

DOI: 10.12731/2218-7405-2013-7-11

## THE REALITY: PHILOSOPHICAL AND CINEMATIC CONSTRUCTS

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The article is devoted to the analysis of philosophical problem of reality. The author defines reality as everything that existed at one time and still exists now; as an objective world in its being primary to man, and as validity in general and its fragment which is the subject area of corresponding science. The author makes a short excursion into the area of reflection of reality, the peculiarity of which will be the fact covering both rational concepts and visual, cinematic images. The goal of article is to capture the difference between the philosophical understanding of the reality, as the rational understanding of the whole being methodologically organized, on the one hand, and the representation of the problems associated with the reality of the cinematograph, whose images are often fixed by instant "setting", that is by only subject to rational comprehension, on the other hand.

**Keywords:** reality, social reality, alternate reality, the modern cinematograph, the image.

## РЕАЛЬНОСТЬ: ФИЛОСОФСКИЕ И КИНЕМАТОГРАФИЧЕСКИЕ КОНСТРУКТЫ

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Статья посвящена анализу философской проблемы реальности. Автор определяет реальность как все когда-либо существовавшее и существующее; и объективный мир в его внеположенности человеку; и действительность в целом, и ее фрагмент, составляющий предметную область соответствующей

науки. Автор совершает экскурс в область осмысления реальности, особенностью которого является то, что он охватит как рациональные понятия, так и визуальные, кинематографические образы. Своей целью статья имеет запечатление разницы между философским осмыслением реальности, как осмыслении целерациональном, методологически организованном и представлением проблем, связанных с реальностью в кинематографе, образы которого зачастую фиксируют, путем моментального «схватывания», то, что только подлежит рациональному осмыслению.

**Ключевые слова:** реальность, социальная реальность, альтернативная реальность, современный кинематограф, образ.

The problem of reflection of the reality is, without a doubt, one of the perennial philosophical problems; its decision is to define the way in which the world presents itself to as world, and the way we understand perceive it. This problem has no distinct localization in philosophical discourse. In philosophical discourse reality is understood as everything that existed at one time and still exists now; as an objective world in its being primary to man, and as validity in general and its fragment which is the subject area of corresponding science [7]. We want to make a short excursion into the area of reflection of reality, the peculiarity of which will be the fact covering both rational concepts and visual, cinematic images. Our goal is to capture the difference between the philosophical understanding of the reality, as the rational understanding of the whole being methodologically organized, on the one hand, and the representation of the problems associated with the reality of the cinematograph, whose images are often fixed by instant ‘setting’, that is by only subject to rational comprehension, on the other hand. Thus, in our study we will understand the reality in the broadest sense of the world, the reality as the sum of phenomena, events, and processes that make us and our world.

One of the aspect of understanding the reality is the allocation of its species or forms, their mutual correlation made by philosophy. Using certain criteria for

particular purposes, philosophers allocate different groups of reality. For example, they distinguish between the objective reality as something that surrounds man and the subjective reality, as something that makes him up. This distinction highlights the boundary between external and internal worlds, the boundary between the something that in its existence does not depend on us, and something that is our very being. We can identify physical and social reality when we assess the dominant factors in this reality as natural factors or man-made factors. A small adjustment of the criterion distinguishes between social or historical and individual or psychological reality. Speaking about the first of them, philosophers point to inner-cultural system of coordinate which serves as the base in building the relationship between natural world and social world, and sets a unique metric of life. In contrast to this psychological reality implies the existence of a single inner world, the research of the reality draws attention to emotional-motivational sphere, personal feelings and memories. Highlighting the importance of events modality philosophers mean actual reality, that is the reality available now and the potential reality possible in the future.

In the last decade the attention of philosophers is concentrated on the topic of virtual reality which is an environment simulated by computer systems. This environment simulates the human interaction through the direct impact on his senses. The topic is one of the aspects of a more general problem of distinguishing between true reality, as the reality which people are included into from birth and the reality false which is formed by various types of simulation.

Cinematograph offers a visualization of such an aspect of the aforementioned problem as the coexistence of different layers of reality. The Mexican director Alejandro González Iñárritu shows an interconnectivity of social, cultural, territorial spaces, which are isolated from each other in his "trilogy of death". The three films – ‘Amores perros’ (2000), ‘21 Grams’ (2003), ‘Babel’ (2006) – are quite different in their plot, tone, style of narration. These films are united by the idea of universality of what is happening to a man, the independence of such events as, death and love and loyalty, or such qualities as mutual understanding and mercy from the environment in

which they occur. The characters from the film – an unemployed Octavio, who makes his living on his dog, a successful publisher Daniel, a homeless man and a former killer El Chivo – from the film ‘Amores perros’ try to be tolerant and take care of their loved ones in severe and sometimes absurd circumstances. Their stories are united not only by the car accident which is fatal to all the participants but also by the desire to overcome the difficult situation of their mutual existence. We can say that in this film as well as in the later film ‘21 Grams’, different social realities, are held together by a sense of hostility outside of the world. The main motive of these films is the following: the world is something that has always opposed man, while this opposition may be expressed in different forms.

The three story lines in the movie ‘Babel’ show the abyss that separates cultural realities of Morocco, Mexico which borders on the United States and urban Japan. At the same time, the stories of all the characters turn out to be so intertwined that the viewer is, in fact, watching the story which is told inconsistently and which starts with the Japanese tourist’s presenting the rifle to Moroccan shepherd boy, who shoots into a void and accidentally hits the American tourists, whose children are looked after by a Mexican nanny, who wants to go to her son’s wedding and who has to take the kids with her. The story goes through people’s lives and culture. Such films as ‘Mystic River’(2003) by Clint Eastwood, ‘Crash’ (2005) by Paul Haggis, ‘Love Actually’(2003) by Richard Curtis convey the mood on the perception of reality as a kaleidoscope of events and universality at the same time.

Another Mexican director Guillermo del Toro shows the interweaving of historical and fantastic realities in his films. The action of such films as ‘El espinazo del Diablo’ (2001) and ‘El laberinto del fauno’ (2006) takes place in the pre-war and war Spain. In the first film the thirteen year-old Carlos, who had lost his parents, is taken out of the familiar world and is placed in to the shelter, lost in the fields. The atmosphere of the old house, with just a few occupants in it, is mysterious and full of vague threats. The children are worried by the civil war, going on somewhere, they are afraid of a surly employee Jacinto, there is an unexploded bomb in the yard, the

phantom of Santi is haunting through the corridors at night. The atmosphere equally oppressive surrounds the twelve-year-old Ophelia (*El laberinto del fauno*) came to her stepfather who is captain of the punitive group pursuing the guerrillas. The girl finds herself involved in the tragic events taking place in two realities. First, a reality of the old mill, which is about to be born of her brother. Second, a reality the magical world where she must prove that she is a princess Moine. The world of the heroes is formed from the unity of present and fiction reality. Does Carlos imagine Killed Santi or is the shelter 'Santa Lucia' at the crossroads of this and the other world indeed? Does Ophelia invents a faun, a magical underground country and a labyrinth leading to it? The director leaves these questions unanswered.

Realities of the film 'The Fountain' (2006) by Darren Aronofsky can be perceived different ways; in this film we witness three stories. The story of mutual relations of a young couple, in which the wife Izzi Creo dies, and her husband, an oncologist, is trying to create saving medicine, can be perceived as the starting reality. The story of a conquistador who went in search of the Tree of Life at the command of the Queen of Spain, can be perceived as the fictional reality of the unfinished book of Izzy. The image of a space flight of Man and Wood to the star Xibalba can be perceived as Tom's dream. On the other hand, all these events can be considered real, but taking place in different time intervals, then the story of a conquistador is the past, the relationship between Izzie and Tom is the present, flight to the star is the future. Lastly, it may be one and the same story told differently. If this story conveys an event, then it's about the last days of Izzy. If this story conveys the meaning of events, then it's the attitude of Izzy's death and the possibility of eternal life. The image of Tom's lonely flying to the star that is about to explode is showing emotional experience of these events by Tom./ Tom's lonely flight to the star that is about to explode is the image transmitting emotional distress of Tom on the death of Izzy.

Hardly the authors of these films are familiar with the original idea of pragmatism about the relationship the reality with the models of its representation.

Nevertheless, a series of films demonstrating the idea that reality with which we deal is not a stable world external to us and physically defined, but the story of the world in description one of the dictionaries. The creators of these films are confirmed by images Rorty's thesis [11] and Dewey's thesis [2] that any description is not enough. If one of the true descriptions can not be, any description may be true. This excludes possibility of talking about the reality as the original reality or the primary reality. Representation of the world can not be correct or incorrect; it may be more or less comfortable. Images of the world can be more or less successful given the time and the purpose of describing. The world as something that is outside of man is not explained by means of language, it is modeled by a language. The world is described as an ordered reality by the man who organizes his own.

Philosophy raises the question of existence and co-existence of the alternative realities, this question comes in the reflection on the types and forms of reality. Although philosophers creating explanatory models of the world demonstrate the capabilities of its description of variable, thinking about parallel worlds are on the periphery of philosophizing. G.V. Leibniz was perhaps one of the few who returned to this theme. The philosopher believed our world to be the most perfect of the possible, he admitted the possibility of the existence of an infinite number of other worlds which are contained in the divine mind. Leibniz writes: 'God is the ultimate perfection, so He chose the best plan when He created the universe, the plan which combines the greatest diversity and the greatest orderliness. For all the possibilities implied by God are working towards that depends on perfection of it. The result of all these aspirations must be the real world as perfect as possible' [5, p.409].

Nietzsche demonstrates the opposite view on this problem. Nietzsche's idea of 'the eternal return' proclaimed an infinite set of variations of the same theme, exact repetition of the same event. This idea was varied in different periods of the life of the philosopher, but it certainly included the thought about aimlessness of the eternal return.

Nietzsche writes: 'Now I die and disappear, - would you say, - and I will be nothing in a moment. The soul is mortal as the flesh.

But causality which I intertwine to will come back again, - I will create it again!

My self is one of the reasons of the eternal return.

I will come back again with this sun, this land, this eagle, this snake, - I do not go back to a new life, to the life, similar to the previous: I will be forever coming back to the same life, to teach again the eternal return of all things' [8, p.161].

Cinematograph paradoxically combines the Nietzsche's idea of 'the eternal return' and Leibniz's confidence in the achievability of 'the best of all possible worlds'. At least, three films, the authors of which are inspired by the thinking cocktail, represent the alternative realities. The protagonist of films 'Mirror for a Hero' (1987) by Vladimir Hotinenko, 'Groundhog Day' (1993) by Harold Ramis and 'Lola rennt' (1998) by Tom Tykwer lives the same day over and over again. The reality is repeated only for protagonist, the people around him do not perceive this repetition. No matter what kind of reality the time loop arises: this may occur in 1949 which carries the hero of 'The Mirror', or this may occur in February the early 90 which Phil gets stuck, or in the late 90's, when Lola expects the variants Rescue Your Boyfriend. The protagonist is attempting to open the circle of repetitions; he is attempting to find some meaning in the endless repetition of the same. Unlike Nietzsche, the protagonists do not accept the grandeur of the eternal return, and finally it makes sense to interrupt. In all instances the situation is resolved by the protagonist's behavior changes, the break of the repetition occurs when protagonist makes this world a better out of a possible, when the protagonist builds an optimal behavioral strategy, when he commits the most perfect actions.

Another aspect of the understanding of reality is the solution to the problem of the correlation between objective and subjective reality. Philosophers take the position of the common sense when they reflect on the problem, although it is not typical. English Bishop George Berkeley [1] was the first to make clear the

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distinction of the talk about the reality as something that surrounds us, and the reality existing outside of us, not for us, beside us. While criticizing the modern materialistic philosophers he actually gave up the Aristotelian thesis, which said that the things around us are something, and consist of something. As we remember, Berkeley noted that only the first thesis is considerable for us: ‘objects are only ideas in the minds of perceivers’. These ideas were adopted and continued by David Hume [4], positivist philosophers and representatives of pragmatism. Berkeley's approach to understanding the reality included not only the question what or, who is on the other side of reality, who forms it (Substance) or who produces it (God), but also the question whether it matters or does not matter the material accuracy of the reality. Is advantageous objective reality over a subjective reality? Can this priority be proved? As we remember, Berkeley has not spoken out in favor of the importance of the material accuracy of the reality; If God gives us the world as aggregate sensations then there is no necessity to require existence independent of us from the reality.

It is easy to see that this problem is tackled by the cinema much and willingly, and in most cases is understood not as Berkeley did. Its traditional solution is the physical representation of reality as positive, and its simulation as a negative reality. This picture does not depend on to what extent the environment offered by one or another kind of reality is comfortable. As an example, let us consider the two films shot in 1999 – "The Matrix" and "Vanilla Sky". Their stories are based on the choice of the main characters of physically accurate reality. It's clear from the films that the choice between the reality and simulacra is equal to the choice between sensations, reinforced by external reality and pure sensations. Neo's choice in favor of the life on the underground Zion and the destroyed, darkened earth, or David's choice in favor of life with a disfigured face and endless pain, can hardly be explained otherwise than by an irrational desire to live in the material, but not the virtual world. The distinction of the reality of the dying humanity turned into an energy appendage by machines lies mainly in the fact that this is an earlier and credible version of reality. The reality is still a predictable reality in which the protagonist of ‘Vanilla Sky’ – is trying to get

back the existence different from the world of the inculcated dreams. So, the plots of films that are based on the choice between objective and subjective realities show a deep philosophical problem – the problem of what counts as a reality, on what basis should be the selection. However the specificity of cinema can not afford to go deep into speculative thinking and attentive viewer is deprived of a convincing answer to the question.

In addition to simulative realities, there is also a reality that arises as a result of altered states of consciousness from normal sleep to severe mental disorder. This aspect can be called a paradox of Chuang-tzu and a butterfly<sup>1</sup>, this paradox refers to the absence of final authority responsible for our perception of reality. The only reality available to our perception, is projected onto by our conscious, therefore when it dysfunctions man will not be able to notice it.

Cinematograph can create the effect of the presence of several realities at once, it allows viewers to experience disconcerting of Chuang-tzu himself. So the viewer who looks a cult film ‘Fight Club’ (1999) by David Fincher does not know until the last episodes about that a friend and guru of the protagonist Tyler is not a real person, he is a hero alter-ego. The hero himself does not understand it too. Subjective reality heroes of French film ‘Dédales’ (2003) by René Manzor are intertwined even more interesting. The plot of the film is based on the investigation of serial murders and the work of the psychoanalyst with the main suspect. At the end of the film viewers detect the story that they were looking this is not a story that takes place with different characters in the real world, but the tangle of subjective realities of one

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<sup>1</sup> Once Chuang-tzu dreamed he was a butterfly. In the morning he was very depressed. His friends were surprised at the condition of the Master and asked him:

- What happened? We've never seen you look so depressed.

Chuang-tzu said:

- I am puzzled, I am confused, I can not understand. At night when I was sleeping, I had a dream I was a butterfly.

One of his friends laughed and said:

- No one ever worried about dreams. If you wake up, the dream disappears. Why does it bother you?

Chuang-tzu answered:

- I am puzzled now. If Chuang-tzu's dream can become a butterfly, it is possible butterfly asleep and she dreams that she Chuang-tzu.

person. The film 'A Beautiful Mind' (2001) by Ron Howard has become a classic, it offers a cinematic version of the life of the American mathematician, Nobel Laureate John Nash who works in the field of game theory and differential geometry. The reality, what it is perceived by the main character, is seen by him much more exciting and eventful than the objective reality which is common to people around Nash.

Not as often as you would expect, filmmakers stand up for Berkeley's position and they refuse to acknowledge the relevance of the choice of a reality as genuine. Obviously, cinematography which works only with the one kind of images is difficult to convey Berkeley's idea about the identity of reality and its perception. However, we can recall the two successful experiences in expression of this idea – the final shots are very different in both time of creation, and the type of film – 'Solaris' (1972) by Andrei Tarkovsky and 'Inception' (2010) by Christopher Nolan. As we remember, the protagonist of "Solaris" returns home after a long space journey, moral searches, returned to the old house of his father which is still waiting for his 'prodigal son'. A flowing stream, a barking dog, books and knick-knacks on the windowsill and his father's indoor clothing – all this creates a convincing image of the 'return' and only the camera that gradually moves away, shows the viewer a slice of the Earth floating on the vast intelligent ocean of planet Solaris.

The film 'Inception' ends with almost the same scene. After a fantastic space dream within a dream, after fabulous tricks and transformation we see an old house, through the glass doors we see the sunlit garden and the children playing in the background. Cobb and Father of his wife return to their country house, as usual he spins the whirligig which is the criterion for the authenticity of what is happening, but Cobb isn't watching his movements as he is not interested by the kind of reality that is around him. It is important that, in both films the protagonists do not care about the nature of the reality in which they stay; it is important what happens in it. In this case the reality is interpreted not so much as the things and events surrounding a human, but as a human relationship. Chris returns to his father, Cobb returns to his children and the important fact in these circumstances is their attitude to events. That is

whether there is something on the other side of our sensations and what exactly – a soulless matter, or God, or a giant computer is of secondary importance, before our attitude to this reality, before our values or choice that we make in the world around us.

Another aspect of understanding reality is the search of the criterion distinguishing realities that can be objective or subjective, supreme or subordinate, authentic or virtual. The problem of determining the place of our reality in the hierarchy of realities is known in philosophy since Plato [9]. It was the ancient philosopher established the tradition of distinguishing the ultimate reality and our reality as the worlds existing on different principles: it is the principle of unity, eternity and immutability for World of Ideas and it is the principle of occurrence and death for World of Objects. Immanuel Kant postulated another principle – not a knowable world, ‘the world of things in itself’, in this case an indicator of inauthenticity of our world is the presence of logical contradictions. Another line of philosophical search for the ultimate reality goes from neo-Platonism [10] with his idea of a stairway down of emanations – the farther away the worse and this is the criterion of its inauthenticity. The variation of this distinction of this reality and ultimate reality is the philosophical tradition of Christianity, which is opposed to Heavenly world and Earthly world [3].

The cinematographic search for the ultimate reality resembles of the Gnostic tradition which postulates a multitude of worlds different in the imperfection. In this connection let us recall, two more films released in 1999 – ‘The Thirteenth Floor’ by Josef Rusnak and ‘eXistenZ’ by David Cronenberg. The protagonist of these films becomes involved in reality game of the software. At first they can easily distinguish between the real world and the fake world, but time goes and the protagonists as well as the viewer begin to guess that everything happens in more than two realities. Both this film and ‘Inception’ have their own markers, allowing to determine which of the realities you are.

The search of the criteria for the identification of real or imaginary realities, is one of the variants of the problem of distinguishing realities. Both the virtual reality and the world of inner fantasies or hallucinations may be imaginary realities. Being absolutely consistent in our thinking, we must recognize the only criterion for the one reality of inauthenticity is the ability to leave this reality and enter into another reality, while preserving the memory of the first reality. So the new reality will only be basic when it prevents the transition to a better world. On this basis, we can say that the most consistent are those religious philosophers who postulate the presence of earthly and heavenly realities while noticing that the existence of a higher world is a matter of faith and ethics. The availability of the higher moral law does not correspond to the earth's logic; this corresponds to the order of the heavenly reality. Most philosophers still find it possible to verify the authenticity of reality on the basis of its internal criteria: the consistency, the continuity, and the cause-and-effect relationships.

The distinction of the real and the unreal in most movies occurs as a verification of the world around us to meet a certain standard requirements. No matter what kind of criterion is used by the protagonist, anyway it is aimed at the detection of logical inconsistencies, self-contradiction in the surrounding reality. The effect of 'deejay' in the film 'The Matrix' is an indicator of changes in the parameters of the virtual reality, so the world may lose authenticity – the time settings can be changed, structure and nature of space can be change as well as the power of the protagonist. The violation of causality in the films 'Vanilla Sky' and 'eXistenZ' makes you wonder how real the world is. Noteworthy that this violation is recognized by protagonists, although the representation of causality could change with reality itself. The protagonists of the film 'Inception' take the stability of physical laws as the criterion for true reality, therefore breach of gravity or inertia indicates the unreality created by dreams. The protagonist of the film 'A Beautiful Mind' tries to use a dual criterion to single out the subjective components in the surrounding reality. Nash makes sure of the subjectivity of some characters surrounding him – he notes

that some of his friends do not change with age. The scientist compares his perceptions with the perception of others when he wants check to quickly how they perceive the world. As we can see, the above examples demonstrate that the perception of reality approximates to perception of theory.

In this article we have tried to show that the film industry often visualizes the quite sophisticated approaches to understanding the reality. The images of the cinema do not only find the philosophical problems, but it accentuates problems that are on the periphery of rational thinking. We think it isn't the result of purposeful philosophizing of the filmmakers; it appears as a "side" product of building a figurative number of the films. The film as a product of popular art must translate the image, familiar and close to the viewer, this image must be close as a flashback or a fancy. The moviegoers are interested in the effect of unity in the adoption of some image. So, the emergence of non-trivial views on the reality in a number of films may indicate the presence of such views not of filmmakers, but in the collective consciousness of the viewership, which is mass, not intellectual. A cinematic image has a collective dimension; it is the product of teamwork of the vast group of people. Thus the film can not be imprinting of a concrete view, which in our case has the view of reality; the film reflects something in common that is present in relation to the world as part of some social systems. Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes about this in his book 'Eye and Mind': 'A vision is not one of the modes of thought or present being "for oneself": it's a given ability to be outside oneself, participate in the articulation of Being Inside, and "I" is completed and closed on itself only by means of the output outside' [6]. Applied to the situation described this statement it means that the filmmakers find and show the problematic situation but they are not practically aware of their presence. (Comments to the films of their creators are highly representative, these comments are always less interesting than the comment of Film Critics, and even the average viewer). This unconscious imprinting allows to fix those aspects of reality that require the later intelligent thinking in the image.

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