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Notions about the Big Bang and the Armageddon, the alleged beginning and end of the Universe, can be found in different versions depending on what mythology, religious text or scientific theory we read. This “Big-Bangeddon” is a worldwide pervasive idea that seems to be engraved in the human psyche since times immemorial and keeps springing back into our conscious every now and then via movies, writings, sermons and lectures.

There’s nothing new about the Big-Bangeddon. We can find stories about the beginning and the end of the world in almost any religion or mythology we can imagine. Greek, Mayan, Inca and Aztec mythologies have them; North-American Indian mythologies have them, Judaism, Christianity and Islam have them; Hinduism has them, Buddhism has them, Zoroastrianism has them. Almost everywhere we look along the history of human kind we find a version of the Big-Bangeddon.

In the western world, the most notable of these versions is the biblical one. The bible tells us the story of the beginning of creation in the book of Genesis and the story of the end of creation in the book of revelations or Apocalypse. This biblical “Genypse” has captured the imagination of the western mind from the inception of that book sometime around AD 325 to the present day.

The fact that the Genypse is found in one form or another in all corners of the world and at most stages of human evolution may often be taken by some people as proof that such theory is true. “It’s a question of genetic memory,” some people may speculate; “it’s a question of psychic intuition,” some others may argue, all of them implying that it’s all a matter of some kind of archetypal idea or collective subconscious memory.

The Genypse may well be a part of our collective subconscious just as much as the idea of “The Devil,” or the personification of evil, may be a part of our collective subconscious too, but if that assumption is correct, how did those ideas get imprinted in our collective memory in the first place?

To accept that Genypse-like postulates emanate from any alleged collective subconscious memory we would first have to answer the following two questions: 1) How can memories of the beginning of time or Genesis be part of our collective subconscious if by definition no human being could have been there to witness it when it happened? And 2) How can the human race have any collective intuition of the end of days if, a) The Apocalypse is an event that by definition has never happened before and, b) It is an event that nobody can possibly have witnessed because it hasn’t happened yet?

Because of its constant and pervasive presence, invalidating the notion of the Genypse in a conclusive manner may prove a difficult thing to do, just as it may prove equally difficult to validate it in an irrefutable manner. The Big-Bangeddon seems to be one of those ideas that linger in everyone’s mind, but no one can categorically prove or disprove. The Genypse idea lives in our imagination like a haunting and fascinating enigma whose legitimacy millions of people take for granted, but nobody can actually corroborate.

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Until Georges Lemaitre came up with his tale of the Big Bang in 1927, most postulates about the Genypse were only of the mystical or mythological kind. Up to the moment when Lemaitre dressed his version of Genesis in scientific garb, beginning-of-time theories had been the exclusive preserve of self-proclaimed religious and mystical authorities.

Lemaitre, of course, didn't prove the Big Bang theory in any convincing irrefutable way. Albert Einstein's ideas may well have served as springboard for Lemaitre's speculations, but none of it is based on anything but plausible scientific inference and guessing. Does anybody have any unquestionable proof that the Big Bang theory is true? Nobody does.

Some scientists may claim that some complex analogies and some relatively esoteric formulas are proof enough to give such theory a more than reasonable level of credibility, but in the end most of it is just plain and sheer imagination. Nobody was there when the universe was allegedly created, so nobody has any first-hand knowledge of how it all may have actually happened.

In fact, nobody in this world has ever witnessed the creation of anything out of nothing, not to mention something of such proportions as the Universe being created out of an alleged nucleus of primal matter. Can anyone ascertain with any authority any event of such cosmic magnitude as the one the Big Bang theory pretends to prove? I doubt it.

Plausible theories are usually based on previous similar cases or on analogies that bear illuminating resemblance to the new postulate. But Lemaitre couldn't possibly have resorted to any such previous experiences or similarities because there is absolutely nothing in recorded history that may even remotely resemble the beginning of the Universe. Nobody knows how that allegedly happened. So there is no way Lemaitre could have relied on anything but sheer imagination when conceiving his story.

And if to this we add the fact that Lemaitre was a Catholic priest, we have a pronounced possibility that he was highly influenced by the bible when he got the "inspiration" for his pseudo-scientific postulate. From this perspective, the Big Bang theory is just a modern version of the same old mythological Genesis-like tales and beliefs, except that this time the tale is told in pseudo-scientific jargon.

Nobody in this world has any first-hand experience of any Genesis-like event and nobody in this world has any first-hand experience of any Apocalypse-like event either. But, if this is so, where is it that all those pseudo-scientific, mythological and religious versions of the Genypse come from? If the Big-Bangeddon is just a worldwide collective subconscious memory and if there is no way for any of us to have witnessed any such event because none of us could have ever been there in the first place, what is it that we are recalling when we come up with any Genypse-like or Big-Bangeddon-like stories and theories?

There's no denying that Genypse tales have been told across the world since times immemorial. If Genypse stories were found exclusively in the bible it would be rather easy to discard them as just one element of a specific set of religious beliefs, but that is not the case. Genypse theories are found in the mythological tales of peoples and tribes disseminated across the entire world and

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across the long span of human history. This fact makes such theories and stories a bit difficult to disregard as random localisms.

There is definitely something universal in those theories and tales, some sort of primary, archetypal, recurrent pattern that pertains to the whole human race. This is a reason why some people try to explain the universality of those stories using terms like “collective subconscious” or “collective memory,” meaning this is an issue that concerns all of us, not as individuals, but as a collective entity.

The “collective” aspect of this phenomenon seems to point to an encoded DNA-like source of inspiration that generates collective but subconscious archetypal intuitions that sometimes surface to the conscious of some people, regardless of their ethnicity or place of origin, prompting them to express very similar Genypse-like kinds of mythological tales and theories. This may well sound a bit far fetched to some, but I’m willing to bet that Joseph Campbell et al would consider it a rather plausible idea.

Still, even if the archetypal-intuition proposition made above were true, the questions would still remain: How could human beings have DNA-like Genesis codes encrypted in them if the human race didn’t exist yet when Creation allegedly took place? And how can any of us have any encoded intuitions about the Apocalypse if the Apocalypse has never happened before and it hasn’t happened yet?

To answer those questions I propose to first look into some basic arguments that serve as foundation to some of the most populous religious denominations of our time. So let me start by clarifying some fundamental concepts that most of us take for granted, but whose explication may throw some light upon the subject in question.

- The concepts of “Eternal,” “Everlasting” and “Ephemeral” are concepts that most of us can talk about with relative ease; nevertheless I will state a brief definition of them. Eternal is anything that has no beginning and no end. Everlasting is anything that has a beginning, but has no end. Ephemeral is anything that has a beginning and has an end relatively shortly there after. For example, all living beings on planet Earth are ephemeral.
- There are basically two kinds of religions or transcendental philosophies in the world, monistic ones and dualistic ones. Monistic religions or philosophies don’t see any separation between Creator and Creation, while dualistic ones see the Creator residing outside Creation.
- Monistic religions or beliefs cannot accept the end of creation for the same reason that they cannot accept the end of God. God is eternal, and since God is creation itself, then creation is eternal as well. From a monistic perspective, creation can evolve or transform itself, but it cannot one day self-destruct and come to an end. God is indestructible, and since God is creation, creation is indestructible too. Creation is God’s tangible expression of itself. Creation is God and God is Creation.

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- But God's creation is constantly changing. God the creator is in constant flux and reflux. Each flux is a new generation of possibilities made available to the reality of "creation." Each reflux is a generation of possibilities that has exhausted itself and returns to the creator.
- In the monistic view, there are only two kinds of living beings: Eternal and Ephemeral. But all ephemeral beings have an eternal core. That core is one and the same with the Eternal Consciousness which is the substance of God, so it is not really a part of "creation." It animates all the ephemeral living beings manifested in creation, but its existence does not depend on the existence of the ephemeral beings it animates. That core has a life of its own, and that life is eternal, it has no beginning and it has no end.
- Dualistic religions or beliefs, on the other hand, can conceive of the end of creation. In their view, the creator is eternal, but it is outside creation. For adherents of Dualistic beliefs, creator and creation are not one and the same; they are separate from each other.
- From the Christian perspective, for example, Creation had a beginning and it will have an end. God created the universe during Genesis and will destroy it during the Apocalypse.
- The biblical creation is not everlasting, but inside that creation there are some beings that have an everlasting core or soul. Those beings are known on planet Earth as Humans. The core or soul of those human beings is everlasting; it had a beginning, but it won't have an end.
- The biblical creation's finitude, however, is in fact only partial. There is a very important portion of that creation which is everlasting. That everlasting portion is divided into two opposite sections: Heaven and Hell. The biblical God created those everlasting realms as places where the human beings' everlasting core could go enjoy the rewards for their righteous lives or the punishment for their crooked ways.
- In the biblical dualistic view, Heaven and Hell are everlasting; they were one day created, but they will never be destroyed. The human soul is everlasting too; it was one day created, but it will never be destroyed; it will exist forever. The part of Creation that we can perceive, on the other hand, has its days numbered. It is supposed to end one day, but nobody knows when.

My beliefs on this matter or, better said, my certainties on this matter, are quite far from any dualistic views; they are firmly anchored on the monistic side of this religious-philosophical divide. I am absolutely positive that God and Creation are one and the same. In my view, Creation is Eternal, not just everlasting. In fact, from a monistic perspective the term "Creation" is a misnomer, as the reality that we perceive through our senses that we call creation was in fact never created in the Genesis sense of the word.

It was never created in the Big-Bang sense of the word either. In my view, the Universe didn't one day just magically spring into existence and started evolving into its present shape out of some sort of atomic silly putty, as Lemaitre pretends it did. Lemaitre's idea sounds to some of us

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like the product of a rather sophisticated, yet ultimately inadequate mind incapable of conceiving the idea of an Eternal Universe.

The Universe is just the largest part of creation, but since Creation is one and the same with God and God is Eternal, the Universe is eternal too. The Universe never came into existence; it was always there, since forever, and it will be there forever too. The Universe may evolve and change; planets may crash and life may become extinct on them; stars may light up or burn out, but the Universe will never disappear. It has always been there and it will always be.

Obviously, this monistic view cannot be shared by the overwhelming majority of people. Almost everybody on Earth embraces a dualistic cosmogony and believes in one version or another of the Big-Bangeddon. I wouldn't be amazed if even some adherents to monistic philosophies expressed their dismay when reading the Eternalist<sup>1</sup> statement I made above. Many Buddhists, for one, would disagree with it. But what those brethren would fail to see is how baseless and fantastic the Genypse-like and Big-Bangeddon-like theories that they believe in really are.

Still, I wouldn't blame anyone for putting their faith in those stories. There is a very solid reason why such tales have so many believers and followers and that reason has to do with the archetypal subconscious intuitions mentioned above. The timeless and pervasive presence of Genypse-like stories definitely points to natural sources of inspiration whose constant thrust towards expression is clearly irresistible to human kind. Human beings seem to have an irrepressible need to believe in and express, in whichever way they can, the idea of a beginning and an end of "Creation."

From an Eternalist point of view, however, the beginning and the end of Creation are perfectly illusory; yet the source of inspiration that produces the stories that talk about them isn't. Genypse and Big-Bangeddon tales are not totally false; they are based on factual, cyclical, recurrent events. Where those theories and stories fail is in the magnitude of their scope. There was indeed a Genesis at a given point in time and there will indeed be an Apocalypse sometime in the future too, but not at the level of the Universe. Genypse-like events have always occurred in all corners of the world and at all stages of human evolution; they just haven't happened to the Universe at large and they never will.

The Genesis is taking place right now, as I write and as you read, everywhere in the world where there is a good number of people. And the Apocalypse is happening there too. The same goes for the Big Bang. The whole of creation is coming into being at this very instant and the whole of Creation is coming to an end at this very instant as well. Genypse and Big-Bangeddon tales are based on actual events, except that the magnitude of those events does not correspond to the magnitude of the events described in those stories.

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<sup>1</sup> Eternalism is a theory proposing that the Universe has always existed and will always exist. This theory stands in direct contraposition to the Genesis and the Big Bang and in direct contraposition to any apocalyptic or end-of-creation views. I came up with that term as I was working on these writings, but when I Googled it I found out it already existed. I don't belong now, nor have I belonged in the past or intend to belong in the future, to any eternalist association, sect or religion.

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There is indeed a collective recollection of the beginning of time encoded in the human psyche, just as there is indeed a valid intuition of the end of days encoded there too; but those collective memories and intuitions have been largely misinterpreted in the tales that the story tellers have told us. What we have read or heard from them are things that keep happening to all human beings, but not to “creation” as a whole. Creation has no beginning and it is indestructible. What has a beginning and has an end is each individual human being.

All of us have our own Genesis and our own Apocalypse. We are all born and we all die. The Universe didn't one day come into being as Genypse theories propose, what one day came into being is each and everyone of us. The Universe is never coming to an end either, contrary to whatever any self-appointed prophet of doom may claim, what some day will come to an end is again each and everyone of us. Genypse theories are actually true; they just never happened at the level of “Creation.”

Genypse tales do emanate from some sort of collective subconscious memory as well, but the source of those memories is not the events that those stories would have us believe in. In order to elaborate further on this line of thinking, let's first recall what question No. 1 above was all about: 1) How can memories of the beginning of time or Genesis be part of our collective subconscious if by definition no human being could have been there to witness it when it happened?

Let's also recall some of the differences that exist between monistic and dualistic cosmogonies. In the monistic view, there are two kinds of beings: Eternal and ephemeral. But all ephemeral beings have an eternal core. Please recall that that core is “eternal,” not “everlasting.” This means that it has no beginning and no end. In the dualistic view there are the same two kinds of beings, Eternal and Ephemeral, except that the only eternal being is God. In the dualistic view, ephemeral beings, i.e., us, also have a core, but that core is not eternal, it is only everlasting. This means that it has a beginning, but it has no end.

Now, my answer to question No. 1 is only valid from the perspective of a monistic cosmogony. Dualistic cosmogonies don't allow for the kind of collective subconscious memories that I propose for the simple reason that, in their view, the life of the human core or soul begins at the moment of conception. From the dualistic point of view, the human soul experiences birth and death only once, whereas in the monistic view the human soul experiences birth and death myriad times.

Something as pervasive across the globe and as constantly expressed throughout human history as the topic of Genypse stories is would have to happen an innumerable amount of times to get encoded in the human psyche in such an indelible fashion. The desire to express Genesis-like ideas appears quite similar to an instinct of the psychic kind and no human instinct can develop in the span of a single lifetime, be it of the psychic or the physical kind. The human genome doesn't absorb information that easily.

My answer to question No. 1, therefore, is only valid from a perspective of reincarnation. The collective subconscious memory we all share that is the source of inspiration for all those stories

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about the beginning of time is an imprint we all carry in our psyche after having gone through an innumerable amount of births. Each time that we are born is just another instance in which the Universe appears to be created for us. Before our birth the Universe didn't exist for us. It came into being one more time at the moment we came back into this world.

It is true that no one could have possibly been there at the beginning of time, but not because at the beginning there was nothing, as Genesis-like theories tell us, but because there has never been a beginning of time. From an Eternalist point of view, time is simply nonexistent. There cannot be a beginning for Eternity. Where there's a beginning there's no Eternity. Everlasting and ephemeral things have a beginning; Eternal ones don't. The beginning or Genesis that we all remember is not the Universe's, but our own.

All human beings are ephemeral. We all have a beginning and we all have an end, but our core consciousness or souls don't; they are eternal. After our "souls" reincarnate in this world for an undetermined amount of times, the memory of our birth gets imprinted on the densest part of it. That imprint or psychic memory eventually surfaces on our conscious and finds expression in the form of Genesis-like stories. But that psychic memory, which is just a recollection of the vast number of re-entries we have made into this reality, is misrepresented in Genypse tales as the beginning of the world, or as the beginning of "creation," although in fact it is just a recollection of the myriad times we have come back into this "reality."

Since all souls go through the same process of reincarnation for as many times as their evolutionary state requires, everyone has recollection of the same beginnings, hence the collective nature of that memory. Genesis-like theories resonate in our minds because we can all relate to them, not in the specific way in which we can remember something we have all experienced collectively like, say, 9/11, but as the intuitive recollection of something we have all experienced individually.

Question No. 1, therefore, can be best answered by stating that Genesis-like theories and stories indeed emanate from some sort of collective subconscious memory, but not because human beings were there to witness the moment of "creation." Nobody could have witnessed the moment of creation because no Genesis-like moment of "creation" has ever taken place. Instead, the seed for all Genesis-like theories and stories is dormant in our collective subconscious memory as an encrypted recollection of our own individual recurring births, which we all have experienced an innumerable amount of times. When that recollection somehow surfaces to our conscious, it finds expression in the form of the mythical stories and pseudo-scientific theories that we all hear about.

Genesis-like tales and Big-Bang-like theories have their foundation in a collective subconscious memory, but since that encrypted recollection is not easily deciphered, it has thus far found conscious expression only in the form of fantastic, overblown mythical tales and theories. We all share in the collective subconscious memory of the many beginnings of time that we have repeatedly experienced as individuals, but that memory has been largely misinterpreted by the scientists and story tellers that have written about them. In consequence, the fascinating tales that those stories tell us are mostly figments of the story tellers' imagination.

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My answer to question No. 2 would again be valid only from the perspective of a monistic cosmogony. Apocalyptic and Armageddon-like tales and stories are best explained following the line of thinking developed in answering question No. 1. This time, however, we have some specific references that may prove illuminating as illustrations for the main two diverging points. Before going forward, let's get a refresher on what question No. 2 was all about: 2) How can the human race have any collective intuition of the end of days if, a) The Apocalypse is an event that by definition has never happened before and, b) It is an event that nobody can possibly have witnessed because it hasn't happened yet?

It is befitting to start the answer by recalling that in the western world the most significant apocalyptic story ever told is, of course, the Apocalypse. But as we know, other similar mythological stories had surfaced in the different parts of the globe way before the Apocalypse ever did. Saint John may have come up with the best seller among those stories, but he couldn't claim the copyright on that idea. If he could, I wouldn't be writing these words, for that would mean that such tales are the sole preserve of the Christian religion, which would also mean this whole issue wouldn't pertain to humanity as a whole.

But that is not the case. Genypse-like stories belong to the human race, as they all spring from some sort of shared subconscious memory of those events. We now know as well that, from a monistic perspective, those events never took place and will never take place at the level of the Universe. We also know that they are taking place as we read in every corner of the world where there are a good number of people. There are people being born everywhere and there are people dying everywhere too. The Genesis and the Apocalypse are happening simultaneously at this very moment in time, but not at the level of the Universe. The Genypse is happening at the personal level of those who are, as we read, being born or dying.

In this line of thinking, St. John's apocalyptic visions were only the visions of his own death which, exalted by his religious fervor, he extrapolated to the level of the Universe. Because of his evident constant devotion to Jesus<sup>2</sup>, St. John probably had attained a certain purity of mind which one day spontaneously brought him to a level of transcendental consciousness similar, but of a lower order, to the level achieved by some successful practitioners of Jnana Yoga. That level of consciousness was probably very similar to other after-death experiences St. John had previously lived in the course of the many reincarnations he had gone through in his long evolutionary journey.

Those after-death stages that St. John relived are quite similar to the ones explained in the Tibetan Book of the Dead or Bardo Thodol. As explained in that book, anyone as deeply devoted to a prophet or deity as St. John was clearly devoted to Jesus\*, can, because of their devotion, avoid or overcome any and all of those horrific visions that may appear to us at certain stages in the after-death process. St. John was unable to avoid those visions, but he was able to overcome

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<sup>2</sup> Please note that, in these writings, any reference to St. John's devotion to Jesus is presented exclusively from the perspective of Bhakti Yoga, the Yoga of devotion.



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them because of his profound love for Jesus, who in the duration of his epiphany appeared a few times as his savior and, in St. John's exalted grandiose extrapolation, as the savior of humanity.

St. John's visions of apocalyptic horsemen and speaking animals had much to do with the attachments he had had and the actions he had performed during his previous lives. The suddenness and intensity of such unexpected state of transcendental consciousness excited his imagination to the point of eventually ascribing dialogues and overimposing Universalist religious meaning on everything he saw. Overall, the final destruction of "creation" in his vision was nothing but an extrapolation to the Universal level of the many times he had experienced death, which represents the end of the world at the personal level for each and every one of us every time we die.

His depiction of the final judgment was also an extrapolation of the balance of deeds that each of us has to submit at the end of each life, except that such balance is not submitted to a court-like group of judges sitting on thrones up in heaven or anything of that sort. That balance is assessed in our ability or inability to bypass or overcome the obstacles that any horrifying visions may put on our way towards liberation. As a merger of Jnana Yoga and the Bardo Thodol would explain, the stronger the attachments we experienced in our lives were, and the more selfish and crooked the deeds we performed were, the more difficult to bypass or overcome those terrifying visions it will be.

The Apocalypse that St. John experienced never represented the end of the world as Christian religious lore has made millions of us believe. The Apocalypse that St. John saw in his vision was his own. He was able to write about it in such detail partly because of the many times he had had the same experience in the past. His imagination, of course, played the major role when he later put his story together. All that terrifying grandiosity expressed in the Apocalypse is mostly the product of St. John's exalted imagination. None of it ever pertained to the Universe as a whole. It was always all St. John's personal interpretation.

But the personal can be Universal from the perspective of monistic cosmogonies. In the long run, St. John's repeated death experience is equal to the experience of death that all of us have gone through time and again. Apocalyptic stories resonate in our minds because we all have gone through our own personal Apocalypse an innumerable amount of times. In other words, we all share in our recollection of the after-death experience depicted in the Bardo Thodol. We have all been frightened by similar apocalyptic visions in the past and, obviously, the great majority of us have failed to overcome those fears; otherwise we wouldn't be here sharing this very same "reality" once again.

To overcome the fearful visions that St. John saw would represent the ultimate liberation from the shackles of reincarnation. If St. John had actually died at the moment of his vision, his deep devotion to Jesus would have obviously been strong enough to pull him out of the jaws of that mystifying transcendental state and lead him into "salvation" which would have meant attaining one of the higher levels of Consciousness in the Eternal Afterlife. This type of liberation by devotion is contemplated in the teachings of Bhakti Yoga, one of the main four branches of Yoga, and is explained with considerable clarity in the Bardo Thodol as well.

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St. John's revelation may also be comparable to the moment of Realization that successful Jnana Yoga practitioners attain, except that St. John's experience appears heavily tainted with hallucinations and impressions from previous births and deaths. His mind was not in a clear state during his vision, as it was obviously plagued with mysterious numbers and other archetypal symbolism. Other individuals who have relived similar near-death states have later been able to recount their experience with much more clarity than St. John did.

The Greek philosopher Plato, for one, tells us in the closing chapter of his famed book "The Republic," the story of a man who died in battle and came back to life a few days later with a very vivid memory of what he witnessed in the netherworld. The story in Plato's "Myth of Er" has some allegories in it too, but it is much less plagued with pseudo-universalistic warnings and is nowhere nearly as blurred with obscure religious symbols as St. John's story was.

Furthermore, Er's tale doesn't have any animal-like creatures speaking prophecies and admonitions and hardly has any terrifying visions either, which may be telling us that Er's mind was, for whatever reason, in a clearer state when he attained his after-life level of consciousness than St. John's was when he attained his. Both story tellers talk about each of their own personal Apocalypses, but only St. John was mystified enough to extrapolate his to universalistic eschatological proportions.

Now, if you're wondering what could there be in common between St. John's apocalyptic vision, Plato's Myth of Er's near-death experience and Jnana Yoga's Realization of the Self, the answer is very simple: the common denominator between them is death. St. John's revelation was like a very intense recapitulation of his repeated experience of death. Er's near-death experience speaks for itself: Er died, saw what he had to see in the after-life and came back to this world to talk about it. The Realization of the Self is attained only after the practitioners' mind has been divested of all earthly attachments, which is basically the death of the ego, which is what happens to all of us when we die.

The association between Realization of the Self and death is also worth further clarification. To Realize the self is to regain direct knowledge of the Eternal Core mentioned above and to regain direct knowledge of that core is only possible when we fully divest ourselves of all the attachments that bind us to this world. These attachments have their root in our identification with our body; which is whence springs our identification with the rest of our earthly attributes.

The clear difference between the experience of Realization and the experience of death is, first, that during Realization we are still in possession of our cognitive abilities and, second, that when our "Super Consciousness" comes back from Realization it comes back into the same mind, the same body and the same set of earthly attributes we had before Realization.

In the case of death, on the other hand, our usual cognitive abilities have largely ceased to function and when we come back into this world from our experience we come back into a different mind with a different body and a whole new set of earthly attributes; in other words, we

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come back to a different reincarnation. Otherwise, the difference between Realization of the Self and death is nil.

Let's also consider that, unlike St. John's and Er's experience, the Realization of the Self is not a random unexpected event. It is a very deliberate achievement obtained in a process that prepares the mind to interpret it and assimilate it. The acquisition of the direct knowledge of our Eternal Self, which in Jnana Yoga is known as Realization, doesn't take place in a mental state previously devoid of expectations and awareness of the importance of the issue at hand. Realization doesn't come to anybody who isn't ready. The practice of that discipline prepares the mind for that transcendental moment, even if before attaining it we don't know exactly what that moment is going to consist of.

The Bardo Thodol is very clear about the importance of preparation for death. That book is basically a manual on how to guide recently-deceased individuals into the Eternal Light of the Self. There are three basic stages or "Bardos" explained in that book. Anyone who had prepared themselves for the moment of death will very likely attain liberation during the first Bardo. Many of St. John's visions, on the other hand, seem to be of the kind described at the bottom of the second Bardo and all through the third.

Those stages involve exposure to the horrifying presence of some wrathful deities. But St. John also saw luminous visions of Christ at different times during his experience. His vision of Jesus coming to his rescue confirms the Bhakti Yoga – Bardo Thodol notion that someone as devoted to any prophet or deity as St. John was devoted to Christ, can attain liberation despite the presence of any wrathful deities. This also means that St. John probably attained liberation when he finally passed away.

Some details in Er's near-death account also correlate well with some essential tenets in the philosophy of Jnana Yoga. In his description of the moment of reincarnation, for example, Er says that the reincarnating souls chose their future lives according to the habits they had had in their previous lives. That observation is perfectly in line with Jnana Yoga's proposition that it is because of our inability to overcome the passions and attachments we have in this life that we are forced to come back into this world again.

In Jnana Yoga and in the Bardo Thodol, liberation from the recurring cycle of reincarnation comes only to those who have gotten rid of their earthly passions and attachments. Those who die having prepared themselves in such a way run directly into the Eternal Light as soon as they enter the After-Life state and don't have to endure any painful exposure to any wrathful visions. Most importantly, by running into the Eternal Light they don't have to reincarnate again.

Situations like the one in which St. John found himself at the moment of his apocalyptic vision don't necessarily involve a lucid state of mind. A high level of selflessness and purity of thought is probably essential for such an exalted mental state to "descend" upon anybody, but the expectation that such event would happen to him probably didn't exist in St. John's mind. The element of surprise can be a determining factor in how we interpret what follows after the higher state of consciousness first hits our minds. Preparation for that moment is essential for

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understanding and assimilating whatever we're faced with during that state of super consciousness.

But St. John doesn't appear to have been ready for that moment. All those encoded mysteries in his vision, like the seven seals, Christ's double-edged tongue, Christ's voice sounding like the voice of many waters, etc., seem like romantic representations of words that St. John was probably unable to understand when Christ spoke them. St. John doesn't seem to have drawn much intelligible meaning from Jesus' overall teachings. He definitely must have had a real Revelation, but his interpretation of it looks highly fantastic and intentionally adorned with imagery that fits well with his obvious devotion to Christ.

In St. John's eyes Jesus was the only possible savior of humanity, but in reality Jesus was just the only learned sage he had ever listened to in person. Obviously, St. John was unprepared to understand an enlightened man such as Jesus must have been. All that apocalyptic symbolism speaks only of how cryptic Jesus' words must have seemed to St. John and the rest of the Apostles. Christ's message was obviously way above the comprehension capability of the great majority of his contemporaries, including the Jesus Twelve.

Let's recall that the Apostles were just common men, simple fishermen and the like, who weren't supposed to even be literate at the time. There was probably only one or two of Jesus' coevals who may have understood at least a portion of the things he said. Judas might have been one of those who understood him a bit, if we are to believe that the Judas Gospel is legitimate and true.

St. John's admonitions to the different churches are again romantic interpretations of the final judgment that Er talks about and that the Bardo Thodol explains using different terminology. St. John's vision's admonitions to "do this" or "don't do that" or else "this will happen to you," seem like recollections of things he had experienced in his previous death stages and during his own personal final judgments. Either that or just recollections of things he had heard other people say during his life.

Similar exhortations to be good and avoid evil had probably been around for hundreds if not thousands of years before St. John wrote his fantastic piece. There is nothing new in the Apocalypse in that regard. What is new in that book is the context in which those admonitions and exhortations are presented: The end of "Creation." Something was indeed coming to an end in St. John's vision, but it was not the Universe. What was once again coming to an end was St. John's own existence.

If by definition the Apocalypse is the most salient representative of all Apocalypse-like and end-of-days theories, it is also the best example of how fantastic and overblown such theories can often be. More importantly, it is probably the best example of how the collective subconscious memory of our recurrent experience of death and reincarnation may serve as source of inspiration for such kind of theories and mythological tales. In other words, most stories about the Universe's finitude or Apocalypse are just blind extrapolations of the finitude of all living things that exist in this world, most significantly our own.

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We see that all life on our planet eventually comes to an end and we infer that such has to be the case at all levels of “creation,” so we extrapolate our own unavoidable personal extinction to the level of the Universe. Our minds don’t seem to be wired to grasp the concept of Eternity so easily. If even some glorified intellects such as those of Einstein and Lemaitre were unable to conceive the Universe as an eternal entity, how can we expect the great majority of people to do so?

But that is all there is to the Genesis and the Apocalypse: No such kind of event has ever taken place. The Universe is eternal, it never had a beginning and it will never have an end. It never came into being out of some sort of atomic silly putty as Lemaitre argued, and it will never be reduced to ashes like some apocalyptic theories pretend. The Universe may change, it may evolve and reshape itself, but it will never disappear. It has always been there and it will always be. What has a beginning and has an end is each and every one of us. We were all born one day and we will all die some day in the future; and each time we have died we have gone through the same after-death stages and we have all fallen back into the recurring cycle of reincarnation.

And each time we have reincarnated we have brought with us into this world the memory of our past births and deaths. After an innumerable amount of reincarnations, those memories have by now become ingrained in our collective psyche in the form of encrypted recollections of our personal Genypse episodes, recollections that, once they occasionally surface to our conscious, become fantastic mythological and pseudo-scientific tales.

No one can have the slightest idea of how the Universe came into being or of how it will come to an end, because the Universe has never had a beginning and it will never have an end. Any stories pretending to relate one event or the other have their inspirational foundation in the collective memory of our repeated exit and re-entry from and into this world and rely heavily on the story-tellers’ vivid imagination.

God and the Universe are one and the same. God is eternal and the Universe is Eternal too. The Genesis, the Apocalypse, the Big Bang, the Armageddon; those are only misconstrued extrapolations of the memory we all share of our own recurrent cycle of birth and death. The reason that we all have some kind of collective subconscious memory of the beginning of time is that we have all experienced the beginning of our lives every time we have reincarnated, and we have all reincarnated an innumerable amount of times. Similarly, we all have a collective intuition of the end of days because we have all experienced the end of our lives a corresponding innumerable amount of times.

There could have never been a Genesis or Big Bang event recorded in the history of the Universe because the Universe has never had a beginning, and there will never be an Apocalypse or Armageddon event recorded anytime in the future because the Universe will never have an end. What has a beginning and has an end is the ephemeral life of the bodies and minds we inhabit while incarnated. The act of reentering this world through the wombs of all the mothers we have had in the past has represented the beginning of “creation” for each and every one of us every time we have reincarnated, just as the act of exiting our bodies at the end of all our previous lives has represented the end of days for every one of us every time we have died.

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Stories and theories about the beginning and the end of time are just illusions generated in our minds because of our inability to understand the wonders of reincarnation and because of our inability to understand the Eternal nature of the Universe and of our souls.

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