

Virtual Selves And Species Evolution

2023

Thomas A. Burns PhD.

Klamath Falls, Oregon

Dream, daydream and imagination have always offered humans the opportunity to explore alternative identities and an alternative reality. At the institutional level of society, all of the different forms of expressive culture – ritual and the various arts – provide options in special “time out” contexts for humans to share the adventures that our imagination engenders. But when our imagination intrudes to become the basis for our behavior in our “real” life activities, we can become delusional and dysfunctional. Our imagination is the source of our human creativity, but in the overall history of human life up to modern times, imagination has had fairly clear boundaries.

These boundaries may be in the process changing as a consequence of the advent of computers, the internet, social media, digital data transformation, holography, and advanced robotics.

We are now able to live more and more of our lives in a virtual media framework as we interact with others on the platforms provided by YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. Utilizing these platforms, we can become more and more complete imaginary-alternative selves interacting with other such selves in communities that are entirely fabricated. We can even travel and buy and share virtual things with others as our alternative selves. Such a virtually based orientation is consuming much of our lives as our identities become increasingly circumscribed by our computer, television, and smart phone screens.

What happens when these screens become holograms and our alternative selves get expressed in humanoid robots that are capable of engaging in sophisticated activities in the real world? The collective result: our virtual world of alternative selves achieves ever greater independence until it becomes its own Thing. In this progressive developmental scenario, what begins in our imagination escalates through our technology to transform what is initially a virtual reality into an alternative reality where a new bio-mechanical or bio-engineered species achieves the position of being able to participate and evolve independently – possibly replacing the homo-sapiens species that created it.

Modern Humans – the TOOL species! Always seeking the Better Tool to replace the less capable Tool, even to their own potential species demise!

Delusion Or Conclusion??