

Book Proposal and Sample Chapters:

Visionary Creativity

How It Will Shape Our Future

Our world is no longer what we have thought it to be, and a new world is struggling to be born. Visionary Creatives are driven to bring this new world to all of us.

Note: The manuscript, about 85,000 words, is complete and available on request.

By John Lobell

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- Sample Chapters. (Note: The book is complete and the full manuscript is available on request.)

What is this book about?

Since I am introducing a new term, “Visionary Creativity,” I should, right up front, define it and say why it is important.

There is an issue that has remained opaque to studies of creativity: the difference between “ordinary” creativity, for example preparing a well-conceived meal, drafting a legal brief, or writing an episode of a sitcom, and the creativity of Salvador Dalí in painting his melting watches or Albert Einstein in formulating the theory of relativity. Studies settle for saying that the creativity of Dalí and Einstein is like ordinary creativity, only more. This is not correct.

Dalí’s painting of his watches and Einstein’s formulation of relativity are examples of Visionary Creativity. Very briefly Visionary Creativity is embedded in its culture, and at the same time remakes its culture. We are all creative, but there is something special about Visionary Creatives like Dalí and Einstein, like Mozart, Picasso, Jobs, and the other figures I address in this book. The Visionary Creative is aware that the world has changed in a profound way, that it is no longer what we have thought it to be, and that a new world is struggling to be born. The Visionary Creative is driven to bring this new world to the rest of us. It is this drive that leads to great works of art, discoveries in science, and transformative businesses.

Visionary Creativity is important to society because it opens us to the future. It is, in Joseph Campbell’s phrase, the “opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestations.” And it is important to Visionary Creatives themselves, as it is their source of joy, which comes from a direct experience of the spirit of the age and the energies of the universe, and from the satisfaction of accomplishing something about which they are passionate.

With that brief description, I can address the question: why is this book important?

We now recognize the importance of creativity. We understand that it defines us as human beings and we know that it is fundamental to the future of our economy and our country. We therefore buy books about it, as indicated by the presence of *Imagine* by Jonah Lehrer on the New York Times bestseller list and by numerous other recent books about creativity, including the ten year old classic, *Rise of the Creative Class* by Richard Florida, which is accepted as having shown that, just as Whyte's "Organization Man" dominated the 1950s, so the "Creative" dominates our time.

But none of these books are about Visionary Creativity. They are about mastery, innovation, problem solving, and sometimes even about creativity, but never about Visionary Creativity.

Put simply, as I said above, we all recognize that Dalí, Einstein, Mozart, Picasso, Jobs, and the other Visionary Creatives I address in this book are special, but no book on creativity has ever distinguished how they are different from someone who, while hooked up to a brain scan, can think of a lot of things to do with a brick.

My book does. What distinguishes Visionary Creatives is that they are immersed in their cultures, and at the same time propel their cultures into the future. Since we have lost an understanding of culture—that people in different times and places are truly different, I have to explain what culture is to explain Visionary Creativity, which is why my book seems to wander far afield, and why it is so rich.

To explain culture is to ask: Who are we and what kind of world do we live in? The answers to these questions might seem self-evident. We are intelligent, social, cultural, biological, and perhaps spiritual creatures living in a world of space, time, and material, governed by physical laws.

And that would have been a good answer until the early twentieth century, when Cubism revealed that we had fragmented, Jung and Joyce showed that we had

internalized our mythological histories, Einstein separated us from all fixed frames of reference, and the physicist James Jeans could state that “the Universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine.”

But that was our condition a hundred years ago. We today are no longer even in the world of modern art and Einstein’s relativity, but instead we live in a world of quantum entanglement, layered time, parallel universes, the East coming into the West, and Indra’s net as a metaphor for the interconnectedness of all things. How do we know that this is the nature of our emerging world? By looking at the work of our Visionary Creatives.

And in showing all of this I do something else: I show the unity between art, science, and business. They are all expressions of the spirit of the age, and the Visionary Creative is the conduit for that spirit, bringing it to all of us through creations in art, science, and business.

To sum up with a bit of immodesty: Creativity defines us as human beings and is vital to our future. This is the first book to truly understand creativity. Thus it is one of the most important books of our time.

MATERIAL FOR BOOK JACKET.

These are times of personal, social, and economic turmoil. Our old institutions are in distress and new ones to replace them are nowhere to be seen. We are cut adrift in a world of change, shorn of frames of reference.

But times of change can also be times of creativity, and we become aware of new possibilities in our arts, sciences, and industries, as well as new directions for our lives. This breakthrough book about personal and cultural transformation, describes how humanity advances through Visionary Creativity.

Today's problems all have one thing in common: they call out for creative vision. We flourish in pursuit of our creativity, and it is in creativity that we will find not only fulfillment for ourselves, but also the visions our world is calling for.

This book is about a new understanding of creativity, about the unfolding future in which our creativity will take place, and about becoming a Visionary Creative. In it you will enter the worlds of modern art, current movies, quantum theory, and social networking. You will find out how we still experience the conflict between the shaman and the priest, how the myths that launched our Western culture are still alive in us today, and why cosmologists place us in seas of parallel universes.

You will come to see familiar figures in new ways: musicians like Mozart, Beethoven, and the Beatles; artists like da Vinci, Picasso, and Duchamp, writers like Twain, Joyce, and Rowling; movie directors like Fellini, Lucas, and Ramis; scientists like Einstein, Bell, and Feynman; and business visionaries like Jobs, Brin, and Page.

You will come to see both art and science as metaphor, encounter a new approach to evolution, see how our privacy has migrated into the cloud, and encounter scientists seeking to reprogram the universe. You will find out how movies like *Stage Coach*,

Star Wars and *Groundhog Day* define the possibilities within which we live, find out what Michelangelo and Mark Zuckerberg have in common, and come to a new understanding of genius. And you will encounter the Visionary Creatives who are right now building our future.

Visionary Creatives feels that our world is no longer what we have thought it to be and that a new world is struggling to be born. They wonder what is wrong with others that they do not also feel this and they are driven to produce work that will help others feel what they feel. As Shelley wrote, "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." This book reveals how our "poets" in the arts, sciences, technology, and business are right now creating our future.

What is in this book?

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Who is the Audience for this book?

This book is aimed at the proverbial intelligent lay person who is interested in what is at the core of our twenty-first century culture, and in creativity, science, and the arts. People who have read the following books may be interested in this book:

CREATIVITY

- *Emotional Intelligence*, by Daniel Goleman
- *Proust Was a Neuroscientist*, by Jonah Lehrer
- *Flow*, by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
- *The Genius in All of Us*, by David Shenk
- *Where Good Ideas Come From*, by Steven Johnson
- *The Art Instinct*, by Denis Dutton
- *The Creating Brain*, by Nancy Andreasen
- *Your Creative Brain*, by Shelley Carson

CULTURE

- *Outliers* and other books by Malcolm Gladwell
- *Understanding Media*, by Marshall McLuhan
- *The End of History*, by Francis Fukuyama
- *The West and the Rest*, by Roger Scruton

This book is written to be accessible to an educated general audience. It explains all of the concepts introduced and it avoids jargon. Most of the creative figures referred to are very well known. All of the figures presented are described. The works of art that are mentioned are generally well known and are described, and those works readers are not familiar with can easily be found online.

Some of the figures addressed include:

- Artists such as da Vinci, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Van Gogh, Picasso, and Duchamp.
- Musicians such as Beethoven and the Beatles.
- Scientists such as Newton, Darwin, Edison, and Einstein.
- Business visionaries such as Gates, Jobs, and Zuckerberg.
- Cultural figures, such as Lao Tzu, Nietzsche, Freud, Jung, and Campbell.
- Architects such as Wright and Gehry.
- Writers such as Twain, Joyce, and Rowling.

The book refers to key works of art, like Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)*, and Duchamp's *Fountain*.

It also refers to popular movies, including *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *A Fistful of Dollars*, *Dirty Harry*, *Blade Runner*, *Star Wars*, *Apocalypse Now*, *In the Line of Fire*, *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*, *Chronicles of Riddick*, *Gran Torino*, *Wanted*, *Groundhog Day*, and *Midnight in Paris*.

About John Lobell for the book jacket:

John Lobell has a widely ranging mind, addressing how new technology changes our consciousness, which in turn leads to cultural paradigm shifts affecting every corner of our lives.

Lobell attended the school of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, and is a professor of architecture at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. He has worked or studied with some of the major creative and cultural figures of the twentieth century, including mythologist Joseph Campbell; architects Louis Kahn and Robert Venturi; Buddhist masters Chogyam Trungpa, Robert Thurman, and the Dalai Lama; and Tai Chi master Cheng Man-Ch'ing.

Lobell works in the fields of cultural theory, consciousness, mythology, architecture, Buddhism, and information theory, and consults on high profile technology projects. He is the author of numerous articles and has lectured throughout the country. His books include *Between Silence and Light: Spirit in the Architecture of Louis I. Kahn* and *Joseph Campbell: The Man and His Ideas*. He is a cofounder of the Web site, CinemaDiscourse.com, which looks at mythology and movies. You can find more at JohnLobell.com.

What are John Lobell's qualifications to write this book?

Lobell has studied with or worked with some of the major figures in art and culture of the 20th century. He has taught generations of students for over forty years, refining his ability to communicate profound ideas clearly.

CREATIVE AND CULTURAL WITH WHOM LOBELL HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED

- **Louis Kahn.** Next to Frank Lloyd Wright, Kahn is the most important American architect. Lobell was a student at Penn where Kahn taught, wrote an important book about Kahn, and has taught a course on him for thirty years.
- **Joseph Campbell.** Lobell studied mythology with Campbell for over twenty years, wrote a book about him, and was a founding board of advisors member of the Joseph Campbell Foundation.
- **Robert Venturi.** Venturi is regarded as the father of postmodern architecture. Lobell studied with Venturi, has written seminal articles about him, and has taught a course about him for thirty years.
- **Edmund Bacon.** Bacon is one of the leading city planners of the 20th century. Lobell studied with him.
- **Harrison and Abramovitz.** The architects of Rockefeller Center, parts of Lincoln Center, and the United Nations. Lobell worked for them.
- **Ulrich Franzen.** Franzen was a leading figure in New York architecture in the 1960s and '70s. Lobell worked for him.
- **Chogyam Trungpa.** First Tibetan teacher to come to the West. Lobell studied Buddhism with him.
- **Robert Thurman.** Leading American scholar of Tibetan Buddhism. Lobell studied Buddhism with him.
- **The Dalai Lama.** Lobell attended a Kalachakra Initiation with him.
- **Michael Harner.** Leading promoter of shamanism in the West. Lobell studied shamanism with him.
- **Cheng Man-ch'ing.** Leading figure in traditional Chinese culture, "Master of Five Excellences." Lobell studied Tai Chi in his studio.
- **Paul Goodman.** Social critic. Lobell studied with him.

TEACHING

Lobell has taught in all areas of the history of art and architecture, making him familiar with the world's great creative works. He also teaches courses on new technologies and their impact on society.

BOOKS

John Lobell's book, *Between Silence and Light: Spirit in the Architecture of Louis I. Kahn*, has been in print for over thirty years, and is known and respected throughout the world. It is the most important book on spirituality and architecture.

Lobell is also the author of *Joseph Campbell: The Man & His Ideas*, a book summarizing the ideas of the mythologist, Joseph Campbell, and *The Little Green Book*, a pioneering book on ecology and green living. He is a contributor to *Timeship: The Architecture of Immortality*. He is also the author of numerous articles.

LECTURING

Lobell has lectured at numerous schools and cultural institutions throughout the country. He is comfortable in front of an audience and is a popular lecturer.

Here a sample of Lobell lecturing at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVMDgue-_yE

Or search on John Lobell on YouTube.

Short Curriculum Vitae

JOHN LOBELL

Professor, Pratt Institute

Education

- M. Arch., 1966: University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Fine Arts: Independent studies and thesis in cultural theory
- M. Arch. 1965: University of Pennsylvania, Graduate School of Fine Arts
- B.A. 1963; University of Pennsylvania

Continuing Education

Mythology with Joseph Campbell (founding board of advisors member, Joseph Campbell Foundation). Buddhism with the Dali Lama, Robert Thurman, and Chogyam Trungpa. Shamanism with Michael Harner. Tai Chi with Professor Cheng Man-Ch'ing. Computer science with Herb Tesser.

Teaching Experience

Pratt Institute, School of Architecture, since 1969, Full Professor with tenure since 1980

Teaching has included history of architecture (survey courses, contemporary architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright, Kahn and Venturi), architectural theory, design, city planning, impact of technology on society.

Professional Experience, Architectural Offices

Ulrich Franzen and Associates, Architects, New York, 1967-69

Abraham W. Geller, Architect, New York, 1966-67

Harrison and Abramovitz, Architects, New York, 1966

Current Consulting and other Experience

Milgo-Bufkin, Brooklyn, N.Y., 1970-88, 1996-present

Architectural consultant; supervising of fabrication of large-scale sculptures for major artists; corporate planning.

Timeship, 2000-present

A projected biotech facility. Director of Research and Education

Joseph Campbell Foundation, 1900-1997

Member of the Advisory Board, editor of newsletter

Arts Magazine, Architectural Contributor, 1968-70

Publications: Books

Joseph Campbell: The Man & His Ideas, Joseph Campbell Foundation, 1993.
The Little Green Book: A Guide to Self-Reliant Living in the '80s. Shambhala, 1981.
Between Silence and Light: Spirit in the Architecture of Louis I. Kahn, Shambhala, 1979.

Publications: articles (SELECTED)

"Quantum Theoretical Issues in Architecture" Tarp, Issue 2, Spring 2004.
 "Campbell on Freud and Jung." Joseph Campbell Foundation Newsletter, No. 1, Fall 1993.
 "A Primer on Joseph Campbell." Whole Earth Review, Summer 1988.
 "Architecture and Structures of Consciousness," Pratt Journal of Architecture, Vol II, 1988.
 "Interview with John Hejduk." Pratt Journal of Architecture, Vol I, 1985
 "A Lucid Mystic." Smithsonian, Jul. 1979. Article on Louis Kahn.
 "Kahn and Venturi: An Architecture of Being-in-Context." Artforum, Feb. 1978.
 "Towards A Zero Energy Architecture." On Site On Energy, Fall 1974
 Numerous book reviews

Conferences and Papers (SELECTED)

- "Genomic Fabrication," presented to Humanity+, New York, 2011.
- "Envisioning a Zero Energy Future" presented at the Oxford Roundtable, Oxford, 2008.
- "Quantum Issues in Architecture" presented at Universal Machines, Pratt, 2005. (Co-organizer of the conference. Stephen Wolfram was the keynote speaker.)
- "Art and the Malleability of Merleau-Ponty's Body Subject" presented at Merleau-Ponty symposium, Pratt, 2005.
- "How Culture Reveals Structures of Consciousness" Toward a Science of Consciousness 2004, Center for Consciousness Studies, University of Arizona, Tucson, April 2004.
- Presentations at "A Parliament of the World's Religions," Chicago, August-September, 1993. Presentations at "A Mythological Toolbox," a program presented by the Joseph Campbell Foundation at Esalen Institute, CA. March, 1993, 94, 95.
- Participated in a conference, "Building a Free Media in the CIS," Sochi, Russia. American and Russian journalist, publishers, politicians, and academics. Spring 1992.

Lectures

1967-present, lectures at over 25 universities and various other venues.

Exhibitions

1967, Environment IV, Corridors, Architectural League of New York.

Memberships, Professional/Academic Organizations

The Architectural League of New York, 1967-present

College Art Association, 1997

Modern Language Association, 1993-94

SAMPLE CHAPTERS AND SELECTIONS FROM:

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01. PREFACE

It is late at night and you are looking at a blank screen. You review your outline listing the elements you think you need and where they should fit. They don't. Hours go by. Nothing is going right. You concentrate, trying to force things into place. It doesn't help. Eventually you relax; your eyes lose focus. You feel yourself dipping into your unconscious. What is it like—dropping below the surface of a pool of water? You come back up with the fragment of an idea. At first it seems unrelated to your project and you are about to dismiss it, but then you realize it might fit. You dip down again, and come up with another piece. More dips. Each new piece is now more complete. Then you begin to bring up notions of how the pieces might fit together. Things move faster, and at times you feel your project is assembling itself. You are far from finished, but the key parts are now in place and you can start working on it with your rational mind, redoing your outline, filling it in, rendering your project into a completed work.

Later you look back at what you have created in the context of your entire body of work. What is it saying? It is saying something almost frightening, that our world is no longer what we had thought it to be, that something new and luminous is emerging, something obvious to you, even though others do not yet see it. It is the outlines of our emerging twenty-first century.

A World in Turmoil

These are times of social and economic turmoil. Our old institutions are in distress and new ones to replace them are nowhere to be seen. We are cut adrift in almost every aspect of our lives, decentered in a world of change, shorn of frames of reference.

But times of change can also be times of creativity, and we become aware of new possibilities in our arts, sciences, and industries; new possibilities for how we live our lives.

Today our educational, corporate, and political institutions urge on us community, collaboration, cooperation, consensus, compromise for the betterment of our commons and of our Selves. Yes, cooperation, consensus, etc. have much to offer, but so does individual creativity, which is the focus of this book. Of course there are many things we must do as a society to address our problems, but we must also ask how do we each individually orient ourselves, what life courses do we set for ourselves? Looking at today's problems, we see that they all have one thing in common: they call out for creative vision. We are at our cores creative creatures, we flourish best in pursuit of our creativity, and it is in creativity that we will find not only fulfillment for ourselves, but also the visions our world is calling for.

This is a book about creativity. It is divided into three parts, presenting first a new understanding of creativity, then the unfolding future in which our creativity will take place, and finally the steps one might take to become a creative and participate in remaking the world.

Our Approach to Creativity

We all have different notions of creativity. What I am presenting may or may not conform to yours, so I ask that you keep an open mind as you make your way through this book. Some say creativity depends on innate genius, others that it depends on dedicated practice, and still others that it has to do with synapses, cortexes, lobes, and even mental illness. And a few say that we are all creative. My approach is different because it starts with the things creative people create.

Creativity is usually defined as bringing into existence something novel that exhibits beauty or utility, but that is not what this book is about. This book is about a creativity that goes much further into “Visionary Creativity.” Visionary Creativity is embedded in its culture, and at the same time, in a virtuous circle, remakes its culture. In the metaphor we will use in this book, Visionary Creativity unfolds on the stage on which we live our lives, and at the same time it continually recreates that stage.

Visionary Creativity

There is an issue that has remained opaque to studies of creativity: the difference between “ordinary” creativity, for example preparing a well-conceived meal, drafting a legal brief, or writing an episode of a sitcom, and the creativity of Salvador Dalí in painting his melting watches or Albert Einstein in formulating the theory of relativity. Studies settle for saying that the creativity of Dalí and Einstein is like ordinary creativity, only more. This is not correct. Dalí’s painting of his watches and Einstein’s formulation of relativity and are examples of “Visionary Creativity,” which is embedded in, and at the same time remaking of its culture. The first part of this book looks at Visionary Creativity in cultural context.

We often define culture as the shared beliefs, values, behavior, arts, and customs of a group of people, but here we will look at culture as the understanding of ourselves and our world as revealed in our myths. These myths, the stories we tell ourselves about our selves, establish the context in which we act out our individual and

collective lives and in which we exercise our creativity. In our Western culture, this context includes a moral and creative center in the heart of each individual.

A World Without Frames of Reference

Visionary Creativity today takes place in the context of contemporary culture, and so the second part of this book looks at our unfolding twenty-first century which is rich with technological developments, but which also presents us with a loss of fixed frames of reference, a vastness of universes, and an existence linked in entangled interrelationships intermingling dream and reality. The twenty-first century has only just begun, and Visionary Creatives will influence how it continues to unfold.

Becoming a Visionary Creative

Finally, the third part of this book describes becoming a Visionary Creative. There is no one linear path to Visionary Creativity, but there is a process of preparation. You may have heard that the Harry Potter stories sprang fully formed into the head of their author, J. K. Rowling, while she was on a train that was delayed four hours. She states: "I had been writing almost continuously since the age of six but I had never been so excited about an idea before. To my immense frustration, I didn't have a functioning pen with me, and I was too shy to ask anybody if I could borrow one. I think, now, that this was probably a good thing, because I simply sat and thought, for four (delayed train) hours, and all the details bubbled up in my brain, and this scrawny, black-haired, bespectacled boy who didn't know he was a wizard became more and more real to me." But Rowling had absorbed the stories of Merlyn, including those in Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, where Merlyn, who could not be killed, was buried in a cave, to come back when England needed him, and T.H. White's *The Once and Future King*, titled after the inscription on Arthur's tomb, "Here lies Arthur, king once, and king to be." Rowling's readings prepared her for what became for both her and the world a great creation and a great journey.

For the first twenty-five years of her life, Rowling did not know that she was going to write her Harry Potter novels, so she could not have known what material would

be important for her future creativity. Steve Jobs, in his Stanford address, said, “You can’t connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards.” Jobs could not have anticipated that the calligraphy course he sat in on after dropping out of Reed College would lead to him designing the Mac computer with elegant type faces, thus not only creating a more pleasing visual experience, but contributing to the growth of visual thinking, something we will discuss later.

Therefore in this book we will look at creativity very broadly. In the introduction to his highly influential book, *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan writes that his editor “noted in dismay that ‘seventy-five percent of your material is new. A successful book cannot venture to be more than ten percent new.’” In this book you will find an ocean of new ideas about our world, ourselves, and our future. Hopefully, as you read, unities will appear that will help you form your own creative narrative.

Newton, Mozart, van Gogh, Joyce, Einstein, Picasso, Fellini, the Beatles, Jobs, and Lucas are a few of the creative figures we will be discussing. What distinguishes their work? Of course it is exceptional. Of course it brings us pleasure or illumination. But there is more than that. The Visionary Creative feels that our world is no longer what we have thought it to be and that a new world is struggling to be born. He wonders what is wrong with others that they do not also feel this, and his motivation becomes to produce work that will help others feel what he feels. His audiences may initially reject his work, but after they have encountered it, they will be changed, and they will be in a new world in a new way.

A Note on Your Own Work

Newton, Mozart, van Gogh, etc. Few of us can aspire to be like any of these figures, so at first, we might think that this book would not pertain to our own creativity, but there are in fact lessons we can all learn from them. And a few of them were not exceptional in their talents, only in their accomplishments. Next to Charles Darwin, the most important person in the theory of evolution is Gregor Mendel, a monk who

twice flunked his exam to become a teacher, but was curious and observant. He asked, what would happen if you crossbred peas that have red flowers with peas that have white flowers? Everybody assumed you would get pink flowers, but nobody had ever tried it and paid attention to the results. It turns out that three quarters of the offspring have red flowers, and one quarter have white flowers. None have pink flowers. From this Mendel was able to work out the basic principles of genetics, not by having a soaring IQ, but by having the simple curiosity to ask a question everybody thought they knew the answer to.

So while this is not a “how-to” book on creativity, there are things you will learn that you might apply to your own work, including to question the obvious, pay attention, and trust your results. Ask yourself, what in your field seems obvious to everyone but seems somehow not right to you? Doing so might open a productive line of exploration.

02. INTRODUCTION

In which we see Visionary Creativity as immersed in its culture and at the same time remaking of its culture, and we see that Visionary Creativity can take place not only in art, but also in science, technology and business. And we see that in our time, our image of a person is very different from what it was in the Renaissance.

“Yes, that’s it! That’s what I have been trying to imagine but did not until now have the imagery.”

- Imagined thought of a sixteenth century Florentine

Visionary Creativity

What do Michelangelo Buonarroti and Mark Zuckerberg have in common? Yes, this is one of those grabber questions with which an author sometimes begins a book. To justify it, the author should show that there is something significant they have in common, and that this commonality points to a new idea that is truly important. Let's see how we will go about doing both.

Michelangelo and Zuckerberg, as well as Beethoven, Einstein, Picasso, Wright, and other figures we will look at in this book, are *Visionary Creatives*. They accomplished not just mastery, not just innovation, not just creativity, but *Visionary Creativity*. The work of the Visionary Creative is embedded in its culture, and, in a circular process, that work is instrumental in the destruction and recreation of its world.

We can imagine the morning of September 8 in 1504 when Michelangelo's sculpture of David, on which he had worked in secret for three years, was drawn from his studio into Florence's Piazza della Signoria. There must have been a shock and then a realization, "Yes, that's it! That's what I have been trying to imagine but did not until now have the imagery." David, a symbol of Florentine independence, is, of course, an Old Testament figure, but the sculpture is in the style of ancient Greek sculpture, thus bringing the Biblical and Hellenic traditions together. *David* was simultaneously the embodiment of Renaissance humanism with its focus on the human, and a stretching of the idea. In simplistic terms, we might say that there is spirit, the human, and nature. The Biblical traditions hold that spirit is the central and highest part of this trio and Greek and Renaissance humanist traditions hold that the human is the central and highest.

David was seventeen feet tall, truly monumental. Before the Renaissance, the most important component of one's Self was one's eternal soul that temporarily resided in an ephemeral body. By "Self," we mean our notion of who we are in a Visionary sense. The humanists, including Michelangelo and his fellow artists, experienced

something new, seeing the Self as body, mind, and soul. The magnificence of *David's* anatomy celebrated the body, connecting the Florentines to the ancient Greeks through its similarity to Greek sculptures, while his piercing eyes are windows into a private mind at work, a psychology. Humanism, born of the books made possible by the new print technology, focused its understanding on both who we are as physical beings and on the private mental processes inside of our heads. Still, *David* was a stretch for the Florentines of the day. It was that stretch, a *discontinuity*, the difference between what the Florentines had been anticipating and what was presented to them, that helped destroy the medieval world in which the body was only a corrupt vessel for the soul, and crystallize the new humanist vision that some anachronistically still hold today. As we will see, we now live in a very different world.

The growth of Mark Zuckerberg's online social network, Facebook, has been so rapid and so well documented that it has led to the Silicon Valley garage being challenged by the Harvard dorm room as an icon for an innovation incubator. On February 4 in 2004, Zuckerberg, then a Harvard sophomore, pressed the enter key on his laptop computer and launched Thefacebook, later to become just Facebook. Facebook allows users to "link" to and communicate with "friends," and to post profiles, personal updates, photographs, preferences, and other material for their friends to see. While several web sites already had many of those features, Facebook brought them together in a compelling way and quickly grew to become one of the world's most valuable companies. Stories of Facebook typically focus on the personalities of its founders and its rapid growth, and its record-setting initial public stock offering, missing its significance, which is the facilitating of our migration from inside our skins out to the electronic cloud, thus destroying the individual psychological Self of Michelangelo's humanist world and opening us up to a new and still unfolding world.

We are more than our bodies, minds, and souls. We are also our roles, relationships, friends, papers, photos, memories, etc. Our identities began migrating outside of our

skins as soon as we started making art, and the pace of that migration increased with writing and then again with printing. But the pace greatly accelerated in the late nineteenth century as we began to weave an electric net around our planet, and exploded with the Internet as we deposited vast parts of ourselves—our records, images, memories—in networked server farms around the world, known as the cloud. Zuckerberg’s Facebook both adopted and extended our putting more and more of ourselves into the cloud, facilitating the sharing of this material, dissolving the private humanist vision created by the printed book and crystallized by Michelangelo, and creating a new vision. This destruction of the old and creation of the new is the role of the Visionary Creative, and the reason the Visionary Creative is both celebrated and feared. As we will discuss later, the vociferous objections to the Internet in general and Facebook in particular regarding privacy are actually reactions to the ongoing destruction of the private psychological Self that had been a function of the previous culture. Such changes are always threatening.

So what do Michelangelo and Zuckerberg have in common? They both mastered their disciplines, Michelangelo carving stone and Zuckerberg coding; both were innovative and both were creative. But we are linking them here because they were both Visionary Creatives. Both experienced their cultures coursing through them, and both were motivated to make apparent to others what was obvious to them: that the world was no longer what it had been. The Visionary Creative, as we will come to understand in this book, is someone who manifests the spirit of the age in his work and at the same time propels that spirit forward into a continually unfolding future, destroying old worlds and building new ones. And now Visionary Creatives are building our twenty-first century, the most radically different period the human race has ever experienced.

At this point we should note something that we will see several times in this book. Our most influential creatives are not always our most original creatives, or those whose creations are the most elegant. We might have been tempted to pair Michelangelo with Steve Jobs, and we do mention Jobs several times in this book.

Time will decide the full importance of Mark Zuckerberg, but for his role in transitioning us out of our bodies and into the cloud, he is our choice here.

We Live in Cultures

It is difficult for us to see our own culture or even recognize the concept of culture; we tend to see our world as “real,” and not one of many possible symbolic constructs. But over time and across the globe, not all people experience the world the same way. In acts of cognition, we process the impressions that come in through our senses, and the way we do is different in different times and places. These differences define cultures.

There is a continual interplay between our culture and our individual processes of cognition—our structures of consciousness—as they remake each other. We see this in art, which, through discontinuities—differences between what we anticipate and what we encounter—restructures our consciousness. We go to an art gallery expecting the Impressionism of Monet, and instead we encounter the Post-Impressionism of Cezanne. Or expecting the Post-Impressionism of Cezanne, and instead we encounter the Cubism of Picasso. We go to a science fiction movie expecting the visual mythology of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and encounter the sword and ray gun hero journey of *Star Wars*. Or expecting the hero journey of *Star Wars*, we encounter the defining role of love in *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*.

We will see that science plays a role similar to art in this respect. We usually regard art and science as two different things, with art the product of the individual imagination and science the objective investigation of the world. But here we will see them both as expressions of the worldviews of their cultures, and both constituting the vocabularies of Visionary Creatives in building new worlds. Thus when we attempt to understand the world in Newtonian terms and find that it

reveals itself in quantum terms, we are not only engaging in scientific investigations, we are also engaging in cultural acts that restructure our consciousness.

We store much of ourselves in our culture, particularly in our arts. Recall the end of the 1982 science fiction movie *Blade Runner*, directed by Ridley Scott, starring Harrison Ford, and based on Philip K. Dick's novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Androids are created to work off-planet, are forbidden to come to earth, and are programmed to die in full health. Those who do come to earth are hunted by special police. The android Roy Batty, played by Rutger Hauer, as he is dying, says, "I've seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire off the shoulder of Orion. I've watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhauser Gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in the rain. Time to die." He releases a white dove that carries away his experiences as he dies. The androids have no cultural forms, no art or literature, in which to store their memories.

Again, Visionary Creatives swim in the culture of their day and manifest in their work the spirit of the age. The things they create—in art, design, science, technology, business—embody that spirit, and at the same time are a little off center for us, somehow not what we expected, presenting a discontinuity that stretches us, restructures our consciousness, pulling us into the future....

Valuing Creativity

Why are we interested in creativity? Let's start by asking what qualities we admire in other people and aspire to for ourselves. Wealth, political power, beauty? Perhaps, but for many, it is creativity. And even when we admire or aspire to another quality such as wealth, it is often creativity we ultimately have in mind.

Think of some of the wealthy people now on our radar screens: the late Steve Jobs, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, Bill Gates, Donald Trump, Richard Fuld. Notice that I have placed this small selection not in order of their wealth, but of how much they

are admired. We admired Steve Jobs of Apple for his role in bringing computers and other digital devices to all of us that are easy to use, elegantly designed, and that enrich us. We admire Sergey Brin and Larry Page for creating Google, which is organizing all of the world's information to make it accessible and useful. Although we are perhaps getting a bit nervous as we realize that *all* of the world's information includes everything about each of us, but more on that later when we discuss the end of privacy. Bill Gates is further down the list because while we admire his philanthropy, and while the company he founded, Microsoft, has brought us useful software, it has not always focused on the elegance and ease of use of its products. Steve Jobs was once asked what he disliked about Microsoft, once Apple's archrival, and after a pause he replied that Microsoft had "no taste—and I mean that in the big sense." Donald Trump is on our list for starting his career by building in New York during bad economic times when others had abandoned the city, but far down on the list because he has created a brand of crass pseudo sophistication. Contrast that to Julia Child who brought good taste in cooking to the average American.

Last on our brief list, and least admired, is Richard Fuld, former CEO of the now bankrupt Wall Street banking firm, Lehman Brothers. Banking firms traditionally were financiers of new business, often creating entire industries. For example, Mellon Bank was the driving force behind Alcoa, Gulf Oil, Westinghouse, U.S. Steel, Heinz, General Motors, Standard Oil, and other companies that defined an earlier age of American industrial might. Lehman itself had helped create Radio Corporation of America, a broadcast pioneer; DuMont, the first television manufacturer; and Digital Equipment Corporation, a computer pioneer. More recently, venture capital firms have played similar roles in creating the digital technology companies that define Silicon Valley. But most Wall Street banks today, as exemplified by Fuld's Lehman, no longer make their money by backing new businesses, but by trading for their own accounts. Put simply, they gamble, and they win. Until they lose. Fuld and other bankers had doubled down their companies' bets until their losses threatened to bring down the entire world financial system.

While many would probably agree with this ranking of the admirability of these wealthy people, they might not realize why they gravitate to some and away from others. I suggest it is creativity. We admire those who create things we admire, we are indifferent to those who create things in poor taste, and we do not admire those who are not creative but instead leach off of those who do.

And political power? Of course we remember villains, but we also remember leaders who are associated with periods of creativity: Pericles, who ruled Athens during its golden age; Catherine the Great, who brought the Enlightenment to Russia; and Franklin Roosevelt who imagined modern America. But more often we remember a period for its creative figures, not its political leaders. For example, we remember Pope Julius II who commissioned Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling frescos because of his tempestuous relationship with his artist, but do we remember Leonardo de Vinci's patron in Milan or the retired clergyman who commissioned Palladio to build the Villa Rotunda? Do we remember the French nobleman who had Voltaire imprisoned on a personal writ or the rulers of Austria when Mozart and Beethoven composed their music? Do we remember the rulers of France when Monet was painting his poplar trees; Cezanne was painting his Grand Bathers; or when members of the Lost Generation, including Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Sherwood Anderson, John Dos Passos, John Steinbeck, and Cole Porter were meeting in the cafés of Paris? Do we remember who the governors of California were when Hewlett Packard, Intel, Apple, Google, and Facebook were launched? For the most part, we do not, but we do remember the leading creative figures of many eras, beginning with Imhotep, the architect of the first Egyptian pyramid.

We could go on and look at beauty. We admired Marilyn Monroe in the 1950s not just for her beauty, but for the way she created a vulnerable femininity both on screen and off that captured and also helped create her time; Elizabeth Taylor in the 1960s for her tempestuous emotionality also both onscreen and off that captured and also helped create her time; and we admire Angelina Jolie today for the way she

plays her asexual onscreen action characters against her off-screen mothering in a search for a new interpretation of femininity for our time. And before these stars, we admired Jean Harlow for the way she reflected changing social and economic circumstances in one of America's most tumultuous periods when she moved from blonde bombshell to more serious roles that paralleled her life problems as the Great Depression wore on. All in just seven years from 1930 until her death from kidney failure at the age of twenty-six in 1937. We admire creativity. And when we admire wealth, political power, or beauty, we are often still admiring creativity.

If the man of power—the politician, banker, businessman—has creative vision, he can conceive something new. Otherwise, he can only bring to the fore that which has already been conceived by a creative. And if, as in the case of General Motors, the managers are able to consistently override the creatives, they may even bankrupt a company. Although they may sometimes live in material poverty, creatives are the source of new ideas. ...

The Spirit of the Age

... Visionary Creatives do not just express themselves, they also capture and express the spirit of their age. Frank Lloyd Wright said:

Every great architect is—necessarily—a great poet. He must be a great original interpreter of his time, his day, his age.

And the modern architect of glass and steel, Mies van der Rohe, writes:

Architecture is the real battleground of the spirit. Architecture depends on its time. It is the crystallization of its inner structure, the slow unfolding of its form.

While Wright and Mies spoke about architecture, we take their words to apply to all that we create.

The true work of creativity must express the spirit of its age, but it must also extend it; it must envision a future and carry us to it. The media theorist Marshall McLuhan expressed this when he wrote:

Art at its most significant is a Distant Early Warning System that can always be relied on to tell the old culture what is beginning to happen to it.

Artists, when speaking about creativity, use terms like “the spirit of the age.” Psychologists when speaking about creativity do not use such terms; they cannot measure the spirit of an age nor put the phrase in academic publications. In this book we will rely on the insights of artists.

We might think of people as generally falling into several groups or combinations thereof in terms of temperament and ability: *leaders*, who organize, motivate, and command; *nurturers*, who care for others; *producers*, who make things; *actives*, who seek physical challenges; *scholars* who contemplate ideas; *mystics*, who experience transcendence; and *somnambulists*, who are content with feelings of wellbeing. And *creatives*, bringers of the new, destroyers of the old. All are worthy. All can lead rich lives. This is a book about creatives and for those who admire them. ...

Beethoven's Third Symphony

In 1802, in the depths of despair over his loss of hearing, Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) composed a “suicide note” now called the Heiligenstadt Testament named after the town where he was living. He then decided on another strategy. He would conquer his despair and remake himself as romantic hero.

In 1805 he premiered his Symphony No. 3, the *Eroica*, a piece displaying operatic heights and depths, the first of a series of works of unprecedented scale combining structural rigor summing up the classical style that they would end, and emotional depth signaling the romantic style that they would unleash.

The Third Symphony, exhibiting the darkness of a rich personality through dissonance of chords and tempo, carries within itself the seeds of destruction and of triumph, and announces Beethoven's artistic rebirth as romantic hero in recreating the expressive nature of instrumental music and of the role of the artist as creator. The music critic William Kinderman writes, "What Beethoven explores in the *Eroica* are universal aspects of heroism, centering in the idea of a confrontation with adversity leading to a renewal of creative possibilities."

While richly complex, *The Eroica* is ultimately joyous, triumphant, signaling Beethoven's turn from suicide. Not so for Werther, the subject of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, revised in 1787. Werther loves a woman he can never have, and, after much sensitive suffering, commits suicide. Werther was so admired among German youth of the day that authorities had to keep watch at bridges.

We feel Werther's longing in Caspar David Friedrich's painting, *Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog*, showing a young man standing on a mountain top, looking down at peaks pressing above the clouds. We feel the power of nature in his painting of a ship crushed in an ice floe and the power of nostalgia in his painting of a cathedral in ruins. And we feel the grandeur of nature in the paintings of storms by J.M.W. Turner in front of which we abandon the belief that we can ever know nature or ourselves through rationality.

Romanticism celebrated individual freedom and the uniqueness of the creative, and it challenged the Enlightenment rationalism that was based on the notion that the reasoned thinking that was proving so successful in science could also be applied to human affairs. Romanticism held that reasoned inquiry was not adequate to account for the awesome powers of nature, or the powers of the human emotions. And Romanticism objected to the notion of generalizing nature into laws. The romantic poet William Blake writes:

Now I a fourfold vision see, And a fourfold vision is given to me; 'Tis fourfold
 in my supreme delight And threefold in soft Beulah's night And twofold
 Always. May God us keep From Single vision & Newton's Sleep!

So Beethoven's romantic vision was a personal triumph, but took place in the context of a larger movement, Romanticism, a celebration of the energies of the human psyche and the powers of nature. ...

Picasso and Matisse: Creativity as Struggle

The notion of creativity as destructive is a consequence of creativity as struggle, sometimes historic struggle. The competition between Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso to be the leading modern artist of the day was not just about styles, but also about visions of the then emerging twentieth century.

Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) was an ambitious young artist in the Paris scene, but he was quiet, as though biding his time. He saw his opportunity when Matisse exhibited *Le Bonheur de Vivre* (the joy of life) in 1906. *Le Bonheur* was a large painting, eight feet across, the kind of size an artist uses when asserting that a painting is of major importance, depicting nude figures dancing, lounging, and making out in a glade. The lines are sensuous and the colors, muted reds, oranges, yellows, and greens, are meant to convey emotion rather than depict nature. Matisse had staked his ground. Picasso responded by asking, what if civilization is only skin Visionary, and beneath it lies a primitive savagery? And what if I can use this notion to wrest from Matisse the role of the leading modern artist? If Matisse would champion erotic joy, Picasso would cut open a vein of suppressed ugly primal energy that threatened the foundations of European civilization, positioning Matisse as representing bourgeoisie comfort and himself as plunging into the dangerous unknowns of the modernist future.

In 1907 Picasso painted *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)* (the young ladies of Avignon), a large oil painting portraying five nude prostitutes at a brothel in Barcelona. Perspective was long gone, and the angular forms of the figures opened the way to Cubism. With its primitive masks, angular figures, and incoherent, aggressive female sexuality, *Les Femmes d'Alger* was such a violent challenge to the self-image of European civilization that for many years Picasso showed it to only a few people.

In a 1992 essay “Reflections on Matisse,” the art critic Hilton Kramer wrote:

After the impact of *Les Femmes d'Alger*, however, Matisse was never again mistaken for an avant-garde incendiary. With the bizarre painting that appalled and electrified the cognoscenti, which understood that *Les Femmes d'Alger* was at once a response to Matisse's *Le bonheur de vivre* (1905-1906) and an assault upon the tradition from which it derived, Picasso effectively appropriated the role of avant-garde wild beast—a role that, as far as public opinion was concerned, he was never to relinquish.

Picasso continued this theme in many paintings and studies of figures in torment, and revisited it in his 1937 monumental protest to war, *Guernica*. ...

Claude Shannon

Claude Shannon's work was never lost, but few have heard of him, although we all now live in the world he created. In 1948 Shannon, a reclusive thirty-six year old mathematician, electrical engineer, and tinkerer working at AT&T's Bell Labs in New York's West Village, published an article titled “A Mathematical Theory of Communication.” The article was modest in its intent; Shannon wanted to be able to quantify the amount of information that could be sent through a given channel, but to do so he had to define information. By the time he was done, his short paper had created what we now know as information theory. What Shannon realized was that the information in a message can be quantified by the number of 0s and 1s required

to transmit it, and has nothing to do with its content. We now call these 0s and 1s bits, a term coined by Shannon in his paper.

This paper was preceded some years earlier by Shannon's MIT master's thesis in electrical engineering. In the 1840s the English mathematician and philosopher, George Boole, developed what is now called Boolean logic. Boolean logic formalizes a set of rules in which, for example, we might say if A and B are true, then we get C. If A is true and B is not true, then we get D. If both A and B are not true,... etc. We use this kind of logic in contemporary computers. In his 1937 master's thesis, titled "A Symbolic Analysis of Relay and Switching Circuits," Shannon showed that these principles could be built into electric circuits, enabling the logic operation to be automated, thus laying the foundations for all electronics including modern computers. His thesis did not gain any special attention when he wrote it, but it is now recognized as the most important master's thesis of all time. With these two papers, Shannon had created the modern technological world. Besides being the basis of computer science and everything we do on the Internet, his information theory is now being used to re-do all of science: physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, etc.

In other words, Shannon developed the science on which our entire digital age is built and on which all of science is being rebuilt. Neil Sloane, editor of Shannon's papers stated that: "He's one of the great men of the century. Without him, none of the things we know today would exist. The whole digital revolution started with him."

In his book, *Microcosm*, George Gilder observes that in the macrocosm (the realm of big industrial machines), when a device become more powerful, it becomes larger, more likely to break down, more expensive, and more energy consuming. But in the microcosm (the realm of the computer chip), when a device becomes more powerful, it becomes smaller, less likely to break down, less expensive, and less energy consuming. And our entire economy is moving from macrocosm to

microcosm, from matter to energy to information and even to creativity.

Also in 1948, in the same building in New York's West Village in which Shannon worked, a group of Bell Lab scientists developed the transistor, later to be miniaturized and placed by the billions on single chips in our computers. Three of these scientists received the Nobel Prize. Shannon did not receive a Nobel Prize; there is no Nobel Prize in information theory or computer science or even in mathematics. Shannon is one of the most important scientists of the twentieth century, indeed one of the most important Visionary Creatives of all time, but it is hard to get recognition in a field that no one knows about because you just invented it. Few people have heard of Claude Shannon. ...

Hedy Lamarr

Billed as the most beautiful woman in the world by the great stage director Max Reinhardt, Viennese-born actress Hedy Lamarr began her career appearing nude portraying sexual passion in the German film, *Ecstasy*, although her move to Hollywood where she became a leading lady working opposite Clark Gable, Jimmy Stewart and Charles Boyer, among many others, necessitated more modesty. Desiring to help the American war effort during the Second World War, she spent time between shooting movies working on her living room floor with avant-garde musician turned Hollywood composer, George Antheil, designing advanced electronically controlled weapon systems.

Their efforts were focused on guidance systems and proximity fuses, looking for ways to detonate a weapon at a given distance from its target, and how to defeat an enemy's attempt to jam the guidance. Their designs are the forerunners of today's smart bombs, cell phones, Bluetooth devices, GPS guidance instruments, and other devices.

Lamarr and Antheil were more suited to their task than one might have imagined.

Both were very smart, and Lamarr had been married to a wealthy Austrian munitions manufacturer and had sat in on some of his negotiations with his clients. And Antheil had built complex mechanisms for his machine age concerts. In 1942 they received a patent for their radio-controlled spread spectrum torpedo-guidance system, but not recognition. At the time the military did not take Lamarr seriously, but in 1997 at eighty-two she was honored for her work by the Electronic Frontier Foundation. Antheil's honor was posthumous. Their work was chronicled in a 2011 book but it is hard to be taken seriously in the field of high tech weaponry when you are the most beautiful woman in the world....

Marcel Duchamp

What better way to end a discussion of the twentieth century than with Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968). Beethoven began his career in the context of the Viennese classicism of Haydn and Mozart. His later work opened the world to the Romantic, but at the same time he was uniquely Beethoven. We might say the same for Duchamp whose early work was in the modernist tradition, derivative of Cubism, Futurism, and Surrealism, and whose later work is described as Dada and opens the way to the art of our time. But at the same time Duchamp was uniquely Duchamp.

Duchamp began his art career in the early 1900s experimenting with various Post-Impressionist styles and hanging out in French artistic circles. In 1912 he completed an ambitious painting, *Nude Descending a Staircase No. 2*. It features repeated abstracted fragmented images of a figure to capture its motion, and partakes of Cubism and Italian Futurism. He submitted it to the Salon des Indépendants in Paris where a jurist asked that he change its name. Refusing, he took it home in a taxi and stated he was finished with being a part of a group, although he did eventually become associated with the Dadaists. Later he submitted the painting to the 1913 Armory Show in New York where it was accepted. An art critic for the *New York Times* wrote that it resembled “an explosion in a shingle factory.” Duchamp lost

interest in painting, got a job as a librarian, and started working on other things, including *The Large Glass*, a piece that looks like a double glazed storm window with images sandwiched between panes of the glass.

In 1917 Duchamp was on the board of the Society of Independent Artists in New York, which announced an exhibit that would show all work submitted. Duchamp went to a plumbing supply, bought a men's room urinal, signed it "R. Mutt 1917," and anonymously submitted it to the exhibit. The exhibition committee debated whether the *Fountain*, as it is now known, was art and whether they should show it. They decided they had to have it at the exhibit because of their announcement, but they would put it behind a curtain and hope that no one would notice it. Bad move for a gallery claiming to be progressive, as the urinal was to become one of the most important works in the history of modern art. Duchamp then announced that it was his and resigned from the gallery, as did several other prominent figures. Then the gallery lost the urinal.

An article about the matter entitled "The Richard Mutt Case" stated that, "Whether Mr. Mutt made the fountain with his own hands or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view— created a new thought for that object." Duchamp said that he wanted to shift the focus of art from physical craft to intellectual interpretation.

Duchamp called the things he chose "readymades." At the Museum of Modern Art you can see one, a snow shovel that he bought at a hardware store, hanging by a wire and looking just like an old snow shovel you might have in your garage.

Duchamp, who died in 1968, spent the last decades of his life focusing on chess, assembling a few references to his earlier work, meeting with young artists, and not making art. Except secretly. For twenty years he worked in his New York studio on

Étant donnés, which was unveiled at the Philadelphia Museum of Art a year after his death.

You enter the section of the museum that has the most comprehensive Duchamp collection in the world and make your way to a very small room that has a worn wooden door with two holes in it. You press your eyes up to the holes and you see a mannequin of a naked woman lying in the brush, her head obscured from your view, a lantern in one hand, and her legs spread open so you are looking at the Visionary slit between them.

When you look at the *Fountain* or the readymade snow shovel, a voice in your head might say, "But that's not art!" Exactly what the exhibition committee of the Society of Independent Artists decided. And you might also wonder about *Étant donnés*. Just ten years after Picasso and Matisse were battling over the nature of modern man on large canvases, Duchamp was signing a urinal with a fake name. Some critics tried to talk about the erotic curves of the urinal, or the fact that the great art form of pragmatic America was plumbing, but you can't say that about a snow shovel.

An artist has an intention; he wants to convey an insight about his time or the human condition. He creates something, usually requiring craft and an aesthetic sense, but as we now know, not always, and places it where an audience can encounter it—in a gallery, between the covers of a book, in a concert hall. An audience experiences the piece, sometimes with consternation. The work, the initial response of the audience, subsequent responses of that audience, responses of subsequent audiences, and ongoing evaluations by critics and historians reverberate through the decades and centuries. Duchamp's point was that art is not just the "something, usually requiring craft and an aesthetic sense," but this *entire process*. Duchamp was one of the first to bring this to our attention, and in so doing engaged in one of the most powerful Visionary Creative processes of our time, defining the "self-consciousness" of our post-modern era. Just about every artist today, especially artists about whom politicians object when the exhibition of their

work receives federal funding, is working in the world created by Duchamp. With his *Les Femmes d'Alger* of 1907, Picasso launched the twentieth century. With his *Fountain*, just ten years later, Duchamp launched the twenty-first. ...

Over and Over and Over

Quantum entanglement, layered time, the East coming into the West, Indra's net, reincarnation as a metaphor for the connectedness of all things. Now let's take a look at one more movie.

Groundhog Day is a 1993 romantic comedy directed by Harold Ramis and starring Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell. It was well received on release, but as is often the case with significant movies, it took a while to sink in. Recall our earlier discussions of how our experience of a work of art changes over time. The movie critic, Roger Ebert, raised his estimation of the movie; the literary critic, Stanley Fish, includes it as one of only two movies since 1958 on his top ten list; and spiritual leaders in several traditions use the movie in their teaching. Harold Ramis states, "At first I would get mail saying, 'Oh, you must be a Christian because the movie so beautifully expresses Christian belief.' Then rabbis started calling from all over, saying they were preaching the film as their next sermon. And the Buddhists! Well, I knew they loved it because my mother-in-law has lived in a Buddhist meditation centre for 30 years and my wife lived there for five years." Despite being made at the end of the twentieth century, it has become a defining movie of our emerging twenty-first century.

Bill Murray plays Phil Connors, an obnoxious, self-centered television weatherman assigned to go to the small town of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania to cover Groundhog Day, the day when a groundhog emerges from hibernation and does or does not see its shadow, thus predicting when spring will come. Andie MacDowell

plays Rita, his patient producer and eventual love interest. For no reason given in the movie, Phil finds himself repeating Groundhog Day over and over again. He wakes up each morning to find that it is not tomorrow, but once again February 2. He remembers “yesterday’s” February 2, but no one else does. He is at first terrified. He sees a psychiatrist. Perhaps he has a brain tumor. Then it starts to get wearing. Sitting in a bar, he remarks, “I was in the Virgin Islands once. I met a girl. We ate lobster, drank pina coladas. At sunset, we made love like sea otters. That was a pretty good day. Why couldn’t I get that day, over and over and over?” Phil looks for ways to deal with his situation. He tries hijinks, stealing money, exploiting people, casual sex, conning his love interest. Then, in despair, suicide, again and again. But he keeps waking up on the same morning. The film does not specify how many times he repeats the day, but from what he eventually masters—playing the piano, French romantic poetry, ice sculpting, flipping cards into a hat, it is at least several decades. Finally Phil decides to use his situation to become a decent person. He finds joy, and on the culminating day, he rushes from place to place to help people. He plays piano and is the center of attention at the Groundhog Day evening party, wins the girl, and escapes the repeatedly cycling day.

The meaning of this repeated experience? Here is one thought. In his book, *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche asks:

What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: “This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more’... Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: ‘You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine.’

Nietzsche is not here concerned with some very different model of the universe, but with our universe, our lives, here and now. He is not saying, “In this theory, this is how your life works,” but rather “How would you live your life if it *were* to work this

way.” If you were going to relive this day over and over forever, you would want it to be a very good day. A day of pleasure, as in “I was in the Virgin Islands once?” Perhaps. But maybe even better than that, the climatic day of *Groundhog Day*, a day of not only pleasure, but of joy over having done a decent job of creating yourself and your life. Nietzsche suggests that is how we should live every day, as though we were going to be living it over and over and over. Steve Jobs put it slightly differently in his 2005 Stanford commencement address a year after being diagnosed with cancer and six years before his death when he said, “I have looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: ‘If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?’ And whenever the answer has been ‘No’ for too many days in a row, I know I need to change something.”

The movie critic Roger Ebert, revisiting *Groundhog Day*, concludes his essay:

We see that life is like that. Tomorrow will come, and whether or not it is always Feb. 2, all we can do about it is be the best person we know how to be. The good news is that we can learn to be better people. ...

The Flow of Energy

There is a myth that mental illness or a difficult life can contribute to creative output, so I want to make it clear that I am not saying that was the case with these figures. My point is that they were able to achieve joy in producing great works despite not being happy under our definitions of happiness. But other figures achieved joy in producing great works equal to those of these creatives while leading long lives free of mental illness and great suffering, including Shakespeare, Bach, Picasso, and Twain. Of these, Shakespeare died the youngest at fifty-two and Picasso the oldest at ninety-one. So no, we are not equating suffering with creativity. We are attempting to describe something other than happiness that we might aspire to, something that values creativity.

Certainly no one would want to suffer what Pope, Beethoven, Nietzsche, van Gogh, and Solzhenitsyn suffered. Especially what van Gogh suffered. What an unhappy life in every respect. But let's imagine we could ask each of them if he would trade his life for one of feelings of contentment, satisfaction, wellbeing, pleasure; a positive emotional state. We know how Nietzsche would answer. I suspect van Gogh might answer the same way, declaring himself with William Blake:

As I was walking among the fires of Hell,
delighted with the enjoyments of Genius;
which to Angels look like torment and insanity.

And we can imagine van Gogh reflecting on Nietzsche's admonition, to participate joyfully in the sorrows of the world.

Doctor Who is a long running British television science fiction series about a Time Lord, Doctor Who, who travels through time in a phone booth. In an episode titled "Vincent and the Doctor," Doctor Who and his companion, Amy, travel to Provence in the south of France in 1890 to enlist van Gogh's aid in fighting a space monster. They form an affection for van Gogh and in an attempt to relieve him of his despair, take him to our present to see an exhibit of his work in Paris. Van Gogh is overwhelmed by the enthusiastic reception for his paintings. Then, within earshot of van Gogh, Doctor Who asks the exhibit's curator, "Where do you think van Gogh rates in the history of art?" The curator, played with British solemnity by Bill Nighy, replies, "Well, big question. But to me, van Gogh is the finest painter of them all. Certainly the most popular great painter of all time, the most beloved. His command of color the most magnificent. He transformed the pain of his tormented life into ecstatic beauty. Pain is easy to portray, but to use your passion and pain to portray the ecstasy and joy and magnificence of our world—no one had ever done it before. Perhaps no one ever will do it again. To my mind that strange wild man who roamed the fields of Provence was not only the world's greatest artist, but also one of the greatest men who ever lived."

Van Gogh never heard words like that, and of course it would have been wonderful if he could have. But did he need to? He wrote to Theo, "Wings, wings to fly above life! Wings to fly above the grave and death! That is what we want, and I am beginning to understand that we can get them." We see from van Gogh's letters that his greatest despair was not his misfortunes, but his inability to fully convey in his paintings the luminous world he experienced. As much as we admire what he accomplished, he had wanted to accomplish so much more.