

Thoughts on Life as Finite and Our Legacy: Chaos & Complex Systems

Jon's video, featuring Epicurus, Socrates, and others describes the position of these two Greek scholars that *death in itself is nothing to fear, that cessation of life is inherent in all things living*, and in any event, *when one is dead, one will not sense the absence of being* (I only wish the narrator in Jon's video spoke less quickly, or was it my impaired hearing?).

Living and experiencing all that is around us, the daily lessons that Nature (the environment) teaches us is that life - from fellow creatures, organic life forms to the very bed rock that supports the rest - has a limited existence. Life is finite and certainty of death is indelibly part of life process itself. That's a safe bet.

Some humans over time have wished for a different scenario and have substituted various belief systems to shield them from this central lesson. Organized religions have as one of its main roles, the express hope/wish to deny the finiteness of life and devised *strategies* to gain "eternal life". This belief system offers solace for many, but its foundation rests on deceiving Nature and gaining an *exception* from the destiny of other life forms. Nature doesn't seemingly give exceptions.

Legacy: What is left after death? To those who survive the deceased, it is the memory of one who died. And for those who wish to *enhance* that memory for those others, shaping that legacy becomes well-used tool for the, as yet, *un-deceased*. Thus, throughout time, everything from pyramids, monuments, mausoleums, cemeteries all the way to simple wooden sticks, become markers for the deceased. Let's not forget the numerous voluminous diaries, memoirs, paintings, daguerreotypes and photos all the way to the avid shaping of futuristic avatars to shape the legacy of the deceased for the living. Legacy can easily become *air-brushed*, removing some of life's warts, for a more idealized life image. John le Carré, the British novelist and former MI5/6 secret agent, while in his Eighties, when asked when he would write his memoirs stated that such a project would be an exercise in futility. He couldn't write, he claimed, an honest, truthful portrait of himself as much as he wished for posterity.

But each to their own; there is no right way to address our life's meaning to those who follow. We do what we think the best. For those of us who have updated our curriculum vitae over and over through life, I suppose it is natural for us to do so – at least one more time.