

DIGITAL IMAGING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

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All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace: Part 2, "The Use and Abuse of Vegetational Concepts".

This episode continues to explore the idea that humans are being colonised by machines. Our modern idea of nature as a self-regulating ecosystem is a machine fantasy. It has very little to do with the realities of nature. This cybernetic idea of nature emerged in the 1950s. Human beings, the rest of life and everything else on the planet are mere components of that ecosystem.

These ideas of a self-regulating ecosystem have it is argued become the model for utopian ideas of human 'self organising networks'. These networks would bypass the traditional needs of government or leaders of a society. The Facebook and Twitter revolutions, the Arab Spring in Syria and Egypt among a number of Middle Eastern countries and the protests for change in Iran gives proof to the idea of global vision of connectivity that would bring about social and political change. Global visions of connectivity fuse with Gaia Theory. One also thinks of Ted Nelson's description of computers as "liberation machines".



Buckminster Fuller Wichita House, Kansas 1946

In an earlier blog or two I spoke of the counter culture as an influencing factor in cyber evangelism. This model for connectivity and freedom was

developed in the 1960s communes of America. Buckminster Fuller's designs provided this fantasy with its architecture. Such communes include Drop City in Arizona in 1966. It was the counterculture scientists that would go on to help formulate the global computer networks.



Drop City, Arizona 1966.

As we began to believe in an idea of an ecosystem, ecologists were quietly proving that a self-regulating ecosystem did not exist. Nature constantly changed and was rather unstable. However, this idea of a self-organizing network had captured our imagination and it had offered us an alternative to political ideologies.

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