The Origin of Species and Other Poems

Presentation by
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THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES

That all life on earth
should come from a single cell:
    the great mystery
Everyone from a single ancestor
a universe still creating itself

one like a cow entered the sea
and became the whale
    Fish or mammal?
    Or mammal and fish
To Linnaeus a mammal
with a heart and lungs
and eyelashes that move
but with aquatic habits

    By adapting to the environment
    gradually
    another species
fins of fish develop
into paws of invertebrates
    why is one a parrot
    and another a tiger
once there were no brains
now there are billions
there was no leaf
now everything is green
    From a single cell
    trees animals you
    all brothers
    we are all a modification of another
    the bird wing was dinosaur’s paw

From such a simple origin
infinity of forms
walk crawl run skip swim fly
the mystery of this variety of life

Microscopic algae
now immense trees
the gills become wings
and the anthropods took flight
The cosmos is natural selection
    and some chance
        (there’d be no evolution
         if everything were chance
         or if there were no chance)

We are so alike
    variations on the same theme
our head is from the worm
or “we are all modified sharks”
the digestive process of an elephant
identical to that of a bacteria
the teeth with which I eat a lobster
are like those of the lobster

Insect bird reptile lily Einstein
since every transition is slow
every species appears without transition
but the whole of life is a single life
and in it there is a single Incarnation

The same DNA in common
    with all the animals
        and our hands and feet
        of amphibious fish and reptile
all emerged from the Big Bang
cosmos not finished yet
and every day is the Big Bang
    the creation-evolution continues
        traveling further and further away from nothing

a handful of cells go towards
    being a bird that flies

Darwin in the 600 pages
of *The Origin of Species*
speaks of the modifications
of species not the origin
the origin is a mystery
    that of the tiny fragile life
        in the immensity of dead worlds

Does a special species with
a special destiny exist?
Destiny that is God-evolution
a God who abandoned eternity
and has entered time
and is future?

The infinite future called God
a God who is the God of novelty
the infinite novelty of evolution
evolution against the status quo
that bankers desire so much

Life emerged on land
and began to walk
slippery fish
leaning on fins
like crutches
from the aquatic limit
to the limitless air
when a well dries
it survives
walking to another well
and the fins became paws

The great mystery of life
all sharing the same origin
and that such different bodies
should come from a single cell
all species relatives
from orchids to earthworms
bacteria gradually dinosaurs
then the dinosaur became bird
also our mollusk ancestor
There is only one animal

Evolution unites us all
the living and the dead
Darwin discovered it
(that we come from a single cell)
that is we are interlinked
if one rises from the dead
we all rise from the dead
GAZING AT THE STARS WITH MARTÍ

The moon like a rugby ball.
At 8 a.m. over the Alps.
All that You touch is so beautiful!

What does the earth look like from the moon?
The astronaut replied:—“Fragile.”
Neither can you see any division of nations.
And the sun: its white light in the black sky.
From purely chemical reactions
intelligent life here transpired.

Could there be others like this on other planets? With bodies?
Where might evolution have already taken them?
Some could be merely interstellar cloud.
Or intelligent beings composed only of radiation.
Which in our lexis we might call angels.
We’re not thinking of Hollywood films.
The meeting would be another step in evolution.

Extraterrestrials and terrestrials.
Then it wouldn’t be change but transformation.
After the meeting nothing but a case of working together.

Children from the same womb of the Big Bang.

Three hundred light years away?
Three thousand light years?
The “conversation” is not easy.

The most powerful transmission
would be a faint murmur across the Galaxy.

Hoping they’ll be merciful with us.
Although still no signs of civilization in the neighborhood.
But Lucretius had already thought:
other earths must exist in the heavens with people and animals.

Why not? Billions of human planets in the Galaxy
In the USSR it was Leninist dogma.
What impact on our art?

What would another intelligent species be like?
Dyson fears a technology run amok.
And what if all the universe’s extraterrestrials, us included,
are trying to build a better universe,
a new universe?

The formula is:
All united but each one is one.
And according to Bohm
all things touch,
all connected with all
and all is instantaneous.
The separation is apparent.
This is the most important gift
of quantum physics, almost
like a science fiction story.
There are no separate particles
says Bohm.
Science fiction taken seriously.

A child on deck gazing at the stars
and sitting beside him Jose Martí.
Later, in his nineties, he recorded Martí’s words
for Cintio Vitier.
“If you think it was made for us to contemplate it
briefly? Don’t you think
my boy, that there has to be something greater than us?
Do you realize
what it represents and that we down here
we’re part of it?
Well just so as you know that it wasn’t made to amuse us
and we have obligations towards what’s been created.”

Now Wheeler asks
what use is a universe without consciousness of that universe.
And adds that the universe is so big
because it couldn’t be any other way.
And Barrow:
Our existence is the cause of the universe’s structure.
That’s very mysterious physics.
That physical conditions could produce man, fine.
But that man could produce the physical conditions
so he could appear later in the future?

The universe had to create observers of itself.”

A child on deck gazing at the stars
and sitting beside him Jose Martí.
WHITE HOLES

A fundamental principle, or
the fundamental principal:
from two microscopic cells
millions and millions of cells are born
and the blue whale dances in the sea.
From the small to the large.
If a molecule was like a car,
they say, a cell would be the Ford company.
From simplicity to complexity,
from confusion to organization,
progression in a single direction.
Consciousness, says Schrödinger,
the plural of which is unknown,

We grow old and die like automobiles.
But if time doesn’t exist nobody has died.
So that things don’t all happen together
that’s time, Wheeler says.
Everything is simultaneous. Time
makes it appear non-simultaneous.
“Time . . . you who do not exist”
You who do not exist except in my neurons.
Turned out there’s no separation between living creatures
nor space nor time which separates. And Einstein
who said that this was phantasmal and absurd
got it wrong.
All those we call dead are alive
because the past exists like the present
although unseen.
And when they wash Che’s face
he becomes a kind of Christ.
“Che never spoke much about Che”
says his daughter Hilda.

Consciousness is different from matter and therefore
can survive the body.
Death will die.
The most universal law:
everything is born and dies in the universe,
even the stars.
What will be born of this universe?
TRAVELING ON A BUS THROUGH THE UNITED STATES

Many years ago from a bus in Virginia or Alabama
I saw
a pink girl, in blue pants
standing on a ladder, picking apples
(her mother calling her from inside)
and another girl, her sister, blue pants
painting the porch of the house white
—And they gazed at the bus as it went by and accelerated.
Time has gone by like the Greyhound bus
but they’ve remained, despite the years, the paint
fresh on the porch
the brush dripping
the hand on the apple, their gazes
many years ago, one morning, Virginia or Alabama
forget which state.
ON THE BANKS OF THE OHIO IN KENTUCKY

Kentucky is a second paradise, said Daniel Boone.
He went in search of Kentucky traveling out west,
and from a hilltop he saw the plains of Kentucky,
the buffalo grazing as on cattle farms
and the silent Ohio through the broad flatlands
bordering Kentucky . . .

(and which now smells of phenol).

Forest Grove Prairie Village Park Forest Deer Park
frontier names!
are now the names of suburban condominiums.

Buses cross the prairies where the buffalo roamed.

Where the pioneer of the frontier once camped
as he migrated in a canoe towards the Missouri river
with his carbine and tomahawk and his beaver traps,
following the beavers
the sound of lawnmowers now resounds,
the tinkle of highballs, laughter, the raucous radio,
shouts from the games of croquet and volleyball
and the dull thud of the baseball in the glove.
From an open window a hi-fi blares
and, with the smell of barbecued meats, wafts in the night.

All was still . . .

----writes Daniel Boone----

I lit a fire by a spring
To roast the loin of a deer I’d killed.
The wolves howled all night long . . .

And now all the sewers spew industrial waste,
chemical substances into the Ohio.
Household detergents have killed the fish
and the Ohio smells of phenol . . .
THE EAGLE

I saw the Bald Eagle, the American Eagle, in the heart of Oregon. Immense prairies of sage grass that only the buffalo can digest, not cattle, Which is why they are deserted.

Neither buffalo nor Indians.

In the distance the mesas as though machine-cut.

In the rickety pickup with Alberto, an ornithologist, we watched as it attacked a Peregrine in flight that dropped what it was carrying, “maybe mouse or something.” Down it swooped to where the food had fallen. Looking from side to side, its breast puffed out, shoulders hunched, sharp profile, ferocious

just as it is on the coin,

and rapidly it flew off with what it had stolen from the poor Peregrine.

The American Eagle
THE PLACE CALLED “HARMONY”

He was traveling slowly in case he got there too early and she was traveling fast because she was going to be late.

He was traveling along one highway and she along another and the two cars collided at the intersection of the two highways (the place called “Harmony”).

The police said the probability of an accident was “a million to one,” because the two highways were very wide at that spot and the drivers of the two vehicles had to have seen each other perfectly “unless the two of them had been distracted thinking about the place they were both heading . . .”

But the police didn’t know that he and she had made a date and that the two cars that collided were heading for the same place. The coincidence was greater than the police knew: Neither one in a million nor one in a billion but one in an infinity of probabilities or rather there was no coincidence or probability and what happened couldn’t have been any other way: he and she had made a date and they’d synchronized their watches and they were too punctual on the date.

That is all.
APALKA

Only in summer, in the brief summer, is it accessible. Descending the river Coco from the last Miskito settlement downstream about five marine miles to the left a narrow river emerges called the Caño de Apalka. If you ascend this river they say you reach a lagoon and then another lagoon and then the mysterious lagoon of Apalka. (You arrive at an endless plain, full of colors orchids and toucans, like in the cinema or in some dream and in the middle of this plain: a lagoon.) Voices apparently of people are heard on its edges and right in the center of the deep waters. According to what the oldest Indians tell who heard the elders of their tribe tell many many years ago pirates ascended the Patuca river and entered via a secret stream to the final lagoon to divide their booty in this hideaway and they fought over the booty and all perished. You can still see, or can maybe see, the masts and rigging tangled beneath lianas and reeds and between rotten trunks, indistinguishable from the trunks the rotten hulls, a jumble, surrounded by water lilies. The Indians of the Coco never venture into the mysterious lagoon afraid of the voices that are heard on its edges. since the spirits of the dastardly souls still watch over the booty and are fighting still and you hear the cries (like toucans) and gunshots and at night you hear the dragging of chains, like raising anchors. Sometimes the thrash of an alligator fighting with another alligator . . . The occasional fin cutting the calm waters of the lagoon: a shark that entered like the pirates through the Pituca or perhaps a swordfish. When the wet season arrives the Apalka lagoon is no more and the plain is no more there’s just a lake as far as the horizon obliterated the place where the Apalka lagoon exists with galleons laden with silver and gold and pearls and the skeletons of pirates everything, skeletons and treasure, sunken in the mud. But maybe there’s a moon, and the infinite lagoon that no one from the Coco visits becomes (on the wind the irate voices of pirates) by the light of the moon of the Atlantic night, a lugubrious lagoon of silver coins.
CELL PHONE

You talk on your cell phone
and talk and talk
and laugh into your cell phone
never knowing how it was made
and much less how it works
but what does that matter

trouble is you don’t know
just as I didn’t
that many people die in the Congo
thousands upon thousands
for that cellphone
they die in the Congo
in its mountains there is coltan
(besides gold and diamonds)
used for cell phone
condensers
for the control of the minerals
multinational corporations
wage this unending war
5 million dead in 15 years
and they don’t want it to be known
country of immense wealth
with poverty-stricken population

80% of the world’s coltan
reserves are in the Congo
the coltan has lain there for
three thousand million years
Nokia, Motorola, Compaq, Sony
buy the coltan
the Pentagon too, the New York
Times corporation too
and they don’t want it to be known
nor do they want the war to stop
so as to carry on grabbing the coltan
children of 7 to 10 years extract the coltan
because their tiny bodies
fit into the tiny holes
for 25 cents a day
and loads of children die
due to the coltan powder
or hammering the rock
that collapses on top of them

The New York Times too
that doesn’t want it to be known
and that’s how it remains unknown
this organized crime
of the multinationals
the Bible identifies
truth and justice
and love and the truth
the importance of the truth then
    that will set us free
also the truth about coltan
coltan inside your cell phone
on which you talk and talk
    and laugh into your cell phone