WHAT IS PROCESS WORK?
Entopia: Illuminating the inner cinema with processwork
Abstract

Entopia, meaning inner place, is where this project begins. It is an illustration of introspection. I use experimental filmmaking techniques in an effort to represent psychological processes and awareness tools. As art, the movies are available to as many interpretations as there are viewers. As the artist, this essay is my interpretation, my contextualization of these creations. My hope for the project is to seduce the viewers awareness into discovering unknown aspects of itself. Or simply to encourage the viewer to succeed at having mystical experiences.

By following threads that weave together the processes of making meaning and attuning awareness I have arrived at these cinematic expressions. This project documents the process of searching the many realms for patterns that connect. Like nighttime dreams, cinema constellates information laden with implicit and explicit narratives. This is creative research and its manifestations. We are weavers of the light and dark, enshrouded by consciousness, yearning to liberate the deepest part of our being.
Acknowledgements

To all of those who acknowledged the absurdity of their passage through. Special thanks to my dream team, Dawn Menken, Gary Reiss and Salome Schwartz. And to my special forces unit, Joe Goodbread, Jan Dworkin and Chris Allen. Lastly to Carl Skoggard and Joseph Holtzman. Thank you for believing in me. I love you all and all the more for helping me learn to love myself.
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Introduction

This project began with the desire to create a series of short videos that illustrate some of fundamental elements of processwork theory. It led me to an unexpected obliteration of self image in a very unique and literal sense. After many attempts at pedagogy and narrative, it has developed into something that is more experiential than tutorial, more implicit than explicit, more art than academic. This was to be expected considering my background in art and experimental filmmaking. Sometimes the movies resemble the fragmented scene changing world of (my) night time dreams. Sometimes they show what therapy looks or subjectively feels like. Two of them are contextualized by coincidental theories on the nature of reality, identity and addiction. I have completed three episodes. They are the results of my research. My hope is to continue making the hundred episodes I envision. In the big picture this project is just getting started and yet in its important to reflect upon what’s already been done. So here I am, trying to understand all of the intentional and unintentional results of my niche psychology video art research.

My Quest and Questions

“Sometimes - often in science and always in art - one does not know what the problems were till after they have been solved” (Bateson 271).
My first question was, how does awareness happen? I soon decided that those lines of inquiry are better left to neurologists and philosophers. Next I wondered, what does processwork theory look like? What visual and cinematic techniques can I use to illustrate these nuanced awareness tools? Can cinema be used to demonstrate and clarify the chaos and confusion of dreaming? Is it possible to cinematically represent a process oriented approach to unfolding a dream? Towards the end I wondered, is cinema a technological attempt at a psychological reification of dreaming? By making movies can I become the dream maker?

In retrospect, these questions feel somewhat artificial, the product of an institutional assignment to formulate research questions. At this point, I am more curious about my motives for making these videos the way I have. My creative process rarely begins with a question. Instead, it begins, like a quest, with a mysterious vision and a desire to “realize,” fulfill or somehow achieve it. A fantasy or idea haunts me and eventually something compels me to externalize it. Perhaps to better understand it. Perhaps just to get it out of my head. This form of inquiry uses art as a tool for psychological reification and uses creative research as an awareness practice. By using images to substantiate fleeting fantasies and dreams I can make unknown parts of myself more known. That which is invisible, or only visible to me, becomes visible. In a 1957 lecture, Carl Jung offered a similar explanation for why he made certain paintings. In reference to a figure in a dream, Philemon, he said, “Since I did not understand this dream image, I painted it in order to impress it upon my memory.” Through painting and active imagination he found that Philemon “represented superior insight” and became for him “what the indians call a guru.” These introspective investigations laid the groundwork for all that followed. Jung, reflecting back upon the inquiries that became the Red Book, said “The years …
when I pursued the inner images were the most important time of my life. Everything else is to be derived from this” (The World Within 10:45). Here is one of his paintings of Philemon from *The Red Book:*

![Philemon painting from The Red Book](image)

To make my *dreams* into my guru, this is my quest. "The term [guru] is a combination of the two words gu (darkness) and ru (light), so together they mean 'divine light that dispels all darkness.' Guru is the light that dispenses the darkness of ignorance” (Murray 231). Just as a window allows light into a dark room, our *dreams* are a window into the unfathomable depths of our being. Jung, being one of the western world’s most prominent midwives of this world view, distills it down to the idea that “One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious” (Alchemical Studies 265). This relationship between the dark and light, the known and the unknown, is at the very core of processwork. These videos are my attempt to illustrate this idea.

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1 By dreams I mean the experiences that occur while sleeping but also the dreamlike aspects of things that happen throughout the day such as body symptoms, relationships, addictions, accidents and fantasies. This usage comes from Arnold Mindell's idea of the dreambody. See *Dreambody* by Arnold Mindell.
Methods, Contexts, Patterns: Technically and Symbolically Speaking

"Try. Fail. Try again. Fail better.” - Samuel Beckett

Making movies, for me, is like building a bridge between fragmented parts of myself. My dreams rarely come in neat narrative packages and thus these videos don’t either. They’re more like a surrealist montage that isn’t meant to make immediate sense to the rational, consensus reality; mind. Something like visual koans, they are meant to summon the unknown, to inspire questions, to at once befuddle and clarify. My aim is not simply to transmit information but to invoke a curiosity in the viewer. They are dream sequences that linger in the hypnopompic realm of the psyche, the place between sleeping and waking. Like dreams and art, they are as meaningful or as memorable as the viewer makes them.

A significant part of my undergraduate education was dedicated to making movies and simultaneously studying film production, history and theory. I approach the medium with a casual, economy of means, do-it-yourself style. For this project I’m am the cameraman, actor, director, writer, grip, editor and entire crew. If a shot is blurry or cropped strange, its either intentional or embraced as part of the process. My mistakes are often the most meaningful and interesting things that happens and so I cherish them. For example, If my head is cut off while standing because a shot was framed while sitting then it’s perfectly representative of how I need to stop being so “heady,” so analytic, and follow other kinds of less known experiences.

Nietzsche describes a similar way of navigating with his claim that,

2 Consensus reality is a term coined by Mindell to differentiate our everyday normative experience of the material world which we can reach consensus about from more dreamlike experiences and subtle essence level or spiritual experiences. This will be discussed at greater length in the section, Three Ways of Being.
The decisive value of an action may lie precisely in what is unintentional in it and that all its intentionality, everything which we can see in it, know, "become conscious of," still belongs to its surface layer and skin, - which, like every skin, indicates something but conceals even more? (Nietzsche 32).

This surface skin and that which it conceals, the spectrum of the known and unknown parts of our being, is precisely what I am revealing in these dreamlike scenes.

I tend to make big agendas and then follow something totally unexpected that is way more interesting than what I had intended to do. That is a casual synopsis of process oriented anything. Just follow what’s happening and you can’t go wrong. Sometimes this means embracing mistakes and other times it means following flirts,\(^3\) the fleeting fancies on the outskirts of awareness. In this project I ended up exploring what I call inverse blue screening. It employs a technique called, chroma keying where one color is made transparent and replaced by another image. It looks like this:

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\(^3\) See Unintentional Music by Lane Arye for more on these ideas.
At first I made a blue chalkboard so I could write credits and titles. Soon thereafter I found myself chroma keying the sky, smashing blue glass with a hammer, pouring blue yogurt all over myself and eventually doing all sorts of odd things around town dressed all in blue like a smurf.

Initially, this was just aesthetically compelling. As I explored the use of this technique it became increasingly emblematic of processwork’s approach to identity, or primary process, and latent identity, or secondary process. This foundational principle of processwork is succinctly described by Joe Goodbread in *The Dreambody Toolkit* as follows, “those features which are more or less familiar to him and with which he identifies we term primary. Those features with which he has little contact and with which he cannot identify himself are those which we designate as secondary” (171). Chroma keying out my body image temporarily liberates me from my primary identity and visually allows a secondary process to appear. This allows the viewer to see through the surface of identity and peek into the vast mysteries of internal experiences.

**Creative Research and The Holy Mountain**

Creativity is a gift and a privilege. It is also an innate aspect of evolution, a survival strategy, a way of engaging with adversity. Humans have risen to the top of the food chain by creating tools, language, civilization, etc.

When I speak of creativity, I am referring to a complete change in ourselves… Without creativity, the world goes all wrong. I am sure that the majority of illnesses come from a lack of creativity, and the social problems we have in the world are due to this shortage. Misunderstood creativity provokes war and crimes (Jodorowsky 250).

Alejandro Jodorowsky is one of the most creative, revolutionary, shamanic film makers of all time. I summon him here because he does so many magical things that I aspire to. He is artist,
alchemist, actor, director, visionary, and revolutionary. *The Holy Mountain* is a cultural critique, a pilgrimage and an experiment that treats filmmaking as a sacred act. A summary of the elaborate narrative at this moment would be overly tangential. I am using it as an exemplary method of creative research⁴. It is a central context, a mountain, around which my methods circumnavigate. We are both far out on the periphery, in the edge realms of consciousness and of the mainstream.

Jodorowsky’s idea that illness, war and crime can result from a lack or perversion of creativity is akin to Frankl’s, Jung’s and processwork’s approach to finding value in disturbances.

Victor Frankl honed this attitude into a psychotherapeutic technique he called *paradoxical intention* where, by amplifying a disturbance, we can understand more about it, possibly accept it or even integrate it and thereby be emancipated from its unwanted effects (Frankl 126). It sounds simple enough in theory though in practice it requires vast courage and creativity. This is the artistry and alchemy of processwork. The idea is so common we see it in well known expressions, “that every problem contains the seeds to it’s own solution” (Peale) or “what makes a man ill also cures him” (Paraclesus). It is a sort of psychological homeopathy that is at once marginal and universal. There is some version of this power of transmutation found in Taoism, alchemy, ancient Greece, tantra, martial arts and throughout nature. Despite its cross cultural prominence, it is relatively rare to find someone who actively turns all the shit of life into gold.

⁴ I feel compelled to legitimize this line of inquiry because “we have generally accepted the idea that research and scientific investigation are synonymous. By identifying the word research with only one of its aspects we are limiting possibilities for advancement through new and imaginative inquiries” (McNiff 21).
In this scene from Jodorowsky’s *The Holy Mountain*, he does just that. Literally acting out this metaphor conveys this ancient wisdom without using a single word. This is why, in an introductory video, I used a worm bin to ask the question, “What is Processwork?” The material of the question is its own symbolic answer. The worms turn rubbish into fertile soil to grow new life in. “The Alchemist’s gold is greater contact with the experience of, and sometimes even insight into, her own and others’ nature” (Working on Yourself Alone 16). This is a central operating principal of processwork that is crucial to my creative process.
Metacommunicative Interlude

This is an essay. It is made of paper and ink shaped into symbols to represent ideas. It is meant to place my art project in a context. As a project for a psychology program I feel compelled to place them in the context of the processwork paradigm and, to some degree, within the field of psychology. I’ve begun to do so already by weaving in quotes from Bateson, Jung, Mindell, Goodbread, Nietzsche and Beckett. Beckett is included to subtly, though now explicitly, conjure the absurdity of this task. It’s absurd because I use the medium of moving images to expand beyond the limitations of language and now I must use language to explain the meta-lingual. The painter Barnett Newman expressed a similar dilemma when he said, “Aesthetics is for artists as ornithology is for the birds.” While I might wish I was entirely a bird I realize that my secondary process is, in keeping with the metaphor, to some degree ornithologically oriented. My present reluctance to accept and integrate this is palpable. I mention it here, as systematically and clearly as I am able, because it’s subtly disturbing my ability to contextualize my project. If I fail to come to terms with my academic aversion then it is likely to then unintentionally hijack my tone and thereby disturb you too, dear reader. I am doing my best to transparently transmute the situation. I realize that there is, traditionally, no place for this kind of communication in an academic essay. However, the more I try to keep my personal bias and diaristic style out, the more it comes in accidentally and inappropriately. It might be possible for me to marginalize this muddle and gloss over it with a desperate demonstration of something intelligible enough to pass. Yet, to do so would be to override all that I have learned from processwork. A key intervention of processwork is to notice and comb out these tangles. To bring them into awareness and to transform them into opportunities to learn and grow. That is what I am
attempting to do in this metacommunicative interlude. I am “communicating about communication” (Steps to an Ecology of Mind 178) in order to more precisely locate my awareness and to better understand something vaguely disturbing which is in the periphery of my immediate experience. Its similar to the attitude of embracing mistakes mentioned in the earlier section on my approach. I reemphasize it here in an effort to demonstrate it and now bring it into context. As Arnold Mindell puts it, “There is a sort of ‘fair observer,’ a metacommunicator who, when she or he is awake, can observe both primary and secondary processes as if from above, on the mountain top, and is able to talk about these insights and perceptions” (Working on Yourself Alone 18).

Let’s zoom out. That’s what happens in movies. You zoom in, focus on something important or mysterious, and then zoom out to place the thing in context. I see five general contexts and one meta-context in which I am positioning myself. They are processwork, psychology, video/art, experimental cinema, and dreaming/meaning. The meta-context is the background, the quantum field, the Tao, the essence, that from which all else somehow emerges. It is the context of the contexts. Now this is an unfathomably vast array of subject matter. Even a synopsis of these five diverse categories is a huge undertaking far beyond the scope of this
production. Not to mention the paradox of writing about the meta-context when, as Lao-Tsu posited in the beginning of the *Tao Te Ching*, “The Tao that can be spoken is not the eternal Tao.”

May this all serve as an establishing shot. The scene often at the beginning of a movie that locates you in a place. Imagine, for example, the aerial view of New York City that many a film open with. It says, here we are, we have arrived in this general vicinity. What a beautiful pattern!

I wonder who lives here. We are reestablishing *entopia*, the place within. Jung will help us,

> When you observe the world you see people, you see houses, you see the sky, you see tangible objects. But when you observe yourself within, you see moving images, a world of images, generally known as fantasies. Yet these fantasies are facts…everything was a fantasy to begin with. (The world within 10:45)

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**Patterns as Context**

Starting with the alternation between day and night, all of life is patterned. All matter abides by invisible forces that pattern the universe. (Mind and Nature 7). Our lives are patterned by our experiences. Life patterns can be deduced from behaviors, relationships, dreams, jobs,

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5 Bateson defines context as, “pattern through time.” (Mind and Nature 14)
addictions, symptoms, traumas, luck, synchronicities and just about everything life has to offer.

“The patterns and sequences of childhood are built into me” (Mind and Nature 15).

The patterns are always there but are not always accessible when we want them to be and are often overly present when we don’t want them to be. They are like catalysts for all of our latent epiphanies and catastrophies. Whether we like it or not, life is a perpetual dance between wholeness and disintegration. Because psychological and life patterns happen over time and can be experienced as anything from totally naturalized to utterly world shattering they are almost unfathomable to the person living through them. Thus we must be creative when identifying and representing the repeating themes and myths of life.

The three movies of this project all use two-dimensional geometric patterns in the context of time based media to symbolically accentuate the all pervasive nature of a vaguely patterned existence amidst a richly patterned world. This recurrent motif is used as a “symbolic representation of the unus mundus,… this ‘one world’ as a continuum consisting of images, as a geometrical continuum” (Von Franz 15). In my movies, these patterns visually dance among therapeutic interactions and internal experiences to invoke the meta-contextual essence. I use images because I just can not find the words to describe what I’m trying to convey. My project is an attempt to show what the experience of processwork feels like. Joe Goodbread offers an eloquent description of what I’m trying to illustrate in The Dreambody Toolkit.

Now we have gotten to the core of process oriented psychology. By emphasizing the client’s momentary experience while simultaneously searching for the larger patterns which structure it, the process-oriented psychologist remains alert to the greatest possible range of manifestations of the process. This relieves him of the need to press his client’s process into a mold dictated by a particular model and allows him to be receptive to patterns originating in the client’s perception and behavior which offer solutions the presenting problem. (62)
Addictive Tendencies

Two of the movies we are about to look at in detail are subtitled, *Addictive Tendencies*. I did not expect addictions to be a significant part of this project. My relationship to various substances became increasingly relevant while I investigated and illustrated my inner world. As the early cinematic experiments took shape, I often noticed my reliance on caffeine to motivate me. Then one day, with the guidance of psilocybin, I realized that alcohol was never going to liberate me and so I liberated myself from it. All the while, my dreams were telling me to sublimate my psychoactive longings and to transmute my addictive tendencies into creative manifestations. Following this process became an all inclusive framework, a way to focus of my endeavors.

Addictions are often dreaming processes. They can be incredibly influential energies that shape our life patterns. Various drugs have hijacked and taken the lives of too many people that I love. This a massive mythic mega disturbance so commonplace that it can be hard to notice or accept. Familiarity can be blinding. Making movies about addictions has brought all kinds of darkness into the light for me. “The great epochs of our lives are at the points when we gain the courage to rebaptize our badness as the best in us” (Nietzsche 186). This is the purpose of all the artistry and alchemy I’ve been discussing. When it comes to addictions, I need all the awareness tools and powers of transmutation that I can find. This is where theory enters into the context of my life.
Discussion of Results: Movie Reviews

In this section I’ll discuss each of the three movies in relation to earlier themes and also as a personal reflection on the process of making them.

3 Ways of Being

Here we have an odd little conflation of philosophies. As Joseph Campbell lectures us on the trine meanings of the sanskrit word “aum” we see two men in room interacting. Their movements are accelerated as they mirror each others signals erratically. As Campbell talks about “gross physical objects” a hammer smashes through them and reveals a curious scrawl,

![Image](image.png)

This didactic reduction makes obvious the connection between Campbell’s ideas about Aum and processwork’s ideas about reality. Campbell explains that each of the three sounds represents a different aspect of reality; A= waking, U= dreaming and M= beyond duality, beyond waking and dreaming. This is strikingly similar to Mindell’s conception of consensus reality, dream reality and essence reality. By weaving together these disparate threads, an archetypal knowledge is alluded to. These trine systems occur in culture everywhere from the Hindu aum and the Christian trinity to the star wars trilogy and semiotic’s index, icon, symbol. This investigation of
the very nature of reality and the experience of subject object relations can really only be alluded to.

Philosophically it seems that “it is not possible to resolve which of the subjective or physical universes ultimately contains the other” (Rogers 85). Yet trinities are one very popular way in which all sorts of problematic dichotomies are resolved.

There is no strict division between subjective and objective reality, consciousness and the physical universe are connected by some fundamental physical mechanism. This relationship between mind and reality is not subjective or objective, but ‘omnijective’ (Talbot 42).

Here we are again, dancing between duality to arrive at the unity beyond. As the video progresses, sanskrit chanting overwhelms Campbell’s explanation. Ravi Shankar and his group sing one of Hinduism’s most famous Mantras.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit Mantra</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asatoma sadgamaya.</td>
<td>From ignorance lead me to truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamasoma jyotir gamaya.</td>
<td>From darkness lead me to light.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrityoma amritam gamaya.</td>
<td>From death lead me to immortality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aum shanti shanti shanti</td>
<td>Aum peace peace peace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We’ve found our way back to the quest with which we began. For me, this mantra contains the alpha and omega of all psychology and spirituality. It alludes to the dance of all duality and beyond. The inner guru has returned.

**Caffeine Fixes Everything: Addictive Tendencies Part I**

I crave caffeine this morning. It was a late night that wasn’t nearly productive enough and now I need language - eloquent, efficient, evocative words - to manifest themselves. It feels like
my synapses are holding the neurons hostage until I pay them ransom in the form of increased blood flow laced with “the most widely consumed psychoactive drug on earth (Lovett 14).

Broca is still in bed and Wernicke is reluctantly complying with the deadline pressure part of my brain (Jaynes 101). Like some kind of psychoactive duct tape to right every morning spent on the wrong side of the bed, caffeine fixes everything. Or so it would seem by the multi billion dollar industry that revolves around this substance. If you google, “duct tape fixes everything,” you will quickly find how truly ironic this adage has become. Like aspirin or a placebo sugar pill, duct tape does have the potential to temporarily relieve a wide variety of problems but it rarely fixes anything with much lasting efficacy. It is a lazy, ugly, readily available, short term solution. The deep longing for a physical or metaphysical panacea has become a ubiquitous cultural phenomenon. Whether pharmaceutical, nutritional, physical, religious or scientific, most humans
want something that will make their disturbances go away. By conflating caffeine with duct tape we arrive at a ponderous perspective that questions this addictive tendency.

The movie opens with fourteen harp’s playing *Postcard from Heaven* by John Cage and is quickly followed by a barrage of images. A hand covered in ants à la Dali. A hand covered in blood pointing like a gun. A fourth of July celebration with naked men cooking meat, drinking alcohol and getting spanked. Women in bikinis. Fireworks. A suicidal Robert DeNiro from Taxi driver montaged with ET’s glowing finger and Casey Neistat jumping from great height into water. His contact with these symbolically charged waters makes a sound reminiscent of a gunshot which acts as a surrealist sound bridge to complete the suicidal longing of Deniro’s blood soaked finger. This liberation leads to a moss covered man meditating with opium poppies.

Cut to a man in bed writing with an afterglow of the dream images in the background. Yes, he is writing his dreams. Ah, that was a dream sequence. Like a dream, this video opens with so many images so fast that the viewer/dreamer can hardly comprehend what’s happening. Like dreams, there is no meta communicative presence saying, “Hey this is a dream.” While, perhaps, ungenerous to the viewer, this is how dreams operate. They often seem to happen instantaneously and are so saturated with fractal layers of holographic associations that one can barely comprehend all of their depths. This is part and parcel of the hypnopompic experience I am illustrating.

And so begins another blurry day. The focus becomes foggy, time is sped up, he checks his phone and rushes to the kitchen for a caffeinated concoction that will hopefully fix everything for long enough.
“When we are awake we also do what we do in our dreams - invent and make up the person with whom we associate and immediately forget it” (Nietzsche 138). Which is to say, we tend to go through the day as if we are still asleep. We are the dream maker and don’t even realize it whether we sleep or wake. We forget that we have the unique ability to reinvent ourselves at any moment.

This is a sarcastic and depressing movie that is meant to create more questions then answers. It gently lingers in the dreamy state of mind that we each encounter everyday and each choose either to embrace or allow to slip away. This is an examination of both my own personal tendencies and the culturally widespread marginalization of dreaming. “Ignoring the dreaming is an undiagnosed global epidemic. People suffer from a chronic form of mild depression when they are taught to focus on everyday reality and forget about the dreaming background” (Dreaming While Awake 7).

It is like a little revelation in a consensus reality focused world whenever someone chooses to bring awareness to the dreaming. This movie is a modest step in that direction.

**Dionysus: Addictive Tendencies Part II**

There is a picture of me from when I was two years old in which I’m sitting at the base of a tree holding a big bottle of wine while a half eaten cracker hangs from my mouth. If only alcohol were so cute. It seems likely that my father staged the photo but I can’t quite tell if that makes the whole situation more or less perverse. His name is Dennis. Apparently he liked this name so much that he also gave it to me. The name Dennis is derived from the Greek name Dionysus. While most widely known as the greek god of wine, his deeper archetypal significance
is of ritual madness and spiritual ecstasy. “The Romans took this ecstatic quality and perverted it by making Dionysus into Bacchus and crowning him the god of Drunkenness” (Johnson 43). Our materialist culture has inherited this Roman degradation and in so doing has fostered an overwhelmingly alcoholic society disconnected from its deeper potential.

That’s a lot. Too much and not enough. This ineffable ecstasy is, for me, the very purpose of existence. It is the kundalini serpent rising up the spine. It is the bliss of the St. Teresa. The direct connection to that which is unfathomably greater than our everyday selves. Indeed, “it comes from the latin root “ex stasis - to stand outside of oneself” (Johnson 13). It is to become one with all existence and non-existence beyond languages inherent polarization of such possibilities. This knowledge, this experience is why I am this being, flesh and spirit. This transpersonal ecstatic enthusiasm is seminal to all of my artistic endeavors and is very difficult to write about in the context of this essay.

This video is a depiction of my relationship with this Dionysian life myth. I have longed for this ecstasy for as long as I can remember and have experienced it through a variety of substances, rituals, and practices. I used to drink alcohol out of a longing for obliterative bliss but it’s a total tease when it comes to truly ecstatic states, so I quit. Psychedelics are more effective and may very well have been part of the Dionysian/Demeterian sacred rite known as the Eleusinian mysteries. The flesh of the gods which they consumed is thought, by some, to be a poetic allusion to magic mushrooms.
This hypothesis was first presented at a Washington mycology conference in 1977 by R.Gordon Wasson, Albert Hoffman and Carl Ruck (Stamets 14). It was further elaborated upon and popularized by ethnobotanist iconoclast Terrence McKenna with his stoned ape theory in which he challenges the status quo scientific narrative of human evolution. “Hallucinogenic plants may well have been the catalysts for everything about us that distinguishes us from other primates, except perhaps the loss of body hair” (McKenna 146).
What, you may by now be wondering, does any of this have to do with Processwork? Great question. This vast but brief explication of my life myth and its confluence with human spiritual evolution is all depicted in this video via images. in addition… soundtrack… with an excerpt of a lecture on addiction research by Dr. Gabor Mate. Process work asks how to integrate the state without the substance. This video shows the ridiculousness of excess alcohol and offers a potential way out through Jungian integration and tantric meditation practices. As the image of the primary process disappears we see the secondary parts emerge. The consensus reality version of Dennis is obliterated and a new world of experience is shown with skyscapes, dream figures, colors, shapes, jewels and rituals. We see the ex stasis of shapeshifting happen right before our very eyes. This visually demonstrates the integration of the ecstatic state.

The shots cut back and forth between the meditator and the drinker. The meditator performs an intricate hand posture called the Mahayoni Mudra which means the supreme womb or supreme source mudra. “It symbolizes the unity between the individual and consciousness. It symbolizes the return of the individual to his source, his origin. It is not only a symbol, for this mudra is used to help invoke this realization and experience” (Saraswati 378).
This simple film is a profound rebirth for me. It is not meant to be an explicit pedagogical tool so much as a psychic seed. It offers a glimpse into the vast depths of being human and its potential.

Contribution

I want to show the magic and mystery of process work to the world through the medium of video art. Just as we use signal awareness to notice and then speak directly to a secondary process I use the symbolic language of cinema to speak directly to our wholeness. To depict any aspect of processwork visually and without jargon is, in my view, a contribution to the field.

Just as processwork implements experiential learning as a path to personal transformation, I offer a cinematic experience as a path to processwork and self-reflection. These movies are a window into our esoteric awareness paradigm.

Conclusion: Ecstatic Technicians of the Sacred

“What could a beneficial artist be: the good magician whose works of art would be charged with such a positive force that they would push a spectator into ecstasy” (Jodorowsky 83).

I have a fondness for bold ambitions such as ecstasy-inducing art and art-inducing ecstasy. For me, the ecstasy appears through the creative process itself, through dreaming and through the confluence of the two. Dreaming is a creative act by an unknown part of our self. It beckons further creativity from our primary identity to then make meaning from the dreams.
Some of my most treasured moments in life are the times that I am able to tap into the dreaming and then crystallize existence into constellations of meaning. These movies are how I express the dreaming and the making of meaning that I so cherish. In so doing, I momentarily become the dream maker and connect with forces greater than my normal self.

This dimension, life as we know it here on planet Earth, is pure unlimited potential; the ultimate opportunity in the guise of a cruel cosmic joke. We are meant to go astray so that we may eventually find a new way, each our own, back to the source. We are here to lift the veil, pierce it, tear it down and elevate ourselves to our highest possibility. We are here to enact change, to embrace it, become it and go beyond it. We are here to suffer and struggle so that we may turn the broken shards of life into mosaics of meaning and beauty.

APPENDICES

Awareness Tools

This is a work in progress as I continue to explore the fluid subjectivity of blue screening and how it can demonstrate the various awareness tools of processwork. It is included here to offer a glimpse of further research. I’ll be using actual woodworking and power tools as metaphors for therapeutic interventions and following process. Pictured below, a crowbar pulls nails to revive a piece of wood as my chroma keyed image salvages a splintered part of my wild exhibitionist. This is but one take on the spectrum of wholeness.
I love tools. I love efficient ways to create profound change. To take a rough, raw, seemingly useless piece of wood and turn it into something useful and/or beautiful. To smear colors around and make images and evoke emotions. To combine images and make stories.

Processwork is an array of awareness tools. Like any tool, its efficacy depends upon its users ability to properly implement it. If you don’t know how to use a table saw then you might seriously injure yourself when you try to use it. Even experienced users sometimes lose a finger on this powerful machine. While they probably won’t take off your finger, awareness tools can also be hurtful when improperly handled.

Like a movie trailer, I can only tell you so much and I assure you this is something you won’t want to miss!
The Dreambody and The Dream Factory

This section is a modest beginning of a historical context. It was too tangential to be included in the main body of the text and too long to be a footnote. The relationship between dreams, cinema and psychology is a fertile field for further research though too immense for this creative project. This investigation would continue on from the earlier discussion about psychological homeopathy and transmutation. The questions are many. Are some dreams a built-in, natural therapist that implements this “like cures like’ strategy for survival purposes? Is that why we have nightmares? Is horror and thriller cinema so popular for similar reasons? Do we dream of our worst fears and similarly watch them on the silver screen because of some sadomasochistic psychological mechanism that is actually there to help us?

Both cinema and modern psychology were conceived in the 1890’s. Both were born with a tendency toward of oneirophilia, a love of dreams. By 1900 Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams* was published in Austria. Meanwhile filmmakers around the world were busy innovating continuity of action across successive shots and the close-up to create more thrilling chase scenes. Chase scenes were the most popular early films and continue to be a common theme among dreamers. Ever since their coincident manifestation, cinema has been exhaustively psychologized and psychology has been occasionally cinematized.

Dreams are not, as Freud famously postulated ,“The royal road to the unconscious” (Freud 47). They are indeed a truly exceptional vehicle but the infrastructure itself consists of the play between light, darkness and all duality which is perpetually unfolding in
every aspect of existence. Smelling, hearing, tasting, feeling, relationships, synchronicities, and body symptoms are all major highways that allow unknown information and parts of ourselves to emerge. Fred Allen Wolf highlights this approach regarding body symptoms in *The Dreaming Universe* as follows,

Symptoms are not just sicknesses that must be healed, repressed, or cured. Instead, symptoms are potentially meaningful and purposeful conditions signaling a fantastic phase of life or bringing one closer to the center of existence. As Mindell put it, “they can also be a trip into another world, as well as royal road into the development of the personality” (214).

In this book Wolf turns existence upside-down with the question, “Are we dreaming or is the universe dreaming us?”

I pause here, prematurely, because it feels a bit nightmarish to begin an entirely new thesis at the end of this one. Like a dream, we’ve switched scenes. The details are different but the underlying energies are, more or less, the same. As fascinating as this is, some dreams we just have to let go and know that they will come back in a thousand ways eventually.

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6 I use “information” to mean, as Gregory Bateson put it, “A difference that makes a difference” (*Steps to an Ecology of Mind* 272).
Video links:

3 Ways of Being
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ocV0Ja1CVJg

Caffeine Fixes Everything: Addictive Tendencies Part I
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyQxKieyt7Q

Dionysus: Addictive Tendencies Part II
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rYtQhq47MUU
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Metz, Christian. *Identification, Mirror (from The Imaginary Signifier*. In Braudy Leo, 1999.


