2. Little Green Sprout

In the dystopian world depicted in the 2008 animated film WALL-E,[1] the population of uninhabitable dead Earth has for generations been relocated to off-planet stations where the humans have turned into blimps because they spend their lives on "hover chairs" (floating chaise lounges) constantly consulting a screen to access satisfaction of their every need.[2] Earth life seems to have slipped completely from their memories. On Earth, only the little trash compacting and stacking robot WALL-E (Waste Allocation Load Lifter Earth-Class) seems to have a nostalgic connection with this old earth life tellingly evident by his obsession with watching old faded Technicolor song and dance movies on a rickety VCR player. His home is a metal storage container that is part of some huge broken transport vehicle in which he has collected treasured items from the junk he compacts—a Rubik's Cube, hub caps, spoons and forks (also a "spork"), strings of decorative colored lights, and a variety of spare parts for himself.

The off-planet station routinely and automatically, it seems, sends to Earth "Extraterrestrial Vegetation Evaluators" or EVEs to determine if the Earth has returned to habitability. One day while doing his daily junk compacting work, WALL-E finds a *little green sprout* growing in a crumpled boot in an old refrigerator and takes it "home" to add to his collection of treasures. Shortly thereafter EVE, a streamlined white egg-shaped female robot with lovely electric blue eyes, is left on Earth to scan for vegetation. WALL-E instantly falls in love with her. After a rocky and literally explosive beginning, they become friends and WALL-E takes her home to see his stuff. When EVE encounters the *little green sprout,* it triggers her "directive," an automatic protocol to return to the space station with this evidence of Earth's

habitability. Unable to bear the loss of his new friend, WALL-E hitches a ride as a stowaway on the ship returning EVE to the space station.

The AI captain seems to represent the conservatism that detests change and adventure and it seeks to destroy the little green sprout so that the earth can be simply forgotten. Yet the human captain becomes inspired by the hope raised by the little plant and he rediscovers, with the help of old video, things like "ho-downs" and "dancing" and "agriculture." "You can plant a seed and water it and grow food, like pizza!" he says with amazement. With the help of WALL-E and EVE, despite his debilitating obesity, the captain overpowers the autopilot and the automatic protocol to return to earth takes the ship back. The film ends with the "greening" of the earth having begun.[3]

The *little green sprout* is associated with both nostalgia for a destroyed past, the past characterized interestingly by music and dancing, as well as with hope for a future Earth-based life, a garden planet where plants grow. The little green sprout is the only remnant of Eden, the garden; the only remnant of god's creation rather than the rubbish attesting to human making. It represents the possibility of ongoing self-sustaining life; life that has a cycle that includes renewal. It represents a world in which dead things give rise to living things—an ongoing seemingly eternal life cycle—rather than an ever-increasing accumulation of junk. The film contrasts "green" makings with human makings that produce stuff that inevitably turns into junk, trash that piles up and won't go away, an industrial kind of making that is inseparable from pollution and destruction. Throughout much of the film it is primarily WALL-E, the trash compactor, and his little cockroach friend who display the greatest human qualities. As with Star Wars' R2D2, little trashcan-looking beeping robots have shown time and again that often they can capture the core characteristics of humanity better than androids and maybe even humans.

This theme of human makings that seems to invariably eventually plague their maker is a powerful refrain resounding throughout human history; it has an undeniably religious aspect. It is not so much humans achieving or creating eternal life; it is getting rid of what seems the eternal presence of stuff that humans create. At present, we are mostly concerned with what to do with the stuff made—scrap/throw away/landfill versus recycle/compost—yet more fundamentally it should be the question of "making." Perhaps unexpected is how commonly "making" has a religious dimension or aspect associated with it. Strong in Western religious traditions, but also common to religious traditions throughout the world, is the distinction between godly creations (the world, life, humans, plants and animals) and human makings (progenitive and biological but especially mechanical and technological; also, sometimes magical). There is a long and pervasive identification of all completely original acts as being necessarily, or perhaps appropriately, only attributable to gods. Any completely originative human act is thus one comparable to god; as, for example, in the technological (rather than two-parent biological) creation of sentient beings (the dreamed goal of making AI/robots). While we would likely no longer indicate this understanding of making as an explicit belief (I'll turn to this history later); to identify human makings on the order of manufacturing sentient beings as godly or godlike is routinely implicated (not always overtly) even in the most popular contexts. We are gesturally formed in the terms of this connection.

The *little green sprout* turns up again in the 2015 George Miller dystopian film "Mad Max: Fury Road." Imperator Furiosa (Charlize Theron) driving an enormous black tanker truck and trailer, the War Rig, abandons her contracted designation, where she was to procure gasoline and bullets, in order to pursue her own mission. Unknown to Immortan Joe (Hugh Keays-Byrne), the tyrant who controls the Citadel where the raggedy remnants of humankind live,

Furiosa has hidden Joe's Wives, five young beauties, in her rig and the whole female gang strike out to find "the green place," Furiosa's childhood home. Of course, upon learning of the rebellion, Immortan Joe sends his crazy gang in their cars pieced together from found scraps to bring the women back. Max (Tom Hardy) is an independent kind of guy and has attempted escape from, but is recaptured by, Joe's posse of mechanics. Max spends the first long section of the chase strapped to a metal cross on the front of a car that is pursuing the fleeing women. A metal grill attached to his head covers his nose and mouth, an echo of the chastity belts—Joe's mechanical control—the women liberate themselves from with bolt cutters. A tube tapping a vein in Max's neck supplies a flow of blood to enhance the critically ill Nux (Nicholas Hoult), the crazy this-is-a-good-day-to-die "warboy" driver of one of the chase cars. Max finally escapes and becomes uncomfortable companion to Furiosa; yet, the small extent to which he is savior to the women, he is a reluctant, almost accidental, one. And, compared with the Mel Gibson Max, this Max is not all that Mad.

The bulk of the film is an action-packed chase across the desert with the ambiguous destination being Furiosa's childhood home vaguely identified as "the green place." Yet when they finally arrive the only remnants of her childhood community are the Vuvalini of Many Mothers—a few "lovely old bikie chicks" as the film's production manager affectionately described them—a small tribe of matriarchs. They knew Furiosa's mother and recall Furiosa's childhood capture. The eldest, The Seed Keeper, lovingly protects a satchel containing a few remnants of their old home; and coincidentally the material promise for their viable future. Among these items is a packet of seeds for various plants and a tiny pot made of the skull of a small animal in which grows a *little green sprout*, the only green thing in the entire film outside the gardens and greenhouses maintained by Immortan Joe atop the buttes at the Citadel.

One of the few conversations in the film more than a phrase long occurs just before the War Rig arrives at the place of the Vulvalini. Max is in the passenger seat, Furiosa is driving the War Rig; the wives are in the back seat sleeping.

Max: "How do you know this place even exists?" [referring to "The Green Place"]

Furiosa: "I was born there."

Max: "Why did you leave?"

Furiosa: "I didn't. I was taken as a child. … Stolen."

Max: "Have you done this before?"

Furiosa: "Many times. Now that I drive a War Rig this is the best shot I'll ever have."

Max: "And them?" [pointing to the back seat where the wives are sleeping]

Furiosa: "They are looking for hope."

Max: "What about you?"

Furiosa: "Redemption."

It isn't accidental, I think, that this conversation occurs shortly before they find the Vulvalini, just before they learn that, without knowing it, they had already traveled through what once was "the green place." It had become an eerie dark poisoned swamp where a few people crept about on stilts to avoid contact with the toxic water trying to glean a morsel of sustenance; a desolate dark place inhabited by crows. Now, only this one little green sprout seems to hold any "hope" at all; yet there is no garden in which to plant it. The little green sprout is the remnant of an almost forgotten past; a past now gone due to human destructive behavior, but also an idealized past of the Garden of Eden, the symbol of original hope and futurity as well as the symbol of sin and temptation and knowledge.

Perhaps redemption for Furiosa means both to regain something in exchange for payment as well as in the more religious sense of being saved, being absolved of the sins of her storied life. Furiosa seems to have paid dearly for her plight to freedom; not the least being the loss of her arm. As she seeks to redeem the life stolen from her she represents, in some sense, dystopian humanity lost in the desert. At the end of the film, being raised up—literally hoisted up on a giant platform—may be the culmination and affirmation of her redemption.

In both of these popular films the *little green sprout* is a sign of hope, yet also a token of an almost forgotten past. It invokes remembrance of things past and nostalgia for the world of origins, for the Garden of Eden, for the presence of god's makings, for the innocence of clear boundaries. The *little green sprout* is a tiny living thing in the midst of vast worlds that have been overwhelmed by silicon (in Fury Road sand is everywhere, literally a silicon valley) and metal (WALL-E has a seeming endless job compacting and stacking metallic junk). The little green sprout as presented in both these films reminds us that the core of the modern revolution, to which Serres referred, is the technology that transformed agriculture making, farming, into an industry rather than a way of life where kids played with and tend farm animals and knew, beyond plastic wrapped packaging, where their food comes from.

These two films present a remarkable portrayal of the female figures who are the caretakers of the little green sprout and are thus, more so than any other characters in these films, associated with hope for a future fecund world. These are not mothers, bearers of future life; they are non-childbearing women. EVE is a robot and though she clearly has gender she is not sexual. Despite the sweet intimacy of the romance that leads WALL-E and EVE to hold hands and dance in space, theirs is still a robotomance and we do not expect them to produce little EVEs and WALL-Es. In Fury Road, the Seed Keeper is a crone, an elder, a survivor and even

though the group of women is called Vulvalini of Many Mothers, there are no youth, no babies, no men. In these two films the image of Eve is a new Eve who is not a mother; she is a farmer, yet one in search of fertile land. The new Eve, I'll call her Tomorrow's Eve, may refer to a leitmotif common in many forms among stories and technologies across this history. I will use this name to refer to this cluster of made figures and the ideas and issues raised by their existence. I imagine her as taking many forms, appearing in both genders.

This little green sprout also reminds us that in the vast cold universe seemingly everywhere void of life, only on Earth and, at that, only in the thinnest and most precarious and tenuous layer can the little green sprout survive; only here in the incalculable vastness did, as the stories tell, God choose to make life. We are reminded that we are turning increasingly to Silicon Valley and all things oil (energy and plastic) and metal to pull ourselves into our future and alarmingly we are already developing some of the pronounced physical characteristics of the blimpish off-planet folks; perhaps we, like they, have forgotten how to dance.

It seems a bit surprising that as far back as the 1984,[4]—the year whose number was used by George Orwell in 1949 as the title of the most widely read of all dystopian novels, a time before the advent of The Google, The Amazon, and The Internet—the first "Terminator" film was made followed, in 1991, by its sequel "Terminator 2: Judgment Day." The films show us the possible consequences of our speeding trajectory into the future. The Terminator films show that advancing technology, Skynet, gained self-awareness (that is a sentient yet artificial intelligence) and took control of and destroyed most of humankind (an event commonly referred to as "singularity"). Only a small Resistance Movement comprised of a few tenacious humans has survived in that world of the future. Yet in these films no little green sprouts have survived; there is no hope. The only strategy is to invoke the time-travel introduced by H. G. Wells in

1895. But this strategy only displaces the conflict to a time in the past (roughly our present). Robots try to prevent, and later to protect, the future resistance that is understood to be dependent on the leadership of one young man, John Connor. To go back and change the past so that a different present (in our future) would occur is never a strategy with certain outcomes as at least a thousand books, films, and televisions shows have explored.

It is fascinating that today the development of AGI (artificial general intelligence, or human equivalent intelligence) and ASI (artificial super intelligence, or intelligence exponentially greater than human intelligence) are trending. Some of the greatest scientific minds—Stephen Hawking—and tech entrepreneurs—Bill Gates and Elon Musk—have expressed that their greatest fear is what they envision these technological advances might bring; one presumes death to the final sprout and domination of Terminator-robot soldiers. It is ironic I suppose that this is the imagined future of the current enterprise of their own making, makings that have made them billionaires and cultural icons. On the other hand, Ray Kurzweil,[5] and a whole movement he has inspired, eagerly anticipate these developments as nothing short of wonderful—utopia rather than dystopia—as the final full blooming of some cyborgian combination or amalgamation of machine and person-remnant that would seemingly finally render the little green sprout irrelevant. This is a cyberpunk world where one's experience is an apparently seamless amalgamation of cyberspace, androids, cyborgs, and pharmaceuticals. While the immortality and utopia of Kurzweil and his followers may be overly ambitious and optimistic, I believe that we are, as Dona Haraway discussed in 1995, quickly becoming enhanced and augmented beings, what I'll call *metahuman cyborgs*.[6]

The enduring popularity of robots and cyborgs and time travel has gained new and imaginative explorations by artists, philosophers, scientists, and the genius technical innovators

that so significantly shape our trends as well as our contemporary cultural identities. Surely, and this is of more importance, the interest is not simply a passing fancy of popular culture, it is rather based in concerns perhaps as old as is human existence and as large as are human efforts to comprehend human nature and the universe. Yet, the settings and characters in these contemporary explorations intimate that there is something unprecedented about the current processes; perhaps it is a blurring of fiction and technological reality. We find ourselves both amazingly and fearfully faced with the deepest concerns about what it means to be human, what it means to live on this planet Earth, what comprises our sense of the ultimate (Singularity, God, the unknown); old concerns indeed, yet they are given existential urgency because of a sense of what our current unprecedented capabilities might mean for what we are rapidly becoming or who we are unbecoming. These old and often classic encounters with the novel and the barely imaginable begin to give rise to the anxiety of crisis as we become aware that what was heretofore clearly fiction is rapidly broaching reality. We are sobered by the glimpse that we may be on the verge of forgetting who we are to the point that we no longer even feel nostalgic.

The issues we face, I am suggesting, are in a sense the ancient issues of makers, makings, and things made. In the beginning, it was God who created. According to one widely told and enduring story this making included the universe as well as, soon thereafter, the making of "man/male" created in "His," God's, image. In one version of the story, woman was made; yet she had no mother so she had no image of, model for, who she should be. Beyond the biblical traditions, there are countless other stories of creator gods; indeed, what characterize a god more than creating the world and people? Today, taking our human capabilities seriously, we dare imagine creating the self-aware robot, a contemporary and nonfictional version of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818, rev. ed. 1831) creature and the golem of Jewish folklore. Such

makings raise the issue of the classical view of religion, that is, that since god (gods) is the only true or legitimate maker of living things (we so commonly set aside women/mothers as somehow irrelevant or taken for granted), such human making of self-aware super-intelligent beings is an attempt at becoming god, or more likely the achievement fitting of a god, replacing the original makers, the Creators. Is ours the era of creation that ends religion? These are classic issues as old as Prometheus and Pygmalion, yet today there is an urgency born of the scientific/technological claim that the making of artificial intelligent robots is approaching this singularity, this unprecedented threshold, when humans can make in the same fashion as gods, even besting them. Such issues are of the greatest order of practical, philosophical, and religious importance.

The more interesting and important aspect of "makings" is perhaps not the current debate about the likelihood, possibility, and timing of such sentient superior-to-human makings, although this discussion seems to me currently center stage and often dominates. While I personally think that any seemingly serious engagement of this discussion betrays a severe lack of understanding of humanity and maybe also technology, that aspect of my objection isn't likely all that important. What is of greatest important is the shape and character of the discussion across time and cultures and its many faces at present. It is the much larger frame of discourse—the one that asks the big and ultimately unanswerable questions, Who are we? and What sort of being (or process) made us? and What is the nature and responsibility of our making?—that I believe offers the greatest interest and potential.

While these issues currently have vast traction in news and popular media—it seems discussions of intelligence, brains, robots are everywhere and popular—to my knowledge there is little awareness of the importance of these concerns among religious communities (especially in

the contemporary west, but I believe also worldwide) or even in the academic study of religion. I've found that women's and gender studies have some few important considerations of the topic, yet these concerns remain far from what this invariably gendered topic deserves given the broad incidence in popular culture. Religious conservatism, so widely influential today, seems inseparable from an unfriendly stance regarding most change and the concern with the consequences of change, particularly as brought about by evolution or human agency. In this prominent religious view, even the existence of such concerns, it would seem, would, along with evolution and climate change and the long history of the universe, be dismissed and denied. Certainly, the current persistent and bold consideration of so many aspects of these issues by Pope Francis is interesting. Yet there is a strong correlation of religious traditions, as broadly understood, with maintaining some constancy with what has been established in the past, the long past. Tradition (perhaps also "history") is typically more closely associated with maintaining constancy than it is with a sequence of interconnected developments; although I'd suggest that we couldn't imagine tradition without a sense of change. Perhaps this tunnel vision is a factor in the steady decline in recent years of religious affiliation especially among young people. Such a correlation is, of course, too broadly drawn, yet the positions of those in society that most strongly and publically identify their position as "religious" are without question those who are the more trenchant and change denying. It is noted how difficult it has been for Pope Francis to initiate in the Roman Catholic Church even modest change on social and environmental issues.

Boldly stated, the broadly recognized conservative tendency of religions is markedly in contrast with the wildly innovative tendencies of technology that have enmeshed themselves in nearly every aspect of contemporary life in cultures throughout the world. The worldwide span

is important to emphasize. While until recently the impact of rapid technological development was confined to the more advanced and wealthy cultures and countries; this correlation is rapidly shifting. With the approaching ubiquity of smart phones in cultures the world over, the concerns associated with these new makings are now global concerns. Given this situation there is worry (though mostly unacknowledged) as to whether religions, as they presently exist, will survive very far into the future as anything other than remnants of a former time—quaint rituals and poetic literature and memorable paintings and tourist visited monuments and architectural landmarks and a few outmoded marginalized odd communities bound by the shared gestures of the bygone; fossilized non-living representations of the little green sprout; not so different from a series of ceramic "Precious Moments" manufactured *en masse* in China sold by Hallmark. Many religious people today compartmentalize life so that the dictates, beliefs, and demands of their religions may coexist without apparent direct conflict with the prevailing beliefs and knowledge of contemporary societies, with the findings of science and technology and philosophy. While this strategy of compartmentalization obviously works for many, it is difficult to believe that the full creative potential of religion, as hopefully we might imagine it, is adequately achieved in this way. Those who are unable to embrace what is an often uncomfortable and perhaps secretly unacceptable develop compartmentalizing strategies that tend to gravitate either to a strict conservatism that demands a staunch literal application of dogmatic and ideological positions to all of life no matter how at odds it is with the most common sense knowledge of the contemporary world or they come to a full and often emotionally charged denial of religion while exploring a wide variety of alternative strategies to deal with what are and should be religious concerns. Surely an important challenge of our time is to birth new more interesting alternatives.

Despite this trajectory that seems to spell the end of religion as we have known it, we must acknowledge that this traditional conservative existence of religion, little changed in so many ways for centuries, continues to be at the heart of most of the wars in the world. Most of the existing violent conflicts in the world today as well as the stark divide among even the people of the modern West are frequently articulated in religious terms. Policy and attitudes on politics, climate, environment, human rights, marriage, gender, individualism, abortion, women's health, public health, race, citizenship, immigration, wealth, security, class, territory, country—all these and more—are frequently based on differences in religious ideology and worldviews; that is, the consequences of large groups holding tightly to quite opposing views, views shaped by their mostly unchanging religious ideas and practices. Religion deeply influences culture and history. Perhaps part of the appeal remaining in religion is the promise of stability in a world buffeted by accelerating change; surely this is fundamental to the Roman Church. At the individual and local levels, we tend to cling to the idea that religion is fundamentally "good" despite the undeniable evidence of its worldwide contribution to violence, conflict, strife, discrimination, hatred, and violation of human rights.

What is clear is that the radical shift of wealth and power that has occurred in the last quarter century has correlated with the advancement of the information age. The data mining companies that go by such names as Google and Facebook and Amazon (and now even Netflix) are extending their reach into every corner of the world. Such change is on an unprecedented order, certainly equivalent to Gutenberg yet occurring on an almost unimaginable timespace frame; immediately global. Remember the Bible was the first book printed by Gutenberg in 1454 or 1455. It seems incomprehensible that traditional religions whose strategy has tended to be maintaining stability can survive the current seemingly inevitable transformation of

worldsense. Some use the term "posthuman" to indicate the era we have already entered. While I'm not so fond of this term, the argument that we are rapidly changing who we are is a compelling one. At the very least we must seriously ask what re-imagination of religion must occur that it becomes a powerful and important and creative force contributing to the unfolding future.

It is not only religions that seem to be out of step with the rapidity of change in information technology and artificially intelligent robotics, it is also politics and the politics of the economy. In the seeming endless political discourse there is much discussion of the need for creating jobs and increasing wages for workers and for how wealth should be distributed, yet, while there is much discourse on outsourcing and illegal migrant labor among other things, politicians and economists typically do not much acknowledge that robots have already taken over many jobs formerly held by humans and that at present AI/robots are encroaching on managerial and research and writing and even fast food jobs, not just manufacturing. It is widely acknowledged, yet only by the few, that in the near future a significant portion of the human labor force will be displaced by robots and that the employment alternatives for such masses of former workers is bleak.[7] The consequences of a thriving economy with a huge segment of the labor force unemployable are of the greatest concern.[8]

I don't wish to join Singulatarianism following Ray Kurzweil's optimism that we will become immortal by 2045 (maybe simply because I probably won't make it to that date and I can barely entertain the idea of living forever as a 102 year old; I'd need more than immortality … something on the order of radical age regression … does anyone ever think of this aspect of immortality?) nor do I wish to join the religious conservatives that insist on the denial of all change that can't be justified by dogmatic literal ideology. Surely neither of these soils will

support the flourishing of the little green sprout. I'm most fascinated that today we find ourselves facing issues that demand knowledge of science and technology, but also of religion and philosophy and history and economics. These are all complementary both essential to and in many respects inseparable from one another. The point is that one cannot consider any one concern while ignoring the others. We find ourselves living at a time when we must be inspired by Janus to look both back over the long human and religious history while also imagining, with the greatest creativity and courage, the potential of our various trajectories into the future. Like Janus, we stand at a threshold and must look both directions at once; perhaps the only defensible way of being two-faced. Religion (the generic category) and religions (the specific historical cultural institutions and practices), no less than science, technology, and economics must re-imagine themselves so as to not only survive into the future but, all the more importantly, to also shape and determine it creatively and humanely. Religion and religions cannot do so without asking the most fundamental interrelated questions: What is religion? What is being human? What is making? What is gender? What is the relationship between maker and things made? What is experience? What is self-awareness? What is creativity? What is responsibility? What is so fundamental to our sense of religion that it seems invariably to include something radically other (gods, mythic creatures, ultimates, impossibles); something beyond limits and horizons and intelligibility and graspability? How can we address all these issues while fully embracing the importance of the current trends towards the future?

I do not believe that we should engage these questions with any expectations of finding answers, particularly easy or pat ones; such a motivation would most likely birth new intolerant ideologies. Indeed, one of the most important realizations I believe with which we must begin is that answers are ultimately neither satisfying nor creative. Answers halt and vacate vitality.

What we must comprehend is that to engage these issues, concerns, and questions is to appreciate that doing so is, in some sense, itself a religious action that is vitalizing, that is, an ongoing process that promotes the fullest engagement with living. I suppose I might be criticized as being a "vitalist," if there is such a thing, or a "humanist;" I wouldn't deny either, yet I want to explore, with reference to long and rich history, how religious traditions have commonly, perhaps distinctively, raised, rather than resolved, the confounding unanswerable questions about life and existence as surely as they have occasionally offered what some have found to be comforting and stabilizing answers. I suggest that the very distinctive markers of religion—those attached to the incomprehensibility of deities and other worlds and ultimates and radical others—function to create a vitalizing tension and opposition that can be understood as tonus (healthy tensions) and must be recognized as generative and creative.

It should be no surprise to us that religions have asked serious questions by invoking myths, dragons, angels, devils, and all manner of deities and creatures. Perhaps it will be a surprise that a leitmotif among most of these stories is "making and unmaking."[9] It may also be a surprise that to this list of traditional religious characters we now need add others—cyborgs, aliens, androids, robots, and metahumans—that are not so readily or immediately identified as religious. Popular culture is presently exploding with comic book superheroes; most of them are metahumans, that is, human beings augmented with super powers. Such enhanced humans have been around for a very long time (since Homer), yet the recent proliferation surely reflects a widely-felt fascination experienced throughout culture.

The image of the "little green sprout" is itself a complex "making." It makes a fundamental distinction between organic/natural and mechanical/artificial makings. Placed in the broad cultural history that is religiously informed, the "little green sprout" reminds of pristine

origins, the Garden of Eden ("the green place"), the nostalgia for a lost innocent past (the time of EVE, the little veggie-seeking robot's name), the longing for a connection with the original maker (God) and kinds of making (agriculture and farm, which a century ago was the core of most human life), the fragility of life, the quality of life correlating variously with radically different kinds of makings. For such a small fragile thing, the little green sprout invokes an exceptionally large milieu. There are makings and then there are makings; they are not all the same.

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[1] WALL-E, Director: Andrew Stanton, Writers: Andrew Stanton (original story), Pete Docter (original story) 2008.

[2] This image is an interesting illustration of Renaud Barbaras, *Desire and Distance: Introduction to a Phenomenology of Perception* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), distinction between "need" and "desire" in his discussion of "living movement." For Barbaras "desire" is the energetics of movement that always conjoin a "there" to a "here" without the there being associated with a need that might be satisfied. "Desire" is, as I understand it, something to pursue yet unattainable like a horizon. These floating bodies no longer "self move" because the movement is one for them and always in satisfaction of some need. These folks no longer have vitality.

[3]Disney/Pixar, "WALL-E Trailer," YouTube Video, 2:20, June 20, 2008, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alIq_wG9FNk

[4] Of course, it must not be forgotten that the original Mad Max trilogy all appeared from 1980 to 1985 and each in some ways tells the same story as does Fury Road. Indeed, much of the last half of the second film "Mad Max: Road Warrior" is a chase involving a huge armored tanker fuel truck driven by Max (Mel Gibson) out from a settlement in the midst of a hostile gang

driving reconstructed cars and motorcycles. As in Fury Road, it was all about the journey out and back, for Max turns the huge rig around during the chase and heads back to his point of origination.

[5] Ray Kurtzweil, *The Singularity is Near* (New York: Penguin, 2005).

[6] See chapter below titled "Cyborg/Metahuman: Future of Gender & Religion."

[7] I believe that the recent politics related to returning jobs to the coal industry is a case in point. Many believe that by ending environmental and safety regulations the jobs will return to coal industry. Yet, the greatest loss of coal-related jobs is due to the development of mining technology that has replaced workers that used pick and shovel with enormous coal mining robots. Nothing is going to remove this technology so that manual labor will return.

[8] This concern will be the subject the chapter "ToolsRUs"

[9] Of course, religion has often been considered as distinguished by cosmogony—cosmic creation—as evident in many seminal understandings of religion, Mircea Eliade's being obvious. See for example Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcourt, 1957). And in there are collections and considerations of these creation stories such as Charles Long, *Alpha Myths of Creation* (New York, G. Braziller, 1957). My concern herein is much broader and focused on human acts of making and unmaking.