

Moving On

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
(Shakespeare, As you like it)*

The tectonic plates were shifting. Of that there was no doubt. There was almost an expectation of change in the air. Each part seemed ready for radical change without really knowing why. Yet, unlike the moving continents, each could stop this process. There was no decision, conscious or unconscious, to hit the red button.

The leaven hit the already prepared mixture, liquid was added and with the heat supplied something completely new began to evolve, began to emerge within a protective and growing sea of amniotic fluid. "I" had been launched on a voyage of discovery seemingly as great as any that I can now remember. I say this because I have no memory of that journey at all. I only know it happened because others observed it from a distance.

They were on the outside looking in and occasionally intervening if they became worried that a seriously adverse event was looming up ahead or had already suddenly raised its nasty head.

As the days passed the one constant was "change" – how bizarre is that? "Change" a "constant"? Every hour of every day brought change. There was change to the world I lived in and yet, once again, unknown to me at the time I was the complete and total centre of my universe. I was living in an egocentric world.

I was changing. I expanded. I grew in size, shape and ability to move. I lived in a sea of comfortable water and learned to swim and cavort with utter abandon.

Weeks passed and I learned to stretch and yawn, to smile and to kick out at the frontiers of my universe. I am told that these were wonderful days even from the point of view of those observing my world by mechanical means. What is astonishing is that I have no memory of those gloriously happy times.

All was truly well. And then the first signs of uncertainty began to appear. There were the occasional and unusual ripples on the surface of my private sea and the sure, comforting and safe walls of my home began to feel less secure. As the days passed these signs began to increase and become more alarming. From a state of total freedom and security I began to shut in on myself and fear for my own survival.

The first signs that an earthquake was imminent absolutely terrified me. Everything began to shake and my sea of security began to disappear. I was forced downwards and pushed through an opening that was clearly too small for me to pass through. I can only presume that all my systems shut down at that point -- except the need to survive!!

I am told that I was first seen by the observers when I arrived into plain sight with my feeding tube still intact. Apparently this was cut and I was expected to survive in a completely different way and with a very different nourishment method and no longer living in a liquid environment.

Remember that I am looking back and going by what others have told me. I presume that I have been blessed with a survival system that allows me to totally block out all the trauma of this "birth experience". The tragedy/blessedness is that I have been left with no memory of those gloriously safe days dancing in the womb.

Nor do I have any memory of the first few years of my life as I learned to eat through a hole in my head and evacuate the products that were not needed from places further down.

Of course I do know that people who have suffered great trauma often deal with it by wiping it out completely together with the historical events surrounding it. Is this what happens --- no memory of life in the womb and no memory of those first few totally dependent years?

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Those early years learning how to live in an alien world are utterly remarkable. Although still completely dependent on others there clearly was an arrogance beyond compare. I seem to have taken it for granted that others should do all the work, should see to all my needs, should protect me from danger because when danger approached it could not touch me, and that within my caring group I was someone to be looked up to and admired.

Then of course there were the years of confusion. Who am I? What am I? Why am I ?

Should I be at all? The doubts about my own importance began to arise and these left massive uncertainties. Comparisons with my peers were not enormously helpful because through my distorted spectacles they usually seemed superior. How different from my frolicking in that amniotic fluid!

Others will write of the later years. I got “educated”, did “courses”, got a “job”, advanced in my “profession”, had a “relationship”, had “offspring”, ensured they were “educated” and capable of flying free.

All of that is now behind me. The world into which I was launched has passed away long ago. The vessel that contained me is no more. That enclosed world became so much wider, bigger, more challenging and even more dangerous. And yes, of course, there was even a time when I thought that I would “leave my mark”.

Now retired (one of “the grizzlies”), all that is becoming less and less important as the days pass. From wanting to be “a mover and a shaker” I am once again being “moved and shaken”. Didn’t someone see it coming down the road a long time ago when he spoke of a stage in life when others would take me where I did not want to go. My world is reducing in size and what was important yesterday is now of little interest. I am feeling the aches and pains of age.

There is of course a huge difference between this and the shuddering within the amniotic fluid prior to my birth. I do not remember the one and I am living the other!!

I rise in the morning now and remember yesterday and give thanks for today. I know that the earth is beginning to tremble a little and that it is only a matter of time before the next earthquake hits with maximum marks on the Richter scale. It will be followed by the tsunami and once again I will be pushed towards the “narrow gate” through which, however painfully, I must pass.

I really hope that when the time comes I will move on with the sure and certain conviction that there is a welcoming hand on the other side and that those I love are later rather than sooner going to wander in and say how happy they are to see me.

Once on the other side, will I remember anything of this period of my life? Will I once again depend on others to tell me what happened? “In my father’s house there are many mansions”.

Who is out there waiting to tell me what I have been through? Of course I won’t remember because the trauma of passage will have wiped away the actual process in order to protect me and allow me to move on.

What is very strange as I approach this narrow opening is that I am leaving behind the big and the obvious. I erupted from the womb as a physical mass into this world. When “I” leave it will be without any clear visible mass at all.

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