

CYBERNETIC GUERRILLA EVOLUTION

By Hal Aigner

A case could be made that the evolution of media and man are coextensive. At this place on the continuum, one is not found without the other. Access to information and the means of exchanging information have attained importance only second (and a close second) to food and shelter.

Evolution is a process of becoming. Existence is process. Being is becoming. Right? "I seem to be a verb," says design-scientist Buckminster Fuller. In *The Teachings of Don Juan*, a journal of apprenticeship to a Yaii shaman, Carlos Castaneda writes

Being a man of knowledge was not a condition entailing permanency. There was never the certainty that, by carrying out the predetermined steps of knowledge being taught, one would become a man of knowledge. Thus, becoming a man of knowledge was a task that could not be fully achieved; rather, it was an unceasing process comprising (1) the idea that one had to renew the quest of becoming a man of knowledge; (2) the idea of one's impermanency; and (3) the idea that one had to follow the path with heart.

Unceasing process. Process entails the displacement of energy either through entropy, the tendency of systems to lose energy and move towards disorder and chaos, or exchange. Exchange implies a minimum of two systems working either in cooperation or in competition. Successful competition means the eventual death of both systems because as one wins out over the other, it destroys its means of exchange and leaves itself subject to entropy. In baseball, when the New York Yankees became so good that they could beat all comers, attendance dropped drastically, and thus, so did gate receipts.

In the March 1970 issue of *Ekistics* magazine, Nathan Katzman writes

Simply put, the second law of thermodynamics states that within a closed system entropy tends to increase and can never decrease. Often the non-scientist forgets that the law of entropy applies only within a closed system; and this can confuse attempts to apply an analogous law to non-thermodynamic paradigms. Thus the following formulation: The entropy of a social system increases as that system becomes closed to communication with the outside. Conversely, the negentropy of a social system increases as that system becomes more open to communication with the outside.

Systems thrive on energy exchange. If instead of yielding process energies to entropy, a system—say, a culture—transforms energy into something suitable for exchange, it extends its capacity for life, health and growth. And for a culture, regardless of whether it is local or global, to be healthy it must encompass both differentiation and synthesis.

The need for both differentiation and synthesis is expounded by the late Jesuit philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the high priest of evolutionary change. In *The Future of Man* he writes

In every practical sphere *true union* (that is to say, synthesis) does not confound; it *differentiates*. . . . Operating in such a field, the tendency of union to bring about differentiation, far from giving birth to mere mechanism, must have the effect of increasing the variety of choice and the wealth of spontaneity. Anarchic autonomy tends to disappear, but it does so in order to achieve its consummation in the harmonised flowering of individual values.

Differentiation is the means of molding energy into a myriad of forms, and synthesis allows for the exchange of energy and the use of it in common cause.

But heretofore, mankind, in its efforts to resist entropy, has opted for competition and its archaic logical extreme: war. And the mechanism used by leaders to get the masses to march to battle has been MISINFORMATION.

Bucky Fuller is quick to point out that 20th century world leaders are generally working from 19th century assumptions. And earth 19th century at that. The specific assumptions are Thomas Malthus' 1810 dictum that birth-rate was out-pacing resources development and there was not enough material to go around. This meant that men were basically in competition for the available food, water and raw materials.

This fit hand-in-glove with Darwin's survival of the fittest theory. Man was seen to be fundamentally in competition from which only the strongest would succeed.

The Malthus-Darwin dicta underlie current game theory, which was developed by the late Princeton professor Jon Von Neuman. This theory, which is used by almost all war departments, assumes that what goes into one person's pocket must come out of another's. My gain is your loss. I win, you lose.

But since the mid-50s, numerous people have discovered that there is enough extant technology to sufficiently process natural resources to amply provide for everyone. All of a sudden it is a different game. Everyone can win. Everyone.

But if the technology and resources are available, what's stopping humanity from being successful???: the lack of adequate information exchange. Information exchange and education appear to me to be the same thing. Media freaks are expanding educational options. In *The Human Use of Human Beings* founder of Cybernetics, Norbert Wiener writes

Information is a name for the content of what is exchanged with the outer world as we adjust to it, and make our adjustment felt upon it. The process of receiving and of using information is the process of adjusting to the contingencies of the outer environment, and of living effectively within that environment. The needs and complexity of modern life make greater demands on this process of information than

ever before, and our press, our museums, our scientific laboratories, our universities, our libraries and textbooks are obliged to meet the needs of this process or fail in their purpose. To live effectively is to live with adequate information. Thus, communication and control belong to the essence of man's inner life, even as they belong to his life in society.



And the Jesuit Teilhard writes in *The Future of Man*

To the eye of physical science, one of the most remarkable characteristics of Life is its 'additive' quality. Life propagates itself by ceaselessly adding to itself what it successively acquires—like a memory, as has often been said.

. . . Far from being an artificial, accidental or accessory phenomenon in its relation to living creatures, education is nothing less than an essential and natural form of biological additivity.

. . . It is through education, by the progressive spread of common viewpoints and attitudes, that the slow convergence of minds and hearts is proceeding, without which there seems to be no outlet ahead of us for the impulse of Life.

And once more from Teilhard, this time from *The Vision of the Past*

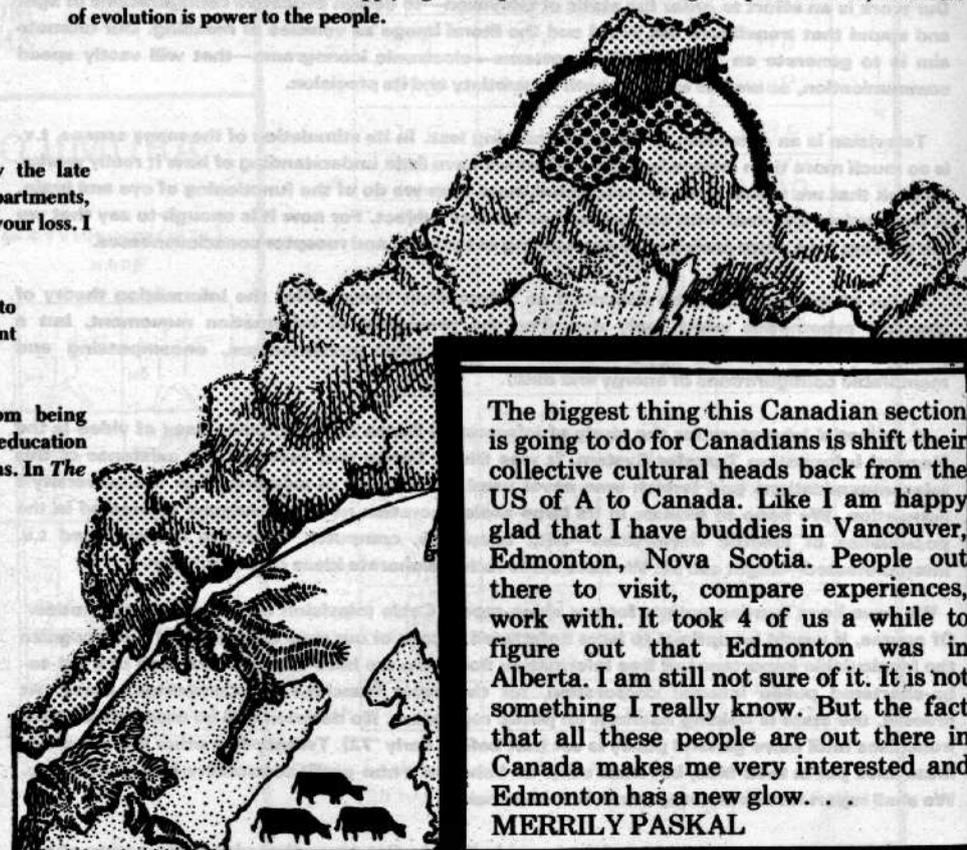
In fact, it must be repeated, our view of life is obscured and inhibited by the absolute division that we continually place between the natural and the artificial. It is, as we stated, because we have assumed in principle that the artificial has nothing natural about it (that is to say because we have not seen that artifice is *nature humanized*), that we fail to recognize vital analogies as clear as that of the bird and the aeroplane, the fish and the submarine.

It is owing to this same fatal assumption that we have for years watched the astonishing system of earth, sea and air routes, postal channels, wires, cables, pulsations in the ether, covering the face of the earth more closely everyday without understanding.

'Merely communications for business or pleasure,' they repeat, 'the setting up of useful commercial channels.' 'Not at all,' we say; 'something much more profound than that: the creation of a true nervous system for humanity; the elaboration of a common consciousness, on a mass scale clearly in the psychological domain and without the suppression of individuals, for the whole of humanity.'

. . . In reality, as anyone can see who tries to put together the general design of the movements of all physical organisms, we are quite simply continuing on a higher plane and by other means, the uninterrupted work of biological evolution. . . .

And it further seems to me that through the expanded use of media for the "harmonised flowering of individual values" and the supplying of adequate information to guide person's lives, the thrust of evolution is power to the people.



The biggest thing this Canadian section is going to do for Canadians is shift their collective cultural heads back from the US of A to Canada. Like I am happy glad that I have buddies in Vancouver, Edmonton, Nova Scotia. People out there to visit, compare experiences, work with. It took 4 of us a while to figure out that Edmonton was in Alberta. I am still not sure of it. It is not something I really know. But the fact that all these people are out there in Canada makes me very interested and Edmonton has a new glow. . . .
MERRILY PASKAL