BUBBLES

Notes on the Painting

Bubbles is divided into three distint but connected sections; Past, Present, and Future. In the Past, the "Immortal Creator" is surrounded by the myriad forms of life that have already become extinct. Painted as white ghosts that evolved from the earliest forms (in yellow) outward. Immediately surrounding "God" are our relatively recent hominid ancestors. As the Past touches the tree of primates in the Present; some of its branches are dead and some are dying. The greater forest of which it is a part of, the metaphorical "web of life" is also thinning as the stumps (newly extinct lines) imply. The forest is still inhabited by the most adaptable of creatures, yet obviously the remnants are a former shadow of its past diversity. The living skin of the earth is fraying at the edges, losing its grip on the rocks that plummet toward and threaten to burst the bubbles of the Future.

The human influence on the Future is undeniable: the mechanical hand and the advanced architecture are still in contact with Earth. The closest bubbles house some of first attempts into space: Sputnik, Tel-Star, Apollo-Soyuz, Skylab, Shuttles, Voyager, and the Hubble Telescope. The next wave is not bound to the biological womb of Earth: the unknown, unforeseen vehicles piloted by Techno-Sapiens exploring the next frontier. Beyond these float sentient entities designed in space, perhaps resembling their distant biological ancestors from the oceans of Earth, evolving anew in the ocean of space.

Further Thoughts

Ninety-nine point nine percent of all life that has existed on Earth has become extinct. There was a time when Earth's atmosphere had almost no oxygen and the planet's life-forms exhaled it as a poisonous by-product, eventually poisoning the atmosphere for themselves and giving rise to new forms of life that could use it. Survivors from that anaerobic age still live where oxygen has not poisoned their habitats, just as there are still remnants of the dinosaur age (birds, for example) and vestiges of every epoch since life began (proto-bacteria, proto-plants, proto-fish, proto-insects). The variables that drive life's evolutionary march are as infinite and unknowable as the universe itself; sometimes it is as simple as needing to eat without being eaten. Life diversified exponentially as it literally fed off itself. This complex, ever-changing web of inter-connected beings is best described as a collection of the currently surviving past. Within this miraculous chaos arose a sentient being that began to wonder ... and wander ... trying to unravel this mysterious force it called "life". The human mind had come of age, capable of driving change through invention. Tools, weapons, language, and culture became ever more sophisticated, propelling the human race far faster than biology had, leading us to believe we have been released from nature's evolutionary grip to control our own destiny.

With boundless imagination we peer into molecular and cosmic structures, creating engineering marvels that were inconceivable only a few generations ago. We are aware of Earth's biological evolutionary march, but we are witness to that of technology. With explosive advances in genetic engineering, nano-technology, and computational power, new bio-mechanical sensory interfaces are being developed to replace and enhance biological organs. With advanced functionality will come extended life expectancies, and this will separate the strictly biological from a new sub-species: Techo-Sapien. From there it is only a short stretch to the improvement and/or replacement of that most critical of human organs, the brain...and with that, the creation of the next truly evolutionary leap; IT, the as-yet unnamed entity made possible by 'singularity', the moment when computers surpass humans in neural connections.

Will IT be the fusion of biology and technology?

Will IT reproduce independent entities?

Will IT be Conscious? Sentient?

Will IT have a Soul?

Will IT be capable of Love? Evil?

Will IT be Wise? Indifferent?

Will IT harvest us, devour us, re-configure us?

Will IT contemplate its beginnings and assume the role of brain for GAIA (the ancient Greek belief that the Earth is a living being) and govern the planet wisely?

Imagining future scenarios is one of the greatest of human achievements, ignoring the realities of the present is one of our worst shortcomings. We are still bound by the womb of Earth. We still cling to the primate tree. We must breath air, drink water, and ingest other biological beings that, in-turn, have ingested other biological beings. The oceans of our earliest ancestors still course through our veins, and we each are inhabited by a multitude of microbial life that maintains our bodies.

We must admit that we have not been released from nature's biological grasp. We are bound by the web of life we evolved from and with. Sadly, we are responsible for an extinction rate not seen since the meteor impact of sixty-five million years ago. It is ironic that the species with such lofty dreams for the future is responsible for the sabotaging of present-day life support systems and, possibly, the critical phase that a great evolutionary leap would require.

Despite our evolutionary restrictions we can here and now improve our hopes of lengthening our stay on Earth. The more minds that can envision and encourage solutions, the greater the probability of their occurring. See yourself as a microbe on a body whose mission is to identify those forces contributing to its demise ... and act as if it were a matter of life and death. As failed stewards of the gift of "dominion over", we must admit the enormity of our collective ignorance and arrogance, and move forward, humbly, with "being a part of." Consider the cost-benefit of your life to the health of Gaia. Dream of a future created with maturity, restraint, and love.

The Big Bang set in motion the evolution of the Universe. Like the fertilization of the egg by sperm cascades through its development to become not only what its genetic code programed it to become, but also an ability to evolve beyond that code; to rewrite itself as it progresses through time, multiplying the variables of its abilities through an inconceivably infinite order of magnitude. Whether from Earth, or from spores on erratic ice comets, the origin of life cannot be known. Microbes in a pond, are fish in an ocean, are planets in a galaxy - all chickens and eggs, the least of which carries infinite evolutionary potential. That everything alive replaced what came before it reveals that death is a gift to birth, no more an end than birth a beginning. Both are each other in turn.

- “The first proto-being, whatever it was, the Ur-ancestor of us all, did not just arise in a pool, it was a pool.” Jennifer Ackerman
- “All the difference between living forms have been achieved only by the elaboration of devices for maintaining that precious liquidity without which cells cannot live and grow: Not for nothing has the composition of mammalian blood led to our description as ‘walking sacks of sea water’ ” Loren Eisely
- “a principle of continuity that runs through the scale of structure in living things...and so, little by little, by imperceptible steps, does Nature make the passage from the plant, through animal, to Man.” Aristotle
- “It may be that our role on this planet is not to worship God but to create him.” Arthur C. Clark
- “G.O.D. generator of diversity.” Unknown
- “Really we create nothing. We merely plagiarize nature.” Jean Battaillon
- “Who placed us with eyes between a microscopic and a telescopic world?” Henry David Thoreau
- “this new work must be done for the sake of the land itself - someone who will come later, who will depend then on what is done now.” Wendell Berry
- “There is no longer any honest way to deny that a way of living that our leaders continue to praise is destroying all that our county is and all the best that it means.” Wendell Berry
- “in unlimited economic competition, the winners are losers: that they may appear to be winners is owing only to their temporary ability to charge their costs to other people or to nature.” Wendell Berry
- “Most of our difficulty with the earth lies in the effort to do what perhaps ought not to be done.” Liberty Hyde Bailey
- “Every discovery in pure science is potentially subversive; even science must sometimes be treated as a possible enemy.” Mustapha Mond - Brave New World - Aldous Huxley
- “With increasing technology goes increasing vulnerability. The more man conquers Nature the more liable he becomes to artificial catastrophes” Arthur C. Clark
- “There are minds that deposit their dangerous unripe thoughts here and there to lie still for a time and be brooded in other minds, and the shell not to be broken until the next age.” Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “If you would be a real seeker after truth, it is necessary that at least once in your life you doubt, as far as possible, all things.” René Descartes
- “If you think you are the product of your parents, you are only an infinitesimal fraction correct.” Whitecrow
- “The true value of a human being is determined primarily by the measure and the sense in which he has attained liberation from the self.” Albert Einstein
- “I must be willing to give up what I am in order to become what I will be.” Albert Einstein
- “Live simply, so that others may simply live.” Unknown
- “Existential eternity - dying is a transaction in an endless gift economy - you nourish the future.” Bill McKibben
- “The hen is the egg’s way of making another egg.” Samuel Butler
- “It is a poor sort of memory that only works backward.” Lewis Carroll
- “We are the ancestors of generations to come.” Lama Surya Das
- “Decay is inherent in all compounded things. Strive on with diligence.” Buddha’s last words