity. There are three movements that humanity goes through: the time of creation, a positive time where we're creating and designing the new; the time of conservation, where creative forces diminish and darkness is needed to temper what was created, then the time of renewal, the time of the Black Jaguar, a time of purification, destruction, and chaos which is needed *so life may continue*. Arkan speaks about our world being in the time of the Black Jaguar and when He shows up, it's a time for change. If we do not choose to change, He will do it for us. Black Jaguar medicine says, "enough of this", often bringing forth destructive forces. It is a death/rebirth cycle wherein death is in service to life.

At around the same time, I listened to an interview with Margaret Wheatley and heard a similar message, this time through the lens of history. Some propose we are currently in a destructive end phase of a cycle of history in the United States. Wheatley cited two of the authors of *The Collapse of Complex Societies* who wrote about the cycles that societies go through and have done so throughout history. Wheatley summed up Sir John Glubb by saying, "They (societies) start out with high ambition, high ideals, all about service, and then gradually through six stages, ending up in the age of degradation, just prior to collapse... it is generational: each generation

wants more, offers less, becomes more narcissistic. This is a 250-year cycle. The United States was founded in 1775, so we're coming up pretty close to that time period."

The other author, Joseph Tainter who took a primarily economic view of the phases, she highlighted by saying, "one of the characteristics is the systems become so overbearing and bureaucratic - become rigid, become held by the elites who no longer care at all about what's happening to anyone else in their society. The elites always take power and use up everything for themselves." While a lot to take in, I sensed it was a meaningful piece of the puzzle.

Astrology also has long referenced the evolutionary movement of humanity. A while ago a friend shared with me an article by Raye Mathis, LSW in which she wrote about the upcoming USA Pluto Return that will be exact in 2022, but says "is already close enough for our country to be grappling with the themes and influences of this major event". Pluto is associated with destruction and regeneration. She goes on to say, "A return of any planet brings to the surface unfinished business related to that particular archetype... With Pluto you cannot just 'patch things over'. You have to go to the depths and build a new foundation. Pluto says 'change is needed'. There must be deep and sometimes painful changes: a death and rebirth". Sounds like another way to talk about the "time of the Black Jaguar". Some astrologers say this death/rebirth is humanity's movement into the Age of Aquarius.

Then just recently I saw an essay by David Nicol, PhD. He stated in his Geistic Musings Post titled "Navigating the Storm of Global Change", Part 1: (10/19/21) the following:

We are in the midst of an epochal shift of the ages from the Piscean to the Aquarian era. The top-down, centralized structures of control characteristic of the Piscean Age are giving way to the emerging horizontal, decentralized networks of the Aquarian era. The formal beginning of the era was announced astrologically with the Great Conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn at 0 degrees Aquarius in December 2020. We are in the throws of the birthing process, now in a dynamic but very dangerous phase akin to moving through the birth canal, with the outcome of the whole process deeply uncertain. In 2024/25, we can expect a dramatic shift in the zeitgeist that may — if we choose wisely and bravely — correspond with a widespread sense of having come through the initiatory crisis and having entered into an entirely new era with radically expanded horizons.

Nicol also talks about this evolutionary global shift from the perspective of Stan Groff's "Basic Perinatal Matrices" (PBM). As someone who has explored and experienced Stan's BPM phases in my 20 years of doing Holotropic Breathwork retreats, I can attest to the value of this pattern level perspective and its application to our current times. Nicol goes on to say:

Focusing our lens more narrowly on the particular archetypal dynamics of our current times, I want to draw now from the model of transformation developed by psychologist Stan Grof, based on his clinical observations of thousands of supervised LSD sessions. Grof observed that, at critical junctures in their psychedelic therapy, patients consistently cycled through four basic

stages of experience that corresponded with identifiable phases of the human birth process. He called these phases “Basic Perinatal Matrices” (BPM).

**BPM I** is the phase in the birth process before labor has started and the infant is still safely and fully within the mother’s womb.

**BPM II** is the phase when labor has started but the cervix has not yet opened, creating an intensely claustrophobic condition, a sense of being stuck and with no way out.

**BPM III** is when the cervix has opened and the infant starts to move through the birth canal. This phase is usually experienced as a tumultuous, dynamic, and dangerous process — a titanic life-and-death struggle with a truly uncertain outcome.

**BPM IV** is the moment of birth itself, when the infant emerges from the womb. This tends to be associated with a sense of sudden, unexpected release from an all-or-nothing struggle for survival. It is felt to be the beginning of an entirely new phase of radically expanded possibility.

Grof theorized that the birthing process itself was like a template for the process of transformation more generally, with these same phases constituting the underlying dynamics of all genuine initiatory or transformative processes, whether in individuals or society at large.

I do believe we are in a life or death initiatory process that no one knows how it will end. What we know is that the choices and actions we humans take will be a defining factor. In Jungian terms, humanity will either face our “shadow selves” personally and collectively, bring them into the light of consciousness, and transform ourselves and our world or we will act them out unconsciously and destroy ourselves and our planet. I am holding both possibilities while reminding myself to focus on our evolutionary potential and do my part to that end.