Chapter eight

Perspective

WHAT EXACTLY IS PERSPECTIVE and how does it help us understand the possibilities of artistic invention? How can we – to quote Morpheus from The Matrix – avoid having the world pulled over our eyes? This chapter will show how being able to stay mentally young, neutral and curious helps and, furthermore, that to elude rote thinking, we need to avoid readily accessible modes of interpretation. We shall come to appreciate the importance of being able to view things from more than one angle and see how existing artistic perspectives were challenged and changed across certain periods of art. Along the way, we shall consider the works of Salvador Dalí, Georges Braque and René Magritte, as well as insights from Steve Jobs, Bruce Springsteen and Ernest Hemingway.

> We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.
> ALBERT EINSTEIN[1]

> We greet the dark and we greet the light ... But that does not mean that the solution is at any point in between. It is outside in the regions of those two extremes. That is the world of creation.
> JEAN WELZ[2]

> Question: "Why aren't you wearing your girl's dress today?"
> David Bowie: "Oh dear: You must understand that it's not a woman's. It's a man's dress".
> MELODY MAKER, 1972[3]

Artists and innovators see the world differently. They have perspective, more specifically, a different perspective. This ability to conceive of and hold an alternative view enables them to see things that others do not, providing them with an added view on the way things are. In part, this derives from the artistic mindset and from an outsider's mentality. Of course there are other sources too.[4] My favourite example of perspective comes from the 1977 painting by Salvador Dalí entitled Lincoln in Dalivision. Each year I use this painting to teach my students about perspective.

Fundamentally, this picture is about the interplay between dominant and subordinate viewpoints. One is the more obvious spectacle of Dalí wife, Gala, seen from behind, naked, as she stares into a golden sunset. This perspective is cued by a tiny "tiled" version in the bottom left-hand corner of the painting. The other less overt perspective emerges if one squints at the picture, refocusing and staring into the distance as it were. So doing, the full head-and-shoulders image of Lincoln emerges from what is at first a haze. This alternative view is similarly cued in the bottom left-hand corner of the painting, this time by a smaller tile of Lincoln's portrait. The cues are adjacent – each suggesting, in the most neutral of terms, a perspective. Both are equally valid ways of seeing. The ironic and somewhat base reality, however, is that the viewer usually sees only the perspective of Dalí's wife. Few can make out Lincoln's face without guided instruction, despite the title that tells us exactly what the painting is about: Abraham Lincoln. Dalí is, in a sense, laughing at us, at our inability to interpret the signs on offer. On interrogation, the unenlightened viewer is usually unable to explain why, with a painting called Lincoln in Dalivision, only a postage stamp's worth of his face is apparent in the bottom corner of the composition. As T.S. Eliot reminds us in the Four Quartets, "human kind cannot bear very much reality."[5]

Presented in this way, Lincoln in Dalivision becomes a challenge to viewers to recalibrate their senses, to see a different world and to appreciate the quiet force of perspective. This ability to discern is one of the hallmarks of visionaries, change agents and entrepreneurs in general. David Bowie put it like this: "It's the union between the user and the art that creates and finishes art."[6] Writer Anaïs Nin understood this dynamic too, commenting: "We do not see things as they are. We see things as we are."[7]

Painter Jackson Pollock had a profound understanding of the tendency to see only what we want to see. As an abstract artist, at first he gave names to his drip paintings, such as Male and Female, Cathedral and Enchanted Forest. These names, he discovered, provided his viewers with figurative clues to decode and interpret his work, a tendency he found distasteful. Putting a stop to this, in the final phase of his career he commenced numbering his paintings, using titles such as Number 5, Number 3, Number 29 and so on. In an effort to explain, Pollock suggested that the viewer "look passively - and try to receive what the painting has to offer and not bring a subject matter or preconceived idea of what you are looking for". Lee Krasner, Pollock's wife, commented: "Numbers are neutral. They make people look at a picture for what it is - pure painting."[8] Sixties Pop artist Andy Warhol adopted a similar deadpan approach to his audience, often playing dumb with the press and refusing to explain his work. He was famous for once saying that all you needed to know about him and his art was already there, on the surface.

Bill Evans had a comparable attitude to his jazz concerts, never introducing the playlist until the set was complete. His focus remained on letting the music speak for itself, rather than allowing people to cue the songs in their heads by introducing them up front. “The best way I can draw people into a musical experience is to avoid words entirely,” he said.[9] The same applies to Neil Young, who, once on stage, seldom lets on to the audience what's in store for the night. Says his old mate Willie Nelson who, with Young and John Mellencamp, started the Farm Aid movement in the mid-'80s: “You never know what you are going to get in a Neil Young concert because he never knows exactly what he's going to do. That way everyone is surprised.”[10] I can attest to that. At a 2016 concert played at London's 02 arena, Young played out a cacophonous electric set with his old pals from Crazy Horse. Those who'd arrived expecting to hear Harvest had mostly left by half-time. Indeed, over two-and-a-half hours, Young played only three acoustic numbers, one, “Blowin' in the Wind”, not even his. Certainly, Young was not on stage to do anyone any favours. As he growled through the deep-end catalogue of this grungy set, he brooked no crowd interference, hunched over his guitar, “Old Black”, hardly facing the audience. He was an artist at work; you, the audience, were invited to come and listen. And that was all the invitation that there was.

Leaning on the philosophy of jazz improvisation, Bruce Springsteen is similar with regard to his recording sessions: no overpreparation; just going with the flow and staying with the vibe. Said Springsteen: “It's fascinating to record a song when musicians don't know it.” In shades of Groundhog Day, he explained: “If people learn their parts too well they consciously perform rather than play flat out. When you just launch into it, it breaks down another barrier between you and the audience. One less layer of formality.” In a studio session, Springsteen was observed shushing the band to silence and gently admonishing them: “That's good! If it gets any better than that, it'll be worse.”[11] It reminds me of one of my all-time favourite tunes, “Girl from the North Country”, which Bob Dylan recorded with the late Johnny Cash in 1969 for the album Nashville Skyline. In the recording, Dylan's timing is off and in one of the verses he even starts off with the wrong words. This notwithstanding, it remains one of his most loved songs and continues to be covered by artists across the world.

This impromptu style of recording stands in stark contrast to some of the later work recorded by the fastidious rock-jazz outfit Steely Dan, who, by the close of the first phase together, would spend months in the studio micromanaging the tiniest minutiae of their music to very little effect. Professional session musos hired for these recordings were driven crazy in the process. These were not small-fry musicians. Mark Knopfler, then frontman and lead guitarist from Dire Straits, was one of the hapless victims. Before the Steely Dan session, Knopfler, an instinctive guitar genius who

cannot sight-read, was given a tape of the music format he was expected to produce. On the day of his session, he arrived in the studio expressing concern because he did not know some of the required chords. Recalled Walter Becker of the incident: "When he came in we could tell he was worried. He got set up and said there were sections he did not know. We said, 'Don't worry, because that isn't where we're going to have you playing.' But what came out was good. Anyway, it takes a long time for us to do things and maybe he felt like he was some kind of remedial guitar player, because it took hours for us to do the stuff. But that happened to everybody."[12] Cold comfort under the circumstances. Though the subsequent album, Gaucho, went platinum with over a million in sales, within a year of its release Steely Dan had folded and would remain dormant for the next 20 years. They had run out of perspective.

Like Young, Cuban-born ballet dancer Carlos Acosta is reluctant to pander to his audiences. He is critical, too, of the stiff, formulaic protocols and "orthodox" conventions of movement that dominate his art. He resents the way in which ballet celebrates the artificial, transforming dancers into wind-up toy things performing for the gratification of an audience schooled in a weird aesthetic that has little in common with the human spectrum of common gesture or natural movement. Rightfully, Acosta points out that ballet is a formula and it's unorganic. "It's antihuman... A square here" (holding his arms out in front of him) "a box there" (raising his arms above his head). "Humans were not meant to move that way, let alone while jumping in the air," he said. Added to the requirement that ballet dancers contort themselves into unnatural postures is the requisite smiling face, which projects to the audience a sham sense of delight and effortlessness. In truth the smile is a fig leaf, a rictus grin. In 2010, Acosta was in a new phase of dance. "I am searching for a transition ... The artistry is still in me. It's a question of finding the right vocabulary and language for your artistry," he said.[13]

In sum, these anecdotes serve to underscore two important points: (1) the efforts of artists to neutralise hasty interpretation and (2) their reluctance to pander to orthodox demands. Their labours in this respect should alert us to how deeply imbued we are with the "familiar" lens, and the drift towards easy interpretation. To this extent, lessons in perspective require us to recognise that each of us inhabits a world reality of our own choosing: a world- as Morpheus puts it in The Matrix - "that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth". The key message from art is that ours is a reality of our own making, a place we have familiarly constructed since birth. And from this familiarity emerges the individual challenge: that, to innovate and create, we must learn to decode and unshackle the limitations we put on our world and our imagination. For it is not so much the tendency to interpret that is the problem but rather the overriding instinct to dive in too quickly and automatically

and, all too often, into the shallow end of interpretation. It is here that our brains tend to get us into trouble, forcing us into silly errors driven by the disingenuous need for speed and efficiency. In order to curb our natural tendency to search out hasty interpretations and to connect the dots too quickly, psychologists such as Daniel Kahneman would argue that we should slow down.[14] We need to appreciate that not everything can be forced into boxes of logic and, that to accommodate the artistic temperament, we have to moderate our drive for rationality and explanation, replacing it instead with a tolerance for ambiguity. Dalí's Surrealism, for example, suggests that we suspend judgement and seek alternate perspectives. Pollock's splattered surfaces ask that we interrupt our deductive drive - his numerically neutral titles forcing us to curb our interpretive instincts. Bill Evans would ask you to listen to the music for what it is, rather than as some kind of tick-box exercise, and Acosta's dance forms urge you to reconsider what it means to move beautifully. With all this taken into consideration, perhaps we should begin to contemplate the possibilities of a world without direct codification, a world in which we can simultaneously hold a multiplicity of insights and possibilities and, like Heisenberg, be okay with that. But how do we get there? Are there any handles or examples that might assist us in this? Possibly one of the best is to backtrack to the child-like quality of curiosity. This often boils down to the question: but what is that really? Michelin chef Heston Blumenthal reflects on his curious nature, a central cog to observing better. In an interview, the owner of the now globally renowned Fat Duck restaurant admitted that he had never formally trained as a chef and how this and his reading on the topic of cooking had sharpened his sense of curiosity. He relates the story of how, in the mid-'80s, he bought a book by an American food chemist and chef, Harold McGee, on the science of cooking. Based on the physics of cooking, the book described why soufflés rise and why eggs help make custards thicken. In it, Blumenthal came across a section explaining why browning meat does not help keep in the juices. This “went against everything I'd learnt in French classical cooking at the time”, says Blumenthal, adding that, as a result of this counter-truth, “a kind of light came on and I felt: if that's not true, how many other things that I've read are not true? So I started questioning everything and that inquisitive nature has really been the driving force for me”.[15]

South African symbolist painter Jean Welz had especially unusual ideas regarding teaching children to access curiosity and awareness - ideas he put into practice during his tenure in the '40s at the Hugo Naude Art Centre in Worcester, the same small town where Nobel Prize winner J.M. Coetzee spent much of his childhood. Welz's biographer, Elza Miles, documents the recollections of one of Welz's ex-pupils, Paul du Toit, who said that Welz did not school children in technique but rather in ways to access artistry and wonder. “His teaching was surely the most unconventional

imaginable. I think nostalgically about the endless hours in which we wandered without words through the veld around Worcester and just allowed the little and the larger things in nature to talk to us and to carry us along into that metaphysical ecstasy of discovery. In this way he awakened in me the ongoing urge to be constantly aware."[16]

In a similar vein, British sculptor Henry Moore has spoken at length about how his search for inspiration led him away from his studio and into nature. In 1937, he wrote: "I have always paid great attention to natural forms such as bones, shells and pebbles, etc. Sometimes, for several years running, I have been to the same part of the sea-shore - but each year a new shape of pebble has caught my eye, which in the year before - although it was there in hundreds -1 never saw. Out of the millions of pebbles passed in walking along the shore, I choose out to see with excitement only those which fit in with my form-interest at the time. A different thing happens if I sit down and examine a handful one by one. I may then extend my form-experience more by giving my mind time to become conditioned to a new shape."[17]

Singer-songwriter Elvis Costello expressed a similar insight: that if we want to change our perspectives, we need to pay more attention to the natural kingdom. The man who once sang "I don't want to go to Chelsea" said: "I saw this one thing about the sense animals have. They showed altered pictures of what insects and birds see. Now to my way of thinking, that means we're the ones with the optical illusion, because we don't pollinate flowers, except by accident. Whereas the flowers have evolved and presumably evolved giving off these colours to insects. So really, daisies are not yellow and white, they're really purple and orange and something. Once you start taking that into account in music, then you realize that some people can't physically hear things. A kid that listens to Metallica or something can't hear that, because he's filled up with this stuff, he physically can't hear a banjo or a harp or something."[18] This coincides with Torn Waits' view on how we can acquire fresh perspectives. In 1987, he said: "The geography of the imagination should have a little bit more wilderness in it; I hate when it becomes subdivided."[19]

Waits has more suggestions on how the juxtaposition of context can allow for new insights. "I think it's like when you listen to opera in Texas, it's a very different world. In Rome you almost ignore it. I've done the same thing, gone out and bought music from Pakistan, Balinese stuff, Nigerian folksongs and all this, and I find that if I bring it with me to unusual places, the place itself is as much a part of the music."[20] His other take on the matter of alternating realities is this: "It's like when you're in a film and you see where the camera is, and then invariably one will look to the left out of frame and see something infinitely more interesting. It's what I try to look out for. It's not a science," said Waits. "It's like you hear music 'wrong' or when you hear it

corning through a wall and it mixes in - I pay attention to those things. You can't always do that. Other times it's imperative that you follow the rabbit, and roll."[21] Shades here of the three-phase artistic process covered in the opening chapter, where, in the third "inspired action" phase, you are required to move fast and act instinctively.

An artist who constantly challenged perspectives was the Swiss-born sculptor and experimental artist Jean Tinguely. Well known for his machine-like kinetic sculptures that self-destructed in the process of operation, Tinguely satirised the mindless, mass-produced commodities of advanced capitalist societies. The South African artist Willem Boshoff believes that Tinguely was a provocateur who "actively caused trouble".[22] Boshoff cites Tinguely's visit to South Africa during the apartheid years, when he was invited to give a demonstration to a group of students at an art school in Johannesburg. While the audience was awaiting his arrival, he quietly let himself in via the back door and introduced himself to the African cleaning staff. When the senior administrators eventually found him, he was engrossed in a sculpture of ostrich feather dusters, which he was assembling with his bemused retinue. It is this ironic sense of social inversion that is common to many successful entrepreneurs. They will single-handedly take on a market giant and do whatever is required to upstage the dominant player. They represent the renegade Colonel Kurtz from Apocalypse Now, who "put a weed up Command's arse".

Ernest Hemingway was another who could not abide stuck-up pretentiousness. He was famous for his brutal, direct prose. Not a Henry James nosing a literary pea around the bottom of a swimming pool, he was rather the great white shark, delivering minimalist prose to killing effect. For Hemingway, style was perspective; style was all. His put-down of the equally famous Southern writer William Faulkner is worth quoting: "Poor Faulkner. Does he really think big emotions come from big words? He thinks I don't know the ten-dollar words. I know them all right. But there are older and simpler and better words, and these are the ones I use."[23]

One of the great "revolutionaries" of musical grammar was "The King", Elvis Aaron Presley. With his good looks, sex appeal, musical instincts and ability to cross over between black-driven blues and traditional white country ballads, Presley personified all that mainstream bubble-gum music was not. By virtue of his negation of all stereotypes of the time, he became one of the greatest shapers of the rock 'n' roll era. In 1957, the effect of Presley on the then eight-year-old Bruce Springsteen was mind-blowing. "He was actually the forerunner for a new kind of man," says Springsteen. "Everyone changed their ideas about everything after that. About race, about sex, about gender descriptions, what you could look like, what you could wear. It was outrageous. It's a fantastic thing to be."[24]

In certain important ways, Hemingway, Tinguely and especially Presley, stood in their time as interpretive symbols. For without them you would struggle to see and understand the alternate possibilities that they sought to bring to our attention. This unveiling of alternate realities is, at base, an artistic undertaking: the artist primed to seek out more of reality than is currently visible. So, while an icon such as Presley stood wholly as a symbol of '50s counterculture rebellion, really, the role of all artists is to direct the world towards paths previously untrodden, to places unknown. And, if they are artists, then certainly they are also inventors, thinkers, tinkerers, dreamers, innovators and creatives (entrepreneurs included). As Eugéne Delacroix the great 19th-century French painter put it: "Men of genius have a way utterly peculiar to themselves of seeing things."[25] And this, then, is perspective.

Think of the maxim of Canadian ice hockey player Wayne Gretzky: "Skate where the puck is going, not where it's been." Many aspects of this type of anticipatory thinking have been absorbed into the current lexicon of scenario planning and political discourse. Though not a planner, on the ice Gretzky possessed an unsurpassed sense of vision and ability to employ space at pace. This was his perspective and, for others, it created new possibilities of thinking, both on and off the ice. The New Zealand All Blacks rugby team is similar in this respect: constantly challenging the operating norms of rugby with their knack of attacking space rather than trying to physically dominate their opponents - the latter being a Neanderthal style of rugby perfected by their traditional rivals, the South African Springboks.

Steve Jobs was another who challenged conventional thinking. Diagnosed with cancer in 2003, he understood clearly where his existential puck was going, and the reality of his approaching death provided immense perspective on the life choices he would still need to make. "[R]emembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life," he said shortly before his death in 2011. "Because almost everything - all external expectations, all pride, all fear of embarrassment or failure - these things just fall away in the face of death, leaving only what is truly important. Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking that you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart."[26]

Yet even before his cancer, Jobs was remarkable at seeking out new perspectives and he would use these to drive his colleagues to higher levels of performance and output. For example, in an incident recalled by early Apple Mac designer Bill Atkinson, Jobs complained to engineer Larry Kenyon that the Mac operating system was taking too long to boot up. Kenyon tried to justify the current set-up but Jobs shut him down by asking whether, if it could save someone's life, it

would be worthwhile clipping 10 seconds off the boot-up time? Kenyon conceded that, if this were the case, then yes, he probably could speed things up a bit. Working off the whiteboard, Jobs then proceeded to demonstrate how five million Mac users each saving 10 seconds of boot-up time a day totted up to roughly 300 million saved hours a year - or 100 lifetimes saved annually. “Larry was suitably impressed, and a few weeks later he came back and it booted up twenty-eight seconds faster,” said Atkinson, musing, “Steve had a way of motivating by looking at the bigger picture.”[27]

There's a story I once heard about Jobs in which he was complaining to his iPod designers that the current version just wasn't small enough. Oh no, they replied, it was definitely as small as they could possibly go. “Oh really?” he is said to have shot back as he dropped the prototype into a fishbowl. Two small air bubbles tracked silently up to the surface. “There!” Jobs smirked, triumphantly. “You see, there is space!”

Another anecdote about Jobs relates to his obsession with fonts. He would fixate over the title bars above documents and window screens, requiring his assistants to redo them endlessly until he was satisfied, which he seldom was. He is reported to have taken a special dislike to the hard-edged font of the earlier Apple Lisa and, for the new Mac, insisted on softer font edges. Atkinson recalls that they must've gone through 20-odd design iterations before Jobs was finally happy to sign off. In the midst of this obsessive craziness, one of the underlings complained to Jobs that this level of micromanagement was ridiculous and that there were more important things to do. “Can you imagine looking at that every day?” Jobs reportedly shrieked. “It's not just a little thing, it's something we have to do right.”[28] Looking back at the Jobs legacy, it is clear that he was just a little off the edge. He thought that Bill Gates was a complete square and way short of perspective. “He'd be a broader guy if he had dropped acid once or gone off to an ashram when he was younger,” he is quoted to have said.[29] Ever the existentialist, even as a young man, Jobs was sucking at the marrow. “We all have a short period of time on this earth,” he said, shortly after his first success with Apple. “We probably only have the opportunity to do a few things really great and do them well. None of us has any idea how long we're going to be here, nor do I, but my feeling is I've got to accomplish a lot of these things while I am young.”[30]

For contemporary artists, certainly one of the key tasks is to attack the architecture of human perception, and a discussion on perspective would not be complete without reference to some of the significant changes that have marked and shifted contemporary visual art over the last century. Take for example the historical tension between painting and photography. There is an enduring myth which suggests that, while painting can produce art that reveals distortions and lies, photography, on

the other hand, produces faithful renditions of a world as it really is: painting as falsehood, photography as truth, as it were. Certain artists have taken exception to this dichotomous thinking, directing the viewer to ask whether and where truth might lie when looking at a photo, which, we are told, cannot lie.

A 1968 painting, Domplatz, Mailand (Cathedral Square, Milan), by German artist Gerhard Richter, makes the point brilliantly. Richter designed the painting in question to look like the blurred photo of an urban landscape, in this case, Milan's Cathedral Square. Its wave-like blurring requires the viewer to refocus the picture, an impossible task. Through its blurred and fuzzy image, this particular painting has become a further commentary on our own inner distortions of reality and the untruths that lurk within photos as much as within paintings. In May 2013, Domplatz sold for $37.1 million, at the time the highest figure ever paid for a painting by a living artist.[31] Six months later the record was smashed when a large sculpture, Balloon Dog (Orange) by Jeff Koons, was sold for $58.4 million.

Richter aside, long before cameras and their commentary on reality, Impressionism came as one of the first important periods in modern creativity to challenge the artistic status quo. It may be argued that the reason many critics have said it was the Impressionists who first showed us the character of true colour is that they steered clear of combining their colours in the traditional way. Until then, about 1874, hues and tones were produced by mixing colours and using white and black to lighten or darken their shades as required. By contrast, the Impressionists, including Monet, Renoir and the exquisite but (during his lifetime) commercially unsuccessful Alfred Sisley, laid down pure rainbow colours alongside one another. Employing short, thick brushstrokes, greys and darks were achieved through the juxtaposition of complementary colours. Not considered a “true” colour, black was studiously avoided and there was seldom any artistic blending of primary colours. Instead, the direct deployment of pure unmodified “spectrum-type” colours enabled the eye to do the mixing of contrasting colours. Thus, in observing an Impressionist canvas, the mixing of colours occurs neurologically as the retina registers, for example, a wavelength of blue light alongside one of red. As a result of this juxtaposition, the retina will receive the impression of purple. Similarly, an Impressionist would contrast blue and yellow to yield a neurological impression of green.

Such colour impressions produced vibrant results, combined with the unmixed and adjacent blue and red colours, for example, that continued to present on the canvas independent of any neurological interpretation. Via this presentation, we can understand better how the traditional approach of physically mixing two colour pastes to create a new colour obliterates the independent wavelength purity of each of the original colours. This, in turn, diminishes the intensity of the new colour.

So we can sec how mixtures created to develop compound colours ultimately result in dulled colour values and a diminished breadth of hue. John Constable the English landscape painter called this the “brown gravy” effect - a depressing coloration that typified much of the art preceding Impressionism, as a stroll through any of the great art museums of Europe will show.[32] (While Da Vinci is known to have understood some of the basic properties of light, it is puzzling that he does not appear to have applied this knowledge to his paintings.) It should also be noted that, while the Impressionists laid claim to colour in all its purity, there are a number of preceding artists who transcended the brown gravy of their peers, notably the Spaniard Diego Velazquez, Constable, the French “lumanist” Camille Corot and the sublime worker of English light, Joseph Turner, whom Monet studied in depth as he developed his Impressionist techniques.

The Cubists, too, are critical in respect of their challenge to traditional perspectives on painting. Those leading the Cubist movement were Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque, commencing their first experiments in Paris in about 1907. Braque's Still Life with Violin and Pitcher exemplifies the central tenets of this period: in the painting, he extended the conventional perspective on tables, jugs and violins, offering not one view as per the traditional format, but several simultaneously. We are confronted with the fragmentation of several day-to-day objects, the artist moving beyond the orthodox of presenting solely one fixed point of view. The pitcher and violin are presented from a view lower than eye level and the table is presented as if from above. Additional scrutiny shows how the pitcher is further fragmented: the lip of the pitcher viewed as if from above, the vessel itself as if from below eye level. The violin is similarly shattered, the entire picture suggesting a compositional plasticity, attacking our conventional and subjective sense of reality. It is quite unnerving, as it implies that subjective reality - the reality we all take for granted - is at best a construct, at worst, an illusory world to blind you from alternate ways of seeing.

Under “normal” conditions, our view of an object is that which is visible only from our current perspective. Should we wish to see more, we need to shift position and thus our perspective. So to see the table or water jug from the six perspectives presented in the Braque painting, we are required to move six times or, alternately, to break the violin and table into six different pieces. In the case of the former, time is required as we shift from points one to two to three, etc. Our shifting sense of space amounts to an ongoing stream of time-lapsed images, each image representing a singular perspective. Reality aside, in the shifting inner world of the artist, other than technical considerations, there is little holding him or her back from composing an image where each refracted perspective can be viewed simultaneously. Here time is consequently sped up and ultimately collapsed, negated, the fractured object unified

indefinitely in a time-space compression. As an epoch in the evolution of art, Cubism became - as art critic Graham Collier put it- "the first full-scale movement... in which the artist breaks loose from the visual tyranny of the object. By this I mean that he exercises his freedom to restructure forms multi-dimensionally in accordance with their several aspects - that he is not tied mentally or emotionally to his perceptual experience of them from one position."[33] This, then, is the first real expression of non-subjective reality, that is to say the consideration of a world divorced from a singular personal perspective.

Of course Surrealists such as Dalí went a step further, suggesting that even within one subjective viewpoint a number of contending perspectives could be identified. Dalí aforementioned Lincoln in Dalivision is a case in point: the painting nudges the viewer to seek an alternate perspective to the more obvious one offered by Gala's curvaceous figure.

An additional hallmark of the Surrealist group was a view that real perspective lay in the realms of the subconscious - witness Dalí world of melting clocks and washed-out landscapes. Their challenge was that we should consider this unconscious world a valid space, and hence seek to bring it to consciousness. Said Dalí: "In the Surrealist period, I wanted to create the iconography of the interior world and the world of the marvelous."[34] Consciousness is a term mostly employed in the psychoanalytic discipline(s) and is used typically in conjunction with its opposite, which is unconsciousness. Unconscious people, psychotherapists might say, are those simply unaware of the inner patterns that govern their lives. To a point then, we are all unconscious; there are levels to this, as in everything. This said, with age, and sometimes through therapeutic work, we can be led more confidently towards hitherto unconscious aspects of ourselves, which we might not otherwise recognise or acknowledge. These aspects, the analysts might say, are those parts that have been denied or split off. The notion of the "inner child", as discussed earlier, is part of this unconscious world - a part that constitutes shadow or underworld. The inner child invokes aspects of play, curiosity, innocence and fearlessness (for starters). As such, when brought from the shadow to consciousness, that child, or indeed that playground of children, can become a catalyst for creativity, an instigator of enquiry and upender of our orthodox adult worlds. If we wish to become more conscious, one of the key tasks, as jungians would say, is to connect with the unconscious, so as to reintegrate with the shadow and its children.

We might connect more fully with the unconscious, but what then? What does being more conscious actually mean? What does it offer? Can it provide more happiness? Does it mean that we might become any easier to get along with? Could it imply that we will "arrive" at a station of higher self-awareness where insight and

maturity are finally ours? In his book Creating a life - Finding your individual Path, respected psychoanalyst and author James Hollis suggests not. Instead, he claims that the notion of a climactic nirvana-type arrival and connection to the unseen aspects of self is sham - one of the greatest fictions spun by the psycho industry and, if anything, a cunning business model aimed at those who would seek self-enlightenment via the couch. For searchers of self-mastery, the truth of arrival is very different and, for Hollis, distils into three important points.

1. He suggests that consciousness will not put a stay on our inner battles. "[A]t best you will manage to win a few skirmishes in your long uncivil war with yourself", he says. "Decades from now you will be fighting on these familiar fronts, though the terrain may have shifted so much that you may have difficulty recognizing the same old, same old."[35] The schizophrenic Dali would concur.

2. Hollis argues that consciousness will require that you focus not so much on your inner wounds, but on dismantling the defences assembled to protect them. As this book argues, one of the key tasks of the artist is to sit in the fire and feel the burn, not stifle it. This fire, the source of our wounding, is where the mythological gods live and one of the places where artists and visionaries mine their creative ore. Artistic insights are not easily manufactured and cannot be produced on order.

3. Perhaps most aptly for this chapter on perspective, Hollis suggests that consciousness will not heal you and will not save you from pain and future suffering. Most artists seem to understand this anyway. As Hollis asserts, consciousness will not heal but it will, "quite simply, make your life more interesting". He concludes: "You will come to more and more complex riddles wrapped within yourself and your relationships. This claim seems small potatoes to the anxious consumer world, but it is an immense gift, a stupendous contribution. Think of it: your own life might become more interesting to you! Consciousness is the gift, and that is the best it gets."[36]

If this claim is not small potatoes, then how big, really, is it? And what can we make of it? If we are to emulate the artists and their search for perspective, working with the unconscious might certainly yield some interesting alternatives. This is no easy task, however, and many would baulk at the prospect of working with shadow and the unconscious in search of fresh perspectives. This said, in closing, a small artistic consolation for those less enamoured with dives into the deep unconscious: Magritte. The Belgian-born René Magritte was, like Dalí, a Surrealist artist but, unlike Dalí, he

favoured a far more rational approach to seeking out sources of artistic inspiration. In 1927, already a sophisticated member of Belgium's Surrealist inner circle, the 29-year-old Magritte journeyed to Paris. There he encountered Surrealists André Breton, Joan Miró, André Masson, Max Ernst, Dalí and others. Their effect on him was galvanising. Over a three-year period in the City of Light, he produced a quarter of his life's output: more than 200 works. By the close of this period and his return to Brussels, Magritte had worked out most of his key ideas and, based on these, he would produce the numerous signature motifs of the art that would buoy him upwards to artistic recognition, until his death some 40 years later. Years after his passing, these signatures are still hard to miss. The bowler hats, referenced by Pink Floyd on Wish You Were Here (1975); the clouds; the green apples, the inspiration for The Beatles' record label and, subsequently, Apple Inc.; and the iconic simultaneously day-and-night scenarios sketched out as if in a twilight death-watch over a Spanish-style Californian dwelling. Jackson Browne chose a version of this painting as the album cover for his wrenching Late for the Sky (1974). The adjusted version would see Browne's car waiting, for whom we know not, beneath a street light outside his shadowed home. Presciently, Late for the Sky would serve as the artistic backdrop to the subsequent suicide of his wife, Phyllis, some two years later. Commenting in the '90s on his songwriting role, Browne offered this perspective: "My version as a songwriter is to explore life as it is for everybody and the last thing I want to do is to live guarded in a mansion. A songwriter must get out and experience life."[37] When he said this, it's not clear whether Browne was referring to the Magritte day-night piece.

In the light of Magritte's profound contribution to the Surrealist movement, it is important to note that his ideas stood in stark contrast to those held by the Parisian circle. To be sure, he was in every way just as insubordinate to convention and bourgeois reality, and even more inclined to dally with the shifting sands of perspective. However, while Dalí and Breton insisted on a complete surrender to the unconscious and a rejection of logic and sanity, Magritte was stubbornly convinced that reason was, and remained, a critical component to the artistic journey. Consequently, as FT art critic Robin Blake asserts: "His art can be understood only as depending on a crucial tension between the uplift of logic and the downward tug of madness." Though rational, for Magritte, the role of mystery in the pursuit of art was undeniable. As he said once in an interview: "One cannot speak about mystery ... one must be seized by it."[38]

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. The use of multiple perspectives is critical if we are to weed out tired ways of thinking. It helps to keep things fresh.
2. This chapter shows how different perspectives are best obtained if we can remain mentally young, impartial and inquisitive, and sidestep “comfortable” avenues of interpretation. All these assist in avoiding one-dimensional thinking.
3. The ongoing shift from one art period to the next demonstrates the fluidity in artistic perspective and interpretation - witness the movements from Impressionism to Cubism to Surrealism.

CHAPTER EIGHT – Perspective

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2 Jean Welz quote www.straussart.co.za/shared/catalogues/2012/review/files/assets/basic-html/page34.html

3 David Bowie interview extract: quoted off The Guardian, 11 January 2016, quoting Melody Maker, 1972.

4 Through a psychotherapeutic process of self-understanding, for example, an individual may see that they are intrinsically different during a panic attack from their normal state of being. Understanding what causes this difference will enable a fresh perspective – sparking insight and new possibilities.

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[26] Isaacson, W. (2011) Steve Jobs, Little, Brown, London (p. 457).

[27] Ibid. (p. 123).

[28] Ibid. (pp. 131-132).

[29] Ibid. (p. 172-173).

[30] Ibid. (p. 155).

[31] In 2006 a Jackson Pollock painting sold for $140 million, and a de Kooning for $137 million.

[32] Collier, G. (1972) Art and the Creative Consciousness, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ (p. 150).

[33] Ibid. (p. 144).

[34] Dalí quote https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvador_Dal%C3%AD

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[38] Blake, R. “Strange Fruit. Tate Liverpool’s new exhibition showcases Rene Magritte’s complex relationship with Surrealism.” Financial Times – Life and Arts, 25-26 June 2013 (p. 11).