

Multi-Realist
Humanifes /
to

Bradford Gyori

Preamble: Multi- Realists paint

with perception. We employ all sorts of artistic techniques—cinematic, literary, sculptural, musical—but our medium is always the same. The pigments on our palette are different conceptions of reality. These competing “realities” are the values and beliefs of a diverse array of human beings. Rather than attempting to articulate a singular point of view, we juxtapose multiple *points* of view. There is nothing fixed and final in the ephemera of our art. We live in the margins, restlessly migrating between different hearts and minds. We are especially interested in perspectives seemingly distinct from our own.

Multi-Realists embrace a methodology of rigorous ego-annihilation, shuttling between poles; black and white, male and female, straight and gay, binary and nonbinary. In practical terms, this means attempting to inhabit the perspectives of complicated human beings who often look, act, speak and think differently than us,

striving to confront uneven power dynamics, unspoken assumptions, barriers of discrimination, attitudes of complacency, love, fatalism, mercy, and contempt. As with many things worth trying, such efforts are often fraught. The way is perilous, sometimes doomed to failure. Still, modest, incremental successes are achievable—moments where we manage to actually envisage a worldview different than our own, glimpsing horizons beyond the circumscribed precincts of tribal affiliations. This is the opposite of appropriation—the crass co-opting of cultural signifiers. Multi-Realism is a celebration of art’s greatest virtue, the ability to break through the barriers separating atomized individuals and truly connect.

Pledge:

We will risk empathy. We will strive to see the world through fresh eyes. We will try to hear and feel and think and taste and smell and intuit and scheme and dream from the perspective of someone who looks nothing like the reflection in the mirror.

“Death to the artist!” we shout. “Long live the artistS—plural!” For us, owning our own voice is not a process of contraction, an act of distilling down to some implacable “essence.” Instead, it is a process of expansion, of proliferating the manifold multitudes that comprise

us, celebrating their contradictions and spreading the umbrella wide enough to envelope even the most exotic outliers. “Long live the voiceS—multiple!” we cheer. “Long live the impulse to vault the vertiginous gap between estranged souls!”

Multi-realists seek to feel the despair of the misrepresented, the normalized, the homogenized, the outcast and the privileged, to radically rethink distinct and particular truths, pushing them together, pulling them apart. We are determined to tear down shrines to the so-called “authentic,” “legitimate,” and “hardwired,” refusing to consider any gift or flaw the exclusive province of a particular gene pool or cabal. We are the unmoored, the entitled and the impoverished, the foolish and the wise, the alienated from any organizing sensibility. We are the untrustworthy, the buzzing hive of the meta-voice. We have no time for singular geniuses, rejecting their so-called authority. Decoupled from the pretense of consensual reality, we do our best work outside the lines, in that moment when similarity and difference are most pronounced. Rejecting the notion of omniscience, we cut from one reality to another without pretending to know “The Whole Truth.” Our breakfast is a gumbo, not a porridge. We celebrate rough edges, burning the seamless

robe and donning a tornado of rags. We defy the limits of the sovereign self. Compassion is our universal solvent, dissolving tidy barriers. We are hateful, loving, respectful, insulting, and reverent. We sing harmony and dissonance with equal gusto. We poke and prod and stroke and stab, but never spoon-feed or handhold, letting the audience decide what they finally believe—which aspects of our flawed polyphonic rants they find most credible.

We research other perspectives, seek out alternative points of view. Then, starting from a baseline of shared humanity, we must imagine ourselves into skins of different colors, equip ourselves with different genitals, and taste different flavors of love. We depict these things as best we can, given our limited life-experiences, our cultural biases, our blissful ignorance. Could anything be harder? Fortunately, before, after, and during each attempt, we can seek guidance and feedback, asking for help, finding ways to honor our fellows, not by portraying them as superhuman saints, but by recognizing their vices and virtues, their stupidity and brilliance, their cruelty and kindness.

Meanwhile, we must stop talking, refrain from defending opinions that were never really ours. Multi-Realists must make mistakes and listen to objections, take on board the valid ones, fall short again and again, but

then slowly, clumsily, determinedly bridge a tiny bit of the yawning chasm between you and me, us and them, object and subject, Other and each other. We must celebrate this tendency to connect despite our countless differences, defending the impulses as artistically valid, but also recognizing it is the necessary precondition for the boldest creative leap of all: the conception of life.

So, when it's time to speak, yes, we will get it wrong, stop, reconsider, redirect, take on new information, then listen more, listen and consider what's at stake as, steadfastly, we will complicate the set of demographic characteristics that might otherwise narrowly classify us. Happily, no tool can measure the breadth and depth of our understanding. Some will always view us narrowly but may the limitations they discern define us only inasmuch as we manage to magnificently transcend them.

We are the many.

Postscript:

The Multi-Real takes on many forms. Our visuals portray competing and complementary values and beliefs collaged within the same pictorial space. Our cinema crosscuts between POV shots, transmigrating souls with each edit. Our written texts feature multiple narrators each vying to claim the story as their own. Our game play mechanics are

multiplayer multimodal, multi-goal-state mosaics. Our songs are matrices of melodic counterpoints articulating different sensibilities. None of this mushrooming complexity, however, comes at the expense of clarity. A worthy objective: focus without oversimplification, simplicity with nuance. An effective multi-real work allows differing sensibilities to cohere around a single crystalline theme or structure, a marriage of contraction and expansion, organization, and entropy. Its ultimate expression: a single jewel reflecting all others.