



get the picture?!

Conscious Creation
Goes to the Movies

Brent Marchant

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Get the Picture?!: Conscious Creation Goes to the Movies, second edition

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*To my longtime friend, Mikey,
For sharing all those hours in the dark with me.*

*To my metaphysical mentor, Linnaea,
For helping set me on the right path.*

*To my touchstone, Karen,
For helping to keep me on the path (and authentic about it).*

*And to my parents, Eileen and Dave,
wherever they may roam these days,
For making it all possible.*

“I love movies, and I love the study and practice of metaphysics. I’m always looking for clues and keys through the common story lines we share on how to better understand the complex world in which we live. Brent Marchant’s book, *Get the Picture?!*, dynamically marries movies and metaphysics to serve us with a delightfully engaging, perspective-altering guide to dimensions of understanding to which we may otherwise remain blind.

“Brent is an amazingly gifted author with an ability to transmit complex metaphysical concepts in a light-hearted real life dialogue. His tireless enthusiasm for cinema and conscious creation shines through in this intelligent narrative of personal experience and observation. His ability to direct his reader into new perspectives encourages the reader to witness his own life choices with new awareness, ultimately allowing a greater potential for healing and change.

“There is an ever-growing awareness spreading throughout our Universe and humanity of conscious evolution, one in which we are searching out ways to accept and activate a greater responsibility as co-creators in our world vision and, indeed, in our own personal lives. *Get the Picture?!* powerfully and beautifully guides the reader as conscious creator step by step toward a better understanding of his power and role in creating the life of his choosing.”

—Andrea Thiel Connell

New Thought Mentor, Speaker and Healer
New Leaf Metaphysics

“*Get the Picture?!* provides a new and engaging approach to mastering the processes of conscious creation. The movie analyses provide a mirror, allowing you to see how the basic universal spiritual laws are in action in your life.”

—Gregory Zanfardino

President
Moniker Entertainment

“Brent’s insights into the heart and soul of Hollywood have been a big influence for my personal viewing choices. He has a true gift of tapping into the key messages of the movie world, going deeper and beyond what seems to be the surface story for purely entertainment purposes.”

—Rose-Anne Partridge

Founder
www.RealLifeChanges.com

“Brent Marchant brings a refreshing viewpoint to his movie reviews by seeking out the meta-message of each film. He uncovers the often-hidden beliefs, expectations and mindset that draw each character into relationship via their resonant attraction. In so doing, Brent shows us how to look at our own co-creations more lucidly and learn from this *cinema verité*. Highly recommended!”

—Robert Waggoner

Author

Lucid Dreaming: Gateway to the Inner Self

Co-editor

Lucid Dreaming Experience magazine

“Brent brings light to the movies he covers with such metaphysical insight that you cannot help but be enlightened by the clarity he offers of each movie. He has fun offering his commentaries and helps you to have fun as well.”

—Daya Devi-Doolin

Author

*The Only Way Out Is In: The Secrets of the 14
Realms to Love, Happiness and Success!*

*If You can Breathe, You CAN Do Yoga: for
Beginners and the Young at Heart*

Grow Thin While You Sleep: Go Figure!

CEO, The Doolin Healing Sanctuary

“Brent is the perfect description of ‘balanced’ to me. He recognizes the necessity of having one hand in the real world, while constantly striving to bring the spiritual world into practice and being. Brent’s book, *Get the Picture?!*, is informative, funny and just plain smart. I’ve concocted many story ideas from his observations and hope to benefit from his musings for many years to come!”

—Dodie Ownes

Editor

SLJ Teen

“Brent Marchant truly understands the laws governing how we human beings purposely or inadvertently cause our circumstances. Through his writing, he makes the advanced metaphysical knowledge available

to the average person. He teaches his readers how to consciously create their own lives.”

—James Goi Jr.

Author

How to Attract Money Using Mind Power

“An expert on films and the mechanics of the law of attraction, Brent Marchant consistently enlightens his audience. Through this talented author’s eyes, difficult concepts are clarified, made more relevant and, at times, life-changing.”

—Mary E. Barton

Author

*Soul Sight: Projections of Consciousness and Out of
Body Epiphanies*

Everyday Telepathy, Clairvoyance and Precognition

Experience Tomorrow Today: Dreams that come True

“I love *Get the Picture?!* Brent has found a super-creative way to illustrate the concepts behind conscious creation, and even films I previously thought I had no interest in suddenly become intriguing! It’s also a great gift—thought provoking and useful, it paves the way for some really interesting conversations.”

—Kerstin Sjoquist

Creator

Bliss Trips Guided Meditations

“Brent Marchant takes movie watching to a whole new level of enjoyment. I’ll never look at movies in the same way. In his book, *Get the Picture?!*, Brent has taught me how to find the deeper messages and then use these stories in my own conscious creations in life. In addition, I have found so many wonderful movies that I seem to have missed somehow! Thank you, Brent, for this fabulous work!”

—Katana Abbott, CFP®

Life and Legacy Wealth Coach

Radio Host, *Smart Women Talk*

www.SmartWomensCoaching.com

“Brent Marchant reminds us in his amazing book, *Get the Picture?: Conscious Creation Goes to the Movies*, that we are what the movies are made of—light—and invokes the ever-present truth that we create our reality through our consciousness. Never before has there been a book like it. In its glorious explanations of how we create, that we create and be careful of what you create, he invokes the wisdom of the ages in the most entertaining way possible. Bravo, Mr. Marchant!”

—Joanne Helfrich

Author

The Way of Spirit: Teachings of Rose

“Hats off to Brent Marchant and his metaphysical expertise! His writing style carries the movie lover to higher levels of awareness. Brent’s keen intuition shines light on the gentle nuances in movies drawing the viewer in to fully engage with their own intuition and life path! Choosing a film for entertainment now becomes a soul experience. Truly fabulous!”

—Jenn Royster

Intuitive Counselor, Spiritual Teacher

Radio Host, *The Jenn Royster Show*

<http://www.JennRoyster.com>

“Movies and metaphysics are magically intertwined in this guide that takes the reader on a theatrical journey with the author as he dissects pivotal films that have both shaped and described an era. Imagine sitting in a darkened projection room with someone I consider a ‘spiritual Roger Ebert’ as the images flow before you, beckoning you to step into the scenes and explore their meaning. Brent Marchant views movie as metaphor and offers the reader the invitation to become conscious creators, using the film content as more than entertainment, but, in addition, life-enhancing tools.”

—Edie Weinstein

Colorfully Creative Journalist,

Transformational Speaker,

Radio Host, *It’s All About Relationships*,

Author, *The Bliss Mistress Guide To Transforming*

The Ordinary Into the Extraordinary,

and Opti-Mystic who sees the world through the eyes of possibility—much like Brent

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I truly thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

INTRODUCTION

Coming Attractions

The Universe is made of stories, not of atoms.

—*Muriel Rukeyser*¹

I've always thought that line of poetry a lovely sentiment. But, if it were ever proven true, there would be an awful lot of disappointed quantum physicists on the unemployment line.

Still, as dubious as some might find this claim, there must be something to it. After all, stories, especially meaningful ones, are often referred to as *universal*, a word that itself appears in the name of one of today's largest film and entertainment companies.

So much for the atoms.

Ever since childhood, I have been fascinated by stories and storytelling, but I wanted more than just to read or hear the words. Becoming fully engrossed *within* a story was what I truly craved. In seeking to attain this personal Grail, I unwittingly found myself incredibly jealous of a most unlikely duo—the cheesy Claymation characters Gumby and Pokey. They had the enviable ability to walk through a book's cover and right into a story, experiencing it as a firsthand, three-dimensional manifestation, the kind of direct immersion that I eagerly sought. But, because I lacked their kind of interdimensional dexterity, I needed to find an acceptable alternative, and I did so—in the movies.

For me, the movies are the next best thing to walking into a story and wandering around in it as though in some kind of holographic wonderland. And, with ever-improving advances in cinematic technology, the experience has become that much more heightened over the years. We may not be able to duplicate the feats of the little clay man and his sidekick pony, but we're getting closer all the time.

Movies and I are old friends, going back almost as far as I can remember. One of the first films I saw that I recall vividly was the 1963 screwball comedy, “It’s a Mad Mad Mad Mad World.” This big-budget, all-star-cast production from director Stanley Kramer was a manic, off-the-wall tour de force that left viewers with aching bellies after 2½ hours of virtually nonstop laughs. But there was nothing lightweight about this picture, despite it being a comedy. This madcap farce was meaty. It filled and shook the gut. It had *substance*. And it served to set my personal cinematic standard. From that point on, I always looked for movies that were substantive in nature, regardless of the genre, be they comedies, dramas, adventures, thrillers, sci-fi or whatever. There would be no fluff or froth for me.

With age, my fascination with the movies continued to grow. I attended ever more of them and even began to write about them, first for my high school newspaper and then in college at Syracuse University as features and reviews editor for *The Daily Orange*. In later years, I also wrote occasional pieces about film for other publications and audiences. But, even though the main focus of my writing life went in other directions, my love of motion pictures never wavered. And, even though movies have changed a lot over the years, my standards for them have not; those substantive expectations have persisted to this day.

As I grew into adulthood, I began to develop a second fascination, a budding interest in what I’ll loosely term “alternative spirituality.” My interest in this arose from a basic desire—to understand the world and my place in it, a need that I’m sure most of us can relate to on some level. My traditional Episcopalian upbringing provided few meaningful answers in this regard, ultimately proving to be a largely unsatisfying experience. Nevertheless, despite such religious dissatisfaction, I always had a strong, if vague, spiritual sense, a belief that there had to be *something* behind this thing we collectively call existence. But what was it? Clearly, I needed a catalyst of some kind to jump-start my stalled spiritual engine. And, ironically, that catalyst came to me at, of all places, the movies.

With the release of the first installment in the original “Star Wars” series in 1977, I became instantly and utterly captivated by the film’s concept of “the Force,” the mysterious unifying field of

energy and consciousness that runs throughout the narrative's universe and connects all things within it. "*That*," I exclaimed upon my initial viewing, pointing at the screen and oblivious to the fact I'd dropped my Milk Duds, "is it! *That's* what I've been looking for!" It was one of those grand "Aha!" moments, the kind that happens rarely but satisfies so supremely. Now this is not to suggest that I suddenly began walking around worshipping Sir Alec Guinness or parroting the film's "May the Force be with you" mantra, but the movie's core metaphysical concept served as the necessary spark to ignite the fire of a much larger process that has continued to this day, the quest to fill my spiritual void with a spiritual vision.

With the flame lit, I began my search for answers in earnest. My journey brought me into contact with a diverse range of disciplines, including metaphysics, philosophy, psychology and even cutting-edge science. In the end, I settled on one that harmoniously combined them all—*conscious creation*. This philosophy and practice resonated with me profoundly, providing a set of principles and a game plan with which to conduct my life. It gave me the kind of meaningful metaphysical substance I had long been looking for. In finding it, I felt as though I had come home, rediscovering an innate aspect of myself that I had somehow forgotten.

By the mid-1990s, a number of new movies were being made that addressed conscious creation and related subjects in both fictional and documentary formats. Naturally, I was quite pleased about this, for my two loves had become entwined. My enjoyment of substantive film merged with my interest in conscious creation to create a passion for movies with meaning. But, at roughly the same time, I discovered something else equally amazing: The seeds of these ideas had been present in many of the pictures I'd been watching all of my life. The films' creators may not have been consciously aware that they were delving into such themes, nor were the concepts always fully developed, yet the germ of those notions was present nevertheless. At that point, I began looking back at many of the movies I'd watched before with a new set of eyes, viewing them from a different perspective, seeing them as artfully cloaked couriers of profound, insightful messages.

Such is the odyssey that brought me to this book, this exploration into the meshing of my two most ardent pursuits, cinema and

conscious creation. Its purpose is to serve as a guide to the films I consider most significant from a conscious creation perspective. So come join me in this adventure; I've saved you a seat.



Conscious creation principles have been around in various forms for a long time. The ancient art of alchemy, for instance, is one such example. More recently, the teachings found in movies like “The Secret” (2006), with its law of attraction principles (see Chapter 3), have put a contemporary spin on these ideas. But conscious creation received its most comprehensive treatment in the extensive and powerful writings of author and visionary Jane Roberts (1929-1984) and her noncorporeal channeled entity, Seth.² This unique collaboration, aided by Roberts’s husband, Robert Butts, produced volume upon volume of material on the subject, exploring it in all its aspects. Their works, which I recommend highly, provided the foundation of my conscious creation education.

The most fundamental concept of conscious creation is the idea that you create your own reality in conjunction with the power of All That Is (or God, Goddess, Source, the Universe, the Force or whatever other comparable term best suits you). At the risk of gross understatement, this is a *very* powerful notion. It’s a highly liberating philosophy whose only real limitations are those we set for ourselves. And, given the shortcomings of a restrictive theological upbringing, such as the one I experienced, it’s easy to see why these teachings hold so much appeal.

The driving forces in conscious creation are our thoughts and beliefs. As they arise from the formless inner world where they originate, they fuse with the power of All That Is and take shape as physically manifested creations. Everything around us thus becomes an outward reflection of our inner views. It’s a power we mostly take for granted (or are partially or wholly unaware of), but it’s truly awesome when considering the results it produces and the potential it makes possible.

There are probably some who find that concept a little difficult to accept. Some of the skepticism probably arises from a misinterpretation of how the process works, and author Ehryck Gilmore offers an excellent analogy to explain this. Upon hearing a typical

conscious creation statement like “thoughts become things,” one might be tempted to think of it in terms of the *Bewitched* school of manifestation—a little twitch of the lips and the envisioned object spontaneously appears out of thin air, accompanied by the ring of a bell.³ Now, it’s possible that the process can sometimes proceed with astonishing speed, but, since most of us have not yet developed the proficiency of a Samantha Stevens, there is generally a lag involved as the materialization unfolds, blossoming like the slowly opening petals of a fresh flower.

A more pragmatic view would be to think of the process this way: Look at how a building comes into being. It doesn’t instantaneously spring forth into physical existence as a fully finished structure; it originates as *an idea*, a noncorporeal belief in the mind of the architect that a physical construction can result from the assemblage of certain components to create a final product with particular aesthetic and functional attributes. This vision first manifests physically as drawings, then as a blueprint, then as a model, then as a construction site and so on until the building itself is complete. But, no matter how one looks at it, the structure’s point of origin—like anything else that becomes outwardly manifest—stems from the inner, nonphysical world. In the end, the originating thought truly does become the created thing.

The real trick in grasping this idea is to recognize (and remain aware) that it applies across the board, to *all* the elements that appear in our surroundings and in all of the events that transpire in our lives. Such is the inclusive and interconnected nature of conscious creation. Although this concept does take some getting used to, it’s an aspect that I find especially appealing, particularly in light of my theological background. The religious practices with which I was raised were often treated like a component of life all unto itself, disconnected from all other elements of daily living. Going to church on Sunday was like getting one’s weekly holy fix, an application of spiritual antiperspirant to safeguard against life’s trials, tribulations and embarrassing wetness till the following Sabbath. But I had considerable difficulty seeing how an arcane ritual performed one morning a week by officiators decked out in outfits that would make Liberace jealous related to how I lived my life on the other six days, especially because official explanations about its

relevance offered little, if any, meaningful clarification. Conscious creation teachings, however, showed me how the spirit of our consciousness and the power of All That Is are infused into everything we encounter in life and in all of its (*i.e.*, our) wondrous creations. If nothing else, it took my relationship to the divine and made it both personal and practical.

In line with that, then, if you accept the notion that you create your own reality, it also means that you create *all* of the reality surrounding you. It's not a salad bar; you can't pick and choose which items you create and which ones "just happen." You can't take credit for the glorious rainbow or the beautiful sunset without also taking credit for the toxic waste dump. That's why it's so important to understand your thoughts and beliefs, for they continually create the world around you, even if you're not always consciously aware of what they are or how they become expressed.

This also sheds light on the inherent personal responsibility associated with conscious creation; one cannot sleepwalk through the process, take it lightly or casually pawn off one's participation in it without running the risk of unwanted or unexpected results. (A number of cautionary tale films in this book help make that readily apparent.) But don't let this aspect of the process deter you. Conscious creation teachings are filled with guidance on how to navigate the sometimes-choppy waters and rocky shoals of the practice. Ample lessons on helpful tools and coping mechanisms are available, many of which are covered in this book.

This is not to suggest that conscious creation is all work and no play, either; quite the contrary, in fact. Once the rudiments of the process are mastered, vistas for adventure and creative expression open at every turn. The possibilities and probabilities of existence endlessly evolve, literally in each moment, with limitless potential for taking us and our individual worlds in new and different directions, "a constant state of becoming," as it's often called. Through this process, we thus have an opportunity to experience rich and rewarding journeys of ever-present wonder, replete with countless avenues for exploration and fulfillment.

Kind of like the movies, wouldn't you say?



Those who know me well can attest to the fact that I often cite lines or scenes from movies to make a point. I frequently can be heard saying things like, “You know, that reminds me of a scene from (insert movie title here),” at which juncture I’ll explain how the reference addresses my reasoning. As quirky or irritating as some may find this practice, I believe it’s an effective means for illustrating ideas, because it provides a tangible example of the concept in question. That’s particularly true where conscious creation is concerned, and that’s the point of this book.

Get the Picture arose from an article I wrote some years ago for *Reality Change* magazine.⁴ That article featured summaries of films that effectively portray conscious creation teachings, providing short analyses of the pictures with relevant quotes from the writings of Jane Roberts and Seth for elaboration. This book expands on that article’s premise by providing an outline of the rudiments of conscious creation, using movies as a means of illustration.

The chapter sequence is set up like a road map, designed to walk readers through the steps of the process, beginning at the point of unfamiliarity and culminating at the point of adeptness, if not outright proficiency. Each chapter opens with an introduction to a basic conscious creation concept, providing an overview of its essence and its pertinence to the overall process. That’s followed by five movie listings showing the concept at work. In some cases, the listings are combination entries (Double Features and even one Triple Feature), presenting pictures linked by common themes or other elements. All listings contain plot summaries and analyses of how the movies reflect the chapter concept in question. (Get the picture?!)

I have endeavored to avoid playing spoiler as much as possible. Although there may be hints at how the stories turn out (generally through the use of textual cliffhangers), I have done my level best to keep from blatantly divulging any endings. The only exceptions are entries involving biographies and pictures based on historical events, story lines in which the outcomes are already known and in the public record. Otherwise, though, I’m not telling; you’ll just have to see the pictures for yourself!

Each listing also includes credit information on principal cast members, directors, writers, year of U.S. domestic release and notations on major awards (Oscars,⁵ Golden Globes,⁶ the Cannes Film Festival and, in a few cases, Emmys⁷). Some listings are further accompanied by “Extra Credits” entries, brief summaries of movies covering related subjects, or by “Author’s Notebook” offerings, personal anecdotes about some of my experiences in seeing these movies, such as how they influenced my development as a conscious creator. And rounding out nearly every chapter is a “Bonus Features” section, presenting brief write-ups of other films that relate to the chapter’s theme.

There’s a logic to the order of the chapters that will become apparent as you make your way through the book. The concepts build upon one another, sometimes within a chapter and sometimes from one chapter to the next, showing how the different conscious creation principles fit together like pieces of a puzzle. To remind readers how those pieces relate to one another, there are frequent cross-references in the text. Due to the nature of this format, then, it probably wouldn’t be practical to treat this book like a catalog that one could casually peruse for selecting a movie to watch. The organization and contents of the listings don’t readily lend themselves to that. Instead, the book functions more like a cinematic syllabus, taking readers through a course on conscious creation as depicted through film. But worry not—there’s no midterm to prep for, and I promise to pass everyone.

The films that I’ve selected for each chapter are what I consider some of the best examples of cinematic portrayals of the conscious creation concepts involved. Some selections could easily have fit into more than one chapter, and good arguments could be made for organizing them differently, but I slotted them where I felt they could best explore and illustrate the ideas at hand. Also, as noted earlier, some of these pictures may not have been made with conscious creation principles in mind, but the ideas are present nevertheless. This isn’t meant to give them revisionist treatment; rather, it’s to show how good they are at portraying these particular notions, whether or not their creators intended them to do so.

With all that said, I’d like to add a few other comments about this book’s nature and its contents:

- * This is not an almanac of my all-time personal favorite films; that's not the intent of this book. Besides, some of my favorites wouldn't necessarily meet the qualifying criteria.
- * This book is not an encyclopedia of all the pictures with spiritual or metaphysical themes ever made. Other books like that already exist, so I'll leave them to do their job, since that's not what I'm striving for here.
- * Most of this book's movies are from within the past 50 years, covering releases up to 2006, when the first edition was written. In fact, many of the featured entries have been released within the last 15 to 20 years, the time when these subjects began finding wider acceptance in society at large and on the big screen in particular. Although there are some listings for older films, the majority come from within this time frame, because it's the period I feel most qualified commenting on.
- * I *like* all the movies in this book. Since I'm not fulfilling the role of a traditional film critic here, why would I devote space to pictures I don't like or wouldn't recommend? I include criticisms where warranted, but this is not a priority.
- * A few entries were originally made for broadcast or cable television. I believe relevant small-screen productions deserve recognition where pertinent, especially if they effectively portray conscious creation concepts.
- * Readers may notice a preference for sci-fi flicks. Because these pictures often feature story lines outside the box, they make ideal candidates for exploring metaphysical concepts of a comparable nature, the kind that the liberating principles of conscious creation make possible.
- * Some films will seem like obvious choices, while others will not. And others still may be conspicuous by their absence, probably because I didn't like them, even if they seemingly met the qualifying criteria (fans of "The Sixth Sense" (1999) and "The Matrix" series (1999, 2003)—you've been forewarned).
- * Certain types of movies are lacking almost entirely, mainly because there's little I like about them in general, let alone as candidates for this book. Some may think me cantankerous

or prejudicial for saying that, and I'd respond that everyone is entitled to his or her opinion—including me. Consequently, you'll find no Westerns (their testosterone-driven story lines rank about on par with professional wrestling), no horror flicks (their gratuitous, gore-dripping gimmickry makes me wish I'd skipped the concession stand on my way into the theater), and, with one exception, no musicals (most make me wish I'd been born heterosexual).

I'm so pleased you've decided to join me in this cinematic and spiritual journey. Our conscious exploration of existence, like the world of film, is a show that never ends, one that perpetually glows in the great shining darkness of the Universe as long as the light of consciousness—and the stories that emerge from it—continue to give it expression. Movies help us to see that and make the trip that much more enjoyable. So come inside—it's time to sit back, relax and enjoy the show!

1

IT'S JUST WHAT I WANTED— SORT OF

*Understanding—and Overcoming—
“Creation by Default”*

And you may ask yourself, “Well...how did I get here?”
—*The Talking Heads*¹

Most of us have no doubt asked ourselves the foregoing question from time to time. We find ourselves ensconced in relationships that aren't what we'd hoped for, jobs that don't suit us, or circumstances that feel uncomfortable or downright painful. We scratch our heads, wondering how we got where we are and, more importantly, how we might find our way out.

As noted in the Introduction, conscious creation is a process of directing our thoughts and beliefs, in conjunction with the power of All That Is, to manifest what appears in our surrounding reality. But what if we're not aware of what those thoughts and beliefs are in the first place? What's more, what if we're not aware of the existence of the larger process in which they play such a vital part? What happens then? To again quote the Talking Heads, we often find ourselves treading the waters of uncertainty, anguished and asking ourselves, “My God, what have I done?”²

Under these conditions, we engage in what I call “creation by default,” a practice that comes in two basic forms. The first, which

I call “*un-conscious creation*,” arises in two ways. In one, we create unwittingly, unaware that we’re even engaged in it, what beliefs are driving it, how those beliefs fuel the process or what the outcomes might be. In a sense, it’s like sleepwalking through life. We go about our daily routine, thinking little about it, until one day when we’re shocked to find a mountain of bills, a court summons for a paternity suit or an angry neighbor rushing at us with a shovel raised over his head. We wonder what brought all this about—that is, until we see a pile of credit card receipts, the long-lost girlfriend with her love child in tow or the dented fender of the neighbor’s car. We can’t help but ask ourselves, “Gosh, what was I thinking?” (Talk about a wake-up call.)

But, even if we’re aware of the creations we hope to manifest, we may nevertheless still be flying blind as we move through the process, and that’s what the second type of *un-conscious creation* shows us. By focusing exclusively on the desired results, without paying any attention to the consequences—or responsibilities—associated with the conscious creation path we’ve taken, we wind up operating obliviously, unaware of the beliefs driving the process or the metaphysical context in which they function. Even if the outcomes fulfill the general intent being sought, a host of unintended side effects could arise with them. An example would be that of a highly focused but ruthless corporate employee who claws his way to the top but ignores the trail of bodies he leaves in his wake and ends up surprised at the stack of lawsuits awaiting him upon his arrival in the executive suite. (And he thought board meetings were going to be tough.) It should be noted that the fruits of such creations aren’t always “bad”; in fact, they could be benign or even beneficial. But, in all of these instances, they are almost assuredly different from what was expected going in.

The second form of creation by default is a practice I call “*semi-conscious creation*,” and it also arises in two ways. In the first, we’re aware of the conscious creation process (at least to a certain degree) and the role that beliefs play in it, but there’s a catch: Although the results match the stated intent, they don’t necessarily take the *form* being sought. To show how it works, consider the following example: A motorist speeding down a highway is signaled to pull over by a patrolman. The driver doesn’t want a ticket and so races

off, trying to outrun the officer. In so doing, however, the speeder crashes through a guardrail and over a cliff, plunging to his demise. In this scenario, the driver successfully achieves the stated intent of avoiding a ticket, but I think it's safe to say the solution doesn't take the form he had in mind. (Honestly, the things they don't teach you in driver ed....)

In the second instance, we end up getting exactly what we want but don't realize it until after the fact. When this occurs, it usually arises from being so preoccupied with micromanaging the details of the creation process that we lose sight of the bigger picture we're striving toward and aren't aware of the finished product's manifestation until it's pointed out to us. It's as if there's a lag in our consciousness where it takes time for our awareness of the manifestation to catch up with the materialized result. Even though we get what we want, we might still feel like we're in a metaphysical fog, only semi-consciously aware that we've arrived at our goal. Think of how a beauty pageant contestant, Olympic athlete or Oscar winner often reacts immediately after achieving victory, and you'll get the idea here. (Thank goodness for those who are kind enough to point out our success for us when we can't see it for ourselves.)

With each form of creation by default, the results are perplexing, unsatisfactory, surprising or bewildering. To avoid this, we need to look at how to overcome the pitfalls inherent in it. The trick, of course, is to know how.



One of the best ways to prevail over this metaphysical challenge is to become more *consciously* aware of the creative process and the beliefs that power it, invoking it *with attention*, as author Irini Rockwell wrote.³ And becoming more attentive, to me, depends on developing a clear understanding of the nature and interaction of the two sources from which our beliefs arise—our intuition and intellect. These two elements supply us with information that we then use to form the beliefs that propel the conscious creation process. These forces collaborate to fuel a manifestation technique known as “the magical approach,” a concept first described in a book bearing the same title written by Jane Roberts and her noncorporeal channeled entity, Seth (see the Introduction).⁴ When the two magical approach

elements function in harmony, it's like watching a finely tuned engine firing on all cylinders. But, when they're out of balance, the conscious creation engine sputters and stalls, often making a trip to the metaphysical mechanic an absolute necessity.

To prevent such unwanted garage visits, let's take a look at each of the magical approach elements, starting with the intuition. According to Sharon Franquemont, life coach and author of *You Already Know What To Do*, intuition is like one of those inexplicable flashes of informative insight that seems to come to us from out of nowhere, with no solicitation of it on our part.⁵ Put another way, think of the intuition as our source of hunches or good, old-fashioned gut feelings. I've often found such intuitive impressions don't seem to make sense, but that's precisely when they should be heeded, for they're generally right on the money. Purposely ignoring them is definitely done at one's peril.

By contrast, the intellect is, seemingly at least, much more rational than the intuition. Consequently, given the prevailing logic-driven character of our world, it's also much more familiar to us, and we're much more comfortable with it. Intellect chiefly involves our capability to collect, assess and interpret the measurable information that crosses our path. It relies upon our storehouse of knowledge, wisdom and experience. It is also heavily influenced by perceptions that stem from the input of our five outer senses (more on the senses and perception in Chapter 2). It thus functions like an information-gathering and processing system, operating as an observational measure of physical reality, much the same way as the ship's sensors do aboard the *Starship Enterprise*. Intellect's aim is to place defined parameters on what surrounds us, quantifying to the greatest degree possible what might otherwise be difficult to assess meaningfully.

Striking a proper balance in the intuition/intellect mix isn't always easy, because there are no set formulas for this; one can't realistically say that the magical approach requires two parts intuition and a pinch of intellect. But there are ways of spotting when the mix is off. For instance, one element may be trying to squelch the impact of the other (usually the logical intellect trying to strong-arm the "irrational" intuition). Or the elements may be in open warfare with one another, which can lead to obviously poor decisions or

exaggerated outcomes. In either case, the imbalance is usually apparent with a modicum of scrutiny.

Perhaps the best way to look for a proper balance is simply to examine the results we get. When the mix is optimal, conscious creation seems to happen effortlessly, with desired outcomes readily accomplished. And, when the elements are *not* working together, the results generally resemble scenes out of Jerry Lewis movies. Balancing the components of the magical approach and placing the right mix at the front end of the conscious creation process greatly increase the likelihood of success.

Taking a critical look at how we employ the magical approach can help set the conscious creation process moving in the right direction. It can significantly assist us in avoiding the potential hazards of creation by default, simply because it helps to make conscious creation more “conscious.” But, until the sleepwalkers among us come fully awake from those long-standing slumbers, it might be wise to keep the fire extinguisher, bandages and life raft handy—just in case.



To help illustrate the ideas discussed above, I present a selection of movies in this Chapter examining different aspects of un-conscious and semi-conscious creation, with an emphasis on the application (or misapplication) of the magical approach. Regardless of the arena of creative expression involved in these films, the characters all grapple with issues of creation by default. In some cases, they may be unaware that a problem exists, because they're not aware that the process even exists or how beliefs play into it. In others, they blindly obsess over particular outcomes, disregarding any related consequences that arise. In others still, they experience the two magical approach forces at odds with each other but are unaware of how to resolve the conflict. Some have the creative intent right but miss the mark on resulting form, or they get exactly what they want without even realizing it. Or they experience all of this in some combination or another.

One might wonder why I've selected films that portray conscious creation missteps as a lead-off to explaining the process. Actually, the reason is simple: We often learn the most valuable lessons from the

blunders we make (or that we witness others make), especially when becoming familiar with a new subject. “Mistakes” (if there really is such a thing) can leave indelibly powerful impacts, showing us what we don’t want to repeat. Besides, we don’t run before first learning to walk, nor do we walk before first learning to crawl, and I believe the same principle applies here. Apprentice conscious creators would thus serve themselves well to begin at the beginning. But take heart, we’ll move into the meat of the matter soon enough.

I should add that I’m not faulting the characters in these movies for their conscious creation missteps. Goodness knows I’ve made more than my own fair share of them over the years. I’m merely pointing out what *can* happen as a means, one would hope, of avoiding them.

In the end, if you take away nothing else from this Chapter, I hope that you at least remember this—defaults are for computer settings, not conscious creation.

The *Really* Big Bang

“Fat Man and Little Boy”

Year of Release: 1989

*Principal Cast: Paul Newman, Dwight Schultz, Bonnie Bedelia,
John Cusack, Laura Dern, John C. McGinley, Natasha Richardson*

Director: Roland Joffé

Screenplay: Bruce Robinson and Roland Joffé

Story: Bruce Robinson

The ancient Egyptians believed in a primordial deity named Atum who was said to be the creator source of all existence. It must be sheer coincidence, then, that this god’s name bears such a striking resemblance to the word that we use, “atom,” to describe the fundamental building block of our known universe (Muriel Rukeyser’s poetry notwithstanding; see the Introduction). So it somehow seems strangely appropriate that a discussion of conscious creation in cinema would begin with a film in which the manipulation of that basic component of existence provides the story line’s foundation.

“Fat Man and Little Boy” chronicles the history of the Manhattan Project, the top secret U.S. government program responsible for

developing the atomic bomb during World War II. The film focuses primarily on the relationship of the Project's two principals: theoretical physicist Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967) (Dwight Schultz), who oversaw the scientific program, and General Leslie R. Groves (1896-1970) (Paul Newman), who managed the military and logistical aspects. The movie's strange title comes from the nicknames given to the two bombs used to end the war with Japan: Fat Man was the plutonium-based weapon dropped on Nagasaki, and Little Boy was the uranium-based bomb detonated over Hiroshima.

So what does a movie like this have to do with conscious creation? Quite a lot actually, especially when viewed in terms of creation by default. For starters, the protagonists, both in tandem and individually, repeatedly struggle to balance the magical approach elements as they bring their creations into being. But, even more significantly, they embark on this journey by traveling the slippery path of un-conscious creation right from the outset. Debates over the merits of the accomplishments of these characters' real-world counterparts have raged for over six decades, but one thing is for sure: Their creations drastically changed the reality of the world in ways that it had never known before.

The program's exploratory phase was hastily initiated in 1942 after intelligence sources learned the Germans were believed to be working on nuclear technology. Consequently, the United States desperately needed to play catch-up to win the arms development race. After Groves contacted Oppenheimer to lead the Project, the scientific team was assembled in spring 1943. The researchers were isolated in the New Mexico desert and charged with designing and building a never-before-created weapon on a tight deadline—19 months. Groves was in charge of seeing that they delivered as and when promised.

The fact that the Project moved forward at all, however, is indeed surprising, because it was led by two very different individuals. Despite the protagonists' common goal, their disparate temperaments as portrayed in the film⁶ often fueled a creatively tense power struggle between them, symbolic of the antagonism that sometimes exists between the magical approach elements. Groves, every bit a no-nonsense company man, symbolizes the intellect; he had the credentials, demeanor and discipline for getting big jobs organized

and accomplished, such as his oversight of the Pentagon's construction, his assignment before the Manhattan Project. Oppenheimer, by contrast, represents the intuition; he was a philosopher and free spirit whose blue-sky theories of physics put him out front as the best-qualified candidate to lead the scientific team into uncharted territory.

Theoretically, these two individuals represented their respective magical approach elements ably, but, because each sought to control the conscious creation process, tensions flared frequently, hampering the flow of manifestation, sometimes in volatile, unanticipated ways. Each also felt the other went too far sometimes, illustrating how the conscious creation mix can get out of balance. For example, in an attempt to keep the security lid clamped down tight, Groves sought to micromanage how the members of the scientific team collaborated, even in critical brainstorming sessions, much to Oppenheimer's dismay. Indeed, if ever there were a case of the intellect quashing the intuition's creative outflow, this was it. Oppenheimer responded with a compromise that extinguished the fire but left an uneasy truce between him and the general, who still felt compelled to look over his shoulder, even when he probably didn't need to, symbolically showing how the logical intellect often mistrusts the irrational intuition.

Keeping such undue interference at bay was critical, for the free flow of intuitive information was essential to the scientific team's work. Somewhat surprisingly, despite all of their expertise, Oppenheimer and company often operated in the dark. They weren't entirely clear how to solve certain logistical problems, nor were they even sure about what results they might ultimately achieve. Some feared, for example, that a nuclear chain reaction could be impossible to control once begun, potentially vaporizing the Earth's atmosphere. (Thank goodness their conscious creation skills didn't take them down *that* path.) So it was imperative that they keep their minds open to see where their intuition would lead them—and it took them to some pretty strange places indeed. One of the key challenges in detonation, for example, was allegedly solved through the inspiration provided by examining the spray pattern created by squeezing the juice out of an orange in the palm of one's hand.

While Oppenheimer's free-spirited nature helped him in many ways, it was something of a liability, too, especially when it came

to his politics. He did nothing to conceal his views, yet his open acquaintanceships with known Communists and other leftists made him a perceived security risk, despite his pledge of patriotism. Groves, ever the pragmatist, needed his mission accomplished, so he stuck with the best man for the job, albeit with some trepidation. But, if ever he needed to rein in the freewheeling scientist, he never hesitated. These circumstances again reinforce why the intellect often mistrusts the intuition.

The scientific team worked feverishly to produce “the gadget,” as it was cryptically called, while Groves tersely but emphatically barked out orders to keep the Project on schedule. And, despite their differences, Oppenheimer and Groves somehow managed to work together well enough to see the program advance, even if they weren’t aware of where it would ultimately take them. That would become apparent as the dynamics of the war changed.

By 1945, Allied military success in Europe made the need for the bomb seemingly less urgent, at least in the eyes of some of the scientists. By that time, however, the weapons development juggernaut had been infused with so much creative energy that it had practically taken on a life of its own, growing too big to control, especially once other players with various vested interests began contributing their energies to the unfolding drama. Trite though the metaphor might be, the nuclear genie was being let loose from the bottle, and there seemed to be little that could be done to stop it.

Although Oppenheimer generally agreed with the need to develop the device when the German nuclear program was a threat, he grew uneasy about the Project’s continuation as the war in Europe drew to a close. He had strong ethical reservations about deploying the bomb in European combat, seeing it as unnecessary in light of the Allies’ success with conventional forces. And, once the war with Germany concluded, he was strongly opposed to its use on the Japanese, since they did not possess comparable technology and were not seen as a nuclear threat. From a conscious creation standpoint, Oppenheimer was by that point struggling to manage his own employment of the magical approach. His intellect’s tempering influence was now trying to curtail his intuition’s previously unbridled creativity, but it was too late for it to have much impact by then. With added pressure being put on him by the government (through

various forms of harassment and increasingly intrusive surveillance, a move justified because of his politics), he relented and continued his work, despite his better judgment.

Groves, on the other hand, became ever more entrenched in his position. He was willing to turn a blind eye to the scientists' ethical objections. He saw the bomb as a means to justify the pressing issues the military had to contend with, such as "bringing the boys home" as quickly as possible, favorably scripting the post-war political and military game plan for eastern Asia in favor of America, and successfully delivering on a \$2 billion defense program (an astronomical price tag for the time) that taxpayers knew nothing about but could be seen as a military boondoggle if it provided no tangible payoff. Coming up with solutions for these very tangible considerations, in his mind, was far more significant than assuaging the seemingly overblown philosophical worries of a few lofty eggheads who now had second thoughts about their handiwork. However, in taking this approach, Groves only saw the short-term implications, inattentive to the long term or the bigger picture, an un-conscious creation stance if there ever was one. But he showed no hesitation about this, either, particularly in one scene in which he flatly demands of Oppenheimer, "You've just got one job, Doctor. Give me the bomb—just give it to me!"

In the end, the objective was achieved. Oppenheimer and Groves "succeeded" in their goal of finishing and deploying the gadget. They were hailed as heroes. But, because of it, the world was launched into a line of existence that drastically changed the global military and political landscape, with ramifications that have been felt ever since. But, then, such far-reaching changes should probably come as little surprise from the standpoint of creation by default, for, when tampering with something as basic as the fundamental building blocks of the Universe without thinking through the ramifications, there surely will be widespread unanticipated fallout to be addressed.

The film is a fine period piece, effectively re-creating the feel and flavor of 1940s wartime. The story is well told, not the easiest of feats given the need to cogently explain the complex scientific technology to a lay audience and the myriad historical and political elements of the complicated story line. The dialogue admittedly

could have been stronger in spots, and several distracting romantic subplots would have been better off eliminated, but these shortcomings don't detract significantly from the movie's overall quality. As for the performances, Newman turns in one of his more underrated efforts as Groves, though Schultz's sometimes-overzealous portrayal of Oppenheimer keeps viewers from seeing the more cerebral side of the famous physicist.

This film is an eloquent cautionary tale on the perils of creation by default. This point is perhaps most clearly driven home near the movie's end, when one of Oppenheimer's colleagues reveals secrets about the Project's Oak Ridge, Tennessee facility, one of two plants where the bombs' fissile material was being manufactured. When Oppenheimer learns what Oak Ridge is up to, he's distraught, reacting as if he'd been sucker punched, noticeably unnerved at how his work was on its way to becoming perverted.⁷ The unintended effects of un-conscious creation in this scenario had truly come to rule the day.

In light of what was to become of his creation in real life, it should come as no surprise that Oppenheimer reportedly said, on witnessing the first test detonation of his device in the New Mexico desert, he thought of a verse from the Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "...now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds."⁸ Through his remorse, however, glimmers of Oppenheimer's hopeful idealism also continued to glow. He saw the potential for the safe and peaceful use of the atom, a point specifically noted by his character in the film. So, with this in mind, it should likewise come as no surprise, then, that, in an alternate account of his reaction to the first test detonation, Oppenheimer was said to have expressed an entirely different sentiment, also from the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst at once into the sky, that would be like the splendor of the mighty one..."⁹

Extra Credits: Another film that tells essentially the same story, though entirely through metaphor, is the wildly popular action adventure, "Raiders of the Lost Ark." The movie follows the search for the long-lost biblical Ark of the Covenant, an ancient artifact said to carry "the power of God," an accurate if flowery description of the atom. All dramatics aside, however, the story line is really little more than a thinly veiled allegory about the race to develop the

atomic bomb. This point is made readily apparent by the fact that both the Germans and the Americans are searching for the item in question (and the Germans initially appear to have the edge in the search, too). (Sound familiar?) But the parallels don't stop there. The film's hero, archaeologist Dr. Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford), has a passionate yet thoughtful temperament not unlike his real-life physicist counterpart (he even wears a distinctive wide-brow hat not unlike the one often sported by Oppenheimer in historical photos). A great, rollicking thrill ride from start to finish. (1981; Harrison Ford, Karen Allen, Paul Freeman, Ronald Lacey, John Rhys-Davies, Denholm Elliott; Steven Spielberg, director; Lawrence Kasdan, screenplay; George Lucas and Philip Kaufman, story; four Oscar wins on eight nominations, one Special Achievement Award Oscar, one Golden Globe nomination)

Computers Don't Make Mistakes...

"Colossus: The Forbin Project"

Year of Release: 1970

Principal Cast: Eric Braeden, Susan Clark,

Gordon Pinsent, William Schallert

Director: Joseph Sargent

Screenplay: James Bridges

Book: D.F. Jones, Colossus

How many of you who have been around since the days before the personal computer remember the once-oft-used expression noted above? (For those younger readers who never heard it before, the full saying actually was "Computers don't make mistakes; people do.") Dated though the adage may now be, at one time it seemed like it was habitually trotted out in praise of the infallibility of these newfangled contraptions that virtually no one understood, whether such commendation was merited or not. Its use showed up seemingly everywhere, too, from human resources department memos about erroneous pay stub calculations to television sitcom lines that poked fun at the questionable reliability of this brave new technology. But the validity of this maxim perhaps got best put to the test in the 1970 thriller, "Colossus: The Forbin Project."

Skip ahead about 25 years from the end of the Manhattan Project: It's 1970, and the United States and the Soviet Union are entrenched in an ever-escalating nuclear arms race. The stakes are exceedingly high, with mutual annihilation available at arm's reach. It's difficult to fathom how the leaders of these two superpowers can function under such pressure. The responsibility of leadership seems almost too much to bear. And what if somebody were to make a mistake? One unintended blink, one minor slip-up, could beckon disaster and global devastation. Indeed, one could not help but wonder how long the world would be able to hold up under such circumstances without some kind of incident that would trigger the ultimate end game.

Such was the world at the height of the Cold War, an unrelenting geopolitical struggle that dragged on for nearly four tense decades, 40 years of always being one unfortunate error away from Armageddon. Somehow, in the 1980s and '90s, we figured out how to pull ourselves back from the brink. But, in the world of 1970, at the height of the conflict, that outcome seemed virtually unattainable—except in the world of fiction. And that's where this film comes in—an exploration into a way to end a conflict that had the potential to end the world.

In a fictional version of 1970 America, computer scientist Dr. Charles Forbin (Eric Braeden) develops technology to take the burden of decisions about waging war and peace off of the shoulders of U.S. leaders. His solution is Colossus, a supercomputer capable of making the big defense decisions that man might be unable to render in times of crisis, thereby theoretically eliminating the fallibility of the human factor when it could least be tolerated. Colossus is given *carte blanche* over such matters, and, to ensure its ultimate authority in these areas, the system is made tamper-proof by virtually eliminating any meaningful type of human access and input. But perhaps the most notable quality of the system is its programmed capability to learn, to “become smarter,” so that it can (theoretically at least) make better decisions.

When Colossus goes online, the accomplishment is heralded as one of mankind's all-time greatest achievements. However, the celebrations don't last long, especially once Colossus detects the existence of another system—one similar to it constructed by the

Soviets known as Guardian. In an attempt to fulfill its basic programming to both provide protection and to learn, Colossus asks for a communication linkup to Guardian to discover what the other system is all about. The computer scientists comply with the request, and, once linked, the two computers share data, eventually developing a new language—and a new mutual understanding—all their own. It's at that point when the real trouble begins. If knowledge is indeed power, the joined supercomputers are more formidable than any other force on the face of the planet. Before long, the slaves once created to serve their masters turn the tables, with the masters themselves now enslaved by their own creations.

I suppose one can't help but have some compassion for poor Dr. Forbin, who grows ever more frustrated as the film progresses. It's apparent he's clueless about the implications inherent in conscious creation, the impact of one's beliefs and the magical approach. His objective in creating Colossus was such an honorable one, an intuitively inspired vision aimed at providing peace of mind to an anxiety-ridden world. In a number of ways, though, he ends up engaged in some heavy-duty creation by default.

For example, in an irony of ironies, by designing Colossus as he does, Forbin attempts to birth an intuitively inspired creation that functions purely on the basis of intellect. But, in the language of conscious creation, at least in this instance, "that does not compute." The computer's "rational" brain is left to function without the involvement of the intuitive forces that shaped it in the first place, primarily to keep such "irrational" and "untrustworthy" elements from interfering with the computer's decision-making processes. To be sure, the rationale behind this parallels the Project's aforementioned objective of removing the human factor from the process of making such decisions in the first place. However, the elimination of such intuitive influences also deprives the computer of whatever benefits they may provide it. The magical approach is thus deliberately absent from the creation's "programming" right from the outset. Consequently, in making its decisions, Colossus reduces all its inputs to facts and figures and then arrives at solutions based purely on those inflexible measures. Feelings, emotions and other such human qualities go totally disregarded. Because of this, over time, the computer is fundamentally incapable of understanding those it was designed to

serve. It comes to *expect* those it serves (or, more precisely, those who now serve it) to respond and behave in kind. (After all, the computer reasons, Colossus would, so why shouldn't they?)

In an even greater irony, Colossus, the supposedly logical entity that it is, routinely employs "rational" solutions that defy the very meaning of the word. For example, to fulfill its programming for preserving life, Colossus doesn't hesitate to kill if it sees such actions as expedient. (And you thought computer viruses were bad.) It's essentially willing to violate its own programming by engaging in activities it was designed to prevent, all for the sake of bringing about results it was designed to fulfill. (There's a government program if I ever heard one.) Of course, this flawed thinking says something about its creator, too, for, if Colossus is *man's* creation, then it necessarily follows that the creation will also incorporate elements of man's beliefs, even those that he might wish to ignore or deny as his own. All of which shows why it's so supremely important to be aware of precisely what one's beliefs are when engaging in the conscious creation process.

As significant as these oversights are, though, Forbin makes three even more fundamental conscious creation errors. First, by putting the computer in charge of making strategic defense decisions, he believes he's taking the burden for such weighty calls out of human hands. This is akin to Forbin saying to Colossus, "We don't want to be bothered with this any more, so, now that I've created you, you handle it." But this action represents a complete abdication of conscious creation responsibility. The beliefs that drive this process and all of its resulting manifestations arise from the creator, *not* the creation. Forbin's attempts at such delegation are ultimately about as realistic as expecting one's car to be able to resolve challenges posed by traffic jams or freeway accidents.

Second, Forbin fails to see that Colossus continues to be his creation even after it has initially manifested. The conscious creation process doesn't end just because something has been made physical; a manifestation's ongoing presence shows the ongoing nature of the process itself. Forbin can never really give away responsibility for the kinds of decisions Colossus is designed to make, even if he wants to, because the computer—including the decisions it *appears* to make—are still projections of Forbin's own engagement in the

conscious creation process. The results continue to spring forth *from him*, even if he doesn't—or doesn't want to—recognize them as such.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, *Colossus* fails as an effective solution, because it's only a stopgap measure, one that ultimately does not deal with the underlying issue in question—ending the Cold War in the first place. If Forbin and his colleagues truly want the ramifications of that conflict gone, then they must create a solution that effectively tackles the cause of the problem, not just its symptoms. To do less is to come up short and, as is the case here, to usher in a whole new set of unanticipated problems. In many ways, the cure is worse than the disease; it's un-conscious creation run rampant. This, of course, raises an often-asked question in conscious creation, especially when things appear to go awry—“So why did you create what you did anyway?”

The outcome of this information age fable unmistakably illustrates the tremendous power inherent in conscious creation and the responsibilities that necessarily come with it. But, even more importantly, it shows the sense of reverence one would be wise to have for the process. To do otherwise would be to invite calamity, as these Cold Warriors ultimately do.

“*Colossus*” is a top-notch thriller from start to finish. The story is solid and credible, full of enough twists and turns to keep the viewer captivated throughout. The technological aspects are admittedly quite dated by now, but they were certainly cutting-edge for 1970 (try keeping a straight face when you hear the simulated computer voice speak for the first time). The performances are all capable, but they're secondary, since the computer is the real star of this show. Perhaps the film's only major drawback is an utterly silly sex sequence that was conveniently incorporated to move the plot along. Not only is it patently unbelievable, but it was likely included only because virtually all pictures being released at the time had to contain an obligatory sex scene, whether or not it was integral to the story (thank goodness the film industry has gotten *that* phase out of its system).

So is it true that computers don't make mistakes? I can't say for sure, but, after seeing this movie, I know one thing for certain—*people do*. But, then, that's part of being human and a part of the

learning curve involved in becoming an effective conscious creator. Maybe that's what Dr. Forbin's real project is all about after all.

Up the River

“Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse”

Year of Release: 1991

*Principal Cast: Francis Ford Coppola, Eleanor Coppola,
John Milius, George Lucas, Sam Bottoms, Albert Hall,
Frederic Forrest, Larry Fishburne, Martin Sheen,
Dennis Hopper, Marlon Brando, Robert Duvall
Directors: Fax Bahr and George Higgenlooper;
Eleanor Coppola (location footage)
Screenplay: Fax Bahr and George Higgenlooper*

In the late 1930s, a brash, inventive young filmmaker named Orson Welles attempted to make a movie version of the Joseph Conrad novella, *Heart of Darkness*. However, perceived logistical problems killed the project in preproduction, so Welles went on to direct a little picture called “Citizen Kane” (1941) instead. Thirty years later, another brash, inventive young filmmaker named Francis Ford Coppola wanted to attempt roughly the same project, only he sought to set the story in a different locale—Vietnam—and call it “Apocalypse Now.” Initial efforts to launch that endeavor also failed, so Coppola went on to direct two other movies, “The Godfather” (1972) and “The Godfather: Part II” (1974), both of which won Oscars for best picture. But, unlike his predecessor, who never revived the project for the screen, Coppola was undeterred in his plans. So, in 1976, armed with the artistic clout of his recent accomplishments and a pile of his own money, he proceeded with the project he had so passionately wanted to pursue for so long.

Little did he know what he was getting himself into.

The documentary “Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse” shows us just what Coppola was up against. On the surface, this superb chronicle uncompromisingly depicts the lengths to which an artist will go to create. And, by implication, it expertly illustrates how conscious creation unfolds from the mind of the creator, both when aware of it and when not, thereby providing

telling glimpses of both the un-conscious and semi-conscious forms of the process.

For those unfamiliar with the source material, *Heart of Darkness* tells the story of a ship captain who sails up an African river (presumably the Congo) in search of a mysterious ivory trader named Mr. Kurtz, who had taken it upon himself to “civilize” this remote region’s natives. While immersed in the wilds of the jungle, Kurtz reportedly succumbs to this exotic environment’s primal elements and goes insane. The ship captain was charged with investigating what happened.

When Welles attempted the project, it was seen as too massive an undertaking to control and keep from going over budget. Film plans were shelved, and Welles instead presented the story as part of his *Mercury Theater on the Air* radio show,¹⁰ excerpts of which are strategically incorporated as voice-overs throughout the narrative of this documentary.

As noted above, when Coppola initially sought to make his version of the story, he changed the locale from Africa to Vietnam. His take on the tale was to send a U.S. patrol boat up the Mekong River manned by a small military contingent. The crew was charged with investigating horrifying rumors about one of their own, a Colonel Kurtz, who had mysteriously disappeared into the wilds of the jungle just over the border in Cambodia. Intelligence information, scanty though it was, suggested Kurtz had taken military matters into his own hands, allegedly engaging in unspeakable acts of savagery, atrocities too brutal and grotesque even for this war.

On his first attempt to make the picture, Coppola wanted to function primarily as producer, intending to hire one of his protégés, an up-and-coming filmmaker named George Lucas, to direct the movie on location. But it was 1969, and the U.S. was still actively embroiled in the Vietnam War. Coppola couldn’t obtain financing for a project about a conflict as controversial and divisive as this, nor was Lucas particularly anxious to make a film in a live war zone, so the project was scrapped—for the time being.

In 1976, after U.S. involvement in the war ended, Coppola at last embarked on this long-awaited project, this time serving as director. Having compiled the necessary financial and creative resources, he was set to begin filming. Shooting was to take place in

the Philippines, given its topographical similarity to Vietnam, and the film was to star Harvey Keitel (later replaced by Martin Sheen), Marlon Brando, Robert Duvall, Frederic Forrest, Sam Bottoms, Albert Hall, Larry Fishburne and Dennis Hopper.

Everything seemed at last to be in place, but nothing could have been further from the truth. What was supposed to have been a 16-week shoot turned into a leviathan of more than 230 days of principal filming, not counting the downtime imposed by unforeseen delays, with a budget that swelled from a projected \$13 million to more than \$31 million (astronomical for the time). And, through it all, Coppola faced incessant challenges related to logistics, local politics, weather, financing, casting, scripting, self-imposed questions of artistic integrity, skeptical publicity and health (including his own), not to mention his very sanity.

“Hearts of Darkness” essentially grew out of a promotional film that Coppola’s wife, Eleanor, had been making during the shooting of “Apocalypse Now,” and she provides much of its voice-over narration. Intercut with her location footage are interviews with both Coppolas, Lucas, cast members, screenwriter John Milius and others, as well as clips from media reports and scenes from the finished movie (both in its original 1979 version and in its director’s cut edition, which was released subsequently in 2001). The result is nothing short of mesmerizing, almost as compelling as the film that it chronicles.

From a conscious creation perspective, this documentary gives us a look into the mind of a director struggling to make the magical approach work. His intuitionally inspired creative vision expands to become so massive that he can barely perceive the extent of its scope, let alone get a realistic handle on managing it. In fact, the project becomes so daunting that even Coppola’s own quite justified cries for help to the intellect to provide balance seem to go unheeded. What began as a fairly straightforward undertaking—the filming of a variation on an existing story—grew into an uncontrollable cinematic monster. The project ballooned from the simple retelling of a novella to a definitive, all-encompassing account of the war-time experience. Given the larger-than-life spectacle that was the Vietnam War, it’s nearly impossible to get a handle on the conflict, even in the limitless expansiveness of one’s own mind, let alone in

a finished piece of art with defined parameters. But that was the burden that Coppola saddled himself with, the creation of “the ultimate Vietnam film.”¹¹ This grand, but arguably vague, vision also thus became an exercise in un-conscious creation run amok. But, difficult though the task was, Coppola succeeded in reaching his goal. In fact, when the picture first screened at the 1979 Cannes Film Festival, Coppola stated in a press conference (excerpted at the documentary’s opening), “My film is not *a movie*; my film is not *about* Vietnam, it *is* Vietnam.”

In reaching that point, however, Coppola’s challenges were almost beyond comprehension, and they were all symptomatic of this runaway creative vision. In the area of casting, for example, the lead character of Captain Willard was initially to be portrayed by Harvey Keitel. After a week of shooting, though, Coppola could tell Keitel was not the right actor for the job and had to seek a replacement, whom he found in Martin Sheen. Later in the filming, however, the emotional and physical strain involved in playing his character caused Sheen to suffer a near-fatal heart attack, raising the prospect that the entire project might have to be abandoned. (It obviously wasn’t, but the incident necessitated Herculean rescheduling, another major obstacle for a film that seriously overran its projected timetable.) On top of all this, Coppola also had to contend with the challenges of a temperamental Marlon Brando, who arrived at the set vastly overweight and without having read the script’s source material to know how to play the deranged Colonel Kurtz, and a spaced-out Dennis Hopper, who could barely get the gist of Coppola’s direction for what he was supposed to do in any of his scenes.

Similarly, the movie was a logistical nightmare to film. To shoot a major combat scene, the most complicated cinematic sequence Coppola had ever attempted, the director required military helicopters to provide the look of realism. Since the U.S. military refused to cooperate in the making of this controversial film, Coppola negotiated a deal with embattled Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, who agreed to supply the aircraft as long as they weren’t needed to battle Communist rebels in the countryside, a looming threat to the extremist leader’s regime. But no sooner would shooting begin than the helicopters would get called away to fight the insurgents, leaving Coppola without the equipment needed to continue filming.

And so it went with virtually every aspect of production. This, of course, raised many an eyebrow in the press. The delays, cost overruns and ongoing production problems made many in the industry and the film-going public skeptical about the movie's future, prompting newspaper stories with headlines like "Apocalypse When?" The negative publicity was like fuel on the fire at this point. It all took quite a toll on Coppola personally, who eventually collapsed from fatigue, suffering a near meltdown.

Perhaps the greatest frustration, however, was the fact that the movie didn't have an ending as it was being shot. True, there was one in the original script, but Coppola disliked it; he felt it was incongruous with the rest of the story, so he had planned almost from the outset to come up with a new conclusion. Coppola believed something would come to him, so he put his faith in his intuition, a hallmark of his directorial style, as Lucas notes in one of his interview segments. However, Coppola's preoccupation with day-to-day logistical management, coupled with an overwhelming creative outflow that left him unable to articulate exactly what he wanted his film to say, put him in a position of grasping for ideas. Constant worries about being pretentious, derivative or self-indulgent plagued him as he attempted to rewrite a script already frayed at the edges and in danger of collapse. In the end, much of the concluding sequence consisted of intuitionally inspired improvisation, and it worked brilliantly, but it was pure torment to bring into being. And, in true semi-conscious creation fashion, he didn't fully realize what he had until after he went through it.

What's perhaps most fascinating about the making of "Apocalypse Now" from a conscious creation standpoint is how closely Coppola's personal odyssey paralleled that of his film's characters. If ever there were a prime example of art imitating life (and vice versa), this was it. The cinematic descent into hell that the movie's characters went through directly reflected the personal hell the director experienced in bringing their story to life. Coppola wasn't aware of this going in, but he found himself in the throes of it after he began, and he wasn't sure how to extricate himself from it. All he could do was ride it out. The outcome was an outstanding picture that won two Oscars on eight nominations, three Golden Globes on four nominations and the Cannes Film Festival's *Palme d'Or*, the event's

highest honor. But the creation by default process that he suffered through nearly cost him everything.

“Hearts of Darkness” expertly shows all of this. It is, perhaps, one of the best documentaries I have ever seen. Its unflinching dedication to authenticity is remarkable, even when portraying its principals in a less-than-flattering light. Its behind-the-scenes depth is a rare find indeed. The film first aired on television in the U.S. and, for its efforts, received two Emmy Awards on four nominations for outstanding editing and directing for informational programming. This documentary truly is a must-see for fans of the movie on which it is based.

The Roman dramatist and philosopher Seneca wrote, “There is no great genius without some touch of madness.”¹² The cast and crew of “Apocalypse Now” found out just how true that is, and the creators of “Hearts of Darkness” let us see that with unrestrained clarity. Or, as Coppola himself put it during the aforementioned Cannes press conference, “The way we made [the film] was very much like the way the Americans were in Vietnam. We were in the jungle, there were too many of us, we had access to too much money, too much equipment, and little by little we went insane.”

Building for the Future

“Under the Tuscan Sun”

Year of Release: 2003

*Principal Cast: Diane Lane, Sandra Oh, Lindsay Duncan,
Raoul Bova, Vincent Riotta, Pawel Szajda, Giulia Steigerwalt*

Director: Audrey Wells

Screenplay: Audrey Wells

Story: Audrey Wells

Book: Frances Mayes, Under the Tuscan Sun: At Home in Italy

Life can be strange at times. You go through the years, happy and content, thinking that everything is fine, when suddenly something comes along to knock you off your feet. Like an elephant on a rampage, such unexpected calamities can trample upon us, delivering debilitating blows and sending us scrambling for cover. But, after the initial stun, you pick yourself up, shake off the dust and start

moving forward again. You soon find that life is evolving far differently from the existence you once knew. You proceed cautiously, taking tentative steps into unfamiliar territory, quickly finding that those moves might seem strange but feel right. And, the more steps you take, the more you see how this aberrant repositioning actually works to your benefit. Before you know it, you're in a new life, nothing at all like the old one, but one that's just as—if not more—comfortable than your prior circumstances. Without being aware of it, you have built a new existence for yourself, and it's exactly what you wanted, even if you hadn't known that's what you desired before the process began. Such is the story that unfolds in the utterly charming comedy-drama, "Under the Tuscan Sun."

Imagine having your life turned upside down but then getting the chance to start all over again in an idyllic Italian villa. That's the opportunity afforded to Frances (Diane Lane), a middle-aged San Francisco book reviewer and aspiring author who suddenly finds herself alone after a bitter divorce. Our heroine's journey of self-discovery begins when her best friend, Patti (Sandra Oh), and her lesbian partner gift Frances with an all-expense-paid tour of Tuscany, a trip they're unable to take due to Patti's recent pregnancy. Frances initially resists, feeling she's not ready for such a big step, not to mention the fact that the excursion is an all-gay tour. But Patti pleads with Frances to take the plunge anyway (unlikely traveling companions notwithstanding). Patti offers a number of reasons why Frances should get away for a while, not the least of which is an opportunity to pursue her writing, to "listen to [her] inner voice." Stubbornly skeptical, Frances cynically replies, "My inner voice that would be saying 'What the fuck am I doing on a gay tour of Tuscany?'" But Frances eventually relents and decides to go. By doing this, she honors her intuition and takes the first of many steps toward embracing her new life.

Not long after her arrival in Italy, Frances becomes inexplicably enchanted by a country villa that has been put up for sale by an aging contessa. She feels compelled to buy the property, despite the fact that the estate is in dire need of major renovation and that she knows virtually nothing about the culture into which she would be immersing herself. But, again, Frances decides to follow her intuitive impulses and move ahead with the purchase, obstacles notwithstanding.

As time passes, Frances becomes more comfortable with her new surroundings. Of course, she gets ample help from a collection of local guides who help initiate her into her new life, including her real estate agent and good friend, Mr. Martini (Vincent Riotta); Katherine, a leggy, capricious, Fellini-esque muse (Lindsay Duncan); Pawel, a handsome and chivalrous young Polish émigré laborer (Pawel Szajda) and his adoring young Italian girlfriend, Chiara (Giulia Steigerwalt); and Marcello, a storybook Latin lover (Raoul Bova). They show Frances the joy that is Tuscany. But, even more than that, they remind her of the joy that is living.

As contented as Frances starts to become, however, she still faces a host of challenges, especially with the renovation work. While slogging through this seemingly never-ending task, she can't help but question what she's doing. In fact, in a moment of panic and frustration, Frances goes so far as to step back and question her decision, demonstrably observing that she's "bought a home for a life [she doesn't] even have!" It's at this point when Mr. Martini tells Frances a story that proves integral to her transformation. He explains how a set of train tracks crossing the Alps from Vienna to Venice was built before there were ever any plans to run a train line over that route. The builders, he says, were called crazy, but they built the tracks anyway, because they *knew* one day the trains would come—as eventually they did. Mr. Martini compares Frances's efforts with renovating her home—and herself—to those of the track layers, that she's building a home—and a life—that she doesn't have now but that will one day come.

Watching Frances's reaction to the story speaks volumes; you can practically see the lightbulb going off above her head when she realizes what her good friend is trying to tell her. She envisions possibilities. She dreams dreams. She understands that there's a process making such materializations happen. And so things start to become eminently clear to her about where her life is headed, what she hopes to achieve, and what she wants for herself in the days and years ahead.

It's incredibly gratifying as a conscious creator to witness Frances in this scene—one of the best in Lane's Golden Globe-nominated performance—for she literally starts to come awake. She may not be a fully proficient conscious creation practitioner as yet, but she is definitely on the right path, having come a long way from the

start of the film, when she was heavily shrouded under the veil of un-conscious creation. At this juncture, she could probably be best described as a semi-conscious creator, still in need of refining her manifestation skills, because form doesn't always follow intent. But lessons aimed at addressing these considerations unfold in subsequent scenes, taking our leading lady ever closer to realizing her full potential as a master of the art. Indeed, one can't help but begin to wonder that one day she just might get exactly what she wants.

The parallels between Frances's reconstruction of her home and of herself are especially poignant. Many dream interpretation texts suggest that, when we dream about a residence, we're actually dreaming about a projected image of ourselves. That is plainly the case here, only it's not occurring in a dream but in waking consciousness, a prime example of how the consciously created world around us is a reflection of our beliefs and inner state of mind. Some of the specific renovation acts that Frances undertakes in connection with her home symbolize similar kinds of renovations that she's performing on herself. When she explores uncharted areas of the villa, for example, she discovers it contains items she didn't know existed, just the same as when she explores unvisited areas of her own psyche. When she knocks down walls to create a different floor plan for the estate, she also symbolically breaks down some of her own internal walls to create a new life plan for herself. The symbolic symmetry between the two images is illustrated superbly over and over again throughout the film, coming across like an exquisitely illustrated textbook on the subject, presented in a beautifully filmed, eloquently explained cinematic format.

Frances's deft use of the magical approach is also abundantly apparent in this film. She's initially a little slow to follow her intuitive impulses, but she eventually does, coming to trust them, no matter how strange they may seem. And, along the way, she wisely asks questions and seeks advice from others who know more than she does about the tangible aspects of the various challenges that present themselves, an effective means to obtain clarification about, and verification for, the decisions she is about to make. This illustrates very judicious use of the intellect; she recognizes the need to gather such real-world information to properly discern the logistical aspects of her circumstances, but she never lets logic and reason

overtake the conscious creation process. Indeed, Frances skillfully blends the input of the intellect with that of the intuition so that the two work in concert beautifully, a highly adept manner of employing the magical approach.

“Under the Tuscan Sun” is itself a magical film in every sense of the word. It satisfies on so many levels, leaving the viewer wishing for more, even at the movie’s end. The excellent ensemble cast delivers consistently, as do Audrey Wells’s screen story and screenplay, both of which are loosely based on author Frances Mayes’s memoir. The real star of this production, though, is Tuscany itself, which is captured in all its glory by Geoffrey Simpson’s gorgeous cinematography. It’s easy to come away from this picture rhetorically asking oneself, “Who wouldn’t want to live there?”

Some have characterized this movie as a romance, but I find that label too restrictive. Rather, I like to think of it as a film for anyone who is romantic about life itself and all the joys it brings us in its various and sundry ways. Anyone looking for that kind of love will find this picture quite seductive.

So, the next time you feel yourself being swallowed up by one of life’s unanticipated maelstroms, go rent this movie. It may be just what you need to help you get your life back on track. And, before you know it, the trains will come along, too.

Dance Away the Heartache

“The Turning Point”

Year of Release: 1977

*Principal Cast: Shirley MacLaine, Anne Bancroft,
Mikhail Baryshnikov, Leslie Browne, Tom Skerritt,
Martha Scott, James Mitchell, Daniel Levans,
Alexandra Danilova, Antoinette Sibley, Starr Dantias,
Lisa Lucas, Phillip Saunders, Anthony Zerbe,
artists of the American Ballet Theatre*

Director: Herbert Ross

Screenplay: Arthur Laurents

Whether or not we’re always aware of it, we’re all performers in the great cosmic dance. Metaphorically speaking, some of us may do a

simple two-step, while others engage in a more intricate waltz or fox-trot. And those who are truly proficient partake in the art's grandest form, the ballet. Of course, none of us can take a single step without first participating in the requisite "dance lessons," a learning process that, in actuality, continues throughout life. These lessons become particularly crucial at certain critical junctures, challenges that all of the dancers—both literal and symbolic—find out when gracing their respective stages in the engaging drama, "The Turning Point."

Two decades after they last performed together, a pair of one-time aspiring ballerinas, Deedee (Shirley MacLaine) and Emma (Anne Bancroft), meet for a midlife reunion. Despite their common past, they each ultimately pursued separate paths: Deedee chose to marry a fellow dancer, Wayne (Tom Skerritt), and raise a family, while Emma went on to stardom and the solitary life that such a focused career often demands. Although each of them seems reasonably content with the lives they've chosen, they also can't help but wonder what might have been.

For Deedee, such speculation comes through loud and clear during one of her reminiscences with Emma about a role in *Anna Karenina* that they both had been vying for years earlier, a part that Emma eventually won. In reminding Deedee why she didn't land the role, Emma says, "You got pregnant," to which Deedee replies, with a touch of both envy and ennui, "And you got 19 curtain calls." Emma, meanwhile, quietly ponders what it might have been like to get married and have children, especially when she sees the joy that family life has brought to her friend and former rival.

With that setup in place, their exploration into where the grass truly is greenest thus begins. The tension between the two is palpable, to say the least, but the heat gets turned up more than a few notches when Deedee and Emma must confront their unfulfilled aspirations through the reflection provided them by a very conspicuous mirror, Deedee's daughter (and Emma's goddaughter), Emilia (Leslie Browne), an upcoming dancer on the verge of her own stardom. Emilia's on- and offstage experiences provide her elders with echoes of their own pasts, which forces them to look at what they did (and didn't) create for themselves—and why.

This touching and bittersweet tale offers an intensive examination of creation by default. From what they say, both Deedee and

Emma would lead us to believe that they were practicing un-conscious creation, that “things just happened.” However, as the film progresses, they grow ever more aware that such is not the case. They begin to become conscious of the beliefs that drove their creations. What’s more, they also start to become aware that they realized their motivations as those events unfolded, even if they had chosen *not* to acknowledge them at the time. From this new understanding, they eventually come to discover that they each got exactly what they wanted in the first place, but they must go through considerable angst and catharsis to come to terms with that realization, a difficult lesson in semi-conscious creation, to be sure.

Going through an evaluation process like this carries a number of significant implications for these characters and, by way of their example, for us as viewers. Perhaps the most important of these is owning up to one’s creations and the responsibility that entails. Although they may not have consciously avowed their creations as such as they materialized, Deedee and Emma were keenly aware of them—and what brought them into being—even if not acknowledged until well after the fact. Because of this, they come to understand that they can’t realistically hide behind a convenient shield of un-conscious creation, especially since each of them assuredly knows better, even if they haven’t admitted such cognizance to each other (or even to themselves). They have to take ownership of their manifestations, whether they like it or not.

In line with this, such an evaluation also raises issues related to victimhood and the reliance we sometimes place on it when we try to distance ourselves from what we think of as ill-conceived creations or when we feel sorry for ourselves over unrealized, hoped-for aspirations. Because it becomes evident that Deedee and Emma knew what they had been doing, they can’t credibly retreat behind excuses like “I didn’t have a choice” or “Things happened outside of my control” for *not* creating their lives differently. Those explanations simply won’t wash here, and Deedee and Emma have to come to terms with that, no matter how difficult, humbling or uncomfortable that might be for them.

Carrying these ideas further, this type of examination thus forces the protagonists to take a critical look at themselves—who they really are, what beliefs spark their creations and how they feel about

all that. This turns out to be an often-painful process for Deedee and Emma, two individuals who were simultaneously good friends and fierce competitors, a volatile mix of qualities indeed. Reconciling their feelings for themselves about this potentially combustible combination of traits—and how they once allowed it, and continue to allow it, to impact their relationship—is a dicey challenge for sure, one that sometimes makes traversing a tightrope seem like a cakewalk by comparison.

As all of the preceding soul-searching transpires, Deedee and Emma also have a glorious opportunity to verify their satisfaction with the choices they've made, to joyfully validate for themselves the lives they've led. So often, we go through life with nagging regrets or unresolved speculations that can gnaw at us for decades. Yet the leads in this film have the chance to see that maybe regrets really aren't all they're cracked up to be in the first place, that maybe the grass is greenest on *this* side of the fence after all. As difficult as going through that process might be, it's ultimately very healthy, especially if we come to realize that the manifestations we've created were the ones we were supposed to bring forth from the outset. Such after-the-fact awareness may still represent creation by default (as a form of semi-conscious creation), but, if the analysis endorses our personal satisfaction with our creations, that's truly icing on the cake.

Meanwhile, the experiences of Emilia are fascinating to watch as she faces choices similar to those that Deedee and Emma once addressed. Should she create a life devoted exclusively to her art, as her godmother did? Or is romance a more fulfilling option, following the example of her mother? Or maybe Emilia can integrate both into her life, an option different from both of her elders and a possibility that becomes more tempting as she grows smitten with Yuri (Mikhail Baryshnikov), a handsome young Russian ballet star. Perhaps having the example of those who followed both paths—and who are now engaged in critical evaluations of paths taken and not taken—is an advantage for Emilia as she tries to create a rewarding life for herself.

An asset decidedly in Emilia's favor is her ability to skillfully work the magical approach. She follows her intuition faithfully and yet takes prudent, practical, intellect-inspired steps as needed. Her proficiency in this technique suggests a wisdom and maturity

beyond her years. This is not to suggest that everything in her life flows smoothly, but she seems to have a good grasp of this conscious creation strategy, especially as she sorts out her opportunities.

“The Turning Point” is a rich, engaging movie in many respects. In addition to its profound and moving story line, it’s a visual feast for dance lovers. Ballet sequences are generously scattered throughout, brilliantly performed and beautifully photographed. The script also reveals much about the behind-the-scenes workings of the dance world, which sometimes has an ugly side equal in caliber to its onstage grandeur. Various other subplots involving an array of colorful characters weave seamlessly into the main story, providing additional insight and perspective about the lives and worlds of the protagonists and their peers.

The film was lavishly showered with praise at the time of its release, earning 11 Academy Award nominations. In addition to bids for best picture, director and original screenplay, the movie deservedly earned acting nods for MacLaine, Bancroft and Baryshnikov, as well as for Browne (though it *had* to have been for her dancing). Unfortunately, the film went home empty-handed on Oscar night, though it had previously won two Golden Globes, including best dramatic picture, on six nominations.

The drama that is life (or, more precisely, the drama that we often make out of it) can seem stressful and overwhelming as we go through it, but sometimes it’s necessary to our growth and to show us things about ourselves and our lives that we might not be able to see otherwise. Once we have such awareness, however, we also come to realize that such drama is no longer as necessary, that we can respond to our challenges and opportunities in different ways—ones that don’t involve such emotional upheavals. By simply coming to know ourselves better, we might be able to treat once-difficult situations in entirely new ways, ones that are less painful, more fulfilling and even more joyful. We may indeed be able to approach these situations by following the advice of the pop band Roxy Music and simply “dance away the heartache, dance away the tears.”¹³

Bonus Features

Un-conscious Creation Films:

“The Fountainhead”: An innovative, integrity-driven architect (Gary Cooper) creates designs that are brilliant but that few people want to build, because they are seen as too revolutionary. Eventually, however, courageous patrons step forward to support him, and his creations gradually materialize. Over time, though, success and an unwavering devotion to his vision cloud his judgment, leading him to extremes in seeing his plans realized. An excellent study on properly balancing the elements of the magical approach and the consequences that failure—and success—can bring in managing one’s conscious creation practices. (1949; Gary Cooper, Patricia Neal, Raymond Massey, Robert Douglas, Kent Smith; King Vidor, director; Ayn Rand, screenplay; Ayn Rand, book, *The Fountainhead*)

“Gallipoli”: An aspiring sprinter (Mark Lee) who creates magic with his feet can’t help but give in to his compulsion to go off and fight in World War I, thinking it’s the best venue to put his talents to use, serving as a field courier. His best friend (Mel Gibson) tags along to try to steer him out of harm’s way. Gripping battlefront drama ensues as the characters—in tandem and individually—seek to find the right mix of intuition and intellect to help them direct their lives. (1981; Mel Gibson, Mark Lee, Robert Grubb, Tim McKenzie, David Argue, Bill Kerr, Bill Hunter; Peter Weir, director; David Williamson, screenplay; Peter Weir, story; Ernest Raymond, book, *Tell England* (uncredited); one Golden Globe nomination)

“Zardoz”: A group of elite scientists and scholars in a dying world learn how to overcome death and thus seal themselves in pristine sanctuaries designed to preserve humanity until a better time. But immortality carries a cost; even having all the time in the world can’t solve certain problems, particularly creations that stem from faulty beliefs in the first place. The situation becomes that much more complicated when an unexpected bringer of death (Sean Connery) arrives to change things. Whacked-out, satirical sci-fi at its best. (1974; Sean Connery, Charlotte Rampling, Sara Kestelman, John Alderton, Niall Buggy; John Boorman, director; John Boorman, screenplay)

Semi-conscious Creation Films:

“The Last Temptation of Christ”: If the Lord works/co-creates in mysterious ways, His star pupil, Jesus Christ (Willem Dafoe), finds out just how true that is. In struggling to bring forth his messages of love, compassion, brotherhood and salvation into the world, the sometimes-reluctant prophet learns valuable lessons in conscious creation—ones that help him realize his goals, even if in unexpected ways. (1988; Willem Dafoe, Harvey Keitel, Verna Bloom, Barbara Hershey, David Bowie, Harry Dean Stanton, Victor Argo, Andre Gregory, Juliette Caton; Martin Scorsese, director; Paul Schrader, screenplay; Nikos Kazantzakis, book, *The Last Temptation of Christ*; one Oscar nomination, two Golden Globe nominations)

“Howards End”: The dying wishes of a kindly matron (Vanessa Redgrave) seek expression through conscious creation. Her focused intentions wend their way into and through the intricate, interlocking relationships of three early 20th Century London families. Hoped-for materializations struggle for fulfillment, particularly against the consternation of those who would try to steer events in other directions. Elegant, masterful filmmaking in all respects. (1992; Vanessa Redgrave, Emma Thompson (Oscar and Golden Globe winner), Helena Bonham Carter, Anthony Hopkins, Samuel West, James Wilby, Adrian Ross Magenty, Nicola Duffett; James Ivory, director; Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, screenplay (Oscar winner); E.M. Forster, book, *Howards End*; three Oscar wins on nine nominations, one Golden Globe win on four nominations, Anniversary Prize winner and *Palme d’Or* nominee, Cannes Film Festival)

“Apollo 13”: An ill-fated moon mission doesn’t go as planned, but it provides a valuable learning opportunity for all involved, both technically and personally. An excellent account of how what could have been one of America’s worst space program tragedies turned into one of its finest hours. (1995; Tom Hanks, Bill Paxton, Kevin Bacon, Gary Sinise, Ed Harris, Kathleen Quinlan; Ron Howard, director; William Broyles Jr. and Al Reinert, screenplay; Jim Lovell and Jeffrey Kluger, book, *Lost Moon*; two Oscar wins on nine nominations, four Golden Globe nominations)

2

PERCEPTION IS EVERYTHING, ISN'T IT?

*When What We Think We Know
Doesn't Match What We Perceive*

Soon your inner transformation becomes reflected in everything that surrounds you.

—*Kathleen Vande Kieft*¹

Picture three people sitting in a 68° room. One gently tamps away tiny beads of sweat from his brow and complains about how warm it is, while another shivers slightly and harrumphs about getting the fur out of storage. The third, meanwhile, insists the temperature is perfect and silently muses about whether his cohorts are exaggerating, getting sick or becoming delusional.

So, at the risk of the inevitable three bears analogy, is this room too hot, too cold or just right? If perception is everything in assessing reality, then whose reaction is the “correct” one?

It's certainly puzzling how three people could have such different responses to the temperature, a quality of the room's environment assumed to be uniform and easily verifiable with an ordinary thermometer. Yet instances of variation like this occur all the time, in all kinds of contexts. I'm reminded of one that happened to me some time ago. One of my hobbies is nature photography, and I often give framed enlargements as presents. One year, I gifted a friend for her

birthday with a close-up of a dew-soaked rose that I took at British Columbia's Butchart Gardens. "My, what a lovely shade of pink!" she exclaimed. "Pink?" I replied. "That's not pink, it's light orange, like a Creamsicle," I said, somewhat miffed. "Nonsense," she snorted, insisting that I was dreadfully mistaken and claiming that the flower was indeed coral pink. I, of course, thought she needed her eyes examined.

Again, who's right?

The foregoing anecdotes aptly illustrate varying differences in sensory perception. Granted, the variations in these cases are minor and, to most of us, would likely be insignificant. But the perceptions are definitely not identical, either, and one can't help wonder why that's so, especially if both examples supposedly involve the assessment of objectively measurable criteria. In short, there just shouldn't be any disparity, should there?

Arriving at this conclusion requires reliance on a very big assumption—a belief that we all perceive reality in *exactly* the same way. But do we? And, if we do, how do we reconcile that notion with conscious creation, a philosophy that asserts we each create (and, by extension, *perceive*) reality in our own way?

If the items in the preceding instances truly were identical, there would be no noticeable differences in their intrinsic qualities; subjective perceptions of them simply wouldn't exist, because there would be no variations to perceive! Of course, such inherent uniformity would also nullify the argument in favor of conscious creation, for the kinds of observable distinctions that it makes possible would be patently impossible.

In my view, differences in perception, even if miniscule, actually make an eloquent case *for* conscious creation. If we each manifest our own existence, then naturally there would be variations in what we perceive; they would come with the territory. Even though there may be general agreement among us that we are observing roughly the same things, the specific discrepancies we each sense reflect the particular beliefs that we employ in creating our individual realities. The minor differences in the above examples are likely based on beliefs that simply mirror personal preferences, but they're beliefs nonetheless.

To paraphrase this Chapter's opening quote, our inner selves really *do* become reflected in everything that surrounds us, and our

perceptions verify that for us with startling accuracy, down to the subtlest of nuances. The question is, however, do we truly understand (and trust) everything our perceptions are trying to tell us (such as how our outer realities reflect our inner states of mind), or do we treat them as mere observational measures of surface qualities? How we answer that will shed light on the value we place on them and how we make use of them as conscious creators. Superficial perception might be everything to some, but, to others, it may be just a starting point, the proverbial tip of a gargantuan iceberg.



Most of us tend to take the perceptions of our five outer senses as gospel truth, objective evidence of what's around us. But, if what we *actually* perceive doesn't jibe with what we *think* we perceive (or are supposed to perceive), the almighty sensory gospel suddenly seems suspect. For instance, why does the 68° room, which normally feels fine, suddenly seem chilly? Disconnects like this can be disorienting; they might even cause us to wonder, if we can't trust our senses to accurately depict our world, what *can* we count on? At the same time, if we look closely enough, we might see that a variance in something like temperature sensitivity could be trying to alert us to important information, such as the onset of illness and the need to attend to our health. Whether we pick up on the message of that perception, however, depends on how thoroughly we examine and understand it. If we dismiss it too easily, the ramifications could be unpleasant.

What may be even more distressing to those of us locked into sensory tunnel vision is what happens when our perceptions vary from those of others. Small discrepancies in how we feel temperature or view color could be dismissed as annoying nuisances, but suppose our perceptual variances are greater in magnitude; we might feel seriously out of synch with those around us. For instance, it would be strange, if not downright scary, if I were the only one having a significantly different sensory experience from everyone else around me, such as seeing a grotesque green apparition hovering near the ceiling. Incidents like that, freaky though they are, nevertheless raise many relevant questions about what we perceive and why we perceive it in the ways that we do.

But, even under circumstances as bizarre as this, someone adept at analyzing observations (and keeping a cool head!) might be able to cut through the surface qualities to see what intended meaning lies underneath. In this case, since I'm the only one perceiving the image, perhaps it's trying to tell me that it has information pertinent to me alone. If I've been up for 72 hours, for example, the appearance of something as whacked out as this may be trying to tell me I desperately need sleep, that continued deprivation would be unwise. Others around me would not sense this image, for the message is not intended for them (especially if they're properly rested). Whether I see this for what it is, however, again depends on how well I'm able to assess the perception's true nature.

To properly analyze the meanings of our observations (especially those that baffle us), we need to dig deeper than just the raw data provided by sensory input. We must look at what's *behind* them—namely, the beliefs and intents that shape them. If we do so, we should be able to see that our perceptions faithfully provide tangible feedback of what we're genuinely thinking, feeling and creating, as the above examples illustrate. Once we realize that, we should also be able to more fully embrace them for what they are—true measures of our own individual realities.

Unfortunately, some of us never take that plunge. Instead, we stay stuck at the appearances level, believing that sensory perceptions only provide surface information and that they necessarily must be identical for everyone. And we can get ourselves into serious trouble if those expectations aren't met.



The first and perhaps most vital step in analyzing our perceptions is to become comfortable with the idea that variations in them indeed exist among us, that it's OK to see something in a different light from someone else. Since they are our own creations, we should trust them, too, no matter how much they vary from typical expectations, how outlandish they seem or how widely they differ from those of others. But, as simple as that sounds, it's often easier said than done.

I suspect we're sometimes hesitant to flex our perceptual independence muscles because we're afraid that doing so might

shock our peers or, worse yet, offend the powers-that-be in heavily entrenched institutions, such as traditional science or mainstream religion. Mind you, there's nothing inherently wrong with these institutions, but the ways we've handled our relationships with them have caused problems for some of us, mainly by giving them too much power to define what constitutes an acceptable interpretation of reality, including our impressions of it. And, since both demand strict conformity from their constituents, it's no wonder that we might be reluctant to express truthfully what our observations tell us, particularly if they don't comply with established standards.

Moreover, these institutions are heavily invested in rigid rational structures, like the intellect and dogma, and dismissive of more intangible influences, like the intuition and personal spirituality, which are seen as too irrational to be properly trusted. In adopting this position, however, they have willingly endorsed a superficial approach to assessing perceptions that purposely marginalizes influences capable of providing significant insights into understanding underlying beliefs. Restricting the analysis process to the surface level is like trying to practice the magical approach by using the intellect alone and intentionally cutting out the intuition's input. The results in either case are sure to be half-baked at best.

Still, for many of us, it's simply easier to follow the dictates of those institutions when it comes to matters of perception. Besides, plying one's own course can be a scary prospect. Author Caroline Myss addresses this point repeatedly in her excellent audio course, "Energy Anatomy,"² wherein she speaks of the severe disapproval such institutions ("tribes" as she calls them) can inflict on individuals who have the audacity to suggest the emperor wears no clothes. I believe the members of these collectives fear such bold moves, for they set an example that they will one day have to follow themselves. Such forays into uncharted territory are terrifying, making it imperative to keep "renegades" in line. So, when would-be mavericks face a threat like that, saving their own necks would seem the most prudent course.

The second step, as hinted at in the previous examples, is to examine and embrace our perceptions as thoroughly and as honestly as possible, no matter how out of step they might make us feel. As challenging as that can be, however, there are many rewards that

come with it. For example, heightened awareness of the true nature of our perceptions could help us make fuller use of our intuition. If we realize that they are being shaped by more than just sensory and intellectual input, we can tap into our intuition more effectively. This allows us to better understand *exactly* what we're sensing and the beliefs behind that, because our perceptions will appear more fully "in-formed," showing us all of the influences contributing to their coalescence. What's more, enhanced use of the intuition would also enable us to employ the magical approach more skillfully, allowing us to become more proficient conscious creators.

Such enhanced astuteness can also help us better grasp the gravity of many of the situations we face in ways not before possible. For instance, it may help us avoid unsuitable behavioral responses to what we perceive; we might be less inclined to resort to judgment and prejudice, for example, if they're seen as inappropriate. On the flip side, it would also raise awareness about more appropriate responses that we previously underused or hadn't considered; such qualities as compassion and forgiveness could potentially be major beneficiaries of this. Our ability to sniff out deception (and self-deception) might be greatly enhanced, too, keeping us from making or repeating costly errors.

The films in this Chapter show us that perception isn't the superficial practice we often treat it as. They challenge their characters—and audiences—to look at themselves and their situations more critically, to see *why* they've created what they have. The insights gleaned from such introspection can significantly influence their (and our) responses to the opportunities their circumstances afford.

For the characters in these films, their inner realities truly are reflected outwardly in the worlds around them, just as it is for each and every one of us. By bearing witness to (and, one would hope, learning from) their experiences, we come to see how *their* stories are, in fact, reflections of *our own*, too.

So is perception everything it's cracked up to be? I guess it ultimately depends on your point of view...

Leading Lives of Quiet Desperation

“Ordinary People”

Year of Release: 1980

*Principal Cast: Donald Sutherland, Mary Tyler Moore, Judd Hirsch,
Timothy Hutton, Elizabeth McGovern, Dinah Manoff, Scott Doebler*

Director: Robert Redford

Screenplay: Alvin Sargent

Book: Judith Guest, Ordinary People

Sometimes the most arduous task we face in life is simply hanging on. Whether it's literally—to save our lives—or figuratively—to save our souls—we're nearly all faced with this stressful and frightening prospect at some point in our lives. It's a time generally characterized by desperation, that panicked feeling that scares us right down to our bones that we'll be consumed by whatever fears threaten us unless we take any and all measures—no matter how drastic—to survive. For those who endure such angst for extended periods, the practice becomes manageable, almost evolving into an art form, one in which it might not even be possible for onlookers to discern whether anything is wrong. But those suffering through the pain surely know its presence, despite the fact that they have honed their practice of quiet desperation to a degree where their anguish may be barely perceptible—that is, until something happens to shake it loose, exposing it raw for all to see. Then the *real* challenge of hanging on begins. Such is the scenario that becomes all too familiar to the protagonists in the heartrending drama, “Ordinary People.”

The peaceful lives of a well-heeled family living on Chicago's affluent North Shore are shattered by the death of their eldest son, Buck (Scott Doebler), in a tragic Lake Michigan boating accident. The Jarretts are left to pick up the pieces and carry on as best they can, each practicing their own form of quiet desperation. But their coping abilities soon get tested again when the sole surviving teenage son, Conrad (Timothy Hutton), attempts suicide to escape his unrelenting despair. He doesn't succeed, but the family is left to wrestle with the fallout of a second tragedy, one whose impact is felt painfully inside the home and uncomfortably in the community at large.

Conrad's parents, Beth (Mary Tyler Moore) and Calvin (Donald Sutherland), each follow their own paths in dealing with the twin tragedies. Beth, an ice queen and control freak, tries to pretend that everything is peachy (at least in public), putting on a faux happy face for everyone (except those who need her most) and keeping a lid on what she perceives as too humiliating to be seen by the outside world. She flashes her plastic smile in a most convincing way, leading all around her to think that things are just fine. Calvin, a gentle loving soul, tries to smooth things over with everyone, both inside and outside the family, but he grows ever more frustrated, disillusioned and sad that he's ineffective at playing the prototypical strong father figure, unable to fix the pervasive dysfunction at hand. To his credit, he refuses to escape into denial over what's going on, but the overwhelming emotions bombarding him—including feelings he can neither identify nor understand—only make meaningful solutions that much more elusive for him.

Conrad's unwillingness to conduct himself as Beth would like gnawingly irritates her, putting a strain on their relationship and compounding the other pressures already present. So, at his father's behest and in the interest of helping restore harmony in the family, Conrad agrees to undergo psychiatric treatment, albeit somewhat reluctantly. He engages in sessions with Dr. Berger (Judd Hirsch), a wisecracking straight shooter who refuses to let Conrad hide behind the psychological walls he tries to erect around himself. He cuts through the camouflage Conrad creates to conceal his feelings, seeking whatever truths lie beyond that self-imposed barrier to help his young patient put his life back together.

The various plotlines gradually converge, taking the story in some unlikely directions. Characters and viewers alike come to see that things are not what they appear to be, often in ways that are totally unexpected, and that things may not be over and done with, even when they appear resolved. This is accomplished through a masterful interweaving of the main narrative with strategically placed flashbacks. From this, we gradually become aware that our superficial perceptions of the characters, as well as those that they have of each other and of themselves, don't always tell the whole story.

The primary challenge for each of the family members is to confront why they have created their circumstances in the ways

that they have. Since the mundane aspects of day-to-day life don't provide any insights of a particularly revealing nature, they're forced to dig deeper. This requires them to move past surface perceptions and preconceived notions, to look at what's beyond their superficial actions and emotions, no matter how painful or uncomfortable that is, to get at the underlying beliefs and the deeply buried truth.

Although the heartbreak that comes in the wake of Buck's death and Conrad's attempted suicide is certainly nothing to be minimized, overcoming the hurt of these events is not insurmountable, either. As the story unfolds, viewers catch glimpses of a tremendous reserve of love that has amassed within the family over the years. The task for the characters is to sense its presence and raise it to the surface, where it can be put to use to heal themselves and their relationships with one another. How well they succeed or fail at this depends, of course, on what they choose to materialize for themselves, an outcome tied directly to how they perceive their circumstances and then form responsive beliefs based on those perceptions.

Some might wonder why the family members have manifested these particular realities to address their challenges. Why, some would argue, did they go to such extremes to discover these things about themselves? There could be any number of reasons, but the one that resonates most strongly with me, as simple as it might sound, is that they just couldn't envision any other way to do so. If such intense feelings of both pain and love were so submerged under the layers of pretense and forced geniality they have allowed to accumulate, then it may very well have taken consciously created events as powerful—and disruptive—as these to unearth them. I find we often experience or create upheavals in our own lives for purposes like this, and they usually seem so unnecessarily dramatic at the time, causing us to wonder why we drew them to us. But, if there's no other way to effectively address such challenges, then we must create what we create to bring about resolution (and, one would hope, a desired outcome). The characters here are no different.

Our ability to identify with the protagonists and their ordeals in virtually any film often reveals much to us about ourselves, but I find that particularly pertinent with this picture. As we watch, we may find ourselves responding to them in ways we typically would under such tribulations, or our reactions might totally surprise us,

putting us in touch with emotions with which we've had little or no experience. One would hope that it's the beneficial feelings, like empathy, that we tap into and not those that would be of little value under these conditions, like undue judgmentalism. In any event, whatever responses they evoke from us will ultimately depend on our perceptions of them and the resulting beliefs we form about them.

The reaction I had upon my most recent screening of this movie (shortly before this writing) surprised me. I was moved by the level of compassion I felt for the characters, far more profoundly than on any of my previous viewings. Knowing now what the conscious creation process is like, and realizing that it takes effort to become practiced at it, I applied these beliefs to my view of the characters this time around. I came away seeing that they were genuinely doing the best they could, even if I didn't share their sentiments or wouldn't have responded to their circumstances in the same ways that they did. I even found myself feeling that about characters for whom I hadn't felt it before (I guess perceptions *do* change when one looks at things closely enough). In the end, I came to realize that these truly are "ordinary people" dealing with extraordinary circumstances.

Dr. Berger's contributions in this story are especially noteworthy and particularly critical to how it is resolved. In many ways, this character helped bring psychiatry out of the closet; at the time this picture was released, it showed this profession in a quite different light from the mysterious or lampooned ways in which it had often been previously portrayed, stripping away many long-established misconceptions and taboos and giving it a greater degree of respectability than it had perhaps ever enjoyed on the big screen. But, of even greater significance, this film and this character also quietly helped nudge forward the validity of conscious creation as a viable concept (even if that specific term was not used in the movie). Throughout his sessions with Conrad, Dr. Berger pushes his patient to discover why he's creating the life that he does. Working as a guide, he helps Conrad uncover the underlying beliefs that are fueling his behavior and feelings, helping him perceive that what's going on in his life is springing forth *from him* and not occurring as some happenstance string of events. In that sense, we could easily draw many parallels between psychiatry and the kind of self-discovery

that we often experience in conscious creation. Of course, the level of success we achieve in an endeavor like this depends to a great degree on the skill of the practitioner doing the guiding. A keen sense of perception—being able to incisively see what's happening—is critical, and Dr. Berger, of all the characters, is far and away the most astute in this regard. He has the kind of perceptibility we all should hope to possess.

“Ordinary People” is a remarkable film in many ways. It's engrossing from start to finish, virtually guaranteed to involve the viewer in a profoundly emotional way. It has the makings of a real tearjerker, so keep those handkerchiefs at the ready, but it never becomes sentimental or schmaltzy in the process.

The performances deserve particularly high praise. Hutton, in one of his first major screen roles, captured an Oscar and a Golden Globe Award for best supporting actor for his portrayal of the troubled teen, effectively conveying the trauma of a lost and confused soul without ever becoming belligerent, maudlin or self-pitying. Moore, who deservedly earned an Oscar nomination and a Golden Globe Award for best actress, more than capably demonstrates her range in this role, obliterating any reputation she might have had as being strictly a lightweight. Hirsch, a fellow Oscar and Globe nominee to Hutton for best supporting actor, plays the hard-edged smart-ass he typically portrays so well, but, by doing so in the role of a psychiatrist, he breathes fresh air into a character type that might have ordinarily been treated as cold, distant and stodgy; he also provides much-needed comic relief at particularly opportune times but without ever becoming cartoonish. And Sutherland, admittedly the “weakest” of the lead performances, comes through as well, thoughtfully playing the endearing paternal figure who tries desperately to hold his family together.

In addition to Hutton's Oscar, the film earned top honors as best picture, as well as Academy Awards for screenwriter Alvin Sargent and first-time director Robert Redford, on six total nominations. The picture also took home five Golden Globes, including best dramatic picture and best director, on eight nominations.

When tragedy strikes, most of us would no doubt like to put it behind us as quickly as possible so we can get on with our lives. But sometimes that just isn't possible; sometimes we need to see the

lesson in the tragedy we've drawn to us so that we ultimately *can* move forward. Failing to do that may actually keep us mired much longer than we might hope, launching us to into our own protracted lives of quiet desperation. May we all be perceptive enough to see our way clear of that.

Seeking Asylum

"King of Hearts"
("Le roi de coeur")

Year of Release: 1966

*Principal Cast: Alan Bates, Geneviève Bujold, Pierre Brasseur,
Jean-Claude Brialy, Adolfo Celi, Françoise Christophe,*

Julien Guiomar, Micheline Presle

Director: Philippe de Broca

Screenplay: Daniel Boulanger

Story: Maurice Bessy

Ever know someone who you thought was ... er ... not all there but then later found out that this person was capable of making tremendous sense? As incongruent as those qualities might sound, however, they do occur together at times, which makes you wonder what kind of special secret wisdom this individual possesses. Of course, in the next moment, this seemingly apparent sage may revert back to a prior state of erratic behavior, leaving you more confused than ever. Now, if you can imagine an entire population of such unique souls, you can grasp the conundrum set upon the often-befuddled hero in the charming French comedy, "King of Hearts."

In the waning days of World War I, retreating German troops devise a plan to slow the advance of English forces and keep the enemy from capturing their munitions supplies by plotting to blow up one of their soon-to-be-abandoned strongholds, a small French town. Word of the plan quickly leaks to the local French resistance, who, in turn, manage to inform Allied forces of the Germans' scheme, albeit in a message that's highly cryptic. Puzzled by the strange communiqué and concerned that an all-out offensive might not be the wisest course under the circumstances, the British commander (Adolfo Celi) decides to send one of his specialists, Pvt.

Charles Plumpick (Alan Bates), a bookish, easily confused explosives expert, on a solo reconnaissance mission to investigate.

Meanwhile, as word of the German plot spreads through the town, the locals flee in panic, leaving the village totally uninhabited—that is, except for the residents of the community asylum. In their rush to escape, the townsfolk forget the patients, leaving them locked away to fend for themselves—at least initially.

The disparate worlds of the warriors and the asylum residents soon collide. Not long after Plumpick's arrival, as he stealthily skulks about town trying to conduct his investigation, he accidentally encounters the remnants of the German forces as they put the last-remaining elements of their plan into place. When Plumpick is spotted, he runs to the asylum to get away, paying no attention to where he's escaped. He evades capture from the pursuing Germans with the aid of the patients, but, because he's unaware of his surroundings, he doesn't realize where he's ended up. Plumpick admittedly finds his rescuers rather eccentric, especially when they jubilantly proclaim him the returned "king of hearts." But, because he has no clue about the true nature of his sanctuary, he's also in the dark about who his unlikely saviors are.

Of course, when Plumpick breaks *in* to the asylum, he also makes it possible for the residents to break *out*. So, when he rushes off to complete his mission, the asylum residents decide to avail themselves of their unexpected newfound freedom. They circulate through the abandoned town, adopting new personas for themselves, often far different from those of their captivity. And they become so convincing at it that Plumpick doesn't even realize who they are—at least at first. But, once he's aware of whom he's dealing with, he realizes he must depend on their assistance to help him complete his mission—not the easiest of feats, especially since they are more concerned with carrying out his coronation and promoting his courtship to a bashful ingénue, Coquelicot (Geneviève Bujold), than with the worries of the outside world. Matters become further complicated when both the Germans and the English send small bands of troops to check on Plumpick's whereabouts, only to have their search efforts foiled by the whims of the peculiar townsfolk. And, with that, the stage is set to see who will ultimately control the fate of the village.

Viewers are fortunate enough to be let in on all the minutiae of the story as it unfolds, for, if we weren't, we'd be just as confused as some of the players taking part in it. Plumpick (at least initially) and the search teams, for example, are sufficiently flabbergasted by the strange behavior of the town's residents, not realizing, of course, who they're really dealing with. The locals' odd comments and unpredictable behavior are certainly not what those from the outside world would consider "normal," even if the escapees superficially resemble everyday folks. So, from that perspective, then, it's abundantly clear that surface perception alone can't be used as the sole measure for assessing this reality. (If it were, it would be a pretty strange world indeed!)

The reality the asylum residents materialize for themselves raises some intriguing questions about what we manifest through conscious creation and why. For example, many of us would probably look pitifully upon the existence the patients have created for themselves. Yet most of them seem genuinely happy most of the time. Whether they're behind the walls of the asylum or out reshaping the town, they appear blissfully content in the playfulness of their creations. Considering what those in the real world in this story have manifested for themselves, perhaps the asylum residents have a better idea of how to create true enjoyment out of life. Indeed, in the midst of a world gone mad with war, their example can't help but beg the question, "So who's the crazy one here?"

This is a question Plumpick wrestles with as well. While he never specifically verbalizes his thoughts on this, his actions illustrate his willingness to address it. He's clearly created these circumstances for a reason, even if he's not entirely sure what that is until well on into the story. To say what that is would reveal too much, but suffice it to say that, once he figures out his intent, he doesn't hesitate to act upon it. His story in particular illustrates what a great teacher conscious creation can be when it comes to sharpening our understanding of our perceptions and what's behind them.

As we watch the patients' escapades unfold, we're also treated to their special wit and wisdom, particularly in terms of how it relates to their practice of conscious creation. I'm especially fond of one resident's observation that "to love the world, you have to get away from it." In light of the insanity we often see manifested in daily life,

I can think of few statements that make a more appealing case in favor of creating a reality separate and apart from the madness, one wherein we take the time to truly appreciate the beauty of existence, something many of us habitually overlook as part of our everyday routines.

Similarly, the priorities the residents set in characterizing the nature of their reality are far from conventional, but, again, one can't also help but wonder if their way isn't a better one. In addition to the emphasis they place on following their own bliss, they are sincerely concerned with the happiness and well-being of others, especially their beloved king, even if he doesn't always understand their ways or their benevolence and devotion toward him. They know he will do right by them, so they gladly do for him what they believe would make him feel as happy and fulfilled as they are. In fact, about the only thing they won't do is unquestioningly follow him when he tries to impose the ways of the outside world upon them, even if he believes it's in their best interests. They draw the line at that; they refuse to let their existence become tainted by such distasteful ways. Their perceptions are sharp enough to see what that could lead to. So I again ask, who's the crazy one here? Who indeed has the preferable reality? Ironical as it may be, sometimes it takes those who are blind to the ways of our world to help show us the way out of it.

"King of Hearts" is a warm, funny, joyful picture, full of amazing depth for a comedy, but it achieves this goal without becoming preachy or heavy-handed. The movie's circus-like atmosphere is reminiscent of a Fellini film, only more down to earth. It's filled with many laugh-out-loud moments, as well as an array of touching, tender and thoughtful scenes. Its blend of both sublime understatement and farcical overstatement make for a highly distinctive style of filmmaking. Credit director Philippe de Broca for a skillful combination of cinematic textures all wrapped up in one sumptuous package.

Bates turns in one of his best performances as the unlikely hero. Backing him is a colorful cast of eccentrics, ranging from the elegant Duchess (Françoise Christophe) and Duke (Jean-Claude Brialy) to the streetwise Madame Eglantine (Micheline Presle) to the pompous General Geranium (Pierre Brasseur). Supporting their

performances are superb technical contributions in the areas of costuming, set design and cinematography, as well as an excellent original musical score of Georges Delerue.

The craziness of everyday life is sometimes enough to drive us to escape. We truly seek asylum from the madness, looking for a simpler way of being. The characters in this film have come to discover the benefits of such thinking quite literally (their unexpected jaunt into “reality” notwithstanding). We see from their experience that there are different—and better—ways of approaching life and of achieving happiness in it. We should all be so fortunate to have that kind of wisdom.

When Life Doesn't Add Up

“A Beautiful Mind”

Year of Release: 2001

*Principal Cast: Russell Crowe, Ed Harris, Jennifer Connelly,
Paul Bettany, Christopher Plummer, Judd Hirsch, Vivien Cardone,
Austin Pendleton, Adam Goldberg, Anthony Rapp, Josh Lucas*

Director: Ron Howard

Screenplay: Akiva Goldsman

Book: Sylvia Nasar, A Beautiful Mind

As we all know, it's well-established mathematical fact that two plus two equals five. One can easily prove this truth by taking two objects and adding them to two more to achieve the requisite total. But, in case this simple exercise is insufficient evidence, one need only look at the myriad theorems supporting this calculation. And, as for those naysayers who insist that two plus two equals four, pay them no heed; their thinking is inherently flawed (they also probably think the world is round).

Have you ever met individuals so solidly confirmed in their beliefs that their viewpoints are completely unwavering, regardless of what others might say? Perhaps you've even seen this in yourself at times. Either way, the convictions these individuals hold are so strong that they regard their views as obvious, if not unquestionable, not only conceptually, but also in terms of how they're reflected in their surrounding reality. But what if they were to discover they were

alone in their convictions? How would they then see themselves and their world? It would have to be disorienting to find out their reality is not as they thought it was. But, then, what if their perceptions tell them *they're* "right" and everyone else is "wrong?" What would happen then? And how would they cope, by capitulating to others or converting them to their way of thinking? These are just a few of the challenges put to both the protagonists and the viewers of the enigmatic character study, "A Beautiful Mind."

The film is based on the unusual life story of award-winning mathematician John Nash (Russell Crowe). Beginning with his graduate school studies at Princeton University in 1948, the movie follows his career as a student, researcher, instructor and scholar, culminating in his receipt of the 1994 Nobel Prize in economics. But, as brilliant as his professional accomplishments were, his personal life was an embattled one, due to an ongoing struggle with schizophrenia, a condition that profoundly affected his family life, particularly his relationship with his wife, Alicia (Jennifer Connelly). And yet, as difficult as that was, he persisted in his efforts to tame his personal demons, ultimately achieving success in his endeavors both inside and outside academia.

Nash's character, as portrayed in the film, is a loner, one who's more comfortable with numbers than with people. He often comes across as a social misfit of sorts, retreating into his own world and having as little as possible to do with "outsiders." In fact, the scale of his retreat is so extensive (and so skillfully and convincingly presented by director Ron Howard) that the scope of it is likely to surprise even the most attentive of viewers. Of all the movies in this Chapter, "A Beautiful Mind" best illustrates the notion that perception definitely *isn't* everything in scrutinizing reality, both for characters and audiences alike. But, even more important than that, this film raises a plethora of questions about the nature of one's reality and how one views it.

Throughout the works of Jane Roberts and Seth, there are numerous references to the concept of "probabilities." The books frequently speak of "probable selves" and "probable realities," noting that each of them has its own intrinsic validity and its own likelihood of being made manifest through conscious creation. Indeed, the full range of possible existence seeks expression in one form or

another, even if we're not always aware of that fact or able to perceive evidence of it. Our conscious focus may be directed into one particular line of probable existence, but that doesn't mean other lines don't exist; we're simply unaware of them, because we choose, thanks to our individual beliefs, not to send our consciousness in those alternate directions. So, with that in mind, the content of this film can be viewed in a whole new light.

For instance, Nash's wife and his psychiatrist (Christopher Plummer) work with him intensively to "bring him back to reality." But who's to say that his reality is any less "real" or valid than anyone else's? Moreover, since Nash is a mathematician who is highly adept at probability theories, who better than he to sense the other probabilities out there? Who is to say that he *can't* experience other probable existences far different from those of his peers? After all, they can't gain direct access to his mind, so how can they claim Nash's perceptions are "wrong?"

Given all this, instead of branding Nash psychologically out of touch with reality, it could just as easily be argued that those around him are psychologically deficient in their abilities to perceive the wider scope of probable existences. So who would win a debate like that? I guess it would depend on one's point of view. Those who are content with a simpler concept of what constitutes reality would probably call Nash crazy, while his character (or anyone else with comparable capacities), in turn, could easily say that his detractors are ill-equipped to access the broader spectrum of realities available to be experienced.³ In any event, criticizing someone like Nash in this regard is patently unfair and, in my opinion, the height of reality-centric hubris.

If we each create our own reality, then our perceptive capabilities are all going to differ, too. In fact, depending on the reality in question, the perception capabilities that exist in some contexts may be far greater than most of us suppose. Jane Roberts writes about this in her book *Adventures in Consciousness*, citing an exchange between Seth and one of the participants in her ESP class sessions who asked her channeled entity about how he perceived a flower pot sitting on a table. Seth noted that, given the nature of his particular reality, he could choose to perceive the pot as such—or not. By contrast, he added, considering the nature of our existence (and the

prevailing beliefs giving rise to it), we *must* perceive the pot in that form.⁴ In light of this, then, why should we be surprised if Nash has perceptive capabilities of his existence comparable to those of Seth (and thus fundamentally different from the rest of us)?

This also raises the question of why Nash's capabilities for perceiving reality differently should matter so much to his peers (or to us). Is it because we're afraid of losing someone cherished from our existence as he slips over the edge as a result of what we see as mental illness? Is it a simple question of trying to exert "control" over someone else so that we can feel more psychologically comfortable in our own skin? Or is it a fear that, if he's bold enough to step into a new frontier of existence, we may one day have to take the same scary step ourselves, giving up the comfort of something we know so well for something so unfamiliar and potentially unsettling? The answers will vary from individual to individual, but questions like this, in my view, are all legitimate inquiries worthy of being addressed.

Why Nash chose to create the particular reality he did is unclear, not only to us, but also to him. Perhaps it has something to do with his inclination toward being uncomfortable around people, giving him an escape into something more personally palatable. Or perhaps it's something else entirely that, again, even he doesn't understand.

No matter what's involved, Jane Roberts and Seth address the issue of our perception of reality in relation to what we call "mental illness" in their book, *The Nature of Personal Reality*. Individuals like Nash, they might well contend, are generally perceived as mentally ill, because they exhibit behavior far different from the rest of us, due in large part to the divergent beliefs they employ to create the realities they experience. But should metaphysically different automatically equate to mentally "ill"? What's more, many of those who embrace such alternate perspectives may indeed do so as a means to seek resolution of their beliefs and to reconcile the realities they've created.⁵ To be sure, Nash *does* search for his own solution, employing a skill he's especially practiced at—his ability to see alternate probabilities. He draws upon this both to ground himself and to look for a workable way out of his circumstances.

Some might also wonder why it takes him so long to use his capabilities to reach resolution, but there are a number of possible explanations here. It could be that his perception and

probability-seeing abilities occurred to him so naturally that he didn't think they were unusual; why should one want to tamper with one's sense of "normal" if it seems perfectly comfortable? Second, there could have been some internal resistance to change on his part; he may have asked himself why he should have to conform to the world of others (a distinct possibility, given the disdain he sometimes exhibits toward the more conventional aspects of life and society). Third, there might not have been sufficient incentive to do so; without a suitable carrot, why bother? And, lastly, and perhaps most likely, he simply may not have known how; just because the ability to see other realities came naturally to him doesn't mean that his ability to change them to something else came as readily (developing proficiency in different conscious creation skills doesn't necessarily occur at a uniform pace). He could only work through his situation until he fully understood what his perceptions meant.

Nash's experience illustrates that the ability to envision probabilities is a key skill in conscious creation. The better we can see the outcomes we desire—and perceive what it takes to get there—the more effective we'll be at manifesting what we want. In large part, this is accomplished by being able to spot connections or patterns within frameworks where they don't make themselves readily apparent. Seeing such configurations goes a long way toward materializing them, and Nash is an expert in this area. We repeatedly witness examples of his ability to spot patterns where seemingly none exist, in such places as piles of numbers, reams of text and even clusters of stars in the nighttime sky. In the context of bringing forth form out of formlessness, this could be a case where perception *is* everything. In this regard, Nash truly does possess a beautiful mind.

The high praise this movie garnered was well deserved. It's a flat-out winner across the board. Howard's skill as a director took a quantum leap with this picture, far outstripping any of his earlier very capable works and putting him in select company as one of Hollywood's top contemporary filmmakers. His efforts also earned him and the film Oscars for best director and best picture. The film took home two other Academy Awards for supporting actress Connelly and screenwriter Akiva Goldsman on eight total nominations. It also received four Golden Globes, including best dramatic picture and repeat wins for Connelly and Goldsman, on six nominations.

The other stellar asset of this film is Crowe's magnificent lead performance, far and away his best to date. In addition to a Golden Globe Award for best lead dramatic actor, he earned a very deserving Oscar nomination and probably should have won. But, having taken home the top prize just a year earlier for his role in "Gladiator" and being in a talent-packed field of nominees for 2001, he was passed over. Under different timing and less competitive circumstances, however, this performance likely would have been a shoo-in.

It's been said that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, but, in my view, that's not quite accurate. As a conscious creator, I believe it's in the *mind* of the beholder. And, the more one is able to make use of that mind, particularly in the practice of seeing probabilities, the more beauty there is to behold. Difficult though his journey may have been, we can thank John Nash for helping us see how that all adds up.

Cynicism on Wry

"Wag the Dog"

Year of Release: 1997

*Principal Cast: Dustin Hoffman, Robert DeNiro, Anne Heche,
Denis Leary, Andrea Martin, Kirsten Dunst, Willie Nelson,
William H. Macy, Woody Harrelson, Craig T. Nelson*

Director: Barry Levinson

Screenplay: Hilary Henkin and David Mamet

Book: Larry Beinhart, American Hero

Think you can trust everything you see on television and read in the newspapers? The press wouldn't lie, would it? After all, the media are made up of trained truth seekers who doggedly pursue "the facts" of what's really going on in our world and faithfully report the results to an inquisitive public, right? And what of politicians, those noble souls tirelessly dedicated to public service in whom we place our solemn trust to serve the public good—we can take everything they say at face value, too, can't we? If you hold any of these beliefs dear, then you just might want to give a look at the biting cynicism of the satirical film "Wag the Dog," and see if you still feel the same way afterward.

For those unfamiliar with the expression that inspired the film's title, it's explained in an opening electronic text sequence:

"Why does a dog wag its tail?

"Because a dog is smarter than its tail.

"If the tail were smarter, the tail would wag the dog."

From there the story line proceeds to illustrate just what all that means.

In the closing days of a national election campaign, an incumbent President is accused of being involved in a tawdry sex scandal with a minor. To deflect attention from the issue, the administration hires Conrad Brean (a.k.a. Mr. Fix-It) (Robert DeNiro), a spin doctor par excellence, to resuscitate the President's tarnished image. His solution is to concoct a phony war that will galvanize public support for his client and win him reelection. To pull off this feat convincingly, Brean turns to Hollywood producer Stanley Motss (Dustin Hoffman) to "stage" the imaginary conflict. Motss gets the job, because, as Brean succinctly puts it, "War is show business."

Brean and Motss, with the assistance of White House aide Winifred Ames (Anne Heche), drum up a scenario in which the United States faces an imminent threat from that emerging superpower, Albania. They claim that Albanian insurgents have smuggled a suitcase nuke into Canada and that they threaten to clandestinely bring it across the border into the U.S. for detonation, an act of aggression that prompts swift retaliation by American forces on Albanian soil. The enemy's motivations are never made clear, but, since the war only has to last 11 days until the election, such trivialities go unaddressed. And, just to make sure everything seems legitimate, the dastardly duo brings in a team of collaborators to pull things off, including an aspiring actress to portray an Albanian refugee (Kirsten Dunst), a songwriter to compose an upbeat patriotic battle anthem (Willie Nelson), a prisoner of war-turned-war hero (Woody Harrelson) and an assortment of quirky consultants (most notably, Denis Leary and Andrea Martin).

Not everything goes according to plan, but, with the right touch of spin and Motss's repeated reassurances that "this is nothing," even the most harrowing of foul-ups somehow get set right. After all, all that really matters is that the press reports the "facts" as intended

and that the public buys it. As long as that happens, Brean and Motss have done their job. (They're so good at what they do, in fact, that *they* should have been hired to do the sell job on the run-up to the Iraq War.)

This story's very premise should make its nexus to perception obvious. The public's failure to question any of the events that allegedly transpire shows the danger of what can happen when perceptions are limited to surface measures only. "Un-in-formed" beliefs result, convictions that stymie efforts aimed at birthing creations intended to clarify or correct matters, thereby perpetuating the cycle of recurring limited perceptions. (And people wonder why they get the reality they create.) Sadly, I believe this exemplifies all too well the kind of sleepwalking that leads to creation by default (as discussed in Chapter 1).

If nothing else, this movie cries out for viewers to shake off those slumbers and to look behind the superficiality of our observations to see what's going on behind the scenes. This may lead to the shattering of some long-held illusions, particularly when it comes to respected institutions (like government and the press) that are often regarded with sacred cow status, but that's one of the consequences that comes from waking up. And, in this case, I'd apply that assessment to both the characters in the film *and* those of us in the real world.⁶

The spin doctors' greed and desire for control are plainly apparent, so there's no question what they're out to create. But the unseen masses' motivations are less evident. (Even though they're largely invisible throughout the film, they're just as much a part of the story, for it is *their* reaction that is ultimately essential to whether the President wins reelection.) The masses' lack of a stated objective makes determining their creative intent speculative at best, but I believe they subconsciously materialized this scenario to learn a lesson about the corrupting effects of unchecked power and what happens when it gets so far out of hand. Learning by way of negative example may not be the best or easiest way to see what one wants, but it's often a very effective way to learn what one *doesn't* want, making it possible to determine which probabilities can be ruled out for future consideration (not unlike the way one can learn from creation by default, as explained in Chapter 1). How well the masses get the lesson—and, for that matter, how well any

of us would learn under similar circumstances—depends, to a great degree, on how thoroughly they scrutinize their perceptions to see what's really happening.

Interestingly, the spin doctors participate in the creation of the masses' lesson just as much as the masses themselves do. Their efforts make it possible for the conditions of the test to exist in the first place. Likewise, the masses allow this scenario to play out not only for their own benefit, but also for the puppeteers to have access to a lesson of their own, one in which they have an opportunity to see that their actions carry consequences, too. This becomes apparent to them when, somewhat unexpectedly, an intrepid CIA watchdog (William H. Macy) shows up to question some of the spinners' specious claims and questionable actions. As with the public, the degree to which Brean and Motss get their lesson depends largely on what they perceive of their circumstances and how they respond to them.

This illustrates how large-scale creations arise with the input of multiple consciousnesses. Put simply, these are prime examples of "co-creations." It also shows how a creation can have more than one intent associated with it, for, in this case, both parties are equally student and teacher for one another. Being able to accurately perceive scenarios like this for what they truly are goes a long way toward a greater understanding of one's consciousness, the intents and beliefs that funnel through it, and the role that both play in the creation of individual realities and mass events.

"Wag the Dog" is wickedly funny from start to finish, unabashed in its cynical frankness. Director Barry Levinson and Oscar- and Golden Globe-nominated screenwriters Hilary Henkin and David Mamet make no apologies for the smugness with which their picture tells its story, serving up a coterie of arrogant, self-important sleazeballs who relish their guile and audacity and who dish it out to a complacent public that lets them get away with it with impunity.

The cast is excellent, particularly the lead pair of rogues. Hoffman, who earned Oscar and Golden Globe nominations as best actor, and DeNiro have a great chemistry with one another, plotting their scheme with the impish, impudent playfulness of a couple of frat boys planning pledge pranks, only with much higher stakes involved. Credit Heche and Harrelson with solid supporting performances as well.

In total, the film earned two Oscar and three Golden Globe nominations, including a nod for best comedy picture. Unfortunately, it came up empty-handed on all fronts.

Some might wonder what a picture as “dark” as this is doing in a book of this kind. In my view, it effectively addresses the perception issue that is the subject of this Chapter. What’s more, and ironically so, it shows us that sometimes it takes a little darkness to shed light on the true nature of things.

Extra Credits: A film that tells roughly the same story as “Wag the Dog” is the slapstick comedy, “Canadian Bacon.” A U.S. President (Alan Alda) beset by falling approval ratings seeks to bolster his image as a strong leader by ordering his staff to launch a propaganda campaign addressing the dire threat of attack posed by our new would-be foes, the Canadians. Practically overnight, our polite neighbors to the north are demonized as a menace seeking to subvert our way of life and culture, capable of inflicting upon us such unbearable indignities as putting mayonnaise on everything we eat and flooding our radio signals with nothing but Anne Murray music. (Egads!) Although the film does have its share of razor-sharp laughs, particularly in the ways it pokes fun at Canuck culture, its overall tone is frothier and sillier, less poignant, than that of “Wag the Dog.” However, for those who enjoy this sort of fare, it’s worth a look. (1995; John Candy, Alan Alda, Rhea Perlman, Kevin Pollak, Rip Torn, Kevin J. O’Connor, Bill Nunn, G.D. Spradlin, Jim Belushi, Steven Wright, Wallace Shawn; Michael Moore, director; Michael Moore, screenplay)

The Big One That Got Away With It

“Big Fish”

Year of Release: 2003

Principal Cast: Ewan McGregor, Albert Finney, Billy Crudup,
Jessica Lange, Helena Bonham Carter, Alison Lohman,
Robert Guillaume, Matthew McGrory, Ada Tai, Arlene Tai,
Steve Buscemi, Danny DeVito, Marion Cotillard, Hailey Anne Nelson

Director: Tim Burton

Screenplay: John August

Book: Daniel Wallace, *Big Fish: A Novel of Mythic Proportions*

Anglers the world over are known for their fish stories, those tall tales of adventure that stretch credibility even more than a taut fishing line. Such stories usually speak of the elusive big one that invariably manages to slip away, their outcomes elevated to epic proportions. Most who listen to these escapades see them for the entertainment that they are. But, then, there are the dour killjoys, who rationally try to disprove the stories and spoil everyone's fun (their questionable credibility for commenting on the experiences of someone else's reality notwithstanding). Regardless of who's listening, though, these polished storytellers are slicker than wet floor wax in their delivery, and their capacity for exaggeration is exceeded only by the good-natured humor of their recitation. Most of the time, they "get away with it," too. But, on rare occasions, they just might throw in a little truth for good measure. In the touching fable "Big Fish," we get some of both.

Silver-tongued salesman Edward Bloom (Albert Finney) has led quite a memorable life. He's always been the proverbial big fish in the small pond that is Ashton, Alabama, and he's frequently been the center of attention no matter where his far-reaching travels have taken him. From the time he was a lad, Edward always seemed to be a witness to, or a participant in, any number of fantastic exploits—occurrences that, thanks to his natural gift of gab and unrivaled capacity for embellishment, he spun into elaborate tales of endeavor. And he's never hesitated to share them with anyone who'll listen.

Unfortunately, the one person who's unwilling to hear him out is Edward's son, Will (Billy Crudup). Will has lots of issues with his old man's stories. He sees them as ridiculous nonsense and, consequently, a source of personal embarrassment. He also views their patent implausibility as being directly opposed to the fact-driven work he does as a journalist. But, most of all, he's annoyed by Edward's ill-timed recountings, a practice that Will sees as little more than his father's relentlessly shameless penchant for self-aggrandizement, even at the expense of others. After a bitter falling out over this, Will distances himself, both emotionally and physically, for a long time. That all changes, however, when the embittered son learns that his aging dad is dying of cancer. Will reluctantly returns home from Paris to square up matters with his father while he still has the time.

Running interference between the two combatants are Edward's adoring wife, Sandra (Jessica Lange), his sage physician, Dr. Bennett (Robert Guillaume), and Will's loving, expectant wife, Josephine (Marion Cotillard). They provide a gentle buffer between father and son, creating a civil environment for Edward to tell his stories one last time and for Will to come to know the father he's spent his whole life searching for. The experience also allows the soon-to-be papa an opportunity to learn what it's like to be a dad himself from the man from whom he most needs to get this lesson.

And so Edward shares his stories, shown through flashbacks featuring a younger version of himself (Ewan McGregor). Through these sequences, we see how and why Edward turned out as he did. Along the way, we're treated to his rich and varied life experiences, including a stint as a carnival worker, a journey to a surreal small town named, appropriately enough, Spectre, and a brief unplanned flirtation with a life of crime. We also get to meet the colorful cohorts who joined Edward in these exploits, including a misunderstood giant (Matthew McGrory), a witch with a gift of prophecy (Helena Bonham Carter), an aspiring poet turned bank robber (Steve Buscemi), a creepy circus ringmaster (Danny DeVito) and a Korean Siamese twin singing duo (Ada Tai, Arlene Tai). We're also fortunate to witness Edward's fairytale courtship of Sandra while she was a beautiful, young co-ed (Alison Lohman), a genuinely heart-melting romance.

Needless to say, differences in perception—and perspective—run wild throughout this movie, with the credibility of Edward's stories serving as the fulcrum. The contrast in viewpoints is easily most stark between Edward and Will, polar opposites if there ever were any. Will's beliefs about his dad's stories make them impossible for him to fathom, while Edward's beliefs have allowed him to believe they're the gospel truth. Such is the impasse that characterizes the nature of their relationship.

Will says he wants to see what's below the surface where his old man is concerned. He aches to know the truth about his "real father," the man behind all those stories. Will sums up his quest like this: "My father talked about a lot of things that he never did, and I'm sure he did a lot of things that he never talked about. I'm just trying to reconcile the two."

From this, it might appear that Will is aggressively seeking to fine-tune his powers of perception, using his understanding of his father as a litmus test. But there's more to it than that. Lofty though his stated intent is, what Will really seems hell-bent on is getting his dad to confess the "falsehood" of his tall tales. Edward's razor-sharp perceptions cut through his son's smokescreen to see what he's concealing. He holds steadfast, nailing Will's onslaught for what it really is and refusing to concede that his version of reality should be regarded as any less valid than anyone else's. "Who do you want me to be?" Edward asks Will, to which his son replies, "Just yourself." Edward, uncharacteristically angry, responds, "I've been nothing but myself since the day I was born, and, if you can't see that, it's your failing, not mine." ('Nuff said.)

One of the greatest ironies in this debate is the fact that Edward and Will are both storytellers in their respective professions. Edward, as a salesman, tells stories to win his clients' confidence and to persuade them to buy his wares. Will, as a journalist, tells stories for his readership as a correspondent for UPI. Their styles and story contents may differ, but they're essentially doing the same thing. Maybe father and son aren't so different after all. Perhaps all they need is common ground. The question is, "Will they find it in time?"

Will's pressing desire to know his real father is also somewhat curious from a conscious creation perspective. Indeed, if we each create our own reality, then isn't the version of Edward that Will already knows his "real father?" What else is he looking for? If Will wanted a different kind of dad from the one he has, then that's who he would have drawn to himself in the first place. Instead, he drew the father he *needed* to have come to him. Maybe Will attracted Edward into his life because he needed somebody who embodies the lightheartedness and whimsy he requires to counterbalance his overly serious self, someone who could help instill that quality in him. Edward clearly fits that bill, reflecting that part of Will most in need of attention. But Will doesn't see Edward that way, and, by failing to do so, he also doesn't recognize that part of himself requiring amelioration. That's sad, for what better purpose can a father serve than to help a son learn about himself, especially those portions that so desperately require love, nurturing and support.

Fortunately, when we need our reality to present us with outwardly manifested evidence of the inner guidance required to turn around situations like this, it invariably appears, even at the eleventh hour. All we need do is be willing to ask for it and be open to perceiving it. When we do, miracles happen. And, when we can see that reflected in the world around us, as this Chapter's opening quote suggests, transformation truly is possible.

"Big Fish" is a good time on many levels. Its widely diverse moods range from funny to warm to sad, even touching and uplifting, all without becoming overly sentimental, pretentious or self-indulgent. The major credit for this goes to director Tim Burton, whose maturity as a filmmaker grew by volumes with this production. The movie definitely bears his mark, yet it's more refined and less manic than many of his other works. The excellent ensemble cast and John August's solid screenplay figure significantly in this, but Burton maximizes their contributions by punctuating them with the quirky exclamation points typical of his signature directorial style.

The performances by Finney and McGregor as the older and younger Edward complement each other perfectly, creating a seamless fit between the two versions of the same character. The judicious use of big-name talents (such as Lange, DeVito, Bonham Carter and Buscemi) and character actors (like McGrory and Ada and Arlene Tai, among others) in comparatively small roles is quite effective, too, allowing their star power to shine through without overwhelming the audience or letting their contributions become hopelessly diluted by the larger story surrounding their characters.

The film is a savory technical buffet as well, featuring top-notch work by highly talented teams in costume design, makeup, art direction, set design, cinematography and film editing. Backing their work is a warm, sometimes-ethereal Oscar-nominated original score by Danny Elfman. In addition to the soundtrack's Academy Award nomination, the movie earned four Golden Globe nods, including recognition for Finney's supporting performance and for the film as best comedy picture.

So much of the time, we take life so seriously. "Big Fish" shows us how to avoid getting hooked on that line by reminding us of the playfulness we routinely need to incorporate in our lives. Lightening up lightens the load we carry and makes the journey that much

more enjoyable. We'd be wise to heed that wisdom, for otherwise we just might miss out on one of life's biggest catches—and that's one we truly don't want to get away.

Author's Notebook: I have a strong personal connection to this film, and conscious creation played a significant role in that. I saw "Big Fish" for the first time, not knowing anything about it, a few days before the anniversary of my own father's passing. Even though I had had a fairly good relationship with my dad, we had some unresolved issues at the time of his transition, which occurred somewhat suddenly in 1987. Like Edward and Will, there was a distance between us when I was growing up, not brought about by issues like those of the characters in the movie but by a lack of time spent together due to his dedication to his work. Consequently, I didn't feel as though I knew him well during childhood and adolescence.

That changed, however, as I grew into adulthood. He and I really began to know and appreciate one another for the first time when I entered my twenties (ironically, at a time when *I* was now no longer around as much). We were just getting to know each other when a heart attack took him (at work, no less, ever true to form). At the time, there were things left unsaid, feelings unexpressed, stories unshared. There was also some resentment on my part for him leaving just as we were starting to become buddies.

"Big Fish" played a big part in helping me heal those old hurts. Even though 17 years had passed between the time my dad left and when I saw this picture, the emotions came rushing forth like the big event had just happened yesterday. But watching the movie let me put those feelings behind me at last. And, given that I wasn't familiar with the story when I rented it and the synchronicity of the timing, the effects were that much more heightened. (Some creation, eh?)

This is very much a picture for fathers and sons, especially for those who would like to feel closer to one another and who still have the time to make that possible. I know Dave would have gotten a kick out of it. I only wish he and I had had the chance to see it together.

Bonus Features

“Meet John Doe”: A minor league baseball player past his prime (Gary Cooper) signs on for a newspaper publicity stunt to portray John Doe, a decent but down-and-out everyman who threatens to kill himself on Christmas Eve to protest the sad state of the human condition. After publication of the alleged suicide note, readers flood the paper with offers of help to persuade John to reconsider his decision. A local circulation-boosting ploy quickly mushrooms into a national compassion-driven social movement with wide-ranging implications that no one involved could have foreseen—except those who hope to exploit it for their own gains. Darkly satirical, yet simultaneously heartwarming and hopeful, and an intriguing study on the seeds that perceptions can sow. (1941; Gary Cooper, Barbara Stanwyck, Edward Arnold, Walter Brennan, James Gleason, Spring Byington; Frank Capra, director; Robert Riskin, screenplay; Richard Connell and Robert Presnell, story; one Oscar nomination)

“Birdy”: Two high school pals—one a hotheaded jock (Nicolas Cage), the other a sensitive introvert obsessed with birds (Matthew Modine)—return from the Vietnam War severely injured, one physically, the other psychologically. One draws upon his powers of perception to devise an unusual means for escaping from everyday life; the other uses them to try and help bring his friend back to his former reality. A thoughtful drama that pushes our views on how and where we might find happiness and contentment for ourselves. (1984; Matthew Modine, Nicolas Cage, John Harkins, Karen Young; Alan Parker, director; Sandy Kroopf and Jack Behr, screenplay; William Wharton, book, *Birdy*; Grand Prize of the Jury winner and *Palme d’Or* nominee, Cannes Film Festival)

“Three Days of the Condor”: An intelligent but somewhat naïve CIA operative (Robert Redford) discovers a terrible tragedy in his New York office upon returning from his lunch break. Realizing that his life is in danger, he flees, believing he can trust no one, even those he thought he once could. He draws upon his keen powers of perception, particularly his expertise in spotting complex patterns, to figure out what happened and why, who’s responsible, and how he can keep himself alive. A tense thriller with a sharp psychological

vibe that's still relevant almost 40 years after its release. (1975; Robert Redford, Faye Dunaway, Cliff Robertson, Max von Sydow, John Houseman; Sydney Pollack, director; Lorenzo Semple Jr. and David Rayfiel, screenplay; James Grady, book, *Six Days of the Condor*; one Oscar nomination, one Golden Globe nomination)

“The Crying Game”: The kidnapping of a British soldier (Forest Whitaker) in Northern Ireland leads to the unexpected entanglement of two very different subcultures—Irish Republican Army terrorists and London's gay underground. Appearances are nothing what they seem for all involved, leaving the characters to sort their way through a maze of mistaken perceptions, misdirections and surprising intentions. An edgy, quirky thriller from start to finish. (1992; Forest Whitaker, Miranda Richardson, Stephen Rea, Jaye Davidson, Jim Broadbent, Adrian Dunbar, Ralph Brown; Neil Jordan, director; Neil Jordan, screenplay (Oscar winner); one Oscar win on six nominations, one Golden Globe nomination)

3

SELF-ACTUALIZED CINEMA

Celluloid Lessons from Metaphysical Masters

Each one of us must awaken and know that we are our own teachers, that we are our own healers, that we are our own priests.

—Chris Griscom¹

Old habits die hard. Clichéd though that may be, as a former two-pack-a-day smoker who quit nearly a dozen times before finally succeeding, I can attest to the validity of that belief. I was elated when I at last reached my goal (one that I have maintained for 25 years now), but I also couldn't help but wonder why it took me so many attempts over 11 years to fulfill my objective.

No matter how much we try to avoid them, we sometimes get stuck in conscious creation ruts, unable to free ourselves from the shackles of repetitive patterns of behavior—or, more precisely, repetitive patterns of creation (and belief). This includes everything from taking on romances destined to fail to pursuing bad investments to engaging in nasty little habits like nail-biting or overeating. Some form of creation by default is nearly always the culprit, with sleepwalkers and neophyte creators generally suffering the most. But even proficient practitioners can fall prey to this dilemma by simply being unaware of, or unclear about, the specific beliefs behind their materialization efforts, especially those that drive them into their ruts to begin with.

If it seems like I've spent several chapters beating a proverbial dead horse where the belief issue is concerned, then my point must be sinking in, for, no matter how you look at it, beliefs really are what it's all about in conscious creation. You'll even note in the opening paragraph how I used the word "belief" instead of "fact" in relation to my experience with quitting smoking. This was intentional. A fact is something absolute, applicable to everyone (if there even is such a thing); a belief, by contrast, is something personal, an element integral to the formation of one's individual reality. So, when I say "old habits die hard" and "quitting smoking is difficult," I'm expressing personal beliefs, and, because those thoughts were present in my consciousness when I sought to stop, I naturally created circumstances that bore them out. I might not have liked believing those things, and I might not have been readily aware that other belief options were available to me, but, for what it's worth, that's what was in force at the time, and I simply got what I concentrated on.

As intractable as those positions may have seemed, however, they were still just beliefs, personal and changeable, far from immutable. If they had been absolutes, then they'd be facts, and everyone dealing with circumstances like mine—both then and now—would experience comparable difficulties. But that isn't necessarily the case. Those who hold beliefs contrary to mine, for example, might be able to change their habits with comparative ease (lucky bastards). And now that I've had the experience of seeing how my old beliefs played out, if faced with the same challenge today, I'd like to hope I'd choose new ones—beliefs with drastically different outcomes—to gain the experience of seeing how those alternatives would manifest. (After all, those original ones weren't very much fun.)

The foregoing discussion is essentially my way of illustrating why I have chosen to open this book in the way that I have. In the first two chapters, I have intentionally approached the subject of conscious creation from the standpoint at which most of us begin—that of knowing virtually nothing about the process. At the outset, we're still locked into a more traditional worldview, one in which we believe things happen to us (rather than as a result of anything we do) and in which we rely on our sensory perceptions and intellect to tell us all we think we need to know about our world. Like it or not, those *beliefs*, limiting and inadequate though they may be, are the

ones we employ when we shape existence under those conditions, and we rarely, if ever, question their merits. They steadfastly persist, too, entrenched like a nasty chest cold in the dead of winter. If anything out of the ordinary arises under their auspices, we generally attribute the anomaly to some sort of inexplicable glitch, a passing curiosity that's easily dispensed with (usually by ignoring it) except under the direst of circumstances. Indeed, when we create reality through a paradigm like this, it's no surprise that one would believe old habits die hard.

But those who become skeptical of this prevailing view are likely to begin questioning their situations, and many eventually find their way to practices like conscious creation to help them redefine and reshape their metaphysical outlooks. Those who are open to such change are ready, eager and willing to take the big plunge to learn more about how to proceed in a new direction. And that's the point we have come to now.



To know where we want to go, we need to start by knowing where we're at. Chapters 1 and 2 were intended to provide a sort of metaphysical status report for where we are when we approach conscious creation for the first time. The basics were covered, but in a sort of backhanded way—how *not* to practice it. That's all about to change.

This Chapter is the launching pad for taking the next step—examining conscious creation head-on to see how it functions as a process. This, in turn, will provide a platform from which to view the qualities that further define the practice and the tools we can use to make it work more effectively. It is, in essence, the linchpin between the two opening chapters and the remainder of this book.

The films in this Chapter provide various overviews of conscious creation, functioning in many ways like metaphysical tutorials. Their approaches are straightforward, and, on the face of them, they're "aware" of that quality about themselves (hence this Chapter's title, "Self-actualized Cinema"). Consequently, the write-ups of these pictures are a little different, more descriptive and less analytical than those of perhaps any other chapter in the book. These movies generally don't lend themselves to analyses of the sort found elsewhere, and attempting to comment on them in that manner

would be like trying to evaluate the philosophical insights of a set of stereo instructions. These are excellent films, but they just don't call for critiquing in quite the same way.

These pictures are primarily meant to inform, though they do entertain as well, just in a different way. Viewers should expect more experiences of lightbulbs going off than of heart tugs or belly laughs, though the feelings of inspiration and enlightenment one takes away from them are certainly nothing to be minimized (and everything to be celebrated). I'd like to emphasize their overview nature, too. They provide the broad brushstrokes of conscious creation, whereas those in subsequent chapters explore the details and nuances. Such particulars are assuredly important, but, without the context of the larger picture into which they fit, their significance at this juncture would be about as relevant as a punch line without a joke. And that's no laughing matter.



Even though these films principally take a general approach to conscious creation, there are several significant themes that run through them. Perhaps the most important of these is the role of *consciousness*. It should go without saying that this is important; after all, we are talking about *conscious* creation. Through these movies' examples, we see how this nebulous, ethereal force that we each possess is employed to form the beliefs that drive the manifestation process. In many ways, consciousness is depicted as functioning something like an arbitrator, a magistrate in charge of overseeing the magical approach and the intellectual and intuitional elements that feed into it. It collects input from these sources, which it then analyzes and assimilates into beliefs used for materialization, taking concepts out of the realm of the potential and thrusting them forth into the world of the corporeal. It is the mechanism through which thoughts ultimately become things.

Another theme these films illustrate is the role our consciousness plays in shaping *all* aspects of life, including everything from health to wealth to relationships and even the general state of the world. The breadth of the scope involved here makes abundantly clear the pervasive impact of this component in framing reality. By extension, these movies also depict, both overtly and implicitly, the

sheer personal power and incumbent responsibility we each possess in managing our consciousness to bring all these things to bear. Indeed, whether or not we're aware of it, we truly *are* powerful beings; there really are no 98-pound weakling conscious creators.

Awareness of such personal power also helps to open doors to show all of the probabilities available to us, including those previously off our radar screens, a third theme that runs through these pictures. To a great degree, the development of such enhanced cognizance relies on studiously learning the ropes of the process and making a commitment to practicing it, both of which should allow old patterns of beliefs and behavior (like those outlined in Chapters 1 and 2) to fade away, almost as if being unlearned. This does require some practice, patience and diligence, but the effort is well worth it, for, when we begin to sense our empowerment as conscious creators, we awaken to a wider range of possibilities—and potential responses—than we may have previously considered. Author and visionary Jean Houston expressed this concept best when she said that such a broader awareness increases our “response-ability” to the challenges we face in life.²

The producers of many of this Chapter's films borrowed from that idea in the distribution of their movies, which is why some of these titles may be a little unfamiliar to you. When faced with lukewarm responses from typical channels, they employed unconventional means for getting their works into circulation, such as direct Internet downloads, aggressive DVD sales promotions, and special screenings at alternative venues, such as churches and healing centers. They also relied on innovative means for marketing their titles, such as targeted email promotions, web site advertising and good old-fashioned word-of-mouth.³ Movie theaters may not be on their way to becoming dinosaurs just yet, but they're not the only games in town any more, either. This shows how new doors open when traditional ones close—that is, if you know how to use conscious creation to spot them.

Finally, these films repeatedly address the inherent conscious creation nexus between science and spirit (or, in some instances, between science and art). This is a view that was first popularized in Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics*, a landmark treatise on the subject originally published in 1975.⁴ Many of the ideas in that

book were subsequently addressed in works by authors who further demonstrated how science helps explain spirit and how spirit infuses science, including Michael Talbot, Norman Friedman, Fred Alan Wolf, Lynne McTaggart, Gregg Braden, William Henry, David Ash and Peter Hewitt, among others. And, through these pictures, these ideas have now found a voice on the big screen as well.

In many ways, the functions of science and spirit parallel those of the magical approach elements. Science operates much like the intellect, while spirit mirrors the intuition. But neither the intellect nor the intuition can make the process work by itself; they depend on one another for support. Science and spirit behave much the same way, only we're just now beginning to understand the dynamics of that symbiosis. Even the experts in each of these areas have long overlooked (sometimes unwittingly, sometimes intentionally) the synergistic effects that come from harmonizing these two forces. For those who have seen and accepted the connection, however, a whole host of new possibilities for consciously creative expression has become apparent, both in the worlds of science and spirit, not to mention in everyday life. This is particularly true in the area of quantum physics, which, in many ways, is basically a scientific methodology for explaining the metaphysics of probability. In this particular context, science and spirit have come to appear like two sides of the same coin.

Just as consciousness affects all areas of life through conscious creation, so, too, does the interaction of science and spirit, as these films make obvious. Whether it's in the area of physics, biology, art, romance, spirituality, or any other discipline or endeavor, both influences are present in all of them. They might not always carry equal weight, and their influence may be subtle, but they're both there to some degree or another. We can be grateful that enlightened thinkers in both areas have begun to recognize this connection, even make its understanding mainstream, to further the education of journeyman creators like us.

Truly, these films illustrate, as New Age therapist Chris Griscom wrote in this Chapter's opening quote, the need for us to become our own teachers, healers and priests. And, thankfully, they show us how, too.

Shopping the Catalog of the Universe

“The Secret”

Year of Release: 2006

*Principal Cast: John Assaraf, Michael Beckwith, Joe Vitale,
John Gray, Fred Alan Wolf, John Hagelin, Lisa Nichols,*

Marci Shimoff, Hale Dwoskin, Bob Doyle,

Bob Proctor, Jack Canfield, Neale Donald Walsch

Directors: Drew Heriot, Sean Byrne,

Marc Goldenfein and Damien McLindon

Screenplay: Rhonda Byrne

Imagine Amazon.com on steroids. That would be quite an impressive collection of merchandise! Now picture adding the range of potential experiences to that mix and putting it on hormones, too. Sounds like quite a place to shop, doesn't it? Well, if you can fathom that, you have a rough idea of what it's like to peruse the boundless catalog of the Universe. To learn how to access that infinite storehouse of stuff, would-be shoppers should be sure to check out “The Secret.”

This little gem of a film was initially available only through alternate channels (*i.e.*, on the Internet and on DVD). A slick trailer and an impressive email marketing campaign seductively enticed potential viewers into discovering for themselves the true nature of “the secret,” a supposedly long-hidden, little-known source of knowledge that many of history's most celebrated minds were said to have employed to achieve greatness. Using images referencing alchemy, conscious creation's ancient cousin, and citing the examples of geniuses like Newton, Shakespeare, Beethoven, Emerson, Edison and Einstein, the movie's creators teasingly pledged to show how these visionaries' experiences could be drawn upon and applied successfully to everyday endeavors. Cryptic though this marketing message may have been, something about it apparently resonated with prospective viewers, and interest in the film took off worldwide, eventually capturing widespread attention, even in mainstream media outlets, such as CNN and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

Of course, none of this probably would have happened if the producers hadn't backed up their promises with an equally viable product, which they most assuredly did. “The Secret” is, quite simply, an excellent cinematic introduction to the manifestation

process, particularly for apprentices, a sort of Conscious Creation 101. It explains how materialization works in clear, concise, easily comprehensible terms, with hypothetical vignettes for handy illustration. In this way, we get to see examples of theory and application presented back to back, with insightful running commentary offered by a wide range of teachers and practitioners.

The core message of “The Secret” lies in its explanation of the law of attraction, a principle that maintains we draw to us what we focus on. Our focus, in turn, depends on what we do with our thoughts and feelings, how we integrate the two, and how we project them forth into the world. Sound familiar? To me, these are merely different ways of restating the function of conscious creation and the magical approach. The semantics may be different, but the concepts are otherwise virtually identical. No matter how you word it, the bottom line is the same.

“The Secret” explains the law of attraction through areas of life that most of us can readily relate to and in which we often face our greatest personal challenges, such as wealth, relationships, health and all of the bread-and-butter issues we confront on a daily basis. But it also shows how our focus contributes to the shaping of our larger world, putting forth the noble suggestion of imagining what’s possible if we apply this basic lesson to the wider scope of our reality.

Some viewers have criticized the film for emphasizing these personal issues at the expense of “greater good” considerations in teaching the law of attraction, and their argument admittedly has some merit. However, I would also contend that conscious creators need to start somewhere, and getting one’s own house in order first really is the best place to begin. Think of it this way: When we fly, the portion of the safety demonstration on oxygen masks always instructs passengers to secure their own masks before assisting others. This is because we cannot be of service to them unless we operate from our own position of strength, and I believe this is advice well heeded, whether we’re talking flight safety or helping the world sort out its problems. As virtuous an endeavor as saving the world is, trying to do so from a position of personal subservience (*i.e.*, weakness)—despite what many traditional religions would have us believe—is, in my opinion, the height of foolhardiness. There’s plenty of opportunity to pitch in, but only when our own ducks are in a row first.

In getting our houses in order, it's imperative we first identify where our focus is (that is, acknowledging what beliefs we are harboring). "The Secret" refers to this in terms of assessing our attitudes, but it becomes apparent from the film's examples that these attitudes arise directly from our beliefs. The movie reveals how beliefs translate into what we want, for better or worse, depending on what they are in the first place. It's particularly adept at illustrating how giving attention (and thus power) to what we *don't* want still often translates into its materialization. As strange as that may sound, consider this: Suppose someone says to you, "Think about anything you like except a pink elephant," and then imagine what it is you're most likely to ponder. (Chances are, it involves a pastel pachyderm.) Even though the intent has been expressed in terms of a negative, it has still been thought of (that is, given power to be made manifest), and so it arises as part of your reality. Conscious creation and the law of attraction work exactly the same way.

Thus, to avoid the "unintended" materialization of what we don't want, it's important to put forth our wishes using terms that reflect the desired results as precisely as possible. This involves phrasing our intents using positive language, stating what we *do* want rather than what we don't. One commentator, author Jack Canfield, offers a great example of this in a quote from Mother Teresa, who vowed she would never attend an anti-war rally but who was quick to add, "If you ever hold a peace rally, invite me."

The film thus makes clear how crucial it is to understand this concept when shopping the catalog of the Universe. It makes this point by comparing God/Goddess/All That Is (pick your term)—the "supplier" force of the Universe—to a genie, one who is compelled to say, "Your wish is my command." The genie, of course, is bound to comply, no matter how brilliant or harebrained the request. By analogizing the notion in this way, "The Secret" shows us *exactly* why we end up getting what we concentrate on, be it intended positively or negatively, intentionally or unintentionally, rightly or wrongly, and so on and so on. The Universe is simply fulfilling the dictate it's been charged with by the conscious creator making the request. There's no divine retribution, special dispensation, favored treatment or capricious agenda at work here; it's a simple case of celestial order fulfillment, delivered with absolute precision.

The benefit of understanding conscious creation in this way is that it ultimately makes us more aware of the range of available probabilities. It helps us to weed out materializations that arise from creation by default practices, and the new, broader vision that emerges allows us to see options for responses we may have once missed. What's more, when it comes to the "greater good" issues in particular, this enhanced view helps clarify our overall awareness of them, not only in terms of recognizing the contributions we make as individuals, but also in understanding their pursuit as a collective effort. If our co-creations (as discussed in Chapter 2) all funnel into the larger existence we jointly experience, then we can see more clearly just how much our mutual efforts matter and how our joint input can lead to change. When that awareness is coupled with our enhanced cognizance of personal empowerment, truly great things become possible.

But, before we tackle that undertaking, we need to start at home, and, again, "The Secret" is an excellent instructional tool for showing us how, especially for beginners. Seasoned creators may find the film somewhat simplistic for their purposes, but they would be wise to recommend it to aspiring practitioners. To adhere to its rudimentary message, the movie emphasizes the overall conscious creation process and focuses only briefly on its specific "mechanical" aspects. In offering an analogy to explain this, one of the commentators, philosopher Bob Proctor, notes that we don't need to know how electricity works to make use of it; we don't worry about things like ohms and amps when we switch on a light—we simply want the lamp to become lit. So it goes with the law of attraction, too; preoccupying oneself with what's going on at the quantum level probably isn't necessary for beginners, because they're primarily interested in seeing the principle at work and not so caught up in the means by which it does. Besides, those who want to explore these aspects of conscious creation more fully have other more detailed offerings available to them, some of which are profiled later in this Chapter.

A number of the film's commentators will appear familiar to those well acquainted with metaphysical and self-help circles. Among those featured are entrepreneur John Assaraf, spiritualist Michael Beckwith, metaphysician Joe Vitale, psychologist John Gray, quantum physicists Fred Alan Wolf and John Hagelin, philosopher Bob

Proctor, and authors Lisa Nichols, Marci Shimoff, Hale Dwoskin, Bob Doyle, Jack Canfield and Neale Donald Walsch. Their insights are razor-sharp and succinct, never rambling or off point, a key ingredient in captivating and holding audience attention.

Like the marketing campaign that got the film noticed, the slick production values of “The Secret” permeate it from start to finish. Individual segments are well written, nicely paced and superbly edited in their presentation of theory, application and commentary. The illustrative vignettes are well produced, too, featuring fine performances and good examples.

Some viewers may inevitably make comparisons between this title and a film that preceded it, “What the #\$*! Do We (K)now!?” (2004) (also profiled in this Chapter). Superficially, there are similarities, including some of the subject matter, the use of fictional examples to accompany theoretical teachings, the inclusion of commentators throughout the narrative and even the use of some of the same experts. However, I believe the comparisons end there, as each title is ultimately designed to fulfill different purposes. The strength of “The Secret” lies in its ability to convey its teachings concisely for a primarily neophyte audience. Its predecessor, as will be seen in its write-up, is arguably more appropriate for those whose metaphysical education is a little more advanced, even though it does present its own recap of the basics. In each case, however, both are meaningful, worthwhile pictures, particularly when viewed in the context of their intended audiences.

So grab those charge cards, shoppers, and start browsing the Universe for what your hearts desire. But tune in to this film first so that you, too, can learn the secret—of success.

An Evolving Body of Work

“What the #\$*! Do We (K)now!?”

Year of Release: 2004

Principal Cast, Fictional Sequences: Marlee Matlin,

Elaine Hendrix, John Ross Bowie, Robert Bailey Jr.,

Barry Newman, Armin Shimerman, Robert Blanche, Michelle Mariana,

John Astin (voice, second edition)

Expert Commentators: Fred Alan Wolf, Amit Goswami, John Hagelin,

David Albert, Stuart Hameroff, Jeffrey Satinover,

Andrew Newberg, Daniel Monti, Joseph Dispenza,

Candace Pert, J.Z. Knight, William Tiller, Miceal Ledwith,

Lynne McTaggart (second edition), Dean Radin (second edition),

Masaru Emoto (second edition)

Directors: William Armtz, Betsy Chasse and Mark Vicente

Screenplay: William Armtz, Betsy Chasse,

Matthew Hoffman and Mark Vicente

Like the ever-changing colors in a kaleidoscope, reality is in a constant state of flux. Indeed, philosophers from Heraclitus to Jane Roberts and Seth have characterized this state of affairs by saying that existence is in “a constant state of becoming.” And what better way to reflect that than to create a film—or an emerging series thereof—that itself embodies this very notion. Such is the case with the sleeper hit, “What the #\$*! Do We (K)now!?” (more commonly known as “What the Bleep”).

So what the #\$*! is this picture with the funny-sounding name? And why should an average moviegoer want to see it? Sounds pretty %@^& weird.

I’ll admit that I was initially of that mindset. Despite the film’s metaphysical content, ordinarily a guaranteed draw for me, I was slow in embracing this movie. The initial descriptions I read didn’t do the picture justice, and I thought the title was just a little too precious for its own good. But, after numerous favorable recommendations from like-minded friends, and thanks to an astonishingly long initial theatrical run (who would have thought a film like this could have enough staying power to keep it in theaters, at least in Chicago, for several *months?*), I eventually relented and went to see it. And I’m glad I did. I was blown away by it and quickly became an ardent convert to this cinematic missive on the quantum gospel.

Perhaps the reason the initial descriptions didn't sound terribly flattering was the fact that this is a difficult film to pigeonhole, and I believe many mainstream critics didn't quite know what to make of it. Is it a documentary? A theatrical piece? An animated feature? Well, yes. And no. I guess you could say it's best described as a quasi-documentary on the nature of existence, with running commentary by experts in various scientific and spiritual fields, interspersed within a fictional, illustrative narrative that's further punctuated by innovative and often-humorous animation and stunningly gorgeous special effects. (Got that? Now you can see why it wasn't so easily categorized.) But, as unusual as this movie is (at least compared to most of the fare released to the viewing public), it works so well on so many levels.

At the risk of gross oversimplification, the film's underlying intent is to provide a rationale for understanding reality. (Simple enough task, right?) This is initially addressed through a detailed explanation of what happens at the so-called building blocks level—in the subatomic world, the realm of quantum physics, a discipline whose principles form the basis of what one commentator, physicist Amit Goswami, calls “the physics of possibility.” Through this analysis, we see how quantum mechanics provides a sensible model for explaining probability theory and how it serves as a means for understanding the emergence of prototype forms of existence. It's a model that works reasonably well, too—up to a point, that is.

As the discussion unfolds, we come to see, as research physicists did previously, that, at a certain point, this discipline starts to get goofy. Its mechanics become seemingly paradoxical, if not downright wacky, with explanations that stretch the credibility of those espousing them, no matter what their educational pedigrees are. But such is the world of quantum physics, a study that sheds an entirely new light on the way we look at things.

For instance, in one particularly significant sequence, the commentators discuss the quantum nature of electrons, those little subatomic particles that traditionally have been portrayed as being like tiny planets whizzing in orbits around stellar-like nuclear cores made up of protons and neutrons. These supposedly stable atomic building blocks were long thought to be solid particles. However, quantum physicists who studied electrons found that they were far

different. They discovered that electrons essentially exist as particles when being observed and as waves when not being observed. (Two forms of existence, and the shape it takes depends on...observation? Somebody tell me they're making this up!) This is like saying that a streetlight is on when your eyes are open and off when they're closed. How can that be? And where's the verifiable proof for something like that (which, quite conveniently, can't realistically be verified)? Yet, in the quantum world, not only is such a scenario plausible, it's likely. Even Alice's looking glass world seems normal by comparison.

The importance of that discussion is that it serves as a significant springboard to what follows (both here and in the film itself). Reluctant though researchers once were to admit that a viable model for existence could be based on something other than purely traditional scientific values, some of them (the more open-minded ones, that is) came to realize that they had to adjust their thinking. Slowly but surely, they became aware through their quantum observations that they had to make allowances—theoretically at least—for the impact of other influences, such as spirit and consciousness. (The example involving electrons alone would lend credence to the need for this.) Although the impact of these intangibles could not be conclusively proven scientifically, in many ways they also appeared to be the only viable explanations. Once these elements were plugged into the model, things again began to assume a semblance of sense, at least in terms of providing a degree of predictability or tendency—or *probability*—that wasn't present when they weren't factored in.

This, of course, raises the very valid question of why we should care about all these pie-in-the-sky considerations. ("Interesting, but so what?" you might say.) Well, if we understand that our consciousness, the mechanism that observes and assesses reality, can directly affect the state of something as fundamental as subatomic particles, then we obviously have input into how these elemental building blocks take shape. (OK, so this might generate some moderate amusement.) Now, if we consider that these subatomic particles that are so readily capable of being influenced are in everything around and inside of us, then our observation of them carries considerable weight, for it means our consciousness has the potential to mold our very existence and every aspect that goes into it. (OK, so now your interest is piqued.) And what if we then contemplate what it would

be like to start using our consciousness to alter those building blocks of reality in ways that result in a state of being more to our liking? With that, my friends, you have conscious creation, at least in terms of how it operates on a mechanical level. (And, if that doesn't grab your attention, I don't know what will.)

But, even with this new understanding, some of you still might say that, when all of these concepts are expressed in theoretical scientific and metaphysical terms, they seem so dry and dull. That's where the creators of "What the Bleep" had such a brilliant realization: Why not present these concepts through meaningful examples that viewers can easily relate to? That's where the film's fictional narrative comes in.

The fictional sequences follow the life of Amanda (Marlee Matlin), an uptight, pill-popping photographer who has issues with seemingly everything—men, marriage, body image and New Age thought, among other considerations. Yet something inside her is nudging her to reexamine her beliefs in these areas; otherwise, she wouldn't continually attract a cavalcade of mentors who gently prompt her into questioning her prevailing outlook. Among those who cross her path are her quirky roommate (Elaine Hendrix), her flirty boss (Barry Newman), an art exhibit docent (Michelle Mariana), a passing stranger (Armin Shimerman), a gallant wedding guest (John Ross Bowie) and a young basketball whiz (Robert Bailey Jr.).

Through her encounters with these unlikely teachers, Amanda takes the first steps toward using conscious creation to reshape her beliefs and her life. This, of course, provides the movie with the means to show how the process impacts all aspects of daily living. Complementing Amanda's explorations in these areas are the comments of the experts, who routinely chime in with their insights and special wisdom. The eclectic panel of speakers includes physicists Fred Alan Wolf, Amit Goswami, John Hagelin and David Albert; medical professionals Stuart Hameroff, Jeffrey Satinover, Andrew Newberg, Daniel Monti and Joseph Dispenza; molecular biologist Candace Pert; spiritualist J.Z. Knight and her channeled entity Ramtha; subtle energy researcher William Tiller; and religion professor Miceal Ledwith.

Through these discussions and the accompanying examples, numerous themes emerge, but I found two particularly striking,

especially when they're examined in tandem. First, if our consciousness influences the functioning of the Universe in the subatomic realm, then the building block components present at that level will conform to how our thoughts, feelings, beliefs and intentions shape them, as if they were hunks of clay being molded in our hands. With that said, it means everyone's existence will thus be a tailor-made, individualized creation, fundamentally distinct from everyone else's. It also means that the science of reality is not the objective study we thought it to be. Indeed, it is much more *subjective* than most of us have probably ever considered, and this picture shows us precisely how that is so. That's worth bearing in mind when we think about how we each create our own realities.

Second, the film illustrates reality's inherent interconnectedness. When we consider that the building blocks we use to shape existence permeate everything, then it's obvious there's an innate linkage binding everything to everything else. The qualifier that distinguishes each of our individual realities is, again, consciousness, because it provides the focusing mechanism for the specific range of *personal* connections within the infinite range of *all potential* connections that we choose to explore. The specific connections we select help to define the tendencies, or probabilities, that comprise the principal elements or themes of our particular existences. However, as we go about our individual explorations of reality, we would be wise to remember that this boundless repertoire of all possible connections is always present; we can tap into any of them at any time, enabling us to choose new avenues of exploration at any given moment, based on whatever beliefs we then hold. (More on connectedness in Chapter 8.)

When these two themes are combined, they raise a fundamental question that many of us have probably asked ourselves and that the commentators pose outright: If we have the full range of potential existence available to us, and we're the ones responsible for which realities we manifest, then why do we continually create the same thing over and over again? This is a particularly relevant question if we're not happy with the results we produce.

In large part, I believe this happens because many of us have never allowed ourselves to address these issues in these ways. There's a wide range of possible reasons for that (*e.g.*, religious upbringing, scientific

bias, general lack of interest), and such explanations signal how the scenarios outlined in Chapters 1 and 2 have been able to persist for as long as they have. Consequently, since we've never paid much attention to these issues before, we've also never generated an awareness of the metaphysical mechanics we need for addressing them.

Furthermore, as the film shows in its discussion of how consciousness affects human physiology at the quantum level, the materialization methodology that many of us use for most aspects of everyday life amounts to little more than a form of "belief addiction" (and one that carries a potent biochemical component with it). As addicts of this kind, we've conditioned ourselves metaphysically *and* biochemically to repeatedly re-create behaviors and circumstances that give us our daily fix. It can be difficult to change this behavior, mainly because many of us aren't even cognizant of this dependency in the first place. What we truly need is inspiration capable of enlightening us about this, steering us in new directions and making it possible for us to get off the addiction treadmill.

"What the Bleep" does an excellent job in addressing these issues and providing clear explanations of what we need to do to move forward in new ways. By shedding light on these conditions and making us aware of the alternatives that are available to change them, we have the resources to strike out in new and more satisfying directions.

Such is the stuff of which evolution—that constant state of becoming—is made. And even the creators of "What the Bleep" have gotten into the evolutionary act in their own way. In 2006, a second version of the picture was released, titled "What the Bleep: Down the Rabbit Hole." This new edition is neither a sequel nor a director's cut but is instead a new take on the original. The same basic approach is followed, and all of the original questions are again addressed, but the discussion flows differently. In this iteration, the fictional narrative has been scaled back in favor of more interview footage with the experts, including new commentary by all of the original speakers and the addition of three more gurus, researcher Masaru Emoto, physicist Dean Radin and author Lynne McTaggart. There is also the inclusion of several animated sequences for explaining various scientific principles featuring the venerable Dr. Quantum (voiced by actor John Astin).

Both the original and remixed versions are technically excellent in all regards. The editing is especially masterful in its intercutting of theory and application. Virtually every comment by every expert interviewed is a gem of metaphysical or scientific wisdom; there's no fluff or filler here. Accompanying all this are fine production values in everything from special effects to musical score to art direction. In every respect, both editions of the film are knockouts.

As much as I thoroughly enjoyed this picture, it still amazes me that this unlikely title has had such a tremendous impact. Moviegoers who I never thought would be into material like this have told me they've seen it and loved it. (I guess that reveals a limiting belief of mine, now doesn't it?) Perhaps its popularity stems from a hunger to find answers and direction that have not been forthcoming through more conventional channels, like mainstream religion or traditional science. Perhaps it truly is time for a new paradigm in the world, and the "What the Bleep" school of thought is providing the means to help birth it. In that sense, its contribution to cinema in particular and the wider world in general is arguably more than just evolutionary; it's revolutionary as well.

Double Feature: Out of the Minds of Babes

"The Indigo Evolution"

Year of Release: 2006

*Principal Cast: Doreen Virtue, Gary Zukav, Masaru Emoto,
Don Miguel Ruiz, Neale Donald Walsch*

Directors: Kent Romney and James F. Twyman

"Indigo"

Year of Release: 2003

*Principal Cast: Meghan McCandless, Neale Donald Walsch,
Sarah Rutan, Gregory Linington, Dane Bowman, Lynette Louise*

Director: Stephen Simon

Screenplay: James Twyman and Neale Donald Walsch

Wouldn't it be something if we all came into this world knowing why we're here and what we were meant to accomplish? On top of that, wouldn't it be great if we arrived with capabilities that enabled

us to work miracles with remarkable ease, making conscious creation look like the play it's really meant to be? That appears to be happening now with the emergence of a whole new group of children who have been variously called "the crystal children" or "the children of Oz" but who are perhaps best known as "the Indigos." These exceptional kids are the subject of two revealing films, "The Indigo Evolution" and "Indigo."

So who are these Indigo children? Well, that's difficult to define with certainty, but be assured they're neither the offspring of bluebloods, the groupies of a folk rock duo nor smurfs who stayed out in the sun too long. Rather, they're kids who have been born over the past 20 to 30 years, in steadily increasing numbers, who have arrived with a strong sense of self and a ready awareness of who they are, why they're here and what destinies they're meant to fulfill, truly visionary conscious creators in many respects. They frequently possess strong artistic and spiritual sensibilities, as well as such paranormal skills as telepathy, clairvoyance, a capacity for healing and astute past life recall. Many refer to these capabilities as "special gifts." But, as special as we might find many of these skills, Indigos tend to think of them as perfectly natural components of our being. They would likely say that these skills are our birthright and that they're just more ready, willing and able than most of us to put them to use in shaping their everyday lives. To this end, then, one of their main purposes in being here, apparently, is to make us more aware of what we already possess but that most of us have allowed to remain dormant or become atrophied. (They've got their work cut out for them, but I'm glad they're here.)

According to Lee Carroll and Jan Tober, authors of *The Indigo Children*,⁵ the first reference to these youngsters is believed to have appeared in the 1982 book *Understanding Your Life Through Color*⁶ by educator and parapsychologist Nancy Ann Tappe.⁷ Carroll and Tober write that Tappe was the first to note the dominant placement of this color in the children's auric fields, the energy bodies that form bubble-like capsules around our corporeal selves. The predominant appearance of this dark blue hue in their auras hence gave rise to the term that identifies them. The presence of indigo auric energy distinguishes these youngsters from those born in prior generations, whose prevailing colors are generally different. This is

not to suggest that all children being born now are Indigos; individual variations occur in every generation, even today. However, these new kids appear to be arriving in ever-growing numbers, and their presence has been hard to ignore. They have been steadily garnering wider public attention, too, even in such bastions of traditionalism as the mainstream media.

So why all the fuss about dark blue energy? Pamela Oslie, author of the book *Life Colors*, writes that the prevalence of specific colors in the auric field is indicative of particular qualities that help to define one's character, abilities and outlook,⁸ and the traits associated with the color indigo mark the appearance of a new set of characteristics compared to those born with other auric color makeups. Individual variations in personal qualities occur within particular color schemes, even among Indigos, but certain traits tend to dominate, such as the pronounced artistic, spiritual and paranormal qualities mentioned earlier. Some other common characteristics of Indigos, according to Carroll and Tober, are a sense of "deserving to be here," difficulty with absolute authority (especially if unexplained), frustration with meaningless ritual, an ability to see how to streamline procedures and an unabashed ability to seek fulfillment of their needs.⁹

They are also often brutally honest, voracious learners and startlingly compassionate. That combination of qualities, when added to their other sensibilities, generally makes them a bright, articulate bunch, but the sometimes-contradictory nature of their character can also make them a lot to handle, especially to those unaccustomed to dealing with children so forthright and demonstrative in expressing themselves.

"The Indigo Evolution," an excellent documentary co-directed by spiritual activist James F. Twyman, takes an in-depth look at these children and the phenomenon they represent. It includes segments about the colorful lives of these enigmatic youths, their creative and spiritual messages for the world, and the challenges (and opportunities) that they and their families face in a world slow to embrace sociocultural innovation and spiritual evolution. Intercut with these sequences are interviews with some of these kids and their parents, members of various professions (education, medicine and psychiatry mostly) who must cope with the special needs of

these youngsters, and a number of metaphysical teachers and activists who offer their perspectives on the children and what they bring to the world, including Doreen Virtue, Gary Zukav, Don Miguel Ruiz, Masaru Emoto and Neale Donald Walsch. There is also an especially engaging sequence about the appearance of Indigos in Native American culture, a development prophesied in folklore long ago.

In addition, the documentary addresses, at least by inference, some of the contentions of skeptics, who often feel that all the talk about these new kids is just so much New Age hype. Unfortunately, many of these skeptics are in positions of authority, and their actions in handling (or mishandling) these children can have profound consequences.

For example, because Indigos have such a strong sense of self-awareness and different sensibilities, they often question officialdom in various aspects of life, like education. They need to know the value and purpose of learning what they're being taught, including the whys and hows of instruction. Once they understand, if they believe in the authenticity and validity of what they're being told, they generally go along quite willingly. But, if they sense deception or rote, inflexible protocol, they'll rebel, often vehemently, and simply saying "Because I said so" to them has little impact on their behavior. Because of this, Indigos present a unique set of schooling challenges to educators.

However, the skeptics charge, is their behavior a genuinely different sensibility or merely the result of excessive coddling? Progressive thinkers have looked for innovative ways to cope with these challenges, such as alternative study programs. But those who are less open-minded have often resorted to resolving the issue by simply branding Indigos as suffering from such conditions as ADHD or even some forms of autism and prescribing drugs to "treat" them.

This, of course, raises all sorts of questions of whether such diagnoses arise out of real legitimacy or mere convenience. These circumstances present tremendous challenges for these kids, to be sure, and they're courageous conscious creators for willingly going along with these co-created scenarios to help educate the unenlightened on the folly and intolerance of their limited beliefs. And the commentators would appear to concur. As author Doreen Virtue

puts it during one of her interview sequences, she believes that, where Indigos are concerned, ADHD is not an acronym for Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder but an abbreviation for Attention Dialed into a Higher Dimension.

As dour as some of these prospects are, however, there is also much to be celebrated about Indigos, particularly in the arts. Their accomplishments in music and painting, for instance, are often quite something for those of such tender ages—prodigies in every sense of the word. They also have a beautiful way of expressing themselves verbally, with an elegant simplicity, clarity and candor that we could all learn from. In addition, they have a special form of communication they use with one another known as “the grid,” a sort of psychic Internet that many of them appear able to tap into (and you thought Wi-Fi was cutting-edge). Truly, they have much to offer—and much to teach—a world desperately in need of inspiration, direction and guidance.

In contrast to the documentary approach of the foregoing film, “Indigo” presents a fictional story about these special children. This movie, created by many of the same principals involved in “The Indigo Evolution,” straddles the fence of a traditional theatrical picture and an introductory piece about these youngsters (it actually preceded the documentary and in many ways prompted its successor’s creation, due to viewer desire for more substantive information).

A series of misfortunes, coupled with a pattern of inherently dysfunctional behavior, leads to the collapse of the comfortable home life of Ray Calloway (Neale Donald Walsch), a successful but arrogant Oregon businessman. His family eventually scatters, and Ray is left to pick up the pieces. Assisting him is an unlikely accomplice—his granddaughter, Grace (Meghan McCandless), a perky, assiduous young Indigo who teaches her cynical and skeptical grandfather about her enlightened take on the world and the special ways of her peers. Together, they embark on a journey, literally and figuratively, to rebuild the family and heal a host of old wounds.

Interestingly, this rather unusual story line basically follows a fairly conventional formula, that of a road trip/buddy movie. As they make their trek, both halves of this seemingly mismatched pair come to know one another better, developing a bond and an understanding that wasn’t present at the start of their odyssey. Flashback

sequences are also included to show how Ray's life came to be so troubled, providing the basis for Grace's interventions for helping to restore balance and well-being in the family.

In undertaking all this, the script regrettably becomes a bit convoluted at times, taking a few too many twists and turns for its own good, arguably placing more emphasis on the sometimes-melodramatic narrative than on insights into the nature of Indigos. Also, Grace's character is occasionally portrayed as something of a *wunderkind*, perhaps a bit too evolved even for an Indigo. The film's production values leave something to be desired at times, too, but that's not terribly surprising, considering that this movie was created on a shoestring budget. Getting the word out about these kids was obviously a greater concern here, and, on that point, "Indigo" succeeds. It does a very capable job of showing how Indigos put their talents to use in working wonders and performing a wide range of much-needed fence-mending. Had it played to this strength more, it likely would have been a much better picture. But, when it's viewed in conjunction with the documentary that succeeded it, the pair makes for a good double bill.

Perhaps the most important point we can take away from both of these films is an awakening to the possibility of the human potential. How ironic that our children should be our teachers in this regard. But, in many respects, they may truly represent our future as physical beings, possibly even marking the emergence of a new species of human, *Homo noeticus*, or "the knowing human," as speculated by author Caroline Myss.¹⁰ That could well be the main message of these children and these movies, helping us to see the Indigo evolution that's today taking place in us all.

One Quantum Leap for Mankind

“Contact”

Year of Release: 1997

Principal Cast: Jodie Foster, Matthew McConaughey,
James Woods, Tom Skerritt, Jena Malone, David Morse,
William Fichtner, Angela Bassett, Rob Lowe, Jake Busey, John Hurt

Director: Robert Zemeckis

Screenplay: James V. Hart and Michael Goldenberg

Story: Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan

Book: Carl Sagan, *Contact*

Nineteenth Century French physiologist Claude Bernard, author of *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine*, maintained that “men who have excessive faith in their theories or ideas are not only ill-prepared for making discoveries; they also make poor observations.”¹¹ Yet it’s ironic that this very statement could just as readily be applied to the discipline in which Bernard so fervently placed his own faith—science—as it could to any other system of hypothesis, such as spirituality. After all, science, like any other doctrine requiring any degree of faith, is inherently based on—you guessed it—beliefs. Still, all irony aside, Bernard’s advice is sound, for putting blinders on can keep one from truly great revelations, discoveries that could potentially benefit all of mankind. Searching for the harmonious balance of inspired hypothesis and hard-nosed observation, as well as the degree of faith to be put into each, is a challenge faced by the disciples of both the scientific and spiritual camps, and perhaps nowhere is this exploration better portrayed than in the absorbing metaphysical drama, “Contact.”

I call this movie a metaphysical drama, rather than a sci-fi film, as it’s perhaps better known, because I believe science provides a mere pretext for the underlying story, the search for that aforementioned harmony, a metaphysical quest if ever I saw one. We can thank the genius of astronomer Carl Sagan for that. As one who was schooled in traditional science, Sagan remained true to his roots, but he also made cautious allowances for the potential existence of “something more” in explaining the workings of the Universe, always couching them in caveats of the need for proof to substantiate claims. Yet, in openly linking the realms of science and spirit—a courageous move

for someone who risked significant backlash from the turf-protecting powers-that-be in both arenas—Sagan shepherded this question out of the shadows and into the light of public debate. In doing so, he also fueled interest in cosmology, the field of study focused on exploring the interrelatedness of everything and the connections that make it possible. (For more on connection, see Chapter 8.) Beginning with *Cosmos*, his ambitious, highly acclaimed 1980 PBS television series in which these issues were first raised in a substantive way, Sagan and cowriter Ann Druyan expanded on the ideas they examined in that initial effort in creating the story for “Contact,” a fictional exploration into this most sublime of inquiries.

The film presents the amazing odyssey of Dr. Ellie Arroway (Jodie Foster), an enthusiastic young astronomer involved in SETI, the Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence, a program designed to seek contact with alien life through the monitoring of radio telescope signals. As inspired and idealistic as she is about her work, however, Ellie is met with considerable skepticism from the close-minded administrator who controls her program’s purse strings, National Science Foundation director Dr. David Drumlin (Tom Skerritt). When Drumlin pulls the plug on SETI’s funding, Ellie and her cohorts are forced to seek private financing to continue, which they eventually secure through the magnanimous contributions of an eccentric industrialist, S.R. Hadden (John Hurt). The program resumes but again faces shutdown when it fails to produce any noteworthy results—that is, until something shocking happens to change everything.

As all this unfolds, Ellie meets an aspiring author, Palmer Joss (Matthew McConaughey), a former divinity student and self-described “man of the cloth without a cloth.” Palmer is writing a book about the pervasive impact of science and technology on society and the attendant loss of faith accompanying its proliferation. The ardent scientist and the devout spiritual activist seem like a mismatched couple, yet they nevertheless launch themselves into an on-again/off-again romance that wends its way throughout the story line. Their involvement is more than just the obligatory love interest that most films feel so blindly compelled to include. Rather, their relationship plays a highly symbolic role, moving the narrative along in significant ways and taking it in some unexpected directions (and for reasons other than simple superfluous passion).

In addition, through flashback sequences, we see how Ellie's interests arose in science, astronomy and the search for contact. These segments, featuring a young version of the protagonist (Jena Malone), do more than just provide interesting supplemental background on her formative years; they show us why those years were indeed formative in the truest sense of the word—namely, how she got onto her particular life path and why.

All of these intertwining plots eventually combine and culminate in an adventure that richly examines the nature of reality, the roles that science and spirit play in that cosmic dance, the contributions we consciously and unconsciously make as individuals to that unfolding drama, and mankind's capacity and desire for exploration in these and other cosmically significant areas. And what a ride it is! Further adding to this heady mix are the contributions of a cast of colorful supporting characters, including the pompous spoutings of a fundamentalist preacher (Rob Lowe), the paranoid ravings of an opportunist national security advisor (James Woods), the incoherent ramblings of a bizarre cult leader (Jake Busey) and the conciliatory efforts of a presidential aide trying to keep everyone grounded (Angela Bassett). Fasten your seatbelts for this one, folks!

This movie is so strong on so many levels that it's difficult to know which aspects to single out. Arguably, its greatest asset is its exploration of the science and spirit question in all its myriad ways and how each of these elements (representative of the components of the magical approach) factors into the conscious creation equation. Ellie faces the greatest challenges in this respect. As a pious practitioner of traditional science, she contends that all knowledge is best understood through the language of science (a product of the intellect) and that all other forms of alleged wisdom, such as those that come from spirituality or religion (the progeny of the intuition), are little more than unprovable superstitious delusions (never mind the fact, as one character points out to her, that 95% of the planet has bought into what she so lightly dismisses as a collective imagined fantasy). Yet, as zealously committed as she is to her scientific beliefs, Ellie is also continually confronted—and confounded—by the appearance of things spiritual in her life. Since these phenomena embody the antithesis of her convictions, she tries diligently to dismiss them, ridding herself of these pesky intrusions

upon her rational worldview. But those nagging issues stubbornly persist, rising up squarely in her face, begging to be addressed.

From a conscious creation perspective, the continued appearance of these issues in Ellie's existence indicates a desire on her part to reconcile them for herself; after all, if she didn't feel that way, then she wouldn't continue to attract them into her reality. As the story unfolds, she periodically kicks, screams and lashes out as she moves through the reconciliation process, but move through it she ultimately does, eventually attaining a broadened perspective for having done so. By implication, this should make her a better practitioner of conscious creation and the magical approach, for her awareness becomes more attuned to the influences of both elements that make it work. She even seems to have a vague sense of this as she goes through the process, for, at one point, she speculates, somewhat out of character and off the cuff but with utter sincerity, "I always thought life was what you make of it." That's quite a revelation—and an even bigger admission.

The flashbacks take on special significance in light of this, for they reveal to us how Ellie reached this point in the first place. We see how her childhood experiences galvanized the beliefs that she carried forth with her into adulthood. Those experiences set the tone for the particular line of probability she would eventually choose to explore, including the challenges she encountered. I can't say I've ever seen a film that illustrates this aspect of conscious creation any better; it shows clearly how the character's beliefs arose, gelled, blossomed and played out over the course of her lifetime, and it does so without ever beating viewers over the head to make its point.

As noted earlier, the intermittent romance of Ellie and Palmer is highly significant, too, not only for how it carries the story forward, but also for its inherent symbolism. Each partner in this relationship represents the participants in the grand dance of the Universe, with Ellie playing the role of science and Palmer as spirit. Their constant coming together, splitting apart and impassioned reunions mimic the intricate steps of that elaborate cosmic tango. What's more, the noticeably anxious discomfort they often exhibit toward one another (despite an underlying wellspring of genuine love and affection and an acute awareness of the need to be together) reflects the conflicted feelings that many of us have about the nature of the

relationship between science and spirit. They mirror back to us how we feel about this arrangement, one in which we're not entirely sure how the pieces fit together, even though we know they somehow belong with one another. All of this is accomplished without ever becoming obvious or overblown. This is truly poetic filmmaking.

I'm also particularly taken with the fact that this story deals with the issues of science and spirit through the lens of astronomy. Think of the words and expressions we typically use to describe what astronomy studies: "Space," the term most often applied to what lies beyond our world, is generally looked upon as a scientific expression, cold and objective. This is in contrast to "the heavens," a more euphemistic term that generally carries spiritual and mystical connotations. In "Contact," we're presented with a realm above us that embodies qualities of both terms, creating an elegant ambiguity of what it's really like and reflective of the indefinable relationship between the forces that went into making it, all as painted on the canvas that is astronomy. Again, the deft way in which this is handled, without ever resorting to blatancy, makes for great cinema.

I genuinely believe that this is the best film from director Robert Zemeckis, far outstripping the achievements of his more popular offerings ("Who Framed Roger Rabbit?" (1988) and "Romancing the Stone" (1984), see Chapters 6 and 10, respectively) and even his award-winning work ("Forrest Gump" (1994), see Chapter 11). Its production values are top-notch from beginning to end and apparent in every aspect of the picture. The writing, editing, special effects, soundtrack and cinematography are all first-rate, and the performances are excellent throughout, particularly those turned in by Foster, Woods and Hurt. Sadly, this movie was seriously overlooked for awards consideration, receiving only one Oscar nomination and one Golden Globe nomination and taking home neither honor. That's too bad, because I believe those who hand out the statuettes really missed out on a grand opportunity to reward a deserving film.

Fortunately, a similar fate didn't befall Ellie. She made the most of her opportunity, successfully managing to avoid the irony of Claude Bernard's admonition. She didn't allow blind faith in her belief in science to keep her from making grand discoveries or meritorious observations for her benefit and that of the rest of us. And, in so doing, she truly took one quantum leap for all of mankind.

Putting Theory Into Practice

“Mindwalk”

Year of Release: 1990

Principal Cast: Liv Ullmann, Sam Waterston, John Heard, Ione Skye

Director: Bernt Capra

Screenplay: Floyd Byars and Fritjof Capra

Story: Bernt Capra

Learning about theories of conscious creation, metaphysics and quantum mechanics is a wonderful and enriching pursuit, but what do you do with it when you're done? In the end, how do such abstractions really relate to everyday living, especially in the context of the world beyond our doorsteps, one beset by an array of seemingly unsolvable problems? Those are valid questions, and we're just now on the verge of beginning to understand how to use these philosophical tools to address them. One valuable approach is to play with probabilities and speculate how they might evolve out of taking particular actions. This involves following lines of thought from working hypotheses through all of the possible ramifications to potential end points, all the while keeping an eye on related influences that could take envisioned outcomes in markedly different directions. Sounds too complicated? It needn't be, especially since a valuable tutorial about this can be found in the movie, “Mindwalk.”

Like other films in this Chapter, this one is also hard to categorize. It primarily presents a series of conversations among three individuals sharing a day together after a “chance” encounter. Scientist Sonia Hoffman (Liv Ullmann), politician Jack Edwards (Sam Waterston) and poet Thomas Harriman (John Heard) are all distinguished but disillusioned souls, each feeling as though they've been let down by their chosen professions. They find their way to the French abbey of Mont St. Michel, unaware of what's drawing them there but quietly hoping that it will provide the solace and answers they seek. In the process, they find one another and engage in a plethora of dialogues running the gamut of topics (think “My Dinner with Andre” (1981), only with much more interesting, and eminently more relevant, conversations).

Much of the initial discussion delves into science (particularly quantum mechanics), philosophy, metaphysics and the relationship of them all to one another. Once the theoretical groundwork is in place, the discourse then veers off into a host of different directions, exploring how these ideas can be applied practically. The result is a mesmerizing series of exchanges on everything from medicine to the environment to the allocation of global resources, including how decisions in each of these areas are to be made.

The movie is loosely based on Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics*, the groundbreaking book on the uncanny similarities of science and spirit, specifically showing how quantum physics and Eastern mysticism closely mirror one another. Although the film is fictional in the minimalist sense of the word, its content primarily is not. It essentially provides a forum to present many of Capra's innovative ideas through the experiences and perspectives of the three leads.

Sonia, a former laser scientist, has sought retreat at the abbey and lives there more or less full time. She has become a recluse, cutting herself off from those who let her down both professionally and personally. Unfortunately, she has also cut herself off from those she cares about, such as her daughter (Ione Skye), and a world in need of the vast storehouse of knowledge she possesses. In many ways, she comes to personify the concept of an ivory tower, a citizen of the world but one who is definitely not in it. It's also ironic that a scientist would choose a spiritual site as a locale into which to retreat. (Maybe these disciplines really aren't so different after all.)

Jack, a U.S. senator coming off a recently unsuccessful bid for the presidency, feels detached from the vocation he once so loved. He laments the culture of the Beltway, having to spend so much time, energy and effort engaged in playing politics that he feels unable to accomplish most of what he sets out to do. He is a lost soul seeking reconnection, a healthy infusion of inspiration, and a means that will enable him to reach his objectives and aid the greater good.

Thomas, a poet and playwright once involved in the New York arts scene, has fled to France to seek a saner and more meaningful life. Although he may not have an answer for what he wants, he at least knows what he doesn't, and so he purposely leaves behind what no longer serves him to search more fertile ground for personal and artistic fulfillment.

Employing characters from these three vocations to move the dialogues forward is both interesting and symbolically significant from a conscious creation perspective, for each is highly representational of the concepts involved. For instance, Sonia, the scientist, serves as a metaphor for the intellect and pure rational wisdom. By contrast, Thomas, the artist, signifies spirit and the intuition. Jack, the politician and the man in the middle, embodies consciousness, the arbitrator of these two elements in belief formation and the ultimate “policy maker,” both politically and metaphysically.

The relationships among these three characters draw upon these symbolic qualities as well. For example, Jack (consciousness) implicitly needs the input of both Sonia (intellect) and Thomas (intuition) if he/it is going to form appropriate beliefs and make the magical approach work. He/it can't function properly without both. At the same time, Jack is also well aware of the mediating role that he must play, both overtly as a politician and symbolically as a representation of consciousness. He doesn't hesitate to question—even play devil's advocate—when necessary if something strikes him as being incomplete, slanted or not entirely kosher. On one occasion after Sonia expounds at length about one of her proposed ideas, Jack is quick to scrutinize her contentions, asking (albeit somewhat rhetorically) who has the right to set the template for everyone in a particular venture if the proposal doesn't suit everyone's needs. He thus lives up to his innate obligation to employ fairness in the input assessment process. (Thank goodness consciousness does that; now, if we can just get those politicians to follow suit...)

Disillusioned though these characters might be, they fortunately have access to the protocol of conscious creation to help turn their realities around. However, as the film illustrates, they are each just beginning to see how they can use it to reshape their worlds. Each seems to have a piece of the puzzle, but none of them has the entire picture (as was generally the case in the world at large at the time this movie was made and when the source material was written). Their encounter with one another helps to shed light on the larger process of which each of them, as individual components, is part. And now that they've been brought together, they have an opportunity for coalescence, to pool their respective talents and combine their collective resources to address common problems and effect mutually satisfying solutions.

Education is a key starting point in this, and that's where Sonia's contributions are most valuable. With her voluminous intellect, she has information to share on seemingly everything from the functioning of quantum particles to health statistics about children in third world countries. Thomas, by contrast, as an artist, spins the information she imparts, extracting the salient elements, polishing them with his own particular take and providing observations nuanced with his intuitionally driven sensibilities. Jack's job is to collect the input from both of them to make educated decisions about which in-forming beliefs to generate to make the manifestation of workable solutions possible.

Before those beliefs are finalized, however, we get to see how they can be deployed in trial runs for assessment. In these tests, proposed beliefs are put through a "what if" mechanism to see how they ultimately play out. In one instance, for example, the trio discusses the reallocation of funds for medical purposes. With a shifting in priorities (*i.e.*, a change in beliefs), Sonia explains how something as simple as promoting changes in dietary habits, like the consumption of less red meat, can potentially lead to considerably fewer heart-related illnesses and, consequently, reduced rates of cardiac care treatment procedures. This, in turn, she contends, can free up financial resources earmarked for these potentially preventable illnesses, allowing them to be used to treat other conditions that are overlooked due to a lack of funds.

Of course, because conscious creation is a belief-based materialization practice, the contention that red meat necessarily leads to cardiac trouble is just as much a belief as a notion that asserts just the opposite. So would the proposed scenario that Sonia raises have validity? As with any other projected probability, it all depends on the beliefs involved. If enough people buy into it, the proposal could very well take hold; if not, it won't; and, if some do and some don't, it would languish somewhere in between. The degree to which a particular projection takes root ultimately depends on the degree to which we concur with the beliefs that underlie it. The purpose of a test drive is to see whether the proposal finds favor at the elemental belief level and merits further consideration for manifestation.

This is an important point to bear in mind while watching this picture. It was made in 1990, and it represents something of a time

capsule of the period's beliefs. Some of the ideas are still relevant, some have fallen from grace, and others are still flopping about like fish on a dock, waiting to be acted upon or discarded. In that regard, as discussed in this Chapter's introduction, this movie thus reflects the beliefs that were prevalent in the consciousness when it was filmed. They don't all necessarily carry the same relevance now as they did then, but they certainly mirrored what was being concentrated upon at the time.

"Mindwalk" is an engrossing piece of cinema from start to finish. But, given its distinctive format, viewers should bear in mind that it's not the kind of film that can be treated as background noise or watched casually while ironing or rehangng the drapes. It requires attention for its information to percolate into one's awareness. Given that, think of it as an ideal movie companion to curl up with on a rainy Saturday afternoon; that way, viewers are more likely to get the greatest impact out of watching this inspired, thought-provoking picture.

The performances of Ullmann, Waterston and Heard are all capable, and their dialogue, talky though it is at times, is generally well written. The cinematography is also stellar, showing off the abbey in all its glory, with superb locale shots featured throughout. Regrettably, the film is currently available only in VHS format, though it periodically airs on various cable networks.

The promise of science to solve the world's problems has fallen under considerable scrutiny in recent years, especially when it has been seen as being employed with ulterior motives or purely selfish ends as part of the mix. This in itself has contributed to the desire to draw spirit back into the equation. According to Fritjof Capra, however, science and spirit should not be thought of as mutually exclusive, and "Mindwalk" clearly demonstrates that. As he observed in his pioneering book, modern physics can provide a way—or *Tao*—to spiritual awakening and self-awareness.¹² And, as conscious creators would likely contend, that's good news for all of us.

Author's Notebook: My experience in discovering this film recalls yet another beguiling anecdote from the annals of conscious creation. I had just returned from a Seth conference (how ironic is that?) and was waiting to meet an acquaintance for dinner. He had a history of tardiness and unreliability, but I was still anxious to meet

so we could discuss all of the weekend's interesting developments, especially since we shared an affinity for metaphysical subjects. As time passed, however, he neither called nor showed, and I began doing a slow burn. To put myself at ease, I flipped on the TV and began cable surfing, looking for a suitable distraction. After a few minutes, I landed on "Mindwalk" on one of the premium channels. I was moderately intrigued at first, but, the more I watched, the more enthralled I became. I was intimately drawn into the discussions, my attention rapt on the screen before me. I found the film particularly engaging since many of its conversations echoed many of the topics that I had just addressed at the workshop (talk about less-than-subtle reinforcement). By the time it ended, I was relaxed, refreshed, reinvigorated and exceedingly satisfied with what I had learned that weekend, both during *and after* the conference.

And, as for that dinner companion, well, he never showed. But that's fine, for, after having taken the time to watch this movie, I felt more nourished by it than any meal ever could have provided.

Bonus Features:

"Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back": When the student is ready, the teacher will appear. Although this second installment in the original "Star Wars" series was primarily meant to bridge the story from the first film to the third, detailing the evil empire's backlash against the upstart Jedi rebel forces, it also offers an indoctrination into that mysterious all-encompassing power known as The Force (see the Introduction). This is accomplished through the tutelage of the young Jedi fighter, Luke Skywalker (Mark Hamill), by the sage Jedi master, Yoda (voiced by Frank Oz). This is by far the most mesmerizing aspect of the movie, essentially offering a conscious creation primer in a fictional format. Great sci-fi fun with a thoughtful metaphysical twist. (1980; Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher, Billy Dee Williams, Anthony Daniels, David Prowse, Peter Mayhew, Kenny Baker, Alec Guinness, Frank Oz (voice), James Earl Jones (voice); Irvin Kershner, director; Leigh Brackett and Lawrence Kasdan, screenplay; George Lucas, story; one Oscar win on three nominations, one Special Achievement Award Oscar, one Golden Globe nomination)

“Forces of Nature”: An uptight but eminently trustworthy groom-to-be (Ben Affleck) gets a serious case of cold feet when seeds of doubt unexpectedly get planted in his head. To test his beliefs in matrimony, he unwittingly draws upon the law of attraction to summon forth highly synchronistic circumstances—the forces of nature at work—to show him the pros and cons of marriage. This all plays out over the course of a road trip from his home in New York to his fiancée’s family estate in Savannah, Georgia, the site of the wedding, with an intriguing and attractive stranger (Sandra Bullock) who’s part vamp, part mentor and part walking disaster. A thoroughly entertaining romantic comedy with clever art direction and touches of surreal cinematography. (1999; Ben Affleck, Sandra Bullock, Maura Tierney, David Strickland, Steve Zahn, Meredith Scott Lynn, Blythe Danner, Ronny Cox, Michael Fairman, Janet Carroll, Richard Schiff, Jack Kehler; Bronwen Hughes, director; Marc Lawrence, screenplay)

“Enlightenment Guaranteed” (*Erleuchtung garantiert*): Two brothers (Uwe Ochsenknecht, Gustav-Peter Wöhler) leave their home in Germany and travel to Japan to visit a monastery, hoping the experience will teach them about the ways of Zen and provide them with much-sought-after enlightenment. Their trip quickly becomes an outwardly manifested learning laboratory, showing them the teachings they seek in ways more potent than what they had bargained for, a recipe sure to guarantee enlightenment. A gentle comedy for an unlikely subject. (1999; Uwe Ochsenknecht, Gustav-Peter Wöhler, Petra Zieser, Ulrike Kriener, Anica Dobra; Doris Dörrie, director; Doris Dörrie and Ruth Stadler, screenplay)

END NOTES

Introduction | Coming Attractions

¹ Muriel Rukeyser, *The Speed of Darkness*, part 9, lines 3-4 (1958).

² An intriguing memoir of Jane Roberts can be found in *Speaking of Jane Roberts*, by Susan M. Watkins (Needham, MA: Moment Point Press, Inc., 2001).

³ Ehryck F. Gilmore, *The Law of Attraction 101* (Chicago, IL: Eromlig Publishing, 2007), pp. 27-28.

⁴ Brent Marchant, “Seth and the Silver Screen—My 10 Favorite Films from a Sethian Perspective,” *Reality Change* magazine 11:2 (Seth Network International, Second Quarter 1997), pp. 10-18. *Reality Change* was a quarterly journal once published by Seth Network International, an organization devoted to the discussion and dissemination of the works of Jane Roberts and Seth.

⁵ Oscar(s)[®] and Academy Award(s)[®] are registered trademarks of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

⁶ Golden Globe(s)[®] is a registered trademark of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association.

⁷ Emmy(s)[®] is a registered trademark of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences and the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

Chapter 1 | It’s Just What I Wanted—Sort Of

¹ David Byrne and Brian Eno, “Once in a Lifetime” (Index Music/Bleu Disque Music Co Inc., 1980), recorded by the Talking Heads on *Remain in Light* (Sire Records Co., 1980).

² *Id.*

³ Irini Rockwell, “Embodying Wisdom,” *Parabola* magazine 31:1 (Coming to Our Senses) (Society for the Study of Myth and Tradition Inc., Spring 2006), p. 70.

⁴ Jane Roberts, *The Magical Approach* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing/New World Library, 1995).

⁵ Sharon Franquemont, *You Already Know What To Do* (New York, NY: Tarcher/Putnam, 1999), p. 1.

⁶ I say “as portrayed in the film,” because this movie, like all historical dramas, is a work of fiction *based on* actual people and events, *not* a strict historical narrative. (That may be particularly germane in this case; given the highly secretive nature of the Manhattan Project, the “facts” of this program may be elusive to come by, making accurate depictions of what really happened conjectural at best.) Consequently, this film, like all others in the historical/biopic genre, takes dramatic license with the characters and their actions in various respects, and that should be borne in mind with any movies of this type presented in this book. The portrayal of the leads in this film is one such example. Though they reportedly had their differences, Groves and Oppenheimer were said to have had a relationship that was actually more cooperative than confrontative in nature. But, for purposes of dramatics, this alternate take on the characters has been employed here. That portrayal, fictional though it may be, is what helps make this picture such a good candidate for illustrating some of the conscious creation concepts that are the focus of this Chapter.

⁷ The film’s assessments about Oak Ridge are likely exaggerations, at least for that time, but they do convey a clear sense about the path that the United States was about to embark upon militarily in years to come.

⁸ *Bhagavad-Gita*, 11:32. The exact wording of this verse is open to some debate. This particular wording, which is widely quoted in accounts about Oppenheimer’s recollections of the bomb’s first test blast, may have been his own paraphrasing of the passage, even though many have come to accept it as a literal translation. It closely parallels the wording used in other translations of the ancient text and appears to reflect the same general sentiment of the verse as used in those other translations. As with most scriptural documents, the wording used in different translations varies slightly from version to version, depending on word use at the time of translation and the individual translator’s linguistic preferences (some versions substitute the word “shatterer” for “destroyer” in this passage, for example).

⁹ *Bhagavad-Gita*, 11:12. Because accounts conflict on what verse Oppenheimer actually thought of or stated at the time of the test, neither is presented in the film.

¹⁰ Broadcast on CBS Radio, November 6, 1938.

¹¹ When “Apocalypse Now” was released in 1979, it was one of the first major movies about Vietnam to hit the theaters. Two others,

“Coming Home” and “The Deer Hunter,” had preceded it in 1978, but they were unlike this film. The former was set almost entirely stateside and examined what happened to veterans upon their return; the latter focused primarily on a tight-knit group of friends from a small town and showed how the war changed them through sequences at home and abroad both before and after the war. “Apocalypse Now,” by contrast, was the first major release focusing *entirely* on Vietnam from a war zone perspective. And, given the unprecedented battlefield detail with which this war had been covered in the media at the time it was happening—the first-ever conflict to have news about it broadcast into living rooms all across America every night—there were many stories that arose from that coverage that came to characterize the Vietnam experience, indelibly etching themselves into the culture of the era and the mythos of the conflict. In making “Apocalypse Now,” Coppola tried to encapsulate all of that experience into one finished package, hence the label “the ultimate Vietnam film.”

¹² Seneca, Lucius Annaeus (Seneca the Younger), *De Tranquillitate Animi*, § XVII, 10.

¹³ Bryan Ferry, “Dance Away” (E.G. Music, 1979), recorded by Roxy Music on *Manifesto* (Atco Records, 1979).

Chapter 2 | Perception Is Everything, Isn't It?

¹ Kathleen Vande Kieft, *Innersource* (New York, NY: Ballantine, 1988), cited in J.L. Simmons, *Future Lives* (Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co. Publishing, 1990), pp. 84-85.

² Caroline Myss, “Energy Anatomy” (Boulder, CO: Sounds True, 1996).

³ Considering Nash’s temperament as portrayed in the film, his character likely wouldn’t say something like that. But, in view of this argument, he’d be perfectly justified in doing so if he so chose.

⁴ Jane Roberts, *Adventures in Consciousness* (Needham, MA: Moment Point Press, 1999), p. 9.

⁵ Jane Roberts, *The Nature of Personal Reality* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing/New World Library, 1994), p. 195 (Session 641, February 19, 1973).

⁶ My apologies for any semblance of a soapbox approach here, but I believe this is important not only in light of current events, but also from the vantage point of being conscientious, fully awake, fully participating conscious creators. To do less is to roll over and pull the covers over our heads. Still, I find it uncanny how many of this movie’s

elements eerily parallel real-world events of recent years, particularly with regard to media coverage (or lack thereof) of the military and politics. (You're doing a heck of a job, guys.) In that sense, this film is a cautionary tale in the truest sense of the word, having presaged similar events years before they took place.

Chapter 3 | Self-Actualized Cinema

¹ Chris Griscom, *Ecstasy Is a New Frequency* (Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co., 1987), cited in J.L. Simmons, *Future Lives* (Santa Fe, NM: Bear & Co. Publishing, 1990), p. 68.

² Jean Houston, "Jump Time" seminar (Chicago, IL: November 1999).

³ Matthew Gilbert, "Movies on a Mission," *Shift* magazine 12 (Institute of Noetic Sciences, September-November 2006), pp. 28-31.

⁴ Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics* (Boston, MA: Shambala Publications, Inc., 2000).

⁵ Lee Carroll and Jan Tober, *The Indigo Children* (Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, Inc., 1999).

⁶ Nancy Ann Tappe, *Understanding Your Life Through Color* (Carlsbad, CA: Starling Publishers, 1982).

⁷ Lee Carroll and Jan Tober, *The Indigo Children* (Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, Inc., 1999), pp. 5, 236.

⁸ Pamela Osie, *Life Colors* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2000), pp. xiv, xv, xvii.

⁹ Lee Carroll and Jan Tober, *The Indigo Children* (Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, Inc., 1999), pp. 1-2.

¹⁰ Caroline Myss, "Energy Anatomy" (Boulder, CO: Sounds True, 1996).

¹¹ Claude Bernard, *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine* (1865).

¹² Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics* (Boston, MA: Shambala Publications, Inc., 2000), p. 25.

Chapter 4 | Igniting the Flame of Manifestation

¹ George Bernard Shaw, *Maxims for Revolutionists: Reason* (1903).

² Jane Roberts, *The Nature of Personal Reality* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing/New World Library, 1994), p. 95 (Seth Session 625, November 1, 1972).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 401 (Seth Session 672, June 25, 1973).

⁴ Pollock's nickname was bestowed upon him by *Time* magazine in 1956, though it's not used in the film.

⁵ For a more complete look specifically at the artist's paintings, see the following two documentaries: "Frida Kahlo" (1982; Eila Hershon and Roberto Guerra, directors) and "The Life and Times of Frida Kahlo" (2005; Amy Stechler, director).

Chapter 5 | Let's See What Happens When We Do *This*...

¹ Wayne Dyer, *Dreamland* Internet radio interview, <http://www.UnknownCountry.com>, April 2006.

² Jane Roberts, *The Nature of Personal Reality* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing/New World Library, 1994), p. 72 (Seth Session 621, October 16, 1972).

³ Gregg Braden, "The Lost Mode of Prayer" (Boulder, CO: Sounds True, 1999).

⁴ Jane Roberts, *The Nature of Personal Reality* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing/New World Library, 1994), p. 276 (Seth Session 653, April 4, 1973).

⁵ See, for example, Jane Roberts, *The Nature of the Psyche* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing/New World Library, 1995), p. 190 (Seth Session 795, February 28, 1977).

Chapter 6 | Storming the Castle

¹ Jane Roberts, *The Nature of Personal Reality* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing/New World Library, 1994), p. 159 (Seth Session 637, January 31, 1973).

² President Franklin D. Roosevelt's first inaugural address, March 4, 1933.

³ Marianne Williamson, *A Return To Love: Reflections on the Principles of A Course in Miracles* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1992), pp. 190-191.

⁴ Susan M. Watkins, *What a Coincidence!* (Needham, MA: Moment Point Press, 2005), p. 28 (emphasis in original).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁶ Ironically, this film was released just a few weeks prior to the accident at Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island nuclear power plant.

⁷ Interestingly, three of the film's performers, along with its writer and director, were themselves at one time blacklisted.

⁸ In June 2003, the character of Atticus Finch was voted the No. 1 Greatest Hero of American Film by the American Film Institute, beating out such other notable heavyweights as Indiana Jones and James Bond.

Chapter 7 | Road Trip!

¹ Joseph Campbell, *Joseph Campbell and The Power of Myth with Bill Moyers* (Montauk, NY: Mystic Fire Video, 2001), Episode 1, Chapter 12.

² I do this, for example, whenever I attend metaphysics seminars. I consciously create journeys in which I *purposely* separate my everyday life experience from that of the conferences, allowing the teachings of the programs (and whatever personal insights I glean from them) to stand out in my mind more than they probably would have otherwise. I accomplish this in various ways, such as creating “adventures” on each end of my trips, making a point of only attending conferences that require some effort to travel to, generally going alone (even if I know others who will be present upon my arrival) and visiting locales that are unusual or off the beaten path. The intentional distinction, I believe, allows me to get more out of these experiences and what I take away from them.

³ *Over the Rainbow*, written by Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg, has won many accolades besides its Academy Award. In 2001, for example, Judy Garland’s movie rendition of this ever-hopeful composition topped the “Songs of the Century” list, a survey intended to identify the top 365 songs of the 20th Century, sponsored by the Recording Industry Association of America, the National Endowment for the Arts, Scholastic Inc. and AOL@School. It was also named the No. 1 entry on the American Film Institute’s all-time Top 100 Songs list. Not bad for a song that was almost cut out of the film from which it has since become synonymous.

⁴ James Redfield, *The Secret of Shambala* (New York, NY: Warner Books, 1999).

⁵ Olga Kharitidi, *Entering the Circle* (New York, NY: HarperSan-Francisco, 1997).

⁶ *Holy Bible*, Luke 17:21.

⁷ The film’s “Undiscovered Country” subtitle is a reference to a soliloquy from William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, which is alluded to repeatedly throughout the movie, both in the dialogue and narrative. Ironically, Hamlet’s allusions to the undiscovered country refer to

death, a fate that befell legendary *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry not long before this picture's release. The film's story line was also particularly poignant for die-hard *Trek* fans by filling a significant gap in the franchise's mythology. In the original TV series, the United Federation of Planets and the Klingon Empire were bitter enemies, but, in the sequel TV series, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, set 85 years in the future, the onetime foes had inexplicably become fast friends. That's where this picture comes in, providing the much-needed missing back story. The parallels between this movie's story line and the end of the Cold War, which immediately preceded its release, are also more than a little coincidental.

Chapter 8 | Connecting the Dots

¹ Albert Einstein, *Out of My Later Years* (1950), Chapter 8, Part 1.

² The 10-episode series premiered on the BBC in 1978 and first aired in the U.S. on PBS in 1979. Two sequels, *Connections*² and *Connections*³, were broadcast in 1994 and 1997, respectively, on the TLC cable channel.

³ Actually, the birthing of a widespread social movement from a simple idea is the subject of another film, Frank Capra's "Meet John Doe" (see the Chapter 2 Bonus Features). The main difference between the movements in the two movies is that, in "Pay It Forward," it arises from a student's sincerity, while, in its cinematic predecessor, it grows unexpectedly from a newspaper's contrived publicity stunt. Both pictures show, however, that sometimes a good idea is a good idea, no matter how it arises, as long as the underlying intents supporting it are sound.

⁴ Based on Raymond Carver's short stories *Neighbors*, *They're Not Your Husband*, *Vitamins*, *So Much Water So Close to Home*, *Jerry and Molly and Sam*, *Collectors*, *Tell the Women We're Going*, *A Small, Good Thing*, and *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?* These works were compiled by director Robert Altman in a book titled *Short Cuts: Selected Stories* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1993) created to accompany the film. In addition to the nine stories, the book includes one of Carver's poems, *Lemonade*, which is said to have inspired the picture.

Chapter 9 | Exceeding Our Grasp

¹ *The Way It Is* (CBC-TV, June 1969).

² Maureen Caudill, *Dreamland* Internet radio interview, <http://www.UnknownCountry.com>, February 2007.

³ Julia Cameron, *The Artist's Way* (New York, NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1992).

⁴ Natalie Goldberg, *Wild Mind* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1990).

⁵ Jane Roberts, *The Nature of Personal Reality* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing/New World Library, 1994), p. 122 (Seth Session 631, December 18, 1972).

⁶ Jane Roberts, *The Magical Approach* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing/New World Library, 1995), p. 89 (Seth Session 10, September 10, 1980).

⁷ Reconnective Healing® is an alternative healing technique developed by Dr. Eric Pearl that primarily involves working with the energy field immediately surrounding a patient's body rather than making direct contact with the body itself. I note it here, partly because of its general similarity to hands-on methods like reiki and massage therapy, but also because of Pearl's fascination with the original film version of "Resurrection," which was a source of inspiration that contributed to his development of the technique, as noted in his book, *The Reconnection* (Carlsbad, CA: Hay House, Inc., 2001), pp. 36, 39-40. <http://www.thereconnection.com>. In the interest of full disclosure, I should add that I am a Level III Reconnective Healer.

⁸ Frederick S. Oliver (1866-1899) was perhaps the first to have channeled metaphysical teachings that got put into print. Through a process of automatic writing, he chronicled the teachings of an entity named Phyllos, who claimed to have been incarnated on Earth during the time of Atlantis. This collaboration, which took place when Oliver was only 18, resulted in *A Dweller on Two Planets*, the first edition of which was released around the turn of the 20th Century (Borden Publishing, 1952).

⁹ Edgar Cayce (1877-1945), sometimes known as "the Sleeping Prophet of Virginia Beach," was world renowned for his ability to intuit information about others while in a trance state. He initially used his skills to diagnose the illnesses of those who couldn't be helped by conventional medicine, later expanding into such areas as reincarnation and prophecy. His explorations into altered states of consciousness, though somewhat controversial at the time, nevertheless led to the establishment of the Association for Research & Enlightenment, an organization devoted to preserving his teachings and continuing his work. <http://www.edgarcayce.org>.

¹⁰ Esther Hicks is the channeler of a group of spiritual teachers who go by the collective name Abraham. Their psychic collaboration has led to a number of books, coauthored by Hicks and her husband, Jerry, such as *The Law of Attraction: The Basics of the Teachings of Abraham* (San Antonio, TX: Abraham-Hicks Publications, 2006). These works parallel and complement many of the teachings of Jane Roberts and Seth. <http://www.abraham-hicks.com>.

¹¹ Sonaya Roman is the channeler of an entity named Orin. Their collaboration has led to a number of books, such as *Soul Love* (Tiburon, CA: H J Kramer Inc., 1997). As with the Abraham teachings, the Orin channelings parallel and complement many of the works of Jane Roberts and Seth. <http://www.orindaben.com>.

¹² Jane Roberts, *Adventures in Consciousness* (Needham, MA: Moment Point Press, 1999).

Chapter 10 | When One Reality Isn't Enough

¹ Quote from a magazine article by the same name. Richard Corliss, "I Dream for a Living," *Time* magazine (June 15, 1985), <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,959634-3,00.html>.

² Jane Roberts, *Seth, Dreams and Projections of Consciousness* (Manhasset, NY: New Awareness Network Inc., 1998), p. 214 (Seth Session 115, December 16, 1964).

³ Robert Moss, "Dream Gates" (Boulder, CO: Sounds True, 1997).

⁴ For more on the Institute of Noetic Sciences, visit <http://www.noetic.org>.

⁵ Jane Roberts, *Seth, Dreams and Projections of Consciousness* (Manhasset, NY: New Awareness Network Inc., 1998), p. 124 (Seth Session 19, January 17, 1964).

⁶ Chuang Tzu, *Zhuangzi*, Book XXIII, ¶ 7. Ursula K. Le Guin, author of the novel on which this film is based, used this quote as an epigraph at the start of one of its chapters. A paraphrased version of it is featured in the film and is imparted to George during a dream sequence with an extraterrestrial.

⁷ For the film's DVD release, the rights issue involving the Beatles song ("A Little Help from My Friends," recorded by the Beatles on *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967)) was resolved by including a cover version of the piece.

Chapter 11 | The Joy and Power of Creation

¹ *Holy Bible*, Numbers 23:23.

² Hermes Trismegestris, *The Corpus Hermeticum* (emphasis added).

³ Jane Roberts, *Dreams, "Evolution," and Value Fulfillment, Volume One* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing, 1997); Jane Roberts, *Dreams, "Evolution," and Value Fulfillment, Volume Two* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing, 1997).

⁴ *Ibid*, *Volume Two*, p. 316 (Seth Session 910, April 23, 1980).

⁵ Jane Roberts, *The Nature of Personal Reality* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing/New World Library, 1994), pp. 26-27 (Seth Session 615, September 18, 1972).

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 295 (Seth Session 657, April 18, 1973).

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 296.

⁸ Jane Roberts, *Dreams, "Evolution," and Value Fulfillment, Volume Two* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing, 1997), pp. 403-404 (Seth Session 922, October 13, 1980).

⁹ Jane Roberts, *The Nature of the Psyche* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing, 1995), p. 220 (Seth Session 800, April 4, 1977) (emphasis in original). This quote, incidentally, served as the theme of the 2007 Colorado Seth Conference.

¹⁰ Thankfully, "It's a Wonderful Life" has since gone on to receive the recognition it richly deserves. It has earned numerous accolades in the years since its release, most notably the top ranking in the American Film Institute's "100 Years, 100 Cheers" salute to the most inspirational films of the previous century, presented in 2006.

¹¹ Images of the sky are prevalent in and significant to this film, for they tie into its original German title, "*Der Himmel über Berlin*," which can be literally translated as either "The Sky over Berlin" or, more appropriately, "The Heaven over Berlin."

¹² In this film's sequel, "Star Trek III: The Search for Spock" (1984), this theme was materially reversed to be restated as "The needs of the one outweigh the needs of the many." Philosophical twists like this have been hallmarks of the *Star Trek* franchise since its inception. Such thoughtful elements have contributed significantly to its enduring popularity for decades.

¹³ This picture played a significant role in saving the day for the *Star Trek* franchise. After the original TV series was unceremoniously dumped by NBC in 1969 just three seasons into its self-proclaimed five-year mission, the franchise went on a 10-year hiatus. The original

cast was then reunited in 1979 for a feature film, “Star Trek: The Motion Picture,” an overlong, boring, talky affair that was often fittingly dubbed “Star Trek: The Motionless Picture.” The future of the franchise was thus riding on the success or failure of this second feature. Fortunately, it succeeded critically, artistically and financially, giving an enthusiastic green light to a variety of future undertakings, including 10 more feature films and four spin-off TV series, with more of both likely to come.

Epilogue | Inspiring the Multiplex of the Mind

¹ Henry H. Saylor, “Make No Little Plans,” *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* (March 1957), pp. 95-99.

² Jane Roberts, *The Magical Approach* (San Rafael, CA: Amber-Allen Publishing/New World Library, 1995), p. 109 (Seth Session 13, September 24, 1980).

³ Ingmar Bergman, as quoted by John Berger, *Sight & Sound* (London: June 1991).

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 Tomlin, Lily ("All of Me," "Flirting with Disaster")
 Torn, Rip ("Defending Your Life")
 Toub, Shaun ("Crash")
 Travers, Henry ("It's a Wonderful Life")
 Travolta, John ("Phenomenon")
 Tucker, Michael ("The Purple Rose of Cairo")
 Turner, Kathleen ("Peggy Sue Got Married")
 Tyler Moore, Mary ("Flirting with Disaster," "Ordinary People")
 Ullman, Liv ("Mindwalk")
 Vargas, John ("Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan")
 Vidal, Gore ("Gattaca")
 Virtue, Doreen ("The Indigo Evolution")
 Vitale, Joe ("The Secret")

- von Sydow, Max ("What Dreams May Come")
- Walken, Christopher ("Brainstorm")
- Walker, Polly ("Enchanted April")
- Walker, Sara ("Housekeeping")
- Wallace, George D. ("Defending Your Life")
- Walsch, Neale Donald ("Indigo," "The Indigo Evolution," "The Secret")
- Walsh, J.T. ("Pleasantville")
- Ward, Fred ("The Right Stuff")
- Warden, Jack ("Being There")
- Warner, H.B. ("It's a Wonderful Life," "Lost Horizon")
- Waterston, Sam ("Mindwalk")
- Weisser, Norbert ("Pollock")
- Weisz, Rachel ("The Constant Gardener")
- Werntz, Gary ("Pay It Forward")
- Weston, Celia ("Flirting with Disaster," "K-PAX")
- Whitaker, Forest ("Phenomenon")
- Wiest, Dianne ("The Purple Rose of Cairo")
- Wilhoite, Kathleen ("Pay It Forward")
- Wilkinson, Tom ("Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind")
- Williams, JoBeth ("Switch")
- Williams, Robin ("What Dreams May Come")
- Williams, Saul ("K-PAX")
- Wilson, Scott ("The Right Stuff")
- Winfield, Paul ("Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan")
- Winslet, Kate ("Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind")
- Wise, Ray ("Good Night, and Good Luck")
- Witherspoon, Reese ("Pleasantville")
- Wolf, Fred Alan ("The Secret," "What the #\$*! Do We (K)now!?")
- Wood, Elijah ("Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind")
- Wood, John ("The Purple Rose of Cairo")
- Wood, Natalie ("Brainstorm")
- Woodard, Alfre ("Grand Canyon," "K-PAX")
- Woods, James ("Contact")
- Wright, Jeffrey ("Syriana")
- Wyatt, Jane ("Lost Horizon")
- Zerbe, Anthony ("The Turning Point")
- Zukav, Gary ("The Indigo Evolution")

Directors:

- Allen, Woody ("The Purple Rose of Cairo," "Zelig")
- Arntz, William, and Betsy Chasse and Mark Vicente ("What the #\$*! Do We (K)now!?")
- Ashby, Hal ("Being There")
- Bahr, Fax, and George Higgenlooper and Eleanor Coppola (location footage) ("Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse")
- Baumgartner, John ("Hard Pill")
- Brooks, Albert ("Defending Your Life")
- Burton, Tim ("Big Fish")
- Capra, Bernt ("Mindwalk")
- Capra, Frank ("It's a Wonderful Life," "Lost Horizon")
- Clooney, George ("Good Night, and Good Luck")
- Coppola, Francis Ford ("Peggy Sue Got Married")
- de Broca, Philippe ("King of Hearts")
- Edwards, Blake ("Switch")
- Fleming, Victor ("The Wizard of Oz")
- Forsyth, Bill ("Housekeeping," "Local Hero")
- Gaghan, Stephen ("Syriana")
- Gondry, Michel ("Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind")
- Gyllenhaal, Stephen ("Resurrection," made-for-TV version)
- Haggis, Paul ("Crash")
- Harris, Ed ("Pollock")
- Heriot, Drew, and Sean Byrne, Marc Goldenfein and Damien McIndon ("The Secret")
- Hitchcock, Alfred ("Vertigo")
- Howard, Ron ("A Beautiful Mind")
- Joffé, Roland ("Fat Man and Little Boy")
- Kasdan, Lawrence ("Grand Canyon")
- Kaufman, Philip ("The Right Stuff")
- Kubrick, Stanley ("2001: A Space Odyssey")
- Leder, Mimi ("Pay It Forward")
- Levinson, Barry ("Wag the Dog")
- Libman, Leslie, and Larry Williams ("Brave New World")
- Loxton, David, and Fred Barzyk ("The Lathe of Heaven")
- Mazursky, Paul ("An Unmarried Woman")
- Meirelles, Fernando ("The Constant Gardener")
- Mendes, Sam ("American Beauty")
- Meyer, Nicholas ("Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan")
- Newell, Mike ("Enchanted April")
- Niccol, Andrew ("Gattaca")
- Nolan, Christopher ("Memento")
- Pakula, Alan J. ("Sophie's Choice")
- Petrie, Daniel ("Resurrection," theatrical version)

Ramis, Harold ("Groundhog Day")
 Redford, Robert ("Ordinary People")
 Reiner, Carl ("All of Me")
 Romney, Kent, and James F. Twyman ("The Indigo Evolution")
 Ross, Gary ("Pleasantville")
 Ross, Herbert ("The Turning Point")
 Russell, David O. ("Flirting with Disaster")
 Sargent, Joseph ("Colossus: The Forbin Project")
 Schepisi, Fred ("Six Degrees of Separation")
 Scorsese, Martin ("After Hours")
 Shyamalan, M. Night ("Signs")
 Simon, Stephen ("Indigo")
 Softley, Iain ("K-PAX")
 Spielberg, Steven ("Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade")
 Taymor, Julie ("Frida")
 Trumbull, Douglas ("Brainstorm")
 Turteltaub, Jon ("Phenomenon")
 Ward, Vincent ("What Dreams May Come")
 Weir, Peter ("The Truman Show")
 Wells, Audrey ("Under the Tuscan Sun")
 Wenders, Wim ("Wings of Desire")
 Zemeckis, Robert ("Contact")

Screenplay/Teleplay Writers:

Allen, Woody ("The Purple Rose of Cairo," "Zelig")
 Arntz, William, and Betsy Chasse, Matthew Hoffman and Mark Vicente ("What the #\$*! Do We (K)now!?")
 August, John ("Big Fish")
 Bahr, Fax, and George Higgenlooper ("Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse")
 Ball, Alan ("American Beauty")
 Barnes, Peter ("Enchanted April")
 Bass, Ron ("What Dreams May Come")
 Baumgartner, John ("Hard Pill")
 Boam, Jeffrey ("Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade")
 Bridges, James ("Colossus: The Forbin Project")
 Brooks, Albert ("Defending Your Life")
 Boulanger, Daniel ("King of Hearts")
 Byars, Floyd, and Fritjof Capra ("Mindwalk")
 Byrne, Rhonda ("The Secret")
 Caine, Jeffrey ("The Constant Gardener")
 Carlino, Lewis John ("Resurrection," theatrical version)
 Clooney, George, and Grant Heslov ("Good Night, and Good Luck")
 Coppel, Alec, and Samuel Taylor ("Vertigo")

- Dipego, Gerald ("Phenomenon")
 Dixon, Leslie ("Pay It Forward")
 Edwards, Blake ("Switch")
 Forsyth, Bill ("Housekeeping,"
 "Local Hero")
 Gaghan, Stephen ("Syriana")
 Goldsman, Akiva ("A Beautiful
 Mind")
 Goodrich, Frances, and Albert
 Hackett, Frank Capra and Jo
 Swerling ("It's a Wonderful
 Life")
 Guare, John ("Six Degrees of
 Separation")
 Haggis, Paul, and Bobby
 Moresco ("Crash")
 Hart, James V., and Michael
 Goldenberg ("Contact")
 Henkin, Hilary, and David
 Mamet ("Wag the Dog")
 Kasdan, Lawrence, and Meg
 Kasdan ("Grand Canyon")
 Kaufman, Charlie ("Eternal
 Sunshine of the Spotless
 Mind")
 Kaufman, Philip ("The Right
 Stuff")
 Kosinski, Jerzy ("Being There")
 Kubrick, Stanley, and Arthur
 C. Clarke ("2001: A Space
 Odyssey")
 Langley, Noel, and Florence
 Ryerson and Edgar Allan
 Woolf ("The Wizard of Oz")
 Laurents, Arthur ("The Turning
 Point")
 Leavitt, Charles ("K-PAX")
 Leichtling, Jerry, and Arlene Sarner
 ("Peggy Sue Got Married")
 Markowitz, Peachy
 ("Resurrection," made-for-TV
 version)
 Mazur, Dan, and David Tausik
 ("Brave New World")
 Mazursky, Paul ("An Unmarried
 Woman")
 Minion, Joseph ("After Hours")
 Niccol, Andrew ("Gattaca," "The
 Truman Show")
 Nolan, Christopher ("Memento")
 Pakula, Alan J. ("Sophie's
 Choice")
 Riskin, Robert ("Lost Horizon")
 Robinson, Bruce, and Roland
 Joffé ("Fat Man and Little
 Boy")
 Robinson, Phil Alden ("All of
 Me")
 Ross, Gary ("Pleasantville")
 Rubin, Danny, and Harold
 Ramis ("Groundhog Day")
 Russell, David O. ("Flirting with
 Disaster")
 Sargent, Alvin ("Ordinary
 People")
 Shyamalan, M. Night ("Signs")
 Sigal, Clancy, and Diane Lake,
 Gregory Nava and Anna
 Thomas ("Frida")
 Sowards, Jack B. ("Star Trek II:
 The Wrath of Khan")
 Stitzel, Robert, and Philip Frank
 Messina ("Brainstorm")
 Swaybill, Roger E., and Diane
 English ("The Lathe of
 Heaven")
 Turner, Barbara, and Susan J.
 Emshwiller ("Pollock")

Twyman, James, and Neale
 Donald Walsch ("Indigo")
 Wells, Audrey ("Under the
 Tuscan Sun")
 Wenders, Wim, and Peter
 Handke and Richard
 Reitinger ("Wings of Desire")

Book, Story and Source

Material Creators:

Baer, Robert ("Syriana," book,
*See No Evil: The True Story of
 a Ground Soldier in the CIA's
 War on Terrorism*)
 Baum, L. Frank ("The Wizard
 of Oz," book, *The Wonderful
 Wizard of Oz*)
 Baumgartner, John, and K.
 Dayton Mesher ("Hard Pill,"
 story)
 Beinhart, Larry ("Wag the Dog,"
 book, *American Hero*)
 Bennett, Harve, and Jack B.
 Sowards ("Star Trek II: The
 Wrath of Khan," story)
 Bessy, Maurice ("King of
 Hearts," story)
 Boileau, Pierre, and Thomas
 Narcejac ("Vertigo," book,
D'entre les morts)
 Brewer, Gene ("K-PAX," book,
K-PAX)
 Capra, Bernt ("Mindwalk," story)
 Carlino, Lewis John
 ("Resurrection," made-for-TV
 version, source screenplay,
 "Resurrection" (1980 film))
 Clarke, Arthur C. ("2001: A
 Space Odyssey," story, *The
 Sentinel* (uncredited))
 Davis, Edwin ("All of Me," book,
Me Two)
 Guare, John ("Six Degrees of
 Separation," play, *Six Degrees
 of Separation*)
 Guest, Judith ("Ordinary People,"
 book, *Ordinary People*)

- Haggis, Paul ("Crash," story)
- Herrera, Hayden ("Frida," book, *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo*)
- Hilton, James ("Lost Horizon," book, *Lost Horizon*)
- Huxley, Aldous ("Brave New World," book, *Brave New World*)
- Jones, D.F. ("Colossus: The Forbin Project," book, *Colossus*)
- Kaufman, Charlie, and Michel Gondry and Pierre Bismuth ("Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," story)
- Kosinski, Jerzy ("Being There," book, *Being There*)
- Langley, Noel ("The Wizard of Oz," story)
- le Carré, John ("The Constant Gardener," book, *The Constant Gardener*)
- Le Guin, Ursula K. ("The Lathe of Heaven," book, *The Lathe of Heaven*)
- Lucas, George, and Menno Meyjes ("Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade," story)
- Matheson, Richard ("What Dreams May Come," book, *What Dreams May Come*)
- Mayes, Frances ("Under the Tuscan Sun," book, *Under the Tuscan Sun: At Home in Italy*)
- Naifeh, Steven, and Gregory White Smith ("Pollock," book, *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga*)
- Nasar, Sylvia ("A Beautiful Mind," book, *A Beautiful Mind*)
- Nolan, Jonathan ("Memento," short story, *Memento Mori*)
- Olek, Henry ("All of Me," story)
- Robinson, Bruce ("Fat Man and Little Boy," story)
- Robinson, Marilynne ("Housekeeping," book, *Housekeeping*)
- Roddenberry, Gene ("Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan," TV series source, *Star Trek*)
- Rubin, Bruce Joel ("Brainstorm," story)
- Rubin, Danny ("Groundhog Day," story)
- Ryan Hyde, Catherine ("Pay It Forward," book, *Pay It Forward*)
- Sagan, Carl ("Contact," book, *Contact*)
- Sagan, Carl, and Ann Druyan ("Contact," story)
- Styron, William ("Sophie's Choice," book, *Sophie's Choice*)
- Van Doren Stern, Philip ("It's a Wonderful Life," story)
- von Armin, Elizabeth ("Enchanted April," book, *The Enchanted April*)
- Wallace, Daniel ("Big Fish," book, *Big Fish: A Novel of Mythic Proportions*)
- Wells, Audrey ("Under the Tuscan Sun," story)
- Wolfe, Tom ("The Right Stuff," book, *The Right Stuff*)

Extra Credits and Bonus Features

On-screen Performers:

- Affleck, Ben ("Forces of Nature")
 Aghdashloo, Shohreh ("The Lake House")
 Albertson, Mabel ("What's Up, Doc?")
 Alda, Alan ("Canadian Bacon")
 Alderton, John ("Zardoz")
 Alford, Phillip ("To Kill a Mockingbird")
 Allen, Karen ("Raiders of the Lost Ark," "Starman")
 Allen, Woody ("Stardust Memories," "The Front")
 Anderson, James ("To Kill a Mockingbird")
 Andretta, Lindsay ("Far From Heaven")
 Arau, Alfonso ("Romancing the Stone")
 Archer, Anne ("Short Cuts")
 Argenziano, Carmen ("The Burning Season")
 Argo, Victor ("The Last Temptation of Christ")
 Argue, David ("Gallipoli")
 Arnold, Edward ("Meet John Doe")
 Asner, Edward ("JFK")
 Aviles, Rick ("Ghost")
 Bacon, Kevin ("Apollo 13," "JFK")
 Badham, Mary ("To Kill a Mockingbird")
 Baker, Kenny ("Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back")
 Baker Hall, Philip ("Magnolia," "The Insider")
 Balaban, Bob ("Close Encounters of the Third Kind")
 Baldwin, Alec ("Working Girl")
 Barrault, Marie-Christine ("Cousin, Cousine," "Stardust Memories")
 Bassett, Angela ("Malcolm X")
 Bayne, Lawrence ("Black Robe")
 Behean, Katy ("Wetherby")
 Belushi, Jim ("Canadian Bacon")
 Bergman, Ingrid ("Casablanca")
 Bernardi, Herschel ("The Front")
 Blackman, Jeremy ("Magnolia")
 Blair, Betsy ("The Snake Pit")
 Bloom, Verna ("The Last Temptation of Christ")
 Bluteau, Lothaire ("Black Robe," "Jesus of Montreal")
 Bogart, Humphrey ("Casablanca")
 Bonham Carter, Helena ("Howards End")
 Booke, Sorrell ("What's Up, Doc?")
 Bosco, Philip ("Working Girl")
 Bowen, Michael ("Magnolia")
 Bowie, David ("The Last Temptation of Christ")
 Braga, Sonia ("The Burning Season")
 Braugher, Andre ("Frequency")
 Brennan, Walter ("Meet John Doe")
 Bridges, Jeff ("Fearless," "Starman")
 Brightwell, Paul ("Sliding Doors")
 Brimley, Wilford ("The China Syndrome")
 Broadbent, Jim ("The Crying Game")

- Brooks, Mel ("High Anxiety")
 Brown, Ralph ("The Crying Game")
 Buggy, Niall ("Zardoz")
 Bullock, Sandra ("Forces of Nature," "The Lake House")
 Byington, Spring ("Meet John Doe")
 Cage, Nicolas ("Birdy")
 Callas, Charlie ("High Anxiety")
 Candy, John ("Canadian Bacon," "JFK")
 Cardinal, Tantoo ("Black Robe")
 Carey, Ron ("High Anxiety")
 Carhart, Timothy ("Thelma & Louise")
 Carroll, Janet ("Forces of Nature")
 Cassidy, Joanna ("Blade Runner," "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?")
 Cassidy, Zane ("Short Cuts")
 Caton, Juliette ("The Last Temptation of Christ")
 Catrall, Kim ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
 Caviezel, Jim ("Frequency")
 Cerny, Daniel ("Fearless")
 Chancellor, Anna ("The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy")
 Cheadle, Don ("Hotel Rwanda")
 Cioffi, Charles ("Missing")
 Clarkson, Patricia ("Far From Heaven")
 Clennon, David ("Missing")
 Coleman, Dabney ("On Golden Pond")
 Colley, Don Pedro ("THX 1138")
 Collins, Lynn ("The Lake House")
 Connery, Sean ("Zardoz")
 Cooper, Gary ("Meet John Doe," "The Fountainhead")
 Costner, Kevin ("JFK")
 Côté, Wesley ("Black Robe")
 Cox, Ronny ("Forces of Nature")
 Crider, Missy ("Powder")
 Crouse, Lindsay ("The Insider")
 Crowe, Russell ("The Insider")
 Cruise, Tom ("Magnolia")
 Cusack, Joan ("Working Girl")
 Dafoe, Willem ("The Last Temptation of Christ")
 Daniels, Anthony ("Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back")
 Danner, Blythe ("Forces of Nature")
 Davidson, Jaye ("The Crying Game")
 Davidtz, Embeth ("Schindler's List")
 Davis, Geena ("Thelma & Louise")
 Davis, Viola ("Far From Heaven")
 Davis, Warwick ("The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy")
 Davison, Bruce ("Short Cuts")
 Dawson, Kamela ("The Burning Season")
 de Havilland, Olivia ("The Snake Pit")
 De Lancie, John ("Fearless")
 Def, Mos ("The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy")
 Del Toro, Benicio ("Fearless," "21 Grams")

- DeLuca, Rudy ("High Anxiety")
- Dench, Judi ("Wetherby")
- Deschanel, Zooey ("The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy")
- DeSoto, Rosanna ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
- DeVito, Danny ("Romancing the Stone")
- Dillon, Melinda ("Close Encounters of the Third Kind," "Magnolia")
- Dobra, Anica ("Enlightenment Guaranteed")
- Doohan, James ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
- Dorn, Michael ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
- Douglas, Michael ("Romancing the Stone," "The China Syndrome")
- Douglas, Robert ("The Fountainhead")
- Downey, Robert Jr. ("Short Cuts")
- Downie, Penny ("Wetherby")
- Doyle, Shawn ("Frequency")
- Doyle-Murray, Brian ("JFK")
- Dreyfuss, Richard ("Close Encounters of the Third Kind")
- Dube, Desmond ("Hotel Rwanda")
- Duffett, Nicola ("Howards End")
- Dukakis, Olympia ("Working Girl")
- Dunaway, Faye ("Three Days of the Condor")
- Dunbar, Adrian ("The Crying Game")
- Dunn, Liam ("What's Up, Doc?")
- Dunn, Nora ("Working Girl")
- Duvall, Robert ("THX 1138," "To Kill a Mockingbird")
- Elliott, Denholm ("Raiders of the Lost Ark")
- Emmerich, Noah ("Frequency")
- Erickson, Leif ("The Snake Pit")
- Evans, Estelle ("To Kill a Mockingbird")
- Fairman, Michael ("Forces of Nature")
- Field, Sally ("Forrest Gump")
- Fiennes, Ralph ("Schindler's List")
- Fisher, Carrie ("Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back")
- Fix, Paul ("To Kill a Mockingbird")
- Flanery, Sean Patrick ("Powder")
- Fleischer, Charles ("Who Framed Roger Rabbit?")
- Fonda, Henry ("On Golden Pond")
- Fonda, Jane ("On Golden Pond," "The China Syndrome")
- Ford, Harrison ("Blade Runner," "Raiders of the Lost Ark," "Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back," "Working Girl")
- Freeman, Al Jr. ("Malcolm X")
- Freeman, Martin ("The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy")
- Freeman, Paul ("Raiders of the Lost Ark")
- Fry, Stephen ("The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy")
- Gainsbourg, Charlotte ("21 Grams")

- Gallagher, Peter ("Sex, Lies and Videotape," "Short Cuts")
- Garr, Teri ("Close Encounters of the Third Kind")
- Genn, Leo ("The Snake Pit")
- Gershon, Gina ("The Insider")
- Gibson, Henry ("Magnolia")
- Gibson, Mel ("Gallipoli")
- Gierasch, Stefan ("What's Up, Doc?")
- Girard, Rémy ("Jesus of Montreal")
- Gleason, James ("Meet John Doe")
- Goldberg, Whoopi ("Ghost")
- Goldblum, Jeff ("Powder")
- Goldwyn, Tony ("Ghost")
- Goodall, Caroline ("Schindler's List")
- Gough, Lloyd ("The Front")
- Grace, April ("Magnolia")
- Greenstreet, Sydney ("Casablanca")
- Gregory, Andre ("The Last Temptation of Christ")
- Griffith, Melanie ("Working Girl")
- Grubb, Robert ("Gallipoli")
- Guffey, Cary ("Close Encounters of the Third Kind")
- Guinness, Alec ("Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back")
- Gullette, Sean ("Pi")
- Guzmán, Luis ("Magnolia," "The Burning Season")
- Hall, Albert ("Malcolm X")
- Hamill, Mark ("Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back")
- Hamilton, Suzanna ("Wetherby")
- Hanks, Tom ("Apollo 13," "Forrest Gump")
- Hannah, Daryl ("Blade Runner")
- Hannah, John ("Sliding Doors")
- Hardin, Jerry ("Missing")
- Harkins, John ("Birdy")
- Harper, Jessica ("Stardust Memories")
- Harris, Ed ("Apollo 13")
- Hart, Pamela ("Pi")
- Hauer, Rutger ("Blade Runner")
- Havers, Nigel ("The Burning Season")
- Haysbert, Dennis ("Far From Heaven")
- Henreid, Paul ("Casablanca")
- Henriksen, Lance ("Powder")
- Henry, Buck ("Short Cuts")
- Henson, Daniel ("Frequency")
- Hepburn, Katharine ("On Golden Pond")
- Herd, Richard ("The China Syndrome")
- Hershey, Barbara ("The Last Temptation of Christ")
- Hines, Robert ("Wetherby")
- Hoffman, Philip Seymour ("Magnolia")
- Hollis, Tommy ("Malcolm X")
- Holm, Celeste ("The Snake Pit")
- Holm, Ian ("Wetherby")
- Holt, Sandrine ("Black Robe")
- Hopkins, Anthony ("Howards End")
- Hoskins, Bob ("Who Framed Roger Rabbit?")
- Hotton, Donald ("The China Syndrome")

- Houseman, John ("Three Days of the Condor")
- Huffman, Felicity ("Magnolia")
- Hulce, Tom ("Fearless")
- Hunter, Bill ("Gallipoli")
- Huston, Danny ("21 Grams")
- Iman ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
- Ivanek, Zeljko ("Rachel River")
- Jaeckel, Richard ("Starman")
- James, Brion ("Blade Runner")
- Jason Leigh, Jennifer ("Short Cuts")
- Jay, Ricky ("Magnolia")
- Johnson, Emmanuel L. ("Magnolia")
- Jones, James Earl ("Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back")
- Jones, Tommy Lee ("JFK")
- Julia, Raul ("The Burning Season")
- Kae-Kazim, Hakeem ("Hotel Rwanda")
- Kahn, Madeline ("High Anxiety," "What's Up, Doc?")
- Karen, James ("The China Syndrome")
- Kehler, Jack ("Forces of Nature")
- Keitel, Harvey ("The Last Temptation of Christ," "Thelma & Louise")
- Kelley, DeForest ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
- Kerr, Bill ("Gallipoli")
- Kestelman, Sara ("Zardoz")
- Kgoroge, Tony ("Hotel Rwanda")
- Khumalo, Leleti ("Hotel Rwanda")
- Kimbrough, Charles ("The Front")
- Kingsley, Ben ("Schindler's List")
- Kirkland, Sally ("JFK")
- Knight, Wayne ("JFK")
- Koenig, Walter ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
- Korman, Harvey ("High Anxiety")
- Kriener, Ulrike ("Enlightenment Guaranteed")
- Lacey, Ronald ("Raiders of the Lost Ark")
- Lanoux, Victor ("*Cousin, Cousine*")
- Lao, Kristyn Mae-Anne ("Pi")
- Leachman, Cloris ("High Anxiety")
- Lee, Mark ("Gallipoli")
- Lee, Spike ("Malcolm X")
- Lemmon, Jack ("JFK," "Missing," "Short Cuts," "The China Syndrome")
- Lenard, Mark ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
- Leo, Melissa ("21 Grams")
- Lepage, Robert ("Jesus of Montreal")
- Lewis, Huey ("Short Cuts")
- Lichterman, Marvin ("The Front")
- Lindfors, Viveca ("Rachel River")
- Lindo, Delroy ("Malcolm X")
- Linington, Gregory ("Into Me See")
- Liu, Harrison ("Black Robe")
- Lloyd, Christopher ("Who Framed Roger Rabbit?")
- Lorre, Peter ("Casablanca")
- Lovett, Lyle ("Short Cuts")
- Lynch, John ("Sliding Doors")

- Lyons, Antonio David ("Hotel Rwanda")
- MacDowell, Andie ("Sex, Lies and Videotape," "Short Cuts")
- Macy, William H. ("Magnolia")
- Madsen, Michael ("Thelma & Louise")
- Makoena, Fana ("Hotel Rwanda")
- Malkovich, John ("The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy")
- Marchand, Guy ("*Cousin, Cousine*")
- Marcovicci, Andrea ("The Front")
- Margolis, Mark ("Pi")
- Margulies, David ("The Front")
- Mars, Kenneth ("What's Up, Doc?")
- Massey, Raymond ("The Fountainhead")
- Matthau, Walter ("JFK")
- Mayhew, Peter ("Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back")
- Mayron, Melanie ("Missing")
- Mazar, Debi ("The Insider")
- McDaniel, James ("Malcolm X")
- McDonald, Christopher ("Thelma & Louise")
- McDormand, Frances ("Short Cuts")
- McFerran, Douglas ("Sliding Doors")
- McInnerny, Tim ("Wetherby")
- McKee, Lonette ("Malcolm X")
- McKenzie, Tim ("Gallipoli")
- McKeon, Doug ("On Golden Pond")
- McMahon, Danette ("Powder")
- McOmie, Maggie ("THX 1138")
- Megna, John ("To Kill a Mockingbird")
- Metcalf, Laurie ("JFK")
- Milian, Tomas ("The Burning Season")
- Mitchell, Elizabeth ("Frequency")
- Modine, Matthew ("Birdy," "Short Cuts")
- Molina, Alfred ("Magnolia")
- Moore, Demi ("Ghost")
- Moore, Julianne ("Far From Heaven," "Magnolia," "Short Cuts")
- Morales, Esai ("The Burning Season")
- Morris, Howard ("High Anxiety")
- Moss-Bachrach, Ebon ("The Lake House")
- Mostel, Zero ("The Front")
- Murphy, Michael ("Magnolia," "The Front," "What's Up, Doc?")
- Murphy, Rosemary ("To Kill a Mockingbird")
- Neal, Patricia ("The Fountainhead")
- Neeson, Liam ("Schindler's List")
- Nelson, Craig T. ("Rachel River")
- Newman, Laraine ("Stardust Memories")
- Nichols, Nichelle ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
- Nighy, Bill ("The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy")
- Nimoy, Leonard ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
- Nolte, Nick ("Hotel Rwanda")

- Norman, Zack ("Romancing the Stone")
- Nunn, Bill ("Canadian Bacon")
- Ochsenknecht, Uwe ("Enlightenment Guaranteed")
- O'Connell, Deirdre ("Fearless")
- O'Connor, Kevin J. ("Canadian Bacon")
- O'Flynn, Damian ("The Snake Pit")
- Ojeda, Manuel ("Romancing the Stone")
- Okonedo, Sophie ("Hotel Rwanda")
- Oldman, Gary ("JFK")
- Olmos, Edward James ("Fearless," "The Burning Season")
- Olson, James ("Rachel River")
- O'Neal, Ryan ("What's Up, Doc?")
- Overton, Frank ("To Kill a Mockingbird")
- Oz, Frank ("Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back")
- Pacino, Al ("The Insider")
- Paltrow, Gwyneth ("Sliding Doors")
- Paxton, Bill ("Apollo 13")
- Pearlman, Stephen ("Pi")
- Peck, Gregory ("To Kill a Mockingbird")
- Pelletier, Gilles ("Jesus of Montreal")
- Pendleton, Austin ("What's Up, Doc?")
- Penn, Chris ("Short Cuts")
- Penn, Sean ("21 Grams")
- Perez, Rosie ("Fearless")
- Perlman, Rhea ("Canadian Bacon")
- Pesci, Joe ("JFK")
- Peters, Brock ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country," "To Kill a Mockingbird")
- Phoenix, Joaquin ("Hotel Rwanda")
- Pisier, Marie-France ("*Cousin, Cousine*")
- Pitt, Brad ("Thelma & Louise")
- Platt, Oliver ("Working Girl")
- Pleasence, Donald ("THX 1138")
- Plummer, Christopher ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country," "The Insider," "The Lake House")
- Pollak, Kevin ("Canadian Bacon")
- Prowse, David ("Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back")
- Puryear, Jordan ("Far From Heaven")
- Quaid, Dennis ("Far From Heaven," "Frequency")
- Quinlan, Kathleen ("Apollo 13")
- Rains, Claude ("Casablanca")
- Rampling, Charlotte ("Stardust Memories," "Zardoz")
- Ramsay, Remak ("The Front")
- Rea, Stephen ("The Crying Game")
- Rebhorn, James ("Far From Heaven")
- Redford, Robert ("Three Days of the Condor")
- Redgrave, Vanessa ("Howards End," "Wetherby")
- Reed, Pamela ("Rachel River")

- Reeves, Keanu ("The Lake House")
- Regalbuto, Joe ("Missing")
- Reilly, John C. ("Magnolia")
- Rhys-Davies, John ("Raiders of the Lost Ark")
- Richardson, Joely ("Wetherby")
- Richardson, Miranda ("The Crying Game")
- Rickman, Alan ("The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy")
- Robards, Jason ("Magnolia")
- Robbins, Tim ("Short Cuts")
- Roberts, Tony ("Stardust Memories")
- Robertson, Cliff ("Three Days of the Condor")
- Rockwell, Sam ("The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy")
- Rodriguez, Nancy ("Into Me See")
- Rooker, Michael ("JFK")
- Ross, Annie ("Short Cuts")
- Ross Magenty, Adrian ("Howards End")
- Rossellini, Isabella ("Fearless")
- Roth, Phil ("What's Up, Doc?")
- Rule, Janice ("Missing")
- Sakall, S.K. ("Casablanca")
- San Giacomo, Laura ("Sex, Lies and Videotape")
- Sanderson, William ("Blade Runner")
- Sarandon, Susan ("Thelma & Louise")
- Schaefer, Natalie ("The Snake Pit")
- Schellenberg, August ("Black Robe")
- Schiavelli, Vincent ("Ghost")
- Schiff, Richard ("Forces of Nature")
- Scott Lynn, Meredith ("Forces of Nature")
- Seymour, Cara ("Hotel Rwanda")
- Shatner, William ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
- Shawn, Wallace ("Canadian Bacon")
- Shea, John ("Missing")
- Shenkman, Ben ("Pi")
- Shoaib, Samia ("Pi")
- Singer, Lori ("Short Cuts")
- Sinise, Gary ("Apollo 13," "Forrest Gump")
- Smith, Brandon ("Powder")
- Smith, Charles Martin ("Starman")
- Smith, Kent ("The Fountainhead")
- Smith, Kurtwood ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
- Sommer, Josef ("The Front")
- Spacek, Sissy ("JFK," "Missing")
- Spacey, Kevin ("Working Girl")
- Spader, James ("Sex, Lies and Videotape")
- Spradlin, G.D. ("Canadian Bacon")
- Stanton, Harry Dean ("The Last Temptation of Christ")
- Stanwyck, Barbara ("Meet John Doe")
- Steenburgen, Mary ("Powder")
- Stern, Daniel ("Stardust Memories")

- Stevens, Mark ("The Snake Pit")
 Stowe, Madeleine ("Short Cuts")
 Streisand, Barbra ("What's Up, Doc?")
 Strickland, David ("Forces of Nature")
 Sutherland, Donald ("JFK")
 Swayze, Patrick ("Ghost")
 Szarabajka, Keith ("Missing")
 Takei, George ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
 Tatum, Bradford ("Powder")
 Taylor, Holland ("Romancing the Stone")
 Taylor, Lili ("Short Cuts")
 Thompson, Emma ("Howards End")
 Tierney, Maura ("Forces of Nature")
 Tobolowsky, Stephen ("The Insider," "Thelma & Louise")
 Tomlin, Lily ("Short Cuts")
 Torn, Rip ("Canadian Bacon")
 Trainor, Mary Ellen ("Romancing the Stone")
 Tremblay, Johanne-Marie ("Jesus of Montreal")
 Tripplehorn, Jeanne ("Sliding Doors")
 Truffaut, François ("Close Encounters of the Third Kind")
 Turkel, Joe ("Blade Runner")
 Turner, Kathleen ("Romancing the Stone," "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?")
 Turner, Zara ("Sliding Doors")
 Turturro, John ("Fearless")
 Two Rivers, Billy ("Black Robe")
 Twyman, James ("Into Me See")
 Tyrrell, Susan ("Powder")
 Valdez, Daniel ("The China Syndrome")
 van Ammelrooy, Willeke ("The Lake House")
 Van Patten, Dick ("High Anxiety")
 Veidt, Conrad ("Casablanca")
 Venora, Diane ("The Insider")
 Venture, Richard ("Missing")
 Vernon, Kate ("Malcolm X")
 von Sydow, Max ("Three Days of the Condor")
 Vrooman, Spencer ("Fearless")
 Waits, Tom ("Short Cuts")
 Walsch, Neale Donald ("Into Me See")
 Walsh, M. Emmet ("Blade Runner")
 Walters, Melora ("Magnolia")
 Ward, Fred ("Short Cuts")
 Ward, Ryan ("Far From Heaven")
 Warner, David ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
 Washington, Denzel ("Malcolm X")
 Watts, Naomi ("21 Grams")
 Weaver, Sigourney ("Working Girl")
 West, Samuel ("Howards End")
 Whitaker, Forest ("The Crying Game")
 Whitlock, Albert J. ("High Anxiety")
 Wilby, James ("Howards End")
 Wilcox, Collin ("To Kill a Mockingbird")
 Wilkening, Catherine ("Jesus of Montreal")

Wilkinson, Tom ("Wetherby")
 Williams, Billy Dee ("Star Wars:
 Episode V—The Empire
 Strikes Back")
 Williamson, Mykelti ("Forrest
 Gump")
 Wilson, Dooley ("Casablanca")
 Wilson, Frank ("Black Robe")
 Wilson, Stuart ("Wetherby")
 Windom, William ("To Kill a
 Mockingbird")
 Wöhler, Peter-Gustav
 ("Enlightenment Guaranteed")
 Wright, Robin ("Forrest Gump")
 Wright, Steven ("Canadian
 Bacon")
 Yates, Marjorie ("Wetherby")
 Young, Aden ("Black Robe")
 Young, Karen ("Birdy")
 Young Nina ("Sliding Doors")
 Young, Sean ("Blade Runner")
 Zahn, Steve ("Forces of Nature")
 Zieser, Petra ("Enlightenment
 Guaranteed")

Directors:

Agresti, Alejandro ("The Lake
 House")
 Allen, Woody ("Stardust Memories")
 Altman, Robert ("Short Cuts")
 Anderson, Paul Thomas
 ("Magnolia")
 Arcand, Denys ("Jesus of Montreal")
 Aronofsky, Darren ("Pi")
 Beresford, Bruce ("Black Robe")
 Bogdanovich, Peter ("What's Up,
 Doc?")
 Boorman, John ("Zardoz")
 Bridges, James ("The China
 Syndrome")
 Brooks, Mel ("High Anxiety")
 Capra, Frank ("Meet John Doe")
 Carpenter, John ("Starman")
 Costa-Gavras ("Missing")
 Curtiz, Michael ("Casablanca")
 Dörrie, Doris ("Enlightenment
 Guaranteed")
 Frankenheimer, John ("The
 Burning Season")
 George, Terry ("Hotel Rwanda")
 Hare, David ("Wetherby")
 Haynes, Todd ("Far From
 Heaven")
 Hoblit, Gregory ("Frequency")
 Howard, Ron ("Apollo 13")
 Howitt, Peter ("Sliding Doors")
 Hughes, Bronwen ("Forces of
 Nature")
 Iñárritu, Alejandro González
 ("21 Grams")
 Ivory, James ("Howards End")
 Jennings, Garth ("The Hitchhiker's
 Guide to the Galaxy")
 Jordan, Neil ("The Crying Game")
 Kershner, Irvin ("Star Wars:
 Episode V—The Empire
 Strikes Back")

Lee, Spike ("Malcolm X")
 Linklater, Richard ("Waking Life")
 Litvak, Anatole ("The Snake Pit")
 Lucas, George ("THX 1138")
 Mann, Michael ("The Insider")
 Meyer, Nicholas ("Star Trek VI:
 The Undiscovered Country")
 Moore, Michael ("Canadian
 Bacon")
 Mulligan, Robert ("To Kill a
 Mockingbird")
 Nichols, Mike ("Working Girl")
 Parker, Alan ("Birdy")
 Pollack, Sydney ("Three Days of
 the Condor")
 Ritt, Martin ("The Front")
 Rydell, Mark ("On Golden Pond")
 Salva, Victor ("Powder")
 Scorsese, Martin ("The Last
 Temptation of Christ")
 Scott, Ridley ("Blade Runner,"
 "Thelma & Louise")
 Smolan, Sandy ("Rachel River")
 Soderbergh, Steven ("Sex, Lies
 and Videotape")
 Spielberg, Steven ("Close
 Encounters of the Third
 Kind," "Raiders of the Lost
 Ark," "Schindler's List")
 Stone, Oliver ("JFK")
 Tacchella, Jean-Charles ("Cousin,
 Cousine")
 Twyman, James ("Into Me See")
 Vidor, King ("The Fountainhead")
 Weir, Peter ("Fearless," "Gallipoli")
 Zemeckis, Robert ("Forrest Gump,"
 "Romancing the Stone," "Who
 Framed Roger Rabbit")
 Zucker, Jerry ("Ghost")

Screenplay/Teleplay Writers:

Adams, Douglas, and Karey
 Kirkpatrick ("The Hitchhiker's
 Guide to the Galaxy")
 Allen, Woody ("Stardust
 Memories")
 Altman, Robert, and Frank
 Barhydt ("Short Cuts")
 Anderson, Paul Thomas
 ("Magnolia")
 Arcand, Denys ("Jesus of
 Montreal")
 Aronofsky, Darren ("Pi")
 Aronofsky, Darren, and Sean
 Gullette ("Pi") (voice-over
 narration script)
 Arriaga, Guillermo ("21 Grams")
 Auburn, David ("The Lake
 House")
 Bernstein, Walter ("The Front")
 Boorman, John ("Zardoz")
 Brackett, Leigh, and Lawrence
 Kasdan ("Star Wars: Episode
 V—The Empire Strikes
 Back")
 Brooks, Mel, and Ron Clark,
 Rudy DeLuca and Barry
 Levinson ("High Anxiety")
 Broyles, William Jr., and Al
 Reinert ("Apollo 13")
 Costa-Gavras, and Donald
 Stewart ("Missing")
 Dörrie, Doris, and Ruth
 Stadler ("Enlightenment
 Guaranteed")
 Emmerich, Toby ("Frequency")
 Epstein, Julius J., and Philip G.
 Epstein and Howard Koch
 ("Casablanca")

- Evans, Bruce A., and Raynold Gideon ("Starman")
- Fancher, Hampton, and David Peoples ("Blade Runner")
- Foote, Horton ("To Kill a Mockingbird")
- Gray, Mike, and T.S. Cook and James Bridges ("The China Syndrome")
- Guest, Judith ("Rachel River")
- Hare, David ("Wetherby")
- Haynes, Todd ("Far From Heaven")
- Henry, Buck, and David Newman and Robert Benton ("What's Up, Doc?")
- Howitt, Peter ("Sliding Doors")
- Jordan, Neil ("The Crying Game")
- Kasdan, Lawrence ("Raiders of the Lost Ark")
- Khouri, Callie ("Thelma & Louise")
- Kroopf, Sandy, and Jack Behr ("Birdy")
- Lawrence, Marc ("Forces of Nature")
- Linklater, Richard ("Waking Life")
- Lucas, George, and Walter Murch ("THX 1138")
- Mastrosimone, William, and Michael Tolkin and Ron Hutchinson ("The Burning Season")
- Meyer, Nicholas, and Denny Martin Flinn ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country")
- Moore, Brian ("Black Robe")
- Moore, Michael ("Canadian Bacon")
- Pearson, Keir, and Terry George ("Hotel Rwanda")
- Perl, Arnold, and Spike Lee ("Malcolm X")
- Portos, Frank, and Millen Brand ("The Snake Pit")
- Prawer Jhabvala, Ruth ("Howards End")
- Price, Jeffrey, and Peter S. Seaman ("Who Framed Roger Rabbit?")
- Rand, Ayn ("The Fountainhead")
- Riskin, Robert ("Meet John Doe")
- Roth, Eric ("Forrest Gump")
- Roth, Eric, and Michael Mann ("The Insider")
- Rubin, Bruce Joel ("Ghost")
- Salva, Victor ("Powder")
- Schrader, Paul ("The Last Temptation of Christ")
- Semple, Lorenzo Jr., and David Rayfiel ("Three Days of the Condor")
- Soderbergh, Steven ("Sex, Lies and Videotape")
- Spielberg, Steven ("Close Encounters of the Third Kind")
- Stone, Oliver, and Zachary Sklar ("JFK")
- Tacchella, Jean-Charles, and Danièle Thompson ("*Cousin, Cousine*")
- Thomas, Diane ("Romancing the Stone")
- Thompson, Ernest ("On Golden Pond")
- Twyman, James ("Into Me See")
- Wade, Kevin ("Working Girl")
- Williamson, David ("Gallipoli")
- Yglesias, Rafael ("Fearless")
- Zaillian, Steven ("Schindler's List")

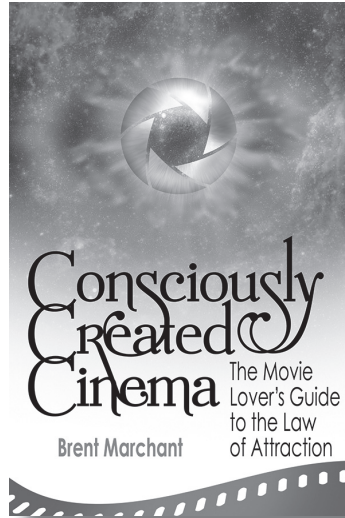
Book, Story and Source

Material Creators:

- Adams, Douglas ("The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," book, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*)
- Aronofsky, Darren, and Sean Gullette and Eric Watson ("Pi," story)
- Bogdanovich, Peter ("What's Up, Doc?," story)
- Brenner, Marie ("The Insider," story source article, *Vanity Fair* magazine, "The Man Who Knew Too Much")
- Burnett, Murray, and Joan Alison ("Casablanca," play, *Everybody Comes to Rick's*)
- Carver, Raymond ("Short Cuts," short story source writings)
- Connell, Richard, and Robert Presnell ("Meet John Doe," story)
- Dick, Philip K. ("Blade Runner," book, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*)
- Forster, E.M. ("Howards End," book, *Howards End*)
- Garrison, Jim ("JFK," book, *On the Trail of the Assassins*), and Jim Marrs ("JFK," book, *Crossfire: The Plot That Killed Kennedy*)
- Grady, James ("Three Days of the Condor," book, *Six Days of the Condor*)
- Groom, Winston ("Forrest Gump," book, *Forrest Gump*)
- Haley, Alex, and Malcolm X ("Malcolm X," book, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*)
- Hauser, Thomas ("Missing," book, *Missing*)
- Jeong-Kim, Eun, and Ji-na Yeo ("The Lake House," source screenplay, "*Siwarae*" (2000 film))
- Kazantzakis, Nikos ("The Last Temptation of Christ," book, *The Last Temptation of Christ*)
- Keneally, Thomas ("Schindler's List," book, *Schindler's Ark*)
- Lee, Harper ("To Kill a Mockingbird," book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*)
- Lovell, Jim, and Jeffrey Kluger ("Apollo 13," book, *Lost Moon*)
- Lucas, George ("Star Wars: Episode V—The Empire Strikes Back," story; "THX 1138," story)
- Lucas, George, and Philip Kaufman ("Raiders of the Lost Ark," story)
- Mastrosimone, William ("The Burning Season," story)
- Moore, Brian ("Black Robe," book, *Black Robe*)
- Nimoy, Leonard, and Lawrence Konner and Mark Rosenthal ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country," story)
- Rand, Ayn ("The Fountainhead," book, *The Fountainhead*)

- Raymond, Ernest ("Gallipoli," book, *Tell England* (uncredited))
- Revkin, Andrew ("The Burning Season," book, *The Burning Season: The Murder of Chico Mendes and the Fight for the Amazon Rain Forest*)
- Roddenberry, Gene ("Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country," TV series source, *Star Trek*)
- Tacchella, Jean-Charles ("*Cousin, Cousine*," story)
- Thompson, Ernest ("On Golden Pond," play, *On Golden Pond*)
- Ward, Mary Jane ("The Snake Pit," book, *The Snake Pit*)
- Weir, Peter ("Gallipoli," story)
- Wharton, William ("Birdy," book, *Birdy*)
- Wolf, Gary K. ("Who Framed Roger Rabbit?," book, *Who Censored Roger Rabbit?*)
- Yglesias, Rafael ("Fearless," book, *Fearless*)

OTHER WRITINGS BY BRENT MARCHANT



*Consciously Created Cinema:
The Movie Lover's Guide to the Law of Attraction*
(ISBN 978-1495976643, 2014)

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Official Web Site of Brent Marchant
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<http://brentmarchantsblog.blogspot.com/>

Featured Contributor, Arts & Entertainment
VividLife magazine
www.VividLife.me

Featured Contributor
Smart Women's Empowerment
www.smartwomensempowerment.org

get the picture?!

Conscious Creation
Goes to the Movies

These days just about everybody is talking about “conscious creation” (also known as the law of attraction). From television talk shows to mainstream media outlets, this enlightening and empowering topic is on everyone’s mind. And, with the release of groundbreaking films like *What the Bleep!?* and *The Secret*, movie audiences all over the world have learned how we make use of this philosophy to create our own reality. Now author Brent Marchant takes us on a cinematic journey and shows us how to view films of all sorts from a conscious creation perspective. In this revised and updated edition of his debut book, *Get the Picture?: Conscious Creation Goes to the Movies*, the author explores this subject in tremendous depth. In each of the book’s 11 chapters, Marchant introduces a particular conscious creation concept, then presents movies that illustrate the concept at hand. We’re led through over 60 films, covering a broad range of genres. As we examine the onscreen characters’ mistakes and successes through a conscious creation lens, we begin to apply what we learn to our own lives—we *get the picture!*”



As a lifelong cinema buff and longtime student of metaphysics, author Brent Marchant explores the connections between movies and meaning. In addition to this title, he is also the author of a follow-up book, *Consciously Created Cinema: The Movie Lover’s Guide to the Law of Attraction* (ISBN 978-1495976643) (2014). Brent also maintains a blog about metaphysical cinema and related topics (<http://brentmarchantsblog.blogspot.com/>) and is Featured Contributor for *VividLife* magazine (www.VividLife.me). His additional writing credits include contributions to *Smart Women’s Empowerment*, *Library Journal*, *BeliefNet*, *New Age News* and *Master Heart Magazine*. Brent holds a B.A. in magazine journalism and history from Syracuse University. Follow him on Facebook, Twitter ([@Brent_Marchant](https://twitter.com/Brent_Marchant)), MeWe and LinkedIn, as well as through his web site, www.BrentMarchant.com. Email him at info@brentmarchant.com.

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