

REALITY: A CO-PRODUCTION. (The nexus of philosophy, science and art from the perspective of a filmmaker)

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It seems that any attempt at discussing reality should, as Hegel correctly deduced in his Science of Logic, begin with the immediacy of Being and infinity. The sense of vertigo brought on by this seemingly endless opening for possibilities, is for me, remedied by grasping hold of the arts with which we may organize our thoughts and actions. "To be or not to be, that is the question..." Indeed this is a fundamental question (driven by what I consider to be the mechanisms of angst and curiosity) so eloquently realized in works by Shakespeare, Parmenides and Hegel. The artistic act of creating a character in a play, poem or philosophical treatise that asks and answers this question provides us with the means by which to consider and analyze Being and our place and potential within it. This creative act, enabled by a combination of biological mechanisms in human form with technology is one of many methods by which

Being is always becoming. This, I will argue, is fundamentally an artistic creative process. Humanity with its Science, Philosophy, communications and media are components of that artistic creative process. What follows is a continuation of my ongoing probing and explanation of how I have come to this understanding.

If I understand Hegel's Doctrine of Being correctly, then being is the only absolute and necessary condition for everything and reality, including non-being. This can be shown by a simple tautology. If something is being then it is Being or Non-Being. In other words, where one thing ends something else or nothing begins. Both nothing and something are forms of being; that is to say "being" nothing or "being" something. Nothingness is therefore resulting from the negation of something. This seems to imply that the absolute is an immediate nothing only because it is immediate everything where specific forms are latent, yet to be defined. This understanding echoes some of the surviving fragments in Parmenides *Poem*. "All is

inviolable." (Fragment 8 line 47-48) and "for it is not lacking, if it were it would lack everything" (Line 33). From a temporal perspective too it is impossible to find a primordial starting point because there must have always been a time prior to any particular point within time. Infinity, I assume, then must not only include all that is and has been, but also everything that somewhere will be, including the infinite opening for novel combinations. Conglomerations of not only matter, in case that is limited, but certainly for ideas and information that in turn may have anomalous effects on matter such as the attempts at CERN to create new matter with the (as yet to function properly) particle accelerator. Now this may all seem elementary but what it seems to imply, shown in the following syllogisms in the form of Barbara, is key to my understanding about the role of the Arts in our reality:

All Time and Space are Infinite.

All Facts exist in Time and Space.

Therefore all Facts are Infinite.

The totality implied by infinite being suggests to me the inclusion of an opening for deviation always on the horizon that would negate the possibility of total knowledge.

All infinity is unknowable.

All facts are infinite.

Therefore all Facts are unknowable.

In science, Philosophy and Art we "discover" and reveal "truths" and "facts." We play with ideas, speculate, experiment and build. Now regardless of the method utilized we are only building upon a limited knowledge of facts since infinity is open, evolving forever beyond the finite, temporal locality of our perceptions. Our ideas, institutions, religions, prohibitions and rules for behavior therefore result only from limited knowledge of facts no matter how objective or scientific our methods may be. This influences our actions and subsequent evolution that is then biased in favor of what is known, perceived,

communicated and allowed. For example, a society where social deviants have been consistently eliminated from the gene pool is the nexus of biological evolution (natural selection) and human selection based on conscious choices. People have been conditioned to behave according to specific rules, such as the scientific method and religious dogma that have a direct impact on human behavior. Also, without getting into the ambiguous implications of the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle and the effect observation has on the behavior of sub-atomic particles, there is the real results being strived for at CERN to actually create a particle; the Higgs Boson. Or, as has been shown in recent studies of brain plasticity where "Psychotherapy works by going deep into the brain and its neurons and changes their structures by turning on the right genes." (Doidge, N. 2007 p. 221.) The persons able to master and benefit from these new methods and technology will perhaps procreate or advance to positions of greater power accordingly and in turn influence culture and subsequent generations. Mankind, as a result of following specific rules, adjusting the

genetic composition of our bodies and altering our environment, which in turn alters us through positive feedback, is different than it otherwise would have been had its culture and actions been based on other sets of rules, discoveries, truths and information. In short, the forms and their qualities that evolve are influenced more by what is perceived, discovered, acted on, revealed or purposefully concealed, than not discovered. This implicates science and philosophy as creative actions in so far as what they reveal, conceal or fail to reveal influences what we evolve into and subsequently are capable of or conditioned to perceive. This feedback loop has a trajectory. Even passive observation or neutrality, in so far as it enables dominant forces to persevere, is complicit in augmenting that trajectory. As the physicist Werner Heisenberg famously said:

Science no longer is in the position of observer of Nature, but rather recognizes itself as part of the interplay between man and nature. The scientific

method changes and transforms its object..." (Stuhr, J. 1993, p. 139)

Descartes' mechanistic universe, in which man merely responds to genetic programming, fails to take into consideration our ability to genetically and artistically engineer beyond instinctive responses. We may choose either to insert random, experimental or counterintuitive factors into the equation thus breaking the cause and effect linearity overriding our instinctive behavior or tendencies. Consciousness becomes an additional component in the evolutionary selection process. Accidental anomalies resulting from artistic or scientific experiments may be selected and used to retrofit our cultural foundations with the implementation of democracy, for example, or our bodies with new parts grown from stem cells.

The analogy I use to illustrate the above mentioned concept is that of a cartoon that can draw itself into the future, which is in a way what we are attempting not only with

genetic engineering but also our arts, cultural institutions, religions etc. This was exemplified in the old 1957 children's animation *Gumby*, by Art Clokey, in which there was a train that created it's own tracks, thus enabling it to go anywhere rather than follow some prescribed path.

One of the most innovative thinkers to comprehend the creative potential in man was Nietzsche, who wrote:

With a creative hand they reach for the future, and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer. Their 'knowing' is creating, their creating is legislation, their will to truth – is will to power. (Kaufmann, W. 1968 p. 326)

This dramatic proclamation by Nietzsche implied that the Philosophers of the future would be Artists. By taking on the responsibility of a creator one can then move on to the task of effective deployment of strategies and techniques

for creation of ideals and artifacts to be used as tools for enhancing or augmenting human life. By enhancing these conditions and building upon those adjustments and revelations we participate in the making of a specific environment be it architectural, emotional, political etc. In turn, that environment has a unique effect on how we feel and behave. It may enhance the conditions for further creativity by taking us out of our everyday perceptions and serving as a catalyst toward modifying the existing landscape or narrative. A modification that has physical implications and repercussions, in so far as it becomes a factor in the selection process, augmenting the evolutionary trajectory of our physical form and mental abilities through positive feedback. Since I believe this to be a creative process and I am an Artist/filmmaker it seems appropriate now to discuss one of the most powerful and pervasive of artistic mediums, motion pictures, to help illustrate my point.

Movies are the logical outcome of technology and theater, the latter which goes back to Greek Tragedy as well as earlier Shamanistic rituals and even more fundamentally, the "presentation of self" in social context. (Goffman, E. 1959) Deconstructing the mechanisms involved in this dynamic, both biological and technological, enables us to identify the ingredients of our becoming and augment it via a strategic deployment of the arts.

Of all the art forms and modes of creativity, in my opinion also including science and philosophy, motion pictures with sound have the ability to reference, include or encompass important aspects of all the others. There are limitations of course, in so far as what is unique in the form of a book or live performance may not translate on film but films can touch upon or point toward those unique qualities. A film can incorporate sound, light, dance, sculpture and music. It can be about or include in its narrative, psychological, philosophical, and anthropological elements, as well as reveal beyond the

narrative composition various patterns, symptoms and conditions. It could be a film about a whirling Dervish or itself function as a Dervish-like entity that enables an audience to feel, via special effects and editing designed to put a person into a trance, something of the Dervish ecstasy and be influenced by that experience. The film *Mothlight* (Brakhage, S. 1963) put me into just such a trance when I was 18 and I then realized the power of art and film to transmit not only information but states of mind and body as well. The way a film is put together can have physical repercussions in the effect it has on its audience, intellectually and emotionally informing how they behave and thus conditioning their bodies, minds and, by extension, the things they destroy or create in the world we live in.

The possibilities of depiction enabled with animation and special effects gives film a unique capability to augment human behavior. Film can both mimic human reality and at the same time delve into the unbounded world of fantasy and

ideals in such a realistic way, with the use of special effects, that the experience becomes palpable and may entice us to try actualizing those imagined scenarios or ideals.

Liberated from the empirically real, motion pictures can serve as a tool to model the infinite possibilities inherent in Being. Being infinite implies infinite potential. In film we are freed from physical constraints in regards to our locality and other relative temporal "physical laws" that we have co-evolved with and continue to evolve with. We can think beyond those relative limitations in time and space, experimenting with alternative scenarios. Film is fluid, like music and the manifold evolution of biological life. It has an ability to move across time and space or focus on and designate a point in a very specific and literal way all in the course of an hour, a few minutes or seconds thus giving us a taste of what would normally take a lifetime or more. It moves between the abstract, the surreal and "real" with ease,

enabled by special effects, stop motion camera technology, documentation etc. This potential is exemplified in films like *Baraka* (Fricke, R. 1992), *Koyannisqqatsi* (Reggio, G. 1982), *Yellow Submarine* (Dunning, G. 1968), and especially in the famous flower scene from *Pink Floyd The Wall* (Parker, A. 1982). In our imagination, anything goes and once imagined it begins to exist, like language, and influences our physical actions. The film language is also a structure that facilitates such freedom and makes it operative. But this freedom, relative to human perception cannot be totally disconnected from structure, otherwise we are lost in a hallucinatory freefall. The freefall of infinite possibility unmediated by the definitive creative process.

The practice of imbibing hallucinogens, dancing oneself into a trance and opening perception with techniques of free association has been a part of knowledge gathering for thousands of years. It is no mere coincidence that ancient Greek philosophy co-evolved with Dionysian rituals that

mixed music, mind altering substances and the art of poetry and tragedy, all of which provided the space and setting for obtaining knowledge, cathartic release and entertainment. This tradition takes on new forms in modern times. Films like *The Wall* or *Yellow Submarine* are fine examples of hallucinations documented, translated and disseminated through film art and the ritual of going to the movie theater.

Biologically speaking, hallucinations result from opening our neurological filter system that obscures the excess of information down to what has evolved to be our everyday necessary perception. The work of Harvard-trained neuroanatomist Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor (2008) describes the opening of that filter resulting from the natural release of chemicals in her brain when she had a stroke, illustrating the role of filtering in our perception of reality. As the stroke hit her she became aware of every atom and particle composing the cells of her body and saw how they intelligently held together amid the flux and flow

of the infinite universe around her. As the perception of her physical borders faded she began to lose herself in the infinite. This concept of the role of limitations, borders, and bodies correlates with Chomsky's observations about human linguistic capability:

...that were it not for these limitations, we would not have the creative act of going from a little bit of knowledge, a little experience, to a rich and highly articulated and complicated array of knowledge.

Because if anything could be possible, then nothing would be possible. (Chomsky, N., Foucault, M., 1974 p.28)

Biological limiters evolved to filter out the excess data not only with natural spoken languages, thus enabling us to speak specific languages as well as to be a specific person, but also with all our perceptions of forms, a necessary ability in order to navigate, search for food and mates. I see a correlation here with the latest research

about the causes of autism as revealed in the book, *The Brain That Changes Itself*:

...some situations overexcite the neurons in children who have genes that predispose them to autism, leading to the massive, premature release of BDNF. Instead of important connections being reinforced, all connections are. So much BDNF is released that it turns off the critical period prematurely, sealing all these connections in place, and the child is left with scores of undifferentiated brain maps and hence pervasive developmental disorders. Their brains are hyper-excitable and hypersensitive." -(Doidge, N., 2007 p. 81)

The analogy in filmmaking is obvious in that a film may only exist as a result of first filtering out all possible shots down to those needed to communicate an idea. Undifferentiated information obliterates specific information.

Pushing our normative boundaries of perception can of course facilitate beneficial revelations. Doidge goes on to describe how one young woman who as a result of her autism had exceptional hearing abilities and loving relationships with trees that she perceived as fellow living beings. Such an extreme condition such as autism is obviously not desirable but knowledge that can be safely gathered from such a perspective might prove useful. It is easy to imagine, for example, that our world would be better if we had a more brotherly and empathetic relationship with trees as the above mentioned woman did. This may become more apparent to some as the last of the rainforest is cut down and the air quality deteriorates.

Other respected scientists and scholars have reported similar benefits from psychoactive plant use, such as the famous ethno-botanist Dr. Richard Schultes (2004), who advocated their use following the tradition of Native Americans: to heighten perceptive ability and experience

the infinite by breaking down some of the structure of our subjectivity and habits of everyday experience. This was done in the interest of gaining an optimal and sustainable human interaction with the environment.

My own experiences with Ayahuasca in the Brazilian rainforest echo these descriptions. The physical effect on the mind that the alkaloids found in Ayahuasca trigger open the same valve and release the same chemicals in the brain as during a near death experience, as happened to Dr. Bolte. The function of limiting the data input is analogous to the physical form of our bodies as a result of cellular walls forming the skin barrier dividing our bodies from the other; bodies that in turn build walls to keep out enemies, predators etc. These are very specific forms, like languages both written and cinematic, and are made up of components arranged to designate that something is this and not that. That it is some specific thing, not everything.

Bodies and forms, like words and film clips, can be arranged, edited and reconfigured into new tools or sentences. Languages and physical forms enable us to think specific structured thoughts instead of freefalling, lost in hallucination and infinity. The thoughts and forms are not just built up, grown and evolved but also carved out and separated off from the totality of infinity with partitions and definitions. The defining gestures, structures and data are connective as much as separating just as walls touch against what they are excluding. Pieces and fragments that appear separate are in fact permeable, overlapping systems composing the whole of infinity and being. Here the Apollonian structure, analogous to art forms as well as biological structure itself, facilitates the foray into the Dionysian realm of ecstasies, like a hunter entering the jungle in search of food, armed with the bio-technology of hand plus extension of spear and eventually tools such as books and cameras. The combined aspects of the two modes first recorded and enabled by formal structures, such as Greek Tragedy, allows for the

optimizing combination of benefits from both perspectives, the local and the infinite. Other cultures had similar rituals and methods for gathering such useful information as can be gleaned from forays into the hallucinatory realm of infinity and total possibility. Revelations from those experiences give insight into possibilities that can be translated and deployed by philosophers, scientists and all other artists who take that responsibility, via languages such as film, to effectively enhance and realize local human potential.

Once an idea is dreamed and envisioned or a more elegant pathway revealed it can then be represented through art and consciously evolved towards as an ideal. First the model is imagined then constructed using, for example, the latest in genetic engineering techniques, imposition of restrictive laws or the lifting of certain prohibitions just as a painter brushes color onto a canvas or nihilistically takes it away. This suggests a conscious evolution beyond so-

called "natural selection" and seems to me supported by recent discoveries in neuroplasticity:

Neuroplastic research has shown us that every sustained activity ever mapped, including physical activities, sensory activities, learning, thinking, and imagining- changes the brain as well as the mind. Cultural ideas and activities are no exception. (Doidge, N. 2007 p. 288).

If true, then by cultivating our brains in such a way that physically enhance their structure and subsequent capabilities, then selecting those changes that best enhance human life will affect our evolution.

Evolution in real time and influenced by conscious choices makes the plasticity of life analogous to clay in the sculptor's hands. The more complex our artistic creative ability and conscious cultivation of it, the more we take responsibility for our becoming and by association the

becoming of the reality we exist in. Consciousness is thus part of the evolutionary process of selection.

Artistic methods are an extension of biological mechanisms analogous to the first tools used as an extension of the hand such as a stick utilized by an ape to extract termites from a hole in the ground. As an extension of the eye, camera lenses and film record light and transmit data to the central nervous system. The data can be enhanced along the way, edited, reformulated or stored in detail that in some ways surpasses our memory, for later and repeated viewing and analysis. Furthermore, by removing ourselves and experiencing things from a safe distance we can explore subjects that would otherwise be impossible. Tragedy, for example can become a form of cathartic therapy. Film, the media and Internet combine to form a visual connection point analogous to and extending our personal central nervous system into a realm that may mingle with others and benefit from an influx of knowledge and experience

impossible to accomplish in a single life without such aids.

This collective experience, facilitated by motion pictures in the form of TV and computer generated virtual reality, perhaps has a latent danger similar to that of an autistic overload. By forgetting our useful illusion of subjectivity and giving ourselves up to collective consciousness we may be cultivating only aspects of our individual brain that facilitate the collective. The collective then functions like a simple life form, for example an amoeba, and because of its large size, like "the blob" from the classic film from the 50's, it is capable of enveloping entire cities, countries and individuals along with the unique and beneficial abilities that correspond to that illusion of individuality or nationality.

People, selected by corporations, states and other bodies based only on how well they can serve the needs of the collective entity, develop only that part of themselves.

The most productive actions many people do are in service of such entities; the other aspects of their humanity, having no value in the market place or the corporation, therefore do not come into play and atrophy like an unused muscle. Over time the individuals are conditioned and evolve accordingly. Use it or lose it just like we lost our gills when we evolved from fish to mammals we may also lose our individuality. The corporate entity with greater power as a whole than any of its individual parts gains a momentum in time that is capable of overriding individual concerns and selects accordingly from a public that is increasingly conditioned to serve the corporation's needs.

It is for the above mentioned reasons that the optimistic vision of a collective consciousness espoused by persons such as Pierre Levy (1999), who thinks that such a collective would always be reducible to the individuals who comprise them, is disturbing. He assumes that the conditioning of the people exposed to such a powerful medium will first serve the interest of humanity and not

the corporation. This notion seems to contradict the obvious ability of powerful conglomerations to override individual wishes. A cursory glance at the recent history of finance capitalism or Soviet Communism is rife with such horrors.

There is perhaps a biological precedent for such behavior and ordering in our own bodies. The constituent organelles that make up our cells long ago formed beneficial associations of mutual aid but are now subject to the dictatorship of the body. Those cells formed organs and are supplied with oxygen and food to function then rewarded with endorphins (an opiate like substance) for good performance. The cells in my skin do as they are told and are sacrificed daily in the interest of the whole. The collective "blob" is greater than its parts. It is easy to imagine people being reduced to such status in a futuristic Orwellian dystopia with ID chips implanted and total surveillance (both of which have been suggested and lobbied for recently in the supposed interest of "safety") but even

today if you don't follow the collective rules you will have difficulty surviving. There is almost no place left to go homesteading and live off the land outside the system.

Even less convincing is Ray Kurzweil's book, *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (2005), where he assures the reader that the new Artificial Intelligence now being developed will serve humanity. Although the AI will be more intelligent than human minds and have access to a vast network of computerized systems ranging from surveillance (the camera on your computer), drones armed with missiles, financial records, etc; it will respect human life because "we will program it with human values." Again, any cursory glance at so called human values manifested not so much in our ideals but in much what we actually do and have done for centuries, is not exactly reassuring. It is bad enough we have not learned to treat our environment or each other better, let alone empowering a machine in our own image. "More human than human" is the line uttered with appropriate menace by

Tyrell just before his android, played by Rutger Hauer in the film *Blade Runner* (Scott, R. 1982) destroys him. Ironically the android character ends up being the most sympathetic and considering that an artificial intelligence could be smarter than us it is conceivable that we will worship it more than rock stars, gods and money. We will want to be as immortal, pretty and smart as it is, especially if there is a glitzy Hollywood feature or "reality show" that romanticizes it for us and, through repetition, conditions our plastic minds.

The Blob, metaphorically speaking, effective at disguising itself, may even appear democratic. Walking the empty streets of the city at night and seeing the flickering blue light emanating from the thousands of apartments while people sit before their TVs in a radioactive daze illustrates some of the parameters framing their choices. Outside the people I pass in the street are plugged into their IPOD and sci-fi horror moive, *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Siegel, D. 1956) seems true; I pod,

therefore I am. There is, after all, something suspect about a species that destroys its own planet out from underneath it, polluting the water it drinks and the air it breathes in the interest of "growth" and "progress" while distracted and hypnotized by the spectacle of their own distraction by way of "reality shows". Progress for who or what, we might want to ask ourselves, not only in the context of trying to understand what is happening in a science fiction film but also in a world where people are busy plugged into their machines while the environment necessary for their survival is polluted.

The potential downfall for humanity resulting from the snowballing effects of technology, if not used conscientiously and in proper doses, is made clear. If "growth", profits and entertainment are to hold such a high position in our democratic society, elevated not only by a powerful elite class but also, I suspect, our genetic tendencies, and have a determining influence on our media then we will continue to evolve within those parameters and

programming regardless of the titles of capitalism, consumerism or communism.

Ideas in the form of both commercial and political propaganda seductively impose the norms and customs of the dominant culture upon us. The medium has been effectively utilized to indoctrinate people into Consumers, loyal workers, National Socialists, Communists and Homeland Security Agents to name a few types. It has replaced the printing press for the dissemination of Capitalist or Marxist ideology that, like Christianity, is devoted to changing the world. As Karl Marx made explicit:

“Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.” (1845) The medium of film in the hands of such artists as Marx, Eisenstein, Riefenstahl and Hitchcock as well as those Warlocks with less of an aesthetic sense such as Cheney and Murdock, has proven to be the most effective means by which to educate, convince and coerce a population utilizing logic, fear, desire, misinformation and excitement.

American advertisers and Nazis learned much from British propaganda during the first world war and deployed it effectively to condition specific responses from the public. The act of 911 for example, recorded, edited and multiplied by thousands of replays was injected into the personal consciousness of everyone without them having to actually have been there. They are just as motivated for revenge as those persons at ground zero and perhaps even more so with the insertion of some dramatic embellishments which enhanced the stimulation of an emotional response, in this case for revenge. Mobilization on a mass scale was achieved and the subsequent killing and defense industry spending justified. This is what Noam Chomsky describes as "...manufacturing consent" in the film by the same name.

(Achbar, M. 1992)

Film has other covert messages as Marshal McLuhan articulated and summed up in 1967 with his catch phrase "The medium is the message." The cumulative effects of

passively watching film must be taken into consideration because it has consequences that may be as influential as the content of the films. We are influenced by the habit of passive observation from a safe distance, vicariously experiencing the drama from the couch and this may have greater impact than that of the content or therapeutic cathartic experience. Having content provided for us rather than creating it ourselves with our own imagination may be the most powerful effect of the medium.

Following this line of reasoning it has been suggested that during the formative years of a child's mental development he or she should not be allowed to form the habit of watching television and computer screens or perhaps not be exposed to it at all. This brings to mind the ancient practice of isolating young initiates who are being prepared to become adult citizens, Shamans, high priests and leaders in caves or sending them alone into the desert on a Vision Quest. That process, designed to increase an initiate's ability to objectively see reality on a more

complex level, gives them fresh eyes by breaking habits of perception; habits that are themselves perhaps the continuation of dominant normative patterns of human bodies and constellations in the micro and macro cosmos.

Looking at history and the amount of suffering endured by humanity it may be worth considering extricating ourselves from some of those ancient patterns and invent an alternative. To glimpse that possibility we must look into the realm of infinity where everything is possible. We must disconnect from physical limitations relative to our human bodies and try to discern which patterns of matter and their habits of thought need to be neutralized. This project requires persons capable of imagining new worlds: persons who are not passive observers.

To accomplish this creative-destructive act we must be able to imagine an alternative. Film Art can serve as a nihilistic tool for making that clearing in preparation for imagining an alternative. Without the nihilistic capacity,

if life were to only follow prescription, as if all reality were already a closed decided and finite system, evolution would not be possible or needed. But because the essence of being (to be) is an action verb, it must be from one moment to the next and so we have the movement of becoming.

Becoming without end or beginning is infinite potential for novelty. A precondition for that possibility is nothingness manifest in our mental ability to both perceive and imagine nothingness, to destroy meaning and realize that all meanings are contingent, temporary (some lasting millennia, others moments) and not ultimate universals themselves. If there were some absolute truth besides Being, then life would be analogous to a train on a track 100 percent of the time and would have to exclude potential deviation. Since it is infinite it must include all deviation as well as non-all. If it is infinite it must be so in all directions and in all dimensions, including the opening for deviation and that indicates that there is deviation from that metaphorical track.

One possible opening that is fundamental to an immediacy of infinite being exists precisely in the form of our nihilistic acts. Thinking of nihilism in this positive creative sense is analogous to the preparation of a blank canvas and the essential prerequisite for painting something new. As Marmysz says, "it is the gap that enables the striving toward." (Marmysz, J., 2003 p. 73) Or as Josef Chytry concluded in his reading of Nietzsche, "...it is precisely because this world is totally without intrinsic value that the aesthetic dimension becomes, as it were, the absolute standard for human and social activity. The primacy of flux and continuum places human creation at a premium..." And, "Once set reality is denied, human beings are committed to creating their world." (Chytry, J., 2005 p. 35) In Nietzsche's view, values are artwork.

Because there is no ultimate reality or truth, humans can create truth and meaning. And this is exactly what gives our actions importance and meaning otherwise we would only have to obediently follow along a set of rules with no

chance for deviation. And if there were no chance of deviation then evolution would not exist. This is why Heidegger is correct when he says, "the essence of nihilism contains nothing negative..." (Heidegger, M., 1982 p. 221) And Marmysz concludes, "nihilism contains one of the most constructive and affirmative of possibilities: the hope for ongoing and never ending interpretation..." (Marmysz, J., 2003.) Nihilistic acts open up the gap to a backdrop of infinity, the void and its potential, an empty space where the artist's imagination is free and human evolution is potentially opened up beyond physical needs, instinctive desires or genetic tendencies.

Of course, as earlier noted, the powerful medium of film can be used to do the opposite of enlightenment or creative evolution to enhance humanity. It is also a tool of coercion, maintaining the status quo power structure co-opting our desire for real change by giving the audience a false sense of satisfaction. Nietzsche's "ascetic ideal" which states that it is easier for man to will nothingness

than something, has its equivalent in the modern day with the disgruntled masses having their revolutionary desire channeled into a football hysteria or a shopping spree for a new Che Guevara T-shirt and the faux revolutionary vogue. Nietzsche's description of the ascetic ideal could easily be updated: it is better to will to shop than to not will. In this way the media, especially in the form of entertainment that releases pent up desires for real change, provides a happy ending when in fact nothing really happened. This has become the mechanism for keeping human energies channeled into profits for the elite and maintenance of the status quo. The nihilistic destruction of meaning is then deployed by the high priests of propaganda such as Rupert Murdoch, to weaken any opposition rather than enhancing the creativity of an individual. It is used to maintain a power structure that belief in some liberating religious or political organizational principle could threaten. With such a powerful medium as film, that is rapidly evolving towards computer generated virtual worlds, we have a double edged sword capable of elevating

mankind to higher levels of consciousness or enslaving it deeper in misperceptions, disinformation and a labyrinth of Machiavellian masks aided by special effects convincing enough to be mistaken for real and seductive enough to satisfy our latent desires.

If the images look real and seduce effectively their actual truth is of very little importance with regards to shaping world events. If it looks real and people react accordingly then they will take actions that are in fact real. Whoever controls the images, either by staging them or recording them as they really unfold, will be able to utilize those images toward realizing their agenda or creating their world. But this is only possible provided that there exists an audience that is not educated to understand the possibility that such manipulation exists as well as the technology to deploy it.

The documentary film *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised* (Bartley, K. & O'brian, D. 2003) dealt with this issue in

detail by documenting first hand how private media manipulated images to achieve their desired result. The film shows a pro Chavez rally on the streets of Caracas in 2002 where snipers opened fire on the pro Chavez civilians and killed ten people. The frightened crowd dove for cover. Some of them had pistols and began firing back in the direction of the sniper fire that was coming from an armored van on an empty street. The private media, owned by Chavez rivals, took the images and edited them to make it look like those who fired pistols in response were the initial shooters. The images of persons who had been killed, they edited in with a peaceful crowd of anti Chavez supporters on another street to make the pro Chavez people look like the aggressors and justify the subsequent coup. A coup that had been planned by the same people who owned the private media news networks and controlled the country before Chavez won the presidency. When the coup failed all of the video was made public, not just the edited version, and what actually happened was revealed. Or was it? Perhaps that too was just another "reality show."

Gestures or acts, like the twin towers being brought down by terrorists or the orchestrated movement of marching troops and camera in Leni Riefenstahl's 1936 film *Triumph of the Will*, are designed to program specific responses in the audience. The maintenance of the status quo structure that depends on the subordinate position of the audience or masses, resulting from their lacking the knowledge or ability to see through the theatricality of propaganda, perpetuates that very same dynamic and structure. Hitler had his own government building (the Reichstag) set on fire and through his media outlets put the blame on the communists to justify their subsequent roundup in 1933. There was an orgy of arrests. Power was consolidated. The Nazis, Hitler and his supporters felt empowered or perhaps were conduits of power as such.

This ordering of bodies, thoughts and actions has its precedent in our biological structure. Structures that have been massaged and ordered by physical laws such as

thermodynamics and phenomena like gravity that we have evolved with and feel at home in. The image of Nazis marching in unison or American troops marching in Afghanistan evokes the potential power in that ordering analogous to molecules aligned in the structure of tempered steel or voices in Wagnerian opera right down to the cellular biological structure of Maria Callas singing the lead. But as much as we are dependent on that cellular biological and social structure, exemplified by Apollonian myth, we also depend on the Dionysian foray into the ecstasy of totality that, although facilitated by the structure of the ritual and biological body, gives us a taste of being beyond the borders of individuals and social constructs. The dialectic that results is perhaps the optimal model for humanity, utilizing both methods. And that is the antithesis of being utilized or used by the terrorists, propagandist, media wizards and warlords. In other words, to cultivate just enough order to survive and leave out the repression and terror.

As long as we remain within the present dynamic of masters and servants (elite and consumers) there will be a mass of people serving as subordinate components, marchers and cannon fodder. The only way out of that is to raise everyone up to the level of educated conscious co-creators, able to perceive what is at play in a given situation and deploy themselves and their tools effectively. To use the film analogy again, it means to become directors and editors instead of mere extras being herded about.

In a digital world the simple push of a button, labeled "sexy real effect," will be all that is needed to convince a skeptical public that buildings turn to dust, that you want "Big Brother" to watch you with a new designer camera or that the puppets are real. In order to emerge from Plato's allegorical cave (*Republic*, 514a-520a) and escape the negative aspects of not seeing beyond the puppets and shadows, citizens must be enabled to perceive on multiple levels beyond superficial appearances. To understand Plato's metaphor careful preparation must be given to the

audience and artists in the interest of an overall humanitarian project. Knowledge must be put above the habit of greed and selfish power embodied in persons and institutions that in turn condition the mass of subordinates as passive spectators, consumers and workers. The method by which we might achieve such an anomalous deviation is an artistic one. Carefully utilizing our language, technology and sciences as an art form, re-editing the narrative to one that is dedicated to planetary sustainability and a viable humanity with a sovereign destiny.

I say this without wanting to indicate that the creative process unfolding is yet so guided by such individuals. On the contrary, one look at the last fifty years of human civilization in the form of charts, graphs and films and I have a sneaking suspicion, perhaps paranoid or intuitive (both evolved for a reason) that a dominant pattern in which even the so called rebellions are co-opted rhythmically and proceed on track. Kurzweil's application

of Moore's law, charting exponential growth of technology, seems to indicate such a pattern. The way in which man fits into that pattern, was summed up poetically by Heidegger:

Thus when man, investigating, observing, ensnares nature as an area of his own conceiving, he has already been claimed by a way of revealing that challenges him to approach nature as an object of research, until even the object disappears into the objectless-ness of standing reserve. (Heidegger, M., 1982, p. 19)

Nations expand and contract like living cells, devouring resources. Construction and birthrates explode like fireworks in slow motion. From the hallucinatory Dionysian vantage point the whole thing seems to unfold with mechanical precision as predictable as the cliché "history repeats itself," unwinding fractal patterns and the orbit of the planets. Our creative efforts with the medium of motion pictures for example, far from guaranteeing an

anomalous deviation from the overarching pattern, may in fact be perpetuating that pattern as a result of the ratio of normative films compared to deviations.

There is, however, a growing cross section of humanity engaged in serious critical viewing and the creation of artifacts for use as tools toward an anomalous deviation. Individuals who have taken the time and done the hard work of study and analysis; what I call the creative, philosophical, martial, and scientific artists, who have vigorously prepared themselves for the project of enhancing life. Who might one of these artists be? I am visualizing a hybrid of Bruce Lee, Nietzsche, Rosa Luxembourg and Einstein. The film and theater director Alejandro Jodorowsky also comes to mind. He is a psychotherapist, composer, mime, writer and director of the cult classics, *The Holy Mountain* and *El Topo*. (1973) His work is, I believe, effective in large part because of his cross-disciplinary method. Another example; artist Marcel Duchamp, who studied philosophy, physics and dressed in

drag; (cross dressing in order to access the feminine is typical of shamanic practice) created the famous readymade sculpture "*fountain*" which was voted the single most influential artwork of the last one hundred years. Both artists ventured freely between the subjective and objective, subverting status quo structures and reassembling them into something new.

The difference between objectivity and subjectivity, enhanced by the technology of writing, reading, filming and editing is potentially threatened by the unbridled growth of virtual reality. A growth guided more by a hedonistic imperative; latent urges like greed, desire for fame, immortality or the safety of a herd-like collective. These components, of a thus far successfully evolving conglomeration, have been spiraling out into time and space with mutations that maybe following genetic tendencies for variation. A structure in which the deviation is already anticipated and built into the dominant pattern in which humans will be enveloped by their created collective bodies

in the same way that the organelles composing our bodies are now subject to the consciousness that emerged as a result of that combination. The ideals or values that were facilitated by the illusion of individuality and brought about in the various artistic processes may disappear into the spherical totality of collective consciousness through virtual reality. The gap or difference, opened up by the disjunction between real and art may close with that line blurring and the free fall of anything being possible may be disconnected from our real life and thus neutralized.

The problem, I suspect, will be that what is actually happening in the real world will be things very different from how we perceive it in virtual space. Take for example the pilots of the drones who operate those killing machines from thousands of miles away while looking at a screen that depicts their targets in a video game format. The real screams and blood have been left out as it might interfere with the performance of the pilots. The next step of course is to remove unreliable humanity from the equation

altogether: the potential pitfalls of which were simplistically explored in the *Terminator 2* movie (Cameron, J 1991) where the machine, played by our Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, took over control.

To resist our prescribed position in this unfolding pattern the co-creators, the dedicated audience, fellow citizens, scientists and humanitarians must engage in dialogue and subsequent action that might enable a viable deviation. Considering that this is not profitable, and our society revolves around profits and pleasures, one must strive against the normative masses being absorbed by this seductive structure. After all it is reminiscent of our own bodies and not only do we feel at home there, our very survival depends on those manifold recursive patterns. "One is obliged to repeat the stereotypical discourse, it is already latent. Improvisation is extremely difficult." (Derrida, J. 1982.) I think that this tendency is latent in our genetic predispositions, biological structures and subsequent capabilities. Nietzsche's "herd" mentality,

dominating, guarding against unbound creativity and keeping the status quo system and structure functional, is alive and well in most of our institutions.

Enter the next phase a.k.a. "2nd Life", in which a virtual space not only replaces the cinema for the masses but potentially our physical bodies as well. The body snatchers need not bother lifting a finger. Pollution may become so bad in the near future that uploading our minds into the big computer will be preferable. Some might even call it judgment day, revelations, nirvana etc. Already the willing masses, tired and bored, are scrambling to get there and relieve themselves the burden of their impoverished physical condition by giving themselves over to the path of least resistance: to get high, entertained and feel good thus following, unfolding and exploding with the dominant recursive pattern; our will to immortality a symptom and biological manifestation of that pattern. For a small fee you may have a sexy cartoon avitar made, enter the virtual world of 2nd life and do many pleasurable things you are

unable to do in reality. As the technology is improved and the sensorial experience perfected it may become as seductive as video games and television or worse.

This unfolding, although recursive (insofar as it is within dominant patterns) may be mistaken for evolution or progress. But latent in that totality there is an opening as Parmenides correctly pointed out "all is inviolate" and therefore must also include the opening for anomalous deviation that can occur by imagining an alternative and then creating a platform of resistance from which to deploy new axioms. We need look no further than the cumulative effects of the organized actions of a billion people driving internal combustion machines and the subsequent global warming to witness the creative potential in so many little dramas and actions organized. The reorganization of those actions beyond the anticipated faux deviation already scripted then is the task of the artist who is both a scientist and philosopher. It is the latent ability in

every human and our birthright to engage creatively in a way conducive to a sustainable humanitarian real world.

Now considering that natural desires are complicit in the status quo we must deploy an unnatural or counterintuitive strategy after deciding what sort of world we shall create. That world begins in our art forms. Experiments are made. Alternatives are brought into being in what we decide to realize and propagate and also with what we decide to ignore and limit or destroy in the creative act of asking, probing, deconstructing and building. What orthodoxies shall be enforced and which obliterated? Which shadow puppet shows shall be utilized to help us see through puppet shows in general and clear the space for an improved narrative? What spaces shall be constructed to enhance which emotions or serve as a platforms for Plato's Socrates, Nietzsche's Zarathustra, or Shakespeare's Hamlet delivering his line, "to be or not to be..." Clearings and sites that will allow us to study what is manifest in persons such as Plato, Nietzsche and Shakespeare and other

fine composers, architects, poets and warriors who use their characters, music, words, buildings and tools for creativity in the quest to artistically augment what we shall become and thus, what shall be.

To conclude, our world is plastic and co-evolving with humanity. Our ability to create is part of the action of infinity being or Being becoming. The artistic methods of science, philosophy and technology are sub-categories of and, combined with biological forms, enable this process. For the most part this is a recursive process, where the "eternal return" or patterns of repetition are not to be confused with the potential for anomalous deviation. This augmentation and creation must be carefully considered because there may be no going back. Before it is too late we may want to gain a higher level of understanding about the possible collateral effects of our "new" technology or the possibility we are perhaps only a temporary component to a larger cycle, soon to be obsolete.

So far this process follows dominant patterns but since "all is inviolate" this includes an opening for a true anomaly. Art making, I believe, is a crucial tool for the realization of that opening. For how can being be all that it can be (in other words, infinite which also includes finite) without evolving creatures that, although dependent on recursive patterns in the form of sunrise, heartbeat, cellular division etc, can then deconstruct themselves and their world, identify the components, the particles, genes, words, actions and rearrange them via artistic methods to create a sustainable platform in time and space. That is not only the action of infinite becoming but also, relative to humanity, the chance for a viable deviation in which we raise ourselves out of our status as subordinate components of existing patterns and become the creators of a new world where the ideals of love and sustainability are realized. A world where a less rigid perception and adherence to status quo reality results in a place where our evolution may be augmented through a series of velvet revolutions, detracting from, rather than adding to, the suffering of

humanity. Those who understand this as a participatory process in which all of our actions and non-actions have repercussions and who then take responsibility for every single one of those actions no matter how small, large, mundane and strive to create a world that will sustain the best aspects of what humanity is, are the artists worthy of my respect and allegiance.

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