

Enter Beyond, Become Being:

A Posthuman Exegesis Concerning The Digital Aesthetics Of Nobody™.

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The recent area of scholarship known as posthumanism, along with the complimentary field transhumanism, pivot around one central and generalized question: what are the limits of our conceptions surrounding subjectivity, and how are we as humans moving away from the classical picture of post-enlightenment humanism? Posthumanism and transhumanism manifests in a variety of ways, from Deleuzian schizoanalysis, intersectional theory, futurism, critical animal studies, Gaia theory, speculative realism, etc. And out of these subfields arises the aesthetic dimension; Posthumanism and transhumanism are apt at expressing concepts through the artistic lens and can easily appropriate aesthetic theory to achieve certain ideational purposes. The new domain of Post and Trans humanism must seek out a artistic domain that can accentuate in a polysemous manner, the various conceptual landscapes that blend fiction with reality, experimentation in thought with politics and lived experience. This leads us to the subject, or rather, artistic project that can be wedded to, and provide a critique of the Trans and Post humanist projects. Lurking around the internet in the form of dissident anonymous image boards, YouTube mirror channels, and a mysterious website filled with hidden content portals lies the video art and music corpus of the anonymous artist (or group of artists) known simply as NobodyTM. A favourite among what is known on the internet as “Chan-culture”, more specifically the infamous 4chan, many ponder upon the significance and seeming absurdity of what the artist calls “edits”, strange video art that juxtaposes several sounds, images, words, and overlapping video content in a seemingly random and chaotic order. But as indicated in many hidden messages, allusions and order is what is being presented, where we can see a theological and philosophic message behind the chaotic display. That is why through a critical exegesis of NobodyTM’s content, Nobody’s critique and lament of transhumanism and the changing nature of identity in the digital age, as well as using philosophic tools from thinkers such as Huxley,

Deleuze and Heidegger, we shall see that the video art of NobodyTM brings the realm of posthumanism and transhumanism into an engagement with the aesthetics of the digital age.

Introduction to Nobodyism: Postmodern Anti-Modern Art.

Cloaked in an intentional anonymity, the art of NobodyTM is made up of videos arranged in themes and motifs, often in random order that consists of segments or “edits” as Nobody calls it, that present a phantasmagoria of flashing images. Videos run through dozens of editing filters, images, sounds and words bleeding into each other, often displaying people indulging in seemingly random fetishes, speaking of life experiences, wild conspiracy theories, depictions of every day life, etc. all of this is presented in a manner of bricolage, sedimentary layers that are juxtaposed to produce a disturbingly visceral effect. The most prominent example that is Nobody’s most famed work is separate from the main episode collection, simply called “you”. Most of “you” consists of eerie background music, and a grainy interview with the Catholic professor and cultural critic E. Michael Jones about his book “Libido Dominandi”, how the post-sexual revolution society uses sexual liberation as a form of mass control and distraction. Overlapped with this is an off-color and gritty video of a dance group “twerking” in an overtly sexualized manner. The video ends with a segment from Mr. Rogers interviewing a paraplegic boy, in a way returning to a form of childhood innocence¹. This is by far one of the most direct videos from NobodyTM in terms of its meaning, but serves as an introduction to Nobody’s way of thinking. The attempt of this paper is to build a body of literature around the interpretation of NobodyTM and this unique style of art in the digital age, therefore I shall refer to Adam

Wallace’s piece that attempts to do just this. As Wallace points out, NobodyTM cuts across

¹NobodyTM. “You”. Uploaded by YouTube: *Celtic Savage* (mirror). Uploaded: Sep, 22, 2016.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_RCOFz8BI&t=295s

diverse fields of inquiry, from the UFO phenomenon, new age ideas, the politics of sexuality, Christian iconography, music, etc. however there is always a subtle hint of irony to the work, as if to detach and alienate the viewer even more from what is presently going on in the videos, for instance, outlandish conspiracies are presented with an ironic subtext. Wallace then comments on Nobody's use of irony, being that irony is a primary mode of conceit and communication in postmodern art and literature, serving to mask and detach one's self from a meaningful engagement of the issues being presented in the work of art. Wallace further point out that the name itself gets to the heart of Nobody's message, "Nobody trade mark", as it is pointed out in the introduction video "divine intelligentsia", everyone is the nobody, everyone engages in the anonymity and totalization of what some would call an oceanic feeling or a Buddha nature. We are all seemingly "trade marked" and mass produced, hence the variety of meanings in the name alone, we are nobody, and in it is either control or spiritual liberation².

Transhumanism and posthumanism are a sufficient lens from which to view NobodyTM's artistic corpus due to the significant presence of a few themes, one being the influence of technology on daily life, and another being the changing view of subjectivity in modernity. One must realize however that NobodyTM is an artistic dark side or negative to the fields of post and transhumanism. NobodyTM's work embodies a message of traditionalism and enchantment that defies the post-enlightenment humanist discourses of reason, mechanistic efficiency and egalitarian cosmopolitanism. In this the work finds commonality with post humanism's wish to embrace the move away from current post-enlightenment humanism, but diverges in that NobodyTM does not embrace the changes to human subjectivity, but reveals

²Wallace, Adam T.C. "NOBODYTM And Postmodern Antimodernism". *West Coast Reactionaries*. Nov, 6, 2015. <https://westcoastrxers.com/2015/11/06/nobodytm-and-postmodern-antimodernism/>

them as a monstrosity, as a direct attack upon the spiritual. What makes NobodyTM unique in this regard (and what makes the artistic work capable of being seen through the lens of post and transhumanism) is that the art specifically picks up the tools of modernity instead of harkening back to a romanticist pantomime of a previous artistic period, all with the intent of subverting modernism. The art of NobodyTM is often spoken of in comment sections as a mirror or screen projecting a hyper-transmitted form of what constitutes modernity and its machinations upon the human spirit, therefore providing a much more affective message than simple idealistic alternatives to modern life³.

An older about section that has seen been archived gives a picture of NobodyTM's use of pictorial language and emotional affect, stating this communication has a certain sincerity, quote "Everything is abstraction, all communication is the transmission of thoughts based on models of perception. We just throw our human syntax at what exists, our spoken/written communication is terribly limited, a great subversion lives beneath all that"⁴. To NobodyTM, the human entity, much like it is to certain posthumanists, is an entity of discourse, images, and symbolism that sediments along familiar forms. The human is an information network interacting with every other part of nature, following a programming, possessing an input and output mechanism that synthesises data etc. in the first episode of the first season, NobodyTM outlines as much. The first image is of music videos and pop culture/advertising images, processed by a lecture from philosopher and ethnobotanist Terence McKenna on the nature of the spiritual reality in a fourth dimensional plane, and the UFO phenomenon presenting a challenge to materialist science. Then

³Wallace, "Postmodern Antimodernism".

⁴NobodyTM. "About Section". *Archive.is*. Pre-2016. <http://archive.is/xrT6w#selection-61.659-61.911>

this is followed by a girl utilizing a voice command headset to search google while images of human mass crowds pouring out of a train plays in the faded background. Finally, a video presented in a distorted color field filter of a lecturer explaining the conscious and unconscious mind along the psychoanalytic model. The surface level mind understands language and reason, while the unconscious is the world of images and iconography, thus laying out the project of NobodyTM^{5,6}. Spirituality is a topic often enunciated in transhumanist discourse, and is even the subject of science fiction, but as Ferrando explicates, has yet to be fully realized within posthumanist discourse. Posthumanism and by virtue posthuman spirituality is the dissolving of binaries and boundaries, where nothing is a complete dichotomous system, for instance mind/body, form/particular etc. like Haraway's cyborg, posthuman spirituality finds connections, relations among parts that are never fully polarized or separated from each other, and constructing relations based on affinity rather than taxonomy⁷. The art of NobodyTM visually represents this blending of the human spirit into various other forms in a polysemous manner, into the animal, the automaton, etc. the subject in the art of NobodyTM is caught between the forces of the divine, and the forces of primal nature, but in this artform the two are seamlessly blended, giving a more total view of the human spirit in postmodernity. From the introduction video "divine intelligentsia", Nobody states that "God's ideal is found beyond the mandated comprehension.... foster one's perception as nomadic" and "to sync with hyper-nature

5NobodyTM. "Episode 1". *Vidme*. Date added: Dec, 4, 2014. <https://vid.me/6IT2>

6Mckenna, Terence and Mishlove, Jeffery. "Hallucinogens And Culture, A magical Journey; Interview With Terence Mckenna". *Thinking Allowed, PBS*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u8y-khMKibU>

7Ferrando, Francesca. "Human Have Always Been Posthuman: A Spiritual Genealogy Of Posthumanism'. In *Critical Posthumanism And Planetary Futures*. Ed. Banerji, Debashish, Paranjape, Makarand R. (New York, India: Springer Publishing, oct, 8, 2016): 243-250.

and become an awaited lover of this dream's material framework, to have patience, for this world is birthing the human experience...the human animal will be dispelled in bliss"⁸.

NobodyTM communicates a new version of spirituality, one that accommodates our unique situation regarding our relationship with nature, our relation to technology and our future. "Divine Intelligentsia" provides a preparation for what is about to be shown in the main corpus of work, providing the three laws "submit to inevitable will, seek the NOTHING, revere our fate" all projected on a psychedelic background of a forest and Nobody's signature winking smiley face⁹. The very end of "Divine Intelligentsia" closes with the simple message: "enter beyond, become being, be the nobody"¹⁰. NobodyTM laments the coming of what nobody calls "submitting to artifact" or artificial intelligence that creates the very foundations of our consciousness, via various propaganda methods. NobodyTM celebrates the mystical and esoteric communiques of various traditions, most prominently the Christian-platonic tradition. At the same time, the work opens an aesthetic fluidity of expression, creating a bridge between the soul of the ancients and the post-secular, post-enlightenment and posthuman. As Ferrando points out regarding Vajrayana Buddhism, the spiritual domain is already "posthuman" in the sense of various mystical practices seeking the transcendental, opening a space that is already beyond the physicality, subjectivity and comportment of humanity as such¹¹. The artwork has a progression,

8NobodyTM. "Divine Intelligentsia". 2016. Nobodytm.com

9In the older version of the about section was a hyperlink that led to a list of various esoteric works that were aimed at building an understanding of the spiritualism behind NobodyTM. Such works as hermetic Kybalion, "the secret teachings of all ages" by Canadian scholar of mysticism Manly P. Hall, and "exopsychology" by mystic, counterculture icon and professor of psychology Timothy Leary.

10NobodyTM, "Divine Intelligentsia".

11Ferrando "Humans have always been posthuman", 246-251.

from the more direct and polemical earliest works such as “Earth2013”¹², that mockingly derides and exposes the problems with modernity from a traditionalist lens, such as mass societal consumerism, narcissism and moral apathy in youth-culture, the obsessions with sexuality and reliance on technology, etc. to more refined and metaphysical works that aims to expose a deeper connectivity between things. Take for instance the earlier off-episode video “know the human”¹³ that depicts a random teenage girl talking about the love of Christ and the genuine worth of a person coming from one’s inner disposition and self-image, or what she calls “the inner beauty that counts”. Overlapping this first are scenes from a bondage parade, the masses being enthralled by sexual expression outside of the norm. the scene leads one to suggest that the noble aim of improving self-esteem and self-image fuels a sort of exhibitionism within the subject that finds its way to conscious expression that deviates from societal standards. But within the same instant as the girl is still talking, calming ambient music and an image of a waterfall takes over with the words “in the image of god” projected. The girl talks about how obsessions with makeup, clothing, etc. does not matter when one is “beautiful on the inside”. This rapid shift of scenes takes place within less then a minute, but is to communicate a subtle exposition on the state of current humanity. There are the “higher and lower” elements to all things, including the ways in which we think of our own self image. But now that we have an introduction to the way NobodyTM operates within digital space, and the quasi-new age spirituality of the work, lets us examine the position of the subject (the posthuman) within Nobody’s video art, and for that we turn to Deleuze and Guattari.

12NobodyTM. “Earth2013”. *Vidme*. Uploaded dec, 2, 2014. <https://vid.me/Q0DN>

13NobodyTM. “Know The Human”. *Vidme*. Uploaded Dec, 2, 2014. <https://vid.me/2iMb>

The digital aesthetic Rhizome 1: Animality and the subject in NobodyTM.

The conceptual tools that can be put to work in describing the video art of NobodyTM are provided by Deleuze and Guattari, namely the concept of the Rhizomatic becoming-animal and animality and the aesthetic concept of faciality. Let us be clear that these tools are ways of expressing the art of NobodyTM, the neo-platonic metaphysics of Nobody comes into contention with the materialist assumptions of Deleuze and Guattari. It is true also that NobodyTM's work expresses the flows and intensities of human desire, but this is often portrayed in the negative sense. D and G make no judgements on where a line of flight or pursuit of a desire leads. Before we get into these two conceptual tools of D and G, one must remember that Nobody's work does cross over into the political, but this is not art like other forms of aesthetic modernism and conceptualism that is *explicitly* political. As it is said in the about section, NobodyTM has no specific political affiliation, and as Wallace observes, any politics present within the artwork is an after-effect, a consequence of Nobody's metaphysical and philosophic disposition towards modernity¹⁴. let us also observe some grounding for the aesthetic application of Deleuzian thought, namely in his work on "the moving image" in cinema; for Deleuze, the art of cinema (especially experimental cinema auteurs that he is fond of) is a highly refined one, for it achieves seamlessly what other artforms struggle to achieve, cinema opens a world of its own. Cinema and video art presents expanded opportunities to engage with a viewer and provide a more polysemous and multi-layered piece, art that can give visual shifts in perception at a rapid pace. The film becomes a "Plane of imminence" in the Deleuzian terminology, a flat plane of relations and operations without a hierarchical structure (qua Spinoza's ethics). In film, there is a

¹⁴Wallace, "Postmodern Antimodernism".

combination of sounds, words, images, dialogue, where each element relates to each other and creates an assemblage of forces that come together to produce an affect within the viewer. The viewer's mental perception, the mind's eye is a blank screen from which the cinematic work is projected on, create its own world on our mind's blank screen, adding to the bigger plane of imminence that constitutes our reality¹⁵.

Let us use some examples from NobodyTM to illustrate this very point; for instance, episode four of the first season entitled "look" gives a wide arrangement of the various digital-subterranean manifestations of humanity on the internet. Through a Lo-Fi and grainy lens, we are first introduced to a person in a full body suit submerging in a cess-pit overlapped with scenes from a wedding home video. The screen projects the words "life is difficult, are you patient? What is your purpose, do you have one?" then the text says for a time "you only see what you know". We then see various images rolling into one another that depict gluttony, various fetish images that have found prominence on the internet such as "human dolls", "furrries" and balloon-play, etc. then we have a chaotic mass of smashed together images, people dancing overlapped with old footage of mass rallies¹⁶. This may seem like an absurdist collage of images, but NobodyTM operates with a purpose in mind, to show a relation between the inane or superfluous activities people do and the reverberations these activities have in a greater social context. Out of all the spaces of relation, NobodyTM continuously highlights in "look" the activities of "furrries" or people in animal suits. People who find expression in animal mimesis, tapping into the animality of the subject, a topic of wide interest in posthuman studies. To Deleuze and Guattari,

15Nadaner, Dan. "Teaching Perception Through Video Art". *Art Education*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (Jan., 2008): 21-23.

16NobodyTM. "Episode 4, Look". *Vidme*. Dec, 2, 2014. <https://vid.me/GiFc>

the self-description of various furies or plush-play people would be within the realm of their overall project of finding lines of flight, or haecceities of desire production that wishes to escape reterritorialization or capture. It is the external form of the furry rather than some who self-describe their activities as wishing to be animals, accentuating the most desired part of the animal that escapes the molar form (molar being the striated space, the state model, the tree from which order is imposed.) of what it means to be human. D and G do not wish to find the molar animal, this is an impossibility, but rather the space between animal and human, the opening of relations that constitutes a fragile, not entirely hierarchical and fleeting space between the boundaries of human and non-human¹⁷.

What Nobody is presenting in audio-visual form is what D and G refer to as becoming-animal, or becoming-minoritarian. The human subject in this aesthetic space becomes nomadic, shifting between spaces of reality and fiction, encoded within digital relations of manipulated media effects, voyeuristically displayed to evoke deep-seated affects within the viewer. The becoming-animal of D and G is real, the in between movement from human to animal, even if anthropomorphism is fantasy. The becoming of any subject in D and G is the movement away from a homogeneous stability within the self towards an instability, and to no longer be recognized as participating within the normalcy of the rigidified structure known as “human”. Becoming-animal, becoming-woman, etc. eludes the present, is within the flows and channels of what D and G call rhizomatic non-hierarchical connections, where one end does not follow another in a causal chain, but rather the flow of connectivity between things is what constitutes

¹⁷MacCormack, Patricia. “Unnatural Alliances”. In *Deleuze And Queer Theory*. Ed. Nigianni, Chrysanthi and Storr, Mer. (London, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009): 141-142.

the rhizome of becoming-animal¹⁸. As D and G state, their project is the enabling of these material flows of desire in a non-linear fashion. Schizoanalysis is a practise of possibility, alterity and flux. As they say in response to the oedipal structural system of psychoanalysis, the goal of Schizoanalysis and the becomings it produces is to “go further still, we have not found the BwO (Body without organs) yet, we haven’t sufficiently dismantled the self” whereas Freudian psychoanalysis says “stop, find yourself again¹⁹. Becomings entail an element of destruction of the self for them to sufficiently take hold. The art of Nobody™ creates this plane-space of fluidity and destruction, often depicting digitalized lines of flight with devastating consequences. Furies and animal-play is only one outlet for Nobody’s art, as trans people, performance artists, adult infantilism (or as it is known, adult baby enthusiasts), and a whole array of other alternative subcultures are depicted in the works. On the surface, it seems Nobody™ is merely mocking or deriding these lines of flight (as it would appear so) but there is a different and more nuanced set of relations going on. The one constant as we have mentioned regarding the artwork is the double-articulation of transcendence and baseness, often presented at the same time. A piece that deals directly with posthuman animality and contortions of identity is episode 18, season 2: in it we have various people talking with a cacophony of midi music in the background and blurred images about gender identity and gender transition. Then we see furies and those engaging in animalistic activities, most prominently are one person in a lion suit with an ocean cropped into the image and a meditation instructional playing in the background as if to denote the disposition of “inner peace” through the animal and trans-minoritarian lines of

¹⁸Bruno, Gerald L. “Becoming-Animal (Some Simple Ways)”. *New Literary History*, Vol. 38, No. 4, On Change and Exchange in Literary Studies (Autumn, 2007): 704- 706.

¹⁹Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism And Schizophrenia*. (New York, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987): 275.

flight²⁰. We then have various religious iconography (the lion of Christ, since this motif is followed by a woman talking about God and our evolutionary path) and the last image of an “adult baby” or “infantilist” as the older man refers to himself in the clip. Here we get a view into the meaning of this episode, as the man goes on to explain why he is an adult baby due to persistent child abuse at the hands of his mother. He tells us that it is his plush animals that give him protection, all while with ambient music playing, a subtle image of Christ crawls up behind him in an open window. This display presents a plane of interrelating parts, from tragedy transmuted into psychological dependence on innocence, androgyny, the image of the divine, etc. it is clear when the man goes on to explain his plush lamb “lala” that protects him from “bad dreams”, that he does not “go on to hurt or bother anyone else, but I simply regress in my bedroom”²¹. The infantilized and regressed subject is now, through the artistic work, transmuted into a spiritual form through a process of becoming that NobodyTM has displayed through the juxtaposition of images. Christ looks over the fragile figure who abstracts his being to the point of a primordial affect (be it safety, recapture of a lost innocence, etc.), the lamb comfort doll plays as an intermediary between a secular society that no longer finds Christianised iconography as apparent, but rather personalized lines of flight (instead of the striated space or code of the Christian model) mimics that of the previous Christian epoch²².

The Digital Aesthetic Rhizome 2: Deconstructed Faciality in NobodyTM.

²⁰NobodyTM. “Season 2, Episode 18”. *YouTube, Uploaded by: nobodytmuploads*. Uploaded, jun, 20, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EudL1yY54v0>

²¹Ibid, mark: 17:40- 21:04.

²²I brought this very clip up on an email with NobodyTM (NobodyTM, Email to the Author. November, 5, 2016), as he stated that Christ watches over us, but words cannot explain the metaphysical reality of Christ, that the figure of God is more of like an opening and closing of a door. This man depicted in the clip steps through into the becoming of Christ, the becoming of personal experience into a figure of mercy and reprieve.

We shall now turn towards the other concept present in *A Thousand Plateaus* that is in keeping with the central concepts of D and G, and accentuated by the posthuman art of Nobody™: that being faciality. The face (like the landscape) to D and G is a process of destruction, intensification of novelty and sedimentary flows, and a dynamic becoming that does not start off as the individuated face. The face is a construct that can be re-arranged and contorted, an assemblage, or rather an “abstract machine” that produces the sedimentary parts of the assemblage. The face is divided into two operational parts that make up the abstract machine-face, both of which are not the facial features themselves but are the grounds from which features are produced: the face is divided into the blank or white canvas, the “signifier”, the space from which facial features are operationally in flux. The second are black holes or subjectification, openings that creates facial recognition, the process of rigid (molar) identity and identification²³. Much like the Reilly method in painting, which maps out 8 key facial features for measuring and executing portrait drawing and painting, black holes are the loci of measuring identity, where the whole body is expressed in the face and facial recognition. These blackholes are what traps the deterritorialized and free moving parts on the face into social and personal identity, we all have a unique face, but similar identifying blackholes. Like a system of disciplinary power (which we will get to later) the blackholes assign identity onto uncarved material bodies, thus cultural understandings and communications between groups and individuals are imprinted. D and G wish to of course disrupt this faciality, abstract the face and

²³Deleuze, Guattari. “A Thousand Plateaus”, 167-169.

make it deterritorialized once more before the forces of recapture grid the blank white canvas, the most prominent example they use is of the white male face^{24, 25}.

The face that has become deterritorialized also lands into the area of the grotesque, the monstrous and the effaced. D and G uses the freestyle rearrangement of faciality to highlight our cultural obsession with monsters, zombies, werewolves, etc. the key feature being that these creatures are not merely monstrous, but have taken on a human attribute, a face that is revealed to be monstrous is one that we recognize as human, the subjectify blockholes of identity are still present. These animal becomings in the face become molecular, meaning they stray between worlds, interacting with and creating new assemblages, becoming increasingly ghostly and abstract²⁶. Nobody™ uniquely manifests the abstract and deconstructive elements in faciality by presenting them in visual form, often focusing on distorted faces. The whole face is the identity of the individual torn asunder in digital simulacra, faces are hollowed out, rendered monstrous and blank, and then presented as venerated and beautified once more. In episode 11 of season 2 we are met with interlacing meanings of images and sounds associated with one's face and seat of identity in the state of becoming. We see people in furry masks dancing to an anti-war rant, teeming, colourful granules that distort an image of an old news reel about the cultural revolution, a person's face in bright colours explaining their coming out as genderfluid while a person in a full doll suit undresses in the background. Finally, in the clip we see words to Nobody's poem "angels paint me" that can be found in the audio discography 2016 album "so

²⁴ibid, 170-171.

²⁵Hickey-Moody, Anne. "Becoming-Dinosaur: Collective Process And Movement Aesthetics". In *Deleuze And Performance*. Ed. Cull, Laura. (London, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009): 164-166.

²⁶Deleuze, Guattari, "A Thousand Plateaus", 275-276.

shine a good deed”. The screen reads “hidden insight, summon hands, this is the fight.. angels paint me, out of this place, let me see, mask off face”²⁷. In episode 11 we also see a woman’s face faded out as she talks about God and redemption, blending in with a background of a man suspended from his feet in a full bodysuit, surely to represent the “hanged man”, a Judas image of punishment, mixed with a faded face of salvation.

The face for NobodyTM is a conduit into the multiplicities of human (posthuman) identity in the modern world. The human doll faces often come with the wide gaping mouth and the listless plastic expression of a new becoming-androgynous, becoming-animal, and becoming-imperceptible. The features are abstracted to *resemble* that of a human, but do not give way to a specific human. The doll faces in the video art of NobodyTM is akin to Deleuze’s work on the faciality of Francis Bacon (also painters like Auerbach can be brought into this analysis as well). The thick strokes and ghastly color-palette of Bacon’s creates the primal scream of his subjects, the face as a rigidified, striated whole slips away, and soon the blackhole of the mouth, the conduit of the scream is all that is left of the face²⁸. So too are the digitally manipulated faces present in various NobodyTM edits. The face is on a line of flight and becomes the whole being of a person to the point of the grotesque. Episode 7 in season two mostly focuses of a bikini-clad woman at an outdoor party laying about erotically. The visual effect is that of television static, or poorly rendered digital film that glitches and waves in and out of colour bands due to the lack of sufficient pixels. In the background, is audio from a lecture on child psychology and the roots of narcissism in the individual from environmental factors at a young age, and how pathological

²⁷NobodyTM. “Season 2, Episode 11”. *YouTube, Uploader: nobodytmuploads*. Uploaded mar, 9, 2016. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_5QTTgeHqo

²⁸Canar, Burcu. “Deleuze And *The Face*”. *Lingua ac Communita*. Vol. 21 (2011): 48-49.

narcissists create a fictional reality and a *false self* to compensate for personal shortfalls²⁹. The lo-res image combines the empty and distorted face of the woman into her whole body, and soon the pixelated static consumes her and the crowd around her, creating one mass of face and body, the multiplicity of the crowd closed in on the face of the women represents the flight into the erotic, the corporeal and worldly.

The face is politics to D and G, dismantling the face and alluding to the blackholes of subjectivity is a political project, to break through the wall of the signifier and become a being of multiplicity³⁰. D and G then take the ideas present in the sections on animal-becomings and faciality further into the realm of nature itself. Nature becomes a giant abstract machine, a plane of imminence that is abstracted yet individuated, where greater dimensions increase on the sedimentary multiplicities, or as D and G refer to the abstract machine of nature as “the One”, where “being expresses in a single meaning all that differs”³¹. For NobodyTM, the mission of art is to give a deeper visual representation of nature in our current epoch. The face is exposed as devoid of humanly qualities, the face can also be the face of control, or right back to the primordial face of creation etc. the face reveals the posthuman state in the works, as in episode 2 (season 1), where we are given a manifold picture of the face. The first scene is a pixelated and color-manipulated image with distorted sound of the famed Oscar “selfie” that involves a few dozen celebrities. Right after we have a picture of a Shiva statue in cosmic dance blurring into scenes from a technicolor blue/green forest, while a lecture from Aldous Huxley plays that is

²⁹NobodyTM. “Season 2, Episode 7”. *YouTube*. *Uploaded by: nobodytmuploads*. Uploaded Mar 3, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-DBBlyLL4I&t=496s>

³⁰Deleuze, Guattari, “A Thousand Plateaus”, 188.

³¹ibid, 254.

giving commentary to Shiva's cosmic dance of creation and destruction, and how the manifold faces and arms of Shiva denote symbolically the nature of reality as multiplicity and cosmic cyclical return^{32, 33}. Here we have the interplay between the face of mass-produced celebrity culture, the faceless inversion of godhood reflecting only its own pale image, right next to the image of a true multiplicity on a metaphysical level. The huddled together faces of mainstream celebrity culture represent the gods of this world, whereas the face of Shiva dances through all of humanity.

With NobodyTM's video art we have this gradual movement as we have mentioned before, from the first few videos that are direct, awash in the political realities of the present day, eventually giving way to more metaphysical subjects. As the face is deterritorialized to D and G so is all of nature. The work Nobody considers the magnum opus of the collection are the two feature length discs 1 and 2, both roughly an hour a piece. In it all of humanity is laid bare, processed through a hectic visual presentation that serves to excite and disturb our senses. We see masses at parties and protests bleeding together in pixilated technicolor, images rapidly shooting across the screen, one of a person in a rubber embryo casing trying to fight out whilst an animation of a galaxy system enacts a return to the cosmic embryo that depth psychologists such as Carl Jung envisioned³⁴. We then see conspiracy theorists talk about invisible satellite rays oppressing humanity; inner city vagrants; and street gangs, in moments of insanity and crisis plastered onto video footage of whole cities at night. A barely visible person crawling out of a

32NobodyTM. "Episode 2, Season 1". *Vidme*. Uploaded Dec, 2, 2014. <https://vid.me/UIRg>

33Huxley, Aldous. "Aldous Huxley Describes The Dancing Shiva Image". From *Speaking Personally* (1961). Uploaded by Richardson, Brett. Oct, 13, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32oo0oyLUdE>

34A later lecture of Carl Jung can be found in the off-episode video entitled "Do not watch", uploaded Dec, 2, 2014. <https://vid.me/Ghgc>

mud pit while a lecturer reads the famed Gibbons quote on the five signs of Rome's decaying culture: those being that art becoming freakish and sensationalist instead of original; the pursuit of honour gives way to making money; people at the top and bottom of society depending on the state for survival etc. a telling message that NobodyTM shows us in visual/audio form. at the very end, we see a video attached to Disk 2 entitled “memory kill”, all of a sudden, the harsh industrial ambient music stops and gives way to calming music accompanied by psychedelic images of children and families playing in a series of home videos. Then we are greeted by a man in a dark mask that appears to be NobodyTM, saying “have you enjoyed the show? We are all in some ways escapist, but who is the greatest escapist of them all? That thing inside you, that voice...that entity that decides what you think, how you think, etc.”³⁵.

I have asked NobodyTM about the purpose of these videos, to which Nobody responded “well, NobodyTM addresses the collective brunt of human perception; it attempts to transmute what we scarcely admit of ourselves; the opposite of our (human) culture's archetypal ideals, which, arguably are presented through the television, entertainment in general - in idols. NobodyTM reveals the shame of our species, whether it is how we conspire against ourselves, and in bold; our perversions”³⁶.

The art of NobodyTM explodes the separation between human acts and the societal/cosmic order we live in. The art is that of pure relationality, evoking images and juxtapositions that expand upon the sedentary layers and connections in the planes of consistency we call society, nature, human identity, etc. This style of editing and remixing is the art of the posthuman, the

35NobodyTM. “Disk 2, Scythe”. *Nobodytm.com*. <http://nobodytm.com/video/scythe2.html>

36NobodyTM, Email to the Author. January- February, 2017.

increasingly urban, rootless westerner that lives a life of inner chaos, uncertainty and isolation. We are experiencing reality that is by increments more mediated by subjective abstractions, fantasy, perversion, technological simulation and social vanity. Any higher aim of liberation is awash in the groundlessness of modern individualist behavioural choice. Political projects become merely acts of propaganda and psychological warfare, and any attempt to seek out the transcendental to the posthuman in the eyes of Nobody™ will inevitably be mediated through the machinations of modernity and technology. The human face as the seat of subjectification undergoes continual shifts in polarities between taking a line of flight that de-subjectifies, and being reconstituted into the shape of the mass-subject, rendered into a bundle of affects enacting a sequence of programming, as we shall see in Nobody™'s critique of transhumanism and its machinations on the very roots of subjectivity itself.

Cybernetic Dissolution: Transhuman Society and its Future.

In his seminal book on posthumanism, the liberal idealist/futurist and political scientist Francis Fukuyama envisions new technologies that have the capability of distorting, reengineering and erasing human identity and subjectivity as we know it, which will pose a severe threat to liberal democracy, and by this fact, topple the future internationalist paradise at the end of history. Fukuyama within the first section takes on the Huxleyan criticism of techno-fetishism, how its power and allure over the human psyche will lead to not to a mass enslavement, but a mass pacification that will be a virtual mass-act of self-enslavement. Fukuyama then dismisses the criticism of religious and esoteric thinkers like Huxley and C.S. Lewis that lament over the coming abolishment of humanity into a techno-transhumanist future that will totally subvert the human will, thus defacing the creation of God. Fukuyama addresses

to an extent, but carves out the metaphysical argument for the dignity and solid identity of the human subject all together. Fukuyama is a liberal thinker after all, therefore wishing to find a ground for human dignity and natural rights in social contract law and democracy³⁷. After expounding upon the promises of biotechnology and the new science of posthuman identity, Fukuyama says that much like nuclear weapons, we shall not wish to hinder the never-ending onslaught of technological progress, this would be reactionary Ludditeism, and would go against the post-enlightenment liberal project. therefore, we shall use the post-cold war liberal technocratic mechanisms at our disposal to regulate biotech, and make sure it does not fall into the “wrong hand”³⁸ After expounding upon the promises of biotechnology and the new science of posthuman identity, Fukuyama says that much like nuclear weapons, we shall not wish to hinder the never-ending onslaught of technological progress, this would be reactionary luddism, and would go against the post-enlightenment liberal project. therefore, we shall use the post-cold war liberal technocratic mechanisms at our disposal to regulate biotech, and make sure it does not fall into the “wrong hand”³⁹.

Here NobodyTM, Huxley, Heidegger, and other critics of modern techno-futurism and the utopian transhumanist worldview point out the shortcomings in Fukuyama’s assessment: Fukuyama focuses on the materialist body, the body of positivism as the subject of change and

37Fukuyama, Francis. *Our Posthuman Future. Consequences Of The Biotechnology Revolution*. (New York: Picador, 2002): 5-7.

38Fukuyama, Francis and Rose, Steven. “Don’t Mess With Human Nature. Francis Fukuyama fears that biotechnology will make monsters of us. Steven Rose weighs the evidence”. *The Guardian*. (Saturday, June, 1, 2002). <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/jun/01/highereducation>

39Fukuyama, Francis and Rose, Steven. “Don’t Mess With Human Nature. Francis Fukuyama fears that biotechnology will make monsters of us. Steven Rose weighs the evidence”. *The Guardian*. (Saturday, June, 1, 2002). <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/jun/01/highereducation>

distortion. This is true, biotech certainly will erase and enhance different parts of the physical and perhaps bio-pharmacological and psychological subject. However, what Huxley and the art of *Nobody*™ shows is that this assessment neglects the psychological, virtual and metaphysical. The project of Transhumanism and the changing face of posthuman identity is very real in the here in now in virtual space. Fukuyama can only see the material aspects of things like the internet and advances in mass telecommunication technology, but accepts the fact that said technology has influenced our very picture of being and everydayness to the point of the affects of virtual-techno information working at the unconscious level. From what we consume, love, feel nostalgic for, etc., the forces of corporate globalism and what Deleuze labelled the “control society” has largely changed our perception of being to a large extent. Soon, in the not-too-distant future, the predictions of Aldous Huxley in his essay “Brave New World Revisited” will manifest itself in a virtual control grid. Technology has largely centralized political and economic power, collectivism in late capitalism has been allowed to flourish more than in any communist regime. On top of increased political alienation comes the personal alienation of post-enlightenment Western societies built upon the foundations and discourses of efficiency and infinite technological and social progress. What has been called the ‘malaise of modernity’ and the increased levels of mental health issues in virtually all advanced Western countries to Huxley is a reality that is the symptom of a greater conglomeration of forces. Modern society is subject to over-organization, and subsequently modern science is what brings multiplicity into unity by ignoring discrete and significant aspects of things in the name of increased abstraction and place general laws upon phenomenon. Hence, modern behaviorism and positivism instills the idea in

the modern technocrat that society should be operated and controlled in such a manner too⁴⁰.

What Fukuyama fails to see (and by this he implicitly supports) is the measures of mass psychic control over whole populations that will only be increased by biotech and the crossing over of Transhumanism from science fiction to legitimate science is largely being controlled by very technocratic liberal institutions he lionizes.

Huxley points to forces we seemingly will have no control over in virtual space as pushing us towards the world envisioned in his magnum opus. New techniques of manipulation and synthetic thought affects creation within the subjugated masses⁴¹. The art of NobodyTM envisions a path towards the abolishment of collective humanity. In *communique*, and in numerous places in the episodes, the erasure and distortion of humanity via virtual reality is a very present reality, as virtuality seeps into every facet of communication and experiential reality. From a description that was on the Nobody-TV page⁴², we get a picture of what the Transhuman and posthuman future will look like. The forces of late capitalism and globalist social engineering will further isolate and propagandize the individual subject with various

⁴⁰Huxley, Aldous. "Brave New World Revisited". In *Complete Essays, Volume VI: 1956-1963*. Ed. Baker, Robert S. and Sexton, James. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publishers, 2002): 230-235.

⁴¹bid, 225.

⁴²"our civilization's trajectory is irreversible - we are being psychically culled by illusions - and our machines are now domesticating us (1) - corporations are plotting to build sub-realities - via trendy virtual-reality technology - that celebrities will soon endorse as fashion (2) - so they may act as gods to the under classes - in a matrix of their own creation - the spiritual peasants are all too eager to submit (3) - sexual intimacy will no longer be intimate - the act will be as mundane conversation (4) - we will be monitored by artificial intelligence - through every medium for "our own protection" (5) - and humans will always feel incline to erode morality - through slogans relating to love and freedom - believing that it is part of evolution - conditioned from birth to worship the institution (6) - the narrative" will not be conquered from within - faith must be put into intangible higher orders - (7) do not submit to the god of mere machines" (NobodyTM, Email to the Author, February, 2017).

methods of weaponizing one's own hedonism and lack of ambition. Our ability to push towards extremes, take lines of flight and conquer nature⁴³, means that we will actively seek artificial intelligence and the centralization of all virtual reality technology. Soon we will be reduced to the statues of automatons following an input programming, similar to how some posthumanists dealing with cybernetics view the posthuman as information systems. Sexuality will become distraction, human intimacy and morality will be thought of as slavery and monstrosity in a virtual world matrix where every fantasy and deep-seated lust can be acted out in digital simulation. The art of Nobody™ brings us closer to this realization by showing us in lurid detail what a large segment of the population is already doing, living through simulation, isolated by technology, and would be willing to give up being as it is presently known for greater heights of virtuality, the cost of which is the apparatus of total control and docility.

In a commentary essay on “Brave New World”, Adorno also pictures the present reality as leading to a bleak disruption in the human entity, where the mass-dividual is subjugated to a collectivism so through that we are unaware of its existence and conditioning. The normalization of commodifying all life, disciplinary power and surveillance will even effect the most mundane acts. Take for instance the reality of small talk and what Adorno refers to as the degeneration of language. Most continue to lack social skills and prefer to communicate in the most rudimentary of ways, often never crossing over into any kind of depth in conversation with others, and this is

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This is the Post enlightenment project of domination and instrumental rationality explicated by Horkheimer and Adorno, every meaningful interaction will be mediated by the culture industry that is driven by instrumental reason. To Nobody™ shares a similar analysis to the Dialectic of Enlightenment, consumerism will degrade genuine culture and art that sustains high civilization into products easily disseminated, or as Adorno calls “the endless streams of trash” produced by modern globalized western culture. See Horkheimer, Max and Adorno, Theodor. W. “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment As Mass Deception”. In *The Dialectic Of Enlightenment*. (Stanford, California, New York: Stanford University press, 2002): 94-100.

due to the transformation of the world into machinery, commodities and surplus value. Even talk itself is measured in terms of efficiency, and the less talk the better, as there is a ubiquitous sense in society that even text messaging has broken down language into the simplest parts. The impulse of creativity and artistic expression will give way to the instrumental reason of the post-enlightenment as well, as (Qua Benjamin) mass produced “art” no longer serves life, but will be taken up with the same utilitarian/consumerist thinking as everything else. Officially approved of and corporatized Art will now only maximize pleasure and dull the senses. Adorno then comments on Huxley’s equation with tradition as the unity of mind and nature, the pastoral landscape coupled with traditionalist humanity lost in *Brave New World*. Society will no longer tolerate anything wild and not under its control apparatus, and will thus make nature itself into our own image⁴⁴. In a world thoroughly disenchanted to Adorno, divertissement, small and cheap entertainment rule in the popular consciousness. Take for instance the worship of sports and mass spectacle, they do not have an inherent ideological message that programs the masses into a consumerist and de-individuating world view, but the mere somatising aspect of mass sports filling the airways provides a convenient escapism. The product of mass culture is geared towards the lowest common denominator, it simulates sensation, yet it has no inherent import towards action. Adorno also gives the art world a challenge, since all art cannot be wholly bracketed from the environment around the artists. For any art to maintain relevance, especially modern art, it must rise above the level of kitsch and escape itself being just another form of mass-escapism by appropriating content from society, but avoiding being totally consumed by the culture industry, existing on the edges of the consensus- engineered reality. The mission of art to

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Adorno, Theodor. W. “Aldous Huxley And Utopia” in *Prisms*. (Massachusetts, New York: MIT Press, 1982): 95-103.

Adorno (like Heidegger) is a mission of revealing, exposing the singular ideology that wishes to capture all life and all perceptions of reality in its clutches⁴⁵.

NobodyTM utilizes the imagery and sounds of globalized corporate aesthetics, like the remix culture of Vaporwave music, to expose and subvert the psycholinguistic effects of mass culture. In various episodes, such as episode 5, where various pop culture tropes and commercial advertisements blend into one another, with various scenes from popular internet videos⁴⁶. These scenes rush fourth in a blurry haze with the intended purposes of giving a disturbing view into the Western masses whom have formulated their identities around culture industry programming. In episode 14 we see babies dancing in front of television screens, then a masked man reading over a psychedelic strobing background “entertained and ideologically bound to falsehoods, live for the weekends, prostitute for brands, the product known as fun is spiraling into the abyss, yes the world is here to amuse you”, then ends with a scene from a rave or dancehall⁴⁷. In episode 6 of the second season is an interesting display of a man sitting next to a television set complaining about the bland unoriginality and creativity of modern television. However, a smaller version of his portrait is at the same time in the television screen, meaning that even in the moment of critiquing the culture industry, one is still enthralled within its grasp, having to submit to its power to find faults in its simplistic mass-cultural programming⁴⁸. The off-episode special in

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Stahl, Gerry. “Utopian Optics: Theodor W. Adorno’s Prisms: Cultural Criticism and Society”. In *Essays In Social Philosophy*. (Drexel University, 2016): 111-115.

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NobodyTM. “Episode 5, Season 1”. *Vidme*. Uploaded dec, 2, 2014. <https://vid.me/5Cn5>

47

NobodyTM. “Episode14, Season 1”. *Vidme*. Uploaded dec, 2, 2014. <https://vid.me/ivWA>

48

NobodyTM. “Episode 6, Season 2”. *Nobodytm.com*. <http://nobodytm.com/archive/ep6.html>

three parts entitled “firmament” (a word for the celestial dome containing the earth, the body of the heavens above in early Christianity, etc.) contains in part 3 a long expose on neurological reprogramming via televised audio/visual media. A cascade of television screens come in and out of the picture while a lecturer talks about reprogramming specific neurological pathways and synapses to produce specific effects in the brain via new technology. We hear about media being used to theoretically turn on and off different cells that can produce a variety of different behaviours to mass groups and subjects, while children are watching a television that is floating in front of pictures of old alchemical illustrations, implying media technology is a “new alchemy” of sorts, refining the subject into the higher image of the collective mass⁴⁹. Just look at the transhumanist fantasies of someone like Ray Kurzweil, who envisions Transhuman robots perfectly replicating human emotions, nanobots being able to take the virtual simulated reality into the “actual” in real life realm, the current human-machine civilization being fully robotic and made into synthetic flesh post-singularity eschaton, etc.⁵⁰. A critic of transhumanism like NobodyTM would concede that some of these technological advancements are inevitable, and you can be able to convince large groups of the population quite easily of the supposed “good” in the new Transhuman world. However, this vision of a Transhuman future becomes monstrous in numerous ways. This world would lead to the deepest and profound levels alienation that would certainly rival the political control of 20th century totalitarian regimes only without the bloodshed, because why slaughter people on mass when a few elites can become the Gods of

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NobodyTM. “Firmament 3”. *Vidme*. Dec, 2, 2014. <https://vid.me/leAE>

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Kurzweil, Ray. *The Singularity Is Near*. (New York: Penguin Book. 2006): 27-30.

their image whilst most the population simply stops reproducing and become docile shells in virtual reality wonderland⁵¹.

Transhuman Society and its Future Part 2: Heidegger and Conclusion.

NobodyTM's unique brand of visual art showcases philosophic concepts in a clear and at times perturbed manner. Every image is inherently a multiplicity, never a singular form, but always articulated in the manifold of relations among images, words and sounds. This much is clear, but now we shall go to the heart of the modern subject and the (soon to be) Transhuman/posthuman subject, the place of our being in relation to technology. For Martin Heidegger, the modern world is predicated on a profound anxiety and precariousness. Heidegger in his famed essay "The Question Concerning Technology" wishes to find the essence to technology and how our existence is increasingly reliant on technological advancement, both physical and virtual. For Heidegger, the essence of technology is not a bringing fourth or a mere revealing of being, but the ultimate revealing of being, a *Challenging-fourth*. The essence of technology is instrumentality, more specifically, its revealing of what is everywhere, and how it radically reorients our view of nature as opposed to how the ancients viewed nature, and therein lies the key to civilizational decline⁵²; technology gathers all of life, centralizes all activities into what Heidegger calls "standing reserve", or Enframing. Enframing challenges-fourth humanity to see things "as they are" in the material, to view nature both external and internal, as a standing reserve to be manipulated, work over, gathered, replenished in supply and culled whenever the

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NobodyTM. Email to the Author. February, 2017.

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Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology". In *Basic Writings*. Ed. Krell, David, Farrell. (New York, Freiburg: Harper and Row, 1977): 304-310.

need arises. The danger of technology comes for its ability to deny to us the concealment and revealing movement necessary for being and truth. Technology purports to be the only truth and logic that can reveal everything, therefore our inner being is uprooted from the being of beings, left to be at the whims of technological progress⁵³.

Heidegger also sees that humanity itself will be subject to a form of enframing, that human nature will be the standing reserve, increasingly becoming automaton, digitalized in normalization, and taught to act as if we are standing reserves. Heidegger does not point to a specific material technology or technological-dystopian scenario, but rather warns us about the essence of all technology as operating under a universalist, rational and instrumentalist basis, and being able to cut into our lives with such nearness⁵⁴. Heidegger makes this point explicit in the later Bremen lectures, stating that enframing or requisitioning orders and effects not only the material forces, but also the inner dispositions of the human subject, invading and attacking inner being as such. We soon think of our positionality as enframed, modern technology seeps into every human and material relation to where the ground of being itself is only felt through the lens of enframing (the essence of technology itself). Requisitioning/enframing soon attacks everything there is by installing a liner and rigid line of thinking about technological progress. Soon history, theology, even God is placed within the actions of the orderable and the passive-standing of all things, God in modernity becomes material as well⁵⁵. Keep in mind that to

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Ibid, 328-331.

54

Blitz, Mark. "Understanding Heidegger On Technology". *The New Atlantis*. (Winter, 2014): 70-74.

55

Heidegger, Martin. "Insight Into That Which Is". In *Bremen And Freiburg Lectures*. Trans. Mitchell, Andrew. J. (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2012): 29-34.

Heidegger, this is a *Free* entering relationship we have towards the revealing of technology in enframing⁵⁶.

For Heidegger, one of the only ways to escape this danger of the senescence of technology is through art, the self-interrogating nature of the work of art and its ability to reveal being as is, revealing and concealing itself instead of the artist imposing a total sum of revealing onto nature the way enframing does⁵⁷. For NobodyTM, this is the analysis of technology in modernity that would more than likely fit with this unique video art. All around the episodes we see humans freely engaging in newer forms of passive discipline, surveillance and consent to live within a dominated subjectivity. We choose to follow the conditioning because (as Huxley has pointed out numerous times) it is within our immediate and hedonistic interests to do so. Enframing-qua-subject becomes real in the art of NobodyTM, or at least more visually explicit than what we would like to admit about ourselves. In episode 2, season 1, we see a smattering of different relationships between millennials and technology. Symbolically the episode opens with an Onco-mouse being injected with something for research. One vignette is a YouTube “Vlogger” talking about some myopic facet to his Facebook use whilst being projected onto a Facebook screen, another is a group of kids playing videogames in a Notan black and white color scheme, etc. near the end we see a very interesting smashing together of two images. One is of a vapid dating gameshow, a reality TV spectacle of little significance where contestants try to find their “perfect online match” amongst each other. Layered on top of that are scenes from a display

56
Heidegger, “Technology”, 310-311.

57
Ibid, 317-318.

mannequin or crash test rubber dummy factory assembly line, and then the storage facility in the factory, both images contain human-like figures stripped of all that we know to be genuine human expression and affect⁵⁸. While the gameshow host explains that psychologists and behaviorists have been used to professionally determine the mystery contestants “perfect match”, we see factory workers outline plans and figures injection molds revealing a new human-like inert object, etc. the symbolism and double-meaning is quite apparent in this segment. The posthuman is enframed and will become more so a standing docile reserved virtual reality Transhuman tech can be allowed germinate in society to the point where it becomes a marketable commodity the way television and videogames are now. The same logic and discourse of instrumental reason we use to order nature is also applicable to ordering our own nature in the eyes of the select few technocrats. The quasi-Nietzschean ambitions of transhumanists neglects this aspect of the continued degradation of not just human freedom, but to NobodyTM humanity’s spiritual state is also in jeopardy. Only the artist and visionary can address the problems of the modern world and its totalizing universalist discourses. The art of NobodyTM satisfies both Adorno’s and Heidegger’s criteria for a new art; the artwork utilizes technology with the aim of anti-modernist reactionary traditionalism in mind, so does not fall into the realm of the nostalgic, the pastoral romanticist art of old, but stays true to exposing what is really constituting modern day reality, dynamically moving within the tools of the culture industry and picking them apart, reappreciating mass culture for a transcendental purpose. The art of NobodyTM also fulfills Heidegger’s view by having that hidden element of concealment within the works, never fully expressing a direct meaning or approach, but simply showing vignettes of

 58

NobodyTM. “”Episode 2, Season 1”.

different affects and scenes. In short, there is always more to come with NobodyTM's art, the polysemous nature of each episode and video ensues that newer forms of art can speak to the multiplicity that is our reality, even if it is a reality inscribed with very sophisticated methods of unconscious control.

In conclusion, we have given an exegesis of the video art of NobodyTM, and have established why it is an art for the posthuman. We have seen how the main corpus of video art fits with and expresses the concepts of animal-becomings, a wide variety of other becomings on display and faciality in Deleuze and Guattari, as well as explaining the general onto-theological position of NobodyTM in relation to the subject having lower and higher aspects of being. We have seen explanation of the unique works of video art, and have given the stark and bleak picture of the Posthuman and Transhuman future in the eyes of NobodyTM. Lastly, we have used the writings of Aldous Huxley, Theodor Adorno's view of Huxley and the culture industry, and the writings concerning the essence of technology to Heidegger. Martin Heidegger to give a more complete picture of NobodyTM's artwork, and how NobodyTM solves certain criteria for Adorno and Heidegger concerning the future of art and its potential fugitive alleviation of the forces of control and posthuman enframing.

Appendix 1. Afterward: NobodyTM's place within the Surrealist Artworld.

The video art of NobodyTM certainly is unique in its application of social commentary and spirituality, however, Video art is part of the wider field of “remix culture” as such. Starting out from its earliest forms in the 1970s with “music concrete”, or the physical manipulation of media to produce different sounds, remixing and re-appropriation of digital media has been a mainstay in underground culture, especially on the internet since the late 90s. From its earliest inceptions, video art has always served as a form of anti-art, rebelling against the increased commercialization of modern art, choosing to manipulate the exposure and tactile nature of film, such as “Vertical Roller” by Joan Jonas that utilizes the exposure of different films rolled into one scene and various off-angle camera shots to produce the effect known as de-synchronization, challenging the objectivity of the main character by distorting the physical nature of film itself. Hence, Video art is always bound up in performative art, often to challenge social and power relations, expressed in a new tactile and physical manner as new technology came about that have artists the ability to manipulate sound and moving images⁵⁹. The changing of one's perception by art is now felt in visual form, but would aid even the surrealists in their goals, such as the famed “Un Chien Andalou” by Salvador Dali (1929) that was one of the first films with an explicitly surrealist goal, to express an ordinary story with the surrealist flow of automatic unconscious contents interfering with the film's narrative.

When it comes to NobodyTM, the pure surrealism and pure artistic modernism of anti-art does not necessarily apply. The art of NobodyTM deconstructs and lets the antipodes of the

⁵⁹ Hornsfield, Katie. *Feedback: The Video Data Bank Catalog of Video Art and Artist Interviews*. (Philadelphia, New York: Temple University Press, March 2006): 1-6.

unconscious mind run free in video form, but does so for a specific purpose in mind, to expose the machinations of modernity and find a method of creating post-modern art that serves a spiritual/metaphysical purpose, to reconcile the disenchanted age with a new art that takes up the digital simulacra of modernism, and uses those very tools against it. The world of remix culture as well, sampling, juxtaposing different songs and videos and snippets, blending together different fusions of styles, be they in music or video, has experienced an explosion of efficacy and exposure in the digital age. A patchwork of materials and sounds are applied to either enhance or supplement an existing piece, or create new pieces of art all together⁶⁰. Surrealism also comes with the added dimensions of virtuality as well, blending the lines between the real (perhaps using a Lacanian term) and the cinematic, the narrative-literary, and the automatic-unconscious.; take for instance the David Cronenberg surrealist film “eXistenZ” (1999). A world filled with corporate draconian intellectual property control over bio-synthetic video games plugged into an organic cerebral cortex input, project a vastly realistic virtual reality dream-state of one’s own making. After the main protagonist couple sabotages the main corporate villain, one in which a character in the VR- video game describes as “the enemies of reality”⁶¹, they go back to their “original” reality, only to discover they do not know the answer to the question “is this real or are we still in the game?”. Reality has become permeable, porous, infiltrated by the corrosive effects of techno-dream land to the point where the ontological grounding of being has been subverted. This is a major emphasis as we have seen, in the works of NobodyTM. Even in subtle instances and hidden references, such as the photo that greets you in the “chat womb” section, of the famed photo with rows and rows of VR headset-clad participants with Facebook

60 Hoffman, Elizabeth. “(Re) Review”. *Computer Music Journal*. Volume 32, Number 2, (Summer 2008): 82-83.

61 Also the title of the 2001 album by the band Nevermore that covers several similar themes.

CEO Mark Zuckerberg walking down the rows like a dictator presiding over a mass demonstration.

The symbolic imagery of NobodyTM may in part come from the deepest recesses of the unconscious and artistic mind. However, the antipodes and half-human monsters following a programming or instinct are not the futuristic, dark, sleekly sexualized and grim aliens of H.R. Giger. Nor are they the off-world apocalyptic, desecrated, muscle-enflamed, teeming and horrifying creatures of Zdzisław Beksiński. The fear-inducing entities that infest a bleak and surreal dreamland are human, extrapolated from what we know to be the human, but closer to us than any dream-monster. For the surreal subjects projected by NobodyTM represent humanity in transition, piling upon themselves more sedimentary layers of contortions and affects, affects expressed in audio-visual form by the edits. The surrealism of NobodyTM is exposing what Aristotle's poetics attempts to resolve⁶², that of narrative-being, and that of the subject immersed in discourse. Through the art, we have a Socratic dialectic playing out of sorts; in every video, we are confronted by a seemingly endless panorama of blended images crawling in and out of focus, overlapped by the detritus of digitalized manipulation. There is all of the depths of surrealism present, the perversity and seeming absurdity of the subject, the manipulation of senses in the viewer, the seeming nonsense piled upon nonsense, but this time in visual format. However, we have the added elements of transcendence, religious haecceities of expression and symbolic diffusion, and an exploration of the possibilities that face the human subject in the postmodern world. To NobodyTM, life itself has become the surreal, and the digital edits merely unpack them in a more direct and visceral format. Here we have a subject, take for instance, the

62 For this see the poetics of Aristotle, Chapter 4-5.

man in Disk 1 of the magnum opus. The man is telling a story of meeting with the Lord in a near death experience, how he thought he would never see his family again, all the while an edited fire display, much like a rain of sparklers, comes down on his head. The oddity of this image catches the casual viewer off guard, but really, like a Zen Koan written after the moment of Satori, the digital edit merely represents the evanescent becoming, the focal point in that singular man's life. The artistic medium merely exposes what is already there, the surreal comes not from imaginative interpretation, but phenomenological looking-into the nature of complex relationalities between subjects, their affects and beliefs, and how they experience reality.

one can debate as to whether the art of NobodyTM is exposing the surreal subjects in the edits in their truest form, or rather, if there is some creative interpretation going on. One thing is for certain is that the nature of the art itself, editing, juxtaposing, distorting and digitally manipulating, etc. defies the normal creative process the way all facets of remix culture does. NobodyTM does not fall simply in line with other video artists or rearranging forms of remixing media, it is an active reassembling of things, of ideas and subjects, rather than simply putting things together in a haphazard manner. Remixing comes in many forms and is done for a variety of reasons, but the mission of NobodyTM it seems, is to rearrange the various themes, images and subjects into a more coherent manner of sorts, to use a surreal and fantastical series of stimuli to in a way, explicate their being, make it present, and in some cases, wrestle the powers of normalization and disciplinary action away from these subjects. NobodyTM in one sense is ripping off the skin of various people and social realities engaged in a process of becoming and exposing them, accentuating the points of voyeuristic entry. But what does all this mean? What process of normalization and discipline? What is clear in the work of NobodyTM is that the

subject is being disciplined by the forces of consumerism, political control, mass distraction, fetishes fueled by the anonymity and connectivity of the internet and technology, all of which are bereft and disconnected from a history, a cultural norm, etc. sometimes we are presented with reminders of our status as a connected species, memories of wholesomeness (such as the short video *Memory kill*), as a near-cynical reminder. What is clear is that the subjects of NobodyTM, from the fetishists, gang members, sports fanatics juxtaposed with images of a Nuremberg rally, etc. all of them share a commonality, besides that all of them are taking lines of flight that may or may not possess the danger of complete physical and spiritual ruin. All of them are stolid in embracing their existential position, be it the extremes of sexuality, technology, human detachment, rootlessness, flippant ignorance and narcissism, etc. NobodyTM finds ways through the artistic edits to break into their being, the vary luminous, fibrous and shredded inner being of the subjects, and sow them together in a visual fashion, often stitching them together with threads from the various connections to the world around them.

NobodyTM in The Artworld.

There are some fruitful comparisons to the art of NobodyTM with other contemporary surreal and visual artists. The most apparent video artist that at least in part utilizes visual media in a similar manner would be director Ron Fricke, with his groundbreaking films *Baraka* (meaning “blessed” in Pali, 1992) and the famed *Samsara* (2011). Both films are without dialogue, and present a series of visual images set within a unique juxtaposition, showing the integral nature of each image within its relationality to the rest of the world and to the cosmos itself. There is a diversity of world-locations depicted, and each image narrates a silent metaphor of liberation within an eastern spiritual context. the opening of *Samsara* (“samsara”, the concept

in Buddhism and Hinduism that is “the world process”, the cyclical nature of all reality within an immanent eternal state of flux, the first noble truth of suffering, for suffering comes from the impermanence of everything, etc.), starts with images of traditional Balinese dancing, the churning clouds of a volcano explosion (perhaps a metaphor for the annihilation and creation of all things), temples in Myanmar, a baby being baptized, and then scenes of Tibetan monks creating an elaborate sand mandala. This is given emphasis in the film, at the very end, as it is custom, the sand mandala is completed and then destroyed after sometimes months of work. This is the metaphor of the silent film, to show the transience and impermanence of life, to give a global picture, of the horrors and tragedies, such as the factory farms juxtaposed to image of activities in mass atomized cities or abandoned open houses taken over by the serene dunes of a desert sand. the world of *Samsara* expressed in the many colored and shaped sides of the mandala serves this function of multiplicity, starting off from an inherent multiple character is also an integral aspect of the esoteric influences of Nobody™ (hence his newer remix of music in the about section called “meditation tape” with a grainy continuous picture of the buddha in his emaciated acetic period). *Samsara*'s near iconic footage of the “Guan-Yin” or thousand hands dance of Mahayana Buddhism⁶³, depicting in ritualistic form the manifold nature of the bodhisattva. The depth of field effect adds to the dancers doing a hypnotic and seamlessly choreographed and in sync dance composition of the manifold hands with eyes on them, swaying in unison at every corner of space. This is a common theme in eastern religious iconography, from the manifold faces and hands of Shiva, the God of cosmic destruction and rebirth, to the thousand hands in the ten-thousand buddha lands, grasping the “ten-thousand things”, or in other

63 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjXWqKKLW6g>

words, connecting every complex part of becoming⁶⁴. The bodhisattva of course is one who can achieve liberation or Nirvana, but chooses to partake in an attachment to this world of Samsara in order to serve as a guidance, to hold off on their liberation as an ultimate form of compassion until every single being is liberated. NobodyTM's art always provides that back door of liberation via the exposure of the obscene and the world, and also the fact that occasionally Nobody will pop up to deliver a sometimes serious and sometimes mockingly ironic message shows that the artist is just as much involved in the subject matter being depicted as everyone else is. Standing in a position of fracture, in one space of becoming, in the worldly, and always grasping onto the other space that is not wholly separate from this reality, the world of transcendence or (as it is in Buddhism) liberation from the wheel of becoming. In the art of NobodyTM you get both at the same moment of video cinematography, sometimes vividly within the same space and in the same episode, often jumping from images and speeches that deal with the sacred, to presentations exposing the baseness of modern living.

A segment in *Samsara* that most closely resembles the work of NobodyTM would be the haunting and off-putting scene entitled "Human?" or alternatively "office man, the angst of Sagazan"⁶⁵; here we have a depiction of the roboticization of everyday life, coupled with a shocking mimed performance representing the many disguises one must adorn in everyday existence to navigate the drudgery that comprises the cubicle-laden, late capitalist West. We see robots that perfectly resemble the humans modelled from them, designed to give off realistic emotional facial gestures, then clips of rows and rows of office cubicle. the scene arrive at the

64 <http://www.taoism.net/guanyin/>

65 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7ei5PNfrps>

infamous Man at the desk giving a violent performance of using clay, paint, dust and cloth to transition between different inhuman faces, scratching off layers of dust and clay to contort the hollow facial features. At one point, he wraps pieces of straw around the clay, almost reenacting the lines from Eliot's *The Hollowed Men* "May I wear such deliberate disguises...Head piece filled with straw, alas"⁶⁶. *Samsara* gives us a picture of the changing human, of the large expansive environments and geographic locations combined with the tiny spaces of agony, alienation and ontological contortions one must face. The nature of NobodyTM's work can be shown to have an inherent commonality with the works of Fricke in this manner, to expose life in an aesthetics that demands interpretation and contemplation on the part of the viewer. But not a passive intellectual musing, but a contemplation that requires one's whole being, and one's emotive and ideational disposition, to fully grasp the meaning of what is going on in the presentation before you.

There are many different video and conceptual artists that can be brought into a comparative framework with the art of NobodyTM, but the one visual artist that possesses the same process of NobodyTM would be the German painter and visual artist Anselm Kiefer; often working in the landscape genre, Kiefer as a neo-expressionist uses a variety of natural and industrial pieces to achieve stunning textures on massive canvases and installation pieces. The work often expresses the very humanly themes of loss, war, mass suffering and destruction, but also redemption within a metaphysical and cosmic framework. Remembering and a sense of completion and redemption often plays heavily in the works (Qua Walter Benjamin) that were inspired by his experiences as a boy during the second world war. repeated imagery, such as the

66 Eliot, T.S. "The Hollowed Men". In *Poems: 1909–1925*. (London: Faber and Faber. 1937).

long sunflower stocks and a plethora of industrial materials, pops up in the works over the span of many years. Like NobodyTM, Kiefer utilizes religious and spiritual imagery to express an inner longing, such as the 2007's *Palm Sunday* which features an uprooted pine tree preserved in resin in front of various photos and drawings of itself. This is meant to represent an inter-faith symbology of the cycle of life and death, atrophy and regeneration. There are many themes from Jewish mysticism as well, often making heavy lead-cast books or scrolls piled up on each other to represent the weight and gravity of tradition. 1996's *Bohemia lies by the Sea* is an expansive landscape beach path made of painted symbols that is almost a darker side to impressionist color-field painting. The thick application of painted symbols forges an idyllic path towards a shoreline horizon, representing how one walks among symbols and guide-markers of meaning. The landscape for Kiefer represents an ideal traditionalist past, a sacred past, but also the appropriation of the classical landscape image as an inverted symbol of strength and will to power, abuse by the Nazi regime. To use the power of the landscape image, to "walk the path down to the beach" represents the need of renewal in Kiefer, confront the maleficence of the past and move forward whilst reconciling with the strange attraction we must our collective history⁶⁷.

Unlike his bohemian and urbanite-secular contemporaries in the modern art world, Kiefer expresses a need to reenchanted the world through the power of art. The mission of art is essentially metaphysical, but a metaphysics tied to the tragedy of modern life that has been uprooted from tradition and based only off the massive changes to history and living itself that occurred in the 20th century. Both Kiefer and NobodyTM share this longing for the higher aspects of being in the divine, but also share a unique artistic process; Kiefer will often mutilate

67 The Art Story. "Anselm Kiefer". *Modern art insight*. http://www.theartstory.org/artist-kiefer-anselm-artworks.htm#pnt_6

works done years or even decades before, add on to them, increase the levels of layers and textures, and overall bring the pieces into different contexts and artistic sub-texts. Kiefer always recycles everything that comes from his work, expressing the need to be an artist who creates, destroys, gives rebirth to a certain piece and breathe life into them the way other artists simply cannot achieve. Kiefer states that this process of his art is a mimesis of the cosmos and of the divine, nothing can truly be obliterated but merely decay, dissipate and reformulate again in another context (like energy)⁶⁸. The artwork becomes a visible language of sorts, an ongoing aesthetic dialogue of adding, reworking, putting the dried detritus of one painting onto another, reformulation and remixing, etc. throughout time. No work is truly complete or possesses a limiting finality to it (akin of Chinese Taoist landscape paintings), instead His artwork is an expansive series of living intertextual multiplicities. Nobody™ shares much in the same style of re-appropriation and recycling of old works into newer, more intertextual and meaningful works. Each edit has content, music, certain visual effects and motives that relate to a previous episode or even previous version of that edit. As it is in remix culture in general, Nobody™ rearranges segments on each edit, making new content and smashing it together with old, with a few visible themes, symbols and ironic Easter eggs that run through the body of work. Nobody™ paints the human landscape and all its horrors and wonders on digital bands, sound waves, pixels, and computer generated bricolage. Kiefer has much similar artistic goals in mind, but prefers the remixing and re-purposing of the physical, the textural, the plastic/malleable, etc. the opulence of visible textures, images and symbols bleeding into the picture in the works of both artists gives a serene naturalness to them. The works are created in much the same way as nature itself

68 Kiefer, Anselm. "Anselm Kiefer: Remembering The Future". *BBC Imagine*. Doc. Nov, 18, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUQuhoqTKtg>

rearranges things, creating rebirth from decay and demise. The artist in this sense is never completed, no work is ever fully cordoned off into the neat but unrealistic category called “complete”. There is no exhausting of possibilities in the subject matter, and for that Nobody™ and Kiefer are at a unique place in the art world.

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