PROLEGOMENA TO AN ETHIC FOR DIGITAL DECEPTION

RATIONALE FOR
AN ETHIC FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES OF ONTOGENESIS:
MODERNITY AND VISIOCENTRISM

by

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We are "Seeking permanence in the midst of what was only perpetually evanescent." Malcolm Lowry

Introduction

Western culture is characterized by its intense dedication, to, or what is called below "metaphysical obsession" with, realism. Mimesis (from the Greek mimeisthai, "to imitate") which involves mimicry, simulation, duplication, forgery, reproduction, presentation and re-presentation assumes an almost magical relationship between the copy and the original. This special and valued relationship has been called isomorphism, reification, haptification, and fiction. Mimesis is driven by a desire to control natural and supernatural states of affairs in the service of power interests and projected future scenarios. Essentially, material technology and sorcery share the same fundamental desire for control.

Perhaps the Neo-Marxist materialist Gyorgy Lukacs (1963, The Meaning of Contemporary Realism, London: Merlin) stated this metaphysical propensity of the West best when he argued that one must not "loose sight of" the fact that "realism" is a genre of fiction. What is betrayed here is the metaphysic of duality variously expressed as subject/object, top down/bottom up processing, primary and secondary qualities, synchronic/diachronic, internal and external states-of-affairs, intention and action, et cetera. However, this is not the metaphysic of all Western thought but specifically modern Western thought or "modernity," which means post-Renaissance Aristotelian realism (Kramer, 1997, Modern/Postmodern, Westport, CT: Greenwood). Avoiding metaphysical speculation, it must be appreciated that fiction is real too, having real consequences especially the genre of reified realism.

Co-Constutionality of Actual/Virtual

According to the fundamental law of signification, that of binary opposition, the identity/meaning of a thing is determined by what it is not. For instance, "up" is meaningless without "down." Likewise reality and fiction are co-dependent concepts. They are mutually exclusive but necessary to each other. When
an expert is trying to determine the authenticity of a painting which claims to be a Rembrandt, the expert can do so only by distinguishing, via differences, the fake from the real one. The fact that painting "x" is an authentic forgery is determinable if and only if the "original" is different. Therefore, "fiction" is just as "real" and necessary as "reality." Ontologically, they are equal and co-constituting (Kramer 1993a, "Understanding Co-Constitutional Genesis,"
Integrative Explorations: Journal of Consciousness and Culture, Vol. 1, No. 1, 41-47). Essentially, fiction is everything that is not real and vice versa. When one brackets this modern metaphysic, both are equally "real," meaning available for direct experience and investigation. The relationship between the two varies from culture to culture and it is this relationship which makes things mean at the most fundamental level. For knowledge, whether a thing is actual or virtual, real or fiction is an essentially important quality of its existence.

An Example: Forgery

Economies are communicative systems of exchange. Value is determined the instant of exchange. Value is a relationship. Value is not a thing like a behavioral service or material commodity but an interrelationship which itself has no spatial extension, color, weight, taste, smell, or other quality that could identify it as a material entity. Value like signification is the result of synthetic comparison which reveals relative difference. Difference is always valued. At the most fundamental epistemic level perception itself is dependent on difference. For instance, physiological tests wherein the muscles of the eye are paralyzed result in a state of blindness (nondistinction -- zero definition); because the neurotransmitter cells of the retina, the rods and cones, quickly become "exhausted" without spectral variation. Once the paralyzing agent wears off the continual tiny "jiggle" that eye muscles produce returns and so does sight. The same is true of smell, touch, sound, et cetera (Pribram, 1971, Languages of the Brain, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall).

Logic also dictates that perception demands difference (Berkeley, 1747; Nietzsche, 1885; Saussure, 1927). Perception of a phenomenon means to be able to identify it, and difference is logically necessary for identity. Difference, like other manifold dimensions such as space and time, while being presumed by various metaphysical systems including empiricism, is not a material thing but a relationship between things. Difference, as such, is available for direct description only to a synthetic analytic process that is avowedly antimetaphysical like Husserlian phenomenology. Otherwise, because difference is relational and not a material thing and as such is off limits to certain methodological prejudices, it must remain naively presumed.

The importance of a real (empirically present) "fake" and a "real" "original" or "authentic," "genuine" thing is evident
only through differential and relational analysis which is comparative (valuated). In order to identify one thing a "fake" and another the "authentic original" presumes a temporal and qualitative relationship between the two. One (the original) is usually valued over the other (the reproduction) because of the privileging of originality (prior creative impulse) or some metadiscursive valuation that makes the original "officially sanctioned" by "powers that be." Temporal priority with regards to "creative orginality" tends to mark the demarcation of status and credibility between a "real" painting (for instance) and a "reproduction." This of course already presupposes a linear concept of time.

FORGERY

As soon as paper currency was invented, forgery became a problem. The worth of bank notes is dependent on their exchange value which is a relationship between things interpreted to be equivalent. For instance, this chair is equal to three goats or this bond is equal to five thousand yen. Value is not fixed. While material things are presumed to be stable and predictable, relationships are in flux including relationships defined as causal. Causal relationships, like all other types, are not empirical things.

A "fake" bank note can have just as much value as a "real" one if the barker can exchange it for a commodity of comparable value. And that "value" remains indeterminate until the moment of transaction. Thus, there is an artist in New York City who draws money and barters his "art" for mass consumer goods. In such cases, the difference between his "money-art" and "real" money is deconstructed. The criteria of exchange value holds for both at the instant of the purchase. The major difference, which is a trivial material one, is that his money-art is not physically identical (in fact not even a close resemblance as his bills are drawn by hand) to "real" money. Furthermore the purchase relationship is deconstructed because it is not clear whether the local shop keeper who gives him two fans for one of his "fake" one hundred dollar bills is purchasing art or if art is purchasing fans. Barter does not presume a privileged position on either side of the equation. As his fame has spread, those merchants who have gotten wise can now sell one of his one hundred dollar money-art "bills" for much more "real" money than the cost of two fans.

Thus, a forged bank note can have just as much value as a "real" one (maybe even more) and this is precisely why some people risk punishment for forgery. In this case, the temporal line is deconstructed, reversed, insofar as his money-art came after the official government note and is a rough copy of the latter.

However, the more abstract concept of an economy, which is a system of constantly changing interrelationships, and its "strength," "health," "value," "stability," or "integrity" is dependent upon the "authenticity" of a standard unit of communicative exchange, the "official" currency. Faith in a currency economy can be ruined precisely because "fake" bank
notes are manifesting "real" values of exchange. This creates a situation where no notes have any "real" (exchangeable) value. For this reason, when the printer Benjamin Franklin started creating paper currencies for the various states in the United States, he struggled to come up with designs and production procedures that would be difficult to reproduce. One of his most successful designs was to use a real leaf as an imprint. However, his success was limited.

In the early United States, as each bank issued its own currency the "forger's art" advanced to match the printer's skills and enforcement of the privileged ("real") versions of bills was sporadic at best. By the time of the American Civil War fully one third of all bank notes in circulation were counterfeit. During President Abraham Lincoln's term a federal note was issued. This note was green on one side and so it came to be known as a "green back." Forger's "furiously duplicated" the new federal currency so that in the first two years of its existence one half of the "green backs" in circulation were counterfeit.

When currency was dissociated from a gold standard, it then became a market of its own, a free floating medium of value dependent on the logic of supply and demand which can be manipulated by central banks and the management of their reserves as well as the physical production of more or fewer bills. Bills can be taken out of circulation and destroyed in order to strength their value by making them rarer.

An additional problem emerges when money itself is treated as a commodity. When money is traded as a commodity of fluctuating value, as when one exchanges British pounds for United States dollars, one is really investing in the institution that issued the notes (the United States Government for instance). If the notes prove to be without exchange value, the issuing institution (a bank or government) looses its integrity. For this reason, that is to safeguard the economy (qua the United States Government including its military payroll), Lincoln created the Secret Service (and not to guard presidents). Today treasury agents aid the secret service in this endless battle to safeguard the fidelity (reality/unreality) of the United States currency.

With the advent of large stock photographic plates, forgers began to create full size negatives of money. The negatives would then be used to create etchings on photosensitive metal plates. Offset presses produced convincing forgeries. However, details still eluded reproduction especially at the stage of the actual printing. For instance, the treasury seal that is printed over the bill's denomination is very difficult to remove from photochemical negative images. However, today's laser scanning and digital information processing equipment make such manipulation a mere stroke of a key. Exact virtual reality copies stored electronically can then be printed by high resolution (high dot matrix count per unit space) multicolor laser printers. Color copiers make mass reproduction simple including tactile ink layering. Getting the correct color balance is no longer a great difficulty.
Consequently, the paper itself including the water mark (which appears only by projected rather than reflected light) and identifying weaves become the easiest determiners of difference. High rag (cotton) content paper does not fluoresce while the bleaching chemicals used to manufacture cheaper wood or bamboo pulp stock will fluoresce. Another way to foil counterfeiters is the use of secretly formulated inks which can be magnetized with the result that "real" bills generate distinctive magnetic patterns. But all of these tricks can be copied. The same problem of unauthorized reproduction plagues the credit card, stocks, licensing, and bond industries. Even holograms, which were suggested by Treasury personnel as many as twenty years ago to be used on paper currency but which failed the "crumple test," are widely forged.

Today, a vast amount of value/exchange (there is no metaphysical duality as is implied in the phrase "value is exchanged" as if "value" exists separate from process as a "thing") is communicated at nearly the speed of light via satellites as transactions take the form of pure electronic current. With enough expertise, it is theoretically possible that economic transnational terrorists could exactly reproduce security codes and log on to the ebb and flow of value/exchange which amounts to a financial conversation occurring 22,300 nautical miles above the equator in geostationary orbit. Since value is the essence of economies and since value is not a physical thing, it does not take great physical power to carry out "white collar" crime. Because they are basically very simple, the signals that are transnational finance could themselves be exactly reproduced or altered with the result that the difference between Real real and real fake would be very difficult to detect. The spatial origination of the pirate signal, and the temporal priority of the original signal may be the best, if not only, means of detection. Generally, this deception detection problem visits all information that can be digitized and reconstituted including audio and video messages.

Expression as Ontogenesis

"Ontogenesis" is a compound term derived from the Greek on (stem ont-) meaning "being," and the term "genesis" which is Latin from Greek meaning "generation," "birth," "origin." Combined, the term "ontogenesis" means the origin of being/meaning. It designates virtually all cultural, as opposed to natural, phenomena including technologies, ideologies, sciences, philosophies, rituals, mythologies; everything conceived by the human mind and expressed (Kramer, 1992, "Facts and Justifications: Understanding Co-Constitutional Genesis.") Public lecture delivered to the students and faculty of the Saint Kliment Ohridsky University of Sofia, Sofia, Bulgaria, Dec. 9). Contrary to religio-mystical discourses nature cannot be said to have a beginning or end because neither is within the realm of human experience. Cultural phenomena, on the contrary, are commonly seen to be created and to pass away.

"Expression" means the physical manifestation of desire.
"Manifestation" is more accurate than to say the "mediation" of desire. This is so because "mediation" presumes a metaphysical separation between some hypothetical "internal" and "external" "states" and a need for a medium to "connect" them. All such metaphysical speculation is bracketed herein in favor of direct experience of expression. For instance, Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant struggled with the Western metaphysics of fragmentation whereby the perception of a thing was claimed to be different from the thing itself. Both failed to overcome this problem which Edmund Husserl called senseless "metaphysical speculation." This metaphysical speculation however remains the central error of conventional empiricism which continually posits an "external" world that is presumably distinct from an "internal" world. Since this is the dominant metaphysic today Husserl's student Volkmann Schlick would later call empiricism "metaphysics gone virulent."

The problem is this: according to Kant perception is the only phenomenon we have direct access to. The *ding an sich* or "thing-in-itself" "out there" remains in principle and practically indeterminate (only partially known) or worse unknowable. Perception is, as Francis Bacon also argued, fraught with distortion. My IQ, my eyesight, the limitations of my logic and observational technologies, the limitations of my knowledge including the very terminologies I use, et cetera are not to be confused with the "thing-in-itself" "out there." The contentious binary opposition between inner and outer heralds the fundamental and identifying prejudice of modernity, spatial metaphysics (physical extension -- materialism/behaviorism) (Kramer, 1997).

The problem inherent with this dualistic metaphysic, and which is addressed adequately (courageously and logically) only by Husserlian phenomenology, is this: how can one know that one's perception is "distorted" if one cannot in principle have direct and perfect access to the so called "thing-in-itself" so that a comparison between the perception and the "thing perceived" can occur? "Distortion" as such is a comparative phenomenon.

"Comparison" presumes a synthetic process (intertextual and interpersonal communication) which integrates all kinds of data including; "sensational" (that from the so-called "senses") memorial, logical (categories and criteria), abstract, associative, et cetera. If I cannot have direct experience of the thing-in-itself, what Friedrich Nietzsche, in Thus Spoke Zarathustra (Second Part) has called "impaculate perception," then knowledge can be said to be neither absolute nor probable because I cannot compare the thing-in-itself with my perception of it. Every measure of probability presupposes zero and one hundred percent metaphysical certitude. Neither Platonic absolutism nor Aristotelian relativism make sense unless they are pitted against each other as competitors which means that each metaphysic relies on the other for signification (binary opposition). Probabalism and absolutism are discourses, positions taken in a struggle about what is real (knowable). They consist of nothing more than refutational statements which
must assume the other in order to have significance. However, each "mere philosophy" has had very far reaching practical/ethical consequences.

Unless one insists on doing metaphysics, all one has is direct, meaning personal experience. The problem here is that experience itself is outlawed by the dualistic metaphysical school of empiricism precisely because it is personal ("subjective"). Hence, as Husserl pointed out, empiricism is illogical (self-contradicting) like all other metaphysical discourses. To escape solipsism, which empiricism must assume because all direct experience is personal, one must as Husserl maintained, communicate (conceptualize, compare, discuss, debate, interpret, et cetera). Before either Husserl, Edward Sapir, or Benjamin Whorf, Nietzsche, in The Gay Science (Section 354 "On the Genius of the Species"), argued that consciousness is a product of the need and process of communication, of language.

And before Ludwig Wittgenstein, he also argued against the possibility of a so-called "private language." Thus, the self and the world of meaning constitute a single process which is hermeneutically transpersonal, a claim also made by Mikal Bakhtin (1981, The Dialogic Imagination, Austin, TX: U of Texas Press). Objectivity is really intersubjective agreement.

The mathematicians and philosophers of science Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead concerned themselves with this problem narrowing it down to the question of whether a category statement must include itself in order to have apodictic force (to be absolutely true). For Husserl, direct experience (without speculation about its provisional status -- its invisible origin causal or otherwise), is the only acceptable, indeed the only available, source of knowledge (Husserl, 1913, Ideas: Wittgenstein, 1969, On Certainty, Oxford, England: Basil Blackwell). Logical comparison of what Husserl called "adumbrations," or variations of how a thing appears, is the only path to anything like "objectivity." Access to various perspectives is vital to the growth of knowledge. Neither facts nor objectivity are simple phenomena but are demonstrated to be complex communicative constructs. Comparison is communicative even if only intrasubjectively. But for a claim to achieve the status of "objective" knowledge it must be intersubjectively and critically scrutinized. Findings must be compared. This is the communicative basis of accuracy, reliability, and validity. Even accuracy can be determined only through multiple observations and comparisons.

Expression and Communication

"Communication" is not the same as simple "expression." Communication always involves interpretation of intent. If one claims a failure to communicate despite expressive effort, what is meant is that intention and interpretation do not correspond sufficiently for a so-called "communion of minds" to occur. Such statements as "Are you with me," "Do you follow," and "Do you understand" express queries about the degree of this correspondence between intent and interpretation. They are
metadataiscursive inquiries about the status of the common ground of communication, the subject-matter the speakers/viewers presumably share in the form of a conversation (scientific or otherwise). I would argue that in virtually all venues of conversation the conversants presume that they are discussing a state-of-affairs which is knowable.

The Princeton anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973, The Interpretation of Cultures, NY: Basic Books) equates culture with communication precisely because communication is an expression of effort to manipulate the world. Manipulation of natural and supernatural forces is culture. However, expression is a more appropriate term than communication. Expression is essentially an expenditure and modulation of energy, power/desire. Expression can encompass miscommunication and disinformation. Modulation is manifest intention. Desire or motive, as Arthur Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Kenneth Burke have argued, is the potential or impulse/compulse for the will-to-communicate. Like the impulse to reach with one's hand, speech and plastic expressions such as sculpture and music are gestures. They are the physical condensation of action: manifest desire (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, Phenomenology of Perception, London: Routledge & Keagan Paul). Expression is premised upon desire for control and the making of something.

In this sense, communication is far more complex than merely "downloading" information from one brain to another, which is the model presupposed by the correspondence theories of truth and communication. According to this consensus model, if we are communicating "well," then my intention, my meaning or "thought image" should "appear" in my interlocutor's brain exactly as it does in my brain. Despite this popular myth, this correspondence/consensus model is hopelessly simplistic and also untestable. Thus, we have the postmodern claim that all reading is "misreading" (deMan, Paul, 1971, Blindness and Insight, NY: Oxford UP), or what the Nietzschean Jacques Derrida (1982 Dissemination, Chicago, U of Chicago Press) has called an infinitude of grafts. But Kramer (1997) demonstrated that this too is indeterminate. Once again, if I cannot claim to have "immaculate perception," then all claims of absolute relativism and "distortion" are senseless. What we have is a world of indeterminate meanings which, as Nietzsche (and later Richard Rorty) argued, are more or less pleasurable, useful, meaningful.

Communication is manifest desire to make something from nothing. That something may be a skyscraper, a dance, a "point" in an argument, or a "line" of reasoning. Spatial expressions such as "point" and "line" reveal the metaphysical prejudice which dominates the post-Renaissance (modern) Western world and its modes of communication (Gebser, 1949; Kramer, 1992; also see Ong, 1982, Orality and Literacy, NY: Methuen; Mcluhan, 1962, The Gutenberg Galaxy. Toronto, U of Toronto P).

No expression is without valuation/meaning: interpretation. As noted above, perception requires limitations which constitute distinctions between things. "Definition" (identity) whether in film stock, a television screen, or semantics
generally, means the ability to perceive adjacent "objects" as separate and distinct. Hence the necessary connection between identity and difference. Perception is more than mere stimulus. Every human activity can be seen as "a statement" rather than a "noise," or mere "object." "Culture" is what is not "nature," in fact "nature" is a cultural construct; some cultures/languages do not have a corresponding word for "nature" in the Western sense, and therefore do not, by reverse logic, have "culture" as a distinct subject-matter available for study (Kramer, 1992, Consciousness and Culture, Westport, CT: Greenwood). Cultural studies, cultural anthropology, and social sciences in general exist only in communities which have the ideas "culture" and "society." Even the signifying of naturally occurring phenomena as being "sublime," "beautiful," "awesome," "monotonous," et cetera, is a process of identification/differentiation. Expression as physical modulation can be categorized as architecture, art, ceremony, literature, "every-day life" behavior (lebenswelt), law, and so forth.

According to Jean Gebser (1949) everything which is a product of human effort is a "civilizational expression" (p. 3). Civilizations and their cultures are produced and maintained as communicative phenomena. Cultures are systems of arbitrary signs (semiotic constructs). They are expenditures of energy, often described as "struggles." The "human drama" is essentially the conflict of competing desires and interpretations. It is senseless to argue about the truth-value of desires. In so far as it can be said that a desire exists (is expressed) it is real. Expressed value judgements made about desired paths of action manifest what are often competing interests (Habermas, 1968, Knowledge and Human Interest, Boston: Beacon Press). Thus politics and war, like all other categories of human action, are forms of communication. In the service of competing interests the behavior of deception is often expressed.

Deception

The term "deceit" is traceable from middle English back to old French back to the Latin deceptus meaning to "misrepresent." Re-presentation, presumes a stable and separate (from awareness) reality that can be known and presented more or less accurately via the comparison of adumbrations. As noted above, to claim to base knowledge on a metaphysic that presumes that there is something beyond awareness is sheer metaphysical speculation. A stable reality can be contrasted to what is provisional, contingent, temporary, transient, or evanescent. All representations are pro-visional but real (the stress on the eye as the organ of truth is evinced in all Indo-European languages see Gebser 1949; McLuhan with Quintin Fiole and Jerome Agel, 1967, The Medium is the Message, NY:Bantam; Kramer, 1992). The eye is the organ of physical extension -- space -- and it becomes the preferred sensational source of information for the predominate post-Renaissance metaphysic. Modernity is marked by a sudden (beginning around 1200 A.D.) stress on space as such,
its measurement, exploration, exploitation, architectural creation, depiction in landscape painting, free-standing sculpture, and rational perspectivally "correct" graphic representation in art and technical drafting, et cetera (Kramer, 1992). The first expressions of space and reason (extensive measurement -- calculation) appear in ancient Greece. "Renaissance" means rebirth and what was reborn was precisely the classical mode of seeing the world as fundamentally spatial -- physically causal -- rational.

With the rebirth of this attitude, mimesis was reborn as the most valued modus of prediction and control. Mimesis manifested the drive for ever more accurate simulations of the world through painting, sculpting, literary description, ceremony, mathematics, et cetera. With the advent of photography, representational art found itself in a crisis until it shifted to nonmetaphysical purposes. The mathematician Husserl described the preferred language of simulation the mathesis universalis. He went on to demolish the dualistic metaphysics which states that a language is not a thing-in-itself but merely a "copy" of reality. Husserl rejected as metaphysical thinking, discursive distinctions between first and second order realities and primary and secondary qualities. Rather, he argued that linguistic structuration participated equally (ontologically speaking) in the world (view -- with "view" implying a provisional status to a "reality"). Indeed, mathematics came to be preferred over the arbitrariness of the contingent world of direct experience. Later Marshall McLuhan would similarly argue that the medium is itself the message.

While mathematics has proven to be a powerful manifold in its own right, television has now emerged as a very powerful mimetic process. The modern mentality is obsessed with both mathematics and television for the same reason -- a desire to escape temporal and spatial constraints (Kramer, 1993, "The Origin of Television as Civilizational Expression," In K. Haworth, J. Deely & T. Prewitt (Eds.), Semiotics 1990. NY: UP of America). The modern mentality has been driven to create impressive mathematical manifolds and equally impressive electronic communication networks in the service of something more than mere simulation. The desire is to identify with, or to be identical with, the subject-matter be it a character, a story, or a state-of-affairs.

Television and other visual media are powerful because it is assumed by viewers that one need not have a skill, to be literate, in order to interact with them and recognize the truth. This is because television does not audibly or literally tell the audience via symbols about a situation, but instead it is assumed that television presents the situation itself, directly to the audience for their own sensational scrutiny without any intervening influences. While a symbol like the word "tree" "stands in for" the thing with bark and leaves, a sign stands only for itself (Kramer, 1997; Kramer & Ikeda, 1998,

For instance, a person who believes in the healing powers of an amulet will be very upset if it is stolen or lost. In the case of magic consciousness, which does not assume a metaphysical separation which symbolism does, the amulet does not merely "stand for" a mystical healing power, it directly manifests the power. Seeing has the power of facticity. Seeing is presumed to be self-evident. Seeing is believing.

Identity makes deception total. The ontological unity of the emotionally driven magic world can be expressed by the simultaneity of relationships that are neither logically nor causally rational as such; pars pro parte (a part for a part), totum pro toto (all for all), totum pro parte (the whole for the part), and pars pro toto (the part for the whole). The magical power to transcend the here and now, to be at the wreck of the Titanic, to laugh or cry with an athlete or character actor, to be in Tien a men Square, or on the surface of the moon (live) while at the same time sitting in one's living room, identifies the power of television. Television is "retribalizing the world" (McLuhan). Gebser (1949) calls this a deficient slide back into magic consciousness. Kramer (1993c, "Mass Media and Democracy, In J. Murphy & D. Peck (Eds.) Open Insitutions: The Hope for Democracy. Westport, CT.: Praeger, 77-98) has suggested that the domination of political television campaigning by emotional, rather than rational discourse, may herald a "third sophistic." Walter Ong (1982, Orality and Literacy, NY: Methuen) and Neil Postman (1985, Amusing Ourselves to Death, NY: Penguin) have argued that "typographic man," who had to deal with grammar (logic) and sequences of narrative logic in the form of written texts, is more rational than videographic man.

Simply because modern scientific rationality has spawned fantastic communication technologies does not mean that the mass population is any more rational than it was in the past. As Einstein and Schweitzer argued, technological progress is not the same as human progress. The montage of logically unrelated images that endlessly pass before the viewer "works" like Freud's definition of "dream-work." Television and most images work omnidirectionally by emotional association rather than by logical or causal (linear) relationship (Eric Havelock, 1963xxx; Ong, 1982; McLuhan, 1962, The Gutenberg Galaxy. Toronto, U of Toronto P; Tony Schwartz, 1973, The Responsive Chord, Garden City, NY: Anchor Books; Judith Williamson, 1978, Decoding Advertisements, London: Marion Boyars; Kramer, 1988).

Advertising mostly works this way. The juxtaposition of a pretty girl with a bottle of scented detergent (shampoo) has no logical relationship. The spatial juxtaposition however, the fact that they simply appear together, triggers arational associations so that the product becomes identified with the face. T. S. Eliot ("Hamlet" in Selected Essays, NY: Faber and Faber, 1932: 145) described this structural "linking" as an "objective corelative" whereby a set of objects, a situation, or a chain of events are put into a form that places them in
apposition with each other thus generating an immediate and specific emotional association. In commercial media, the overall textual and contextual process of "flow," Postman (1985) calls the "now this" world view whereby a narrative can be interrupted every fifteen minutes by a totally unrelated set of images (an advertisement) without apparently driving the viewer crazy. Thus a report about suffering in Bosnia is juxtaposed with an advertisement for carpeting or a vacation Cruise. Why? The "reasons" are not apparent in the images themselves. All images are presented as being of equal importance and validity. Humans are sense makers even if it is illogical. In discussing magic consciousness and identity Gebser says:

The effectiveness of such interchangeability is perhaps most strikingly demonstrated in the vicarious sufferings experienced in the course of ritual sacrifice. Exchange (Tausch) -- in the realm of magic -- is by no means deception (Tauschung); it is rather the expression of the genuine validity of "equals."

In this equal validity of the whole and the part, two additional basic features of the world of magic emerge. These consist of equal treatment and equal significance, without differentiation. Equal treatment brings with it what we may call thinking by analogy or association, which is less "thinking: than it is a purely accidental association based on analogies. Here too lie the roots of sympathetic equal treatment which magic man is able to mete out to everything which is, or even seems to be, similar. Herein lies the reason why magic man feels things which seem to resemble one another as "sympathetic to," or "sympathizing with," one another. He then proceeds to connect them by means of the vital nexus -- not the causal nexus (Gebser, 1985: 50; emphasis added).

The desire is to go beyond mere simulation with its mimetic (dualistic) metaphysic to pure identity. Television technologies have been pushed to become a "living color," "real time live," "high definition," "eye witness" to life. The modern prejudice which strongly favors the eye (the "show me" epistemic bias), is revealed by survey after survey that shows that television is the "most trusted," "most accurate," "most honest," "most reliable," source of news (Comstock, et al., 1978, Comstock, G.A., S. Chaffee, N. I. Katzman, M.E. McCombs and Donald F. Roberts. Television and Human Behavior. NY: Columbia UP; The Annual Roper Organization Surveys).

The unmistakable trend is that visually sensational media like television and billboards, because of their visual presence, is leaving all older media behind. This is so because seeing is presumed to be free from interpretation/distortion. As slight-of-hand artists have known for a very long time, this distinctly modern faith, which has been called "viseocentrism" by Kramer (1988, Television Criticism and the Problem of Ground:
Delivered at Crossing the Disciplines: Cultural Studies in the 1990's Conference. University of Oklahoma, October 21, Norman; 1993b; 1997) (as compared with Derrida's notion of "phonocentrism"), makes the modern very vulnerable to deception.
The greater the faith, the greater the deception. For this reason, the "magician" invites her audience to check up her sleeve and to "watch closely." The greater the scrutiny the more amazing the "effect."
However, audiences who attend "magic shows" know they are being "tricked." But when the source of the visual information claims to be "authentic," to have no other motive than to inform the audience, then they will suspend judgment and be all the more susceptible to delusion. It is a moral duty of a slight-of-hand artist to not lie, to not claim to really have supernatural powers, to not aggrandize herself. By stark contrast, competitive television news programs, and other visual media must maintain and enhance their source credibility. They claim to be "objective," and "value free."

**Linear (Spatialized) Time and Responsibility**

Time is the essential dimension in the distinction between the pro-visual, and the permanent. Culture is provisional. Nature is permanent including the nature of self-evident truth.

As Goethe argued, scientists may learn to manipulate the eternal laws of nature but no scientist can ever hope to break them. As far as human experience is concerned, natural law is permanent, unbreakable. Vicoicentrism is faith in the law of seeing. Vicoicentrism is the utter belief that neither eyes nor cameras lie. Vicoicentrism is naive empiricism which is based on the metaphysical faith of correspondence between sight and "external" object seen. The essential quality of being unbreakable is the characteristic which identifies natural law as such (including the search for knowledge of human "nature").

Even probabilities expressed statistically are yielded by the apodectic force of mathematical function. Statistics may yield probabilities about represented realities but statistical reasoning itself is largely regarded as internally coherent and infallible. "In logic nothing is accidental" (Wittgenstein, 1921, 2.012).

In so far as one can say that a deception exists, it is "real" deception. The term "deceptogenesis" is introduced here to designate the origin of a false representation. Deception is always pro-visual and can be identified as deception by comparison to the "original" state of affairs (one adumbration among others) which is purposively re- or misrepresented. To be sure, this requires one to privilege the previous state of affairs over subsequent ones. Due to modern humanity's tremendous metaphysical prejudice in favor of spatial extension (physicalism) and its organ the eye, graphic deception is extremely effective in manipulating modern populations. The
phrases "show me," "eye witness," and "seeing is believe," express the metaphysical foundation for modern humanity's strongest faith. Visual evidence is the best.

A problem arises however. When the original, which is represented, is not available, culture and ideology itself cannot become "false." In fact the truth value of a claim about something remains indeterminate unless the original can be examined and compared with the re-presentation. It is only by comparative analysis, for instance, that excellent forgeries can be revealed as such. Otherwise, they would likely remain undetected forever.

Re-visionistic history is an excellent example of this quagmire. Because Napoleon is no longer available for direct examination, qualities and characteristics of the man that are reported (handed down as historical literature) can be neither verified nor falsified. The study of history is largely dependent on testimony (hear say) rather than immediate personal scrutiny (Campbell, 1823, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, Boston: Charles Ewer). Consequently, written history, unlike descriptions of current states-of-affairs, is extremely susceptible to distortion. But more importantly, the "distortion" is not verifiable but must remain mere speculation; fundamentally indeterminate and therefore open to endless controversy. History has a sense of indeterminacy about it as is well demonstrated by the current controversy over the authorized biography of the former President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, Dutch, by Edmund Harris (1999, NY: Random House). One reason Harris is open for attack is because it is presumed that all written text amounts to hearsay, while visual evidence is self-evident. "Distortion" for Husserl, unlike his predecessors, can exist and therefore can be identified but only via critical comparative processes.

Until the mid-nineteenth century, history was, in the end a literature. But increasingly, due to the undetectable nature of digital manipulation, we must be suspicious of visual records too. The provisional status of history is dangerous because history is often used as a justification for present states of affairs and contemporary decisions which are not decisions at all but are enacted as dead "responses" to "what is the case" ("reality," fatalistic "facticity"). Such reaction rather than action may be labeled Newtonian behaviorism (Kramer, 1992). The great chain of causation is often evoked as a fatalistic thread of yesteryear winding to the present so that everything is an always predetermined effect of previous causes (Foucault, 1970, The Order of Things, NY: Pantheon). This "chain" constrains responsibility thereby denying the very existence of ethics. Guilt, as well as motive and intention, are reduced to senseless "subjective states" or have even been defined by false positivism as not existing because everything one does is merely the effect of previous causes. The devil made me do it.

With a different temporal awareness that is integral rather than spatio-linear, Gebser (1949) preserves freedom and its tandem phenomenon responsibility. Gebser points out that the dominant metaphysical speculation of materialism has been
applied to time so that time has wrongly been spatialized in the ulterior interest of measurement (a modern tactic for, or obsession with, physical control). However, if time is understood accurately (in accord with its true and unique ontological qualities) proof remains a "burden," a necessary responsibility for free individuals. Integrality or atemporality also avoids several logical contradictions. For instance, culture, being human expression, is pro-visional, but as Malcolm Lowry points out, this is perpetually so. This paradox is a consequence of the limitation of classical two-valued dia-logic and the Western obsession with spatial metaphysics (linear dialectics and measurable extension). It is an error at the ontological level to ask spatial questions of nonspatial phenomena. For instance, what color is time, knowledge, or even the scientific method, how long are they, how much do they weigh, et cetera?

Truth and Civilization

At the core of all great civilizations is the issue of truth. Upon this metaphysical foundation hinges all doctrines of the "good" person meaning one who is free from vice, honest, courageous, incorruptible, just, and magnanimous (Isocrates, Plato, Jesus of Nazareth, Confucius, Buddha, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Augustine, and practically every defining thinker in the Western European and Asian traditions). Noble action is distinguishable as the opposite of evil action. "Noble action" is identifiable if and only if the truth can be known about the action and the circumstances. Thus truth has everything to do with morality and ethics. Truth: What is it? How can one know it when one experiences it? How can one present it (the problem of mimesis in methodology and other media)? How can one persuade others of the truth? How can consensus emerge and decisions about future courses of action be taken on the basis of a shared reality? These are just a few of the questions that are presumed by every normative structure that every culture promotes and in fact relies upon for its existence.

Action, and thus ethics, derive from knowledge of the truth. If one claims, as some current deconstructionists do, that there is no truth, then two problems emerge. First, do the deconstructionists believe that their position about the nonexistence of truth is itself true? And second, if there is no truth then there can be no liars. The existence of deception depends on truth and vice versa. Without one, the other cannot be identified.

Technology is a form of communication. Technology is incantation. Incantation calls into being previously nonexisting things. The two dimensional vision of the blueprint is transformed into the three dimensional artifact. This process is material magic. The term "magic," can be traced to the Persian root mag(h) meaning "make," "might," "mechanism," "machine" (Mumford, 1934; Gebser, 1949). "Magic" is the term given to incantatory behavior which expresses a desire to control natural and supernatural forces. Technology manifests
the same impulse as witchcraft, totem, and sorcery, only under
the dominance of the metaphysic of materialism. Technology is
material magic and it is a rhetoric. Nothing is so persuasive
as reality. Technology creates reality. Technology changes and
creates artificial environments. It could be argued that the
human is not the "rational animal." Instead humans are creative
(makers) for the human species is the one that does not adapt to
environments so much as change the environment to its collective
desire. Power-interests (desires) guide the creation of the
human milieu including. The fact of the existence of any given
milieu is its own truth. Humans live in environments of their
own configuration. Humans are the most domesticated of all
animals. Humans adapt to environments of their own creation and
thus humans are increasingly self-made. The world is a
discourse, or "episteme" to use Foucault's term, or
"consciousness-structure" (Gebser, 1949), or "paradigm" (Kuhn,
1962).

As has been recognized since the emergence of rational
self-reflexive discourse in ancient Greece, the control of
knowledge/information is the greatest of all powers.
Metaphysics (what counts as reality) is the most fundamental
power, for what is real is beyond debate. Accepted facts have a
fait accompli quality to them. Indeed, the word "fact" means
"things already done." With today's information technologies
(data processing and data transmission) it is
information/knowledge/reality, in short truth itself which is
subject to manipulation. When the sense of what is real becomes
ambiguous, nihilism is the consequence. In a world without
foundation, ethics, even situational ethics, evaporate. If the
question "what is the case" becomes senseless then violence and
indifference are inevitable. In a world without difference
there can be no identities, no meaning. In a meaningless state,
anything goes.

Because the post-Renaissance modern is so materialistic in
her/his metaphysical tendencies, seeing has become truth. When
one sees "for one's self" it is not a matter of mere belief but
knowledge. It is difficult for the materialist to question the
veracity of her/his own direct sensory information. Survey
after survey demonstrates that the great majority of Americans
get most of their news from television, that television has a
higher credibility than print or radio, that television news is
the most trusted source of information. Seeing is believed to
be less rhetorical than hearing. The greatest rhetoric is the
one that is invisible and therefore beyond question.
Television, because it hides nothing and only shows, is more
persuasive than nearly any method/medium in human history.
Television's mimetic correspondence is so convincing that it can
mobilize millions to action in a matter of minutes. For this
very reason, visual rhetoric is all the more invisible and
therefore persuasive — powerful. When I see something I don't
just believe what I saw but I know what I saw. Strong emotional
commitment marks the modern's faith in material extension.
Space is the dimension of the eye. Statistics too as
spatializing measurement are very persuasive. This post-
Renaissance metaphysical faith I call "visiocentrism" (Kramer, 1989; 1990, 1992). The problem with this faith is that it is very deeply held and defended with proportionate vehemence (remember the fate of Plato's fearless spelunker). The greater the illusion the greater the deception.

**Digital Deception**

While nonspatial sources of knowledge, such as logic, defy digital distortion and manipulation, sensory information is vulnerable and so too are those committed to sensationalism as the metaphysical foundation of reality/truth. No matter the consistency and validity of the logic used, all arguments begin with premises about reality. Since knowledge (even if later determined to be false) is the ultimate power or motivator for action, and knowledge is always of reality/truth, the power to distort reality, to create delusion and illusion, is extremely dangerous. For instance, the stripes on zebras are meant to confuse hunting predators. As a herd of zebra begin to run the stripes disrupt patterns that would otherwise indicate the position of an individual animal thus confusing the lioness. Stripes, their mobility, pattern recognition and misrecognition, and so forth are information. If the lioness fails to properly identify patterns of individuals she may well starve.
Ethic Concerning Digital Information
Deception

by

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The power to manipulate reality is greater than any other weapon. The decision to create and use any instrument of creation or destruction, is premised upon a faith in what is the current state-of-affairs (what is the case). An overall cosmological pattern is necessary for action to be anything other than random and accidental. Policy cannot be planned on a chaotic basis. While confusion may be a powerful tactic of defense it can also disrupt survival. If the zebras (see Prolegomena to this Ethic) themselves become confused then this defensive tactic of pattern disruption will backfire spelling disaster for the herd.

The widespread manipulation of visual information patterns by the use of digital equipment cannot discriminate among audiences. Dissemination of information is not totally controllable. In nature it is relatively simple: a lion is not a zebra. But we are all humans. In so far as decision making, democratic or otherwise (although the implications for reality manipulation are even more grave for democratic institutions and societies) depends on a presumed reality that is stable over time and therefore predictable, digital pattern distortion can throw decision making into the realm of mere chance, like shooting into the dark. Under such conditions vital and scarce resources necessary for survival will be wasted only to mention the problem of injustice. The lioness can afford only a few runs at the zebra before her caloric level drops and she begins a spiral of diminishing returns for her effort. The probability of failure rises as she becomes weaker and more desperate. Humans cannot break this law of nature.

Accurate information is the foundation of sound decision making. Frustrated effort, sabotaged by false premises can lead to hopelessness and violence on personal and international scales. Persuasion should remain at the level of what is good, best, right about a known and shared reality. When reality itself becomes ambiguous, then value judgments about it and what ought to be cannot be meaningfully debated.

War may be defined as the failure of diplomacy. For humanity, taken as a whole, war is always counter-productive. Diplomacy can succeed to be implemented only when there is a shared and accurate version of reality underlying judgments. For this reason digital manipulation of information (which is
practically undetectable -- beyond comparison) threatens the very basis of judgements and should therefore be strictly, if not entirely, avoided. If a people discover that they are living, fighting, killing and dying for an illusion, massive dissolution will follow with consequences that cannot be predicted. To a certain extent history can teach us about the possible magnitude of such wrenching changes that follow from cosmological mutations (formation and re-formation). But one major difference is that today's information technologies are the most persuasive/powerful in history.

Persuasion, the discourse that defines reality is ultimate power. With the impulse to generate ever more convincing technologies of simulation, future technologies will become even more powerful. If a picture equals fact then it is absolutely powerful/convincing. Digitally manipulated visual presentations that re-present nothing, may displace the "original." Nihilism is the consequence. Under such conditions, ethical judgements loose their metaphysical moorings and a people can be set adrift with cataclysmic consequences. Value-judgements must be about something.

If reality is fundamentally indeterminate then so too is the "right" or "good" or "just" course of action. Even the "limited" use of digitally "enhanced" or manipulated visual information should be avoided because the dissemination of such information cannot be totally controlled. Even if such information comes "to light" hundreds of years after conception, it can strongly influence historical justifications and rationale. Since history is often used to justify current and future policy decisions, deceptive information can continue to do damage long after its initial purpose is forgotten. In fact it can do its greatest damage after its initial (perhaps well intended) purpose is forgotten because there is no comparative or alternative scenario to expose it as a lie (its negative truth value).

Digital information deception threatens the very definition of reality. Since information cannot be totally controlled, unintended future audiences may fall under the influence of information (especially powerfully persuasive visual information) that is false but for them indeterminate in truth value. For this reason digital image manipulation for the purposes of deception is unethical and unacceptable. Digital image manipulation, because it is virtually undetectable, poses a serious threat to the foundation of all value judgements and informed decision making. It is a special class of deception (being practically undetectable), and should be considered unethical and counter to all that is valuable and worthwhile.
Notes

Interestingly, but not at all surprisingly, when Russell, the "champion of positivism" was imprisoned for being a conscientious objector, the only book he chose to take to prison with him was Husserl's two volume work Logische Untersuchungen (Logical Investigations). Similarly, when the acclaimed Vienna circle scholars of Carnap, Quine, Wittgenstein, and others collectively read the logical Investigations the circle disbanded conceding that Husserl's logical insights had far surpassed their efforts to escape metaphysical "clap trap" such as physicalism, materialism, idealism, and other assorted "isms." It is for this reason that Husserl avoided Kantian "phenomenalism" and phenomenography (today called ethnomethodology) in favor of phenomenology and later proclaimed himself to be the only real positivist.