

Burial, Cremation or Cryobiology

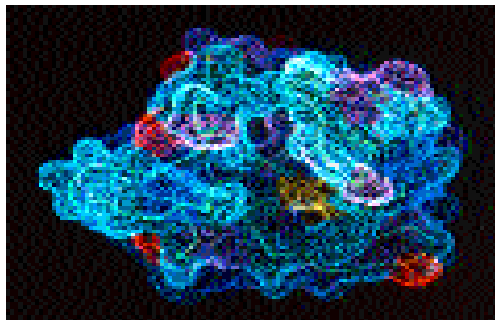
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By Harry Braun

Given the remarkable developments in molecular biology, the old saying that "*none of us are going to get out of this alive,*" may not be true after all. This "life or death" decision involves the definition of death. If one is cremated, for example, there is no doubt that one's death is permanent because all of the DNA and protein molecules of memory are irreversibly destroyed in the fire. If a person is buried, the DNA in their hair could last for centuries, but not the molecules of memory in their brain. On the other hand, if an individual's DNA and protein molecules of memory have been frozen, they are in a state of "suspended animation," which means that person is not dead at all. Indeed, given the exponential advances in molecular biology and nanotechnology, within 30 to 50 years it will be possible to repair any molecular or cellular damage that may have occurred, and allow the individual to be "reborn" with all the memories of his or her past life, into a biocybernetic "designer gene" era.

Biocybernetics involves the integration of biological molecules, computers and robotics. Proteins, like the one imaged below, are key bio-molecular elements because they are at the heart of life, metabolism and memory. All DNA instructions are for the manufacture of proteins, whose 3-dimensional structures are so complex that an entirely new generation of super-computers are being developed by IBM and others to characterize their behavior. The architecture of proteins is already being used as the template for the development of "Biochips" that will be key molecular components of a rapidly approaching "designer gene" era, whereby individuals will be able to reprogram their DNA as easily as they rewrite a sentence in a paragraph.

Our Biological Creator



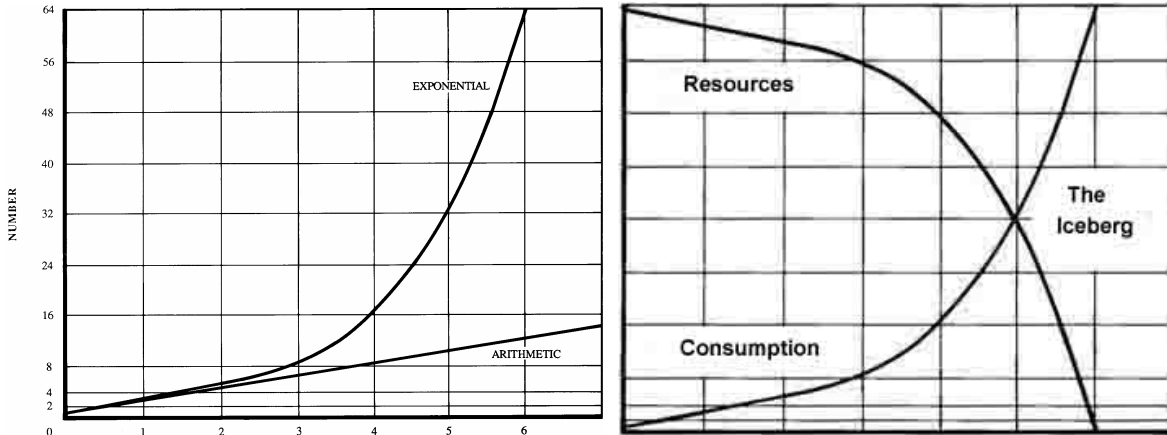
A supercomputer image of a protein-scale nanobe
Courtesy of Scripps Molecular Biology Laboratory

The first protein-based "nanobe" originated over 4 billion years ago, and it may still be alive and well because it has since given birth to every living cell and organism on the earth. The nanobial proteins represent an ancient and highly advanced civilization that was responsible for the development and function of everything from bacteria to the human brain and nervous system. As such, the nanobes are indeed our biological creators, and they could certainly be viewed as the "spirit" or "life force" of every living cell.

The Exponential Age

We live at time where exponential growth in a number of environmental and scientific areas will soon result in a technological utopia or ecological oblivion. If oblivion is defined as the destruction of the earth's agricultural life-support systems, then utopia could be defined as humanity having made a successful transition to renewable energy and biological resources. The great irony is that both utopia and oblivion are evolving exponentially and simultaneously. Because of the exponential advances in molecular biology, computer science and knowledge in general, this generation stands at the threshold of a new era of molecular medicine. Yet few people understand the significance of exponential growth that characterizes these developments.

The graph shown below on the left shows the difference between arithmetic growth and exponential growth that increases at an increasing rate. The graph on the right shows what happens when more and more people are forced to compete for fewer and fewer resources.



Exponential growth is characterized by doubling times. A simple but graphic example of this principle is to consider what happens if one person communicates with 2 other people on the first day of a 31-day month about an important concept like *The Phoenix Project* plan to shift to a solar hydrogen economy with wartime-speed. Then on the second day, each of the 2 people contact 2 additional people; and on the third day, the 4 people contact 8 people, etc. With this doubling time of 24-hours, at the end of a 31-day month, over 2 billion people will have been contacted. That is the extraordinary power of exponential growth, and it's because of the exponential advances in molecular biology and knowledge in general that the rapidly evolving field of molecular medicine will soon be able to not only regenerate cryogenically preserved patients, but eliminate the molecular mechanisms of aging and disease as well. This ability to change the genetic and amino acid codes that make up the molecules of life will be the most significant development in the history of life itself. As Dr. Hans Moravec, Director of the Robotics Institute of Carnegie-Mellon University has observed:

"We are on a threshold of change in the universe comparable to the transition from non-life to life."

Both the positive and negative exponential forces are now rapidly evolving simultaneously, and whether our future is going to be a biocybernetic utopia or an ecological oblivion will be determined by how quickly a transition of substance to a solar hydrogen economy is implemented. Ultimately, we on *Spaceship Earth* are like the passengers aboard the *Titanic*, and there is only a limited amount of time left to change course. It's like a car speeding faster and faster towards a cliff. After a certain point, it doesn't matter what the driver does because the force of inertia will propel the car over the cliff. Ships have much more momentum than cars, and global ecosystems have much more momentum than ships, which is why there is a genuine urgency to shift from fossil and nuclear fuels with wartime-speed. Do your part. Send a small contribution to the Phoenix Project Foundation at the address listed below, and most importantly, communicate this message to at least 2 other people as though your life depends on it – *because it does*. Remember, we are as close to utopia as we are to oblivion, and the actions you take could will determine which future evolves.



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