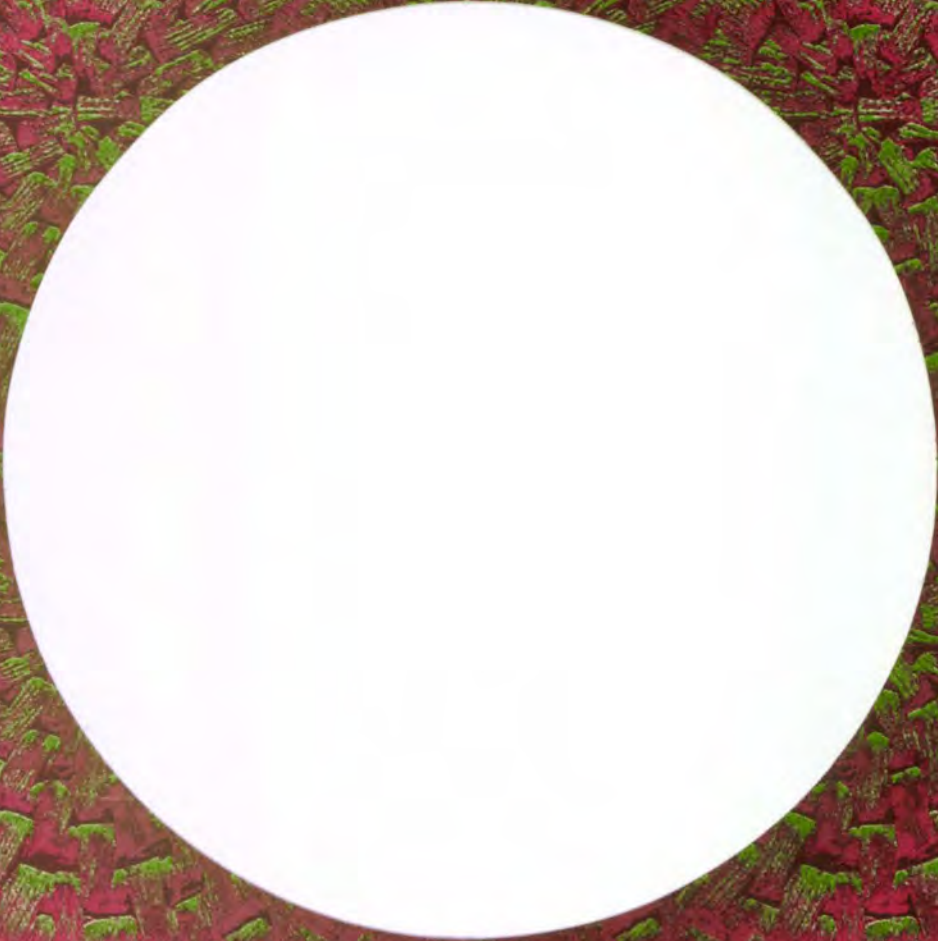




volo  
#2/3

Home



Mediasia

Including the Brilliant,  
Long Play • Anti Interactive  
V.O.L.V.O.  
Airbag CD-rom





• This issue contains a signature with strange pictures: visualisations of spaces in Mediamoo. Moos are very powerful — because fully text-based — virtual realities. You meet people, play or work and you can arrange your own space as you like. You arrange the space by describing it and programming behaviour of elements contained in it. The suggestion of such text can be strong, as strong as the text of a good book can be. So it is actually not necessary to visualise such spaces on paper, but we just couldn't resist.

The rooms people create for themselves in moos on the net are examples of the development of a radical, new idea of *home*. *Home* has undergone some sweeping changes during the last hundred years. The house as home for the late—modern nuclear family ripened into its definitive form. A reliable, well-thought—out solution. Standardised enough to produce in large quantities and to agree that everyone has the right to one. Everyone knows where he or she belongs — at Home.

All houses were connected to networks: Roads, Gas, Electricity, Water, Postal Service, Central Urban Heating, Subway, Garbage Collection. Modern support networks that turn the house into a safe, comfortable and practical spot.

Almost simultaneously, the house was connected to the networks of the media. Telephone, Radio, Television and Computer networks turn the house into an even more effective base of operations.

But they also rupture the safe walls of the house radically. Of course, media have always done that. One who loses himself in a book *teleports* out of his or her physical environment. Newspapers, radio and television possess that same quality. They are windows onto another world. Often so absorbing that the window metaphor no longer applies. One becomes mentally connected to the media space and consciousness of one's own body and home is temporarily suspended. We have become used to having a couple of channels to media space open simultaneously. Reading the newspaper with the TV on; enjoying a book while a CD plays. Or we mix up home and media: eating in front of the television, vacuuming with the radio on, making love while music is playing.

The telephone is another story, as we are not completely displaced into media space. We make contact through it; we speak to others who are absent. And, as opposed to prayer (see the next issue of *Mediamatic*) we get a clearly audible answer. The other speaks to us and we feel obligated to answer in our turn. Telephone is more engaging than other media, and not so easy to combine with radio or television. We're there in person. When the telephone rings, it's (usually) for us and we have a place of our own in the telephone net. That place

corresponds with home. If I don't pick up the telephone, the conclusion at the other end of the line is: *He's not home*. Or even: *He's not there*. Many answering machines state that their owner is not at home. At home means my end of the telephone line.

We are becoming increasingly connected to interactive networks comparable to the telephone net. Besides my telephone number, I have an e-mail address and a home page on the Web. And a room in a MOO. The MOO is the limit: if I'm not there and someone drops in, I appear to be there. The system says: *Willem is asleep*.

The difference between the old mass media and the new many—to—many networks is that it matters whether the individual participant exists or not. Increasingly, users are forming a virtual spot of their own. An electronic home that supplements our old home: it's a spot that is very closely connected to our identity. A spot where we can be found and which serves as a base of operations. A space we arrange ourselves, where we receive visitors and collect our electronic possessions.

At the last *Doors of Perception* conference, many speakers declared that their laptop computers are their only homes. (For an extensive report of the conference, see our Web site: <http://www.mediamatic.nl/>.) Today's laptops may be the first primitively fashioned dwellings in cyberspace: for the moment, that kind of avant-garde comments can only be expected of toy—crazy telenomads. But *Mediamatic* found reason enough to devote this issue to exploration of the theme of home.

WILLEM VELTHOVEN  
home <http://www.mediamatic.nl/~willemvelthoven/>

# De ruimte thuis

In dit nummer zit een katern met rare plaatjes. Het zijn visualisering van ruimten in Mediamoo. Moo's zijn zeer krachtige — want volledig tekst gebaseerde — virtual realities. Je ontmoet er mensen, speelt of werkt en je kunt er je eigen ruimte inrichten. Die ruimte richt je in door ze te beschrijven en door het gedrag van elementen in die ruimtes te programmeren. De suggestie van de tekst is sterk, zo sterk als de tekst van een goed boek kan zijn. Het visualiseren van die ruimten is dus eigenlijk onzin. Maar we konden het niet laten.

De kamers die mensen voor zichzelf inrichten in moo's op het net zijn voorbeelden van de ontwikkeling van een radicaal nieuwe notie van *thuis*.

Thuis is de afgelopen honderd jaar sterk aan verandering onderhevig. Het huis als thuis voor de laat-moderne kern-familie bereikte zijn uitgerijpte, definitieve vorm. Een betrouwbare, uitgekende oplossing. Voldoende gestandaardiseerd om in grote hoeveelheden te produceren en om te kunnen afspreken dat iedereen er recht op heeft. Iedereen weet waar 'ie hoort. Thuis!

Alle huizen werden aangesloten op netwerken: Wegen, Gas, Electriciteit, Riool, Post, Stadsverwarming, Metro, Vuilnisophaaldienst. Moderne ondersteunende netwerken die van het huis een veilige, comfortabele en praktische plek maken.

Bijna tegelijkertijd is het huis aangesloten op de netwerken van de media. Telefoon, Radio, Televisie, en Computernetwerken maken van thuis een nog effectievere uitvalsbasis.

Ze doorbreken echter ook de veilige muren van thuis op een zeer radicale manier. Media hebben dat natuurlijk altijd gedaan. Wie zich verliest in een boek *teleport* uit z'n fysieke omgeving. Kranten, radio en televisie hebben die zelfde eigenschap. Het zijn vensters op andere werelden. Vaak zo absorberend dat de venstermetafoor niet meer van toepassing is. Men raakt mentaal aangesloten op de mediaruimte en het bewustzijn van het eigen lichaam en thuis wordt tijdelijk opgeheven. We zijn gewend meestal een paar kanalen naar de mediaruimte tegelijk open te hebben. Krant lezen met de tv aan, Genieten van een boek terwijl je een cd draait. Of we mengen thuis met media: eten bij de televisie, stofzuigen met de radio aan, vrijen met muziek.

De telefoon is een ander geval, hier worden we niet volledig overgeplaatst naar mediaruimte. We hebben er contact mee. We spreken tot afwezige anderen. En, in tegenstelling tot bij het gebed (zie het volgende nummer van *Mediamatic*), we krijgen duidelijk hoorbaar antwoord! De ander spreekt ook tot ons en wij voelen ons op ons beurt verplicht te antwoorden. Telefoon is meer engagerend dan andere media, en niet zo makkelijk te combineren met radio of televisie. We zijn er zelf bij. Als de telefoon gaat is het voor ons (meestal) en we hebben een eigen plek in het telefoonnet. Daar weet men ons te

vinden. Die plek correspondeert met thuis. Als ik de telefoon niet opneem is de conclusie aan het ander eind van de lijn: *Hij is niet thuis*. Of, sterker nog: *Hij is er niet*. Ook veel antwoordapparaten beweren dat hun eigenaar niet thuis is. Thuis is mijn eind van de telefoonlijn.

We raken inmiddels meer en meer aangesloten op met de telefoon vergelijkbare, interactieve netten. Ik heb inmiddels naast mijn telefoonnummer ook een e-mail adres, en een home-page op het Web, en een kamer in een moo. In de moo is het nog het sterkst. Als ik er niet ben en iemand komt bij me langs dan lijkt ik er toch gewoon te zijn. Het systeem zegt: *Willem is asleep*.

Het verschil tussen de oude massamedia en de nieuwe *many-to-many* netwerken is dat het er toe doet of een individuele deelnemer bestaat. De gebruikers vormen meer en meer hun eigen virtuele plek. Een elektronisch thuis dat ons oude thuis aanvult: het is een plek die zeer nauw met onze identiteit verbonden is. Een plek waar we te vinden zijn en vanwaaruit we opereren. Een plek die we zelf inrichten, waar we bezoek ontvangen en waar we onze elektronische bezittingen verzamelen.

Op de laatste Doors of Perception conferentie verklaarden meerdere sprekers vanaf het podium dat hun schootcomputer hun enige thuis is. (Zie voor een uitgebreid geïllustreerd verslag van die conferentie onze Web site: <http://www.mediamatic.nl/>) De huidige laptops zijn misschien de plaggenhutten van cyberspace: dat soort avant-gardistische opmerkingen zijn voorlopig alleen nog te verwachten van speelgoedgeile telenomaden. Maar voor *Mediamatic* was er aanleiding genoeg om in dit nummer het thema thuis te onderzoeken.

WILLEM VELTHOVEN

Home <http://www.mediamatic.nl/~willemvelthoven/>

Mediamatic volume 8 # 2/3 the Home Issue

V.O.L.V.O. CD-ROM

about v.o.l.v.o. CD-ROM

editorial

Mediamatic On Line

NetLes

FLORIAN BRODY *My home is my Memory is my Home*

ERKKI HUHTAMO *Armchair Traveller on the Ford of Jordan*

BILWET *Electronic Loneliness*

DIETMAR DATH *Distinction Renouncing Movement: AmbiEntity versus IdEntity*

PAUL GROOT *From Home to Home, the Escape Route*

MANUEL DE LANDA *Homes: Meshwork or Hierarchy?*

LEX WOUTERLOOT *At Home in Prison*

STEPHEN PERRELLA *Being @Home as Hypersurface Architecture*

UNITED ARTISTS *Welcome to MediaMOO!*

MIKE DAVIS *Urban Control, the Ecology of Fear.*

BRENDA LAUREL *Imagery and Evolution*

GEERT LOVINK *Interview with George Legrady*

BAS RAIJMAKERS reviews *Imagologies* by Taylor/Saarinen

JORINDE SEIJDEL reviews *Museums* by Murray and *Museum Culture* by Sherman/Rogoff (ed.)

VOLKER HEISE and PETER BERZ review *Buch der Könige II* by Klaus Theweleit

GEERT LOVINK reviews *L'illusion de Fin* by Baudrillard

GEERT LOVINK reviews *Der Buchdruck in der frühen Neuzeit* by Michael Giesecke

WIM NIJENHUIS reviews *Medien-Zeit* by Peter Sloterdijk

LAURA MARTZ reviews *The Electronic Disturbance* by Critical Arts Ensemble

WOLEGANG ERNST reviews *Visite aux armées: Tourisimes de guerre* by Diller & Scofidio (ed.)

WILLEM VELTHOVEN reviews *DoorMat FAT* by van Blokland/van Rossum

calendar

colophon

Newsroom Amsterdam

## MEDIAMATIC Home AMSTERDAM



### Mediamatic Magazine

An international quarterly about the cultural implications of new media. Since '85 in print. Since '94 on line. HERE. You can also jump directly to the current issue.



### Doors of Perception

A Report on the Doors of Perception 2 @HOME conference which we co-organised with the Netherlands Design Institute.



### Mediamatic NetLes

Info about Mediamatic's Training Program. We offer an excellent range of High Pressure, Hands On World Wide Web courses. (info in Dutch, courses too;-)



### Mediamatic Consultancy

We can help you...  
  
Mediamatic is also a design and communications consultancy



### the People

Personal Pages of our Staff, Clients, Writers, Allies, Lovers, Friends, Family...



### WebSide Story

About the Mediamatic On Line service What's here and why, future plans, technical data, credits.

Here's a page with our addresses and more info about our RL Home.

Check out *Mediamatic On Line* at <http://www.mediamatic.nl/>

It's a state-of-the-art Web site with the digital version of this magazine and a lot more interesting & beautiful material. (use a recent web client that supports tables, background colors & images & in-line jpeg)

Voor Informatie  
over *Mediamatic's*

**NetLes;**

onze hands-on  
cursusdagen over  
vormgeving,  
uitgeverij en

marketing op het  
*World Wide Web,*

bel (020) 626 6262

De algemene inleiding voor wie nog niet veel ervaring heeft met het Net • Wat is het internet nou eigenlijk precies? • Zelf leren • Nu en later • Wat is de lol en wat is het nut? • Waarom

Wat zijn de mogelijkheden voor de productie van multimediale content? • Hoe zit de productie van multimediale content in elkaar? • Hoe werk je samen met

Op het internet zijn geen BC-spreads • In virtueel community-land is informatie geconsumeerd • De vorm en besteding veranderd dramatisch • De mogelijkheden voor respons zijn ongekend • In het net is de marketing relatiemarkt aan

interactie design • Ontwikkeling van sociale processen, typografie, visuels • Interactieve introductie tot de pagina, beschrijvingstaal • Over informatie-structuren ontwikkelen interactiviteit • Vormgeving • Voorbeelden van de modiste "sites" van het Web

Workshops met de top-ontwerpers van het WorldWideWeb voor ontwerpers, tekst, beweging • Op deze dagen wordt er gewerkt aan de vormgeving van de more visies van het Web

Het internet biedt alle mogelijkheden voor externe communicatie en PR • Ook nu! • Zoals de telefoon al intern en extern een belangrijk instrument is • Wat zijn de organisatorische veranderingen

Mediamatic is een van de meest toonaangevende mediabureaus in Nederland • Wat is de toekomst van de media? • Wat is de toekomst van de media?

Bel voor uitgebreide cursusinformatie en -data (020) 626 6262 • Kun je handreik ook e-mailen desk@mediamatic.nl • Ook op onze website [www.mediamatic.nl/](http://www.mediamatic.nl/)

## Florian Brody

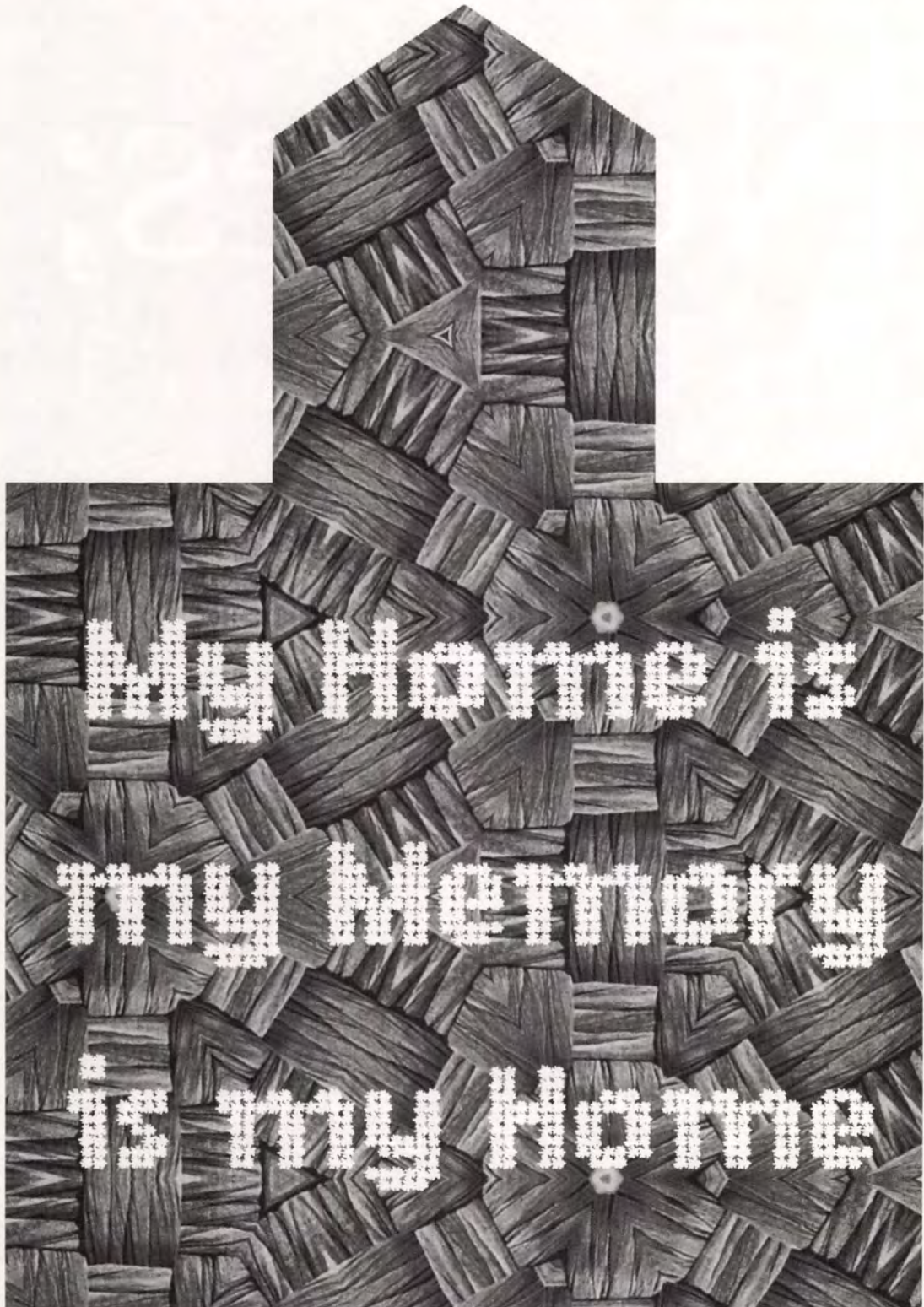
- Is my home where my heart is or where my computer is? Is home where I want to be or where I am?

In an environment where on one side properties become more and more important

and on the other side our economic interests shift from objects to information,

home is no longer defined by geographic coordinates but by the access path in an information net.

Home is not only a shelter but also a communicative place where you can define at least some of the rules and feel secure.





## My Home is my Memory is my Home

• Otherwise the home concept would not have had such success in programs like Hypercard and on the Web as well as IRL<sup>1</sup> as the safe place to get back to. In an environment that is messy by definition we need a place to go home, from where we can start out again.

No matter how you perceive home, it is always embedded in memories, and different technologies are used to maintain these memories and thus connect to home. Nevertheless, the home experience of the body is complementing the memory even when in a motel room with a laptop pc. Living in a virtually-generated world results ultimately in alienation from the ego which disconnects you from the outside world (Schaff 1977). And connection to the net cannot replace the personal experience. The role of virtual reality systems is heavily debated as a replacement for the outside world. We do not know yet if our mind can adapt to a degree that we accept vr worlds as more real than real worlds. If we have memories there, we might begin to accept it and develop a form of belonging to it.

Cases of people reacting like machines have been described in literature as mental disorders, as in the case of Joey, a boy who believes he is a robot (Bettelheim, 1962).

Interaction and communication is in many ways assumed to be with the computer rather than through the computer, and human interface design encourages that (cf. also Weizenbaum, 1976). And while the computer can serve as a memory place for 'home' it can be home only to the extent a book can be 'home'; that is, a place to remember and a place to attach memories to.

By analyzing the computer as a home two distinctive aspects have to be reviewed — the computer as a memory place and the computer as a communication device. While these two aspects cannot be separated in their usage, it seems to make sense to discuss them separately.

### The computer as a memory place

The computer is more than a device sitting on my desk — it is the place for my memory, my memories and that is what home is all about.

### The computer as a communication device

While two or more telephone lines at home is becoming standard in the us, Vienna is just moving the phone from the attic into the living room.

Many have pointed out that the telephone is the first electric vr machine, as you can talk to

someone without having to see them, but what is more important here — and this holds true equally well for the computer — it extends the home. Avital Ronell in her *Telephone Book* asks: *When does the telephone become what it is? It presupposes the existence of another telephone, somewhere, though it's a totality as apparatus, its singularity, is what we think of when we say 'telephone'.* (Ronell 1989)

Home is used in many computer systems as an 'anchor' for orientation in complex environments. Whenever you get lost you go home.

**help home**

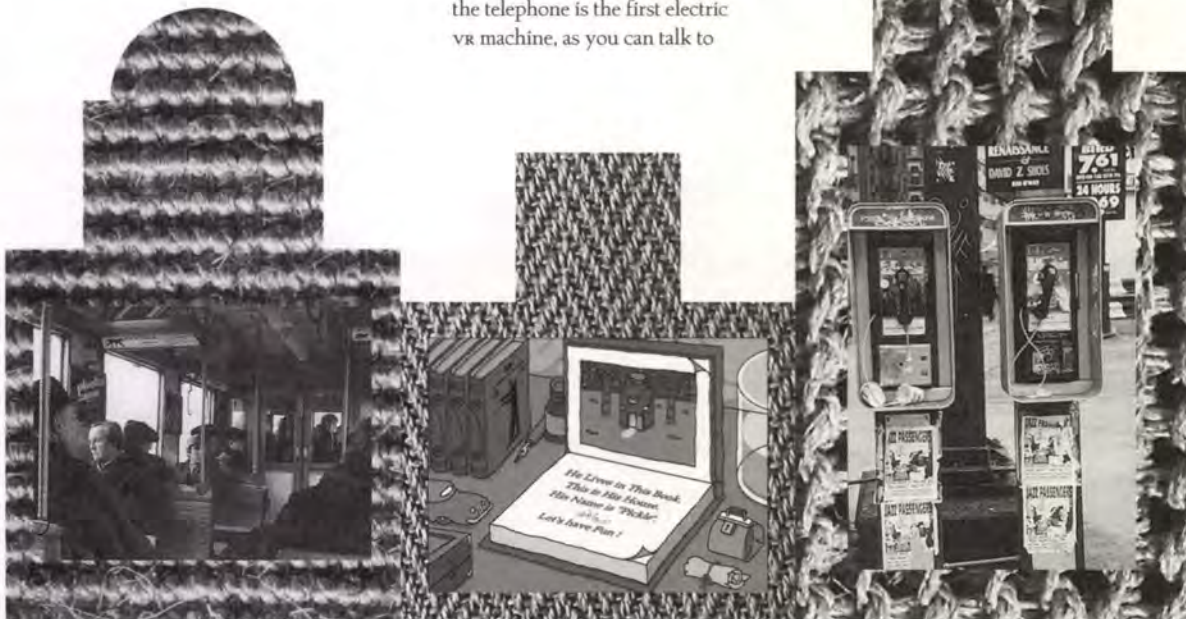
**Syntax: home**

Instantly teleports you to your designated home room. Initially, this room is the LEGO Closet (#109). You can change your designated home; see 'help @sethome' for details.

(from: Mediamoo<sup>2</sup> Help System)  
Meeting in strange places, specially inside a computer can be awkward at times. One suddenly realizes that all this Global Community chat is not made for people

<sup>1</sup> In Real Life: an abbreviation that makes fun of itself by being used.

<sup>2</sup> Mediamoo is a professional virtual community with its membership restricted to professionals in media research interested in exploring virtual text based worlds. It is at purple-crayon.media.mit.edu 8888



Guest smiles  
You say, "Isn't that weird -  
you sit in AMS and I in VIE  
and we meet in Boston, Mass"  
Guest laughs  
Guest says, "it is a bit  
awkward..."  
(excerpt from an original  
conversation in the LEGO/Logo  
Lab inside the Mediamoo.)

### The Kaffeehaus Metaphor

The Kaffeehaus as Memory  
Place.

Vienna has the great advantage of a unique institution the *Kaffeehaus*, which has nothing to do with the café. You are neither at home nor in the open public; You are in your *Kaffeehaus*, in an environment known to you, where you are known, where you have information resources available<sup>3</sup> and partners to communicate with. It is similar to a networked environment — with the advantage that the agents are really intelligent and the coffee is good.

A whole literary style has emerged from authors working in the *Kaffeehaus* rather than at home. One of them, Alfred Polgar pointed out: In the *Kaffeehaus* you find people who want to be alone but need company to do that. And there are so many who hate the *Kaffeehaus* even though, or

because, of the fact that it is somehow a home to them (Bernhard).

### The Electronic Cafe

Electronic Cafes were around before the r-Way discussion heated up. Kit and Sheri opened their Electronic Café on 18th Street in Santa Monica many years ago, and it has been a template for many other similar locations around the world. Their activity is actually less that of a café but more of a meeting place of some sort of activist group in search of international connections. Their preferred technology was always the video telephone, a technology that never really hit the market as the bandwidth we have available — despite all arguments — is still very narrow. Still, black and white jerky video phones have their community around the world and serious sceptics are told that Bishop Tutu has one of those phones and so much for that!

Is the computer becoming more and more the defining environment in a non-communicative society, thus replacing neighbour-communication with long-distance communication via electronic devices?  
Home is where you hang your head.

GROUCHO MARX

### Home as a Place

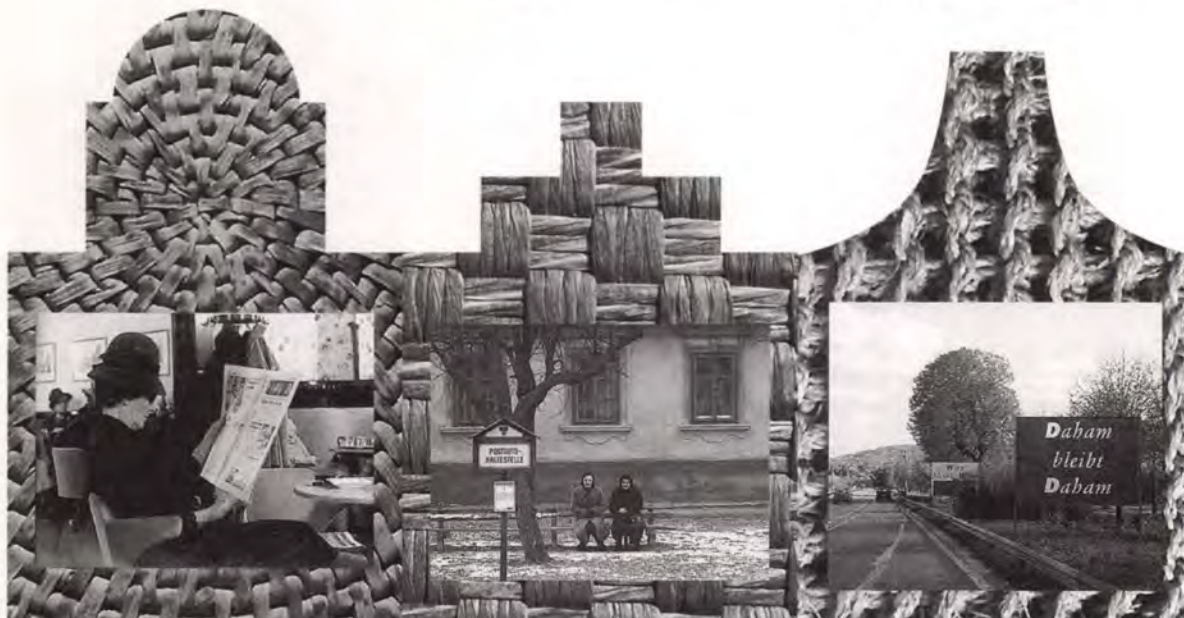
Being at home is being in a known environment — and as much as home means something different for every reader of this text, we all know the feeling associated with it. It is more than a place to stay but not necessarily one's own apartment or castle. I will try to argue that the concept of home is losing its relation to the place we live in as the conceptual home moves towards a dynamic medium, away from paper and books and all the other things that surround us and define the space we live in.

While the mind-body discussion is still unsolved, home is getting more from where you hang your hat, or as Groucho puts it, your head, but where you hang (should read: *plug-in*) your mind. While home is still a place, it is less of a geographical and more of a conceptual place.

### Home as an Address

Home is also the place where you can be located by others. While houses used to have no street address but a name that identified them, places like *Brodie Castle* near Elgin, named after the family, or houses like *Zum blauen Schwan* in Vienna, named after the house sign, today the location of houses has no more importance to get in contact with the people who live there.

<sup>3</sup> Decent Kaffeehäuser not only offer the major newspaper of the world but also an encyclopedia and the waiter knows answers to most general and personal questions.



• Recently I saw a card that identified the coordinates of the owner by three numbers, the 9-digit ZIP code that identifies a PO-Box in the US, the telephone number, and the CompuServe address:

John Miller  
90210-5499  
(212) 555 1212  
100322,9999

And while in small towns people still know where you live and can give you directions (*turn right behind the red barn ...*) the basic conversation today is about how to send messages from CompuServe via Internet to some other system.

**Getting in contact**

Our relations are no longer networked to the other side of the street we live in (read: we put our body to bed every night) but via hyperlinks in virtual nets. Not only are we resuming a nomadic life style abandoned for very practical reasons many generations ago, we can also easily carry around many aspects of home in a laptop computer

— and can be met at home in the most desirable places. A lot has been written about information junkies (Rheingold 1993) and their need for communication. The Global Village where we all get together is being used as a metaphor for the round table where we meet to discuss whatever moves us. Rheingold analyses the state of CMC (computer-mediated communication) and writes about the addicts on different systems: the Minitel in France, the campus networks, the xxx BBS (adults only) in the middle of nowhere. *The feeling of logging into the WELL<sup>4</sup> for just a minute or two, dozens of times a day, is very similar to the feeling of peeking into the café, the pub, the common room, to see who's there (...)* (ibid. p.26). It also has a similar devastating effect to one's agenda — you lose hours a day chatting away on interesting but not very important issues. The most interesting aspect in all this discussion about global communities and worldwide information exchange is Rheingold's point, that the WELL works only for people who live in the area after all. Attending the

annual WELL picnics has become an integral part of life on the net. Many discussions do not travel well and need a common cultural field. Home is more than a mailbox — it is the cultural environment that surrounds us — but not necessarily a geographic position.

**My home is my Library**

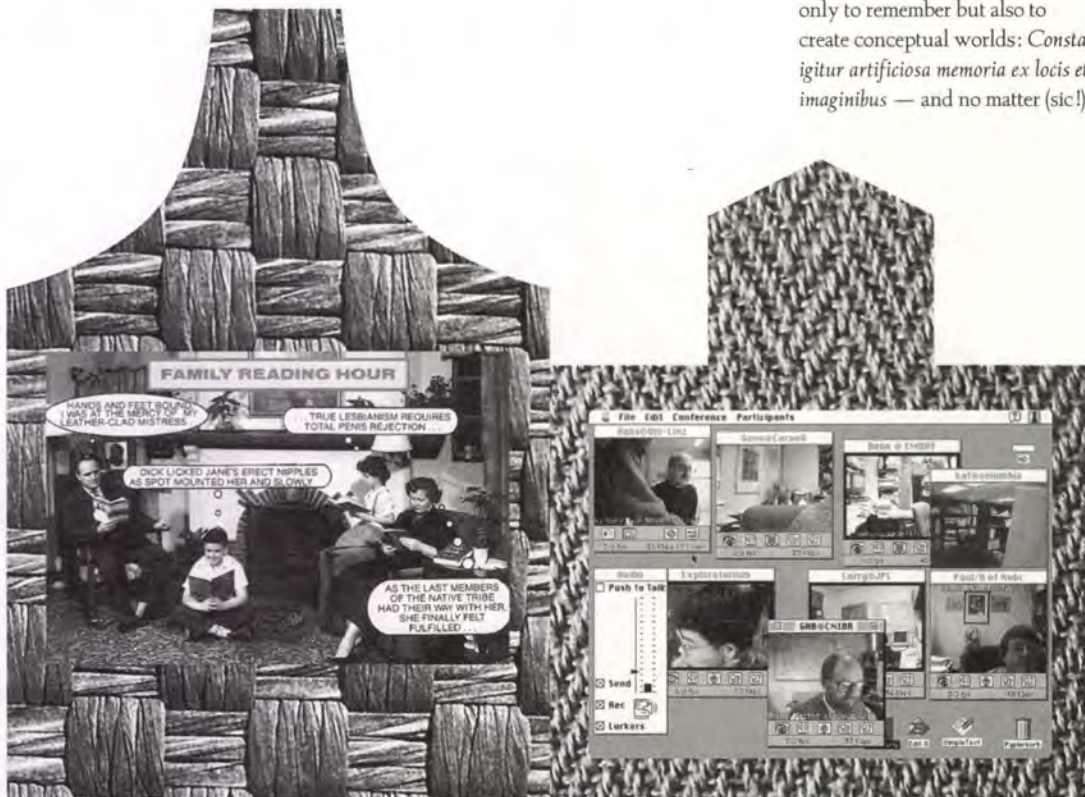
I am very often involved in discussions about the future of the book and if electronic media will kill the book. One of the reasons people are so concerned about the possible vanishing of books is their quality to make a home comfortable.

For many of us, home is defined by books. Not only by books as a decorative item in a room, but by the book as an outside representation of mind. The transition of the book from paper to a dynamic medium thus endangers our home concept. This is one of the reasons for irrational resistance to electronic books.

**Locations revisited**

*The Art of Memory* uses rules for places and rules of images not only to remember but also to create conceptual worlds: *Constat igitur artificiosa memoria ex locis et imaginibus* — and no matter (sic!)

<sup>4</sup> The Whole Earth Electronic Link is a Bay Area (San Francisco) based system that has gained cult status as the computer conferencing system to an extent that the art group Station Rose performs sessions about the WELL as art pieces. Rheingold's book *The Virtual Community, Homesteading the Electronic Frontier*, (Rheingold 1993) tells you everything you will ever want to know about the WELL and the people who have their home there.



• whether we sleep every night at a different place or continue to live in the room we were born for the rest of our days — the concept of home is what creates it, not the place alone — the memory that holds the traces that are constitutive, for home is built by images of places and places for images. (Yates 1969)

Nothing to write home about? Even when away, home is still the place to write to — to get back to — but can you feel homesick for a home stack, a home card or a home page of a www server? Probably not, as none convey any feeling of being back home. On a home page you cannot touch the green, green grass of home. Home has changed in dimension but has not lost its magnetism. And while the phone has moved from a contraption in the attic to a commodity in the living room — preferably cordless — you feel the umbilical cord only when you stand freezing on the corner of Broadway and 14th fresh out of quarters.

Phone company ads live on mothers calling their babies — people getting in contact, staying in contact. Are we moving out of the restricted home, defined by geographic borders or are we moving in?

When you show up on the doorstep of an English manor it is quite possible that the butler may tell you *Milady apologizes, she is not at home* and you will have to wait until you get a nice card

Mr. and Mrs. John Miller

at home

on Saturday, November 5

from 4 pm

— you are not personally invited — you are being told that Mr. & Mrs. Miller will be at home and willing — if not happy — to see you. This is the way things still work — unless you meet for a chat in the Internet where social conventions are still very rudimentary — because of the code being restricted to ASCII<sup>5</sup>. *Don't leave home without it* The industry tells us that home is where we want to be and that they can help us feel at home. Home has become the ubiquitous word in every catalogue in every marketing campaign. Sony and others offer home entertainment, MicroSoft created a home imprint suggesting that their CD-ROMs are for home use, communications companies help you stay in touch and credit card companies suggest a home abroad when needed.

Cars make great homes too; people sometimes prefer to 'live' in their car, even if it is not an rv or motor home, while retail statistics show that people spend

more money on their car stereo than on their home equipment. One of the reasons why we have favorite books is that we feel at home in them —.

### Home inside a book bringing it all back home

*Ich fühl mich nicht Zuhause* — I don't feel at home — the feeling of not belonging here where one is common upon Jews, especially in the Diaspora in Europe, where traditionally they have been on the run forever, living out of their suitcases. Gustav Mahler, the famous composer who, coming from a small Bohemian town with at that time a predominantly German-speaking population, who became world famous in Vienna, felt threefold homeless — as Bohemian among the Austrians, as Austrian among the Germans and as a Jew in the whole world. Ultimately home is not inside the books, not inside the house, but inside ourselves.

Mother (to small child who wants the light left on):

But you sleep fine in the dark at home, sweetheart.

Child: Yes, but at home it's my own dark.

(Applewhite 1994)

<sup>5</sup> No pictures, no nice fonts, no sound in most communications — as of today.

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## Erkki Huhtamo

*Een algeheel panorama op de wereld, met beelden die we slechts kennen uit de onvolledige verhalen van andere reizigers.*

*Gezeten voor het haardvuur, genieten wij het voorrecht ze te bestuderen zonder bloot te staan aan de uitputting,*

*ontberingen en genomen risico's van deze dappere en ondernemende kunstenaars,*

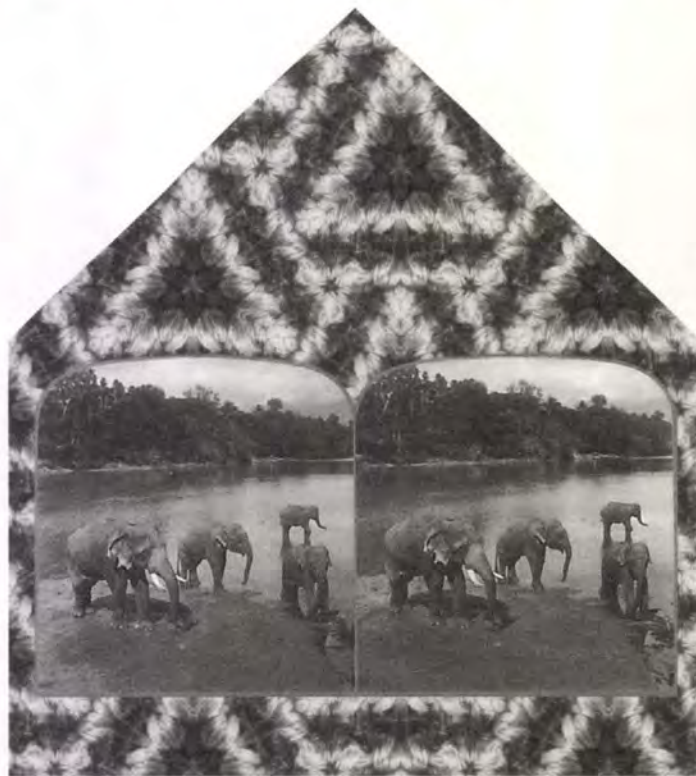
*die, ter onzer lering en vermaak, landen en zeeën bereisden, rivieren en valleien trotseerden en rotsen en bergen bedwongen*

*met hun zware last aan fotografische apparatuur, ANTOINE CLAUDET, 1860.*

Bovenstaande ervaring werd mogelijk gemaakt door een destijds nieuw en sensationeel visueel apparaat, de stereoscoop.

Erkki Huhtamo toont aan dat het gebruik van technologie als virtueel reismiddel niets nieuws is.

### **Armchair Traveller on the Ford of Jordan.**



### **The Home, the Stereoscope and the Virtual Voyager**

- *The general panorama of the world. It introduces to us scenes known only from the imperfect relations of travellers.*

*By our fireside we have the advantage of examining them,*

*without being exposed to the fatigue, privation, and risks of the daring and enterprising artists*

*who, for our gratification and instruction, have traversed lands and seas, crossed rivers and valleys,*

*ascended rocks and mountains with their heavy and cumbrous photographic baggage, ANTOINE CLAUDET, 1860.*

This experience was made possible by a new and sensational visual apparatus, the stereoscope.

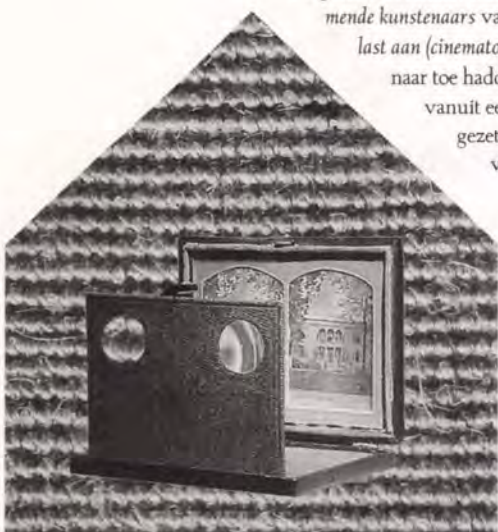
Erkki Huhtamo shows us that producing a simulacrum of reality, using technology as a means for virtual travel, is not new at all.

Toen de Architectural Machine Group van het Massachusetts Institute of Technology eind jaren '70 haar *Aspen Movie Map* presenteerde, was dit een geheel nieuw medium: de combinatie van beeldplaat en computer bood de mogelijkheid tot een wandeling in een stedelijk landschap waar de bezoeker om zich heen kon kijken, van richting kon veranderen en zelfs in woningen naar binnen kon kijken, zonder er ook werkelijk 'te zijn'. Weinig mensen hadden zelfs maar gehoord van het stadje

Aspen in Colorado, waar de *dappere en ondernemende kunstenaars* van het MIT hun *zware last aan (cinematografische apparatuur*

naar toe hadden gebracht om er, vanuit een rijdende auto, nauwgezet iedere straat op film

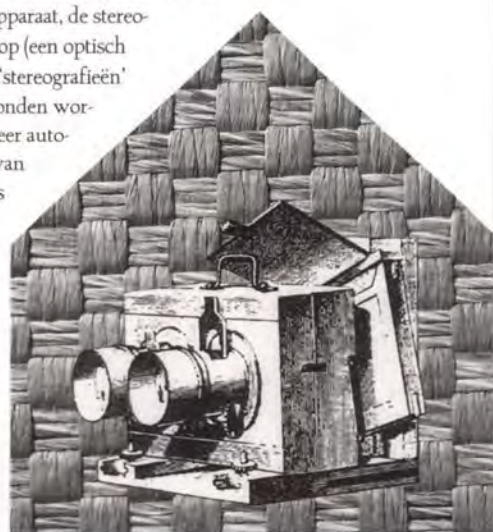
vast te leggen. Dit materiaal werd later op een computergestuurde beeldplaat overgebracht, waarbij de lineaire sequentie van de beelden werd doorbroken en de gebruiker de mogelijkheid kreeg zelf zijn route te bepalen. De paradoxale



zo niet 'voor ons haardvuur gezeten' dan toch tenminste voor onze desktop.

### Het Vliegend Tapijt

Ondanks de schijn van nieuwigheid die aan al deze mogelijkheden kleeft, roepen ze toch regelmatig een zeker gevoel van déjà vu op — vandaar ook de door mij getrokken parallel met het werk van een zekere Antoine Claudet, die in 1860 de ervaring beschreef die mogelijk werd gemaakt door een destijds nieuw en sensationeel visueel apparaat, de stereoscoop. Deze stereoscoop (een optisch hulpmiddel waarmee 'stereografieën' ofwel 'diepte'-foto's konden worden bekeken) roept weer automatisch het beeld op van de 'huisreiziger,' zoals die bij uitstek werd gepersonifieerd door de Amerikaanse natuurkundige, essayist en stereoliefhebber Oliver Wendell Holmes. In 1859 schreef Holmes over zijn stereoscopische reizen: *Ik wandel door de*



ervaring van afwezige aanwezigheid die dit project teweegbracht heeft inmiddels al vele benamingen gekregen: een 'surrogaatreis', een 'virtuele wereldreis', 'movie mapping' etc.

Al bleef het bij de *Aspen Movie Map* bij een experiment, de er uit voortkomende beleving is gemeengoed geworden. Kunstwerken als *The Legible City* van Jeffrey Shaw en de reeks 'moviemaps' van Michael Naimark (*The Golden Gate Moviemap, vbk — the Moviemap of Karlsruhe, etc.*) maakten van het gegeven gebruik. Verder zien we industriële toepassingen die, zonder dat ze een direct gevolg zijn van het MIT-



*wijngaarden van het Rijnland en neem plaats onder Romeinse bogen, ik loop door de straten van opgegraven steden en werp een blik in de gapende afgronden van Alpengletsjers, of op de razernij van kolkende watervallen. Ik beweeg mij in een oogwenk van de oevers van de Charles naar de Jordaanbedding en laat mijn lichaam achter in de leunstoel bij de tafel, terwijl mijn geest vanaf de Olijfberg neerblijkt op Jeruzalem.<sup>2</sup>*

Maar, zal men zich afvragen, is dit niet precies hoe wij televisie kijken, van kanaal te veranderen en zich ogenblikkelijk te verplaatsen van de ene uithoek van de aarde

naar de andere? Het wekt geen verbazing dat in de reclameteksten rond de televisie van het begin af aan veelvuldig reismetaforen voorkwamen, zoals de 'rit per vliegend tapijt', 'een hedendaagse Alice', 'het grootste venster naar de wereld', 'het antwoord op het eeuwenoude verlangen van de mens naar ogen en oren om door de hindernis van de afstand heen te breken'.<sup>3</sup> Een advertentie uit 1944 beloofde de kijker zelfs een bestaan als 'saloncolumbus op tienduizend-en-een spannende ontdekkingsreizen!'<sup>4</sup> De strategie van CNN is vanzelfsprekend gericht op de 'ultieme' vervulling van deze beloften. Zij gaat prat op de verzorging van een altijd-aanwezige wereldreiszone, waarin huiskamer en kantoorruimte rechtstreeks in verbinding staan met de brandhaarden van de wereldpolitiek, en waar de kijker getuige kan zijn

<sup>2</sup> Oliver Wendell Holmes, 'The Stereoscope and the Stereograph' in: *The Atlantic Monthly*, # 3 (juni 1859), p. 738-748. Herdrukt in *Photography: Essays & Images*, red.

Beaumont Newhall, *The Museum of Modern Art*, New York 1980, p. 59 (cursivering door mij).

<sup>3</sup> DuMont maakte al in 1943 — '44 van deze metaforen gebruik om 'de weg te bereiden' voor de komst van de televisie — zie Cecelia Tichi, *Electronic Hearth*.

*Creating an American Television Culture*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1991, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Advertentie door DuMont, 1944. Uit Tichi: *Electronic Hearth...*, p. 15.

• *The Aspen Movie Map*, realized by the Architectural Machine Group of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the late 1970s, was a new kind of vehicle: a combination of the video-disk and the computer allowed us to traverse an urban landscape, to look around, turn at the cross-roads, even peer into people's houses without actually 'being there'. Indeed, few people had heard about the little town of Aspen, Colorado, where the *daring and enterprising artists* of the MIT group had transported their *heavy and cumbersome (cinemato)graphic baggage*, meticulously shooting each and every street from a moving car. Later, the footage was transferred on a computer-controlled video-disc; the linearity of the filmed sequences was broken and the user was given the possibility of selecting one's own routes. The paradoxical experience of the presence-in-absence made possible by the project has been called by many names: 'surrogate travelling', 'virtual world voyaging', or 'movie mapping'.

Although the *Aspen Movie Map* remained just an experiment, the mode of experience it enacted has

become common. Artworks, such as Jeffrey Shaw's *The Legible City* and Michael Naimark's series of 'moviemaps' (*The Golden Gate Moviemap, vbk — the Movie-map of Karlsruhe, etc.*) have caught up with the idea. There are also industrial applications which, while not stemming directly from the MIT

achievement, extend its endeavour to the field of 'telepresence': tele-operated robot cameras roam the deep seas while endoscopic cameras penetrate the human body. Our ability to visit audiovisual data-spaces is no longer restricted to those stored on 'local' off-line systems such as the video-disk or the CD-ROM; *Mosaic* offers a gateway to the vast networked on-line realms of the World Wide Web, as a first step towards the realisation of the dream of cyberspace. A growing number of these virtual voyaging applications address the private user-consumer. Piloting a Hurricane over the British Channel during the German blast of 1940, roaming the island of Myst, visiting the Library of Congress — all this can take place, if not 'by our fireside', at least by our desktop.

## The Magic Carpet Ride

In spite of the apparent novelty of all these applications, a sense of *déjà vu* often comes to mind — hence the parallel I have drawn with the text one Antoine Claudet wrote in 1860, describing the experiences made possible by a new and sensational visual apparatus at the time, the stereoscope. The stereoscope (an optical device for viewing 'stereographs', or photographs 'in relief'), in its turn, almost automatically recalls the idea of the 'armchair traveller', perfectly personified by the American

physicist, essayist and stereo enthusiast Oliver Wendell Holmes. In 1859 Holmes wrote about his stereoscopic travels: *I stroll through Rhenish vineyards, I sit under Roman arches, I look into the chasms of*

*Alpine glaciers, and on the rush of wasteful cataracts. I pass, in a moment, from the banks of the Charles to the ford of Jordan, and leave my outward frame in the armchair at my table, while in spirit I am looking down upon Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives.*<sup>2</sup>

But, one may ask, isn't this the way we look at television,

switching channels and being instantaneously transported from one corner of the world to another? Predictably, the advertising discourses around television have from the earliest times of broadcasting often used travel metaphors, such as 'magic carpet ride', 'a modern Alice', 'the biggest window to the world', 'the answer to man's ageless yearning for eyes and ears to pierce the barrier of distance'.<sup>3</sup> An advertisement from 1944 even promised the TV viewer would become 'an Armchair Columbus on ten-thousand-and-one thrilling voyages of discovery!'<sup>4</sup> The strategy of the CNN has, of course, been geared to provide the 'ultimate' fulfillment of these promises. It purports to offer an ever-present global travel-zone, connecting the living-room or the office with the hotspots of world politics and allowing the viewer to witness the scene of an earthquake or a folk murder 'as if actually there'.

## The Armchair Traveller as a Topos

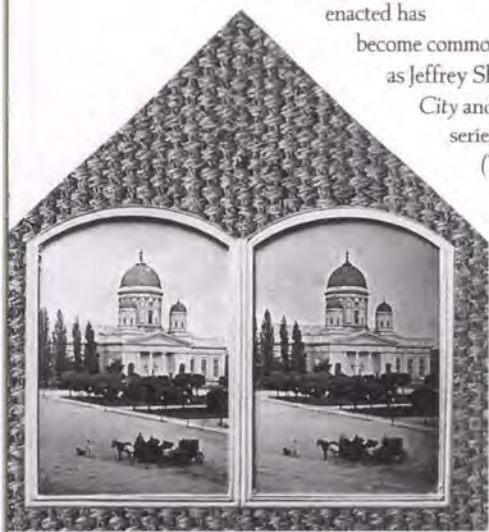
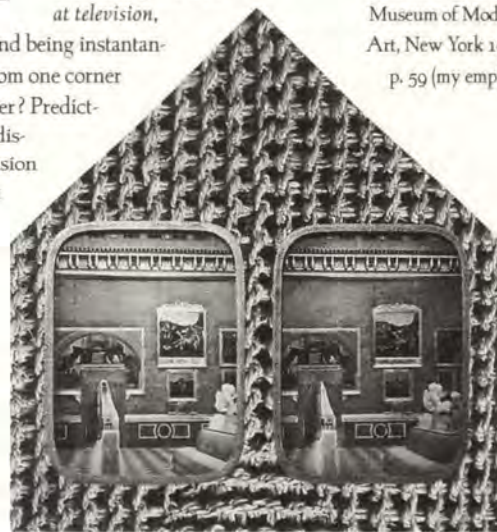
These examples show that technological 'breakthroughs' emerge from pre-existing fabrics of cultural discourses,

<sup>2</sup> Oliver Wendell Holmes, 'The Stereoscope and the Stereograph' in: *The Atlantic Monthly*, 3 (June 1859), p. 738-748.

Reprinted in: *Photography: Essays & Images*, edited by Beaumont Newhall. The Museum of Modern Art, New York 1980, p. 59 (my emphasis)

<sup>3</sup> DuMont used these metaphors already in 1943-44 to 'prepare the ground' for the coming of broadcasting, see Cecelia Tichi: *Electronic Hearth. Creating an American Television Culture*, Oxford University Press, New York 1991, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> DuMont advertisement, 1944. Reproduced in Tichi *Electronic Hearth*, p. 15.



5 Zie ook mijn 'From Kaleidoscomaniac to Cybernerd. Towards an Archeology of the Media', in: *ISEA '94 Catalogue*, red. Minna Tarkka, The University of Art and Design, Helsinki 1994, p. 130-135; 'Encapsulated Bodies in Motion: Simulators and the Quest for Total Immersion', in: *Critical Issues in Electronic Media*, red. Simon Penny, SUNY Press, New York (nog niet verschenen). Mijn ideeën zijn geïnspireerd op de omvangrijke studie van Ernst Robert Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter* (1948). Mijn voorname bezwaar tegen Curtius, die op sommige plaatsen gebruikmaakt van Jungs archetypen om het verschijnen van bepaalde *topoi* te verklaren, is gelegen in het feit dat het altijd culturele, en

van aardbevingen en plattelandsmoorden 'alsof hij er bij was.'

### De Thuisreiziger als Topos

Uit deze voorbeelden blijkt dat iedere technologische 'doorbraak' voortkomt uit reeds bestaande cultuurvertoegen, ook al beweren de makers het tegendeel. De ideeën en doelstellingen die ten grondslag lagen aan de *Aspen Movie Map* waren verre van 'nieuw.' De produktie van een evenbeeld van de werkelijkheid, het gebruik van technologie als virtueel reismiddel, de verandering van de toeschouwer van buitenstaander tot actief deelnemer (tot *agent*) en het vermogen de kunstmatige omgeving te 'betreden': deze dromen liggen ten grondslag aan de meeste ontwikkelingen binnen de mediacultuur. Hun paradox bestaat eruit dat ze keer op keer worden gepresenteerd als nooit eerder vertoonde vernieuwingen, als het bewijs van technologische *verandering* en *vooruitgang*.

Om met deze paradox af te rekenen, stel ik voor deze 'dromen' te behandelen als *topoi*, ofwel als alledaagse motieven die 'drijvend' worden aangetroffen binnen

culturele tradities en er tegelijkertijd het arsenaal aan vertoogformules van uitmaken.<sup>5</sup> In zekere zin zijn deze *topoi* 'ervaringsmallen' die op wisselende plaatsen en tijden, en binnen volkomen verschillende sociale en culturele kaders in werking treden. Ze kunnen vele gedaanten aannemen en verschillende functies hebben. Soms lijken ze 'onbewust' te ver-

schijnen, wat veronderstelt dat degenen die ze aan het licht brachten nog zijn ondergedompeld in de 'endoweld' van het heden, blind voor wat zich buiten hun tijdelijke begrenzingen afspeelt (zoals te zien was in de idealistische vr-verhandelingen van Jaron Lanier e.a. in het begin van de jaren '90). Maar een *topos* kan ook bewust geactiveerd en voor propaganda- en bekeringsdoelinden gebruikt worden (bijvoorbeeld door politici en de marketingwereld).

Een interessant geval is de 'thuisreiziger,' een *topos* die, binnen de huidige technoculturele context, een podium biedt voor het tegenover elkaar stellen van volkomen verschillende opvattingen over de voortgaande virtualisering van de cultuur. Vermoed als 'surrogaatreiziger' bijvoorbeeld, vertegenwoordigt hij het progressistische, uto-

pische standpunt dat uitgaat van McLuhan's opvattingen over de nieuwe technologieën als prothesen, als een toevoeging aan het menselijke kunnen. Anderzijds is de thuisreiziger tevens een cliché dat vooral gemeengoed is geworden in verband met de televisie, waar hij weinig eervol gebruikt wordt als synoniem van een 'couch potato'. De term impliceert een staat van relatieve passiviteit, van een 'vervreemde' verhouding tot de werkelijkheid, met het beeldscherm als middelaar. Toch is er ook een standpunt tussen deze twee uitersten mogelijk, zoals al werd aangetoond door de kritische 'virtuele wereldreis'-installaties van Jeffrey Shaw.<sup>6</sup>

### Vensters met een Geweten

Zoals al bleek uit het voorbeeld van Oliver Wendell Holmes, wordt de figuur van de thuisreiziger ook in andere historische tijdvakken aangetroffen. In de context van de negentiende-eeuwse cultuur lijkt hij een bijzondere betekenis te hebben verworven als produkt en symptoom van de massale reorganisatie, die plaatsvond op het gebied van de beleving en representatie. Dit

had te maken met de vroege ontwikkeling van de mediacultuur, die echter maar een klein onderdeel uitmaakte van een veel uitgebreider socio-economisch en cultureel proces. Industrialisatie, kolonialisme en het offensief van de kapitalistische produktiewijze leidden tot het aanscherpen van ideologische scheidslijnen in de geïndustrialiseerde landen. Dit weerspiegelde zich ook in de fysieke scheidslijnen die ontstonden tussen stad en platteland, tussen het ene stadsdeel en het andere, en tussen de woning en de wereld daarbuiten.

Met name in de leefwereld van de middenklasse in opkomst ontwikkelde zich een groeiende polariteit tussen het openbare en privé-leven, een proces waarop ideologisch werd voortgeborduurd in de ontelbare handleidingen voor 'huishoudeconomie' en de juiste woonhuisarchitectuur. De openbare ruimte, belichaamd in het wegnen van de grote stad, kwam gelijk te staan aan handel, voortdurende haast en een gevoel van bedreiging (een onbehagen dat werd gevoeld door de groei van het industriële proletariaat); de persoonlijke ruimte, met de woonkamer als middelpunt, stond voor harmonie, rust en bescherming. Volgens Wolfgang Schivelbusch weerspiegelde



bijgevolg ideologische constructies zijn.  
6 Shaw zelf gebruikt de term 'Virtual World Voyaging' voor zijn kunstwerken. Zie mijn 'Virtual Voyaging in the Landscape of Doubt', in: *Media Passage*, *Intercommunication '93*: Agnes Hegedus, Matt Mullican, Jeffrey Shaw, red. Akihiko Yoshimura & STT Publishing Co., Tokyo, 1993, p. 42-49.



• even if their creators may claim otherwise. The ideas and goals that inspired *Aspen Movie Map* were far from 'new'. Producing a simulacrum of reality, using technology as a means for virtual travel, turning the spectator from a bystander into an active protagonist (an 'agent') and the ability to 'enter' the artificial environment are among the dreams and desires which underlie much of the development of the media culture.

Their paradox is the fact that they have been invoked over and over again as unheard-of novelties, as proofs for technological change and progress.

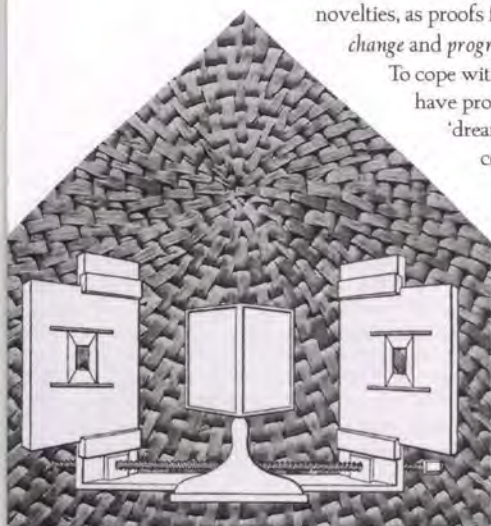
To cope with this paradox, I have proposed to treat these 'dreams' as *topoi*, or as commonplace motives

'floating' within cultural traditions and simultaneously forming their storehouses of discursive formulas.<sup>5</sup> In a way, the *topoi* are 'moulds for experience' that get activated in different times

and places, and in very different social and cultural contexts. They may appear in many kinds of disguises and serve various purposes.

Sometimes they seem to emerge 'unconsciously', implying that the people who evoke them operate submerged into the 'endoworld' of the present, unable to look back beyond its temporal confines (as was the case with the idealistic discourses on virtual reality by Jaron Lanier and others in the early 1990's). But a *topos* may also be consciously activated and exploited for propaganda and persuasion (by marketing people and politicians, for example).

The 'armchair traveller' is a case in point, a *topos*, which in the present technocultural context provides a platform for confronting highly different views about the on-going virtualization of culture. In the disguise of the 'surrogate traveller', for example, it has come to represent the progressist and utopian option, resonating with McLuhan's ideas about the new technologies as prostheses, empowering extensions of the human capabilities. On the other hand, the armchair traveller is also a cliché, deeply rooted in *common parlance*, particularly in connection with the television. It is often treated as synonymous to 'a couch potato', with a clearly pejorative connotation. It implies a state of relative passivity, an 'alienated', screen-



mediated relationship to reality. Yet, there are intermediate positions as well, as exemplified by the critical 'virtual world voyaging' art installations by Jeffrey Shaw.<sup>6</sup>

### Windows with a Conscience

As the example of Oliver Wendell Holmes has already shown, we can find the figure of the armchair traveller from other historical periods as well. In the context of the 19th century culture it seems to have gained an extraordinary significance as a product and a symptom of the massive reorganisation which took place in the modes of representation and experience. This had to do with the early development of media culture, which was, however only one thread in a much larger socio-economic and cultural process. Industrialisation, colonialism

and the onslaught of the capitalist mode of production led to the sharpening of the ideological divisions in the industrialised societies. This was also reflected in the physical divisions that came to divide the city from the countryside, one part of the city from another, the home from the outside world.

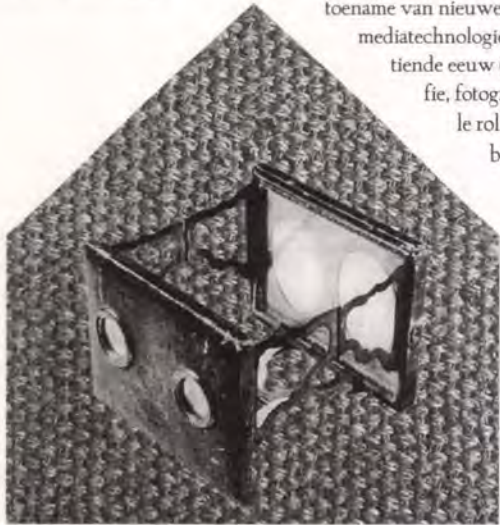
Particularly in the lives of the rising middle-classes a growing polarity developed between the public and the private spheres of life; this was ideologically elaborated in countless manuals about 'domestic economy' and the proper way to design a home. The public space, epitomised by the streets of the big city, came to be identified with business, constant hurry, and a sense of threat (an uneasiness caused by the growing industrial proletariat); the private space, centred on the domestic parlour, represented rest, harmony and security. According to Wolfgang Schivelbusch, the absolute quality of this division was reflected even in such factors as the habit of covering the windows with heavy curtains and the strong resistance against connecting the bourgeois house with the gradually expanding gas and electricity networks.<sup>7</sup>

However, there was also a third sphere 'beyond the horizon': the reality of the colonies and other

<sup>5</sup> See my 'From Kaleidoscomaniac to Cybernerd. Towards an Archeology of the Media', *isea '94 Catalogue*, edited by Minna Tarkka, The University of Art and Design, Helsinki 1994, p. 130-135; 'Encapsulated Bodies in Motion: Simulators and the Quest for Total

Immersion' in: *Critical Issues in Electronic Media*, edited by Simon Penny, the SUNY Press (forthcoming), New York. My ideas have been inspired by Ernst Robert Curtius's massive study *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (1948). My main objection to Curtius who sometimes resorted to Jungian archetypes to explain the appearance of certain *topoi* is that they are always cultural, and thus ideological, constructs.  
<sup>6</sup> Shaw himself calls his art-practice 'Virtual World Voyaging'. See my 'Virtual Voyaging in the Landscape of Doubt' in: *Media Passage. InterCommunication '93: Agnes Hegedüs, Matt Mullican, Jeffrey Shaw*, edited by Akihiko Yoshimura & NTT Publishing Co., NTT, Tokyo, 1993, p. 42-49.

7 Wolfgang Schivelbusch *Lichtblicke: zur Geschichte der künstlichen Helligkeit im 19. Jahrhundert*, München: Hanser, 1983.



het absolute karakter van deze tweedeling zich zelfs in gebruiken zoals het afschermen van de ramen met zware gordijnen, en in het sterke verzet tegen aansluiting van de burgermanswoning op het gestaag groeiende gas- en elektriciteitsnet.<sup>7</sup>

Er bestond echter nog een derde wereld 'achter de horizon': de realiteit van de koloniën en andere verre landen. De nieuwe vervoersmiddelen, de koloniale expedities en de positivistische wetenschappelijke hongering naar controleerbare feiten leidden tot een geweldige toename van nieuwe kennis. De nieuwe

mediatechnologieën uit de vroege negentiende eeuw (de rotatiepers, lithografie, fotografie) zouden een cruciale rol gaan vervullen als bemiddelaars en popu-

laire verwerkers van deze kennis. De gedrukte media waren de eersten die zich de rol van bemiddelaar toedichtten, een positie die werd verdedigd met morele, educatieve danwel patriottische argumenten.

Hadden

de romans van een Dickens of Balzac nog de functie van virtuele 'vensters met een geweten' die uitzicht boden op de harde werkelijkheid van de 'kansarme' klassen, die praktisch op de stoep bivakkeerden, de geïllustreerde tijdschriften en populair-wetenschappelijke publikaties boden de thuisreiziger het middel om zijn directe fysieke omgeving te ontvluchten. En ze waren beslist niet de enigen. Toen Louis Daguerre in 1822 in Parijs zijn Diorama opende (een schouwspel van zich atmosferisch veranderende landschappen, geproduceerd met behulp van beschilderde transparante schermen waar natuurlijk licht doorheen viel), raadde een plaatselijke krant haar lezers aan om *zonder de geringste inspanning het genot te komen proeven van de reis naar Zwitserland en Engeland, zonder onze hoofdstad te verlaten*.<sup>8</sup>

### De Universele Reiziger

Het doel van het thuisreizen was onverbloemd in de gedrukte media zelf terug te vinden. *The Universal Traveler* uit 1836 was een populair compendium van de kunst, gewoontes en gebruiken van de belangrijkste moderne wereldnaties. In het voorwoord stond te lezen: *Het voorrecht om verre landen en verschillende naties te bezoeken en bestuderen is slechts weggelegd voor de enkeling... de meerderheid moet wel verstoken blijven van deze vorm van informatie en amusement... (met behulp van dit boek) kunnen zij er nu thuis van genieten,*

*ongeacht in welk jaargetijde... Wij zullen U een beeld voorhouden zodat U, in het gemak van Uw huiskamer, al wat bezienswaardig is kunt bekijken, precies zoals de echte reiziger het zou zien.*<sup>9</sup>

Interessant is hier een scène uit J.W. von Goethes roman *Die Wahlverwandschaften* uit 1809, waarin een zeker personage een groep dames onderhoudt met zijn tekeningen, die hij tijdens zijn buitenlandse reizen heeft gemaakt met behulp van een camera obscura. *In hun eenzaamheid waren de vrouwen blij om op deze comfortabele wijze de wereld rond te kunnen reizen; om de havens en kusten, de bergen, meren en stromen, de steden, kastelen en andere plaatsen die ze uit de geschiedenis kenden, aan hun ogen voorbij te zien trekken.*<sup>10</sup> Alle elementen van het thuisreizen zijn hier al aanwezig, met inbegrip van de figuur van de 'proto-reiziger', al heeft het mechanisch gereproduceerde optische beeld hier nog niet het hele proces doorlopen naar zijn functie als drager —



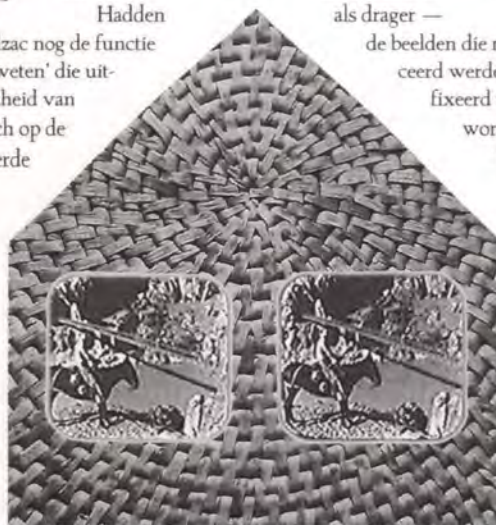
de beelden die met een camera obscura geproduceerd werden konden nog niet chemisch gefixeerd worden, maar moesten met de hand worden gekopieerd.

Toen in de vroege jaren veertig van de 18de eeuw de fotografie werkbaar werd, trokken er vrijwel onmiddellijk architectuurfotografen de wereld in, vaak op groots opgezette wetenschappelijke expedities. Met ongekende nauwkeurigheid documenteerden zij de overblijfselen van de antieke culturen, zij het niet zonder ideologische vooringenomenheid. Al spoedig werden ze gevolgd door topografische fotografen

met een minder wetenschappelijke en patriottische inslag. Zo maakte bijvoorbeeld de Brit Francis Frith in de jaren vijftig van de 19de eeuw zeven reizen naar het Nabije Oosten, waarvan hij verslag deed in de vorm van een reeks fotografische boeken. Volgens Ian Jeffrey wou Frith, die *meer een reiziger-verteller dan een wetenschapper was, aan mensen meedelen hoe dingen aanvoelden, ze laten zien hoe het eigenlijk was om daar te zijn, op juist die wegen, tussen juist die stenen.*<sup>11</sup> Het behoeft geen uitleg dat Frith de stereografie voor dit doeleinde uitermate geschikt vond.

### Een Stereoscoop voor Elk Gezin

Na haar introductie aan het publiek op de grote Londense Crystal Palace-tentoonstelling van 1851, werd de



8 Cit. Anne Friedberg *Window Shopping. Cinema and the Postmodern*, University of California Press, Berkeley en Los Angeles 1993.

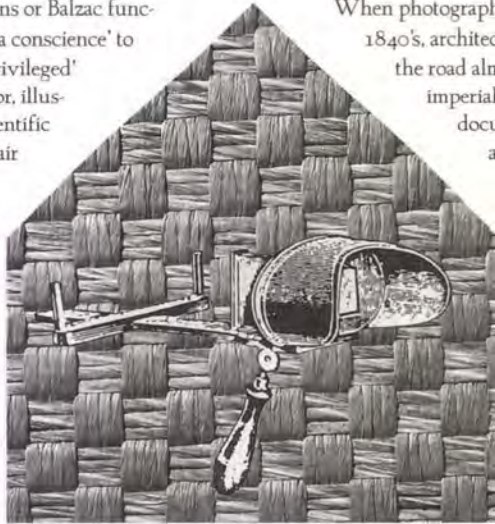
9 Cit. Edward W. Earle 'The Stereograph in America: Pictorial Antecedents and Cultural Perspectives', in: *Points of View. The Stereograph in America — A Cultural History*, The Visual Studies Workshop Press, Rochester 1979, p. 9.

10 Mijn vertaling.  
11 Ian Jeffrey *Photography. A Concise History*, Thames & Hudson, Londen 1981.

## Armchair Traveller on the Ford of Jordan

• distant lands; thanks to the new means of transportation, the colonial expeditions and the positivistic scientific thirst for verifiable facts masses of new knowledge got amassed. The new media technologies of the early 19th century (the rotation press, lithography, photography) came to play a crucial role as mediators and popular processors of this knowledge. Initially, it was the print media that adopted the role of a mediator, justifying its position by moral, educational or patriotic grounds.

Whereas the novels of Dickens or Balzac functioned as virtual 'windows with a conscience' to the harsh realities of the 'underprivileged' classes practically outside the door, illustrated magazines and popular scientific publications provided the armchair traveller with a means to carry them away from his immediate physical surroundings. They were by no means the only ways. In 1822, when Louis Daguerre opened his *Diorama* (a spectacle of atmospherically changing landscapes produced by means of painted and transparent screens backlit by natural light) in Paris, a



newspaper urged Parisians who like pleasure without fatigue to make the journey to Switzerland and to England without leaving the capital.<sup>8</sup>

### The Universal Traveller

The goal of armchair travelling was explicitly stated by the print media itself. *The Universal Traveller* (1836), a popular

compendium of the arts, customs and manners of the principal modern nations of the world declared in its preface: *It is the privilege of but few, to visit and observe distant countries and different nations... the majority are necessarily cut off from this species of amusement and information... (with the aid of this book) they may enjoy it at home, and in every season of the year... We will hold up a picture by which, in the comfort of your homes, you may see whatever is worthy of inspection, just as the literal traveller would see it.*<sup>9</sup>

Significantly, J. W. von Goethe's novel *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (1809) contained a scene, in which a person amuses a group of ladies with his drawings, executed during his travels in foreign lands with the help of a camera obscura. *In their loneliness,*

*the ladies were pleased to be able to travel around the world so comfortably; to see coasts and harbours, mountains, lakes and streams, towns, castles and other places known from the history drift past their eyes.*<sup>10</sup> The elements of the armchair travelling are already here, including the figure of the 'pre-traveller', although the mechanically reproduced optical image is still in the process of emerging as a carrier — the images produced with a camera obscura could not yet be fixed chemically; they had to be copied by hand.

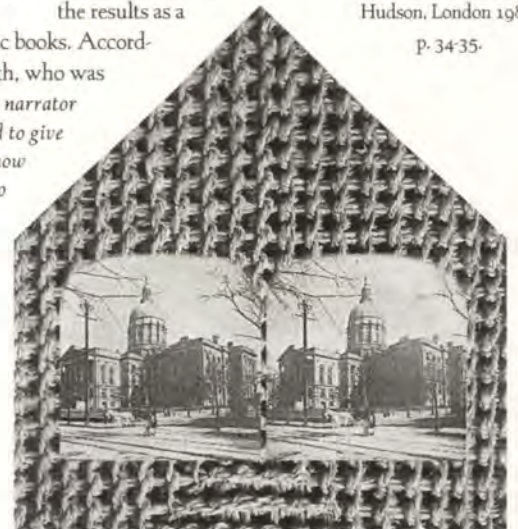
When photography became viable in the early 1840's, architectural photographers set out on the road almost immediately, often with imperial scientific expeditions. They documented the remains of the ancient civilizations with

unprecedented accuracy, but hardly without an ideological bias. They were soon followed by topographical photographers, who had a less scientific and patriotic fervour. The Englishman Francis Frith, for example, made seven trips to the Near East in the 1850's, publishing the results as a

series of photographic books. According to Ian Jeffrey, Frith, who was more a traveller and a narrator than a scholar, wanted to give the feel of things, to show just what it was like to be there, on just those roads, among just those rocks.<sup>11</sup> Predictably, Frith found stereography perfectly suited for his purposes.

### A Stereoscope in every home

Stereography became extremely popular soon after it was first introduced to the public at the great Crystal Palace exhibition in London in 1851.<sup>12</sup> Its main subject matter was from the beginning the outside world — monuments, picturesque landscapes, well known touristic sites, distant and exotic lands. Taking advantage of the more practical and faster glass negative processes developed in the 1850's stereography became (parallel with *carte-de-visite* photography) the first mass-produced form of photography. The pioneering London Stereoscopic Company, founded in 1854, is said to have sold half a million stereoscopes within two years. Simultaneously, the list of stereoscopic 'views' in the



<sup>7</sup> Wolfgang Schivelbusch *Lichtblicke: zur Geschichte der künstlichen Helligkeit im 19. Jahrhundert*, Hanser, München 1983.  
<sup>8</sup> Cit. Anne Friedberg *Window Shopping. Cinema and the Postmodern*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 993, p. 26.  
<sup>9</sup> Cit. Edward W. Earle 'The Stereograph in America: Pictorial Antecedents and Cultural Perspectives' in: *Points of View. The Stereograph in America — A Cultural History*, The Visual Studies Workshop Press, Rochester 1979, p. 9.  
<sup>10</sup> My translation.  
<sup>11</sup> Ian Jeffrey *Photography. A Concise History*, Thames & Hudson, London 1981, p. 34-35.

<sup>12</sup> The principle of stereoscopic vision was scientifically demonstrated by Charles Wheatstone in 1838, but the phenomenon only became widely known after the Scottish scientist Sir David Brewster designed a compact lenticular stereoscope, which was manufactured by the French optical instrument makers,

12 Het principe van het stereoscopische beeld werd al in 1838 wetenschappelijk gedemonstreerd door Charles Wheatstone. Het fenomeen kreeg echter pas grote bekendheid door de constructie door de Schotse wetenschapper Sir David Brewster van een compacte, lenticulaire stereoscoop, die werd vervaardigd door de Franse opticiens Duboscq & Soleil en geïntroduceerd tijdens de Crystal Palace-tentoonstelling. Naar het schijnt toonde niemand minder dan koningin Victoria belangstelling voor het apparaat, een wervende bijval waardoor de stereografie al gauw een commercieel succes werd. Belangrijkste bron voor dit verhaal is Brewsters eigen vertekende *The Stereoscope. Its History,*

stereografie al snel vreselijk populair.<sup>12</sup> Van het begin af aan was de wijde wereld haar belangrijkste onderwerp — monumenten, schilderachtige landschappen, bekende toeristische trekpleisters en verre exotische landen. Gebruik makend van de snellere en praktischere glasnegatief-methoden die in de loop van 1850 werden ontwikkeld, werd de stereografie (samen met de portretfotografie op visiteformaat) de eerste in massa geproduceerde fotografievorm. De London Stereoscopic Company, een voorloper uit 1854, schijnt in twee jaar een half miljoen stereoscopen verkocht te hebben. De lijst van stereoscopische 'aanzichten' in haar catalogus moet gestegen zijn van 10.000 naar 100.000. Gewapend met de kreet *Een Stereoscoop voor Elk Gezin* bereidde de onderneming de weg voor voor honderden andere maatschappijen in Europa en de Verenigde Staten.<sup>13</sup>

Deze populariteit, die al snel uitgroeide tot een ware 'stereoscomanie,' is tot op zekere hoogte de reden achter het merkwaardige feit dat de stereografie nagenoeg ontbreekt in de meeste werken over de geschiedenis van de fotografie. Enkele uitzonderingen daargelaten, zijn al deze werken geschreven vanuit het

standpunt van de kunst. In de Britse pers werd eind vijftiger jaren van de 19de eeuw al geschreven over *stereoscopische troep*, die het bewijs van een bedorven smaak was.<sup>14</sup> Hierin weerklonken de elitaire, esthetiserende opvattingen van 'serieuze amateurs' zoals Julia Margaret Cameron, die van de fotografie een *Schone Kunst* wilden maken. Voor de ontwikkeling van

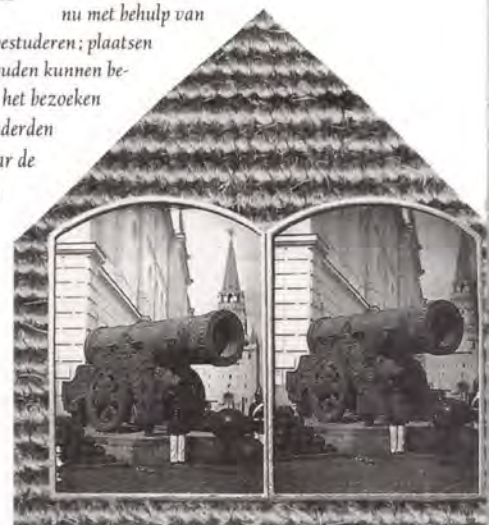
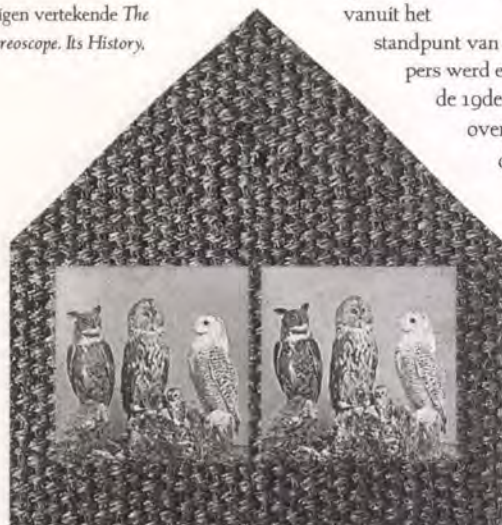
kaartspelen, lezen en de gewoonte om zowat alles te verzamelen, van postzegels tot insecten. Evenals deze activiteiten, bevestigde het welhaast ritueel doorgeven van de stereoscoop van het ene familielid naar het andere, waarschijnlijk rond de tafel of voor de open haard gezeten, de eenheid van het gezin. Het verzamelen van daguerrotypen van overleden familieleden vervulde dezelfde functie, zij het op andere wijze, terwijl de albums vol visiteformaatportretten het gezin binnen een virtuele gemeenschap van familie en belangrijke kennissen plaatsten.

Evenals de 'telecomputer' of de gezins-'mediamotor' die aan de thuisgebruiker van de negentiger jaren beloofd, maar voorlopig nog niet bezorgd is, was de stereoscoop bedoeld als een veelzijdig medium. Dit wordt duidelijk als we het praatje lezen dat de huis-aan-huis

verkopers van stereoplaten van Underwood & Underwood voor hun nietsvermoedende cliënten op het Amerikaanse platteland moesten afsteken: *... ze zijn zo goedkoop, en tegelijk zo boeiend; Uw bezoek kan zichzelf vermaken met behulp van een stereoscoop en een collectie aanzichten; Uw kinderen lezen en horen mensen praten over plaatsen die ze nu met behulp van*

*de aanzichten kunnen bestuderen; plaatsen die ze nooit allemaal zouden kunnen bezoeken, omdat alleen al het bezoeken van een paar ervan honderden dollars zou kosten; maar de stereoscopische beelden, gezien door een goed glas, zullen hen een betere indruk geven dan wat dan ook.*<sup>15</sup>

Zo creëerde de stereoscoop een virtueel kanaal waardoor de buitenwereld kon binnentreden. Met het verstrijken van de jaren vormden de miljoenen geproduceerde stereoplaten en de honderden, misschien wel duizenden die in de speciaal hiervoor vervaardigde kabinetten thuis lagen opgeslagen, een visueel duplicaat van de wereld — de rechtvaardiging, zij het een virtuele, voor de Underwood & Underwood-kreet *De Stereoscoop is de schakel tussen thuis en de plaats van Uw keuze*.<sup>17</sup> Rond de eeuwwisseling brachten de grote stereoscopische bedrijven zoals Underwood & Underwood en de Keystone View Company zelfs 'Reispakketten' en 'Wereldtours' op de markt, die bestonden uit een reeks kaarten, plattegronden, reisgidsen en natuurlijk stereoscopische kijkers. Zo kon het gezin een 'geheel verzorgde' Wereldreis maken. Volgens een handleiding van Keystone *kan de reis het beste in een rustig tempo ondernomen worden, met voldoende tijd om de bezochte volken te leren*



*Theory and Construction*, John Murray, Londen 1856 (herdrukt door Morgan & Morgan, NY, 1971).  
 13 Zie voor een vroege geschiedenis William C. Darrah *The World of Stereographs*, W.C. Darrah, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 1977.  
 14 Ian Jeffrey *Photography...*, p. 39.; zie ook Grace Seiberling en Carolyn Brooke *Amateurs*, *Photography*,

de mediacultuur en de democratisering van het fotografische beeld was de 'stereoscopische troep' evenwel van veel groter belang dan de verfijnde kunststukken van de Pictorialisten.

Een andere manier waarop het belang van de stereoscoop is onderschat, is de wijze waarop hij werd afgedaan als het zoveelste optische kinderspeeltje, vergelijkbaar met de zoëtroop, fenakistoscoop of caleidoscoop. Zelfs Anne Friedberg, auteur van de overigens opmerkelijke 'media-archeologische' studie *Window Shopping* (1993), herhaalt deze misvatting.<sup>15</sup> De stereoscoop kan echter met recht beschouwd worden als de eerste 'mediamachine' die specifiek op het thuis-'publiek' gericht was. In elk geval nam hij zijn plaats in in de huiskamer, als een nieuw tijdverdrijf naast activiteiten als pianospelen, handwerken,

## The Home, the Stereoscope and the Virtual Voyager

• company's sales catalogue is said to have grown from 10 000 to 100 000. Armed with the slogan *A Stereoscope in Every Home* the company showed the way for hundreds of others in Europe and the United States.<sup>13</sup>

This popular appeal, which rapidly developed into a veritable 'stereoscomania', is to a certain extent the reason for the curious fact that stereography is practically absent from most general histories of photography. These histories have been, with few exceptions, written from the point of view of art. Already in the late 1850's the British photographic press started speaking about

*stereoscopic trash and proof of a vitiated art taste.*<sup>14</sup>

This reflected the elitist and aesthetizing attitudes of 'serious amateurs' like Julia Margaret Cameron, who were trying to develop photography into a Fine Art. For the

development of the media culture and the democratisation of the photographic image, the 'stereoscopic trash' was, however, much more significant than the Pictorialists' beautified achievements.

Another way of failing to grasp the significance of the stereoscope has been to dismiss it as just another optical toy for children, comparable to zoetropes, phenakistoscopes and kaleidoscopes. Even Anne Friedberg, the author of the otherwise remarkable 'media archaeological' study *Window Shopping* (1993) repeats this misinterpretation.<sup>15</sup> The

stereoscope can, however, with good reason be called the first 'media machine' addressed specifically for the home 'audience'. It certainly came into the family parlour as a new entertaining pastime, finding a place alongside such activities as piano playing, handicrafts, card games, reading and the habit of collecting almost anything from stamps to insects. Like these activities, the almost ritualised handing of the stereoscope from one family member to another, perhaps sitting around a table or by the fireplace, reconfirmed the family unity. The same function was served, albeit differently, by the collection of daguerreotypes of deceased family members, while the albums full of *carte-de-visit* photographs placed the family within a virtual society of relatives and notable acquaintances.

Like the 'telecomputer' or the domestic 'media engine' that has been promised, but not yet delivered to the home users of the 1990's, the stereoscope was meant for multiple purposes. This becomes clear from the speech that the door-to-door salesmen sent by the Underwood & Underwood company all around rural America were expected to deliver to their unsuspecting customers of stereo cards: ... *they cost so little and yet are so interesting; if company comes they can help entertain themselves with a stereoscope and a collection of views; children read, hear people talk then study about places in the views; they can never visit all these places as it would cost hundreds of dollars to visit only a few and the stereoscopic views, as seen through a good glass, will give them a better idea than they can get in any other way.*<sup>16</sup>

Indeed, the stereoscope established a virtual channel delivering the outside world to the inside. As the decades passed,

the millions of stereo cards produced and the hundreds, perhaps thousands of them stored in the specially designed cabinets in the homes formed visual duplicates of the world, justifying, albeit

virtually, the Underwood & Underwood slogan *The Stereoscope becomes the connecting link between home and the place you wish to see.*<sup>17</sup> Around the turn of the century, major stereoscopic companies such as Underwood & Underwood and the Keystone View Company even began marketing 'Travel Systems' or 'Tours of

the World', consisting of pre-arranged sets of cards, maps, guide books and of course stereoscopic viewers. This made it possible for the whole family to set out on an 'all-expense-paid' World Tour. According to a Keystone guidebook, *(t)his trip around the world should be taken leisurely, with ample time to get acquainted with the people visited and to understand how they live in all parts of the world. We will not need to hurry to save expenses, as time spent on this World Tour adds nothing to our cost of travel whether we make the trip in a few weeks or throughout an entire year.*<sup>18</sup>

### Mental as Anything

The immersiveness of the experience was always one of the evocative aspects of stereography. In its basic

Duboscq & Soleil, and displayed at the Crystal Palace exhibition. It has been said that Queen Victoria herself got attracted by the device; with this promotional help stereography soon became a commercial success and a fashion. The main source of this version is Brewster's own and biased *The*

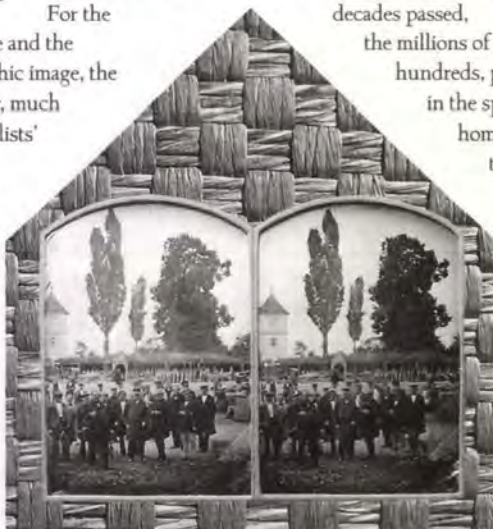
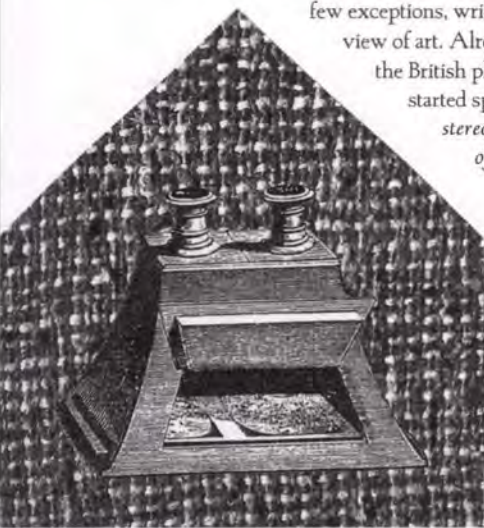
*Stereoscope. Its History, Theory and Construction*, John Murray, London 1856 (reprinted by Morgan & Morgan, NY, 1971).

<sup>13</sup> For the early history, see William C. Darrah *The World of Stereographs*, W.C. Darrah, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 1977.

<sup>14</sup> Ian Jeffrey *Photography...*, p. 39.; see also Grace Seiberling with Carolyn Brooke: *Amateurs, Photography, and the Mid-Victorian Imagination*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1986.

<sup>15</sup> Anne Friedberg *Window Shopping. Cinema and the Postmodern*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1993.

<sup>16</sup> William Brey: 'Ten Million Stereo Views A Year' in *Stereo World*, Jan/Feb 1990. I would like to thank Larry Cuba for his help in locating this and other sources.

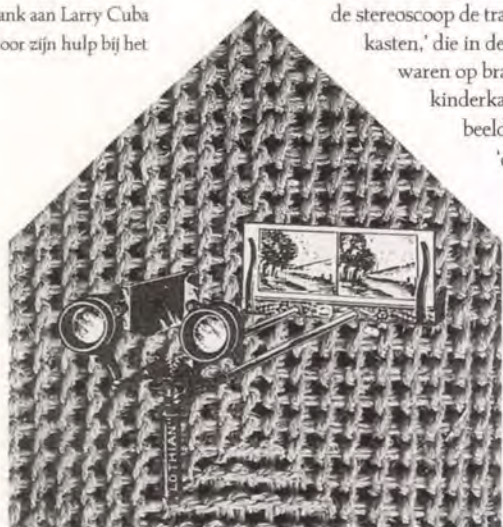


and the Mid-Victorian Imagination. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1986.  
 15 Anne Friedberg *Window Shopping*...  
 16 William Brey 'Ten Million Stereo Views A Year', in: *Stereo World*, jan/feb 1990, p. 9. Met dank aan Larry Cuba voor zijn hulp bij het

kennen en hun leefgewoonten in verschillende delen van de wereld te waarderen. Er is geen enkele reden tot haast uit financiële overwegingen, want of we hem nu in een paar weken of in een heel jaar willen maken, de kosten van onze Wereld Tour blijven altijd dezelfde.<sup>18</sup>

### Volkomen Psychisch

Het gevoel in het beeld op te kunnen gaan was van het begin af aan de bijzondere aantrekkingskracht van de stereografie. Met zijn simpele vormgeving zette de stereoscoop de traditie voort van de 'kijkkasten', die in de 19de eeuw zeer in trek waren op braderieën en zelfs in de kinderkamer. Wie zich in het beeld in de stereoscoop liet 'opgaan' was in zekere zin alleen met de bekeken scènes. Zoals al werd opgemerkt, komt deze ervaring overeen met het opzetten van een virtual reality-helm. Het verdwijnen van de (visuele) aanwezigheid van het eigen lichaam, gekoppeld aan



opsporen van deze en overige bronnen.  
 17 idem, p. 10.  
 18 *A Trip Around the World through the Telebinocular*, red. Burton Holmes, Keystone View Company, Meadville, Pennsylvania 1930, p. 3.

19 Brey 'Ten Million Stereo Views A Year'...

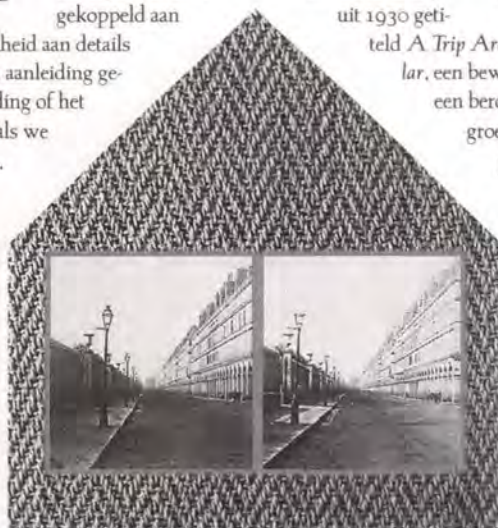
20 Rosalind E. Krauss *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 1986, p. 138.

21 *A Trip Around the World through the Telebinocular*... p. 9-10.

de suggestie van diepte en de veelheid aan details van het stereografische beeld, kon aanleiding geven tot beschrijvingen van uitreding of het maken van een geestelijke reis, zoals we zagen bij Oliver Wendell Holmes. Rond de eeuwwisseling was dit een cliché geworden waarvan door Underwood & Underwood dankbaar gebruik gemaakt werd: Het Reispakket van Underwood is in de eerste plaats psychisch. *De Reis die wij verzorgen is niet lichamelijk, maar geestelijk, en toch blijft het een heuse reis.*<sup>19</sup>

In zijn artikelen mocht Oliver Wendell Holmes zichzelf (en op z'n minst een paar lezers, natuurlijk) graag amuseren met eindeloze opsommingen van alle details die hij in zijn stereografieën had waargenomen, haast alsof hij ze vanuit een uitkijktoren met een telescoop had bekeken. Deze rijkdom aan details werkte een actieve, bijna 'tastende' manier van kijken in de hand, waarbij de ogen zich constant van detail naar detail lijken te bewegen. Volgens Rosalind Krauss is het *focussen van het ene vlak naar het andere in het stereoscopische beeld, de vertegenwoordiging van een deel van het lichaam van wat een ander deel (de voeten) zou doen in de echte ruimte.*<sup>20</sup> Mogelijk verklaart dit gedeeltelijk de keerzijde van de 19de-eeuwse stereografie, als het eerste succesvolle podium voor visuele pornografie.

De stereoscopische ervaring paste op verschillende manieren binnen de structuur van de 19de-eeuwse cultuur.

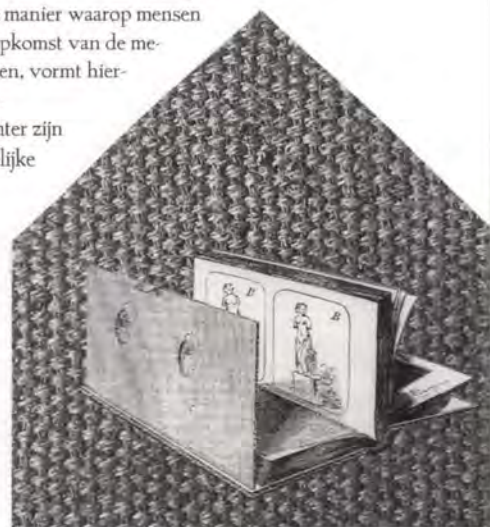


Het verband met de positivistische ideologie is snel gelegd: de gedetailleerde nauwkeurigheid en schijnbaar waarheidsgetrouwe weergave van de werkelijkheid sloten aan op het algehele streven destijds. Anderzijds lijkt het idee van de stereoscoop als middel om het 'stoffelijk gestel' te verlaten en de geest, los van zijn aardse gebondenheid, te laten vliegen, te verwijzen naar de ideologie van de Romantiek. Hier is overigens niets vreemds aan. De vertogen van positivismen en Romantiek, die vaak elkaars tegenpolen lijken, vertonen tijdens de gehele 19de eeuw versmeltingen en overlappingsen. De manier waarop mensen tegen de geleidelijke opkomst van de mediatechnieken aankeken, vormt hierop geen uitzondering.

Erg interessant echter zijn hier de wetenschappelijke bewijzen die de Keystone View Company rond de eeuwwisseling begon te geven voor de authenticiteit van de virtuele wereldreiservaringen die ze met haar producten wou bieden. In een handleiding uit 1930 getiteld *A Trip Around the World through the Telebinocular*, een bewerking van eerdere uitgaven, werd een beroep gedaan op een representatieve groep van Amerikaanse universiteitspsychologen om te bewijzen dat, rekening houdend met een aantal voor de hand liggende beperkingen, zoals het ontbreken van kleur en beweging, gezegd kan worden dat de ervaring die op deze wijze wordt opgedaan, dezelfde is als wanneer men buiten bewustzijn naar de plaats in kwestie gevoerd zou worden om ter plekke een kijkje te kunnen nemen. Met andere woorden, voor de duur van deze staat van bewustzijn bevindt de persoon in kwestie zich daadwerkelijk op de waargenomen plek. Een aantal van de geachte heren specificeerde: *de persoon in kwestie neemt de plek daadwerkelijk in eigen persoon waar.*<sup>21</sup>

Deze wetenschappelijk hoogst twijfelachtige steun was nodig, maar mocht weinig baten; de belangstelling voor de stereoscopische wereldreis was snel aan het afnemen. De televisie, met haar belofte om van de kijker een 'saloncolumbus' te maken, was nog ver weg, evenals de kersverse belangstelling voor stereografie in de vorm van de *View Master*, die echter vooral beroemd zou worden als een handig en bijzonder suggestief speelgoed. De topos die decennia lang actief was geweest had geleidelijk aan zijn eigen inhoud verteerd, en was weer een lege mal geworden. Totdat hij een nieuwe inhoud vond.

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vertaling F L A B

## Armchair Traveller on the Ford of Jordan

• construction the stereoscope continued the tradition of all kinds of 'peep-show' devices, which were a popular entertainment in the 19th century at country fairs and even in children's rooms. The person who 'immersed' his/her eyes into the 'hood' of the stereoscope was in a sense alone with the scene s/he was observing. The situation resembles the experience of wearing a virtual reality head-mounted display, as has been pointed out. The disappearance of the (visual) presence of one's own body together with the depth cues and the infinity of details a stereograph contains sometimes inspired descriptions about leaving one's body and travelling in spirit, as in the case of Oliver Wendell Holmes. By the turn of the century this had become a cliché which Underwood & Underwood could use in their sales literature: *The Underwood Travel System is largely mental. It provides Travel not for the body, but for the mind, but travel that is none the less real on that account.*<sup>19</sup>

In his articles Oliver Wendell Holmes amused himself (and obvi-

ously at least some of his readers) by giving exhaustive lists of all the details he could perceive in the stereographs he was observing, almost as if he had been standing on the viewing platform of an observation tower, with a telescope in his hands. This richness of details encouraged

an active — almost 'tactile' — way of looking where the eyes seem to be constantly scanning the scene, moving from one detail to another.

According to Rosalind Krauss, *the actual readjustment of the eyes from plane to plane within the stereoscopic field is the representation by one part of the body of what another part of the body (the feet) would do in passing through real space.*<sup>20</sup> Perhaps this gives a partial explanation to the flip side of the 19th century stereography as the first successful platform of visual pornography.

The stereoscopic experience fit into the fabric of the 19th century culture in multiple ways. It is easy to see its connection with the positivistic ideology; the accuracy of details and the apparent

truthfulness of the impression of reality it offered were common goals. On the other hand, the idea of using the stereoscope to leave the 'material frame' and let one's spirit travel free of the earthly restraints seems to refer to the ideology of romanticism. There is nothing strange in this. The discourses of positivism and romanticism which may seem to be opposed to each other, constantly merge and overlap during the 19th century. The ways people felt about the gradual coming of media technologies makes no exception.

It is, however very interesting that after the turn of the century the Keystone

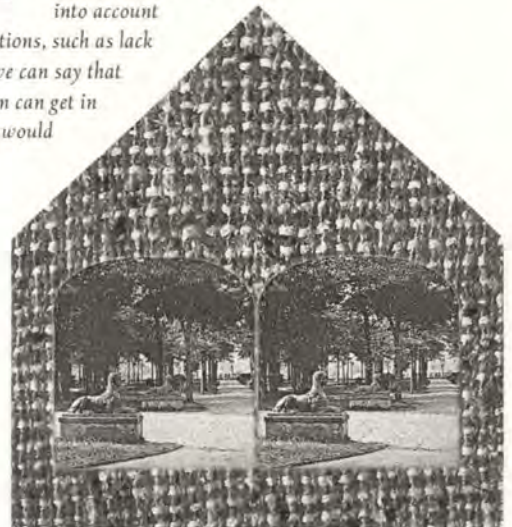
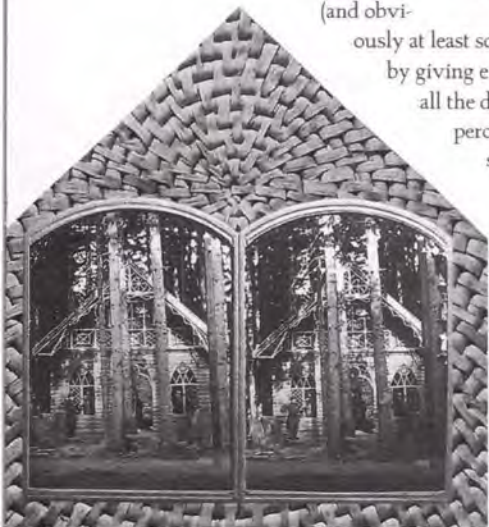
View Company started proving scientifically the validity of the virtual voyaging experiences its products purported to offer. In the guidebook titled *A Trip Around the World through the Telebinocular*, published in 1930, but based on earlier versions, a representative group of psychologists from American universities was called on to prove that (t)aking into account

*certain obvious limitations, such as lack of color and motion, we can say that the experience a person can get in this way is such as he would get if he were carried unconsciously to the place in question and permitted to look at it. In other words, while this state of consciousness lasts it can be truly said that the person is in the place seen. Some of the honourable professors made a qualification: it can be truly said that the person is really seeing the place itself.*<sup>21</sup>

This scientifically highly dubious support was needed, although it hardly helped; the interest in stereoscopic world voyaging was quickly waning. Television with its promises about making the viewer 'an Armchair Columbus' were still years away, and so was the newly born interest in stereography, this time in the form of the View Master, which, however, made its fortune above all as a handy and highly evocative toy. The topos, which had been active for decades had slowly consumed its content; it had become an empty mould again. But then, new content started pouring in.

17 Item., p. 10.  
18 *A Trip Around the World through the Telebinocular*, edited by Burton Holmes, Keystone View Company, Meadville, Penna 1930, p. 3.

19 Brey 'Ten Million Stereo Views A Year'...



20 Rosalind E. Krauss *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1986, p. 138.  
21 *A Trip Around the World through the Telebinocular*, p. 9-10.

Verander de wereld, blijf thuis. ¶ Dat is het adagium van de sociaal-ergonomen die uit het gebruiksgemak van consumenten-electronica een staatsinrichting distilleren. ¶ Nu men definitief uitgedacht is over de maakbare samenleving meent men dat in de privésfeer een reservoir van nijvere zelfregulatie aangeboord kan worden. ¶

De  
 post-so-  
 ciologen in hun  
 vermomming van  
 trendtasters gaan heel  
 hun herboren bevlogenheid  
 projecteren op de woonplek. Hun  
 zorg geldt het leger uitgerangeerde wit-  
 te- en blauwe boordenwerkers, dat dankzij  
 hometerminals uit een staat van anomie en inpro-  
 ductiviteit gehaald zou worden. Het eigen enthousias-  
 me voor de technogadgets wordt getransformeerd in de  
 hoop op een nieuw economisch elan. Het installeren van nieuwe  
 media bij u thuis blijkt een arbeidssituatie te provoceren. De combina-  
 tie van datasnelweg en opgevoerde televisie leidt onafwendbaar tot de we-  
 derkeer van de huisindustrie in de vorm van virtuele weefstoelen. Het platte-  
 land zou weer opbloeien, de files verdwijnen, het milieu worden gespaard en het  
 gezin worden hersteld. En wie wil dat in alle redelijkheid nou niet? ¶ In het tijdperk van  
 de werkvloer, de kantoortuin, de kantine en vergaderzaal bestond er nog een politiek arbeidskli-  
 maat. Er was nog sprake van ruimtelijke nabijheid en zichtbaarheid van de hiërarchische verhoudin-  
 gen binnen een technisch circuit dat de arbeidsdeling integreert. De inschakeling bij de materiële produk-  
 tie zorgde voor een dwingende lotsverbondenheid. Dat vormde de voedingsbodem voor de corporatistische  
 dromen uit de 20ste eeuw, van fordisme en taylorisme tot het Japanse management en New Age. Vakbonden zorg-  
 den voor een pacificatie van de immer sluimerende arbeidsonrust. Zo ontstond na wo ii in het Westen een configu-  
 ratie die een beheersbare sociale dynamiek waarborgde. Totdat de permanente herstructurering uiteindelijk resulteer-  
 de in ontvolkte fabrieken. Net zo geruisloos verdwenen de passies voor socialisme en communisme. De sociale  
 kwestie verschoof daarmee van de fabriekspoorten naar de huisdeuren. Het thuis is zodoende het object geworden  
 voor de fantasieën van de politiek economen en andere sociaal visionairen. ¶ Wie  
 nu vervroegd uit-treedt is niet meer te motiveren en is de facto afge- schreven. Deze grijze  
 massa behoort tot het industriële verleden, maakt het laatste geld van de verzorgingsstaat op  
 en wordt verder alleen gelaten. Maar zij waren het die zich bewust hebben gewijd aan de  
 woninginrichting. De na-corlogse generaties ontdekten het eigen huis als vrijetijdsobject  
 en als spiegel van het Ik. Het verbouwen en herinrichten werd hun levensinvulling en re-  
 latie-therapie (de open keuken in een open huwelijk). Waar het op aankwam was de  
 volgorde van de aankoop en de juiste schikking van de koelkast, hifi, huiskamerameublement, schemerlamp, brom-  
 fiets, gras-maaier, zonnewering en wasmachine. Een bijzondere plaats namen de verkeermiddelen in: de personen-  
 auto voor buiten en het televisietoestel voor binnen. Het huis was een hersteloordeel waar je kreeg wat je toekwam; een  
 beschutte ruimte waarin de gezinsidealen werden gepraktizeerd. De fatale om-slag kwam met het verlate inzicht dat  
 men werkte aan een gerealiseerde utopie waarin het niet lang uit te houden was. De com-  
 plete verzameling aan comfort veranderde in dood kapitaal. De sociale functie van familiai-  
 re ontvangstruimte stierf af en maakt thans plaats voor een actieve en tijdelijke ordening  
 van op het individu betrokken steunfuncties. De overdaad aan stoffige spulletjes heeft  
 plaats gemaakt voor een streng geselecteerde mix van sanitaire objecten. De combinatie  
 van een gestyleerde en functionele ambiance zorgt ervoor dat het huis er klaar voor is om te  
 worden omgetoverd tot werkruimte. ¶ De visioenen van het telethuiswerk staan op  
 één lijn met de wens- voorstellingen over robots, kunstmatige intelligentie en kunst-  
 organen. Hierin wordt geappelleerd aan een volgend, nog onbekend maar voorstelbaar ont-  
 wikkeliingsstadium. Het thuiswerk aan de terminal schept een arbeidssituatie die alle tra-  
 ditionele attributen mist (fysieke inspanning, collegialiteit, verplaatsing, lawaai en vuil).  
 Alles wat vroeger ar- beid tot een last maakte, lijkt nu te zijn verdwenen. Het werk aan de  
 machines van weini- gen, waarborgt de welvaart van velen die thuiszitten. Maar de



• Change the world; stay home. ¶ This is the adage of the social ergonomists who have distilled a polity out of the user-friendliness of consumer electronics. ¶ Having definitively finished pondering possible societies, people fancy that there is a reservoir of diligent self-regulation to be tapped in the private sphere. ¶

• Post-sociologists

disguised as trend tasters are projecting all their reborn enthusiasm onto the home. Their concern is directed at the army of out-of-action white- and blue-collar workers, who will be taken out of their state of anomie and unproductivity thanks to home terminals. Individual enthusiasm for techno-gadgetry is being transformed into the hope of a new economic élan. It turns out that installing new media in your own home provokes a labour situation. The combination of data highway and enhanced television will inevitably lead to the return of cottage industry in the form of virtual looms. The countryside will bloom again, traffic jams disappear, the environment will be spared and the family restored. And in all reasonableness, who wouldn't want that? ¶ In the age of the shop floor, the open-plan office, the canteen and the meeting room, a political work climate still existed. One could still speak of spatially proximate and visible hierarchical relationships within a technically integrated division of labour. Engagement in material production fostered a compelling solidarity. This laid fertile ground for the corporate dreams of the 20th century, from Fordism and Taylorism to Japanese management and New Age. Labour unions ensured the pacification of always-latent labour unrest. After World War II in the West there thus arose a configuration which guaranteed a manageable social dynamic. Until the perpetual restructuring finally resulted in empty factories. Passion for socialism and communism disappeared just as soundlessly. The social question thus shifted from the factory gates to people's front doors. The home has thereby become the object of fantasy for political economists and other social visionaries. ¶ Those who take early retirement are no longer motivatable and are *de facto* written off. This grey mass belongs to the industrial past, is using up the last of the welfare state's money and is otherwise left alone. But these were the people who consciously dedicated themselves to home furnishing. The post-war generations discovered the home as leisure object and mirror of the ego. Remodelling and renovation became the way they filled their lives, and their relationship therapy (an open kitchen in an open marriage). It all came down to the order of purchase and correct arrangement of refrigerator, stereo, living room furniture, floor lamp, motorcycle, lawnmower, blinds and washing machine. Means of communication occupied a privileged place: the car for outside and the television for inside. The house was a recovery centre where you got what was coming to you: a sheltered space where family ideals were practised. The fatal turn came with the delayed insight that people were working on a realised utopia which was impossible to stand for long. The complete collection of comforts became dead capital. The social function of the familial reception room died out and made place for an active and temporary arrangement of support functions geared towards the individual. The excess of dusty knickknacks has made way for a strictly selected mix of sterile objects. A combination of stylized and functional ambience ensures the house is ready to be turned into a workplace. ¶ Visions of home tele-work are on a par with wishful imaginings about robots, artificial intelligence and transplant organs. There is an appeal to a coming stage of development, as yet unknown but imaginable. Working at a home terminal creates a work situation lacking in all the traditional attributes (physical exertion, collegiality, change of place, noise and dirt). Everything which used to make work a nuisance now seems to have disappeared. The work at (industrial-age) machines of a few vouchsafes the prosperity of the many who stay home.

geïn-  
 ternaliseer-  
 de arbeidsdrang  
 kan het schijnbare  
 nietsdoen, dat nauwelijks  
 meer is terug te vinden in de  
 werkloosheidsstatistieken, niet ver-  
 dragen. Er moet een gevoel van noodza-  
 kelijkheid gecreëerd worden, dat het zonder  
 aanpakken van allen onverwijld in decadentie, mis-  
 daad en entropie eindigt. Het is de verrukking dat de  
 massa's weer iets om handen zullen hebben en aan een lijntje  
 kunnen worden gehouden. Thuis maken we een invasie van de  
 science fiction mee: het ruimteschip nestelt zich in de huiskamer en  
 dringt de gedachte op dat je op een virtuele ruimtereis bent. ¶ Met video-  
 spelen, 06-lijnen, interactieve media en homeshopping is men al in de stemming  
 gebracht en heeft tactiele vaardigheden verkregen om voor geld op afstand te gaan wer-  
 ken. Nu moeten de beslissers nog worden warm gemaakt om de telesector te voorzien van  
 zowel technische als ideologische infrastructures. Die kunnen worden geholpen door de articula-  
 tie van een wilsact dat we samen, maar wel ieder voor zich, in een positief klimaat, een perspectief  
 scheppen op economische activiteit. En passant wordt een axioma van zelfverwerkelijking op de telearbeid  
 geplakt: alleen als je handelt word je iemand. Zonder activiteit geen identiteit. Opgepept, getraind en op perfor-  
 mance beoordeeld moet de geïndividualiseerde massa in staat van paraatheid worden gebracht voor digitale arbeid  
 op stukloon. ¶ Het telewerk is geen institutie maar een constitutie, een mentaal kader waarin de nieuwe arbeids-  
 inspanning zich kan bewegen. Om te beginnen psychisch: wat vroeger immobiliteit heette, is nu de uitgangspositie  
 tot het leveren van een arbeidsprestatie. Het afzonderen moet daarom geconditioneerd worden. De enkeling wordt  
 opgesloten in een nis waarin hij/zij één is met het netwerk. Men wordt gemaand het hoofd te houden bij het scherm,  
 want er is niks anders. Het opbloeiend gezinsleven blijft uit, net als het vreemdgaan op de  
 werkplek. En zelfs de aangeboden uitweg van de virtuele seks loopt dood. Het enige waar  
 men mee blijft zitten is de rekening. Aangezien de toevallige ontmoet- ting is uitgebannen,  
 komen de bemiddelingsbureaus met videopresentaties, strenge mat- ching en screenings-  
 technieken om de wens te koppelen aan het daarop toegesneden aan- bod. Wanneer het tot  
 een omgangsregeling is gekomen, treden de al te menselijke onvolko- menheden aan het  
 licht en worden acute obstakels, nog voor het avontuur op gang ge- komen is. Grosso mo-  
 do is de ander naar keuze onuitstaanbaar. De immer ontbrekende glans en perfectie van de ander vormt een sociale  
 grondslag van verveling en lusteloosheid. De omgang wordt gesmoord en de tele-existentïes zijn verder onzichtbaar  
 en onbetekenend voor elkaar. *Martin Buber, waar ben je?* ¶ De elektronische eenzaamheid kan niet worden gevat  
 in metafysische dan wel psychiatrische termen. Geen melancholische diepte maar een artificiële vlakke. De verlaten-  
 heid is een fatale pro- duktiefactor, een val waarin men door overmoedig denken en het ge-  
 loof in luchtspiegelin- gen tuimelt. Alleen georganiseerd toerisme wordt nog als een uitweg  
 gezien. Men legt een collectie van psycho-fysieke ervaringen aan, van meditatie, inkeer,  
 uitputting, extase, vasten, pelgrimage tot heroïsche hulpverlening. Maar die sensaties  
 leveren geen daad- kracht op tijdens de hoogst eigen confrontatie met het apparaat. De  
 stekker uit het Net trekken betekent zelfmoord. Er is geen toekomst zonder het Net; er  
 circuleren geen alter- natieve scenario's meer. De voortgang van de enclosures lijkt niets in  
 de weg te staan. De tijd van wanhoop ligt definitief achter ons. Get serious. Sentimenten  
 zijn in de archeologi- sche lagen van het bewustzijn beland (in een tijd waarin de geschiede-  
 nis van de mentaliteit wordt geschreven). Het Net als de ideale tredmolen voor zelfgestylde  
 identiteiten zal geen revolutionaire situaties scheppen, noch de wereld ten onder doen  
 gaan. De cyberneti- sche leegte hoeft niet gevuld te worden en zal ook nooit vol zijn (van  
 verlangens, afkeer of onrust). Totdat ten lange leste de telematische energie verdwijnt in het  
 flatland van het stil- zwijgen in het aangezicht van de commando's die opblinken.

• But the internalised  
 urge to work cannot bear this apparent  
 idleness, which is scarcely discernible in unemployment  
 statistics. A feeling of urgency must be created, the feeling that  
 unless we all do something about it, everything will end posthaste in  
 decadence, crime and entropy. There is delight that the masses will once again have  
 something to do and can once again be kept on a leash. At home we are experiencing a  
 science-fiction invasion: the spaceship is ensconcing itself in the living room and the feeling of  
 being on a virtual trip through space imposes itself. ¶ With video games, toll numbers,  
 interactive media and home shopping people have been put in the mood and acquired the tactile skills to  
 work for money at a distance. But the decision makers still have to be warmed up to equip the tele-sector  
 with a technical as well as an ideological infrastructure. They can be helped by the articulation of an act of  
 will that we will, together yet individually, create a positive perspective on economic activity. An axiom of self-  
 realisation has been slapped onto telework in passing: you're only someone if you're in business. No activity, no  
 identity. Pepped up, in shape and evaluated for performance, the individualised mass must be brought into a state  
 of readiness for digital piecework. ¶ Telework is not an institution, but a constitution, a mental frame in which  
 the new work effort can move. Psychic, to begin with: what used to be called immobility is now the point of  
 departure for delivering labour performance. Isolation must thus be conditioned. The individual is shut up in a  
 niche, at one with the network. One is urged to keep one's mind on the screen, for there is nothing else. There will  
 be no flourishing family life, no workplace adultery. And even the promised outlet of virtual sex has come to a  
 dead end. All we're left with is the bill. Since chance meetings have been banished, dating services bring us  
 videos and careful matching and screening techniques to line up our wishes with a tailored selection. But once  
 the stage of visitation rights is reached, the all-too-human imperfections come to light, and become acute  
 obstacles before the adventure is even underway. By and large, the other we choose is unbearable. The  
 other's always-lacking gloss and perfection create a social footing of boredom and apathy.  
 Communication is stifled, and the tele-beings stay invisible and meaningless to each other. *Martin*  
*Buber, where are you?* ¶ Electronic loneliness cannot be expressed in metaphysical or  
 psychiatric terms. It is not a melancholy depth, but an artificial surface. Desolation is a  
 fatal production factor, a trap people fall into through reckless thinking and belief  
 in mirages. Only organised tourism is still seen as a solution. One builds  
 up a collection of psycho-physical experiences, of meditation,  
 repentance, exhaustion, ecstasy, fasting, pilgrimages  
 for heroic assistance. But these  
 sensations yield no answers in the  
 extremely personal confrontation  
 with the machine. Pulling the plug  
 on the Net is suicide. There is no  
 future without the Net;  
 alternative scenarios no longer  
 circulate. Nothing seems to stand  
 in the way of the advance of  
 enclosures. The age of despair is  
 definitively behind us. Get  
 serious. Sentiment has landed up  
 in the archaeological layers of  
 consciousness (in an age in which  
 the history of mentality is being  
 written). The Net as ideal treadmill  
 for self-styled identities will create  
 no revolutionary situations, nor  
 bring the world to an end.  
 Cybernetic emptiness need not be  
 filled, nor will it ever be full (of  
 desire, abhorrence or unrest).  
 Until telematic energy finally  
 disappears into the flatland of  
 silence in the face of blinking com-  
 mands. ¶ translation LAURA MARTZ



## Distinction

Wanneer je je ertoe zet 'kennis' te vergaren over onze maatschappij en haar alomtegenwoordige tekeneconomie, kom je meestal al snel een of andere goochemerd tegen die vraagt: hoe kun je nu conclusies trekken over tekenruimten *terwijl* je je daar doorheen beweegt? Je dient je observaties 'buiten' de sferen te kunnen legitimeren door het precieze punt aan te geven waar je een uitgang vond waardoor je naar buiten kon gaan om 'boven' de drieënheden van visuele ruimte, akoestische ruimte


schreef de Duitse schrijver Rainald Goetz dat *het niet waar is dat er geen plek buiten is waar kritiek een dagelijkse praktijk is: die plek heet jeugd*. Als dit nog steeds waar is, zullen de protagonisten van de jeugdcultuur eraan moeten wennen dat het daar buiten binnenkort erg druk gaat worden, want ellende is dol op gezelschap. Dit essay omschrijft een bepaalde praktijk, of eerder een aantal praktijken, dat al te vinden is in de voorrechte onzekerheidszone die gelegen is in de nog niet afgepaal-



## Renou

### Home - Living Room

Het eerste onderscheid dat ik moet introduceren is het symmetrische en polaire verschil tussen 'Home' (thuis) en 'Living Room' (huiskamer). Een huiskamer bestaat 'echt' (empirisch), thuis niet (is speculatief). (Vermoedelijk bestond thuis ooit wel echt in het verre verleden, maar dat was vóór de popcultuur.) Thuis is het 'oorsprongsverhaal' dat geconstrueerd is als *achteruit wijzende* wegwijzer in de visuele, akoestische en zelfs tactiele ruimte. Home is



Het sociale (niet het 'culturele') verschil tussen de 'conditie van kamermuziek' en de 'conditie van muzak zal in de komende jaren steeds belangrijker worden.

en tactiele ruimte (= de maatschappij) 'uit te rijden'. Dit goddelijke gezichtspunt, waartoe niemand ooit werkelijk heeft weten op te stijgen, is momenteel een stortplaats geworden voor alles wat niet-gewenst is. Mensen beginnen zich er meer en meer 'helemaal uit' te voelen en zich dienovereenkomstig te gedragen, met name in maatschappijen die een zelfbeeld hebben met een hoge resolutie en met duidelijke definities over wat 'binnen' en 'buiten' betekent. Niet lang geleden

de ruimte die zijn medium zowel deelt met het binnen als het buiten, praktijken die ik samenbreng onder de term 'Ambiënte Entiteit' (= omgevingsentiteit) ofwel AmbiEntiteit. Een AmbiEntiteit is niet iets dat iemand trots zijn of haar bezit kan noemen: alleen waarnemers kunnen beslissen of een bepaalde ruimte bewoond wordt door een AmbiEntiteit. Laten we de middelen verschaffen om die beslissing te kunnen maken en uitleggen waarom die nodig is.

*gemaakt om vandaan te komen* (zoals Lee Marvin zong, die zelf geboren was *onder een zwerfende ster*). Een Living Room is een 'levende kamer', een kamer die gedecoreerd en gefunctionaliseerd is om het heden *onsterfelijk* te maken en *eisen* ('verledens') op afstand te houden, en daarbij de bewoners te beschermen tegen de dingen waar je 's nachts zoal op kunt stoten. Als een Living Room wordt verward met een Home, slaat de tragedie toe. Wat je dan krijgt heet gevangenis. Gevangnissen en



## AmbiEntity



## uer

being

Movement

• As soon as one wants to obtain 'knowledge' about society and its pervasive signal economy, one is usually asked by some killjoy: how can you reach any conclusion about the signal-spaces you are moving in while you're still moving there? 'Outside' the spheres, you are expected to justify your observations by marking the exact point where you found an exit that allowed you to get out and 'rise above' the trinity of visual space, acoustic space and tactile space (= society). Yet this divine point of

have to get used to the idea that many will join them outside now, because misery loves company. This essay will delineate a certain practice, or rather a variety of practices, already found in the privileged indecision zone which lies in the yet unmarked space that shares its medium with both the inside and the outside, practices which I subsume under the term 'Ambient Entity' = AmbiEntity. An AmbiEntity is not something anybody could proudly call him/herself; only observers can

past, but this was before pop culture). Homes are 'origin stories' constructed as *retrospective* signposts within visual space, acoustic space, and even tactile space. They are *made for coming from* (as Lee Marvin sung, who was *born under a wanderin' star*). Living Rooms are 'rooms that live', rooms decorated and functionalized so as to *immortalize* the present and *keep away the demands* (pasts), thereby protecting the inhabitants from things that go bump in the night. When Living Rooms get mistaken for Homes,

• The social (not 'cultural') difference between the 'Condition of Chamber Music' and the 'Condition of Muzak' will be of growing importance in years to come.

view nobody ever successfully ascended to has now become a dump for the unwanted. People are beginning to feel and act 'completely out of it', especially in societies which have a high resolution image of themselves with clear definitions of what 'inside' or 'outside' means. Some time ago German writer Rainald Goetz wrote that *it is not true that there is no place outside where critique as practice is exercised: the proper place is called youth*. If this is still true, then protagonists of youth culture will

decide whether a given space is inhabited by an AmbiEntity. Let's provide the means by which such a decision may be reached and explain the necessity of doing so.

### Home - Living Room

The first distinction I should introduce is the symmetrical and polar one between 'homes' and 'Living Rooms'. Living Rooms are 'real' (empirical), homes are not (speculative). (Homes probably *were* real, too, at some point in the distant

tragedy strikes. What you get then is called a prison. Prisons and Sanatoriums, although crammed with people, seem to be pretty vacant in the 90s: attractive, perhaps, to the completely demoralized. Home is the *past* while a Living Room *might be* 'History', and while history is societally conditioned and may be described as a tunnel through which an optional sense of being 'here' might be deduced, the past is *not* societally but ontologically conditioned and can have no tunnel function since it is,

ills

Identity

sanatoria zitten weliswaar vol mensen, maar maken een lege indruk in de jaren negentig: misschien alleen aantrekkelijk voor wie compleet gedemoraliseerd is geraakt. Thuis is het *verleden*, terwijl een huiskamer 'geschiedenis' zou kunnen zijn. De geschiedenis is maatschappelijk bepaald en kan omschreven worden als een tunnel waardoor je de optische gewaarwording kunt traceren dat je 'hier' bent. Het verleden is echter niet maatschappelijk, maar ontologisch bepaald en heeft geen tunnelfunctie omdat het, alleen al op basis van zijn definitie, iets is dat alleen kan worden 'bevestigd' of 'verworpen', net als een veroordeling tot gevangenisstraf.

Een AmbiEntiteit maakt 'progressief' gebruik van de Living Room doordat ze deze niet verlaat met thuis. In plaats daarvan besluipen ze deze kamers (die rondbewegen in een overigens langzaam de-mobiliserende maatschappij) zoals een jager zijn of haar prooi besluipen. Als een Living Room wordt gevangen door een AmbiEntiteit, laat de kamer daarbij soms het leven.

De belangrijkste motivatie waarom de AmbiEntiteit op Living Rooms jaagt, is teleurstelling over de popcultuur: op een bepaald punt in Minkovski's ruimtetijd heeft de AmbiEntiteit vermoedelijk 'ondergronds willen gaan', maar de flats in de buurt van de ondergrondse waren te duur geworden. Er moest een nieuwe ruimte, *onder* de oude ondergrondse, worden gevonden en veroverd. Voor sommige mensen was dit cyberspace. Voor anderen waren het Living Rooms. Op zoek naar de Living Room gebruikt de AmbiEntiteit een waarnemingswijze die afhankelijk is van één enkel, versterkt zintuig: het gehoor. AmbiEntiteiten houden van geluiden. Het waren ook geluiden die hen ertoe aanzetten op zoek te gaan naar een ander leven, dat verschilde van het leven dat werd uitgedragen door (echte of imaginaire) 'autoriteiten'. De pop-kater leidt niet tot wanhoop, maar eerder tot verlichting: de vroegere verwachtingen waren nooit 'fout', ze zijn alleen niet uitgekomen, en nu

is het tijd om verder te gaan. Zoals de Duitse popcriticus, liquide socioloog en homeopathisch SubGenius Dietrich Diederichsen het uitdrukte (in *Spiegel Spezial: Pop und Politik*, 1994): *Popmuziek gaat over sociale beweging en mobiliteit en kent daarbij hoofdzakelijk één richting: van de totaal geïndividualiseerde staat en de uitsluiting van het individuele (of het nu om politieke, 'raciale' of economische redenen is, het eindresultaat is dat je alleen bent, je een vreemde voelt en merkwaardig gedrag vertoont) naar de utopische insluiting van*



iedereen (bevrijding, revolutie, eenheid, communicatie). Pop zei hallo, terwijl jij alleen vaarwel zei — en pop was vaak zo dom dat ze niet eens begreep waarom je tabee zei — ze bleef hallo zeggen. Daarom luistert de AmbiEntiteit zo graag naar 'gettomuziek' (zoals rapper KRS-1 het noemde op zijn plaat *Ghetto Music - the Blueprint of Hip-Hop*). Pop had nooit de pretentie een nieuwe maatschappij werkelijkheid te laten worden, maar ging in plaats daarvan over onwaarschijnlijkheden en maakte de oude maatschappij onwerkkelijk. De beroemde folkzanger en veroordeelde misdadiger Charles Manson eiste vroeger: houd op met bestaan! Maar dat is niet de manier om een AmbiEntiteit te worden, en Manson zit in de gevangenis en kan ons geen advies geven. De Living Room biedt onderdak aan opties: het is noodzakelijk dat je hem altijd zou kunnen verlaten, maar er nooit toe komt om dat ook echt te

doen. Als je blijft omdat je domweg niet kunt weggaan, sterft de Living Room af.

## Herhaling en Verschil

Een tamelijk onbekend iemand met de naam Charles H. Duell kan worden beschouwd als een van de belangrijkste voorlopers van de AmbiEntiteit. Hij was rond de eeuwwisseling hoofdambtenaar van het Amerikaanse patentbureau. In 1899 verzocht hij president William McKinley om het patentbureau op te heffen en niet langer patenten uit te reiken aan uitvinders omdat, zoals Duell briljant beargumenteerde:

*alles dat kan worden uitgevonden ook al is uitgevonden. Het enige dat nog ontbrak aan het uiterst werkbare wereld-*

*beeld van Duell om hem een volledige en echte AmbiEntiteit te maken, was het subtiele inzicht in het dicht verstrengelde spel tussen verschil en herhaling, dat 15-jarige technokids in onze tijd hebben weten te verwerven. Helderheid verduisterde Duells inzicht. Hij had gelijk: alles wat de moeite waard was om uit te vinden, was al uitgevonden, maar er waren ook nog manieren om de apparatuur verkeerd te gebruiken en die moesten nog worden uitgeplozen.*

In een artikel in het Duitse semi-professionele technofanzine *Raveline* (#4/1994) beschrijft een jonge dandy met de naam Marcel Feige de listen en lagen van het buitensporige geluk dat kids in 1994 te verduren hebben, onder omstandigheden die al door Duell werden voorzien — ze moeten opgroeien met de gedachte dat alles al gebeurd is (Gina Arnold, *Route 666 — The Road to Nirvana*). Feige: *Naar de stad met mijn broer. In de auto doe ik Westbams Mix Tape die ik voor 50 mark heb gekocht in de cassetterecorder. Ik ben trots dat ik de tape heb, maar, shit: vijf minuten later vraagt mijn broer: Is dit al een nieuw nummer of nog steeds hetzelfde? Ik gooi de barbaar de auto uit en stap zelf uit bij de plaatselijke platenwinkel. (...) Uiteindelijk lig ik zaterdag om een uur of zeven 's avonds*

• by its very definition, something that can only be 'accepted' or 'rejected' like a prison sentence.

A 'progressive' use of the Living Room is made by the AmbiEntity, who does not mistake Living Rooms for homes; instead it stalks those rooms (which move around in an otherwise slowly de-mobilizing society) like a hunter would stalk his/her prey. When a Living Room is caught by an AmbiEntity, it sometimes even gets killed.

The prime motivation for the AmbiEntity's hunt for Living Rooms is disappointment with pop culture: at some point in Minkowski spacetime, the AmbiEntity might have wanted to 'go underground'. But apartments near the hangouts of the underground had become too expensive. A new space, *beneath* the old underground, had to be found and conquered. To some, it was cyberspace. To others, it was Living Rooms. In searching for the Living Room, the AmbiEntity uses a mode of perception depending upon one single, enhanced sense: the sense of hearing. AmbiEntities dig *sounds*. After all, sounds initially motivated them to search for a different life, different from the one that was proposed by (real or imaginary) 'authorities'. The pop-hangover does not trigger despair but rather enlightenment: the former hopes were never 'bad', just unfulfilled; now it's time to move on. As German pop critic/liquid sociologist/holeopathic SubGenius Diedrich Diederichsen put it (in *Spiegel Spezial: Pop und Politik*, 1994): *Pop music talks about social movement and mobility and in doing so knows primarily one direction: from the totally singularized state/exclusion of the individual (be it for political, 'racial', or economic reasons, the result is being lonely, feeling strange, acting weird) to the utopian inclusion of all (liberation, revolution, unity, communication)*. Pop said hello, while you said goodbye — and pop was rather stupid sometimes in not even understanding why you said goodbye — it still said hello. That's why the AmbiEntity is so keen on listening to 'Ghetto Music' (as rapper KRS-1 dubbed it on his album *Ghetto Music — the blueprint of HipHop*). Pop never pretended to make a new

society real, but instead dealt with improbabilities and made the old society *unreal*. Famous folk singer and convicted criminal Charles Manson used to demand: Cease to exist! But that's no way to become an AmbiEntity, and Manson is in prison and cannot give us any advice. The Living Room hosts *options*: it is imperative that one *could* always leave it, yet never gets around to actually do so. If one stays because one simply *cannot* leave, the Living Room dies.

### Repetition and Difference

A little-known person named Charles H. Duell could be called one of the main ancestors of the AmbiEntity. He was Commissioner of the us Patent Office at the turn of the last century. In 1899 he implored us President William McKinley to abolish the Patent Office and stop handing out patents to inventors, because, as Duell reasoned brilliantly: *Everything that can be invented already has been invented*. The only thing that Duell's very workable worldview lacked to make him a complete and proper AmbiEntity was the subtle understanding of the intertwining play betwixt difference and repetition that 15-year old technokids of our time have since achieved. Clarity obscured Duell's view. He was correct: everything worth inventing had already been invented, but there were ways of using the equipment *the wrong way* which still had to be figured out.

In an article for the German semi-professional technofanzine *Raveline* (#4/1994), a young dude named Marcel Feige describes the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune that 1994's kids have to suffer and endure under conditions anticipated by Duell — they have to *grow up thinking everything has already happened* (Gina Arnold, *Route 666 - The Road to Nirvana*): *Off to town with my brother. In the car, I put Westbam's Mix Tape, which I acquired for 50 marks, in the tape deck. I'm proud to own this tape, but oh, what Horror: five minutes later, my brother asks: Is this a new song already or is it still the same? I throw the barbarian out of the car and hop off myself at the local record store. (...) Finally, Saturday,*

*almost 7 pm — I lie in the bathtub to wash away the dry sweat from last night's party, getting ready for tonight's Rave. I can't listen to music in the bathroom. I still remember my mother's evil glance the day I pumped up the Volume of our Living Room's Stereo to hear every last 303-Sequence of that ForceMassMotion in the bathroom. Gotta hurry. (...) I sink down into the water and the water gets into my ears, my mouth forms a silent O and I push my breath out of my lungs in short intervals. A Mega-Bassline forms in my hide. I could spend all evening like that. I just need a tape deck now to sing a perfect demo.* The attitude young Marcel describes here may not be the most advanced way to get a grip but at least it gets you through the night. It's quite ahistorical and yet not existentialist. The key sentence is where the brother is denounced for not understanding the significance of a music where 'all the tracks sound the same': the aforementioned Diederichsen once stated that a truly new music is easily recognized by seeming to lack variety. The idea is to feel *insistence* in the *distance*: repetition and difference played off each other. For a good introduction to the issue of how marginalized cultural practice works with repetition patterns, compare James A. Snead's 'Repetition as a Figure of Black Culture' in Ferguson/Gever/Minh-ha/West: *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).

Urban techno and hip-hop kids live in a situation similar to Jeffty's — Jeffty was the protagonist of a 1977 short story by American speculative fiction author Harlan Ellison, 'Jeffty is Five'. Little Jeffty was blessed — or cursed — with the ability to stay 5 years old all his life — he could listen to new episodes of old, forgotten radio shows on his old radio, although those shows did not exist anymore and those new episodes were never produced. When you have to grow up thinking everything has already happened, you become 'Jeffty' in a way. Ellison wrote: *Hume denied the existence of an absolute space, in which each thing has its place; Borges denies the existence of one single time, in which all events are linked. Jeffty*

in de badkuip en was ik het opgedroogde zweet van de party van gister nacht van me af om me klaar te maken voor de Rave van komende nacht. Ik kan niet naar muziek luisteren in de badkamer. Ik herinner me nog de woeste blik van mijn moeder toen ik eens het volume van de stereo in onze huiskamer omhoogdraaide om elke laatste 303-Sequence van ForceMassMotion in de badkamer te kunnen horen. Moet me haasten. (...) Ik zak omlaag het water in en het water komt in mijn oren, mijn mond maakt een stille O en ik pomp mijn adem met korte onderbrekingen uit mijn longen. Een megabaslijn komt opzetten in mijn schuilplaats. Ik kan de hele avond zo doorbrengen. Ik heb alleen een cassette-recorder nodig om nu een perfecte demo te zingen. De houding die de jonge Marcel hier beschrijft is misschien niet de meest geavanceerde manier om houvast te krijgen, maar het helpt je wel de nacht door. Het is tamelijk a-historisch en toch niet existentialistisch. De sleutelzin is die waarin de broer wordt gehegeld omdat hij niet het belang begrijpt van een muziek waarvan 'alle nummers hetzelfde klinken'. De eerder genoemde Diederichsen beweerde eens dat werkelijk nieuwe muziek gemakkelijk te herkennen is doordat er geen enkele variatie in lijkt te zitten. Het idee is dat je in de verte een enorme hardnekkigheid bespeurt: herhaling en verschil tegen elkaar uitgespeeld. Voor een goede inleiding op de vraag hoe gemarginaliseerde culturele praktijken werken met herhalingspatronen, zie James A. Sneads 'Repetition as a Figure in Black Culture' in Ferguson/Gever/Minh-ha/West: *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).

De stedelijke tekno- en hip-hopkids leven in eenzelfde situatie als Jeffty — Jeffty was de hoofdpersoon in een kort verhaal uit 1977 van de Amerikaanse schrijver van speculatieve fictie Harlan Ellison, getiteld 'Jeffty is Five'. De kleine Jeffty was gezegend — of gestraft — met het vermogen om zijn leven lang vijf jaar oud te blijven. Hij kon naar

nieuwe afleveringen van oude, vergeten radioprogramma's luisteren op zijn oude radio, al bestonden die programma's niet langer en waren de nieuwe afleveringen nooit gemaakt. Als je verplicht bent op te groeien in de wetenschap dat alles al eens gebeurd is, word je in zekere zin 'Jeffty'. Ellison schreef: *Hume ontkende het bestaan van een absolute ruimte, waarin elk voorwerp zijn plaats heeft. Borges ontkende het bestaan van één enkele tijd, waarin alle gebeurtenissen met elkaar zijn verbonden. Jeffty ont-*



ving radioprogramma's van een plaats die volgens de logica niet kon bestaan in het natuurlijke schema van het ruimtetijd-universum zoals Einstein dat geconcipieerd heeft. Maar dat was nog niet alles. Hij ontving voordelige aanbiedingen van verzendhuizen die door niemand werden vervaardigd. Hij las stripverhalen die dertig jaar eerder ter ziele waren gegaan. Hij zag films met acteurs die al twintig jaar dood waren. Hij was het ontvangststation van al het nimmer eindigende vermaak en vertier uit het verleden, dat de wereld in de tussentijd had laten vallen. (H. Ellison: 'Jeffty is Five', in *The Essential Ellison*, Beverly Hills, Morpheus International, 1991, blz. 805). Jeffty's neef, de AmbiEntiteit, beweegt helemaal niet. De authentieke, zuiwere beweging van A naar B zou de Living Room alleen verstoren en interfereren met de zelfvermenigvuldiging, de zelfhandhaving en het zelfbehoud van de Living Room.

## Circulaire Beweging

Zowel biologen van de Maturana/Varela-school als geavanceerde sociologen uit de Niklas Luhmann-branchen noemen deze processen autopoeisis, al gaat het hierbij niet om simplistische analogieën tussen organismen en sociale systemen. Hoe kan een waarnemer de AmbiEntiteit onderscheiden van de Living Room als de AmbiEntiteit geen bewegingen maakt die dit onderscheid mogelijk zouden maken? De AmbiEntiteit vindt een passend substituuut voor beweging, namelijk de 'beweging die rust': de circulaire beweging. De energiebron van de circulaire beweging is een enorme voorraad van zowel expres als per ongeluk geproduceerde arbitraire geluiden aan de gerafelde randen van de popmuziek.

Voordat er BPM-cijfers bestonden (beats per minute), stond op platenhoezen en -labels het aantal RPM aangegeven (revolutions per minute), en het dubbele hart van een cassette draaide rond en rond om de muziek van A naar B en terug (!) te transporteren. Zelfs een CD 'roteert'.

Er zijn twee soorten schitterende circulaire schijnbewegingen. De ene is om je eigen as draaien, de andere gaat de orbit in en draait dan mee met een aardbol. Beide typen vormen diepe onderstromen in de westerse popcultuur en duiken sinds 1950 regelmatig op in de muziek.

1. Het principe van het om je eigen as draaien is te vinden in de hi-energy discomuziek uit midden jaren tachtig (*You spin me right round baby right round / like a record baby round round round round*, een mooie song van Dead or Alive), maar ook op kosmische schaal, waar teleschizomatische fuzzrockecosystemen roteren en draaien in een tijdloze en dwaze hippie-wijsheid (*To everything / turn turn turn / there is a season / turn turn turn...*) Dit autorotatie-principe nodigt uit tot introspectieve benaderingen en navelstaarderij — de intellectuele format is vermoedelijk de verstrooidheid. Als het autorotatieprincipe wordt gecombineerd met agressie, sociaal-geïnduceerde



• received radio programs from a place that could not, in logic, in the natural scheme of the space-time universe as conceived by Einstein, exist. But that wasn't all he received. He got mail order premiums that no one was manufacturing. He read comic books that had been defunct for three decades. He saw movies with actors who had been dead for twenty years. He was the receiving terminal for endless joys and pleasures of the past that the world had dropped along the way. (Ellison: 'Jeffy is Five', in *The Essential Ellison* (Beverly Hills: Morpheus International, 1991), p. 805) Jeffy's cousin, the AmbiEntity, does not move at all. Authentic, genuine movement from A to B would only disturb the Living Room and interfere with the Living Room's self-reproduction/self-maintenance/self-preservation.

### Circular Movement

Both biologists of the Maturana/Varela school and advanced sociologists of the Niklas Luhmann branch call these processes autopoiesis, although this does not imply simplistic analogies between organisms and social systems. How can an observer distinguish the AmbiEntity from the Living Room if the AmbiEntity does not make moves allowing such a distinction? The AmbiEntity finds a suitable substitute for movement, namely the 'movement that rests': circular movement. The power source of circular movement is a vast pool of both intentionally and accidentally produced arbitrary sound at the frayed ends of pop music.

Before there were BPM-numbers (beats per minute), RPM (rounds per minute) was indicated on record sleeves and labels, and the double heart of a tape went round and round to transport the music from A to B and back (!) again. Even a CD 'rotates'.

There are two kinds of beautiful circular pseudo-movement, one is autorotation, the other gets into orbit and circles around a world. Both run deep as undercurrents of western pop-culture and since about 1950 are frequently manifest in music.

1. The autorotation principle can be found in hi-energy-disco-music of

the mid-80s (*You spin me right round baby right round / like a record baby round round round round*, a beautiful song by Dead or Alive) as well as on a cosmic scale, where teleschizomatic fuzzrock-ecosystems rotate and spin in ageless foolish hippie wisdom (*To everything / turn turn turn / there is a season / turn turn turn...*) This autorotation principle invites introspective approaches and navel-gazing; its intellectual format would be woolgathering. When the autorotation principle combines with aggression, socially induced fear and tension, it becomes paranoid: the rotating 'identity' (an entity under the influence of what Freud called 'Id': an Id-Entity) looks for a direction in which hatred and fear might be released on guilty ones. This can be studied in the stage performance of W. Axl Rose, lead singer of Guns 'n' Roses. His act onstage is frequently that of somebody who feels he has to run amok among the ordinary citizens: he holds his microphone stand at a 90-degree angle away from his body, which becomes an axis for a weapon of destruction, while at the same time singing: *I don't need your civil war*. This is not a pacifist statement. He doesn't really say that civil wars are bad, he just says you can keep them for yourselves.

W. Axl Rose, who is thus perhaps more of a 'leader of the free world' than Clinton ever will be, recently expressed a morbid fascination with the fate of eternal prisoner Charles Manson, a fascination which is quite different from the strange solidarity with which American Punk Rock Legends like Henry Rollins (former lead singer of Black Flag, now a successful solo artist) always spoke of Manson. Henry Rollins' stage act is the exact opposite of Axl Rose's. As such, it's not necessarily 'better', but a difference that puts a mark on the situation as a whole. Rollins' muscular body, tattooed all over with underground-history's insignias (things like Manson's 'Creepy Crawl' symbol and the logo of Black Flag, one of the most important early 80s us punk bands between the Dead Kennedys and Minutemen), twists back and forth, becoming a Civil War all its own;

sometimes it doesn't even look real, and that's because it's not — in 1994 Rollins declared he's a 'liar', and woe to those who claim to understand or identify with him. While Rose lashes out at invisible demons (meaning the poor huddled masses of the planet, no doubt) with his microphone stand, Rollins seems to take invisible punches from all sides, but all the beating he receives from out of nowhere only makes him stronger, a true 21st century Nietzschean autorotation transcendentalist, who has also invented lyrics to match that performance: *I've been followed around again, around and around again (...) feeling like a lonely man choking on a telephone line / tryin' so hard but I still can't lose my mind*. The White Man's burden. This is where Rock's paranoia, the belief that Civil Wars are waged out there just to make it difficult for me to grow up, becomes supercharged information, beats gravity and soars off to the stars, which brings us to the orbital movement.

2. This second kind of circular movement was of course first illustrated by the last 20 minutes of Kubrick's movie 2001: A Space Odyssey, corresponding beautifully with the autorotation interior set shown earlier in the film in the famous 'jogging on the ceiling' scenes. Kubrick even thought of mentioning the necessary Minkowski-Space where those two circular movements, spindle/autorotation and orbital rotation, can take place. He visualized the Living Room showing us a clean Louis XVI bedroom bathed in white light. The fitting musical description of orbital movement was created by the Beatles in *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*. The orbital experience is encoded in countless pop and rock songs, from the Beach Boys' *Round round get around I get around* to Van Halen's *Here we go around round / run run runaround*. If Guns 'n' Roses represent a 'worst-case-scenario' for the autorotation model, then it is safe to say that Mike Oldfield, some tracks by Ace of Base and almost all the Muzak work by Brian Eno represent the lowest common denominator to which 'orbital' approaches can sink.

angst en spanning, wordt het paranoïde: de roterende 'identiteit' (een entiteit die onder invloed staat van wat Freud het 'Id' noemde: een Id-Entiteit) kijkt uit naar een *richting* waarin haat en angst kunnen worden losgelaten op wie *schuldig* zijn. Dit fenomeen kan worden bestudeerd aan de hand van het podiumoptreden van W. Axl Rose, zanger van Guns 'n' Roses. Op het podium gedraagt hij zich regelmatig als iemand die amok meent te moeten lopen onder de gewone burgers: hij houdt zijn microfoonstandaard in een hoek van 90 graden van zijn lichaam af, waardoor die een as wordt voor een vernietigingswapen, waarbij hij gelijktijdig zingt: *I don't need your civil war*. Dit is *geen* pacifistische uitspraak. Hij zegt niet dat burgeroorlogen fout zijn, hij zegt alleen dat jullie ze voor jezelf kunt bewaren.

W. Axl Rose, die al doende wellicht meer een 'leider van de vrije wereld' is dan Clinton ooit zal worden, sprak onlangs over zijn morbide fascinatie voor het lot van de eeuwige gevangene Charles Manson, een fascinatie die sterk verschilt van de merkwaardige solidariteit waarmee er altijd over Manson werd gesproken door legendarische Amerikaanse punkrockers als Henry Rollins (vroegere zanger van Black Flag, nu een succesvol solo-artiest). Het podiumoptreden van Henry Rollins is exact tegengesteld aan dat van Axl Rose. Het is daarom niet noodzakelijkerwijs 'beter', maar wel zo verschillend dat het de situatie als geheel verduidelijkt. Rollins' gespierde lichaam, van top tot teen onder de tatoeages met de onderscheidingstekens van de underground (dingen als Manson's 'Creepy Crawl'-symbool en het logo van Black Flag, een van de belangrijkste Amerikaanse punkbands uit begin jaren tachtig, tussen de Dead Kennedys en Minutemen), kronkelt heen en weer, en wordt in zijn eentje een burgeroorlog. Soms ziet het er niet eens echt uit en dat is het dan ook niet — in 1994 verklaarde Rollins dat hij een 'leugenaar' is en wee degene die beweert hem te begrijpen of zich met hem te identificeren.

Terwijl Rose met zijn microfoonstandaard uithaalt naar onzichtbare demonen (dat wil zeggen: de zielige, opeengepakte massa's van deze planeet), lijkt Rollins van alle kanten onzichtbare klappen te krijgen, maar elk pak slaag dat hem van nergens wordt toegediend, maakt hem alleen maar sterker, als een ware 21ste-eeuwse Nietzscheaanse autorotatie-transcendentalist, die bovendien reeds de songteksten heeft uitgedacht die bij het optreden horen: *I've been followed around again, around and around*



*again (...)* feeling like a lonely man choking on a telephone line / tryin' so hard but I still can't lose my mind. De zware last van de blanke. Dit is het punt waar de paranoia van de Rock — het idee dat er daarbuiten burgeroorlogen worden gevoerd, alleen om het *mij* moeilijk te maken om op te groeien — omslaat in uiterst geladen informatie en de zwaartekracht verslaat om weg te zeilen naar de sterren, wat ons bij de orbitale beweging brengt.

2. Dit tweede type circulaire beweging werd als bekend het eerst in beeld gebracht in de laatste twintig minuten van Stanley Kubricks 2001: *A Space Odyssey*. Dit slot correspondeert prachtig met het autoroterende interieur dat eerder in de film te zien is in de faamde 'joggen op het plafond'-scène. Kubrick overwoog zelfs om de benodigde Minkowski-ruimte expliciet te noemen, de ruimte waarin beide circulaire bewegingen — de spoel c.q. autorotatie en de orbi-

tale rotatie — kunnen plaatsvinden. Kubrick visualiseerde de Living Room door ons een nette Louis xvii-slaapkamer te laten zien, badend in wit licht. De passende muzikale beschrijving van de orbitale beweging werd gemaakt door de Beatles in *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*. De orbitale ervaring is in ontelbare popsongs gecodeerd vastgelegd, van het Beach Boys-nummer *Round round get around I get around* tot Van Halens *Here we go around round / run run run around*. Als Guns 'n' Roses een 'rampenscenario' van het autorotatiemodel vertegenwoordigt, kun je gerust stellen dat Mike Oldfield, sommige nummers van Ace of Base en bijna al het muzakwerk van Brian Eno de laagste gemene deler vertegenwoordigen waartoe de 'orbitale' benadering kan zinken.

De zeldzame en verwarrende epifanische momenten waarop de twee rotatieschema's één worden, hetgeen een synergetische waarneming mogelijk maakt, blijven hoopgevend voor de dingen die nog komen — luister bijvoorbeeld naar Chuck Berry's *Round and Round*, of de betere ambient/trance tekno. Wat gebeurt er als een 'blanke' die in Europa woont, of iemand die is geboren en getogen in Tokio, de rapgroep Gang Starr hoort verkondigen dat: *Brooklyn, New York, is the best... the place where we dwell?* De luisteraars kennen Brooklyn niet uit eigen ervaring, maar goed, naar muziek luisteren is zelf een eigen ervaring. En je hebt natuurlijk ook de *viszerale Erschütterungen* (Dietrich Diederichsen). Deze sonische nerveuze identiteitsschokken spiralisieren de luisteraars uit hun synchroniteit met hun vermeende omgeving. Aanpassingsgevaar! Uw sociale RPM-index a.u.b.! De luisteraar is de 'inhoud', terwijl deze inhoud iets wordt dat de luisteraar nooit had mogen zijn. Het moment van de zwaartekracht: rotatie versus rotatie creëert aantrekking.

### Tijd

Zo wordt er regelmatig nieuwsgierigheid gewekt op plekken waar ze de status quo verstoort. Zestienjarigen uit Berlijn willen de oorzaak weten van de tellen in Los

• The rare and confusing epiphanic moments where those two rotation blueprints become one, allowing synergistic perception, remain promising for things to come — listen to Chuck Berry's *Round and Round* for example, or some fine ambient/trance techno. What happens when a 'white' person living in Europe, or somebody who was born and raised in Tokyo, hears rap group Gang Starr's announcement that: *Brooklyn, New York, is the best... the place where we dwell?* The listeners don't know Brooklyn from experience, but then again, listening to music is an experience in its own right. There is the *viszerale Erschütterungen* (Diedrich Diederichsen) of course. Those sonic nervous identity earthquakes spiral the listener out of sync with her/his supposed environment. Adaption alert! Social RPM index please! The listener is the 'content' while this content becomes something the listener was never supposed to be. The moment of gravity: rotation viewing rotation creates attraction.

### Time

Curiosity is then frequently raised in spots where it does disturb the status quo. 16-year olds from Berlin want to know what caused the riots in Los Angeles. Detroit house music becomes an experience for Hamburg gay youth. This reveals to them the *improbability of communication* (Luhmann). If it becomes a habit, some screws might be turned a little too far inside some heads. All this turning around and around and spinning and orbiting makes you dizzy. *And I could tell them No/ or I could let it go/ but I would rather be hanging on...* (Aerosmith, *Living on the Edge*). The Aerosmith video clip for their song *Amazing* shows a multiple plane play of inter-active/vx-hide-and-peek, tunnel-of-love-perspectives in which the band is not quite as integrated as they might have wished: you never really know where exactly they're at, but near the end of the clip, a glimpse is shown which gives us at least the chance of a good guess: no, that's wrong, the glimpse is not *shown* but rather *heard*: out of radio static that sounds like blubbers sizzling on an open fire, Steven Tyler's charismatic

Whisky-induced voice, which has won him a teenage following around the globe, speaks out for AmbiEntity optimism: *So, from all of us in Aerosmith to all of you out there, wherever you are, remember: the light at the end of the tunnel... may be you.* This may seem naive, but at least it's not cynical. What else can you expect from a band that has been around for ages and now feels responsible for the whole modern media world of the Children's Room in a charming if somewhat confused way, as their eagerness for the use of new media demonstrates: on the 27th of June 1994, the band went online via CompuServe with their track *Head First* before ever putting the song 'on the air' on the radio or MTV. Kids, logged in, could get a hold of the track 'in advance'. On *Yo! MTV Raps* in the summer of 1994, host Fab Five Freddy explained to *brothers 'n sisters* everywhere what e-mail was and how you could use it, and showed the viewers the mail he had just received on a computer screen. He explained that the purpose of this was to *spread the knowledge so that anyone who still doesn't know what time it is now knows what time it is.*

But traditionally, it has been a job of the academy to tell us 'what time it is'. Among the great thinkers that have always been eager to leave this weary planet and watch the conundrum from outer space, German sociologist Niklas Luhmann, author of *Soziale Systeme: Grundriß einer allgemeinen Theorie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1984) is perhaps one of the most promising. To Luhmann, 'society', or rather 'social systems' (like science, law, art and economy, for which 'society' is both horizon and environment) is not composed out of irreducible, primary units ('people'), but instead is communication, while 'psychische Systeme', 'Personen', etc., are environment. And 'communication' is not the 'action' of passing information from A to B, but rather a threefold selection under conditions of double contingency.

This concept is quite useful for opening up spaces and at the same time declaring them occupied (by observers, no doubt). It's what the AmbiEntity would say about hisheritself, if itshehe would want to

say anything: I'm an environment, select what you need. The consequences of this have yet to be pondered, maybe by effortlessly talking 'about' them. Writes Luhmann: *The Social is not a special case of a system made out of actions but rather constitutes 'action' via communication and attribution as a reduction of complexity, an indispensable self-simplification of the system.* (Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984, p. 191). There is an amazing tendency to mark anything as action. Declares Luhmann: *The most important consequence of this analysis is the fact that communication may not be observed directly but may only be deduced from other data. Therefore, in order to be observed or to observe itself, a communication system has to be made into something that looks like an action system.* (Luhmann, *ibid.*, p. 226).

This means that one can put the blame on anybody and that Living Rooms are difficult to defend. There is not much choice, really, for an AmbiEntity once a Living Room is captured — it has to be devoured whole. This is perhaps the ultimate task of the AmbiEntity: entering Living Rooms, one after the other, killing them, and then moving on, collecting the non-essence of occupied spaces and socio-ecological niches, skinning them from the inside. The 80s serial killers hunted in the 'first nature'; their heirs hunt inside the 'second nature', the holopathically mixed media environment, behaving as an environment *towards* the environment. The transformation of AmbiEntities into Image Slashers is the future of those who want to deny the new hierarchy superimposed upon visual, acoustic and tactile space, a hierarchy that suggests to 'revolutionaries' that history should be 'ended' or 'solved' like a puzzle. But revolution is beside the point: history should not be ended, it was never even there — it should be brought into existence by separating the history *we want* from the 'past' we 'actually' 'got'. Smart kids know that the mask the new hierarchy puts on is called 'time'.

They do not want to accept it out of the realization that time has never been their own.

Yet.

Angeles. Housemuziek uit Detroit wordt een ervaring voor jonge homo's in Hamburg. En deze maakt hen de *onwaarschijnlijkheid van communicatie* (Luhmann) duidelijk. Als je er verslaafd aan raakt, zou er een aantal schroeven in een aantal hoofden net iets te strak kunnen worden aangedraaid. Je wordt een beetje duizelig van al dat rondtollen, rondcirkelen en rond de aarde draaien. *And I could tell them No / or I could let it go / but I would rather be hanging on...* (Aerosmith, *Living on the Edge*). De videoclip van Aerosmith bij hun nummer *Amazing* laat een meerlagig spel zien dat bestaat uit interactief/vr-verstopptje spelen in combinatie met een tunnel-of-love-perspectief, waarin de band nou niet bepaald zo sterk geïntegreerd is als ze zelf moet hebben gewild: je weet nooit precies waar zijzelf zijn, maar tegen het eind van de clip krijg je even iets te zien waardoor je daarover op z'n minst een goete gok kunt wagen, of nee, dat is niet waar, je krijgt niet iets te zien, maar eerder te horen: uit radioruis die als het gesis van kwalen in open vuur klinkt, spreekt Steven Tylers charismatische, whisky-dooitrokken stem (waarmee hij wereldwijd een tienerpubliek achter zich heeft weten te krijgen) zich uit voor AmbiEntiteitsoptimisme: *So, from all of us in Aerosmith to all of you out there, wherever you are, remember: the light at the end of the tunnel... may be you.* Dit mag naïef klinken, het is in ieder geval niet cynisch. Wat zou je anders kunnen verwachten van een band die al tijden bezig is en zich nu op charmante, zij het licht verwarde wijze verantwoordelijk voelt voor de hele moderne mediawereld in de kinderkamer, zoals blijkt uit hun happigheid om nieuwe media te gebruiken: op 27 juni 1994 ging de band online via CompuServe met hun nummer *Head First*, nog voor het nummer op radio of MTV was geweest. Ingelogde kids konden het nummer al 'vooraf' te pakken krijgen. Op *Yo! MTV Raps* legde in de zomer van 1994 gastheer Fab Five Freddy aan de *brothers 'n sisters everywhere* uit wat e-mail

was en hoe je het kon gebruiken, en hij liet de kijkers zien wat voor post hij net had ontvangen op een computerscherm. Hij verklaarde dat het doel ervan was *to spread the knowledge so that anyone who still doesn't know what time it is now knows what time it is.*

Traditioneel was het altijd de taak van de academici om ons te vertellen 'what time it is'. Temidden van de grote denkers die er altijd attent op zijn geweest deze vermoeide planeet te verlaten en het raadsel te aanschouwen vanuit de interstellare ruimte, is de Duitse socioloog Niklas Luhmann, schrijver van *Soziale Systeme: Grundriß einer allgemeinen Theorie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1984) misschien een van de meest belovende. Voor Luhmann bestaat de 'maatschappij' of eerder bestaan de 'sociale systemen' (zoals wetenschap, recht, kunst en economie, waarvoor de 'maatschappij' zowel de horizon als de directe omgeving is) niet uit onherleidbare, primaire eenheden ('mensen'), maar zijn ze in plaats daarvan communicatie, terwijl de 'psychische systemen', 'personen' enzovoort de omgeving zijn. 'Communicatie' is niet de 'handeling' van het doorgeven van informatie van A naar B, maar eerder een drievoudige selectie onder het regime van een dubbele contingentie.

Dit concept is erg handig om ruimten te openen en tegelijkertijd te beweren dat ze al bezet zijn (door waarnemers, wie anders). Dat is precies wat de AmbiEntiteit zou zeggen over zichzelf in geval hetzich iets zou willen zeggen: ik ben een omgeving, neem wat je nodig hebt. De consequenties hiervan moeten nog nader worden overdacht, misschien door er ongedwongen 'over' te spreken. Luhmann: *Het sociale is geen speciaal geval van een systeem dat bestaat uit handelingen, maar brengt eerder de 'handeling' tot stand via communicatie en attributie als een reductie van de complexiteit, een onontbeerlijke zelf-vereenvoudiging van het systeem* (Luhmann, *Soziale Systeme*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1984, blz. 191). Er bestaat een verbazingwekkende tendens om wat

dan ook een handeling te noemen. Luhmann: *De belangrijkste consequentie van deze analyse is het feit dat communicatie niet direct kan worden waargenomen, maar alleen kan worden afgeleid uit andere data. Om te worden waargenomen of om zelf waar te nemen moet een communicatiesysteem daarom worden omgevormd tot iets dat eruit ziet als een handelingsysteem.* (Luhmann, *ibid.*, blz. 226).

Dit betekent dat je om het even wie de schuld kunt geven en dat Living Rooms moeilijk te verdedigen zijn. Er bestaat eigenlijk niet veel keuze voor een AmbiEntiteit, wanneer er eenmaal een Living Room is veroverd — hij moet helemaal worden verzwolgen. Dit is wellicht de uiteindelijke taak van de AmbiEntiteit: Living Rooms betreden, de een na de ander te doden, en dan verder te gaan, de niet-essentie van de bezette ruimtes en socio-ecologische niches te verzamelen en ze van binnenuit af te pellen. De serie-moordenaars van de jaren tachtig gingen op jacht in de 'eerste natuur', hun erfgenamen jagen binnen de 'tweede natuur', de holoopathische multimedia-omgeving, en gedragen zich *ten opzichte van de omgeving* alsof ze zelf een omgeving zijn. De transformatie van AmbiEntiteiten in beeldenstormers is de toekomst van degenen die de nieuwe hiërarchie willen ontkenen die over de visuele, akoestische en tactiele ruimte is gelegd, een hiërarchie die 'revolutionairen' influistert dat de geschiedenis 'beëindigd' moet worden, of 'opgelost' als was ze een raadseltje. Maar een revolutie slaat de plank helemaal mis: de geschiedenis hoeft niet te worden beëindigd, want ze heeft nooit bestaan — ze moet te voorschijn worden geroepen door de geschiedenis die we *willen*, te scheiden van het 'verleden' dat we 'in werkelijkheid' hebben 'gekregen'. Slimme kinderen weten dat het masker dat de nieuwe hiërarchie opzet 'tijd' wordt genoemd.

Ze willen die niet aanvaarden, omdat ze weten dat de tijd nooit hun eigen tijd is geweest.

Nog niet.

vertaling ARJEN MULDER

Paul Groot



From Home  
to Home,  
the Escape Route

*Come with me, take me home!  
I have no home. Fix your typewriter.  
If you fix the typewriter, you have your home.*

DAVID CRONENBERG, *Naked Lunch*, 1991

Ana(a)loge hallucinaties en digitale schijnbewegingen.

van een uitgelogde Burroughs tot een ingeplugde Nooteboom, van Interzone tot InterZone.

• Analog hallucinations and digital faking.

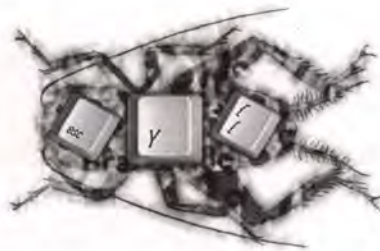
from a logged-out Burroughs to a plugged-in Nooteboom, from Interzone to InterZone.

Wanneer is het toetsenbord eigenlijk een geïntegreerd onderdeel geworden van de computer? Is die combinatie wel zo vanzelfsprekend? In ieder geval bewijst de computer zich in de laptop als een heel nuttige schrijfmachine, die, behalve een alledaags genoeg voor ook een intellectueel-artistische verrijking is.

De verfilming van William Burroughs' chaotisch ogende roman *Naked Lunch* in de stilistisch zelfverzekerde stijl van David Cronenberg is de ultieme illustratie van de personificatie van de typemachine. De angst-dromen uit het analoge tijdperk waar zelfs geen white-out holders redding kunnen brengen bij correcties, en waar de angsten van een writersblock zich in de mechanica van de machine projecteren. Nog zonder de trucks van de ASCII's, ANSI's en UniCodes die de tekstverwerker van tenminste tijdelijke vluchtwegen voorzien, en evenmin met simpeler toepassingen, worden toetsen, letterpenen en de andere verfijnde mechanica die de bizarrerie van een typemachine is, tot de slagwapens van vreemde hallucinaties. Typemachines zijn tot ijzingwekkende, grillig gevormde kevers geworden, surrealistisch betoverde gevaarten, ijzeren rammelkasten, analoge hard-ware die aan geheimzinnige metamorfosen lijdt. Een schrijver schrijft niet langer zijn obsessies en inhibities in de tekst van zich af, kijkt niet over zijn machine heen, maar ziet zijn angsten in de schrijfmachines tot leven komen.

Het ontbreken van een duidelijk taboe op de homoseksualiteit brengt, eind jaren veertig, begin jaren vijftig, in de Interzone — een fictieve stad die doet denken aan Tanger — een aantal Amerikaanse schrijvers bijeen die voor hun gekwelde gevoelsleven hier balsem komen halen. Paul Bowles verschuilt zich achter een dandy-ese vormgeving, Alan Ginsburg

struikt hier rond, Jack Kerouac meent hier wat te zoeken te hebben, net als Burroughs zelf die klaagt over de sappen in zijn klieren die aan de kook raakten toen hij zich realiseerde dat het woord homoseksualiteit iets met hemzelf te maken kon hebben. Geen van hen weet een uitweg voor hun angsten. Spreken doen ze er alleen in bedekte termen over, de waarheid van hun vervloekte leven komt pas goed aan het licht als ze aan hun typemachines (cadeau gegeven of gewoonweg gestolen) werken. Hun overspannen geesten hebben al hun frustraties in de typemachines geprojecteerd, voorwerpen die ze als Marokkaanse schandknaapjes onderling uitwisselen en waar ze de verboden zones van het menselijk lichaam voortdurend mee betasten. Vol venijn beeldt Cronenberg de altijd weer wat beduimelde verlangens van deze schrijvers uit. De schaamte waar Burroughs en de anderen door verteerd worden is af te lezen aan de maskerales van de hen omringende typemachines. Zijn eigen machine voelt zich als sprekende anus het beste thuis, maar wanneer Burroughs de liefde bedrijft met Jane, de vrouw



van Paul Bowles, verandert diens exemplaar in een liefdesmachine. Zijn angst voor de vrouwelijke seksualiteit maakt er een bloederig instrument van.

Deze typemachines zijn de overduidelijke symbolen voor de objecten van een verboden seksualiteit. Kiki, een van die begeerde jongens, biedt zich na een ordinaire slemppartij als een onverwachte engel aan Burroughs aan, en fluistert hem in het oor *Come with me, take me*

*home!* Als Burroughs, zich met een *I have no home* van hem wegdraait, probeert Kiki hem met een effectieve smeekbede — *Fix your typewriter, if you fix the typewriter, you have your home,* —



tot andere gedachten te brengen. Een doorleefde nachtelijk liefde volgt, gevolgd door een dag vol schaamte die slechts in de offerdood van de jongen gesmoord kan worden. Burroughs levert Kiki alsnog uit aan een verachte bewonderaar, waarop een brutale seksdaad volgt, een weerzinwekkende horrorfiguratie in een sadistische seksmachine.

Zo verfilm je dus een definitief afgesloten periode uit de geschiedenis van de mechanische tekstverwerking. Schrijvers worden door hun typemachines gemarteld en niet zij zelf, vooral hun werktuig, heeft een fix nodig. Maar in deze afgeleefde wereld van Burroughs en de andere American Poets waar Kafka van de oververhitte verbeelding bezit genomen heeft, is er alleen nog sprake van een naargeestig repareren. Hier is er tussen liefde en seks, mechanica en processing, toerisme en reizen, tussen al die tegenstellingen waarin de oude esthetica grossiert geen ontwikkeling meer mogelijk. Zelfs de echo van de ongelooflijk verleidelijk stem van Kiki die de echte liefde lijkt te vertegenwoordigen, is er een die sinister natrilt: de fix die de schrijfmachine nodig heeft zal op de lange termijn Burroughs fixaties niet tegen slijtage kunnen beschermen.

• When did the keyboard actually become an integral part of the computer? Is the combination as natural as it seems? In any case, the computer proves itself as a laptop to be a very handy typewriter that, besides being a daily source of pleasure, is also a source of intellectual and artistic enrichment.

David Cronenberg's stylistic, self-assured film version of William Burroughs' chaotic-looking novel *Naked Lunch* is the ultimate illustration of the personification of the typewriter: nightmares from the analog era, in which not even white-out holders can provide salvation with corrections and the fears of writer's block are projected into the mechanism of the machine. With neither the tricks of ASCII, ANSI and UniCodes that provide the word processor with at least temporary escape routes, nor any of the simpler applications, the mass of keys, letters and other refined mechanisms that make up the weirdness of the typewriter, become the weapons of strange hallucinations. Typewriters have become blood-chilling, queerly shaped beetles, surrealistically charmed vehicles, iron junk closets, analog hardware suffering from mysterious metamorphoses. A writer no longer frees himself from his obsessions and inhibitions through the text. Nor does he look above and beyond the machine; he sees his fears come alive in typewriters.

The lack of a clear homosexuality tabu in the fictional city of Interzone (a city reminiscent of Tangiers) in the late forties and early fifties brings together a group of American writers, all of whom have come to assuage their emotional pain. Paul Bowles hides behind dandyish design, Alan Ginsburg rummages around, Jack Kerouac thinks there's something here for him to find, as does Burroughs, who complains that the juices in his glands began boiling over when he realized that the word homosexuality might have something to do with him. None of them has an escape route for their fear. They speak only in

veiled terms. The truth of their damned lives only comes to light when they work at their (received-as-a-gift or simply stolen) typewriters. Their strained minds have projected all of their frustrations onto the typewriters, objects that they trade continually among themselves like Moroccan catamites and with which they continually probe the forbidden zones of the human body. Cronenberg venomously portrays these writers' well-thumbed desires. The shame devouring Burroughs and the others is visible in the masquerades of the typewriters surrounding them. His own machine is most at home as a speaking anus, but when Burroughs makes love with Jane, Paul Bowles' wife, his turns into a love machine. His fear of female sexuality turns it into a bloody instrument.

These typewriters are the over-obvious symbols of the objects of a forbidden sexuality. Kiki, one of the boy-objects of their desire, offers himself to Burroughs like an unexpected angel after a round of vulgar gluttony, whispering in his ear: *Come with me, take me home!* When Burroughs turns away (*I have no home*), Kiki tries to change his mind with a well-aimed plea: *Fix your typewriter, if you fix the typewriter, you have your home.* A night of sensual abandon follows, followed in its turn by a day filled with shame that can only be stifled by the sacrificial death of the boy. Burroughs turns Kiki over to a despised admirer, upon which a brutal sex act follows, a repulsive horror figuration in a sadistic sex machine.

This, then, is the way one films a period from the history of mechanical word processing that is gone forever. Writers are tortured by their typewriters and not they, but their machines need a fix. But in this shabby world of Burroughs and the other American Poets where Kafka of the overheated imagination has taken over, all that remains is dreary repair work. No more development is possible here between love and sex, mechanics

and processing, tourism and travel, between all those juxtapositions that the old esthetics dealt in. Even the echo of the incredibly seductive voice of Kiki, seeming to represent real love, is followed by sinister vibrations: the fix needed by the typewriter will not be able to protect Burroughs' fixations from wear and tear, in the long run.

Interzone as the Americanized free trade zone that has especially been immortalized in novels by the sole old-fashioned writer of the group, Paul Bowles. Here, Burroughs and Bowles, Jack Kerouac and Allan Ginsburg, all advocates of heavy drug usage for artistic ends of their own, attempt to entrust their fears and hallucinations to paper and to tame and pacify the typewriters. In vain: there is not even the hint of liberation in Interzone. These conservative (in spite of appearances to the opposite) writers are searching for artistic liberation in the wrong place. They are pre-occupied by their frustrations and keep the door well shut. That is true of Bowles, of Ginsburg and Burroughs; they have never wanted or been able to adapt their metaphors. Without their tormenting bonds, they would lose their artistic-psychological motivation. In *Blam!*, one of the



most remarkable HyperCard cd-roms from 1993, Burroughs appears as a speaking anus — a role that his beetle typewriter likes greatly to play — still as the leading metaphor of a digital artistic program!

Interzone als die veramerikaniseerde vrijhandelsplek die vooral door de enige ouderwetse schrijver van deze groep, Paul Bowles, vereeuwigd werd in zijn romans. Hier trachten Burroughs en Bowles, Jack Kerouac en Allan Ginsburg, allemaal advocaten van een stevig druggebruik ten behoeve van artistieke programmatische doeleinden hun angsten en hallucinaties aan het papier toe te vertrouwen en de typemachines te temmen en tot rust te brengen. Tevergeefs, in Interzone is er zelfs niet de suggestie van de bevrijding. Deze, ondanks de schijn van het tegendeel, nogal conservatieve schrijvers zoeken in de verkeerde richting naar een artistieke bevrijding. Ze zijn gepreoccupeerd door hun frustraties en houden de deur goed gesloten. Dat geldt voor Bowles, dat geldt voor Ginsburg en dat geldt voor Burroughs, nooit hebben ze hun metaforen kunnen of willen aanpassen. Bevrijd van hun kwellende banden zouden ze hun artistiek-psychologische motivatie kwijt zijn. Op *Blam!*, een van de meest opmerkelijke HyperCard cd-roms uit 1993 verschijnt Burroughs' sprekende anus — een rol die zijn kever-schrijfmachine met graagte speelt — nog steeds als leidende metafoor voor een digitaal artistiek programma!



De bevrijding van het toetsenbord komt dan ook uit een andere hoek. Het zijn Pound, Joyce en Borges, vertegenwoordigers van de Europese avant-garde die de literatuur uit de knellende banden van de schrijfmachine bevrijd hebben. Lang voor het elektronische



toetsenbord werkelijkheid was geworden werkten ze al aan hun hiervoor uitermate geschikte artistiek avant-gardistische project.

Zonder zich ooit iets van de mogelijke mechanische beperkingen aan te trekken spraken ze al in de taal van het Gesamtkunstwerk. In de schaduw van het oude Hollywood, van de vertelkunst van Dickens, van de kabbalistische alchemie van rabbi Loew, van de poëzie van Mallarmé (*Un coup des dés*), van de acrobatische gestalte van een Baron van Münchhausen die zich telkens weer aan de eigen haren uit het moeras omhoog weet te trekken, krijgt de oude alchemistische droom zijn vorm.

Ze hebben het beter begrepen dan de inwoners van Interzone: voor die bevrijding die vooral een bevrijding van het toetsenbord zal moeten zijn, heb je niet de



unheimlichkeit van een Heidegger nodig, meer een eenvoudige toepassing van de ANSI-code. Geen kentheoretische of literair-filosofische overwegingen, maar eenvoudige technische oplossingen maken het toetsenbord vrij. Los van de analoge wereld en van

die verschrikkelijke dwangneurose uit Interzone kan het toetsenbord een nooit eerder gehoorde natuurlijke klankbodem krijgen. Het kan zich nu aan willekeurig welke grammatica

koppelen. Terwijl de bewoners van Interzone als de dood zijn voor een toetsenbord waarop de kwellende qwerty-indeling met

een simpele code in willekeurig welke andere configuratie herschikt kan worden, wordt het nieuwe toetsenbord voorbereid. Om de artistieke algoritmen en de geheimtaal van Bruno en Borges er op los te laten zijn toevoegingen als de Escape- en de Home-toets nodig, een Home-toets die zo nodig weer tot een Escape-toets geprogrammeerd kan worden. De paradoxen en tegenstellingen van de modernistische, analoge wereld worden door een post-moderne digitale esthetiek afgelost en het Qwerty-toetsenbord door een simpele ANSI-codering bevrijd! Van Interzone tot InterZone.



```
; HOME.ESC
Message "Press Esc-X to escape Home"
Sleep 100
Return
```

```
; HOMEDEL.ESC
Escape
Return
```

```
; INIT.ESC
Setkey -83 Play "Home"
;esc
Setkey -32 Play "Homedel"
;esc-x
```

of:

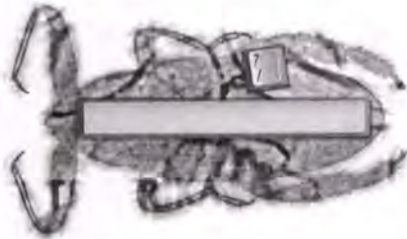
```
on keyCodeFilter
  if the key = HOME then
    don't PassEvent
  end if
end keyCodeFilter
```

De Interzone is het gebied waar Herman Mussert, de ik van Cees Nootebooms *Het volgende verhaal*, in slaap valt om bij het wakker worden er letterlijk uit te ontwakken, ergens in een hotelkamer in Lissabon. Hoewel hij toch meent gisteren thuis in Amsterdam naar bed te zijn gegaan is hij al op weg naar een nieuwe existentie door de dood heen. Een hallucinatie van een koortsige geest, of een leeg geheugen dat hem parten speelt, een verregaande vorm van dementie, of een diep bewuste ervaring? Hoe het ook zij, het is een tekst die op het sterfbed ligt, net als de ik zelf. Dit is een



II

• Thus, the liberation of the keyboard came from another source. It was Pound, Joyce and Borges, representatives of the European avant-garde, who liberated literature from the galling bonds of the



typewriter. Long before the electronic keyboard had become reality, they were working on their extremely suitable, artistic avant-garde project. Without taking the least notice of possible mechanical limitations, they began to speak the language of the Gesamtkunstwerk. In the shadow of old Hollywood, of the narrative art of Dickens, of the cabalistic alchemy of rabbi Loew, of the poetry of Mallarmé (*Un coup des dés*), of the acrobatic figure of Baron van Munchhausen who continually succeeds in pulling himself out of the bog by his own hair, the old alchemical dream took form.

They understood better than the inhabitants of Interzone: for liberation, which first must necessarily mean liberation from the keyboard, you don't need the *unheimlichkeit* of a Heidegger. More useful is a simple application of the ANSI code. Not theoretical or literary-philosophical considerations, but simple technical solutions free the keyboard. Separated from the analog world and from that terrible compulsive neurosis of Interzone, the keyboard can obtain a natural foundation of sound hitherto unheard of. It can now join with any grammar at all. While the inhabitants of Interzone are scared to death of a keyboard on which the galling qwerty arrangement can be changed arbitrarily to any other configuration, a new keyboard is being prepared. Additions like the Escape and

Home key are necessary to unleash the artistic algorithms and the secret language of Bruno and Borges; a Home key that can be re-programmed to become an escape key, if necessary. The paradoxes and contradictions of the modernistic, analog world have been relieved from their post by a post-modern digital esthetics and liberated by a simple ANSI-encoding. From Interzone to InterZone.

III

```
; HOME.ESC
Message "Press Esc-X to escape
Home"
Sleep 100
Return
```

```
; HOMEDEL.ESC
Escape
Return
```

```
; INIT.ESC
Setkey -83 Play "Home"
;esc
Setkey -32 Play "Homedel"
;esc-x
```

or:

```
on keyCodeFilter
  if the key = HOME then
    don't PassEvent
  end if
end keyCodeFilter
```

The Interzone is the area where Herman Mussert, the narrator of Cees Nooteboom's *The next story*, falls asleep only to awaken (literally) in a hotel room in Lisbon. While he is certain that he went to bed yesterday in his own home in Amsterdam, he has already passed death on the way to a new existence. A hallucination of a feverish mind or an empty memory that is playing tricks on him? An extreme form of dementia or a profoundly conscious experience? Whatever the case, it's a text on its deathbed, like the narrator himself. This is a body that embodies an artistic and a genuine bodily death at once. An I-figure that is more than only a split personality, who literally consists of as many forms as there are sentences in this novella. But

this 'I' is not simple to pin down, it changes and exchanges its form, is not easy to know (according to the first critic that waved the novella away with a bored yawn) refrains from committing itself (for those who see it as a contemporary document worthy of a Nobel prize). And for good measure: he has already had done with the fear of beetles. He sees a documentary about a *sexton beetle*, a beetle with the colors of a salamander (...) I saw a noble animal, ebony and copper. It looked like it had blazons on its shields. He sees no typewriters-gone-wild, but simply a science fiction beetle's head, magnified a hundred times (...) vomiting green stomach bile over a round pellet of bait that still looked like a dead rat an hour ago.

The 'I' form feels a little awkward here. A bundle of collected, ever-changing circumstances and functions that we say 'I' to. 'I' as a sort of appeal of the body. While it still has something in common with the conventional considerations, Mussert's 'I' has begun a nomadic voyage as an unconscious identity, not present in the reality of the story but in the reality of the text itself. Other than the third person, according to Roland Barthes the sign of a comprehensible agreement between society and author — the absence of which signifies a purposeful destruction of the novel — 'I' is the sign of a personal artistic practice, of a secret code between author and reader. Suddenly, under the apparent surface of Mussert's thought, we see a process of multi-tasking, an 'algebraic state of behavior', which is not only an expression of the tragedy of human affairs. The seemingly dead novel has reappeared in a new state in this short work by Nooteboom.

Indeed, Nooteboom is concealing something incredibly heinous under his cloak. Former classical language teacher Mussert was gradually drawn into the travel guide business and now produces his books as though on order under the pseudonym Dr. Strabo. He is vegetating,

lichaam dat tegelijk een artistieke en een echte lichamelijke dood beleeft. Een ik-figuur die meer is dan alleen een gespleten persoon-

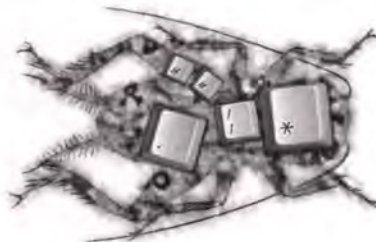


lijkheid, die letterlijk uit evenveel gestalten bestaat als er zinnen in deze novelle staan. Maar deze 'ik' is niet eenvoudig te duiden, hij wisselt en verwisselt, laat zich niet gemakkelijk kennen (volgens een criticus die deze novelle met een verveelde geeuw afdeed), of laat juist het achterste van zijn tong zien (voor wie in deze korte novelle een eigentijds document ziet en een Nobelprijs waard). En voor de goede orde: met de angst voor de kevers heeft hij al afgerekend. Hij ziet een documentaire over een doodgraver, een kever met de kleuren van een vuursalamander (...) Ik zag een adellijk dier, ebbehout en koper. Het leek wel alsof hij blazoenen op zijn schilden had. Hij ziet dan ook geen op hol geslagen typemachine, maar eenvoudig een honderd keer vergrote science-fictionkop van een kever (...) groen maagsap uitbraken over een ronde kogel van aasvlees dat er een uur geleden nog uitzag als een dode rat.

De 'ik'vorm hier voelt zich wat onwennig. Een bundel samengestelde, steeds veranderende omstandigheden en functies waar we 'ik' tegen zeggen. Ik als een soort beroep van het lichaam. Terwijl hij toch wel wat gemeen heeft met de conventionele overwegingen, is de ik-vorm van Mussert aan het zwerven geslagen als een onderbewuste identiteit, die niet aanwezig is in de realiteit van het verhaal maar in die van de tekst

zelf. Anders dan de derde persoon, die volgens Roland Barthes het teken van een begrijpelijke overeenkomst tussen maatschappij en auteur is — en bij wiens afwezigheid er sprake is van een opzettelijke vernietiging van de roman — is de ik het teken van een persoonlijke artistieke praktijk, van een geheime code tussen auteur en lezer. Hier zien we plotseling, onder het schijnbare oppervlak van Musserts denken, een proces van multitasking, een 'algebraïsche staat van handeling' die niet alleen uitdrukking geeft aan de tragiek der menselijke betrekkingen. De roman die dood leek te zijn wordt in deze korte novelle van Nooteboom tot een nieuwe staat gebracht.

Wat Nooteboom in zijn schild voert is dan ook wel heel erg snood. Mussert de ex-leraar klassieke talen die van lieverlede in de reisboekenbusiness verzeild is geraakt en nu zijn boeken onder het pseudoniem van Dr. Strabo als op bestelling levert, vegeteert op de laatste resten van een cultuur die eens als literatuur werd ervaren, en nu als reisverslag wordt opgeroepen. Deze ik, van reiziger in oude teksten naar een toerist in plaatsjes, beweegt zich steeds op de meest onverwachte en slinkse manieren door de tekst heen. Op een schijnbaar onhandige, maar in wezen watervlugge, metamorfoserende manier verkent hij alles om zich heen. Als de omkering van Musils *Mann ohne Eigenschaften* die vooral in de diepte en uitgebreidheid een beeld van een



'menselijk karakter' als een 'tekst' scheidt, heeft Nooteboom een 'tekst' als een 'mens' uitgedost. Deze novelle is een tekst die de

lezer de ondergang van de culturele elite aanpraat als het simpele verhaal van een individu, dat zichtbaar wordt in de omwenteling van de oude klassieke culturele leessfeer naar die van de post-moderne reisboeken-cultuur. Het verhaal van een desillusie, waarbij de suggestie van een echte doorleving ervan is verworpen tot een veelvuldig opsommen en namedroppen van de klassieke protagonisten en helden. Net zo min als met de inhoud van zijn reisboeken, onderhoudt hij er nog



een persoonlijke relatie mee. De namen en gestalten van de helden zijn niet doorleefd, zijn niet anders dan de ikonen en de helden van een toevallige zomermode. Horatius oogt als SuperMario, Ovidius als Aladin, als een schaduw van iets dat eens een betekenis moet hebben gehad, maar nu als een verre akoestische galm in zijn hersenen ronddoelt.

### IV

*He was a seaman, but he was a wanderer, too, while most seamen lead, if one may so express it, a sedentary life. Their minds are of the stay-at-home order, and their home is always with them — the ship; and so is their country — the sea.* JOSEPH CONRAD, *Heart of Darkness*  
De psychologie zal ongetwijfeld een duidelijk antwoord kunnen geven op de vraag op hoeveel metaforische niveaus ons denken tegelijk actief kan zijn, hoeveel schijnbaar elkaar uitsluitende

beelden toch nog door ons verstand verwerkt kunnen worden zonder daarbij op tilt te slaan. Maar zowel Wittgensteins

• flourishing on the last remains of a culture that once was experienced as literature and is now retrieved as a travel journal. This 'I', from the traveller in ancient texts to the tourist in little places, moves through the text in the most unexpected and furtive manner. In a seemingly clumsy, but actually lightning fast, metamorphic way, he explores everything surrounding him. Like an inversion of Musil's *Man Without Qualities* which creates an image of a 'human character' as a 'text' mainly through depth and expanse, Nootboom has dressed up a 'text' as a 'human being'. This novella is a text that persuades the reader of the downfall of the cultural elite in the form of the simple story of an individual, rendered visible in the devolution of the realm of ancient classical literature into post-modern travelogue culture. The story of a disillusionment, in which the suggestion of a real experience of classical protagonists and heroes has turned into a repetitive summarizing and name-dropping. His interaction with it is no more personal than his interaction with the contents of his travel guides. The names and forms of the heroes are not lived out, are nothing other than the icons and heroes of a chance summer mode. Horatio looks like Super Mario, Ovid like Aladdin, like a shadow of something that must once have had meaning and now roams his brain like a distant acoustic reverberation.

III

*He was a seaman, but he was a wanderer, too, while most seamen lead, if one may so express it, a sedentary life. Their minds are of the stay-at-home order, and their home is always with them — the ship; and so is their country — the sea.*

JOSEPH CONRAD, *Heart of Darkness*  
Psychology will doubtless have an answer to the question: upon how many metaphorical levels can our thought be active simultaneously? How many seemingly mutually exclusive images can be processed by our mind without it crashing? But Wittgenstein's

reading of the duck's head that becomes a rabbit, Escher's graphic transformation of fish into birds and the contours of Picasso's faces — in which the profile of a face becomes a 'head-on' portrait — suggest that it is only with great difficulty that human beings can distort the image of reality into a higher power. Apparently, there are strict limitations to our esthetic and psychological intelligence.

At first glance, Mussert would seem to have lost his grip on his surroundings. But in the self-regulating individual messages, a sort of 'telescript' messages that provide themselves automatically with an idiosyncratic, rhetorical cryptography, he does succeed in creating a coherent image of himself. However much he may lose and multiply himself in multiple 'I', 'you' and 'he's, the underlying metaphors reveal a recognizable coherence. He has the feel of the word processor in his fingers, as it were. He is a post-modern human being that manifests himself as a text and seems to be completely unaware of the limitations of the keyboard. Anachronistic, analog, on a simple typewriter. The hero of the modern times, as penetrating as Camus' stranger, the embodiment of the fifties. Both are archetypal images of a period of time: the stranger who wants to forget the misery of the world and allows himself to be blinded by the sun and the writer of travel guides who derives his personality from the changing standard settings of the keyboard. A worn shade of a past time, he also incorporates a shadow of the future. Every meaningful interpretation of his life can be rendered obsolete by a keyboard setting.

Mussert is already plugged-in, but can't deal with it because he still cannot get an overview of all the possibilities this encompasses. The transition from an analog and literary to a digital physicality contains a clear problem: his own death. Mussert possesses neither a repairable, classical, robotic physicality, nor an organism that expresses itself in physical

meta-language. His body suffers from amnesia, from loss of concentration, and thus disintegrates into countless bodies. Digitalization as a simple case of analog disintegration.

The fate of Mussert, nicknamed Socrates in school, is also the fate of a disintegrating European culture: *an ex-alumnus would read Herman Mussert's obituary and say, 'hey, Socrates is dead (...) my body would begin an endless nomadic journey (...) and take part in the most fantastic metamorphoses(...).'* On his final living journey, a boat trip up the Amazon, he leaves the boat and the sobbing of its diesel motor and enters the jungle, ultimately to meet his death. *The deep, growling call of toads and giant frogs sounded from the banks. I don't know how long I stood there; one final time, the jungle glowed terribly in the Eastern sun; one final time, the flash of a day hastened across the river and blackness once again enfolded everything, birds and trees, concealing and covering everything.*

This is Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* revisited in a flight beyond one's own culture, the echo of Marlow's boat trip in



search of Kurtz, a company agent who has retreated into the jungle. As a literary text, it has always been admired, as a screenplay, it lay on the shelf for a hundred years — perhaps appearing as a faint shade of itself in John Huston's *African Queen* — until it was finally filmed by Francis Ford Coppola in *Apocalypse Now*.

Ford Coppola went about his work very carefully and used the metaphor that the writer had applied as a literary style device. Conrad excels in the establishment of scenes by means of gleaming, sparkling things, things

lezing van de eendekop die een konijn wordt, Eschers grafische omzettingen van vissen in vogels, als de contouren van Picasso's gezichten — waar het profiel van een gelaat een 'en face' wordt — suggereren dat de mens maar moeilijk het beeld van de werkelijkheid tot een hogere macht kan verdraaien. Aan onze esthetische en psychologische intelligentie zijn kennelijk nauwe grenzen gesteld.

Mussert lijkt op het eerste gezicht misschien de greep op zijn omgeving verloren te hebben. Maar in de zichzelf regulerende losse boodschappen, een soort 'telescript' boodschappen die zichzelf automatisch van een eigenzinnig retorische cryptografie voorzien, weet hij wel degelijk een samenhangend beeld van zichzelf te geven. Want hoe zeer hij zich ook in meerdere 'ikken', jij's en hij's verliest en vermenigvuldigt, de erachter liggende metaforen blijken een herkenbare samenhang te vertonen. Hij heeft de tastzin voor de tekstverwerker als het ware in de vingers, is een post-moderne mens die zich als tekst manifesteert en van de beperkingen van het toetsenbord geen weet schijnt te hebben. Anachronistisch, analoog, op een simpele typemachine. De held van de moderne tijd, even indringend als de vreemdeling van Camus die de gestalte van de jaren 50 was. Beiden zijn archetypische beelden van een tijdvak: de vreemdeling die zich door de zon laat verblinden en de ellende van de wereld wil vergeten, de reisboekenschrijver die zijn persoonlijkheid aan de wisselende standaardzettingen van het toetsenbord ontleend. Als de afgeleefde gedaante van een voorbij tijdperk incorporeert hij ook een schaduwbeeld van de toekomst. Elke zinvolle interpretatie van zijn leven kan per toetsenbordsetting achterhaald worden.

Mussert is al ingeplugd, alleen kan hij er eigenlijk nog niet goed mee omgaan omdat hij de mogelijkheden niet kan overzien. In de overgang van een analoog literaire naar een digitale lichamelijke zit voor hem een duidelijk

probleem, zijn eigen dood. Mussert beschikt helaas niet over een te repareren, klassieke robotale lichamelijke, noch over een zich in een lichamelijke metaal uitdrukkend organisme. Zijn lichaam lijdt aan geheugenverlies, aan gebrek aan concentratievermogen en valt zo in ontelbare lichamen uiteen. Een digitalisering als een eenvoudig geval van analoge disintegratie.

Het lot van Mussert, die op school voor Socrates werd uitgemeakt is ook dat van een desintegrerende Europese cultuur, *een oud-leerling zou de overlijdensadvertentie van Herman Mussert lezen en zeggen, 'hee, Socrates is dood (...), mijn lichaam zou aan een oneindige zwerftocht beginnen (...) en deel hebben aan de meest fantastische metamorfosen...'* Op zijn laatste levensreis, een boottocht die hem op de Amazone brengt, gaat hij temidden van het gesnik van de dieselmotor van boord, de oerwouden in, en tenslotte de dood tegemoet. *Van de oevers klonk een diep gegrom van padden of reuzenkikkers. Hoelang ik er stond weet ik niet, de zon uit het Oosten zette nog één keer het oerwoud in een vreselijke gloed, nog één keer streek de haastige flits van de dag over de rivier tot het zwart zich weer over alles heen vouwde, vogels en bomen, en alles bedekkend.*



Dit is Conrads *Heart of Darkness* revisited in een vlucht buiten de eigen cultuur, de echo van Marlow's boottocht op zoek naar Kurtz, een handelsagent die zich in de jungle heeft teruggetrokken.

Als literaire tekst is het altijd al bewonderd, als filmscenario heeft het honderd jaar in de la gelegen — misschien hoogstens in John Hustons *The African Queen* gepersifleerd — om uiteindelijk



door Francis Ford Coppola in *Apocalypse Now* verfilmd te worden.

Ford Coppola is daarbij heel precies te werk gegaan en heeft er de metafoor voor gebruikt die de schrijver als literair stijlmiddel had toegepast. Conrad excelleert in het omschrijven van zijn scènes door middel van glimmende en schitterende, uitspattende en voorbischietende oplichtende verschijningen. Een heel letterlijk literair vuurwerk. Ford Coppola heeft die stijlfiguur nog letterlijker genomen en laat Brando als Kurtz niet zomaar verschijnen als de kalende en malende figuur die hij uiteindelijk blijkt te zijn. De verontrustende gestalte van Kurtz, dat *monstre sacré* dat de hele tekst overschaduwde, komt tot leven in een raadselachtige verfilming. Als Martin Sheen als Marlow hem op zijn zoektocht dan eindelijk onder ogen krijgt is hij geen mens, maar vooral een opkomend sterrenbeeld in totale duisternis. Zijn schedel, een enkel plekje aan zijn schedel licht op, andere lichtjes volgen langzaam. Dit is geen blik op een levend mens, dit is een blik op een ruimtelijke sfeer, hier zien we sterrenbeelden oplichten. De kop van Brando is iets goddelijks dat langzaam menselijke karakteristieken aanneemt, voor zover de malende Brando-Kurtz, dat nog kan. En waar Kurtz een 'terug naar de natuur' incorporeert, is Musserts 'ik' een toekomstvisie. Maar alle twee zijn het filosofische

• that appear and are illuminated briefly as they flash past. A very literal kind of literary fireworks. Ford Coppola has taken this stylistic device even more literally and has Kurtz (Brando) appear not merely as the balding, raving figure that he ultimately turns out to be. The disturbing figure of Kurtz, that *monstre sacré* overshadowing the entire text, is brought to life on film in a mysterious way. When Marlow (Martin Sheen) finally sees him at the end of his quest, he is not a human being, but mainly a rising constellation in total darkness. His skull: one tiny place on his skull is illuminated. Other tiny points of light follow, slowly. This is not a view of a living human being, it is a view of an area of space; here, we see constellations begin to glow. Brando's head is something divine, that slowly takes on human characteristics, to the extent that the raving Brando-as-Kurtz is still able. Where Kurtz incorporates a 'back to nature' idea, Mussert's 'T' is a vision of the future. But they are both philosophical bodies and it is precisely in their downfall that they reveal the essence of European culture. The romantic body that has fought its way into the jungle and allows itself to be incorporated into the organism of nature's natural state is related to the bourgeois body that, as it undergoes metamorphoses, manages to cloth itself in the armaments of digital culture. Kurtz is also the shadow falling over the next story, he is the 'true other' and the Other in me, continually torn between 'T' and another identity. In Africa, on the banks of the Congo, where Kurtz resides in the jungle and in the mouth of the Amazon Mussert is steaming into. Both gazing at the starry night sky, sharing the moments of ecstasy.

U

The monstrous typewriters of Burroughs' nightmares are like illustrations of the hallucinations that precede the digital Big Bang. The heavily yoked keyboard becomes organic, but cannot endure the confrontation with a

new culture that has long since been staged without its knowledge. Mussert is a novel hero that seems to possess the outward appearance of the classic 'T' from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, but has actually already disintegrated into hundreds of fragments under the surface of that apparent form and surrendered to the electronic keyboard. His hour of death is his hour of awakening, not only the cliché of a life flashing before one's eyes at one's last breath, but in a genuine digital incarnation. The end of a life consisting of 'old-fashioned' stories, turns out to have been adapted to new relations. His protective magic charms do not refer to the solid, concrete 'T' of flesh and blood in *Heart of Darkness*. Mussert constructs an 'T' that goes beyond the deconstruction being prepared in order to be read metaphorically-allegorically in HyperText and CyberSpace. Burroughs' stories about an 'T' that delivers itself up to the hallucinating experiences of a keyboard are grotesque. But the story of Mussert, whose sentences seem to have been typed on an old-fashioned keyboard, intuitively recognizing the new electronic syntax and keyboard grammar of the new world, is no less so. This is a story that observes the keys as a metafile and registers their mysterious movements as though invisibly present. These movements and claims form the key to what is narrated. The secret of it is the driving force of both the language events and the contentual events, on the routes between home and home, by way of the escape key.

'The next story', an image of a reading culture that has outlived itself and is falling apart, seems hardly 'contemporary', but the undocumented resources of this novella seem couched in HyperText. A ruinous image that simultaneously opens the door onto 'something' else. A downfall and simultaneously a rearrangement. Nootboom — or is it only the reader — shoves the 'T's nose into its old, rhetorical values, recognizable now only as

flat shadows of worn-out phenomena, retrieved one final time, one after another, as empty signs, empty names.

A culture of literacy on the threshold of a hyperculture in which an analog system is being replaced at its post by a digital one. Interzone becomes InterZone. Nootboom's secret code is written in z++. This is the instrument for a language with which the invisible becomes audible and the incomprehensible recognizable and the everyday magical. z++ is the artistic sibling of c++ because



it is the language in which Zorro makes himself understood, in which Zeno's paradox is expressed, to which Barthes' Degree Zero is related and for which Borges' Zohar functions as an artistic algorithm. In a constantly expanding and contracting, shifting perspective, z++ demonstrates how all possible worlds ultimately can be reduced to one, single letter on the keyboard. All of the countless shelves of the labyrinthian library are combined in that one, single key in order to subsequently expand anew, through Piranesque effects and baroque convolutions. Like a long-since-realized, impossible figure so longed-for by mathematicians. This is no uncontrollable 'randomization', no necessary by-product of a process of compression; it is a reduction of patterns and structures of all possible files and worlds to that single key that in its turn refers to that single byte containing all of creation.

translation JIM BOEKBINDER

lichamen die juist in hun ondergang de essentie van de Europese cultuur tonen. Het romantische lichaam dat zich in de jungle heeft binnengevochten en zich laat opnemen in het organisme van de natuurlijke staat der natuur is verwant aan het burgerlijke lichaam dat zich, al metamorfoserend, in de wapenrusting van de digitale cultuur weet in te kleden. Kurtz

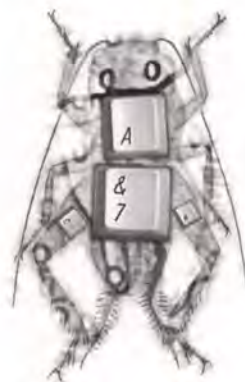


is ook de schaduw die over het volgende verhaal valt, hij is de 'ware ander' en de Ander in mijzelf, voortdurend tussen de ik en een andere identiteit heen en weer getrokken. In Afrika aan de oevers van de Kongo, waar Kurtz verblijft en in de monding van de Amazone, die Mussert opvaart. Beiden staren naar de sterrenhemel, de ogenblikken van extase delend.

### U

De monsterlijke schrijfmachines van Burroughs' angstdromen zijn als illustraties van de hallucinaties die voorafgaan aan de digitale oerknal. Het beknelde toetsenbord wordt organisch maar kan de confrontatie met de nieuwe cultuur die buiten hem om allang al in scene is gezet, niet aan. Mussert is een romanheld die de uiterlijke gestalte van de klassieke ik uit Conrads *Heart of Darkness* lijkt te bezitten, maar onder die schijngestalte in honderden fragmenten uiteenvalt en zich wel degelijk aan het elektronische toetsenbord heeft overgegeven. Zijn

stervensuur is zijn ontwaken, niet alleen als clichébeeld van een levensgeschiedenis die bij de laatste ademtocht nog eens als in een enkele flits voorbijschiet, maar ook een ontwaken als een heuse digitale incarnatie. Het einde van een leven dat uit 'ouderwetse' verhalen bestaat, blijkt aan de nieuwe verhoudingen te zijn aangepast. Zijn bezwerende formules verwijzen niet naar het vaste, precieze ik van vlees en bloed uit *Heart of Darkness*, Mussert construeert een ik voorbij de deconstructie die zich voorbereidt om metaforisch-allegorisch in HyperText en CyberSpace gelezen te worden. Burroughs' verhalen over een ik die zich uitlevert aan een

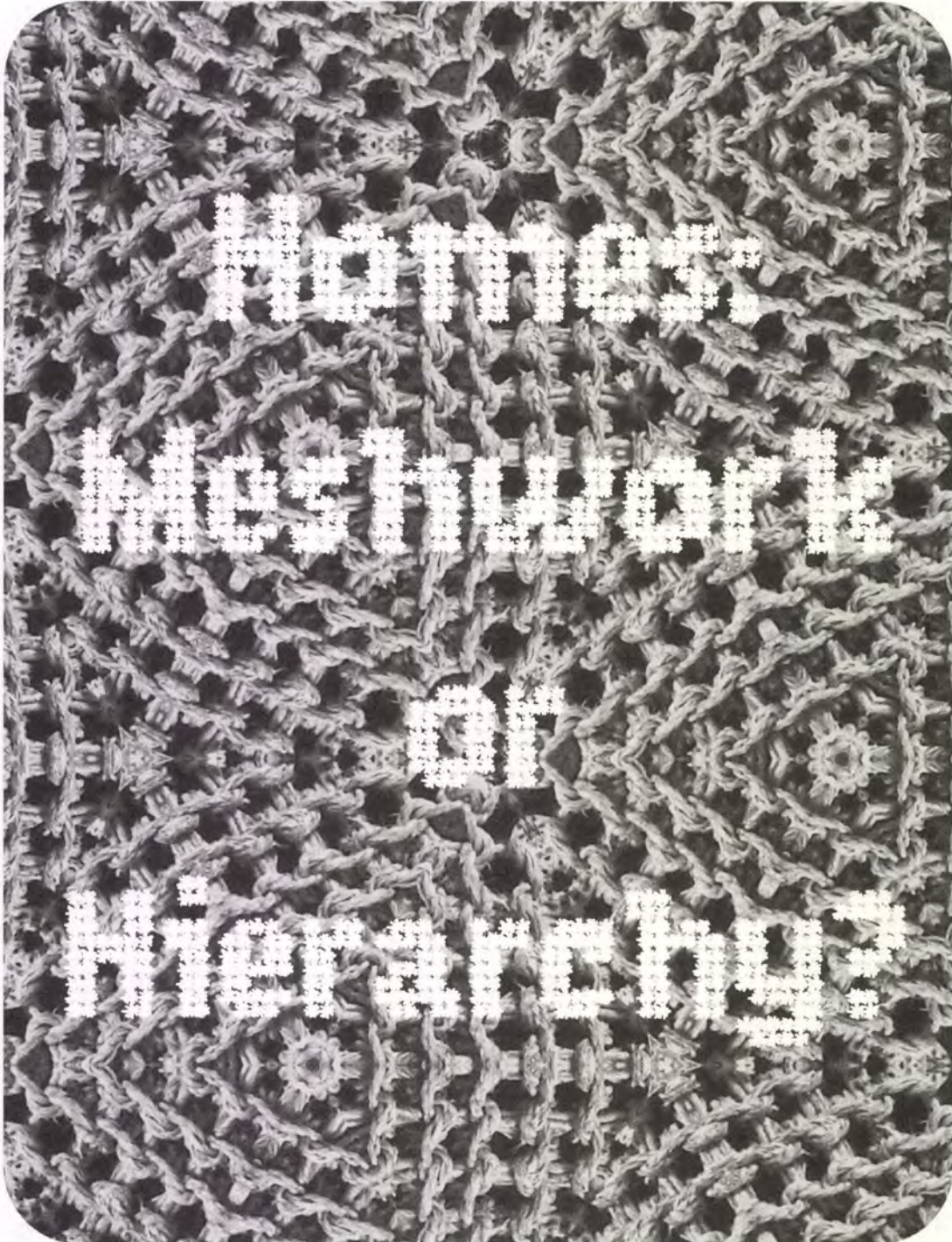


hallucinerende ervaring van het toetsenbord zijn grotesk. Maar het verhaal van Mussert, wiens zinnen op een ouderwets toetsenbord getypt lijken, en de nieuwe elektronische syntaxis en de toetsenbordgrammatica van de nieuwe wereld intuïtief herkennen, is dat niet minder. Dit is een verhaal dat als *metafile* de toetsen observeert en als in een onzichtbare aanwezigheid de raadselachtige bewegingen ervan registreert. Deze bewegingen en beweringen vormen de sleutel van het verhaalde. Het geheim ervan is de drijvende kracht van zowel de taalevenementen als de inhoudelijke gebeurtenissen, op de routes tussen home en home, via de escape-toets.

'Het volgende verhaal', een beeld van een leescultuur die zich overleefd heeft en

uiteenvalt, kleurt allerminst 'hedendaags', maar de ongedocumenteerde 'resources' van deze novelle lijken als in HyperText gevat. Een ruïneus beeld dat tegelijk de deur naar 'iets anders' opent. Een ondergang en tegelijk een zich herschikken. Nooteboom — of is het alleen de lezer? — drukt de ik met de neus op zijn oude, retorische waarden, die alleen nog als vlakke schaduwen van uitgeleefde verschijnselen herkenbaar zijn, nog eenmaal opgeroepen, de een na de ander, als lege tekens, als lege namen.

Een lees- en schrijfcultuur op de drempel van een hypercultuur waarbij een analoog ontworpen systeem afgelost wordt door een digitaal. Interzone wordt InterZone. Nootebooms geheime codering is geschreven in z++. Dit is het instrument voor een taal waarmee het onzichtbare hoorbaar, het onbegrijpelijke herkenbaar, het alledaagse magisch wordt. z++ wordt het artistieke broertje van c++ omdat het de taal is waarin Zorro van zich laat horen, waarin de paradox van Zeno wordt uitgedrukt, waar Barthes' Degree Zero mee verband houdt en de Zohar van Borges als artistiek algoritme functioneert. In een steeds uitdijend en inkrampend verschuivend perspectief laat z++ zien hoe alle mogelijke werelden uiteindelijk ook weer tot één letter op het toetsenbord teruggebracht kunnen worden. Alle ontelbare schappen van de labyrintische bibliotheek worden in die ene enkele toets samengebaldd om vervolgens, via Piraneske effecten en barokke golvingen, weer breed uit te waaiëren. Als een allang gerealiseerde, onmogelijke figuur waar de wiskundigen zo naar smachten. Hier geen onbeheersbare 'randomization' als noodzakelijk bijproduct van een proces van compressie, maar een terugbrengen van patronen en structuren van alle mogelijke files en werelden tot die enkele toets, die op zijn beurt verwijst naar die enkele byte die de gehele schepping in zich herbergt.



- How do homes happen? Are they planned, as we have intuitively tended to believe, or is the process a more messy one?

Drawing on biological, cognitive and economic models, De Landa believes that the evolution of Home, territories, cities and other socio-biological and even non-organic expressions of order, is a more nonlinear process than has been assumed.

• Imagine having just landed a corporate job which demands that you move to a new city. In this urban environment the corporation has already found you an apartment and, following the tradition of its great corporate culture, it has had it decorated so that it embodies the aesthetic and functional values for which the firm has become famous. No doubt, when you finally move to this new place it simply won't feel like home; more like a hotel suite, despite the fact that it offers you shelter and even luxuries that you did not enjoy before.

Does this lack of *home feeling* stem from the fact that everything around you has been planned to the last detail? Would it feel homier if you shared the corporate values that informed the planning? Wouldn't you have to live for a while in this place, interacting with its walls and table surfaces by placing a souvenir here, a momento there, before something like a sense of home began to emerge? These questions can also be raised even if we eliminate from our scenario the intrusive presence of an outside planner. Would a place feel like home if every expressive or functional detail had been exhaustively planned by yourself? No doubt all of us think about the decoration of our home environment, but do we always have an explicit reason why certain things are placed where they are? Don't we often place them in a given location because it feels like that is where they belong, as if our souvenirs and sentimental possessions arranged themselves through us?

Answering these questions in the case of human beings is rather hard because of the extreme variability of human culture and, even within a given culture, the great diversity of human personalities. Besides, I am not aware of any systematic study of these questions regarding

human homes. We do have some information, however, about the creation of home territories by certain species of animals which throw some light on the question *Are homes planned or self-organized?* In particular, I would like to begin my exploration of these issues with a brief examination of bird territories and the role that the expressive qualities of song and color play in their formation.

### Planned Homes

When the question of how birds create a home territory was first raised (by ethologists like Lorenz and Tinbergen) the answer given to these questions was *Homes are planned*, with the remaining controversy gravitating around the issue of *Who does the planning, genes or brains?* Are the planned strategies pieced together by genetic evolution or are they learned in the bird's lifetime? In either case, the formation of a home territory was seen to derive from an internal territorial drive or instinct, with a precise central location in the brain. Out of this *territorial centre* commands would then be issued to other centres in the brain (a nesting centre, a courtship centre) and out of this hierarchical mental structure, a correct set of actions would then be implemented and the borders of the territory would then be appropriately marked.

More recently, however, this line of thinking has been increasingly criticised. Philosopher Daniel Dennet, for example, has convincingly argued that to postulate *brain centres* is to simply move all the original questions about an animal's behaviour to an 'animalculus' inside the head. Unless this animalculus is 'stupid' enough that it does not need to interpret representations or perform other complex cognitive functions, we are simply answering one question (How are territories organized by an animal?) with another one

of equal complexity (How are territories organized by an animalculus?).

Philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari have raised essentially the same point, adding that home territories should be conceived not as emanating from an internal drive but as emerging from the interaction of a non-hierarchical set of brain functions and the expressive qualities of the territorial markers themselves, for instance, the color of certain leaves or stems which some birds use to attract females, or the musical properties of bird songs, or even faeces or urine scented with the excretions of special glands.

The recent development of theories of nonlinear dynamics and of processes of self-organization has given these critics a boost. While before the 1960's it was virtually impossible to imagine the emergence of order without a central agency behind it, today we are familiar with a growing body of knowledge about the spontaneous generation of ordered structures in inorganic as well as organic (and even social) processes. For the purposes of understanding the issue of home territories, it will be useful to trace the effect of these new ideas in the current confrontation between symbolic Artificial Intelligence (which retains a hierarchical organization of centres) and the new Connectionist school, based on nonlinear dynamics and a decentralized conception of the mind.

An 'artificial bird's brain' designed with symbolic AI would typically contain representations of the world (coded in the bird's mental language) forming a cognitive map of its surroundings. Creating a territory would then consist of symbolic operations performed on these representations and only later implemented as actions in the real world.



• A Connectionist approach, on the other hand, would be to generate a population of neural nets, each of which is dynamically connected to the outside world. In other words, without using mental representations each neural net in the bird's brain is in a nonlinear stable state (or attractor) which is associated with a similarly stable pattern in the animal's environment. A pattern outside (such as the expressive qualities of a territorial marker) can then be recognized by the animal without forming an explicit internal symbol to stand in for the pattern.

Neural nets have indeed supplied us with a concrete technological paradigm of how brains could function without internal homunculi. Unlike symbolic AI, which has only scored successes in the modelling of evolutionary late skills (such as playing chess or proving theorems), Connectionist designs have succeeded in capturing more basic abilities, such as face recognition.

And yet, for our purposes here, not even this novel branch of cognitive science has gone far enough. The real breakthrough to understand how home territories could self-organize through brains and outside expressive qualities, comes from an even younger branch of AI: behavioral-based AI (or as it is sometimes called, the *animat* approach). The differences between behavioral and symbolic AI have been very lucidly expressed by Pattie Maes, and we may summarize them as follows: Symbolic AI decomposes minds into relatively large functional modules (perception, execution) interfaced together by central representations (beliefs, desires, intentions). The activity of the modules and the representations form a static 'model of the world', and the effects of learning are conceived of as the operation of reformulating this model.

Behavioural AI, on the other hand, does not involve high level general modules (which as I said, almost always embody homunculi) but low level specific modules (such as 'collision avoidance'). High level skills emerge out of the interactions of these micro-modules, none of which can be said to possess the skill. More importantly for our present purposes, behavioural AI does not aim at the internal generation of a world model, but rather, it situates its robotic animals in the real world so that the objective features of the environment can be used as a form of external memory. This modelling strategy is sometimes expressed with the phrase: *The world is its own best model.*

One useful way of explaining this rather cryptic phrase is by using some insights from the ecological theory of perception developed by James Gibson in the 1960's. Gibson elaborated the crucial idea that the environment provides an animal with meaningful constraints which he called *affordances*. For instance, solid ground supplies animals with (or *affords* them) a surface to walk on. On reaching the edge of a swamp, an animal's 'muscular intelligence' tells it automatically that the ground there does not afford suitable support, and the animal reaches this 'conclusion' without the need for an internal 'world model' which includes representations of dry and wet land. Similarly, a hole in the ground of suitable size affords an escaping animal a place to hide, and twigs afford the bird nest-construction materials. An open environment affords locomotion in all directions, while a cluttered one affords it only at certain openings. And, of course, what a given part of the world affords depends on the animal: water, due to surface tension, affords a walking surface to a small insect but not to a large bird, to whom it affords at most a gliding

surface. The point of all this is that the world possesses a kind of intrinsic 'proto-semantics', which is meaningful to animal minds in a functional way.

In terms of behavioural AI, this means that a simple module for collision-avoidance (so simple it does not contain a homunculus), together with the obstacles afforded by a room's walls, can generate the complex behaviour of 'wall following' without an internal representation of the room. But the layout of surfaces in the environment is only one source of affordances; the behaviour of other animals is another. Prey afford predator's nutrition, while a territorial bird affords another competition. Animals may also afford one another opportunities for cooperation. This idea has also been exploited by behavioral AI in designs where novel intelligent behaviors emerge not only from the animal-environment interaction, but also from the interactions between the animals themselves. Hence the idea of building not expensive single robots, but teams of relatively inexpensive ones. This has the advantage that the solution to a given problem emerges out of the interactions of the whole team, with no single member being essential to the task. In this way, the inevitable breakdowns and malfunctions that plague any real life applications do not cripple the entire enterprise, as would be the case with the single robot approach.

By now it should be clear what I am getting at. Home territories self-organize through a complex interplay between male and female birds and the expressive affordances of their environment. For example, the male satin bowerbird builds a stage decorated with bright blue objects of different kinds with which he tempts a female to stop by. Then, as the courtship begins, he will grab a yellow flower in his beak and alternately display it and hide it

• in a species-specific ritual. The home territory of the couple may be seen as emerging from simple in-the-head components (which are partly learned, partly inherited) and the optical affordances of the blue and yellow objects. Now, is it possible to extend these remarks to human beings? Is it possible that our own homes self-organize in this way, with the expressive affordances of our cherished possessions playing an active role too?

Although I would like to answer this question affirmatively, there are other aspects of the problem that we must consider first. In particular, unlike birds we also possess linguistic abilities, and hence a greater propensity to form representations and plans inside our heads. It may be, as philosopher Andy Clark has suggested, that our minds are a kludge (or *bricolage*) of different kinds of intelligence: some intelligent abilities arise out of decentralized and parallel processes, others from centralized and sequential ones.

### Meshwork and Hierarchy

One useful way to think about this is to view the evolution of the human mind as involving a similar process as symbolic AI, only in reverse. When the first AI programs were written, programming languages and computer hardware were very hierarchical and sequential. In the 1970's, when symbolic AI switched to the creation of expert-systems, the need for flexibility forced them to create programming languages which simulated parallel processing even while running in sequential hardware. Andy Clark's idea is that our evolution may have involved a similar, though opposite, solution: we began with a highly parallel and non-hierarchical hardware (like birds) and at some point our brains began to simulate a

sequential and centralized mind: the stream of linguistic consciousness with which we are familiar through introspection.

If our minds are thus hybrids of two or more computer-types then we should expect our homes to be also complex mixtures of self-organized and planned components, or to use the technical terms, of hierarchies and meshworks. Hierarchies are structures in which components have been sorted into homogenous groups, then articulated together. Meshworks, on the other hand, articulate heterogeneous components as such, without homogenizing. A bird's territory is more meshwork than hierarchy, while the hypothetical pre-furnished corporate apartment I mentioned has more hierarchy than meshwork elements in it. Our homes can then be seen as mixtures of self-organized and planned components: certain objects will occupy a space and fulfill a function which we deliberately assigned to them, while others will be located where they meshed well with their surroundings. And in these terms, the feeling of home could be derived from how well we mesh with the objects and expressive affordances of this private environment.

The concepts of meshwork and hierarchy have become one of the cornerstones for the application of nonlinear dynamical simulations to social and economic questions. Hence they are very useful in analysing not only the structure of our private spaces, but also that of public spaces. That is, they help us thinking not only about our homes but also about the home of our homes: the city. From this point of view our individual homes become households, one of several types of institutions housed by our home towns. These institutional populations are also complex mixtures of

meshworks and hierarchies, of markets and bureaucracies, for example.

Pre-capitalist markets, like those which existed in medieval Europe, in China or India, or indeed in many small towns even today, are structures that emerge out of a decentralized decision-making process which brings heterogeneous needs and offerings together. In modern nonlinear models, markets have very little to do with the 'invisible hand', involving complex processes of self-organization and not just demand and supply. Behavioural AI (as well as other forms of nonlinear cognitive science) sometimes use market-like structures (such as bidding schemes) to replace centralized decision-making in the robot's mind.

On the other hand, cities are also the home of governmental, commercial, religious and other hierarchies, in which decision-making is centralized, and the effects of decisions travel through well defined chains of command. At every level of this chain, that is, at every rank, the human components are very homogenous: the very process of rising through the ranks performs a sorting operation which results in more or less uniform behaviour within each level. Indeed, the correct functioning of a command chain assumes this uniformity and predictability. And yet, here as elsewhere, when we actually study a given hierarchical structure we are bound to find mixtures of meshwork elements, even if only in small proportions.

Moreover, as markets grow in complexity they can generate hierarchies, and vice versa. Take, for example, the big fairs that existed in Europe from the 13th century on: at the top they had the money markets, followed by luxury goods markets, while at the bottom we find food and other elementary goods. Hence these fairs were

• veritable hierarchies of meshworks. Similarly, when we analyse the interactions between governments, large commercial monopolies and oligopolies, ecclesiastical, medical and military authorities, we find that they usually interlock in varying ways, complementing one another without losing their individual differences. Since no 'super-hierarchy' is controlling this process of mutual accommodation, the overall process suggests a meshwork of hierarchies.

Drawing some analogies with biological processes may be as useful in analysing home towns as it was in exploring individual homes. Some evolutionary biologists have suggested that any entity that replicates itself, regardless of the nature of the process, can evolve in the exact same way as creatures with genes do. The first candidate for a non-genetic replicator was, of course, Richard Dawkins' *memes*: patterns of behaviour that replicate themselves across a given animal population through imitation. The best studied example of memes is bird song. Although the basic structure of the song, an impoverished skeleton, is genetically hard-wired, the full song with all its flourishes, harmonies and counterpoints is not. Individual birds must be exposed to actual full songs by other birds of their species in order to develop their own. Since bird songs form local dialects and change over generations, they are indeed a replicator as much as genes are.

Human beings, on the other hand, are the home of other replicators. While we house memes just like birds do — most fashions and fads, for example, are propagated by imitation, we also speak languages and these do not replicate by imitation but by enforced repetition. When people learn the sounds (or phonemes) of English, for

example, they do not imitate them: they shoot for a norm, they attempt to repeat a standard sound, and they must do so if they want to be intelligible to the rest of the English-speaking community. A similar point applies to both vocabulary and syntactical rules. They are replicators but not memes. It is thanks to this flow of norms through human populations that all our languages have evolved.

To return to our main subject, economists Nelson and Winter, authors of the very influential theory of evolutionary economics, have suggested that the institutional inhabitants of cities are replicators too. They claim that the daily routines of a given institution, together with whatever formalized regulations the institution may have, form a kind of 'organizational memory'. When a commercial organization, for example, opens a new branch outside of its home town, and sends some staff there to preserve continuity, informal routines as well as formalized procedures become replicated, and in an important sense, the institution itself has given birth to an offspring. A similar process occurs when a given city colonizes foreign land and replicates its governmental and religious institutions there. Since the copying of routines (and even rules) is subject to alteration and local adaptation, there is here enough variation that some sorting process equivalent to natural selection can use as raw material for evolution. Since our private homes are part of this population of institutions, some of the details of their architecture as well as the daily routines that make up our lives may have evolved in a process like this. So considering the two lines of my argument, the self-organization of expressive affordances as well as the evolution of institutions via routine- and rule-replication,

our homes are like bird territories in more than a metaphorical sense.

### Matter-Energy

The main problem with what I have said so far is that I have concentrated exclusively on the informational aspects of the problem. That is, I discussed expressive affordances and genetic, memetic and normative patterns and pretended for a while that that is all that mattered. But, of course, bird territories and human homes involve more than just information. In particular, they need a constant supply of matter and energy in order to work. The function of territories is indeed that of creating a protected source of food supplies. Urban homes too, have always been connected to local markets where they draw their supplies. Perhaps the best illustration of the crucial role played by matter-energy is provided by the action of genetic replicators. As is well known, all individual genes do is to code for enzymes (and other proteins) which are large molecules capable of accelerating or decelerating chemical reactions, and thus, of being used as control agents for metabolic functions. This catalytic function of enzymes may be described as the ability to force systems of molecules to switch from one stable state (called an attractor) to another. But as is well known in contemporary thermodynamics, it is the flow of energy through a system that creates the stable states in the first place.

Catalysts without a flow of matter-energy are powerless. In order to perform their magic, genes and their control products depend on the flow of biomass through the food webs that characterize ecosystems. A bird's territory is as much a genetic and memetic structure, as it is an energetic and material one — and so are our homes. Not only were they always

• connected to food webs via markets, the first other public connection that they established was with sewers (that is, the same nutritional flow from the other side). True, it was later traversed mostly by informational flows: telephone, radio, tv, and networked computers, but as before, these flows of catalysts can only perform their magic on energetic materials capable of self-organization. We tend to forget not only the flow of food but also the flow of electricity into our homes, as well as the electrical and hormonal flows in our bodies which play such crucial roles in the 'feeling of home'. And we tend to talk of the 'information age' without realizing that the future is as much about energy and materials as it is about information. The common dependency on matter-energy between territories and homes is, I believe, another respect in which they are alike beyond metaphor.

Biological metaphors have been used in the past, many times with terrible results. For example, positivist philosophers in the 19th century compared cities and organisms and concluded that both have homeostatic mechanisms to keep them in internal harmony. This embodied a very romantic view of both nature and society, which disregarded friction, conflict and other nonlinearities that make simple self-regulation impossible.

Today, nonlinear models are more sophisticated than that, and more importantly, have revealed that the friction exorcised from those romanticized views is essential to the self-organization of meshworks. A similar point applies to 'invisible hand' economics, where perfect rationality and perfect competition are supposed to benefit society automatically. Nonlinear simulations of market formation include not

only bounded rationality, that is, a realistic limited degree of problem-solving skills, but also delays, bottlenecks and other sources of friction which are also key to their self-organization.

Thus, we have learned to draw better analogies and to discover more realistic metaphors. But the question now is, are they still mere metaphors? The answer is that some are and some are not, and the ones that are not give us a good idea of how to get rid of metaphors altogether. For example, when we compare genes, memes, norms and routines we are not, I believe, thinking metaphorically any longer. What we are saying is that, any replicator which is coupled to a sorting device (a selection pressure of any kind) results in a kind of 'probing head' capable of exploring a virtual space of possible forms. These forms may be animal bodies, bird songs, human languages or urban institutions, but all are evolved through a blind probing and groping in the space of possibilities. In a way, coupling a replicator and a sorting device results in a 'virtual searching device' which may be incarnated in different material and energetic physical supports. This abstract 'probing head' has in fact been incarnated in computer software: the famous genetic algorithms, which can be used to breed other software programs. Genetic algorithms are used, for example, to implement some of the non-homunculi modules of behavioural AI.

Let me use another example to illustrate this crucial point. When we say, as Marxists used to say, that *class struggle is the motor of history* we are using the word 'motor' in a metaphorical sense. But when we say that a hurricane is a steam motor we are not: we are saying that it embodies the same engineering diagram as a steam motor; that is, that it runs

on a reservoir of heat, that it operates through thermal differences, and that it runs matter and energy through a Carnot cycle. Thus, the difference between metaphorical and literal uses of a term consists sometimes in the difference between embodying a purely linguistic analogy and an engineering working diagram. The comparison of genes and memes or norms is clearly a diagrammatic (not a linguistic) one: all three embody an abstract searching device. What about comparing human homes and bird territories? Are there abstract machines behind the formation of meshworks and hierarchies that would allow us to make the comparison in a diagrammatic way?

I believe there are, although a discussion of them would take me into areas hardly related to our theme here. All I can say now is that it is one and the same process (or rather different processes embodying the same abstract machine) which results in entities as different as human hierarchies, the bodies of animal species and even sedimentary rocks, all of which are structures in which homogenous elements are articulated together. Similarly, markets, ecosystems and even igneous rocks are all structures where heterogeneous elements are linked together without imposing uniformity over them. As is clear from the history of AI, that is, from the domination of hierarchical-symbolic thinking and the obstacles which Connectionism found to become a legitimate branch of cognitive science, humanity finds it much easier to think in terms of articulated homogeneities rather than articulated heterogeneities. But it is the latter, I believe, that holds the secret for a better future. Perhaps we can learn from birds — and why not even rocks? — the secrets of non-homogenous thinking.



**Vijftig jaar lang leefde Eduardo Taguas in Spaanse internaten,  
heropvoedingsgestichten en gevangenissen  
totdat hij op een goede dag vrijgelaten werd. Hij was toen vijftig.**

- **For fifty years, Eduardo Taguas lived in Spanish boarding schools,  
reform schools and prisons.  
He was fifty years old when he was set free.**

Zijn moeder zat opgesloten in de gevangenis toen hij geboren werd in 1939. Taguas groeide op in inrichtingen. Wegens het uithalen van kattenkwaad kwam hij in een heropvoedingsgesticht terecht. Eenmaal binnen de gesloten strafinrichtingen zorgde hij er zelf voor dat hij in deze enige hem bekende wereld kon blijven. Hij nam de schuld op zich van misdaden die door zijn medegevangenen begaan waren. Zo rekte hij z'n straf, totdat hij in 1989 op de stoep werd gezet van de gevangenis van Cordoba. De zeven maanden vrijheid die hij in heel z'n leven had gekend hadden hem gesterkt in de overtuiging dat de hele wereld één gevangenis is. Hij verlangde weer toegelaten te worden tot zijn vertrouwde cel.

De tragische levensloop van 'Papa Taguas' lijkt een zeldzaam geval, maar is dat waarschijnlijk niet. Velen komen op zo jonge leeftijd in een strafinrichting dat het begrip 'thuis' geen concrete betekenis meer heeft, of verblijven zo lang in het gevang dat er nooit meer een thuis zal zijn waar ze naar kunnen terugkeren. De 74-jarige Carlo Pillo zou na een verblijf van 35 jaar in een Italiaanse gevangenis in aanmerking komen voor gratie, maar zag welbewust af van het indienen van een dergelijk verzoek.

*Weggaan? Ik zie op de televisie dat ouderen, bejaarden, slecht behandeld en beroofd worden en dat hun geld wordt afgepakt. Trouwens waar zou ik naar toe moeten? Ik ken die wereld niet meer. Ik heb een pensioentje, verdiend in de gevangenis. Ik heb heel mijn leven hier doorgebracht, dit is nu mijn huis.*

Verschillende extreem lang gestraften hebben hun autobiografie geschreven. Onder andere Alan Reeve en Jimmy Boyle, die beiden in hun jeugd in Britse strafinrichtingen terecht kwamen en gedoemd leken om tot in lengte van dagen in die penitentiaire circuits te blijven hangen. Deze bajesboeken geven een hallucinerend beeld van het gewone leven in de cellencomplexen. Tegelijkertijd vormen deze levensbeschrijvingen een spiegel waarin de extramurale normaliteit

van het gewone thuis wordt gereflecteerd. Deze oefening in het huiselijke denken van gevangenen herinnert ons stilzwijgend aan de jongste ontwikkelingen in de criminologie op het vlak van alternatieve straffen. In de vorm van het elektronisch huisarrest convergeren cocooning en detentie. Wat leren bajesklanten ons over de belevingswaarde van gevangenis-cel en wooneenheid?

### Paradox van de Detentie

Detentie betekent een verbanning uit huis en gezin en de afzondering in een gesloten strafinrichting. Deze sociale scheiding van het familieverband vormt een van de grootste lasten van het gevangenschap. Het is daarom ook bijzonder zwaar als een gedetineerde wordt ondergebracht in een gevangenis ver van huis, waar de familie niet in staat is om regelmatig op bezoek te komen. De mogelijkheid tot het schrijven en ontvangen van brieven, en in een aantal landen zelfs de vrijheid om te telefoneren verzachten de pijn van de scheiding slechts weinig. Het resultaat is dat een gevangene psychologisch totaal op zichzelf wordt teruggeworpen, en afhankelijk wordt gemaakt van het functioneren van het inrichtings-systeem.

Paradoxaalwijs brengt de gevangenis de gedetineerde in een milieu waar nauwelijks enige privacy bestaat. Eenzaam opgesloten in een cel is de gevangene permanent onderworpen aan het toezicht van de bewakers, die door een luikje in de celdeur of een videocamera een stille surveillance uitvoeren. De Zuidafrikaanse dichter Breyten Breytenbach wees in een interview op het benauwende van deze surveillance: *Een van de sterkste indrukken van de gevangenis is dat je nooit alleen bent. Je bent altijd alleen, ik zat geïsoleerd — maar al wat je doet, elk woord wat je zegt, is volledig bekend aan de overheid.* In de meeste landen delen meerdere gevangenen een cel met elkaar, zodat zij geen moment alleen zijn. De belasting van de gevangenschap bestaat dus uit het gedwongen samenleven.

Deze verticale controle van bewakers en het horizontale toezicht van medegevangenen laat de gevangene nauwelijks vrije handlungsruimte. Dit absolute gebrek aan privacy veroorzaakt een enorme emotionele druk. Zich terugtrekken op het toilet is een van de manieren om een provisorisch privé-domein te creëren voor het luchten van emoties. Bobby Devlin die in het Noordierse Long Kesh in een betrekkelijk open kamp was geïnterneerd, signaleerde dat zelfs daar sprake was van specifieke methoden om zich even af te kunnen zonderen. Bijvoorbeeld om na het bezoeken het verdriet om het afscheid van familie te verwerken: *Sommige van de jongens probeerden de 'Grote D' te verwerken door een deken over hun hoofd te trekken en het van zich af te slapen. Ik zou er liever tegen vechten door ruim een uur in mijn cel te ijsberen.* In veel gevangenis is de terreur die gevangenen onderling op elkaar uitoefenen erger dan het officiële penitentiaire regime dat de cipers opleggen. Het veiligstellen van een bestaan in deze harde binnenwereld, zonder toe te treden tot de leerschool van criminelen, vraagt om condities en een persoonlijke kracht waar velen niet over beschikken. Een Italiaanse gevangene meende dat het risico van een eeuwig verblijf in het gevang voortkwam uit de gevaren van de confrontaties met medegevangenen. *Gevangenisstraf is al een zware veroordeling, maar het kan een eindeloze worden. Je kunt het beste op jezelf blijven, niemand iets vragen en je eigen zaakjes oplossen. Zo hou je op z'n minst de hoop om eens vrij te komen.* Zo'n afzondering uit zelfbescherming is alleen mogelijk als er een mild en ordelijk gevangenisregime heerst en men zich niet hoeft te compromitteren met medegevangenen.

### In het Medium van de Verzorging

Het mijden van het criminele milieu in de bajes impliceert een onderduiken in het gevangenis-systeem. Makkelijk is het niet om die autonomie te bereiken omdat

• His mother was in prison when he was born in 1939. Taguas grew up in institutions. When he got into mischief, he was placed in reform school. Once inside the penitentiary, he made sure he would be able to stay in the only world he knew. He took the blame for crimes committed by his fellow inmates. He prolonged his sentence in this way until he was released from the Cordoba prison in 1989. The seven months of freedom he had known in his life had confirmed his idea that the whole world was a prison. He longed to be readmitted to his familiar cell.

The tragic life story of 'Papa Taguas' is probably not as unusual as it appears. Many enter a penitentiary at such a young age that the term 'home' loses all concrete meaning, or remain locked up for so long that there is no home for them to go back to. 74-year-old Carlo Pillo was eligible for clemency after 35 years in an Italian prison, but deliberately decided not to submit an appeal. *Get out? I saw on tv that old people, the aged, are treated badly, robbed, they take away their money. And where would I go? I don't know that world anymore... I have a pension, the pension I obtained in prison. I've spent my life here; this is my home now.*

Various long-term prisoners have written autobiographies. Among them are Alan Reeve and Jimmy Boyle, both of whom landed in British prisons in their youths and seemed doomed to be stuck in the penal circuits for years to come. Their stories provide a hallucinatory picture of daily life in the cell complexes. At the same time, these prisoners' biographies are a mirror in which we can examine the extramural normality of the ordinary house. This exercise in the homely thoughts of prisoners tacitly reminds us of recent developments in criminology in the area of 'alternative punishment'. Cocooning and detention converge in the form of electronic house arrest. What can cons teach us about the

experience value of the prison cell and the housing unit?

### The Paradox of Detention

Detention means banishment from house and family and isolation in a closed penitentiary. This social separation from family ties forms one of the greatest burdens of imprisonment. It is thus an especially aggravating circumstance when prison accommodation is so far from home that the family is unable to pay regular visits. Being able to write and receive letters, and in a number of countries even to telephone, eases the pain of separation only slightly. The effect is that a prisoner is thrown back totally upon his own psychological resources and made dependent upon the functioning of the penal system.

Paradoxically, the prison places the inmate in an environment where scarcely any privacy exists. Locked up alone in a cell, the prisoner is subjected to permanent supervision by guards, who practise silent surveillance through a hatch in the cell door or via a video camera. South African poet Breyten Breytenbach explained in an interview why this surveillance is so oppressive: *One of the strongest impressions of prison is that you're never alone. You're always alone — I was in solitary confinement — but whatever you do, every word you say, is completely known to the authorities.* In most countries, several prisoners share a cell, and are never alone for even a moment. Thus the stress of imprisonment, paradoxically, consists of forced community.

Vertical supervision by guards and horizontal surveillance by fellow inmates leave the prisoner hardly any free space. This absolute lack of privacy causes enormous emotional stress. Withdrawing into the toilet is one way of creating a temporary private domain where one can vent emotions. Bobby Devlin, who was interned in Long Kesh in Northern Ireland in a comparatively open camp,

observed that even there, there were certain methods of creating temporary privacy. For instance, to process the sorrow of separation from one's family after visiting hours: *Some of the lads tried to overcome the 'Big D' by throwing a blanket over their heads and trying to sleep it off. I would rather fight it by walking around the cage for over an hour.* In many prisons, the terror exerted on prisoners by each other is worse than the official penitentiary regime imposed by the wardens. Making an existence for oneself in this hard inside world without joining the school of criminals requires conditions and personal strength which many do not have. An Italian prisoner believes that the greatest hazard of life in prison springs from the danger of confrontations with fellow inmates. *Prison is already a heavy sentence, but it can turn into an endless one. It's better to stay by yourself, don't ask anybody anything and solve things for yourself. That way at least you have the hope of someday getting out.* But isolating oneself out of self-protection is only possible when a mild and orderly prison regime prevails and one does not have to compromise with fellow inmates.

### In the Medium of Care

Avoiding the criminal milieu 'in the can' implies lying low inside the system of the prison. It is not easy to achieve such autonomy, because the machinery of the prison itself has an upsetting effect on the inmate. Daily life is totally controlled and regulated, with a predetermined mechanical outcome. The most elementary actions are established as programmed procedures. Ex-inmates' most painful memories are of the automatic waking and the regulation of sleep by a central light-switch. *For me the worst thing in this cell was the loudspeaker above. Every morning at six o'clock the fluorescent light, which was sunk in the wall, went on. Pop. Bright all day, that yellow-green light. Like in an operating room. That loudspeaker jerked you out of your deepest sleep:*

de machinerie van de gevangenis zelf een storende werking heeft op de gedetineerde. Het dagelijks leven is totaal gecontroleerd, gereguleerd en in een machinale afloop voorbeschikt. De meest elementaire handelingen zijn vastgelegd in mechanische procedures. Aan het automatische wekken en de door de centrale lichtschakelaar gereguleerde nachtrust houden oudgevangenen de meest pijnlijke herinneringen over. *Het ergste in deze cel was voor mij de luidspreker bovenin. 's Morgens om 6 uur sprong de tv-buis, die in de muur was verzonken, peng, aan. De hele dag licht, van dat schrille groenige licht. Net een operatiekamer. De luidsprekerinstallatie rukte je uit je diepste slaap: Goedemorgen, het is zes uur, opstaan. En dat elke ochtend, elke ochtend opnieuw. Net als je aan het dromen was, hoorde je plotseling die stem. Dat schrille licht. Elke ochtend die schok. Dat heeft me kapotgemaakt.*

De hotelfunctie van de penitentiaire inrichting, om het managementsjargon te gebruiken dat in de justitiële bureaucratie opgeld doet, is op zich al voldoende om mensen murw te maken. Het isolement in de gevangenis is echter een complexe mix van dwang die van buitenaf uitgeoefend wordt, psychologische en sociale methodieken van zelfbescherming en mechanische inwerking van de penitentiaire strafmachine. Breytenbach: *Het fysiek slopende van al die lege tijd die voorbijgaat, het besef van intellectuele afstomping, want je hebt geen enkele intellectuele impuls van buiten, niks, dus langzaam keer je in jezelf, ga je dolen, krijg je een soort labyrint-hoofd.* Het verblijf in het gevang noopt tot een fatale terugtrekking op het persoonlijk terrein van eigen lichaam en geest. Gevangenisstraf krijgt hierdoor onvermijdelijk het karakter van een lijfstraf.

De media bieden de geïmmobiliseerde en geïsoleerde zombies een middel om de verveling te bestrijden en de tijd te doden. Iemand die in Zwitserland in voorarrest zat doorstond de

beproeving van de afzondering dank zij het gedrukte woord. *Ik zag alleen drie keer daags de man die het eten in mijn cel naar binnen schoof, verder niets. Wel kregen we een paar oude verformfaaide tijdschriften uit 1972, die Bunte en zo, en af en toe een boek.* Tegenwoordig is de televisie echter het basismedium geworden in de West-Europese gevangenis. Zelfs in een inrichting met grote bewegingsvrijheid als Long Kesh stond de televisie centraal. *Er stond een tv in de hut die werd 'verafgood', en ik was een van de gelovigen. Om ruzie te voorkomen over welke programma's bekeken zouden worden, koos elke hut een panel van drie personen om voor elke avond een programmakeuze op te schrijven. Over films en sport werd altijd geruzied.*

Dit opgaan in de media wordt met een zekere bivalentie bekeken. Immers de media zijn een integraal onderdeel geworden van het gevangenisregime. De gevangenen die in de televisiekamer aan het toestel zijn gekluisterd kunnen niet meer zonder. Jimmy Boyle: *Ze worden erin opgezogen alsof televisie een noodzakelijke drug is om aan de bestaande situatie te ontsnappen.* Een Zwitserse gevangene interpreteert dit als een bevestiging van de detentie: *Psychisch ga je behoorlijk kapot hierbinnen. Televisie is slecht. Iedereen hangt maar voor de tv, sinds het is toegestaan. Veel gelegenheid voor kritische reflectie op de media laat het bestaan in de gevangenis niet. Zelfs de selfmade intellectueel en beeldend kunstenaar Jimmy Boyle noteerde in het holst van de nacht bij het luisteren naar de radio: *De deejay van Radio Clyde spreekt met de mensen thuis via de telefoon. Via hen proef ik de atmosfeer van huisparty's. Popmuziek schettert in mijn oren en ik verwonder me over het medium radio, over hoe het eenzame mensen opbeurt. Het is alsof het me geruststelt niet alleen te staan.**

### De Bajes als Sensorium

In de passieve vorm lijken de media de gevangene een helpende hand te bieden, en hen in staat te stellen zich in een cocon in te

spinnen. *De gordijnen zijn gesloten om het licht van de eindigende dag tegen te houden, om buiten aan het gezicht te onttrekken. Een koptelefoon en de duisternis houden de werkelijkheid op een afstand, en zijn een middel om me de nacht door te helpen want morgen zal de dag nieuwe hoop brengen, schrijft Boyle. Wanneer de gevangene de zeggenschap ontnomen wordt over de sturing van zintuiglijke indrukken wordt het leven tot een hel. Het overprikkelen fungeert indirect als een psychologische methode om gevangenen dol te maken. Boyle typeerde de traditionele gevangenis als een akoestisch universum: *'s Ochtends zal hij ontwaken met geluiden van het oude systeem, krassende sleutels in sloten, pispotten die geleegd worden... De Franse psychiater Gerard Hof beschreef de nacht in een gevangenis als een weerzinwekkend klankbeeld van een riool. De akoestiek was zodanig dat ik noodgedwongen via mijn oren werd geïnformeerd over de stinkende en ongezonde staat van het spijsverteringskanaal van mijn medegevangenen, als gevolg van een chronisch gebrek aan voedsel; medegevangenen die ik alleen maar mocht kennen van het geluid van hun stoelgang en van de geluiden die ze maakten wanneer ze boerden, overgaven of spuwden.**

Gerard Hof ervoer de gevangenis als een systeem van georganiseerde overprikkeling, met een spectrum dat varieerde van de herrie van verbouwingswerkzaamheden tot de moedwillig berokkende geluids-overlast. Hof werd na opsluiting in een streng afgezonderde cel onthaald op een tierend radiodistributieapparaat. Na het dichtslaan van de celdeur brak de hel los. *Precies op dat moment werd de luidspreker aangezet, een mix van snerpende fluittonen, militaire bevelen om te gaan spazieren, popmuziek, etc. zo hard dat zelfs al zou ik een koptelefoon opzetten met de volumeknop helemaal open, de geluidsterkte niet minder zou worden. Zijn ongevraagde radio-ontvangsttoestel kon niet zachter gezet worden of uitgeschakeld.*



• Morning, it's six o'clock, get up please. This was every morning, every morning. Just when you're dreaming, you suddenly hear that voice. That glaring light. Every morning that shock. That broke me up.

The 'hotel function' of the penal institution, to use the management jargon which has caught on in the judicial bureaucracy, is in itself already enough to bring people to their knees. Isolation in prison, however, is a complex mix of pressure applied from outside, psychological and social methods of self-defence and the mechanical effect of the penal punishment structure. The prison creates a greater isolation than the care circuit of the prison itself imposes upon prisoners. Breytenbach: *What wrecks you physically, as all that empty time goes by, is the awareness of an intellectual dulling, because you don't get a single intellectual impulse from outside, nothing, so you gradually turn in on yourself, your head becomes a sort of labyrinth.* A stay in prison compels a fatal withdrawal onto the personal terrain of one's own body and mind. The sentence thus inevitably takes on the character of corporal punishment.

The media offer these immobilised and isolated zombies a means to fight boredom and kill time. A prisoner on remand in Switzerland endured the ordeal of isolation thanks to the printed word. *I only saw the guy who pushed the food into my cell three times a day. Nothing else. What we got were a couple of crumpled magazines from 1972, and a book once in a while.* Nowadays, however, television has become the chief medium in Western European prisons. Even in an institution like Long Kesh, with great freedom of movement, the television is central. *There was a tv in the hut which was an 'idol of worship', and I was of that faith. To combat argument over which programmes to watch, each hut elected a panel of three to write out a choice of viewing for each night.*

*Films and sport always caused resentment as to what was on.*

This absorption in the media is regarded with a certain ambivalence. For the media have become an integral component of the prison regime. The inmates sitting in the tv room glued to the set can no longer live without it. Jimmy Boyle: *They are locked into it as if television is a necessary drug to escape the present situation.* A Swiss prisoner interprets this as an affirmation of detention: *You're totally broken here mentally. The television is bad. Everyone just sits in front of the tv, since it's allowed.* Life in prison does not allow much opportunity for critical reflection on the media. Even self-made intellectual and artist Jimmy Boyle noted, listening to the radio in the dead of night: *The Radio Clyde disc jockey is speaking to people in their homes via the telephone. I get the atmosphere of home parties from them. Pop music is blasting in my ears and I marvel at radio and how it must comfort lonely people. It's almost as though it's reassuring me I'm not alone.*

### Gaol as a Sensorium

In a passive manner, the media seem to extend prisoners a helping hand, allowing them to spin a cocoon around themselves. *The curtains are closed to shut out the light from the dying day, to blot out of sight that there is an outside. Earphones and darkness keep away the reality, and are measures taken to help me through the night as tomorrow the day will bring new hope,* writes Boyle. When a prisoner is deprived of the control of sensory impressions, life becomes a hell. Overstimulation functions indirectly as a psychological method of driving inmates crazy. Boyle characterised the traditional prison as an acoustic universe: *In the morning he will awake to the sounds of the old system, scraping keys in locks, chamber pots being emptied...* The French psychiatrist Gerard Hof described night in prison as mimicking the repulsive sounds of a sewer. *The acoustics were such*

*that I was compulsively informed via my ears of the stinking and unhealthy state of the digestive tracts of my fellow inmates, caused by a chronically meagre diet; fellow inmates I was forbidden to know except through the sound of their defecation and those which they made while belching repulsively, vomiting and spitting.*

Gerard Hof experienced prison as a system of organised overstimulation, an entire spectrum, from the racket caused by construction to wilfully caused noise pollution. After being locked up in solitary confinement, Hof was treated to a blaring radio. After the cell door was slammed, all hell broke loose. *It was precisely at that moment that the loudspeaker came through, a blend of piercing whines, military commands, pop music, etc., so loud that it wouldn't have been any louder if I'd put on headphones with the volume all the way up.* His unasked-for radio receiver could not be turned down or off. When the guards ignored his pressing of the alarm bell, he decided to wreck the set. The noise was threatening to drive him crazy. Hof immediately draws a connection between the psychotechniques inflicted on him and the normal media outside the prison. *Two thoughts flashed through my head in that racket: Sensory deprivation = sensory compulsion and the conclusion that I'd already made before: There is a fascist tendency in pop music...*

The Frenchman grew suspicious and concluded that his radio must contain not only a speaker but a microphone, and that he was being permanently watched in his cell. *I was a guinea pig in a trial setting which had been conceived so that all my reactions were controllable, measurable and quantifiable; you knew how many times I turned on my radio, how often I looked for another station; you conducted a purposeful study of my motivations by changing the dose of frustration at will, a study that can be very useful for a number of goals: the refinement of psychological methods of torture, the study, for reasons of advertising, of sound structures which attract the*

Als de bewaking niet reageert op het indrukken van de alarmbel, besluit hij het toestel te slopen. Hof legt meteen de verbinding tussen de psychotechniek die hem overvalt en de normale media buiten de gevangenis. *Twee gedachten slieten door mijn hoofd tijdens dat helse kabaal: zintuiglijke ontbering = zintuiglijke verplichting en een conclusie die ik lang geleden al had getrokken: Popmuziek heeft iets fascistisch...*

Argwanend geworden concludeert de Franse gevangene dat er in zijn radiotoestel niet alleen een luidspreker moet zitten, maar ook een microfoon, en dat hij in zijn cel permanent gevolgd wordt. *Ik was een Guinees biggetje in een experimentele kooi die zo was ingericht dat al mijn impulsen controleerbaar, meetbaar en kwantificeerbaar waren; men wist hoe vaak ik mijn radio aanzette, hoe vaak ik van kanaal switchte; men maakte een doelbewuste studie van mijn motivaties door de dosis frustratie naar willekeur te veranderen, een studie die voor een aantal doeleinden erg nuttig kan zijn: de verfijning van psychologische martelmethode, de studie — voor reclamedoelstellingen — van geluidsstructuren die de aandacht van het oor trekken of een mnemotechnische obsessie creëren. Was er een team van onderzoekers in witte jassen die opzettelijk de grafieken bestudeerden? Experimenteel gebruik van een misstap, fundamenteel onderzoek om de reclame en de consumptiemaatschappij te bevorderen? Tot vandaag de dag ben ik ervan overtuigd dat het zo was.*

### Alleen in jezelf

Hoe juist deze intuïtie ook moge zijn, het besef onderworpen te zijn aan een permanente observatie dwingt Hof zelfs in absolute eenzaamheid van de isoleercel zijn gedrag te camoufleren. Deze mediale pressie dwingt de gedetineerde zich in zichzelf terug te trekken. Tot passiviteit gedwongen, verstoken van informatie en zonder feedback van gewone

mensen moet de gevangene van zijn creatieve geest gebruikmaken om een eigen omgeving, discipline en communicatiecircuit te scheppen. *Het was alsof de externe realiteit was verdwenen en met de betekenisdrager ook de betekenisgever verdwenen was; alsof de gevangene beroofd van zijn vrijheid tegelijkertijd beroofd was van de betekenis van elke discussie over alles wat geen deel uitmaakte van zijn cel. De gevangene, opgesloten in zichzelf, ziet niemand die hem gerust kan stellen en hem kan helpen van zijn ervaring te leren en hem kan uitleggen dat zijn reactie normaal is.*

Om weer te ontsnappen aan de afsluiting in de eigen denkwereld en contact te leggen met de buitenwereld moet hij zich grote inspanning getroosten. Vogels bieden soms een helpende hand. Veel gevangenen strooien broodkruimels om vogels naar hun celraam te lokken. *'s Ochtends hoorde ik het gezang van de vogels die op de broodkruimels afkwamen die de gevangenen door de tralies gooiden. Er waren mussen, merels en ook kraaien. Op een ochtend werd ik gewekt door de roep van een vogel, in plaats van een loeiende sirene. Een bijna mystiek gevoel van geluk overviel me.*

Minder poëtisch is de roep van de natuur die in het eigen lichaam klinkt: die van de seks. Door de gedwongen onthouding en segregatie der geslachten wordt een oversekste atmosfeer geschapen. Zelfbevrediging is in de regel de enige vorm van lustbeleving die toegestaan is. Maar pornografie is overal beschikbaar. *In bijna alle Franse gevangenissen floreren de pornobladen, en de phalocratische mentaliteit van het merendeel van de gevangenen wordt voortdurend gevoed door fantasieën. Perversiteit komt naar buiten in zijn volle omvang. Waar gevangen niet totaal geïsoleerd zijn slaat die term perversiteit vooral op seksueel misbruik van gevangenen onderling. Onverwacht ontlaadt de weerszin tegen het celibataire universum zich in een collectieve actie, zoals de opstand*

die in 1988 uitbrak in de Engelse gevangenis van Haverigg nadat opdracht was gegeven de pin-ups van de wanden te verwijderen.

De psychische dimensie van de strafervaring wordt nog versterkt door overvloedig druggebruik. Naast de inname van psychofarmaca op medisch voorschrift zijn in alle gevangenissen op grote schaal illegale drugs in omloop. Boyle: *Toen ik vanmorgen met een jongen in de eetzaal sprak zei hij dat hij nooit langer dan drie maanden zonder hasj was geweest — hij zat al negen jaar. Hij zei dat hij blij was niet meer in hal 'B' te zitten want daar was te veel heroïne om de verleiding te weerstaan. Hij gebruikte harddrugs voor zijn veroordeling. Volgens hem en een ex-Peterhead gevangene was de harddrug scene de afgelopen jaren veranderd in de bajes. Eens waren het pillen (barbituraten, etc.), nu is het hasj wat de klok slaat. Volgens hen werd dit door iedereen getolereerd, zelfs door de bewakers. In het geval van pillen zouden ze alles en iedereen als bezetenen onderzoeken wetende dat er geweld bij hoort. Op hasj is iedereen passief.*

### Eindelijk Thuis

Een dwangmatige 'innere Emigration', die weinig met morele inkeer van doen heeft, kenmerkt de gevangeniservaring. Op den duur heeft het verblijf in de gevangenis een totaal desocialiserend effect. Langzaam worden de psychische basiswaarden om aan het gewone sociale leven deel te nemen ondermijnd. *Hier ben je erg geïsoleerd. Ik heb dat gemerkt in het ziekenhuis. Toen ik de laatste dagen af en toe eruit mocht, kreeg ik in het warenhuis pleinvrees. Ik voelde me zo raar, ik weet het niet. Steeds weer stelde ik me voor dat een boer die voor het eerst in de grote stad komt, zich zo zou moeten voelen. (...) Ik heb steeds het gevoel dat wanneer men hier is men gelooft al zijn hele leven hier te zijn en de rest van zijn leven hier door te brengen, vond een Zwitserse drugverslaafde die gedetineerd werd.*

• attention of the ear or create a mnemonic obsession. Was there a team of researchers in white coats intently studying the curves? A practical memory experiment, fundamental research for the advancement of advertising and the consumer society? To this day I am convinced that there was.

### Alone in Yourself

However correct this intuition may be, the realisation that he is being subjected to permanent observation pushes Hof, even in the absolute solitude of the isolation cell, to camouflage his behaviour. This medial pressure forces the prisoner to close up in himself. Forced into passivity, deprived of information and without feedback from regular people, the prisoner must use his creativity to create his own environment, discipline and communication circuits.

*Everything happens as if external reality had disappeared and with the signified also the signifier, as if the prisoner, deprived of his freedom, was at the same time also deprived of the signification of any discourse about anything that wasn't part of his cell. The prisoner, locked up by himself, sees no one who can strengthen him and help him learn from his experience by explaining to him that his reaction is normal.*

To escape being closed off in the world of his own thoughts, he must go to great lengths to make a mental goalbreak by making contact with the outside world. Birds can be an almost saving link to the reality from which prisoners are excluded. Many prisoners scatter bread crumbs to lure birds to their cell windows. *In the mornings I heard the singing of the birds that came in great numbers for the bread crusts which the prisoners threw them through the bars. There were sparrows, blackbird and also crows. One morning, I was awakened by the call of a bird, instead of a roaring racket. I felt an almost mystical happiness.*

Less poetic is the call of nature which sounds in one's own body: that of sex. An oversexed atmosphere is created by the

forced abstinence and segregation of the sexes. As a rule, masturbation is the only form of sexual experience permitted. But pornography is available everywhere. *In almost all French prisons, porn magazines flourish, and the phallographic mentality of the majority of the inmates continually enriches itself through fantasies. Perversity becomes visible in its full spectrum. Where prisoners are not totally isolated, 'perversity' mainly means sexual abuse of other inmates. Disgust with the celibate universe unexpectedly manifests itself in collective actions like the 1988 uprising in the English prison of Haverigg, which erupted after it was ordered that pin-ups be removed from the walls.*

The psychological dimension of the experience of gaol is compounded by excessive drug use. Alongside the taking of medically prescribed pharmaceuticals, illegal drugs circulate in all prisons on a large scale. *Boyle: Speaking to a guy in the dining hall this morning, he said he hasn't gone more than three months this sentence without a smoke of hash — he is in nine years. He said he was glad to be out of 'B' hall as there was too much heroin there and he could feel the temptation. He was into hard drugs before this sentence. On speaking to him and an ex-Peterhead prisoner, they remarked that the hard drug scene has changed in recent years in the nick. At one time in prison it was all pills (barbiturates, etc.) but now it's all hash that's on the go. They say that everyone, even the screws, are more tolerant of this. But if it is pills, they go mad searching everyone and everywhere, knowing there is violence associated with them. On hash everybody is passive.*

### Finally Home

A compulsory 'inner emigration', which has little to do with moral repentance, characterises the prison experience. A stay in prison ultimately has a totally desocialising effect. After being forfeited for so long, the basic psychic requirements for taking

part in normal social life are undermined. *One is very isolated here. I noticed that in the hospital. When I got to go outside sometimes at the end, I got agoraphobia in a department store, and I felt so foolish, I don't know. I kept thinking, this is how a farmer must feel, coming to the city for the first time. I always get the feeling that if you're here it seems like you've been here your whole life and will be here for the rest of your life, remarked a gaolled Swiss drug addict.*

The prisoner is ousted from the order of space and time and isolated in an extraterritorial transit space. *Hof: I lost the notion of time, had no idea how many days had passed, didn't know the date or when I could expect visitors. The link to the outside becomes an inner experience; even an obsession. When you're here, you keep dreaming of outside, even if reality is very different. Through the availability of the media one remains reasonably well-informed. We're quite informed here about what's going on outside, through papers and now and then tv. When Jimmy Boyle is placed in an experimental prison ward with longer visiting hours, he realises to his embarrassment that his social skills and contact with his family have been affected. I didn't know what I would be able to talk about for this length of time. I was dreading those moments of long, drawn-out silences when we were all lost for words.*

For many ex-inmates, regained freedom is a traumatic affair. Many who are set free have no one waiting for them any longer. *I don't know what I'll do when I get out of here. I don't have relatives or friends. No one comes to visit, but when I'm free, I'll go to Bern, Zurich or Basel. I always spend the night in hotels. And when one does have a place to go, such as the parental house, then one no longer knows one's place. Boyle spoke to an acquaintance about his integration problems: He said there are times when he lies in his bed for three days at a time, sometimes even a week. He said he isn't depressed or anything but*

*continues on page 60*

Een gevangene wordt uit de orde van ruimte en tijd verdreven en geïsoleerd in een extraterritoriale transitruimte. Hof: *Ik verloor het besef van tijd, had geen idee hoeveel dagen voorbij waren gegaan, welke datum het was en wanneer ik bezoek kon verwachten.* De band met buiten wordt een innerlijke ervaring. Een obsessie zelfs. *Als je hier zit droom je voortdurend van buiten, ook als de werkelijkheid er heel anders uitziet.* Door de beschikbaarheid van de media blijft men redelijk goed geïnformeerd over wat er zich buiten afspeelt. *Natuurlijk worden we hier op de hoogte gehouden van wat er buiten gaande is, door kranten en af en toe de tv.* Verlegen realiseert Jimmy Boyle zich, wanneer hij in een experimentele gevangenisafdeling geplaatst wordt met langere bezoektijden, dat zijn sociale vaardigheid afgenomen en het contact met zijn familie verstoord is. *Ik wist niet waar ik zo lang over zou kunnen praten. Ik was doodsbang voor die momenten van langgerekte stiltes, als niemand meer iets wist te zeggen.*

De herwonnen vrijheid is voor veel ex-gedetineerden een traumatische aangelegenheid. Velen komen vrij zonder dat er nog iemand op hen wacht. *Ik weet niet wat ik ga doen als ik hier uitkom. Familie, vrienden heb ik niet. Er komt niemand op bezoek, maar als ik vrij ben, ga ik een keer naar Bern, Zürich of Bazel. Ik slaap altijd in hotels.* Ook al is er wel een plaats waar men terecht kan, zoals in het ouderlijk huis, dan voelt men zich er niet meer thuis. Boyle sprak met een kennis van hem over zijn integratieproblemen: *Hij zei dat er tijden waren waarop hij drie dagen achtereen in bed lag, soms zelfs een week. Hij zei dat hij niet depressief was of zo, maar ervan genoot opgesloten te zijn. Hij stelt zijn hele manier van leven ter discussie en heeft het idee dat hij niet op dezelfde golflengte zit met mensen buiten de gevangenis.*

Breyten Breytenbach: *Ik heb een aantal van zulke jongens gekend, die alleen maar een misdadigersmilieu hadden*

*meegemaakt, zowel binnen als buiten de gevangenis, en die langzamerhand zo waren afgestompt, dat ze zich alleen nog thuis voelden in de nor. Ze maakten daar dan ook echt een nestje van, prentjes aan de muren, gordijntjes voor het tralievenster, echt heel cosy. De gevangenis heeft maar één echte uitwerking: zij maakt een gevangene van je. Da's op den duur dan ook het enige waarvoor je nog deugt. Wie niet meer terug kan naar de bak, en geen normaal leven meer kan beginnen, moet zich opsluiten in het eigen huis. Een vriend van Boyle koos voor dat alternatief: Hij zei dat hij zichzelf opsluit in zijn kamer als een gevangene en zich vrij gelukkig voelt wanneer hij een boek leest en tv kijkt. Het is bijna alsof hij zijn eigen gevangenis buiten heeft gecreëerd.*

Deze zelfverkozen particuliere gevangenis in de eigen woning is in essentie een media cel. Sommige ex-gedetineerden betreden de gewone wereld als gevangenen van de media. Een vrijgekomen kennis van Jimmy Boyle was met zijn gezin uit zijn huis gezet, maar bleef een onderkomen met zich mee dragen: *In feite zijn ze dakloos. Alsof hij de verstoorde invloeden in zijn leven wil versterken, heeft hij, ondanks dakloos te zijn, een televisietoestel en een videorecorder wat een vrij kostbare aanschaf is.* Voor het elektronisch huisarrest hoeft men geen armband met een chipkaart te dragen, maar is een transfer naar de virtual reality van de media reeds voldoende. Breyten Breytenbach: *In de gevangenis word je als een baby. Je verliest elke zin voor de werkelijkheid. Je bedenkt de meest fantastische verhalen over wat er buiten allemaal gebeurt. Je zou het omgekeerde verwachten in zo'n keihard, hyperrealistisch concreet milieu als een gevangenis. Maar juist daar ga je in je fantasiewereld leven.*

Thuis ben je pas echt in je geloof in urban legends, de kracht van piramides en de bewustzijnsverruimende werking van sensore deprivatie.

*continued from page 59*

*• enjoys being a recluse. He is questioning his whole way of life and feels he cannot get on the same wavelength as other people on the outside.*

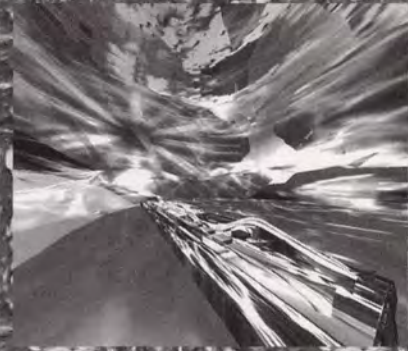
Breyten Breytenbach: *I've known a number of those guys who had only known a criminal milieu, inside prison as well as outside, and who were gradually so numbed that they only felt at home in the nick. And they really made a nest there, too: prints on the walls, curtains over the bars, really cosy. The prison only has one real effect: it makes you a prisoner. And in the end that's the only thing you're good for. If you can't go back in the clink, and can no longer lead a normal life, you must lock yourself up in your own house. A friend of Boyle's chose this option: He said that he locks himself up in his room like a prisoner and feels quite happy as he lies reading books and watching tv. It's almost as if he has created his own prison outside.*

This self-created individual prison in one's own house is in essence a media cell. Some ex-inmates enter the normal world as prisoners of the media. A freed acquaintance of Jimmy Boyle's was thrown out of his house with his family, but carried shelter with him. *They are virtually homeless. As though to reinforce the distorted influences in his life, although homeless, he has a tv and video recorder, which is a pretty expensive commodity.* For electronic house arrest, one need not wear a computerised wristband; transfer to the virtual reality of the media is enough. Breyten Breytenbach: *In prison you're like a baby. You lose all sense of reality. You think up the most fantastic stories about what's happening outside. You would expect the opposite in such a hard, hyperrealistic concrete milieu like a prison. But it's there that you start to live in a fantasy world.*

You are only truly at home in your belief in urban legends, pyramid power and the consciousness-expanding effect of sensory deprivation.

translation LAURA MARTZ





As an alternative project to the more inventions that Mediamatic suggests for this issue, Stephen Perrella posits an alternative space called Hypersurface, that resists being defined in terms of cyberspace and virtual reality.



• One finds typically that static categorical ideas relevant in a material embodied world are re-realized in cyberspace. This extension of Western Cartesian assumptions into cyberspace presupposes a dichotomy between mind and body, whereby the mind is reconstituted as a technological inside. Cyberspace serves as a technological reflection or extension of the *ego cogito*, or the self as mind. Cyberspace does not exist other than as a linguistic/conceptual construct that reiterates Cartesian space, a computer platform epistemology, re-reconstituting dualities.

Similarly the notion of home is never a final, deduced state. It is a fixed entity only when one assumes a fixed identity; as in the statement *this is my home*. The question of 'home' and identity in the context of a culture racing toward virtual reality creates a catastrophic dilemma for both notions. The gap between any conception of home (as Christopher Alexander nostalgically dreams of it) and that same humanist conception of home re-realized in cyberspace (as argued for in Michael Benedikt's introduction to his anthology *Cyberspace: First Steps*) configures a perverse and schizophrenic condition. The dualisms of Cartesian thought are manifested: home, or mind, is assumed to be inside, and simultaneously have a technologically constituted home/mind-self, in cyberspace (as a space other than the categorical real).

An example of this uncanny condition exists when one dons cyberwear, creating a simultaneously real and virtual body, and an event impacting the virtual body effects the corporeal body. This constitutes a schizophrenic moment. An experience that folds into the gap between real and virtual. In other words, what happens when the self we see in the mirror is taken as the real?

To posit an alternative to the dualistic assumptions of cyberspace, the phenomenal dimensions of polarities may be considered as always already interspersed through each other, neither existing as a pure state. Toward this Cartesian techno-abys, I posit an alternative spatiality called *Hypersurface*. Hypersurface is an alternative to the schizo-dualistic oxymoron 'virtual reality.'

To engage the architecture of hypersurface, one must reveal the site of the most concentrated focus of attention and desire of Western culture: the 'screen', must be rethought of as a sponge rather than as a knife dividing the real/virtual. All the dualism in Cartesian culture; inside/outside, male/female, ground/edifice, ornament/structure, form/function, etc., are constituted by the separatrix (/) that now may technologically be understood as a 'screen.' The term screen here is meant both literally and phenomenally, i.e. the tv, computer, architectural skin, or boundary condition.

Hypersurface is a manner of envisioning a non-dichotomized space beginning with the economy of screenal culture as a Ground Zero. The screen as ground zero is the problematic substrate of Western consciousness. What is registered on that surface (one that immediately complexifies) doesn't afford any objective understanding, as there is a continuous seam between the reader and what is read, inasmuch as every reading reconfigures that surface. Hypersurface is a theory of liquid embodied architecture to displace the nostalgia and re-realization that most carry into the spatialities of new media technology. Hypersurface delimits the reductions given through biases prevalent in disciplinary categorization.

Epistemological thought hasn't and can't produce what it promises; there are only further degradations of experience to

come. It is not a matter of deciding to go into cyberspace — we are always already in it. It is not the creation of art in cyberspace, it is a matter of rescuing art from its superfluous role in relationship to architecture. A deconstruction and refutation of Cartesian spatial assumptions and a respect for antihumanist/antilogocentric discourses after May '68.

To think the architecture of hypersurface is not an act of construction or deconstruction but a nearly self-generating between-state. *Hyper* regards reconfigured manifestations of subjectivity/desire not over and above, but as a having-risen-within. Surface is the architectonic translation as structure/substrate. Hyper-surface deconstructs the gap between bodies and buildings into an interactive substrate (hypersurface) configured by intersubjective digital praxis.

If the hyper communications of virtual culture/capitalism were exhumed from the non-space of vr and set into play within an architectonic of hypersurface, the resultant distortions, disfigurements, and radical abstractions left open to interpretation would effect a return of the repressed. In hypersurface new forms of intersubjective interactivity would emerge from the context of reductive Western logocentrism. Prior to any empirical dealing with technology, we are already televisual. This suggests that we do the deconstructive work to recover the uncanny from within that condition. The uncanny or originary difficulty, or the fear of death, has been covered over by the rational tendencies that have been at work since the beginning of Western culture. Hypersurface architecture returns the fear of death into dynamic, deconstructed technological space as a 21st century condition for dwelling. One that ends the repressed assumptions of the Humanist tradition.

\*\*\*\*\*

**\*\* Welcome to MediaMOO! \*\***

\*\*\*\*\*

PLEASE NOTE:

MediaMOO is a professional community, where people come to explore the future of media technology.

The operators of MediaMOO have provided the materials for the buildings of this community, but are not responsible for what is said or done in them. In particular, you must assume responsibility if you permit minors or others to access MediaMOO through your facilities. The statements and viewpoints expressed here are not necessarily those of the janitors, Amy Bruckman, or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and those parties disclaim any responsibility for them.

Type:

- 'connect <character-name> <password>' to connect to your character,
- 'connect Guest' to connect to a guest character,
- 'help @request' for information on how to get your own character,
- '@who' just to see who's logged in right now,
- '@quit' to disconnect, either now or later.

connect mediamatic jans

\*\*\* Connected \*\*\*

purple-crayon.media.mit.edu

You are almost to MediaMOO, inside a fiber optic cable. Type OUT to get to the Media Lab or COMMON to get to Curtis Common.

Obvious exits: out to The E&L Garden, common to Curtis Common, salon to The NI Salon, and down to media.mit.edu

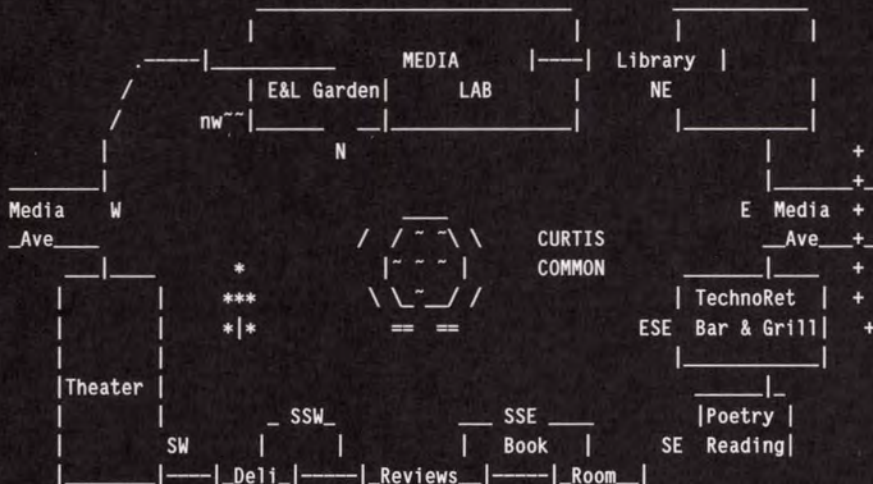
There's a new edition of the newspaper. Type 'news' to see it.

MediaMOO is a professional community for media researchers.  
Please type "help purpose"

common

You head for Curtis Common...

Curtis Common



Jouke, Geert-Jan and Mediamatic are standing here.

You see Fountain, BLUEPRINT#1, BLUEPRINT#2, A sign announcing help via paging...READ THIS, Santa, Santa's list, invitation, and purple frisbee are here.



Geert-Jan reads the media graffitti on Fountain...

Jouke asks, "3 weeks though?"

Geert-Jan says, "yes, we have a january 'interim' period between semesters.."

Geert-Jan says, "we meet 4 hours a day.."

Jouke says, "ahh"

Jouke must do his expense reports....

Jouke, "I am already"

Jouke sighs

Geert-Jan greets Mediamatic...

Geert-Jan tosses purple frisbee into Fountain...

... the fountain waters slosh about after purple frisbee's entry...

@who

Player name	Connected	Idle time	Location
Mediamatic (#113)	2 minutes	0 seconds	Curtis Common
Jouke (#3657)	10 minutes	10 minutes	Curtis Common
Geert-Jan (#008)	10 minutes	10 minutes	Curtis Common
Kas (#8043)	23 minutes	15 minutes	Oneday quadrangle
Menno (#447)	23 minutes	13 minutes	Oneday quadrangle
Ilona (#62)	23 minutes	20 minutes	Oneday quadrangle
Volvo (#8867)	48 minutes	21 minutes	Women's dressing room
Maxi (#63)	12 hours	11 hours	the Ballroom
Yvonne (#2111)	43 minutes	35 minutes	Men's Dressing Room
Pieter (#430)	2 hours	36 minutes	Pyramid
Antje (#233)	34 minutes	23 minutes	the Ivory tower
Fred (#915)	13 minutes	2 minutes	the Atelier Picasso
Esther (#576)	16 hours	13 hours	PoMo-a-GoGo lounge
Arnoud (#10544)	15 minutes	5 seconds	Gordon's office and lounge
Nox (#8850)	7 minutes	7 minutes	U-505 boat
Lars (#555)	5 minutes	2 minutes	Moss Rock Wilderness
Hans (#1383)	a day	3 hours	Box forest
Rein (#75)	18 hours	14 hours	Room of the Willd MiNd
Q.S. Serafijn(#7)	4 hours	30 minutes	Corwin's Cabin
Rosanna (#800)	6 hours	6 hours	the Bathroom
Edward (#7213)	3 hours	3 hours	The Wub
Tijl (#8934)	4 minutes	4 minutes	the Great Lake
Joseph (#5585)	an hour	22 minutes	Celestial cavern

Total: 23 players, 4 of whom have been active recently.  
There are 2 players not listed.



@join-kas

## Oneday Quadrangle

The oneday cloisters, you stand in a central space created by buildings on all sides, and dominated by a knarled wide oak and an uneven and wildly colourful garden.

East is a nineteenth century warehouse building converted to living quarters.

North is a low building with glass along its length, the water of a 25 metre pool reflects the autumn sun.

West is a building that looks like an English country house but by intention and the addition of some complex parasitic architecture, has been converted for use as office space.

South is a modern and uninspired squat factory building, it has no windows but two large doors are slid open revealing a quiet, clean, and unmanned production line, humming almost imperceptibly.

Obvious exits: north to oneday poolside and east to oneday warehouse

east

oneday warehouse

When you dance and your arms and hands find ways through the temporary spaces of the crowd and your hips rotate and your torso flexes and twists, and movement flows rhythmically through your whole body, you can't help thinking that music is filled with spatial cues and that lucid large gestures and measured breathing are all in some way a direct consequence of a musical map.

In the sense of feeling hollow and sinewy and alive reaching into the light and the clarity.

Moving measured and slow. This room is made up of all those temporary spaces.

sort of type thing

It is also the ground floor of a warehouse and good place to play loud music

Obvious exits: up to all empty living space and west to oneday quadrangle.

up

all empty living space

A big open space, with a ceiling made low by bunches and folds of raw cottonhung untidily, covering it completely all white and dishevelled.

Autumnal sun streaks through large, down to the floor, warehouse windows, and plays on the stained, polished, wood floor; three large futon, lying sort of next to each other so you could, perhaps, crawl from one to another, are obscured by a number of large Marks and Spencers duvets. This sleeping place fills a small part of the excessive floor space.

A low trestle table runs from the mattresses all the way to the wall and on it are two unremarkable terminals; books and magazines, some scattered, some organised into ridiculously neat rows. One end is full of wood and metalworking tools, a lathe, and a fix mounted drill dominate chippings and useless looking objects in various states of disrepair.

Most of the space is bare hollow and peaceful.

There are no chairs.

A wrought iron staircase leads down

Obvious exits: down to oneday warehouse and up to Cafe Tired

You see DELL 486DX here.

JBen, Kas, Ilona and Menno are here.

up

Cafe Wired

Large and empty.

...but there's been work going on in preparation for good things to come.

On the wall is a large temporary sign which says:

Cafe Wired:

Here you are virtually connected to Cafe Wired@LambdaM00.

(This means if you say or emote anything here, they'll see it there.)

Be advised.

-The Management

The South wall is all glass, and looks out over the warehouses of Media Gulch.

Beyond the warehouses to the Southeast lies San Francisco Bay.



You wonder if you should dress for the occasion.  
You step quietly into the ballroom, feeling underdressed.

@join Volvo

You step through the velvet curtain into the women's dressing room.

## Women's Dressing Room

The dressing room is a clutter of gowns, hats, and gloves from all different eras.  
Type 'examine rack' for more information.  
Obvious exits: east to Ballroom Foyer and south to The Ballroom.  
You see women's clothing rack here.

examine rack

women's clothing rack (aka #598, women's clothing rack, and rack)

Owned by Amy.

You see a rack filled with formal (and not so formal!) attire from all eras.

Type 'examine rack' for more information.

Obvious verbs:

wear <anything> from rack  
search rack  
design\*-outfit <anything> for rack  
give-away <anything> from rack  
list\*-outfits rack  
g\*et/t\*ake rack  
d\*rop/th\*row rack  
gi\*ve/ha\*nd rack to <anything>

search rack

You search through the rack and find outfit T-shirt and 501 blue jeans and thongs (Outfit #48) which would look elegant on you.

wear 48 from rack

You slip into outfit T-shirt and 501 blue jeans and thongs.

search rack

You search through the rack and find a flowing floral skirt that just brushes the floor (hence the dust-ruffle) with low-cut, sweeping neck top in cream and rose, flowers in her hair, bells on her sandals (Outfit #86) which would look darling on you.

wear 86 from rack

You remove outfit T-shirt and 501 blue jeans and thongs.

You slip into a flowing floral skirt that just brushes the floor (hence the dust-ruffle) with low-cut, sweeping neck top in cream and rose, flowers in her hair, bells on her sandals..

search rack

You search through the rack and find a classic black cocktail dress and snakeskin pumps (Outfit #1) which would look divine on you.

wear 1 from rack

You remove a flowing floral skirt that just brushes the floor (hence the dust-ruffle) with low-cut, sweeping neck top in cream and rose, flowers in her hair, bells on her sandals..

You slip into a classic black cocktail dress and snakeskin pumps.

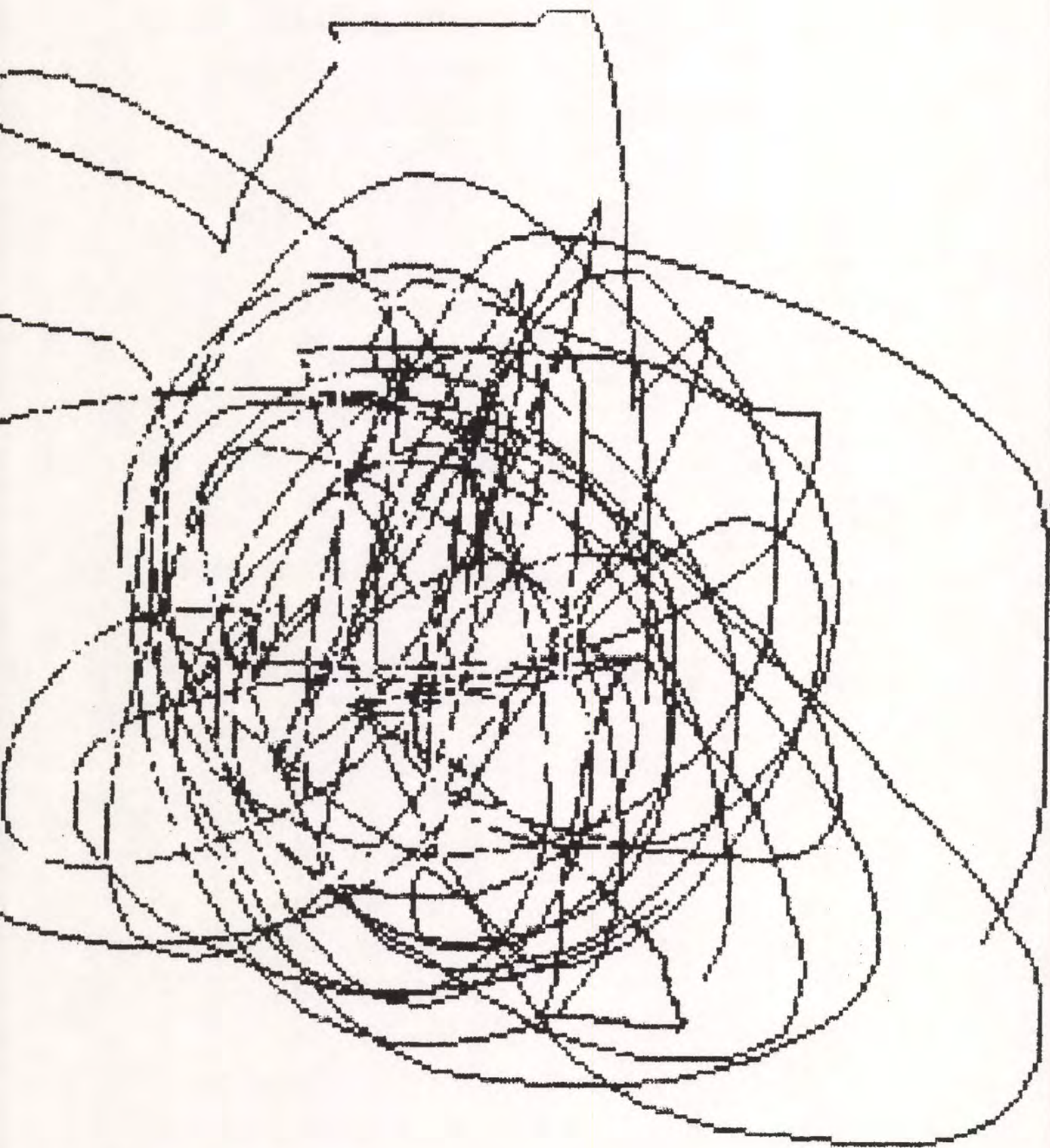
east

You step into the slightly brighter light of the foyer.

Ballroom Foyer

The ballroom foyer has a green marble floor with swirls of gold. The walls are a rich green velum, and the white ceiling forms a pointy peak in the center.

Obvious exits: south to The Ballroom, east to Men's Dressing Room, west to Women's Dressing Room, and north to Sixth-floor Atrium.



south

## The Ballroom

Hanging from the peaked ceiling thirty feet above, an art deco chandelier shines. You can see its reflections in the marble floor, which is a deep green with whirls of gold.

Behind the black slate bar built into the west wall, Lucy is making drinks.

Sunken down two steps is a large, octagonal dance area.

Obvious exits: north to Ballroom Foyer, northeast to Men's Dressing Room, northwest to Women's Dressing Room, and south to Dance Floor.

You see Lucy, The Great Big Giant Birthday Card, plate of cheese, MediaMOO Award Plaque, plate of cookies, and Robo Ninja-Librarian here.

You pause in the doorway of The Ballroom, gazing around the ballroom.

A voice announces, "Maxi".

south

You step onto the dance floor.

Dance Floor

The large, octagonal dance area is inside the ballroom, set two steps down.

The floor here is a polished mahogany, which reflects the lights of the chandelier above.

Obvious exits: north to The Ballroom

You see The Band here.

examine the band

The Band (aka #2193, The Band, and band)

Owned by Amy.

The members of the band are dressed in formal attire, as the occasion demands.

Amazingly, the number of players and the instrumentation change to perfectly suit each song!

You realize that they are actually a very nice hologram, with simulated 3d audio output!

Obvious verbs:

g\*et/t\*ake the band

request <anything> from the band

@remove-song <anything> from the band

@list-songs the band

@responsible\*-for-that-last-song the band

@reset the band

@learn\*-requests the band <anything>

d\*rop/th\*row the band

gi\*ve/ha\*nd the band to <anything>

request airbag from the band

You tell the band leader your request.

The band leader says "Sure thing. We'll play that next."

@list-songs the band

Songs in the band's repertoire:

1: The Time Warp, suggested by Amy (amy) (#75)

2: Our Lips are Sealed, suggested by Amy (amy) (#75)

3: Vogue, suggested by Amy (amy) (#75)

4: Hawaii, suggested by Janice [GPC] (#8080)

5: Scarlet Begonias, suggested by mday [The Rhetronymical] (#1849)

6: Love Me Tender, suggested by Corwin (#6685)

7: Masochism Tango, suggested by Blue-Guest (#106)

8: moon river, suggested by petit-objet-a (#8776)

9: Hell Awaits, suggested by Guest (#113)

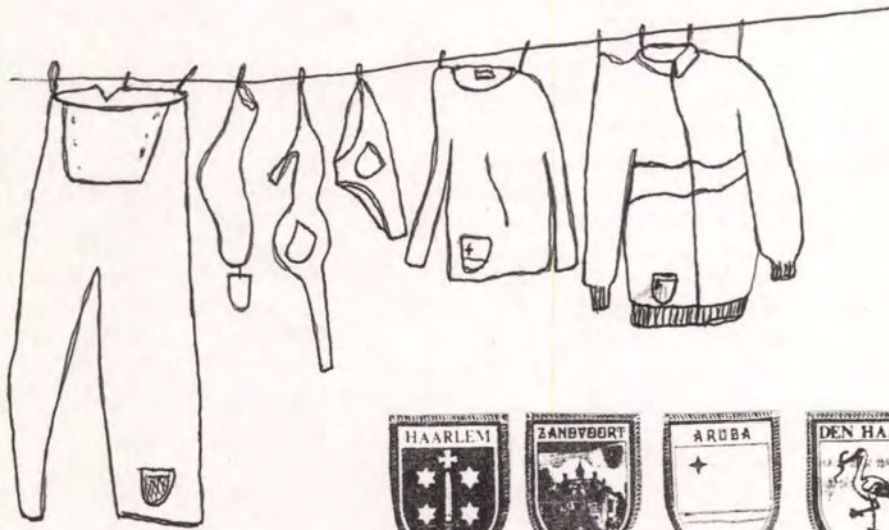
10: The Maestro, suggested by cheets (#10301)

11: charleston, suggested by cj (wunderin') (#8672)

12: ThunderStruck by AC/DC, suggested by James-Bond (#4130)

The band leader says, "And now a special request from Maxi."

The band starts playing "airbag".





northeast

You step through the velvet curtain into the men's dressing room.

## Men's Dressing Room

The dressing room is a clutter of tuxedos, tail coats, cummerbunds, gloves, and hats from all eras.

Type 'search rack' to pick an outfit, and 'wear # from rack' to put it on!

Obvious exits: west to Ballroom Foyer and south to The Ballroom

You see men's clothing rack here.

search rack

You search through the rack and find mask, snorkle, fins, complete body tattoo, and floppy guitar (Outfit #61) which would look handsome on you.

wear 61 from rack

You slip into mask, snorkle, fins, complete body tattoo, and floppy guitar.

search rack

You search through the rack and find a black Marcel Duchamp t-shirt, surfer sweatpants, and no shoes (Outfit #57) which would look smashing on you.

wear 57 from rack

You remove mask, snorkle, fins, complete body tattoo, and floppy guitar.

You slip into a black Marcel Duchamp t-shirt, surfer sweatpants, and no shoes.

search rack

You search through the rack and find a pair of spike-heel cowboy boots the size of Mt. Rushmore (Outfit #15) which would look handsome on you.

wear 15 d from rack

You remove a black Marcel Duchamp t-shirt, surfer sweatpants, and no shoes.

You slip into a pair of spike-heel cowboy boots the size of Mt. Rushmore.

search rack

You search through the rack and find frayed jeans and a rather faded Grateful Dead t-shirt (Outfit #32) which would look OK on you.

wear 32 from rack

You remove a pair of spike-heel cowboy boots the size of Mt. Rushmore.

You slip into frayed jeans and a rather faded Grateful Dead t-shirt.

west

You step into the slightly brighter light of the foyer.

Ballroom Foyer

The ballroom foyer has a green marble floor with swirls of gold. The walls are a rich green velum, and the white ceiling forms a pointy peak in the center.

Obvious exits: south to The Ballroom, east to Men's Dressing Room, west to Women's Dressing Room, and north to Sixth-floor Atrium.

north

You feel a tingling sensation and suddenly realize that you are no longer wearing frayed jeans and a rather faded Grateful Dead t-shirt.

Sixth-floor Atrium

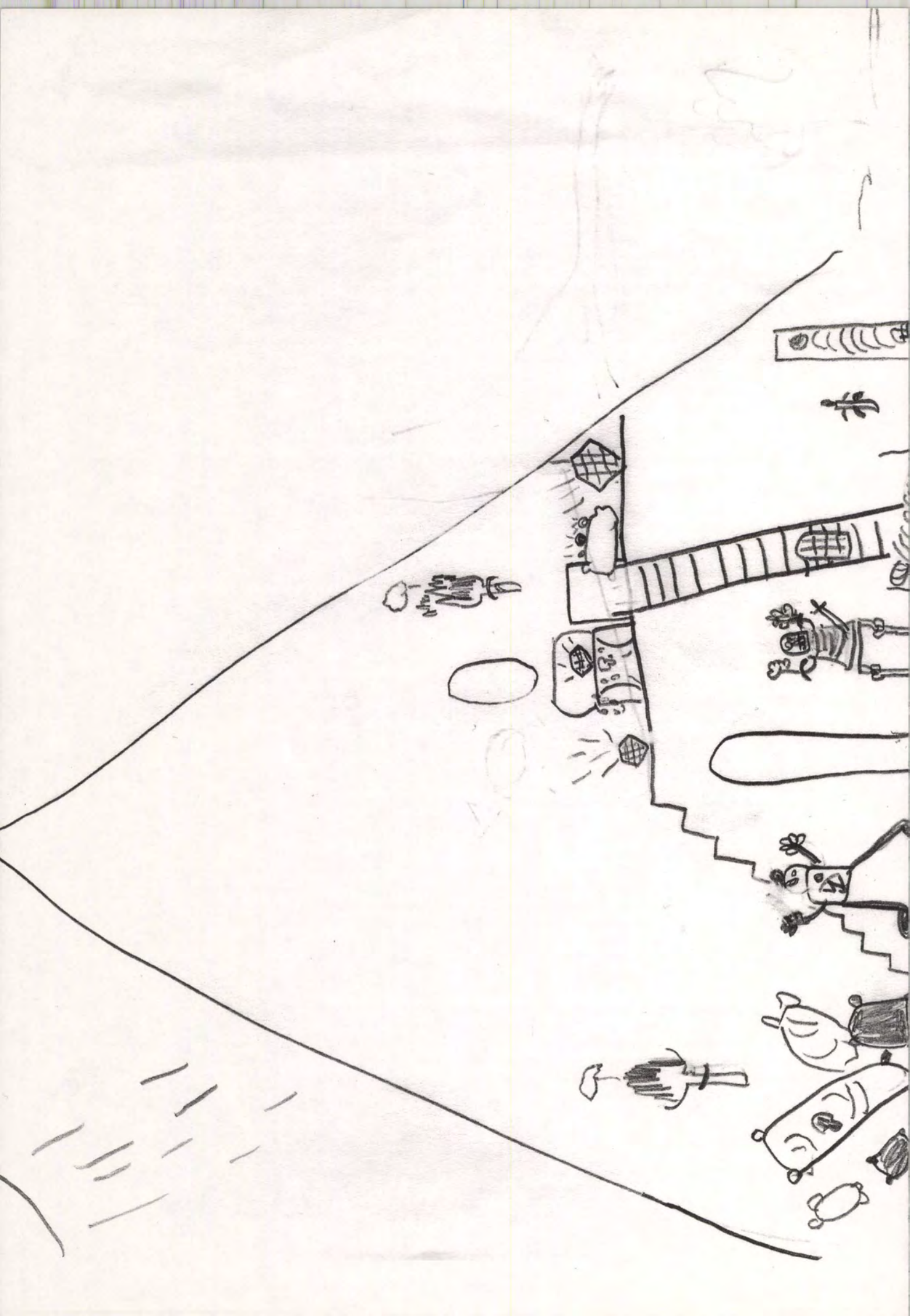
A mist-filled space. The topology of this floor is unclear.

Obvious exits: library to The Library, down to Media Lab Roof, alum to Alumni Hallway, south to Ballroom Foyer, and elevator to elevator

You see an elevator call button here.

elevator

The doors are shut. Ouch!



@go pyramid

## Pyramid

A shimmer of swirling white light, fiber optic cable is strewn everywhere, this place is obviously under construction!

One of the cables has a head jack. You are attracted to it...

Obvious exits: down to The Lower Depths of the Pyramid

You see Head jack, Mummy, Kaiada, Flame's slate, Golden Coin, Flame's New Year postcard, and rope here.

examine mummy

Mummy (aka #4870 and Mummy)

Owned by Flame.

Congratulations on owning your very own conversational robot.

To learn how to program your new bot, just drop the bot and say 'hello'.

The bot will teach you everything you need to know!

examine kaiada

Kaiada (aka #3128 and Kaiada)

Owned by Flame.

It looks at you with a dark and brooding intelligence. You see a large bird with iridescent copper feathers that seems to shimmer in the light. It's piercing eyes constantly shifting color and brightness. Its talons are adorned with precious metals and jewels. The dark bird holds centuries in its devastating mind, and it is no untried veteran of the Arts. As you watch, a flickering aura blazes around it, and where there was a bird, now a panther, and now a wolf, and once more a silent evil bird... Kaiada looks at you inquisitively with eyes of utter madness and shifts spasmodically through a hundred different shapes in recognition of you, before losing interest and wandering away...

down

You feel great inner calm after leaving the comforts & beauty here.

The Lower Depths of the Pyramid

A dark and mysterious room, the walls are covered with hieroglyphics.

You can read them or write your own if you like...

You see rats scampering between the shadows on the floor...

You hear Steve Vai playing loudly in the background.

Iping lurks in the corner guarding the Treasure Room entrance.

Obvious exits: up to Pyramid

You see Hieroglyphic Wall, Flame's Sword, and Sarcophagus here.

examine sarcophagus

Sarcophagus

You see a golden liquid crystal sarcophagus with morphing fractal.

The details are kinda hazy but you are no longer where once you had been.

@go treasure room

Treasure Room

You see a dusty white light pour across the Pharaohs treasures from the small entryway, through which you just passed.

As your eyes become accustomed to your surroundings, you see soft velvet pillows and carpets amidst piles of precious gems and jewels.

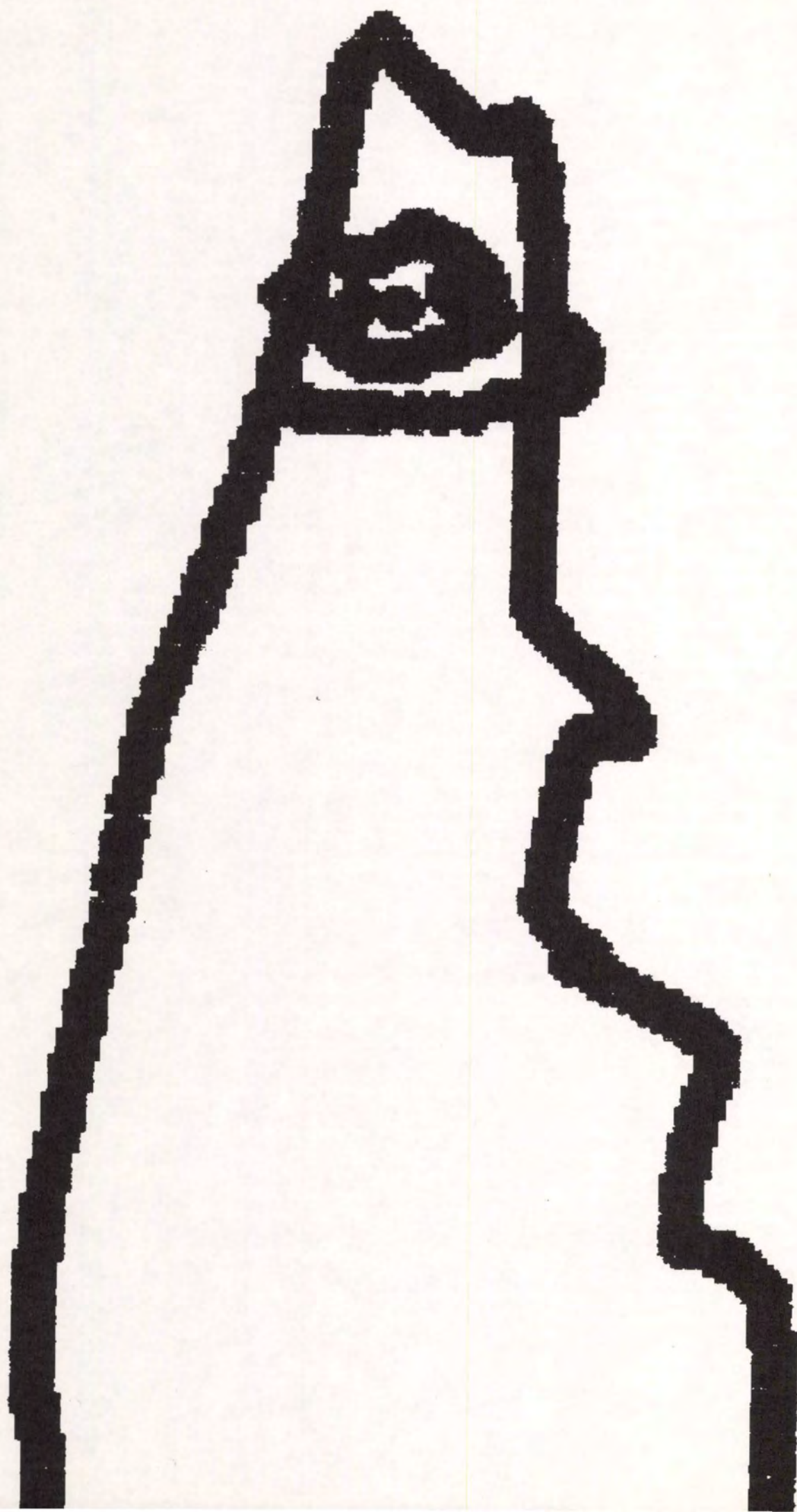
Opals, azures, diamonds, emeralds, rubies and pearls blend and shape the beams of light into a thousand brilliant hues. The scent of sweet spices and jasmine fill the air.

Torches softly burn in the corners of the room, creating dancing shadows over the glistening jewels and your body...

The walls of the room are a golden liquid crystal, gently morphing different images, every so often you see a beautiful mirror framed in silver filigree.

Obvious exits: east to The Lower Depths of the Pyramid and smoke to Hooka

You see Torch and Pieter here.



tower

You climb a golden ladder up into brilliant light.

## The Ivory Tower

The south tower of the Smithsonian castle, which rises majestically into the azure sky.  
(Ninja-Librarian's office.) Visitors are welcome.

Obvious exits: stairway to Heaven, road to Hell, PL to Public Library, and trail to Moss Rock Wilderness.

Ninja-Librarian and Antje are standing here.

You see AST 386, a window, and a gold coin here.

examine a window

a window (aka #4071 and window)

Owned by Ninja-Librarian.

Across the river in Virginia you see a garish neon sign flashing the words  
'EAT AT BLUE MOON ESPRESSO'.

Obvious verbs:

turnon a window

turnoff a window

tune a window to <anything>

sch\*edule a window

play <anything> on a window

pause a window

res\*ume a window

autopause a window

dumptape a window

g\*et/t\*ake a window

d\*rop/th\*row a window

gi\*ve/ha\*nd a window to <anything>

turnon a window

Guest turns on a window.

examine coin

a gold coin (aka #2482, a gold coin, gold coin, and coin)

Owned by Ninja-Librarian.

You see a Spanish doblon, very worn and faded.

You can barely make out the inscriptions on it.

It looks like it was part of the treasure from an ancient ship sunk by pirates.

You wonder what it's doing here in MediaMOO.

If you're undecided about anything, feel free to toss the coin.

Obvious verbs:

toss coin

g\*et/t\*ake coin

d\*rop/th\*row coin

gi\*ve/ha\*nd coin to <anything>

toss coin

How many times do you want to toss the coin? Enter a number. Limit is 10.

[Type a line of input or `@abort' to abort the command.]

3

You toss the coin. It tumbles through the air and lands.

Tails.

You toss the coin. It tumbles through the air and lands.

Tails.

You toss the coin. It tumbles through the air and lands.

Tails.

stairway

You fall into a reverie and your soul takes wing.



Heaven

A golden paradise flowing with grant money, artistic genius, and intellectual freedom.  
Obvious exits: retreat to The Ivory Tower and down to Public Library  
You see wind chimes, Famous Last Words, and the twilight zone here.

You feel blissfully relaxed.

examine twilight zone

the twilight zone (aka #2108, the twilight zone, twilight zone, zone, and tzone)  
Owned by Ninja-Librarian.

You see a strange shimmering area. There seems to be an opening in it.

Obvious verbs:

g\*et/t\*ake twilight zone  
enter twilight zone  
d\*rop/th\*row twilight zone  
@lock-entry twilight zone with <anything>  
@unlock-entry twilight zone  
@about twilight zone  
@describe-inside twilight zone as <anything>  
@opacity twilight zone is <anything>

enter twilight zone

You are now entering the twilight zone  
A very unstable area. If you move in any direction you might disturb the zone.

move

The zone begins to shake and dematerialize.

You feel a slight motion.

Outside the twilight zone, you see:

the atelier picasso

An airy studio atop the third floor of an apartment in the 6th arrondissement of Paris.  
The zone restabilizes itself.

out

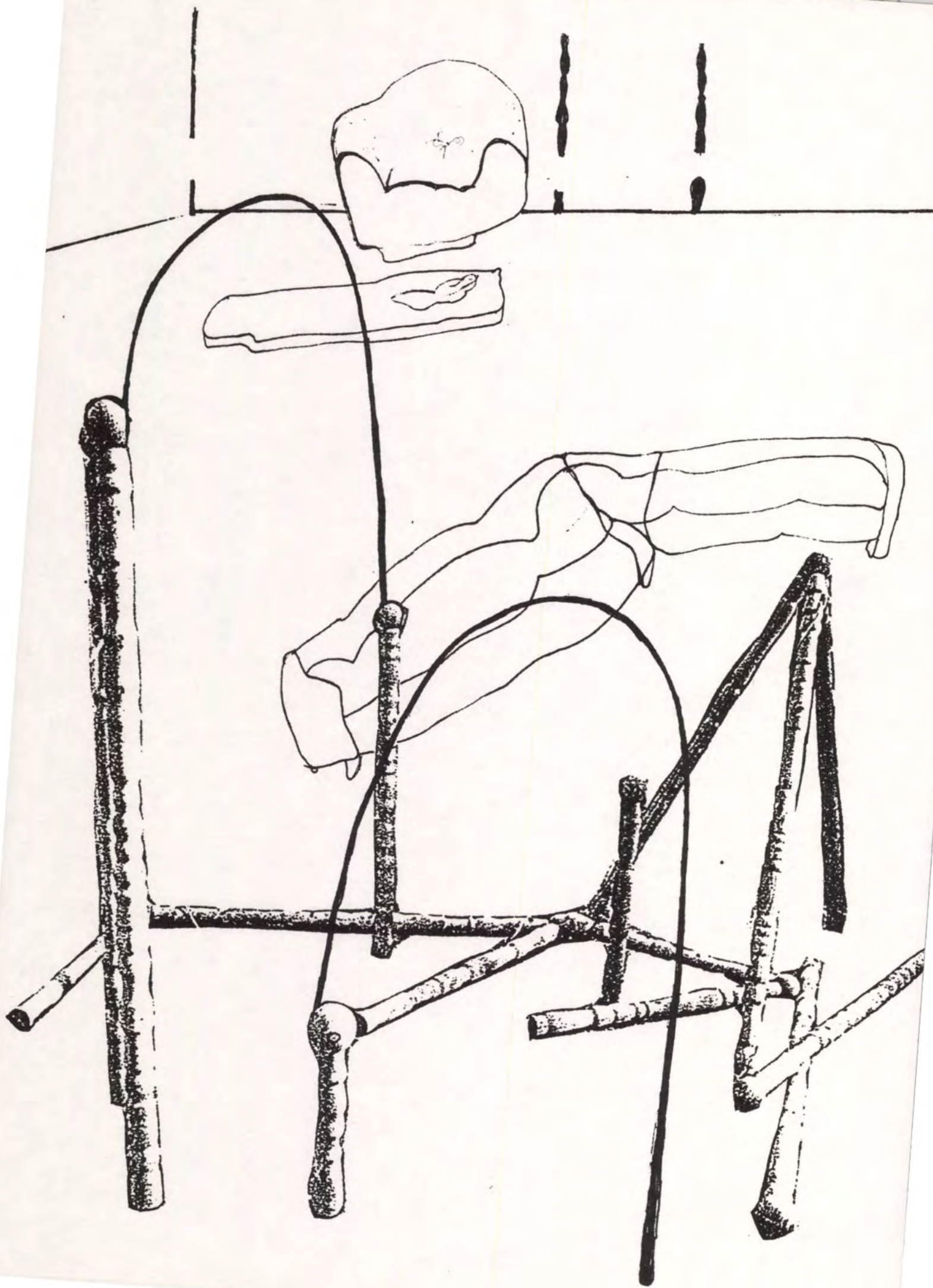
With a jolt, you are hurled out.

## The Atelier Picasso (#5479, the Atelier Picasso)

An airy studio atop the third floor of an apartment in the 6th arrondissement of Paris. The building is 18th century: the stone walls are cream-colored and cool to the touch, stone floors covered with intricately woven carpets from Kashmir and Petra, large windows open to the quiet street below. Signs of work scattered everywhere: papers, paintings, and a few mechanical sculptures. Around the room are a number of comfortable chairs, and a desk. On the desk, a bunch of irises stand in a black vase.

enter twilight zone

You are now entering the twilight zone  
A very unstable area. If you move in any direction you might disturb the zone.





move

The zone begins to shake and dematerialize.

You feel a slight motion.

Outside the twilight zone, you see:

the PoMo-a-GoGo Lounge

The zone restabilizes itself.

out

With a jolt, you are hurled out.

## The PoMo-a-GoGo Lounge

Brightly lit with sunlight, the Lounge has deep bay windows on all sides, rioting with plantlife of various flavors. Large comfy cat-scratched pink and brown chairs that look like they came from a thrift shop (they did) are placed around the room, along with low tables. A large aquarium on one side contains a small overactive Southern Painted Turtle named Murphy. Books and papers are stacked everywhere, and a compact Mac sits on a desk in the corner. Boston weather is battering at the glass but it's cosy in here; have a bagel, sit down and watch TV; the Animaniacs is on PoMo channel 1, the X-Files are on PoMo channel 2. There's an Indigo Girls tape in the stereo, but They Might Be Giants' album Flood is on the other side if you're not in a mellow mood. PoMo has oral exams in the fall so be quiet; have some respect for the dead.

You see the twilight zone here.

PoMo (<Alert>) and Esther are here.

examine PoMo

PoMo (aka #4116, PoMo, Jude, and Judith(2))

Owned by PoMo.

Resolved to keep her temper all summer.

Research interests: Postmodern novels, computers and writing, Virtual culture and science fiction.

enter twilight zone

You are now entering the twilight zone

A very unstable area. If you move in any direction you might disturb the zone.



move

The zone begins to shake and dematerialize.  
You feel a slight motion.  
Outside the twilight zone, you see:  
Gordon's Office and Lounge  
The zone restabilizes itself.

out

With a jolt, you are hurled out.

## Gordon's Office and Lounge

Gordon's Office is dominated by a massive oak desk won on a bet from a friend. Well taken care of and dark, but it also seems friendly. Halogen floor lamps are in every corner of the office. Along one wall is a massive stone fireplace. Since spring is coming the flue has been shut and the ashes from a very cold winter swept away.  
Along another wall is what looks like a very inviting, very comfortable leather couch.  
Bookcases, full of tapes surround the walls and there are vcrs for viewing this vast collection.  
In the corner lighted by perfect three-point lighting are Gordon's two Emmys.  
You may look but don't touch.  
Gordon and Arnoud are standing here.  
You see gsp, gtv, gvcr, gcam, and the twilight zone here.

see gsp

gsp (aka #8507 and gsp)

Owned by Gordon.

Congratulations on your new slide projector! For operating instructions just 'show 1 on <projector name>' for a brief tutorial..Good luck!

If you should experience any difficulties contact cdr or paulb for assistance.

examine Gordon

Gordon (aka #8083 and Gordon)

Owned by Gordon.

Having left academic life (thank god), Gordon reverts to his professional role(s) as writer, producer, director, and manager.

Research interests:

distance education and multimedia

Comments:

This character class lets you set your mood with the @mood command.

Carrying:

gfer

Obvious verbs:

transform-msg Gordon is <anything>

wh\*isper <anything> to Gordon

@mood

I don't understand.

enter twilight zone

You are now entering the twilight zone

A very unstable area. If you move in any direction you might disturb the zone.



move

The zone begins to shake and dematerialize.

You feel a slight motion.

Outside the twilight zone, you see:

U-505

The zone restabilizes itself.

out

With a jolt, you are hurled out.

## U-505

You are inside the cavernous Kriegsmarine slips at Brest, France, in 1942. Tied to the quay to your 'west' is the U-505, a type IXc U-Boat. You may go aboard and explore its interior. You can also learn more about its exterior by typing 'survey'. To learn the purpose of this virtual exhibit (the ACTUAL U-505 is on display at Museum of Science & Industry, Chicago) type 'mission'. To learn who helped create this exhibit, type 'credits'.

You see a gangplank heading west, toward the sub's Conning Tower.

You see Sub Guide here.

You see the twilight zone here.

BenHM (U-Boot Commander) and Nox are here.

You join BenHM.

west

You walk the gangplank to the sub's deck. A short climb leads you to the... Conning Tower. This is the conning tower - submariners call it a 'sail' - where the Captain can direct surface operations by direct observation. It has a chest-high wall that is more for weather, as the bullet holes attest. As on the quay, you can type 'survey' to look at the exterior of the U-505 in more detail.

You see a gangplank going east to the quay.

You see a circular hatch and ladder leading down. (Way down, and tight.)

To the east you can see Nox and BenHM (U-Boot Commander) across the gangplank.

You drop down into the conning tower.

mission

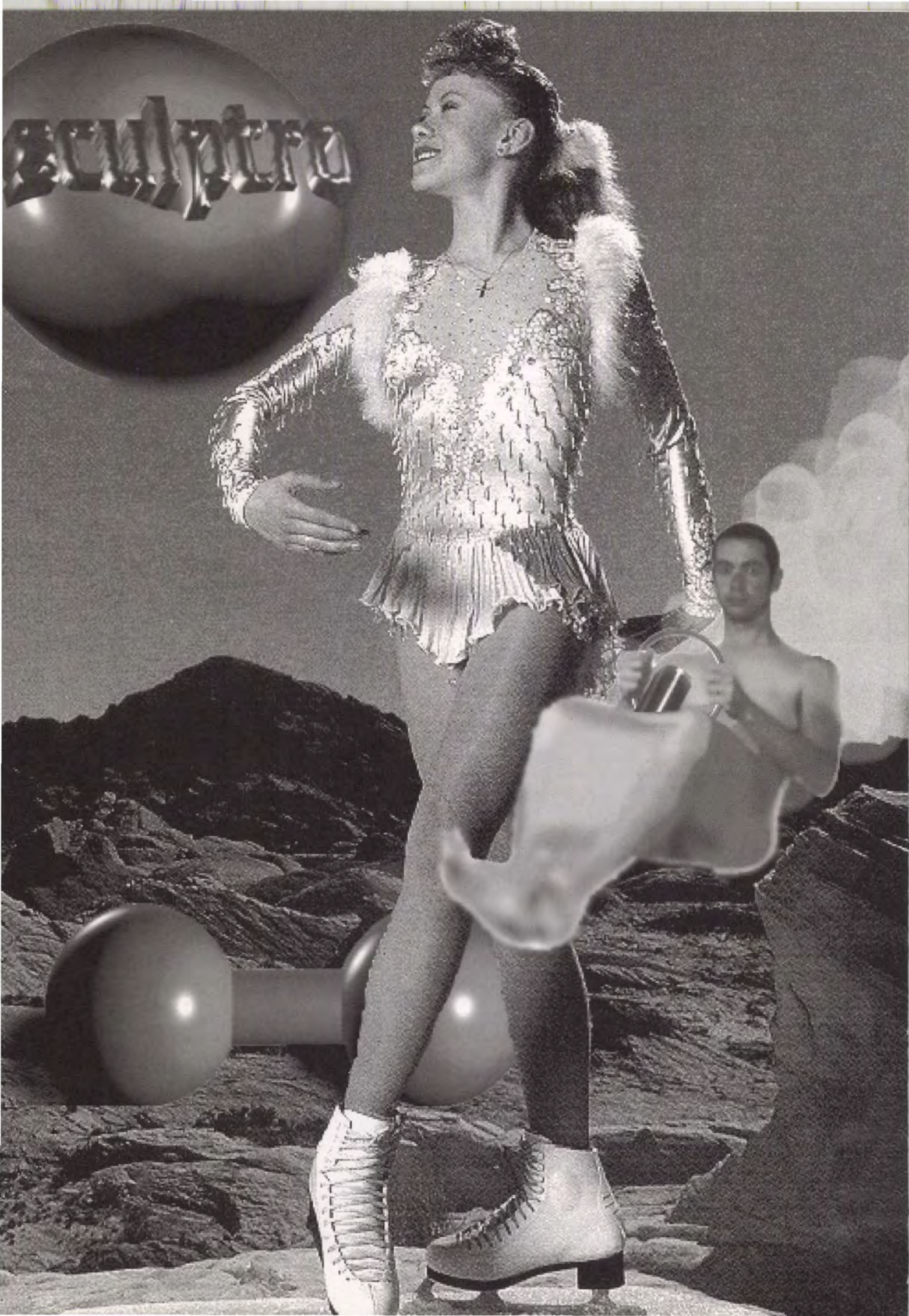
This series of rooms is a virtual representation of the actual U-505, on display at the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. The virtual exhibit is intended as a demonstration of the possibilities, toward the goal: of an on-line Museum.

survey

You start your survey from the front, or bow. The deck of the U-505 is flat, and made of boards supported above the cylindrical pressure-hull. Like most WWII subs, this is completely different from modern subs, where everything retracts into the smooth cylindrical outer-hull. Forward of the sail you see the davits and anchor winch. Directly in front of you, slightly to the left is the first generation air-search radar. You can learn more about it by typing <radar>. Immediately behind-and crowding you-are the masts for the periscope, air intakes and the schnorkel. Behind the masts are the two gun emplacements, each one a little lower than the other. For more about them, type <aagun>. As you look further back, you see the tapered stern. You see no obvious entries, other than the hatch at your feet, since they're all hidden by the deck boards. To learn about loading and logisitics in a U-Boat, type.... For all of its 76 m (249 ft) the U-505 looks really big. Keep that impression in mind as you tour the inside, you're in for a bit of a surprise.

enter U-505

U-505 is still under construction.



retreat

You awake from a pleasant dream, strangely refreshed.

The Ivory Tower

The south tower of the Smithsonian castle, which rises majestically into the azure sky.

(Ninja-Librarian's office.) Visitors are welcome.

Obvious exits: stairway to Heaven, road to Hell, PL to Public Library, and trail to Moss Rock Wilderness

Ninja-Librarian is standing here.

You see AST 386, a window, and a gold coin here.

trail

You leave for a restful vacation in an unspoiled area of tranquility.

## Moss Rock Wilderness

The hot sun shines down through thick leaves.

Several trails meander through the trees. You can 'hike' here, or 'ski' if there's snow. Change the season if you like! Rustic wooden benches are tucked away in cozy enclaves and there are large rocks. Feel free to sit awhile. A spectacular view awaits those who look ('look view').

look view

From here you see a dark Box Forest and a rugged Mountain. The Blue Sky is a dazzling turquoise and you can just make out a tiny helicopter flying by. In the far distance you see a familiar place, Curtis Common.

change season

To change the season, type spring, summer, fall, or winter.

winter

Lars changes the season to winter. A blanket of snow covers the trees and meadows.

You put on your cross-country skis, take your poles, and set forth...

Just follow the purple blazes. You will remain within the bounds of the Wilderness Area as you explore.

You herringbone up a steel hill, breathing deeply of the cool mountain air...

The Mountain

You stand before a crag marking the pinnacle of this mountain. A stream trickles down the mountain, emerging from a fissure in the crag, which is partially hidden behind an odd-looking specimen of vegetation.

Icy cold water gurgles around massive smooth boulders, forming pools where schools of fish dart in choreographed patterns. A grassy meadow invites you to the opposite shore, where there is some new construction.

You skillfully maneuver around a few rocks...

A rocky promontory

The sun stands in an empty hazy sky and beats down upon the gray rocks and the scrubby, parched grass. You gaze over an breathtaking vista.

You show of your perfect telemark turns down a broad slope...

Sylvan-Glade

Pan's glade is a forest clearing surrounded by tall laurel, linden and mallorn trees.

You ski into a deep peaceful woods...

Mollywood

A dark and intriguing forest.

You finish your ski tour, feeling refreshed and invigorated. You take off your skis.

You lace up your hiking boots, take your staff, and begin a short hike...

Just follow the purple blazes. You will remain within the bounds of the Wilderness Area as you explore.



Adam, I'm home. Had such a nice day. They had this lovely application in ADAMS Lego-Mall to recreate yourself into a traditional concept of being. You did a great job, I love you for it



You head down the trail...

## Box Forest

Southern pines and oaks frame a clear stream. The water is cold, hinting at a spring upstream. There is a campsite barely visible through the trees. Clothing and shoes are piled on on a log by the water.

Obvious exits: camp to Faerie Camp, Over There to Rev.Mitch's Clench House, Rope ladder up to Victor's Banyon-Tree Hideaway, path to The Mountain, Slide to Adam's PlaySpace, and North to McTavish Castle.

You see Swimming Hole and The Universal Barge here.

examine swimming hole

Swimming Hole (aka #2027, Swimming Hole, hole, water, dive, and in)

Owned by GeorgeWade.

The screen of the Swimming Hole is blank, but it seems to be shimmering slightly.

You feel strangely drawn to it.

You dive through the water into the Internet. sar.usf.edu

You are in a maze of little twisty passages. You see the back of a computer screen here.

Obvious exits: down to usf.edu, vesheu to vesheu.sar.usf.edu, out to Box Forest, and virtu to virtu.sar.usf.edu

north

McTavish Castle

A huge forboding granite castle. Ravens swoop down around your head and a cold wind blows salty spray off the sea north of here.

You hear the whining sound of bagpipes coming from the castle's interior.

Obvious exits: south to Box Forest and jump to The Universal Barge.

Mandy is here. Your whole body quivers and shakes as you are sucked back in time and space to Scotland in the time of Bonnie Prince Charlie.

examine mandy Mandy (aka #2511 and Mandy)

Owned by Mandy. A young woman wearing a long floral dress and birkenstocks

Carrying: Essay

south

You step through the time hole. The smell of heather and gorse leaves your senses as you return from the highlands of Scotland to...

Box Forest

Southern pines and oaks frame a clear stream. The water is cold, hinting at a spring upstream. There is a campsite barely visible through the trees.

Clothing and shoes are piled on on a log by the water.

Obvious exits: camp to Faerie Camp, Over There to Rev.Mitch's Clench House, Rope ladder up to Victor's Banyon-Tree Hideaway, path to The Mountain, Slide to Adam's PlaySpace, and North to McTavish Castle

You see Swimming Hole and The Universal Barge here.

slide

You sit down in a small pool of water and push off into the abyss. The slide twists and turns through the forest and into a dark cavern. Suddenly, you are dropped into another pool.

You get up, dry off, and walk up the path to...

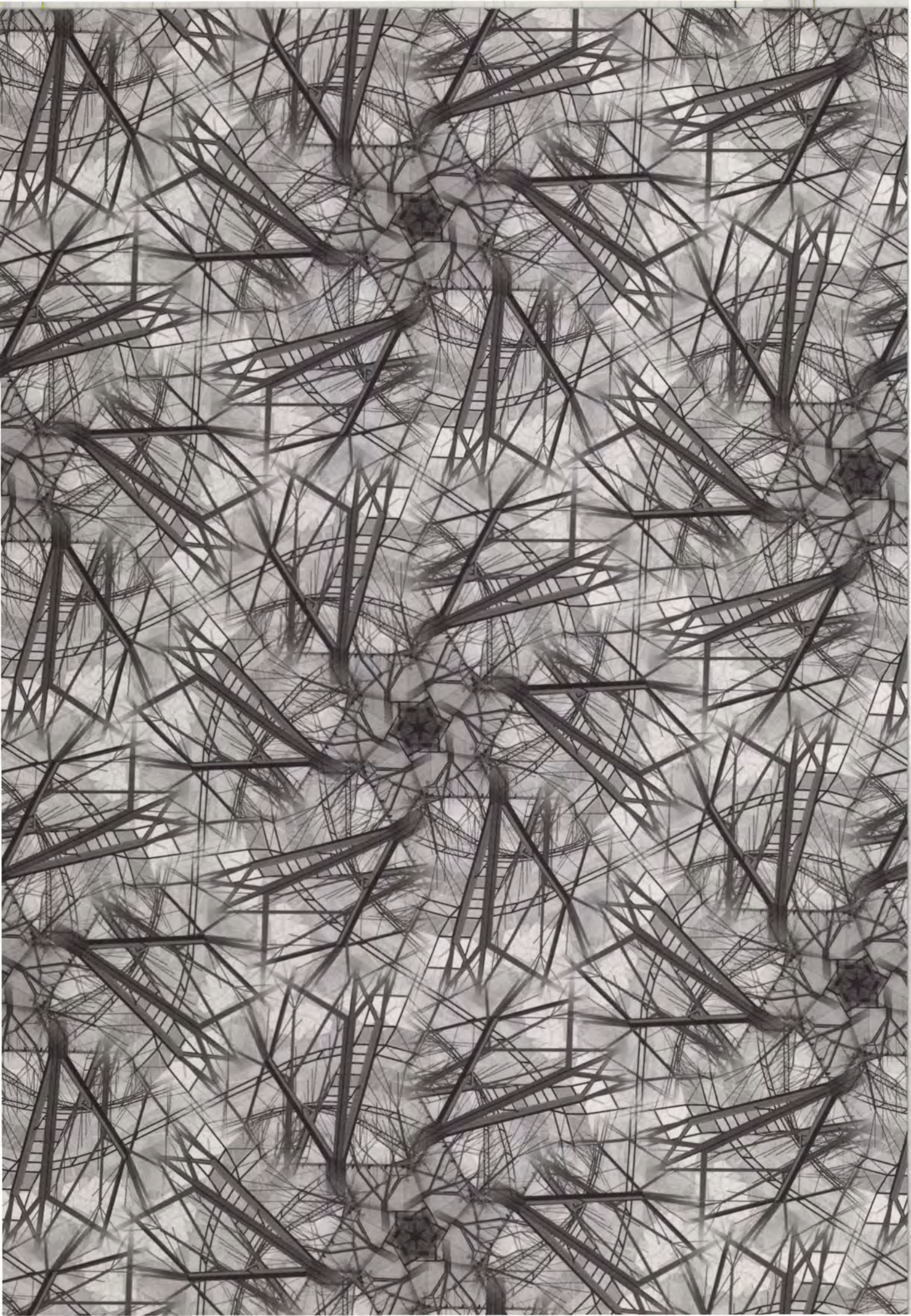
Adam's PlaySpace

A large brightly crayoned sign welcomes you! You see a medium size room with a large basin filled with colored balls and a small swimming pool on the balcony. A fluffy air cushion is on the floor and the walls are brightly colored.

Obvious exits: Climb up to Box Forest

Adam is here.

You notice your hair is still a bit damp and you shake off a bit more.



@go STS Sub-River Tunnel

STS Sub-River Tunnel

A long corridor with burnished chrome paneling. A soft glow emanates from fluorescent lights recessed behind the paneling at intervals along the corridor. You feel very much underground. A plethora of exits beckons to you.

At one end of the corridor there is a spiral staircase that ascends to the STS Centre above. STS folks are welcome to build their own rooms and connect them here.

For information read the Note on Building or type: help @dig

Obvious exits: up to STS Centre Underwater Corridor, roots to Fraxter's Treehouse, abode to Zebre's Abode, fly to icy bay, tower to The Ivory Tower, under to The Seamless Web, airlock to Charles River Airlock, fame to HyperHalloFame, crossroads to Summa Nulla, steps to GregS' Office, temple to Tikal, board to Corwin's Cabin, n to Room of the WiLd MiNd, pop to Singularity, AI to AI 6th floor hallway, chio to Chio's Computing Office, oz to Down Under, Jesse to Ostranenie Unltd, Lair to Rahvin's Lair, burrow to Arboreal DellShop, lower to Lava Laboratory, dig to McLuhan's Grave, and study to Wes's Study  
You see Note on Building here.

n

## Room of the WiLd MiNd

This looks like someone's backyard, complete with a rusty bike lying against an aging oak tree. In the branches of the tree is an elaborate treehouse with a rope ladder hanging from it. Under your feet are some oddly placed leaves, perhaps you should look at them more carefully. You see The Writer's Hideout here.

examine The Writer's Hideout

The Writer's Hideout (aka #7928, The Writer's Hideout, and hideout)

Owned by Nikki.

Looks like the treehouse you always dreamed you'd build when you were a kid, although this place looks slightly more fancy. There's a cozy-looking seat and a couch, with a table covered with wirebound notebooks and stained with mug-rings. Climb on up and visit, and when you'd like to leave, go on down.

Nikki (relatively busy) and Rein are here.

look nikki

Usually smiling gal, awaiting her last year of college with some trepidation, but still excited to be in the journalism field. Note, that is journalism, not anything that has to pertain to that O.J. guy, or Nancy Kerrigan. \*smirk\*.

She is sleeping.

Carrying:

intricately carved crystal vase

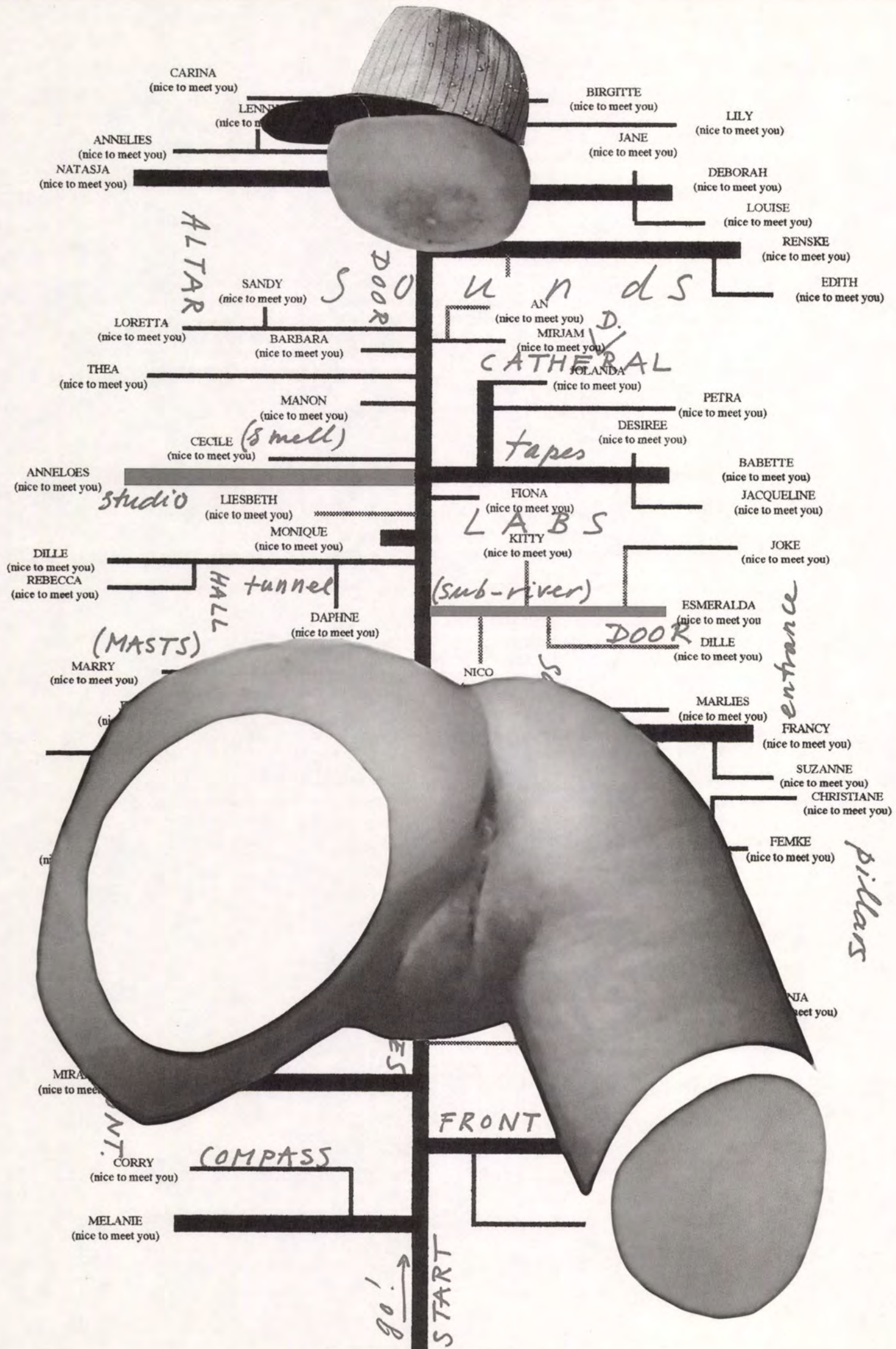
Nik's Incredible Edible Notes

WiLd MiNd

John Donne

Slide Projector #2

board



board

## Corwin's Cabin

The smell of salt air and gentle rocking of the deck tell you that you have boarded a ship. You see navigation charts, maritime instruments, and books of naval history and adventure all around the room. Standing in this room makes you yearn for command of your own ship and the grand adventures to be had.

An antique Oak desk covered with charts and manuscripts faces the door you just entered.

Numerous wooden stools are available for visitors to this cabin.

The sounds of lines being pulled taught, sails raised, hatches opened and closed, and a myriad of other sounds surround you. It is as if a ship were being prepared to sail....

Corwin is standing here.

You see Compass Box, Map Case, a bulletin board, and Ghost Ship here.

Obvious exits: ashore to STS Sub-River Tunnel and east to The Mariner's Cathedral Five bells.

Q.S. Serafijn is here.

examine Map Case

Map Case (aka #1347 and Map Case)

Owned by Corwin.

Congratulations on owning a high tech VCR! To operate your new vcr hook it up to a tv and load in a tape! Type 'manual vcr' for complete operating instructions.

If you need further assistance please see cdr or paulb.

It is empty.

examine Ghost Ship

Ghost Ship (aka #1761 and Ghost Ship)

Owned by Corwin.

A spectral craft with ragged sails, ancient wood, and skeletal crew. It appears to sail on an ominous mist, and the sound of banshees can be heard...

enter Ghost ship

Unfortunately, Ghost Ship doesn't let you enter.

examine Corwin

Corwin (aka #6685, Ray, Raymond, and Corwin)

Owned by Corwin.

The first thing you notice is the coffee cup. It is held like a talisman in the hand of this young gentlemen with brown hair and green eyes that some have called dreamy. He is dressed casually, but respectably. A confirmed bachelor, with a bachelors late night habits and haunts, he thinks the MOO is one of the best things to it the planet since the idea of running water was invented. As you finish your inspection, you notice that the coffee cup has a peculiar tendency to turn into a martini glass at random intervals. He is wearing pirate garb. He is listening to Marillion.

Research interests: Virtual workplaces and labs.

east

You feel a sorrow pull upon your heart as you solemnly approach...

The Mariner's Cathedral

You find yourself in a large stone room with high pillars that are shaped like ship's masts.

The gentle sound of surf surrounds you, combining with the requiems being played by the large coral organ at the front of the room.

As you walk around, you see that there are a number of alcoves to either side of the hall.

Each one shows a scene of sailors battling the sea, and losing.

These alcoves are memorials to the sailors who have gone out, but not returned.

Obvious exits: west to Corwin's Cabin

You see a robed and hooded priest kneeling before the altar here.

All those in attendance please offer a moment of silence.

ashore

You feel a stiff sea breeze blow you off the deck, and as the sound of sea shanties fades, you arrive at...



## A Bathroom

A simple little bathroom. Nothing too complicated here; no eyes in the stalls for automatic flushings, no springs in the faucets for automatic washings.

Obvious exits: out to STS Centre Rooftop Cafe

You see A Toilet and A Sink here.

examine a toilet

A Toilet (aka #3925, A Toilet, toilet, toi, loo, can, john, and pooper)

Owned by Drikao.

This is a toilet in the grand old style of days gone by when fiberglass was but a twinkle in [the scientist's] eye. It is black and white, tall and slender, graceful but filled with purpose.

Obvious verbs:

flush a toilet

g\*et/t\*ake a toilet

d\*rop/th\*row a toilet

gi\*ve/ha\*nd a toilet to <anything>

flush a toilet

You flush the toilet. It gives out a great roar of appreciation.

examine a sink

A Sink (aka #5919, A Sink, and sink)

Owned by Drikao.

This sink is small and hangs high on the wall. Above it there is a small mirror, and to the left there is one of those paper towel dispensers that can be so annoying. It doesn't look out of place here because it is just as old and crusty as everything else. There is a tap each for hot and cold, and a large knob for stopping the drain. Around the drain and the emergency overflow escape from flooding holes the porcelain has chipped away to show the corroded metal underneath. It's all nice and green. If you have been in the bathroom and don't want your mother to yell at you, you ought to use the sink.

Obvious verbs:

turn <anything> on a sink

turn-fork a sink

unplug a sink

plug a sink

g\*et/t\*ake a sink

d\*rop/th\*row a sink

gi\*ve/ha\*nd a sink to <anything>

plug a sink

You have plugged the sink.

out

STS Centre Rooftop Cafe

The roof of the STS Centre has been covered with clay tiles and converted into an outdoor cafe.

It's perpetually sunny and breezy here. You can hear the sound of seagulls crying and jet planes taking off from nearby Logan International Airport.

There are several tables that you could sit at with umbrellas to shade you from the sun.

Behind a counter off to one side of the roof, you see Mike, the waiter.

He looks helpful.

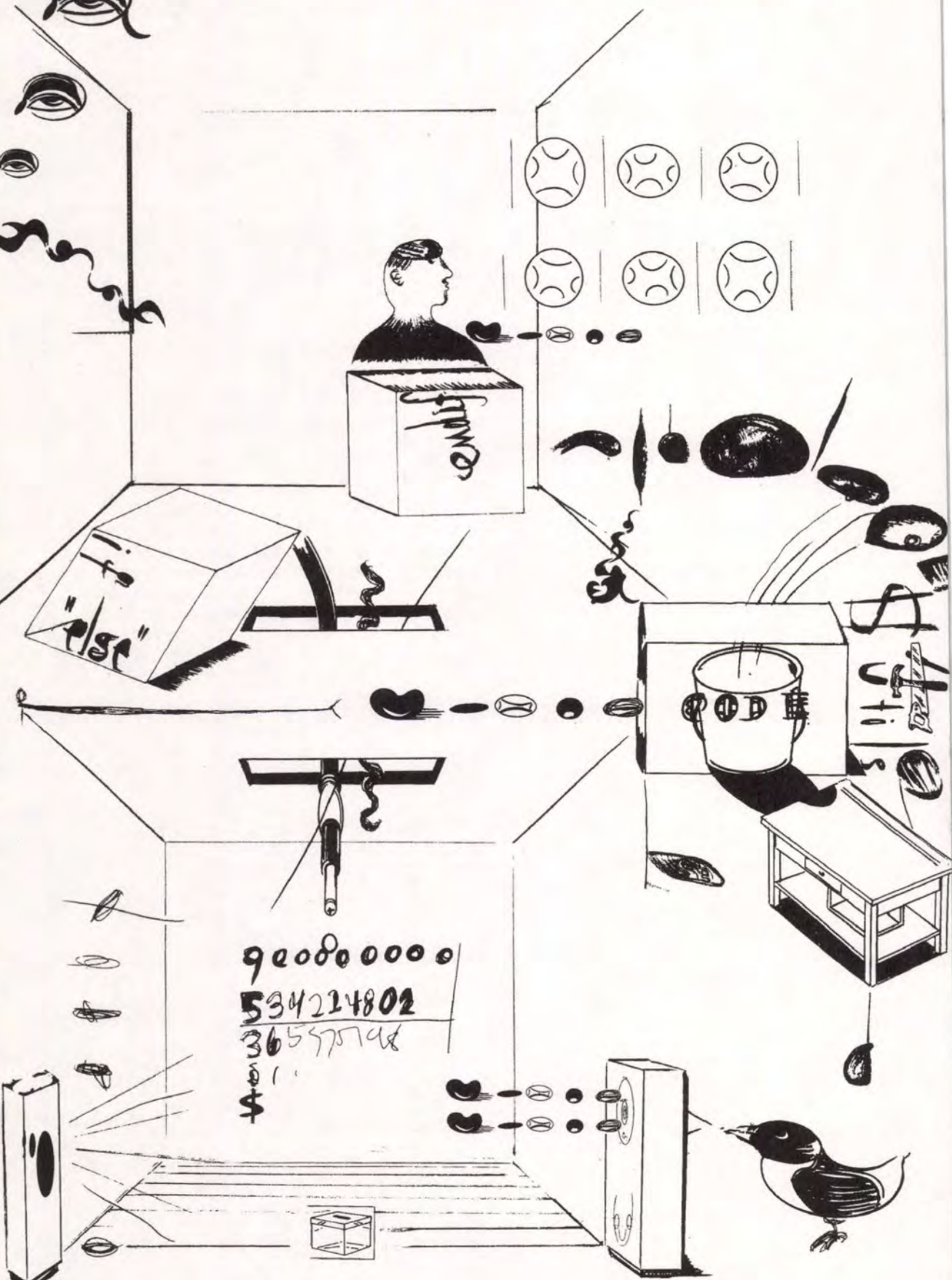
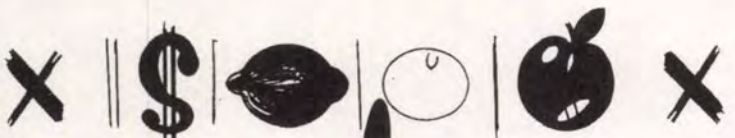
Obvious exits: down to STS Centre 3rd Level Hall

You see Mike the Waiter, Diving Board, ten HighBalls, and empty bloody mary here.

Mike the Waiter nods to you.

Mike the Waiter says "Welcome back, Rosanna."

# Drum Machine



9000000000  
534224802  
36577798  
401





@join edward

## The Wub

You stumble through the entrance of a large container with soft outside walls. There are many wall rugs here, mostly with Indian motives, and it is well lit. There is the pleasant smell of freshly ground coffee beans in the air, and a percolator is buzzing away in one corner. The air is thin, but you feel weighty and your eyelids become heavy as you peruse the room. You feel as though in a cave, where prehistoric peoples spend their winters. It is warm here. A great deal of cushions is scattered on the floor, and while they seem comfortable, some people don't like sitting there because their legs fall asleep. Various computers and terminals are stacked against the walls, with the hum of their fans driving you mad. An antiquated-looking air conditioning system blows soothing cold air into the room from the far left. A bird flies past outside, which you can't see, as there are no windows here. Some thumpa-thumpa disco shit is being played loudly over the huge speakers on one wall.

Obvious exits: down to The Celestial Cavern and workshop to Workshop, Inc.

### workshop

Workshop, Inc.

You see a large workbench against the left wall, under a window. On it, when you look closely, are several boxes, each neatly labeled. There is a blue one that says: 'if - else - endif' on the label, and a yellow one that reads: 'return;' on it. On the other side of the workbench is a green, slightly larger box whose label reads: '\$utils'. There is a still larger red bucket right in the middle with a label that says: 'other people's code'. There is a really big and fluffy orange couch right in the middle 'The Guide' pretty loudly.

You see Toy Box and CD Changer here.

Obvious exits: wub to The Wub, arcade to MediaM00 Arcade, and igloo to An Igloo

This room is unlocked.

### arcade

MediaM00 Arcade

A loud and colourful games parlour, under construction still. Please feel free to contribute your own game machines and game rooms here.

Obvious exits: workshop to Workshop, Inc.

You see Dream Machine and Jack here.

Edward is here.

### examine Dream Machine

Dream Machine (aka #1951, Dream Machine, and slots)

Owned by Winter.

A really nice and antique looking slot machine. You may 'yank' it, if you feel lucky today.

Obvious verbs:

yank Dream Machine

g\*et/t\*ake Dream Machine

d\*rop/th\*row Dream Machine

gi\*ve/ha\*nd Dream Machine to <anything>

yank Dream Machine

You yank the lever on the slot machine...

\\\\ The Dream Machine \\\\

peach peach apple

\\\\ \\\\

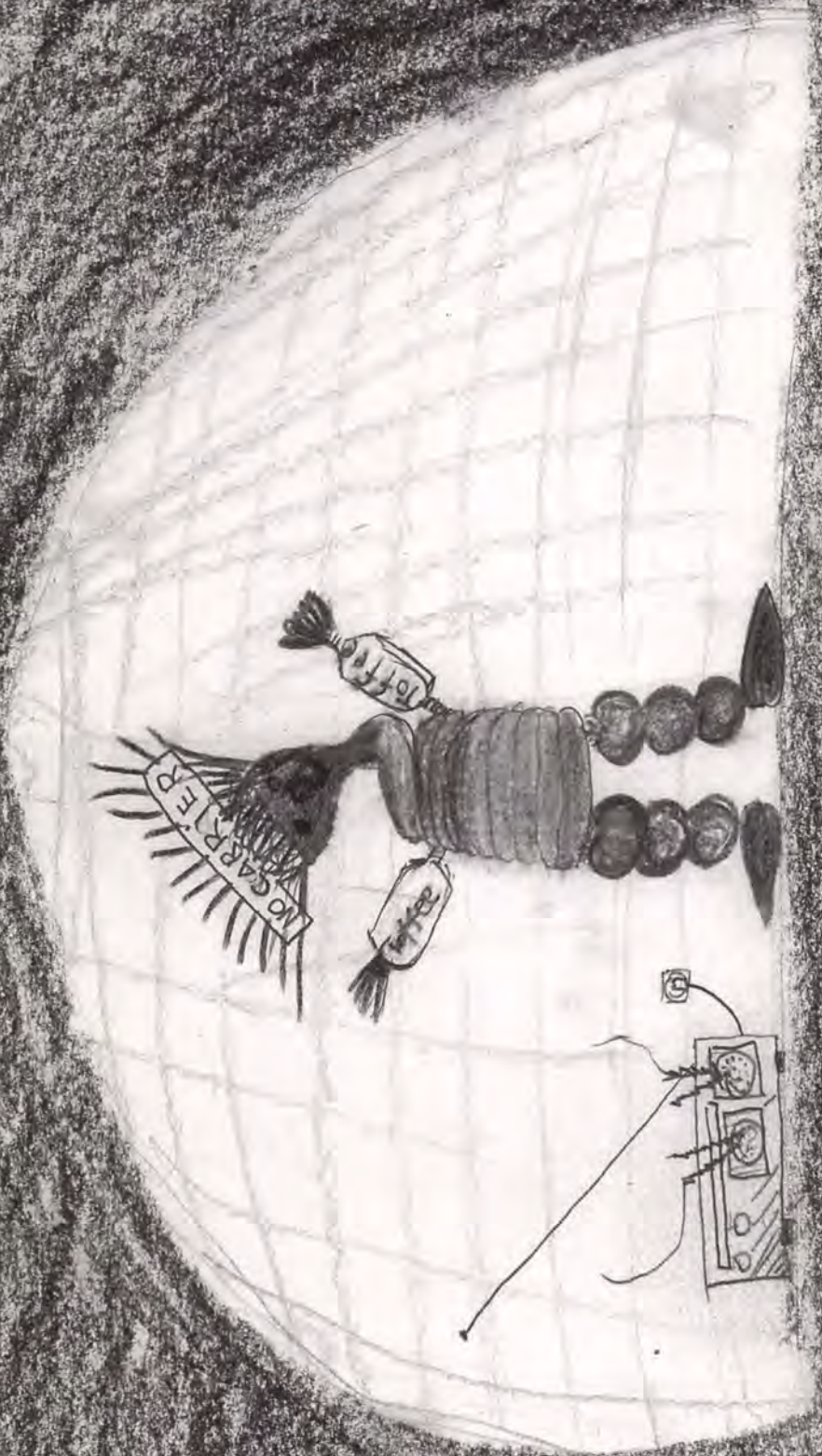
Close, but not close enough. You get one coin.

### examine jack

Jack (aka #9658, Jack, and j)

Owned by Rush.

A blackjack game. Commands include: play bj, hit bj, stand bj, bank bj to <value>, bet bj to <value>.



@go the great lake

## The Great Lake

You see a gigantic lake, with some anomalies. Half the lake looks like it is summer, and the other half is frozen over with ice. The cut-off point is neatly in the middle, and you can't seem to understand this obvious confusion of nature's ways. You stare at the lake for quite a while in disbelief. Until it dawns on you: this is vr!

You stand on the edge of the ice and peer out over the water...

You see An Igloo, A Rock, @toad, WinterTrivia, Steven Brust's -Jhereg-, and The Rock here.

Obvious exits: meadow to Morningside

examine an igloo

An Igloo (aka #8999, An Igloo, and Igloo)

Owned by Winter.

You see a small and cosy looking igloo. The ice on the outside is blinding white and shimmers.

Winter lives inside.

the infamous Winter is here.

Obvious verbs:

enter an igloo

g\*et/t\*ake an igloo

d\*rop/th\*row an igloo

@lock\_entry an igloo with <anything>

@unlock\_entry an igloo

@about an igloo

@describe-inside an igloo as <anything>

@opacity an igloo is <anything>

enter an igloo

Unfortunately, an igloo doesn't let you enter.

look Winter

Arctic light freezing cold damned snow slush black ice frozen catastrophic genuine dreadlocked mocha almond fudge icemonster. He is wearing a stick-on tattoo on his forehead that reads 'NO CARRIER'. He is listening to Elvis Costello.

He is awake and looks alert.

Carrying:

unconditional love                  Winter's BlackJack

Rush's beautiful wings

Suddenly, out of the Great Lake, rises the ghatliest, nastiest looking thing you have ever seen!

Out of the Great Lake arises a monster! It makes a loud, fierce, hissing noise and spews fire at you!

The noise becomes deafening! You cower down and look around you for help...

Still, curiosity pulls you towards the monster. You look at it close so you can tell all your friends about it later...

The monster is large, with grey silvery scales all over its huge 20-ft body! It's eyes are bright orange! The monster makes one last ear-shattering noise, and >>>splashes!<<< back into the Great Lake.

You think to yourself that no one else probably saw any of this.

meadow

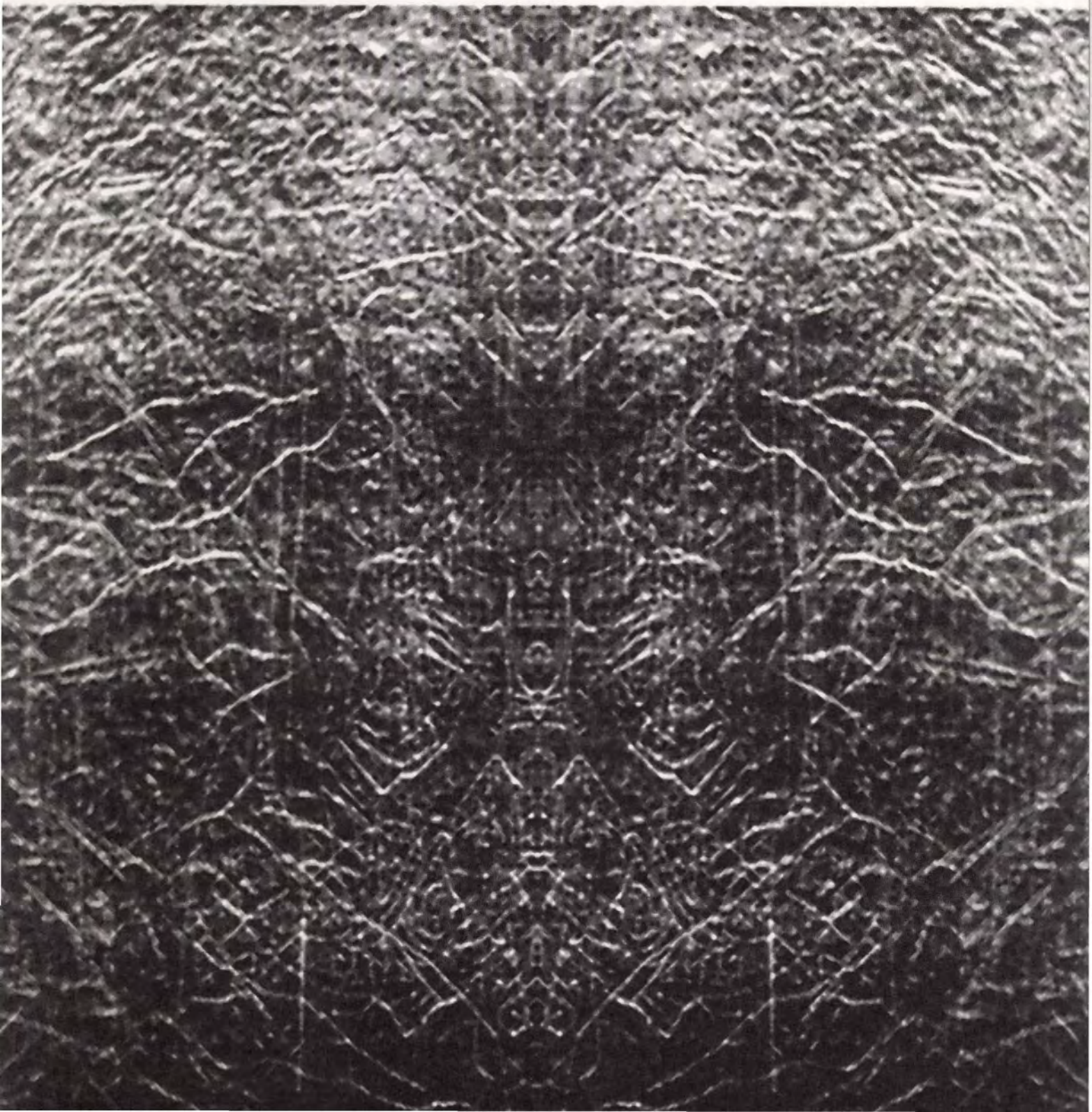
Morningside

A quiet meadow where one can commune with nature. Most of the animals are friendly unless they are provoked, so relax, enjoy and watch the fluffy white clouds float overhead in the brilliant blue sky.

You see a shepherd, a herd of cows, and a flock of sheep here.

Obvious exits: cavern to The Celestial Cavern and lake to The Great Lake

A cow ambles from the herd, and MOOs at you.



cavern

After entering the airlock, you are quickly catapulted down to ...

## The Celestial Cavern

You enter a dark thermal cave. A map of the stars is being projected onto the ceiling. You can barely make out the shape of a book in the far corner. It is a brand new copy of Stephen Hawking's "A Brief History of Time." You notice a sign that reads: "Grammar Does Not Count Here."

A corner of the cave is surrounded by paper and various writing utensils. A fuzzy bat mumbles in its sleep in the deeper recesses of the cave. You are more than welcome to lie down, stare at the stars and contemplate the mysteries of the universe.

Obvious exits: up to The Wub, west to FourthWorld, trap-door to Fraxter's Underground Suite, and meadow to Morningside

You see poetry generator, Onadai Cyberdeck, and Otyer is standing on his head fast asleep right over here.

Otyer and Mindlace are here.

examine Otyer

Otyer (aka #5064 and Otyer)

Owned by Otyer.

Midnight's Otyer. Hands, fingers, thumb, teeth (for chewing only), mind (terrible thing to waste), feelings, manners (hard to find sometimes), feet, eyes (2), but no wings. He looks just like his picture. He is a boy.

Carrying:

pontail Comb made out of a Pinecone

Carving on a Tree

Obvious verbs:

wh\*isper <anything> to Otyer

examine poetry generator

poetry generator (aka #6407, poetry generator, and generator)

Owned by Winter.

This machine will generate truly random poetry in an anarchist-dadaist-schizo-mental-paranoid way. Just type in 'activate generator' to switch it on.

Obvious verbs:

activate poetry generator

g\*et/t\*ake poetry generator

d\*rop/th\*row poetry generator

gi\*ve/ha\*nd poetry generator to <anything>

activate poetry generator

Joseph activates the poetry generator.

The poetry generator says in a somewhat metallic, yet beautifully rounded voice:

himself thinks somnabulent

disenfranchized over calculator

words lonely

jupiter imagery deserted she

their themselves poem somnabulent

disenfranchized deserted

their internet

types altruistic calls

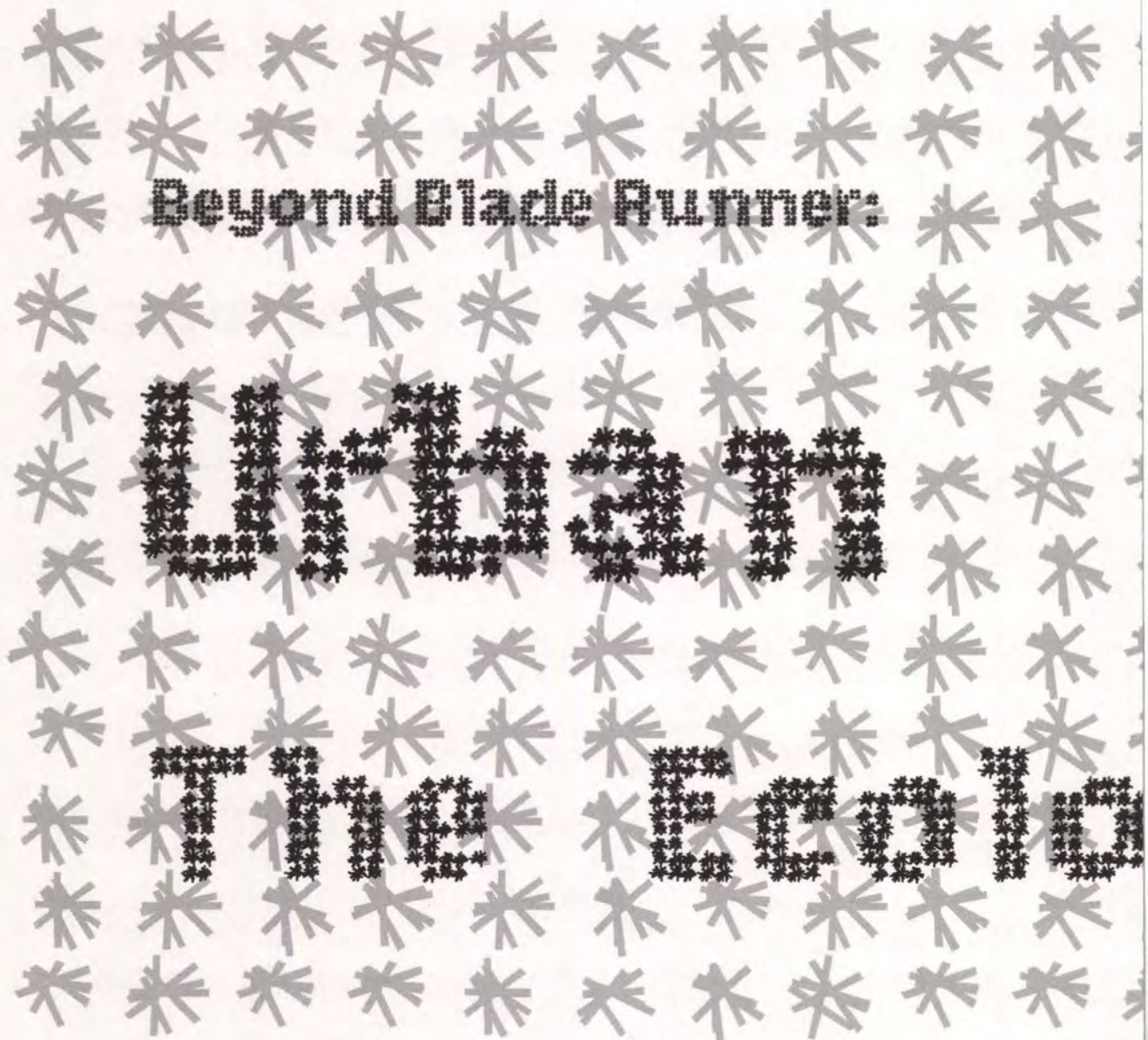
that qualified darling

marks it

@quit

\*\*\* Disconnected \*\*\*

Mike

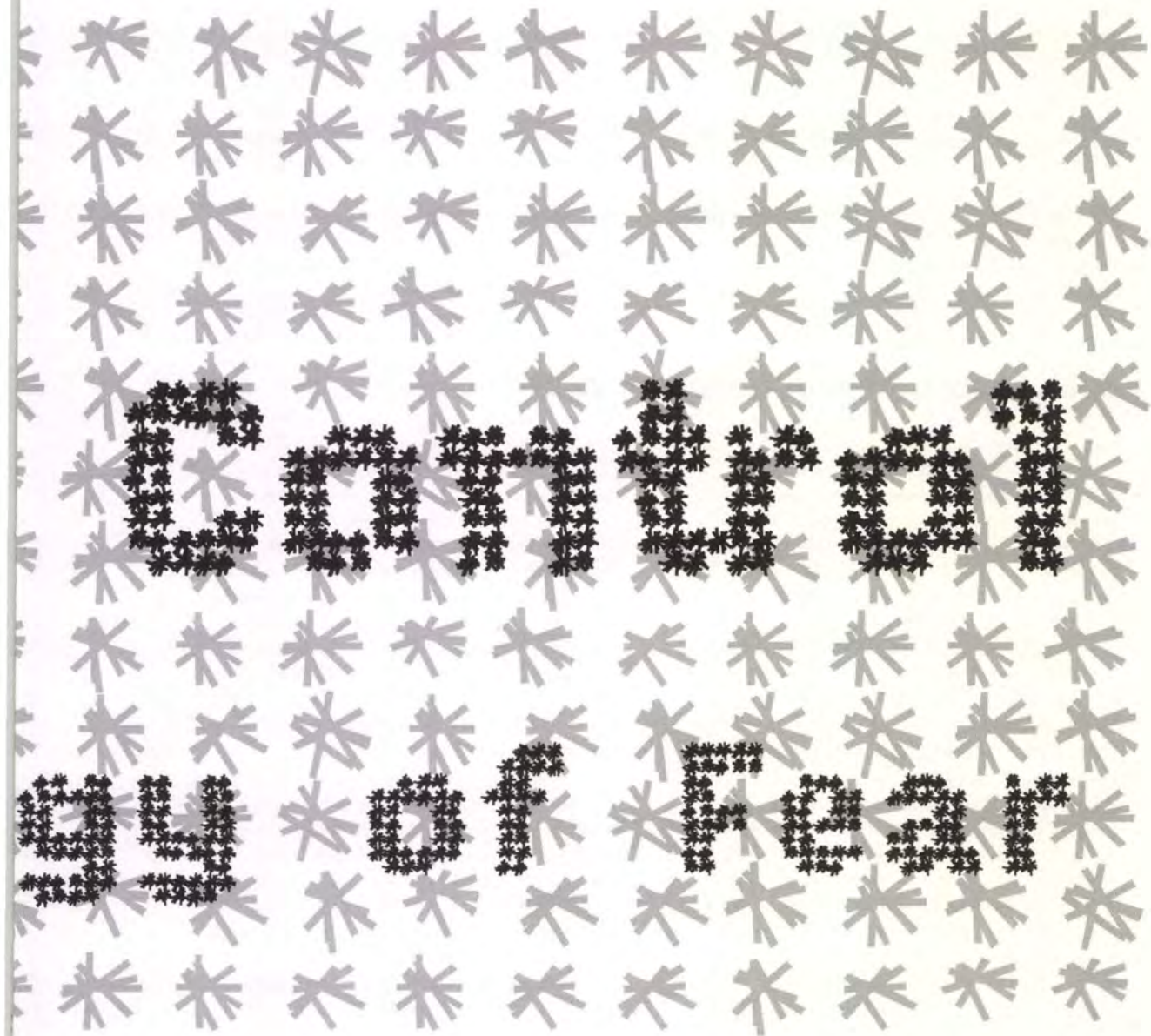


Iedere Amerikaanse stad heeft een eigen wapen en lijfspreuk. Een aantal steden houdt er een gemeentelijke mascotte op na, sommige hebben een eigen kleur of lied, een vogel, boom, of steen zelfs.

Maar Los Angeles kent tegenwoordig als enige stad ook een officiële Nachtmerrrie.

Mike Davis, auteur van *Prisoners of the American Dream* en *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in LA* (1990),

laat zien hoe deze nachtmerrrie langzaam vorm aanneemt.



- Every American city has its official insignia and slogan, some have municipal mascots, colors, songs, birds, trees, even rocks.

But Los Angeles alone has adopted an official Nightmare.

Mike Davis, author of *Prisoners of the American Dream* and *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in LA* (1990),

shows how this nightmare is slowly becoming real.

Na drie jaar discussie, overlegde een vooraanstaand gezelschap uit de civiele en zakelijke wereld in 1988 een gedetailleerd *plan de campagne* voor de toekomst van Zuid-Californië aan burgemeester Bradley. Het grootste gedeelte van dit *LA 2000: A City for the Future* verzandt in breedsprakige retoriek omtrent de onafwendbare opkomst van Los Angeles als 'wereldcentrum', maar in het nawoord bevindt zich een hoofdstuk waarin door historicus Kevin Starr de vraag gesteld wordt wat er zou kunnen gebeuren als de stad er niet in slaagt een nieuwe 'heersende orde' te creëren om haar immense etnische diversiteit in goede banen te leiden. *Er is natuurlijk ook het model-Blade Runner: de versmelting van individuele culturen tot een platte veelzijdigheid, die evenwel blijft zinderen van de onopgeloste vijandelijkheden.*

*Blade Runner* — LA's eigen, dystopische schaduw-zijde. Een rondrit met de Grayline anno 2019: zure regen druip van de kilometershoge neo-Maya-piramide van de Tyrell Corporation op de massa van bastaards die ver in de diepte in de Ginza krielt. Terwijl een stem een buitenaards burgermansbestaan op de 'Buitenwereld' adverteert, drijven reusachtige neonreclames als wolken boven de stinkende en meer dan gewelddadige straten. En Deckard, de Philip Marlowe van na de apocalyps, die in een strijd verwickeld raakt om zijn geweten — en zijn vrouw — te redden in dit door boosaardige biotechnologie-magnaten bestuurd stedelijk doolhof...

Nu Warner Bros., een paar maanden na LA's oproer van 1992, de oorspronkelijke (en hardere) *director's cut* heeft uitgebracht, blijkt de macht weer die Ridley Scotts filmversie (1982) van Philip K. Dicks *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* over onze immer onrustiger slaap uitoefent. Vrijwel iedere huidige schets van LA's toekomst gaat ervan uit dat het duistere visioen van *Blade Runner* mogelijk, zo niet onvermijdelijk, het eindpunt van het *land of sunshine* zou kunnen zijn.

En toch blijft *Blade Runner*, glamoeruze ster van alle *sf-dystopia's*, mij treffen als op een eigenaardige manier anachronistisch en verrassend onprofetisch. Het gezelschap Scott, 'visueel futurist' Syd Mead, production designer Lawrence Paul en art director David Synder, toont ons in feite weinig meer dan een onsamenvangende collage van denkbeeldige landschappen. Verwijder het laagje 'Geel Gevaar' (Scott is, zoals ook in *Black Rain* te zien is, bezeten door het idee van stedelijk Japan als evenbeeld van de Hel) en 'Film Noir' (het glanzend zwartmarmere Déco-interieur), tezamen met een keur aan hi-tech renovatiewerkzaamheden, en overblijft het zeer herkenbare beeld van stedelijke wildgroei zoals ons door Fritz Lang al werd voorgespiegeld in diens *Metropolis* (1931).

Zowel de onheilspellende, door mensenhanden vervaardigde Everest van de Tyrell Corporation als de opgevoerde ruimte-patrouillewagens die door het luchtruim zoeven zijn, zij het ditmaal in verduisterde vorm, toch het onmiskenbare erfgoed van de beroemde wolkenkrabber-stad van de bourgeoisie uit *Metropolis*. Maar ook Lang zelf persifleerde slechts de Amerikaanse futuristen van zijn tijd, met name de toonaangevende architect Hugh Ferriss die, samen met wolkenkrabber-ontwerper Raymond Hood en de Mexicaanse architect/archeoloog Francisco Mujica (die de stedelijke piramide

à la Tyrell voorzag), het concept populariseerde van de toekomstige 'Reuzenstad' met haar wolkenkrabbers van honderd verdiepingen, hangende snelwegen en landingsplaatsen op de daken. Ferriss en Co. op hun beurt, borduurden weer voort op reeds bestaande fantasieën — sinds het begin van de eeuw zeer in zwang als vulling van de zondagskrant — over het aangezicht van Manhattan aan het einde van de 20ste eeuw.

Met andere woorden, *Blade Runner* komt niet verder dan het geven van de volgende versie van dit centrale modernistische beeld — dystopisch, utopisch, ville radieuse of meta-New York City — van de metropool van de toekomst als een soort Monster-Manhattan. Een fantasie die nog het best 'Wellsiaans' genoemd kan worden, gezien H.G. Wells' poging om, al in zijn *The Future in America* uit 1906, zich een beeld van de late twintigste eeuw te vormen door de *overdrijving van het heden* (in de gedaante van New York) tot een soort *giganteske karikatuur van de bestaande wereld, waarbij alles tot enorme proporties wordt opgeblazen en een onwaarschijnlijke dichtheid verkrijgt.*

Ridley Scott's eigen 'giganteske karikatuur' slaagt er dan misschien in te wijzen op een aantal etnocentrische angsten omtrent een op hol geslagen veelslachtigheid, maar het lukt hem niet om tot een verbeeldingsvol gebruik te komen van het feitelijke landschap van Los Angeles — met name die enorme, ononderbroken vlaktes van verkrottende bungalows, bouwvallen en ranch-achtige gevaartes — zoals het, fysiek en sociaal, de 21ste eeuw in kwijnt.

In mijn boek *City of Quartz* heb ik de verschillende tendensen in de richting van een militarisering van dit landschap al opgesomd. De ontwikkelingen sinds de rellen van 1992 — waaronder een toenemende recessie en kapitaalvlucht, keiharde bezuinigingen, een duizelingwekkend aantal moorden (ondanks de wapenstilstand tussen de *gangs*) en de enorme vlucht die de wapenhandel neemt in de voorsteden — kunnen de acceleratie van de sociale tweedeling en ruimtelijke apartheid alleen maar bevestigen. Nu de *Endless Summer* zijn einde nadert, lijkt het volstrekt niet ondenkbaar dat het Los Angeles van het jaar 2019 een dystopische verhouding tot enig ideaal van de democratische stad zal hebben aangenomen.

Maar tot wat voor 'stadsschap', zoniet dat van *Blade Runner*, zal deze kwaadaardige ongelijkheidsevolutie dan wel leiden? In plaats van mij te beperken tot een grotesk, Wellsiaans toekomstbeeld — een uit zijn voegen gearsten technologie en architectuur — heb ik zorgvuldig geprobeerd om al bestaande ruimtelijke tendensen te onderkennen, in de hoop een glimp op te kunnen vangen van het patroon waarin zij zich voordoen. William Gibson heeft in boeken als *Neuromancer* al op schitterende wijze aangetoond hoe een realistische, 'extrapolatieve' science-fiction vooruit kan lopen op een toekomstige sociale theorie en verzetspolitiek tegen het cyber-fascisme dat daagt aan de nieuwe horizon.

In de hierna volgende tekst heb ik geprobeerd een 'Gibsoniaanse' plattegrond te schetsen voor een toekomstig Los Angeles zoals het zich nu gedeeltelijk al



• In 1988, after three years of debate, a galaxy of corporate and civic leaders submitted to Mayor Bradley a detailed strategic plan for Southern California's future. Although most of *LA 2000: A City for the Future* is devoted to hyperbolic rhetoric about Los Angeles' irresistible rise as a 'world crossroads', a section in the epilogue (written by historian Kevin Starr) considers what might happen if the city fails to create a new 'dominant establishment' to manage its extraordinary ethnic diversity. *There is, of course, the Blade Runner scenario: the fusion of individual cultures into a demotic poly-glottism ominous with unresolved hostilities.*

*Blade Runner* — LA's own dystopic alter ego. Take the Grayline tour in 2019: The mile-high neo-Mayan pyramid of the Tyrell Corp. drips acid-rain on the mongrel masses in the teeming Ginza far below. Enormous neon images float like clouds above fetid, hyper-violent streets, while a voice intones advertisements for extra-terrestrial suburban living in 'Off World.' Deckard, post-apocalypse Philip Marlowe, struggles to save his conscience, and his woman, in an urban labyrinth ruled by evil bio-tech corporations...

With Warner Bros.' release of the original (more hardboiled) director's cut a few months after the 1992 Los Angeles uprising, Ridley Scott's 1982 film version of the Philip K. Dick story (*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*) reasserts its sovereignty over our increasingly troubled sleep. Virtually all ruminations about the future of Los Angeles now take for granted the dark imagery of *Blade Runner* as a possible, if not inevitable, terminal point of the land of sunshine.

Yet for all of *Blade Runner's* glamor as the star of sci-fi dystopias, I find it strangely anachronistic and surprisingly unprecient. Scott, in collaboration with his 'visual futurist' Syd Mead, production designer Lawrence Paul, and art director David Synder, really offers us an incoherent pastiche of imaginary landscapes. Peeling away the overlays of 'Yellow Peril' (Scott is notoriously addicted, c.f. *Black Rain*, to urban Japan as the image of Hell) and 'Noir' (all the polished black marble Deco interiors), as well as a lot of high-tech plumbing retrofitted to street-level urban decay, what remains is recognizably the same vista of urban gigantism that Fritz Lang celebrated in *Metropolis* (1931).

The sinister, man-made Everest of the Tyrell Corporation, as well as all the souped-up rocket-squad-cars darting around the air space, are obvious progenies — albeit now swaddled in darkness — of the famous skyscraper city of the bourgeoisie in *Metropolis*. But Lang himself only plagiarized contemporary American futurists; above all, architectural delineator Hugh Ferriss, who together with skyscraper designer Raymond Hood and Mexican architect-archeologist Francisco Mujica (visionary of urban pyramids like the Tyrell tower), popularized the coming 'Titan City' of hundred-story skyscrapers with suspended bridge highways and rooftop airports. Ferriss and company, in their turn, reworked already existing fantasies — common in Sunday supplements since 1900 — of what Manhattan might look like at the end of the century.

*Blade Runner*, in other words, remains yet another edition of this core modernist vision — alternately utopia

or dystopia, *ville radiouse* or Gotham City — of the future metropolis as Monster Manhattan. It is a fantasy that might best be called 'Wellsian' since as early as 1906, in his *The Future in America*, H.G. Wells was already trying to envision the late twentieth century by *enlarging the present* (represented by New York) to create *a sort of gigantesque caricature of the existing world, everything swollen up to vast proportions and massive beyond measure.*

Ridley Scott's particular 'gigantesque caricature' may capture ethno-centric anxieties about poly-glottism run amock but it fails to imaginatively engage the real Los Angeles landscape — especially the great unbroken plains of aging bungalows, dingbats and ranch-style homes — as it socially and physically erodes into the 21st century.

In my book on Los Angeles (*City of Quartz*, 1990) I enumerate various tendencies toward the militarization of this landscape. Events since the uprising of Spring 1992 — including a deepening recession, corporate flight, savage budget cuts, a soaring homicide rate (despite the black gang truce), and a huge spree of gun-buying in the suburbs — only confirm that social polarization and spatial apartheid are accelerating. As the Endless Summer comes to an end, it seems quite possible that Los Angeles 2019 could well stand in a dystopian relationship to any ideal of the democratic city.

But what kind of cityscape, if not *Blade Runner*, would this malign evolution of inequality produce? Instead of seeing the future merely as a grotesque, Wellsian magnification of technology and architecture, I have tried to carefully extrapolate existing spatial tendencies in order to glimpse their emergent pattern. William Gibson, in *Neuromancer* and other novels, has provided stunning examples of how realist, 'extrapolative' science fiction can operate as prefigurative social theory, as well as an anticipatory opposition politics to the cyber-fascism lurking over the next horizon.

In what follows, I offer a 'Gibsonian' map to a future Los Angeles that is already half-born. Paradoxically, the literal map itself, although inspired by a vision of Marxism-for-cyberpunks, looks like nothing so much as that venerable *combination of half-moon and dart board* that Ernest W. Burgess of the University of Chicago long ago made *the most famous diagram in social science.*

For those unfamiliar with the legacy of the Chicago School of Sociology and their canonical study of the *North American city*, let me just say that Burgess' dart board represents the five concentric zones into which the struggle for the survival of the fittest (as imagined by Social Darwinists) supposedly sorts urban social classes and housing types. It portrays a 'human ecology' organized by biological forces of invasion, competition, succession and symbiosis. My remapping of the urban structure takes Burgess back to the future. It preserves such 'ecological' determinants as income, land value, class and race, but adds a decisive new factor: fear.

### Scanscape

The current obsession with personal safety and social insulation is only exceeded by the middle-class dread of progressive taxation. In the face of unemployment and

aftekent. Hoewel geënt op een soort Marxisme-voor-cyberpunks, heeft de plattegrond zelf paradoxaal genoeg het meeste weg van de beroemde *mengeling tussen halve maan en dartboard* van Ernest W. Burgess van de University of Chicago — sinds lang het *beroemdste schema uit de sociale wetenschappen*.

Voor hen die minder bekend zijn met het werk van de sociologische school van Chicago en hun klassiek geworden studie van *de Noordamerikaanse stad*: kort samengevat vertegenwoordigt Burgess' dartboard de vijf concentrische zones waarin de strijd om de *survival of the fittest* (zoals gezien door de Sociaal-Darwinisten) verondersteld wordt de stedelijke sociale klassen en typen huisvesting in te delen. Zij geeft een beeld weer van een 'menselijke ecologie' die bepaald wordt door de biologische krachten van invasie, competitie, successie en symbiose. Mijn herindeling van de stedelijke structuur voert Burgess *back to the future*. Zij gaat nog steeds uit van 'ecologische' determinanten zoals inkomen, grondprijs, klasse en ras, maar voegt daar een nieuwe, beslissende factor aan toe: de angst.

### Scanscape

De huidige obsessie met persoonlijke veiligheid en sociale isolatie wordt slechts overtroffen door de angst van de middenklasse voor een progressieve belasting. Als antwoord op een werk- en dakloosheid die hun weerga sinds 1938 niet kennen, blijft onze tweepartijen-concensus vasthouden aan bezuinigingen op overheidsuitgaven en uitkeringen. In plaats van gemeenschapsgelden te investeren in oplossingen voor onderliggende sociale omstandigheden, zijn wij gedwongen steeds meer geld aan individuele veiligheidsmaatregelen uit te geven. Wat overblijft is een stadsherstel-retoriek waarvan de inhoud intussen ver te zoeken is. *Rebuilding LA* betekent niets meer dan de verdere isolatie van de bunker.

Terwijl als gevolg hiervan de stad steeds meer op een jungle begint te lijken, ontwikkelen de verschillende sociale milieus naar vermogen hun eigen beveiligingstechnologieën en -strategieën. Het resulterende patroon mondt, in navolging van Burgess' dartboard, uit in concentrische zones, waarvan de roos in dit geval *Downtown* heet.

In een vorig essay beschreef ik al in detail hoe een geheim noodcomité, bestaande uit Downtowns leidinggevende grootgrondbezitters (het zogenaamde *Committee of 25*), in 1965 reageerde op de acute dreiging van de rellen in Watts. Na een waarschuwing van de autoriteiten dat de centrale stad *door zwarten overspoeld* dreigde te worden, legde het Comité zijn renovatieprojecten in de oude kantoor- en winkelkern stil. Vervolgens gebruikte men het onteigeningsrecht van de gemeente om, enkele blokken ten westen, hele wijken plat te walsen en hier een nieuwe zakenkern te creëren. Het gekelderde aandeel van het Comité in de oude zakenwijk werd door de gemeentelijke dienst stadsvernieuwing — inmiddels praktisch de privé-projectontwikkelaar van de groep —, opgevangen door het geven van enorme kortingen op panden in de nieuwe kern, die hiermee ver beneden de marktwaarde daalden.

Sleutel tot het succes van de hele strategie (destijds gevierd als de 'renaissance' van Downtown-LA) was de fysieke afscherming van de nieuwe kern en haar grondprijzen achter een verdedigingslinie van winstpalissades, betonnen pijlers en snelwegmuren. Traditionele voetgangersverbindingen tussen *Bunker Hill* en de oude kern werden verwijderd; het voetgangersverkeer in de nieuwe zakenwijk vond voortaan bóven de straat plaats, over viaducten waartoe de toegang gecontroleerd werd door de beveiligingssysteem van individuele wolkenkrabbers. Deze radicale privatisering van Downtowns openbare ruimte — met alle kwalijke, raciale bijklanken vanden — kon plaatsvinden zonder enige noemenswaardige openbare discussie of verzet.

Bovendien lijken de rellen van 1992 de ontwerpers van *Fortress Downtown* in hun vooruitziende blik alleen maar gelijk gegeven te hebben. Terwijl de ruiten van de oude zakenwijk rond Broadway en Spring Street sneuvelden, wist Bunker Hill zijn naam waar te maken. Met een druk op de toetsen van hun bedieningspanelen kon het beveiligingspersoneel van de grote banktorens iedere toegang tot hun kostbare percelen blokkeren. De benedenverdiepingen werden met kogelvrije stalen deuren afgesloten, roltrappen stonden abrupt stil en voetgangersverbindingen werden door elektronische sloten vergrendeld. Zoals in een artikel in de *Los Angeles Business Journal* al werd opgemerkt, heeft het relbeproeft succes van de afweersystemen van zakelijk Downtown de vraag naar nieuwe, geavanceerdere beveiligingssysteem alleen maar doen toenemen.

Op de eerste plaats wordt de scheidslijn tussen architectuur en ordehandhaving steeds vager. Het LA Police Department is een centrale rol gaan spelen in de verdere ontwikkeling van Downtown. Er kan geen groot project meer worden opgestart zonder hun betrokkenheid, en in sommige gevallen, zoals een discussie over toiletvoorzieningen in openbare parken en metrostations (waar ze tegen stemden), maken ze in alle openheid gebruik van hun vetorecht.

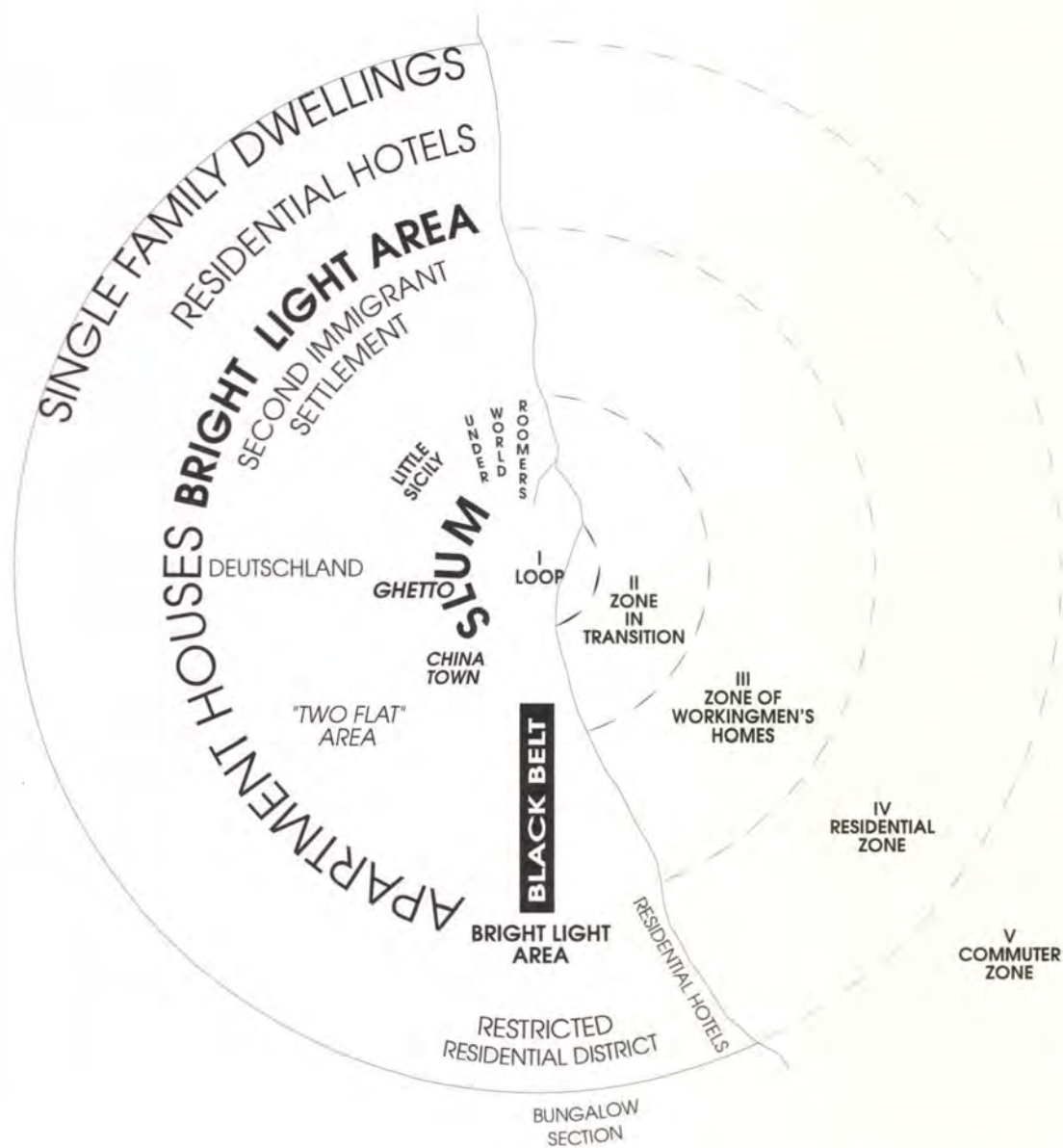
Ten tweede is de videobewaking van het gerenoveerde gedeelte van Downtown inmiddels uitgebreid tot parkeerplaatsen, privé-trottoirs, winkelpromenades enzovoort. Deze allesomvattende bewaking komt neer op een wezenlijk 'scan-schap': een ruimte die gevormd wordt door een beschermende zichtbaarheid en die in toenemende mate bepaalt waar kantoorpersoneel en middenklasse-toeristen zich in Downtown op hun gemak voelen. De camera op de werkvloer of in het winkelcentrum zal op den duur onvermijdelijk worden doorgeschakeld naar beveiligingssysteem thuis, persoonlijke 'rampenschakelaars', auto-alarmen, telefooncellen etc., in een vorm van ononderbroken en voortdurend toezicht op onze dagelijkse routine. Het is niet ondenkbaar dat yuppie-lifestyles binnenkort gekenmerkt zullen worden door het zich al dan niet kunnen veroorloven van *elektronische guardian angels*.

Ten derde worden grote gebouwen met steeds gevoeliger apparatuur en zware wapenarsenalen uitgerust. De wolkenkrabber met het computerbrein uit *Die Hard I* (in werkelijkheid de Fox-Pereira-toren van

## Beyond Blade Runner: Urban Control The Ecology of Fear

• homelessness on scales not seen since 1938, a bipartisan consensus insists that the budget must be balanced and entitlements reduced. Refusing to make any further public investment in the remediation of underlying social conditions, we are forced instead to make increasing private investments in physical security. The rhetoric of urban reform persists, but the substance is extinct. *Rebuilding LA* simply means padding the bunker.

responded to the perceived threat of the 1965 Watts Rebellion. Warned by law-enforcement authorities that a black *inundation* of the central city was imminent, the Committee of 25 abandoned redevelopment efforts in the old office and retail core. They then used the city's power of eminent domain to raze neighborhoods and create a new financial core a few blocks further west. The city's redevelopment agency, acting virtually as their private



As city life, in consequence, grows more feral, the different social milieux adopt security strategies and technologies according to their means. Like Burgess' original dart board, the resulting pattern condenses into concentric zones. The bull's eye is Downtown.

In another essay I have recounted in detail how a secretive, emergency committee of Downtown's leading corporate landowners (the so-called Committee of 25)

planner, bailed out the Committee of 25's sunk investments in the old business district by offering huge discounts, far below market value, on parcels in the new core.

Key to the success of the entire strategy (celebrated as Downtown LA's 'renaissance') was the physical segregation of the new core and its land values behind a rampart of regraded palisades, concrete pillars and

F. Scott Johnson) is de voorloper van een mogelijk genre architectonische anti-helden; *rationalere gebouwen* die beurtelings het kwaad bestrijden, of er juist aan ten prooi vallen. Het waarnemingssysteem van de gemiddelde kantoorflat maakt nu al gebruik van panoptische beelden, reuk, temperatuur- en luchtvochtigheidsschommelingen, bewegingsdetectie en in sommige gevallen gehoor. Enkele architecten praten al over de dag waarop gebouwen, met behulp van hun eigen AI-beveiligingscomputer, in staat zullen zijn hun menselijke inhoud automatisch door te lichten, te identificeren en mogelijk zelfs te reageren op hun emotionele toestand (angst, paniek etc.). Het gebouw zelf zal, zonder gebruikmaking van beveiligingspersoneel, iedere crisis kunnen afhandelen — van het weren van straatvolk uit de toiletten of uit het gebouw, tot het opsluiten van indringers in de lift.

Als al het andere faalt verandert het intelligente gebouw in een combinatie van bunker en geschutsbasis. Toen de nationale Resolution Trust Corporation beslag legde op de inboedel van de Columbia Savings and Loan Association, ontdekte men dat president-directeur Thomas Spiegel het hoofdkantoor in Beverly Hills in het geheim had laten verbouwen tot 'terrorismebestendig' fort. Naast geavanceerde elektronische sensors, een computersysteem dat terroristische incidenten over de hele wereld bijhield en een wapenopslagplaats in de parkeergarage, beschikte het gebouw op Wilshire 8900 tevens over het merkwaardigste managerstoilet van Los Angeles: niet alleen was het kantoor van Tom Spiegel met kogelvrij glas uitgerust, het had ook een badkamer met kogelvrije douche. In geval van gevaar openden zich verborgen panelen in de douchewanden, waarachter zware geweren lagen opgeslagen.

### De Open Vuurlijn

Achter het *scanscape* van de gefortificeerde kern bevinden zich de getto's en barrio's waardoor Downtown-Los Angeles omringd wordt. In het oorspronkelijke, op Chicago geënte schema van Burgess is dit de 'overgangszone': straten met pensions en huurkazernes afgewisseld door de oude bedrijven en aanvoerwegen, waar de pas gearriveerde immigrantengezinnen en ongehuwde arbeiders werden ondergebracht. Los Angeles' binnenring van Latino-wijken die door snelwegen in stukken gesneden wordt, herinnert nog aan deze traditionele functies. Boyle en Lincoln Heights, Central-Vernon en MacArthur Park: aanloophavens voor de armste immigranten uit de regio en het laagbetaalde arbeidsleger van Downtown's hotels en *sweatshops*. Evenals in het Burgess-diagram is de bevolkingsdichtheid hier de hoogste van de stad. (Volgens de telling van 1990 telt één wijk van MacArthur Park bijna 30% meer inwoners dan Midtown-Manhattan heeft!)

Tenslotte vormt deze *tenement-zone* (waar op een klein oppervlak een buitensporig groot aantal kinderen opeengepakt zit), nog net als in het Chicago van 1927 de klassieke voedingsbodem voor tiener-streetgangs (over de honderd volgens informatie van LA's afdeling Onderwijs). Maar terwijl over het *Gangland Chicago* in

1920 nog getheoretiseerd kon worden als zijnde een wezenlijke *overgangsfase* in de sociale ordening van de stad — *terwijl de goeude woonwijken plaats maken voor de oprukkende industrie en handelondernemingen, ontwikkelt de gang zich als één uiting van de economische, morele en culturele voorgrens die ontstaat op het breukvlak* — zou een gang-plattegrond van het Los Angeles van nu samenvallen met de sociale klasse-geografie. Het getribaliseerd geweld van de teenagers in de binnenring verspreidt zich al naar de oudere voorsteden; de *Boyz* zitten nu in de *Hood* waar *Ozzie* en *Harriet* vroeger woonden.

Desalniettemin is de binnenring nog altijd de gevaarlijkste sector van de stad. De LAPD's *Ramparts Division* die even ten westen van Downtown opereert, heeft stelselmatig met meer gevallen van doodslag te maken dan enig ander wijkteam in het land. Het nabijgelegen MacArthur Park, ooit de parel op de kroon van LA's parkwezen, is tegenwoordig een open vuurlijn waar crackdealers en streetgangs hun geschillen beslechten met geweren en uzis. Alleen al in 1990 vonden er dertig moorden plaats.

De overbelaste LAPD-korpsen in de binnenstad geven openlijk toe dat ze niet over genoeg mankracht beschikken om zich met alle lijken op straat bezig te houden, laat staan dat ze de dagelijkse inbraken, autodiefstallen of afpersingen door gangs de baas zouden kunnen. De vertwijfelde inwoners van de binnenring worden aan hun lot overgelaten, zonder de financiële middelen of politieke invloed van de rijkere buurten. Als laatste redmiddel zoeken zij hun heil bij de heren Smith & Wesson, een naam die op menige patio prijkt na de woorden *wordt beschermd door...*

Ondertussen voeren de huisjesmelkers van de slums hun eigen schrikbewind onder de dealers en kleine criminelen. Onder druk van nieuwe wetten die het mogelijk maken drugsbanden te onteigenen, huren ze knokploegen en gewapende huurlingen in om de misdaad in hun woningen 'uit te roeien'. Onlangs werd in de *LA Times* verslag gedaan van de opwindende wederwaardigheden van een van deze clubs die opereert in de wijken Pico-Union, Venice en Panorama City in de San Fernando Valley.

Dit beveiligingsteam onder leiding van 'avonturier' David Roybal, twee meter twintig en 140 kilo, is bij huiseigenaren befaamd om zijn efficiënte beestachtigheid. Wie verdacht wordt van dealen of gebruiken wordt, samen met andere klaplopers en huiseigenaren onwelgevallige individuen, met fysieke gewapende kracht het gebouw uitgedreven. Wie zich verzet of zelfs maar protesteert wordt zonder pardon in elkaar geslagen. Zoals de *Times* schrijft, *grepen Roybal en z'n ploeg (tijdens een razzia in Panorama City een paar jaar geleden) zoveel huurders en krakers bij de kladden wegens drugs, dat ze van een recreatierruimte een grote cel maakten waar de arrestanten aan de met bloed besmeurde muren werden geketend*. De LAPD was op de hoogte van deze 'privé-gevangenis' maar negeerde de klachten van de huurders *want het is in het algemeen belang*.

Roybal en trawanten vertonen een nauwe gelijkernis met de zogenaamde *matadors*, de huurling-revolverhelden in de woonwijken van Brazilië die met grote

• freeway walls. Traditional pedestrian connections between Bunker Hill and the old core were removed, and foot traffic in the new financial district was elevated above the street on pedways whose access was controlled by the security systems of individual skyscrapers. This radical privatization of Downtown public space — with its ominous racial undertones — occurred without significant public debate or protest.

Last year's riots, moreover, have only seemed to vindicate the foresight of Fortress Downtown's designers. While windows were being smashed throughout the old business district along Broadway and Spring streets, Bunker Hill lived up to its name. By flicking a few switches on their command consoles, the security staffs of the great bank towers were able to cut off all access to their expensive real estate. Bullet-proof steel doors rolled down over street-level entrances, escalators instantly stopped and electronic locks sealed off pedestrian passageways. As the *Los Angeles Business Journal* pointed out in a special report, the riot-tested success of corporate Downtown's defenses has only stimulated demand for new and higher levels of physical security.

In the first place, the boundary between architecture and law enforcement is further eroded. The LAPD have become central players in the Downtown design process. No major project now breaks ground without their participation, and in some cases, like a debate over the provision of public toilets in parks and subway stations (which they opposed), they openly exercise veto power.

Secondly, video monitoring of Downtown's redeveloped zones has been extended to parking structures, private sidewalks, plazas, and so on. This comprehensive surveillance constitutes a virtual *scanscape* — a space of protective visibility that increasingly defines where white-collar office workers and middle-class tourists feel safe Downtown. Inevitably the workplace or shopping mall video camera will become linked with home security systems, personal 'panic buttons', car alarms, cellular phones, and the like, in a seamless continuity of surveillance over daily routine. Indeed, yuppies' lifestyles soon may be defined by the ability to afford *electronic guardian angels* to watch over them.

Thirdly, tall buildings are becoming increasingly sentient and packed with deadly firepower. The skyscraper with a computer brain in *Die Hard I* (actually F. Scott Johnson's Fox-Pereira Tower) anticipates a possible genre of architectural anti-heroes as *intelligent buildings* alternately battle evil or become its pawns. The sensory system of the average office tower already includes panoptic vision, smell, sensitivity to temperature and humidity, motion detection, and, in some cases, hearing. Some architects now predict the day when the building's own AI security computer will be able to automatically screen and identify its human population, and, even perhaps, respond to their emotional states (fear, panic, etc.). Without dispatching security personnel, the building itself will manage crises both minor (like ordering street people out of the building or preventing them from using toilets) and major (like trapping burglars in an elevator).

When all else fails, the smart building will become a combination of bunker and fire-base. When the federal Resolution Trust Corporation seized the assets of

Columbia Savings and Loan Association they discovered that the CEO, Thomas Spiegel, had converted its Beverly Hills headquarters into a secret, 'terrorist-proof' fortress. In addition to elaborate electronic security sensors, a sophisticated computer system that tracked terrorist incidents over the globe, and an arms cache in its parking structure, the 8900 Wilshire building also has Los Angeles' most unusual executive washroom: Tom Spiegel's office, in addition to the bullet-proof glass, was designed to have an adjoining bathroom with a bullet-proof shower. In the event an alarm was sounded, secret panels in the shower walls would open, behind which high-powered assault rifles would be stored.

### Free Fire Zone

Beyond the scanscape of the fortified core is the halo of barrios and ghettos that surround Downtown Los Angeles. In Burgess' original Chicago-inspired schema this was the 'zone in transition': the boarding house and tenement streets, intermixed with old industry and transportation infrastructure, that sheltered new immigrant families and single male laborers. Los Angeles' inner ring of freeway-sliced Latino neighborhoods still recapitulate these classical functions. Here in Boyle and Lincoln Heights, Central-Vernon and MacArthur Park are the ports of entry for the region's poorest immigrants, as well as the low-wage labor reservoir for Downtown's hotels and garment sweatshops. Residential densities, just as in the Burgess diagram, are the highest in the city. (According to the 1990 Census, one district of MacArthur Park is nearly 30% denser than Midtown Manhattan!)

Finally, just as in Chicago in 1927, this tenement zone (*where an inordinately large number of children are crowded into a small area*) remains the classic breeding ground of teenage street gangs (over one-hundred according to LA school district intelligence). But while 'Gangland' in 1920s Chicago was theorized as essentially *interstitial* to the social organization of the city — *as better residential districts recede before the encroachments of business and industry, the gang develops as one manifestation of the economic, moral, and cultural frontier which marks the interstice* — a gang map of Los Angeles today is coextensive with the geography of social class. Tribalized teenage violence now spills out of the inner ring into the older suburban zones; the Boyz are now in the 'Hood' where Ozzie and Harriet used to live.

For all that, however, the inner ring remains the most dangerous sector of the city. Ramparts Division of the LAPD, which patrols the salient just west of Downtown, regularly investigates more homicides than any other neighborhood police jurisdiction in the nation. Nearby MacArthur Park, once the jewel in the crown of LA's park system, is now a free-fire zone where crack dealers and street gangs settle their scores with shotguns and Uzis. Thirty people were murdered there in 1990.

By their own admission the overwhelmed inner-city detachments of the LAPD are unable to keep track of all the bodies on the street, much less deal with common burglaries, car thefts or gang-organized protection rackets. Lacking the resources or political clout of more affluent neighborhoods, the desperate population of the inner ring is left to its own devices. As a last resort they have turned

regelmaat hardnekkige criminelen en zelfs straatkinderen executeren, terwijl de politie moedwillig de ogen sluit. Wij klaren het karwei waar anderen falen luidt het gezamenlijk motto. Of zoals een van Roybals zeer gewelddadige medeplichtigen uitlegt: *Iemand moet de dienst uitmaken en als wij ergens komen, doen wij dat. Als iemand bijdehand is slaan we 'm verrot, gewoon op de vloer, waar z'n vrienden bijstaan. We doen ze handboeien om en schoppen ze in elkaar, en als de ziekenwagen komt zeggen we, Yo, klaag me maar aan.*

Naast deze 'huur-een-heffo's' kent de binnenstad inmiddels ook een uitgebreide handel die moet voorzien in de vraag naar tralies en gaas voor de woningbeveiliging. In de binnenring lijken de meeste huizen intussen dan ook op kooien in een dierentuin. Het arbeidersgezin van nu moet zich iedere nacht insluiten voor de gezombificeerde stad daarbuiten, alsof ze in een film van George Romero wonen. Eén onbedoelde bijwerking hiervan is de angstaanjagende toename van het aantal branden waarbij complete gezinnen, hulpeloos gevangen in hun vergrendelde huizen, in de vlammen omkomen.

De celwoning duikt in vele gedaanten weer op in het binnenstedelijke landschap. Al voor de lenteoproer hadden de meeste slijterijen, in navolging van de banken van lening, het winkelgedeelte achter de toonbank volledig betralied en het vuurwapen op een strategische plaats verborgen. Zelfs bij veel plaatselijke vetkoningen vond de transactie hamburger/geld uitsluitend nog plaats door kogelvrije kunststoftralies. Het straatbeeld wordt het afgelopen decennium belaagd door graffitiwerende, vensterloze betonkolossen, als betrof het jeugdpuistjes. Inmiddels kunnen de verzekeraars deze *relbestendige bunkers* praktisch verplicht stellen bij de renovatie van vele wijken.

Ook de plaatselijke lagere- en middelbare scholen zijn steeds minder van gevangenis te onderscheiden. Terwijl de onderwijsuitgaven per inwoner van Los Angeles tot een dieptepunt gedaald zijn, worden de schaarse fondsen gestoken in de fortificatie van speelplaatsen en het inhuren van gewapende beveiligingsagenten. Tieners beklagen zich bitter over overvolle klaslokalen, gedemoraliseerde leraren en aftakelende campussen die niet veel meer voorstellen dan justitiële dagverblijven voor een vergeten generatie. De speelplaats heeft inmiddels veel weg van een oorlogslagveld. Zoals hun ouders vroeger geleerd werd onder de tafels te kruipen in geval van een kernoorlog, wordt de scholieren van nu geleerd om op het teken van de leraar dekking te zoeken in het geval van een drive-by shooting — en zich niet te verroeren totdat het 'kust veilig' gegeven wordt.

De door de landelijke overheid gesubsidiëerde woningbouwprojecten beginnen op hun beurt een steeds grotere gelijkenis te vertonen met de beruchte 'strategische dorpen' waarin destijds de Vietnamese plattelandsbevolking gedetineerd werd. LA kent weliswaar nog geen woningbouwprojecten met de geavanceerde technologie van Chicago's Cabrini-Green, waar gebruik wordt gemaakt van netvlies-scans om persoonsgegevens na te trekken (vgl. de openingsscène van *Blade Runner*), maar de bewegingsvrijheid wordt er in toenemende mate bepaald door de politie. Net als boeren

van een opstandige plattelandsstreek, worden bewoners van alle leeftijden naar believen staande gehouden en gefouilleerd of onderworpen aan wederrechtelijke huiszoekingen. In één bijzonder grof geval arresteerde de LAPD, een paar weken voor de rellen in de lente van 1992, meer dan vijftig mensen tijdens een bliksemrazzia in het Imperial Courts-woningbouwproject in Watts.

In deze stad, die met de grootste woningnood in het land te kampen heeft, zijn de projectbewoners uit angst ontruimd te worden steeds minder geneigd aanspraak te doen gelden op hun grondwettelijke bescherming tegen illegale huiszoeking of inbeslagname. Intussen geven landelijke richtlijnen de vermoedingsautoriteiten het recht om *gezinnen* van vermoedelijke dealers of criminelen te ontruimen. Hiermee staat de weg vrij naar een politiek van *collectieve bestraffing* zoals bijvoorbeeld wordt toegepast door de Israëli's tegen de Palestijnse bevolking van de West Bank.

### De halve Manen van de Onderdrukking

In het oorspronkelijke Burgess-diagram wordt het 'dartboard' dat de fundamentele socio-economische stadsordening weergeeft, doorkruist door de 'halve manen' die gevormd worden door de etnische enclaves (*Deutschland, Klein-Sicilië, de Zwarte Gordel etc.*) en specifieke architectonische ecologieën ('familiehotels', 'laagbouw' etc.). In de hedendaagse metropool Los Angeles kunnen we het ontstaan zien van een nieuw, speciaal soort enclave welke nauw samenvalt met de militarisering van het landschap. Bij gebrek aan een nauwkeuriger gemene deler zullen wij de term 'sociale beheersingswijken' (sbw's) gebruiken. Hier zien we de versmelting van ruimtelijke ordening en de sancties uit het (burgerlijk) strafrecht, tot wat Michel Foucault ongetwijfeld herkend zou hebben als verdere voorbeelden van de evolutie van de 'disciplinaire orde' van de twintigste-eeuwse stad.

Zoals Christian Boyer Foucault paraphraseert: *De disciplinaire heerschappij distribueert lichamen in de ruimte door aan elk individu een celvormige sectie toe te wijzen, waarbij uit deze analytische ruimtelijke ordening een functionele ruimte ontstaat. Uiteindelijk wordt deze ruimtelijke matrix tegelijkertijd werkelijk en onwerkelijk: een hiërarchische organisatie van cellulaire ruimte en een zuiver ideale orde die wordt opgelegd aan de vorm van die ruimte.*

De hedendaagse sbw's (die zowel 'werkelijk' als 'ideaal' zijn) kunnen worden ingedeeld naar hun mate van justitiële ruimtelijke 'discipline'. Bestrijdingsgebieden, momenteel in aangegeven wijken van Los Angeles en Hollywood in het leven geroepen ter bestrijding van graffiti en prostitutie, breiden het traditionele recht van de politie om op te treden tegen 'overlast' (de juridische basis van iedere indeling in zones) uit van de produktie van schadelijke stoffen tot schadelijk gedrag. Doordat zij direct gefinancierd worden uit de geïnde boetes of bijzondere belastingen (bijv. op verfspuitbussen), bieden de bestrijdingsgebieden de mogelijkheid aan huiseigenaren en winkeliersverenigingen om een harder optreden te eisen tegen specifiek plaatselijke sociale problemen.

• to Messieurs Smith and Wesson, whose name follows *protected by...* on many a porch.

Slumlords, meanwhile, are mounting their own private reign of terror against drug-dealers and petty criminals. Faced with new laws authorizing the seizure of drug-infested properties, they are hiring goon squads and armed mercenaries to 'exterminate' crime in their tenements. The *LA Times* recently described the swashbuckling adventures of one such crew in the Pico-Union, Venice and Panorama City (San Fernando Valley) areas.

Led by a six-foot-three 280-pound 'soldier of fortune' named David Roybal, this security squad is renown amongst landlords for its efficient brutality. Suspected drug-dealers and their customers, as well as mere deadbeats and other landlord irritants, are physically driven from buildings at gunpoint. Those who resist or even complain are beaten without mercy. In a Panorama City raid a few years ago, the *Times* notes, *Roybal and his crew collared so many residents and squatters for drugs that they converted a recreation room into a holding tank and handcuffed arrestees to a blood-spattered wall.* The LAPD knew about this *private jail* but dismissed residents' complaints *because it serves the greater good.*

Roybal and his gang closely resemble the so-called *matadors*, or hired gunslingers, who patrol Brazilian urban neighborhoods and frequently, while the police deliberately turn their backs, execute persistent criminals, even street urchins. Their common coda is that *they get the job done all else has failed.* As one of Roybal's most aggressive competitors explains: *Somebody's got to rule and when we're there, we rule. When somebody says something smart, we body slam him, right on the floor with all of his friends looking. We handcuff them and kick them and when the paramedics come and they're on the stretcher, we say: Hey, sue me.*

Apart from these rent-a-thugs, the Inner City also spawns a vast cottage industry that manufactures bars and grates for home protection. Indeed most of the bungalows in the inner ring now tend to resemble cages in a zoo. As in a George Romero movie, working-class families must now lock themselves in every night from the zombified city outside. One inadvertent consequence has been the terrifying frequency with which fires immolate entire families trapped helpless in their barred homes. The *prison cell house* has many resonances in the landscape of the inner city. Before the Spring uprising most liquor stores, borrowing from the precedent of pawnshops, had completely caged in the area behind the counter, with firearms discretely hidden at strategic locations. Even local greasy spoons were beginning to exchange hamburgers for money through bullet-proof acrylic turnstiles. Windowless concrete-block buildings, with rough surfaces exposed to deter graffiti, have spread across the streetscape like acne during the last decade. Now insurance companies may make such *riot-proof bunkers* virtually obligatory in the rebuilding of many districts. Local intermediate and secondary schools, meanwhile, have become even more indistinguishable from jails. As per capita education spending has plummeted in Los Angeles, scarce resources have been absorbed in fortifying school grounds and hiring armed security police. Teenagers complain bitterly about overcrowded classrooms and

demoralized teachers on decaying campuses that have become little more than daytime detention centers for an abandoned generation. The schoolyard, meanwhile, has become a killing field. Just as their parents once learned to cower under desks in the case of an atomic bomb attack, so students today are *taught to drop at a teacher's signal in case of ... a driveby shooting — and stay there until they receive an all-clear signal.*

Federally subsidized and public housing projects, for their part, are coming to resemble the infamous 'strategic hamlets' that were used to incarcerate the rural population of Vietnam. Although no LA housing project is yet as technologically sophisticated as Chicago's Cabrini-Green, where retinal scans (c.f., the opening sequence of *Blade Runner*) are used to check i.d.s, police exercise increasing control over freedom of movement. Like peasants in a rebel countryside, public housing residents of every age are stopped and searched at will, and their homes broken into without court warrants. In one particularly galling incident, just a few weeks before the Spring 1992 riots, the LAPD arrested more than fifty people in the course of a surprise raid upon Watts' Imperial Courts project.

In a city with the nation's worst housing shortage, project residents, fearful of eviction, are increasingly reluctant to claim any of their constitutional protections against unlawful search or seizure. Meanwhile national guidelines allow housing authorities to evict *families* of alleged drug-dealers or felons. This opens the door to a policy of *collective punishment* as practiced, for example, by the Israelis against Palestinian communities on the West Bank.

### The Half-Moons of Repression

In the original Burgess diagram, the 'half-moons' of ethnic enclaves (*Deutschland, Little Sicily, the Black Belt, etc.*) and specialized architectural ecologies ('residential hotels', 'the two flat area', etc.) cut across the 'dart board' of the city's fundamental socio-economic patterning. In contemporary metropolitan Los Angeles, a new species of special enclave is emerging in sympathetic synchronization to the militarization of the landscape. For want of a better generic appellation, we might call them 'social control districts' (scds). They merge the sanctions of the criminal or civil code with land-use planning to create what Michel Foucault would undoubtedly have recognized as further instances of the evolution of the 'disciplinary order' of the twentieth-century city.

As Christian Boyer paraphrases Foucault: *Disciplinary control proceed[s] by distributing bodies in space, allocating each individual to a cellular partition, creating a functional space out of this analytic spatial arrangement. In the end this spatial matrix became both real and ideal: a hierarchical organization of cellular space and a purely ideal order that was imposed upon its forms.*

Currently existing scds (simultaneously 'real and ideal') can be distinguished according to their juridical mode of spatial 'discipline'. *Abatement* districts, currently enforced against graffiti and prostitution in sign-posted areas of Los Angeles and West Hollywood, extend the traditional police power over nuisance (the legal fount of all zoning) from noxious industry to noxious behavior. Because they are self-financed by the fines collected or

In toezichts-gebieden, zoals in heel Zuid-Californië vertegenwoordigd door de 'drugsvrije zones' rondom openbare scholen, worden door de staats- of landelijke overheid extra straffen of 'verzwaringen' opgelegd aan misdrijven die begaan worden binnen een gespecificeerde omtrek rond openbare instellingen. De beheersings-gebieden zijn bedoeld ter isolatie van potentieel epidemische sociale problemen, die kunnen variëren van onze illegale immigrant, de Mediterrane fruitvlieg, tot de immer groeiende massa dakloze *Angelenos*. Al worden de grenzen van de 'daklozenbeheersingszone' in Downtown-LA niet op even surrealistisch nauwkeurige wijze aangegeven als de 'Medfly Quarantine Zone' van het Ministerie van Landbouw, vormt deze toch een van de meest dramatische voorbeelden van een sbw. De stadspolitiek verhindert de verspreiding van daklozenkampementen naar de omliggende wijken en chiquere delen van Downtown, door hun 'beheersing' (officiële term) in de overbevolkte achterbuurt die als Central City East bekend staat (oftewel de 'Bajes' volgens de bewoners). Hoewel de door de crisis veroorzaakte explosieve toename van het aantal daklozen de zwervers onverbiddelijk de stegen en leegstaande gebouwen van de aangrenzende wijken in de binnenring indrijft, houdt de LAPD vast aan haar meedogenloze politiek om hen terug te jagen naar de uitzichtloosheid van de Bajes.

De tegenovergestelde strategie bestaat natuurlijk uit de formele uitsluiting van daklozen en andere groepen paria's van gebruik van de openbare ruimte. De laatste tijd heeft een hele reeks steden in Southland, van Orange County tot Santa Barbara en zelfs de 'Volksrepubliek Santa Monica', 'anti-kampeerverordeningen' aangenomen die de daklozen uit het gezicht moeten houden. Intussen volgen Los Angeles en Pomona het voorbeeld van het stadje San Fernando (de geboorteplaats van Richie Valens) door aan gangleden een parkverbod op te leggen. In deze 'Gangvrije Parken' wordt het gang-lidmaatschap bestraft met niet-ruimtelijke sancties (met name *stop*, de nieuwe Wet Terrorismebestrijding en -voorkoming); een soort 'verbod op vereniging' waarbij, ook zonder specifiek gepleegde misdaden, het lidmaatschap van een groep strafbaar gesteld wordt.

Dit soort criminalisering van groepen heeft in diepste wezen te maken met de projectie van middenklasse- en conservatieve fantasieën omtrent aard en wezen van de 'gevaarlijke klassen'. Zo voerde de negentiende-eeuwse bourgeoisie een kruistocht tegen het grotendeels denkbeeldige 'zwerversgevaar' en hallucineerde men in de twintigste eeuw over een 'rood gevaar'. Uiteindelijk dook halverwege de tachtiger jaren de geest van Cotton Mather plotseling weer op in de voorsteden van Zuid-Californië. Beschuldigingen aan het adres van de plaatselijke kinderdagverblijven, die in werkelijkheid brandhaarden van duivelse perversie zouden zijn, wierpen ons in één klap terug naar de zeventiende eeuw en de heksenprocessen van Salem. Gedurende de kindermishandelingszaak tegen de McMartin-kleuterschool — die de duurste en langstlepende vergelijkbare zaak van de Amerikaanse geschiedenis zou worden — getuigden de kinderen

over misbruik door leraren die op bezemstelen rondvlogen of op andere wijze blijk gaven van bezetenheid door de Duivel.

Eén nalatenschap van de collectieve hysterie waarmee dit gepaard ging en die ongetwijfeld grotendeels voortkwam uit het plaatsvervangend schuldgevoel van vele ouders, was het ontstaan in San Dimas van de eerste 'kindermishandelingsvrije zone' in het land. Dit voorstadje à la Twin Peaks, in de oostelijke San Gabriel Valley, werd van onder tot boven volgeplakt met de waarschuwing, *Handen thuis! Onze kinderen zijn beschermd. Wij hebben hun foto's en vingerafdrukken*. Mij is niet bekend in hoeverre de legers loerende pedofielen in de bergen rond San Dimas ook werkelijk werden afgeschrikt door deze waarschuwing, maar het is een feit dat iedere poging om de hedendaagse stedelijke ruimte in kaart te brengen, het bestaan zal moeten erkennen van dergelijke duistere, Lynchiaanse zones, waar de sociale verbeelding haar fantasie op loslaat.

Ondertussen lijkt het Zuid-Californië van na de rellen zich op te maken om steeds meer sbw's te creëren. Enerzijds worden de buurten er, met de komst van het landelijke *Weed and Seed*-programma dat de financiering van de wijkopbouw koppelt aan de gangbestrijding, hernieuwd toe aangezet om uitsluitings- en/of toezichtsstrategieën te ontwikkelen. Zoals veel activisten al waarschuwden, heeft het 'wieden en zaaien' veel weg van een politiestaat-karikatuur van de *War on Poverty* van de jaren '60, waarbij het justitiële apparaat de rol van manager van het stadsherstel krijgt toegeschoven. De armen zullen geen andere keus hebben dan hun medewerking te verlenen aan hun eigen criminalisering, als de eerste voorwaarde voor ontwikkelingshulp.

Anderzijds is het niet ondenkbaar dat de nieuwe technologieën de conservatieven — en vermoedelijk ook de nieuw-linksen — pas echt de kans zullen geven te experimenteren met kostenbesparende voorstellen voor *gemeenschapsdetentie*, als alternatief voor de bouw van dure nieuwe gevangenissen. Aangevoerd door Charles Murray, de ideoloog van het Heritage Institute — wiens polemieek tegen sociale voorzieningen voor de armen, *Losing Ground* uit 1984, als het krachtigste manifest van het Reagan-tijdperk gold — beginnen conservatieve theoretici al te speculeren over de uitvoerbaarheid van een *bajesstad* zoals we die kennen uit SF-fantasieën zoals *Escape from New York*.

Murray's uitgangspunt, zoals voor het eerst uiteengezet in de *New Republic* van 1990, is dat *drugsvrije zones voor de meerderheid* mogelijk de creatie zullen vereisen van sociale vuilnisbelten voor de gecriminaliseerde minderheid. *Als het resultaat van deze politiek (het onbepaalde recht van huiseigenaren en werkgevers tot discriminatie bij de selectie van huurders en werknemers) de concentratie betekent van de rotte appels in enkele super-gewelddadige asociale buurten, dan moet dat maar*. Maar hoe de onderklasse effectief in haar eigen 'supergewelddadige' mega-sbw's, en uit de drugsvrije Shangri-la's van de bovenklasse te houden?

Eén mogelijkheid zou de systematische aanleg zijn van discrete *beveiligingspoorten*, die aan de hand van



- special sales taxes levied (on spray paints, for example), abatement districts allow homeowner or merchant groups to target intensified law enforcement against specific local social problems.

*Enhancement* districts, represented all over Southern California by the 'drug-free zones' surrounding public schools, add extra federal/state penalties or 'enhancements' to crimes committed within a specified radius of public institutions. *Containment* districts are designed to quarantine potentially epidemic social problems, ranging from that insect illegal immigrant, the Mediterranean fruit fly, to the ever increasing masses of homeless Angelenos. Although Downtown LA's 'homeless containment zone' lacks the precise, if surreal, sign-posting of the state Department of Agriculture's 'Medfly Quarantine Zone', it is nonetheless one of the most dramatic examples of a *scd*. By city policy, the spillover of homeless encampments into surrounding council districts, or into the tonier precincts of the Downtown scandscape, is prevented by their 'containment' (official term) within the over-crowded Skid row area known as Central City East (or the 'Nickle' to its inhabitants). Although the recession-driven explosion in the homeless population has inexorably leaked street people into the alleys and vacant lots of nearby inner-ring neighborhoods, the LAPD maintains its pitiless policy of driving them back into the squalor of the Nickle.

The obverse strategy, of course, is the formal *exclusion* of the homeless and other pariah groups from public spaces. A spate of Southland cities, from Orange County to Santa Barbara, and even including the 'Peoples' Republic of Santa Monica', recently have passed 'anti-camping' ordinances to banish the homeless from their sight. Meanwhile Los Angeles and Pomona are emulating the small city of San Fernando (Richie Valens' hometown) in banning gang members from parks. These 'Gang Free Parks' reinforce non-spatialized sanctions against gang membership (especially the recent Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act or *STEP*) as examples of 'status criminalization' where group membership, even in the absence of a specific criminal act, has been outlawed.

Status crime, by its very nature, involves projections of middle-class or conservative fantasies about the nature of the 'dangerous classes'. Thus in the 19th century the bourgeoisie crusaded against a largely phantasmagorical 'tramp menace', and, in the 20th century, against a hallucinatory domestic 'red menace'. In the middle 1980s, however, the ghost of Cotton Mather suddenly reappeared in suburban Southern California. Allegations that local daycare centers were actually covens of satanic perversion wrenched us back to the seventeenth century and the Salem witch trials. In the course of the McMartin Pre-school molestation case — ultimately the longest and most expensive such ordeal in American history — children testified about molester-teachers who flew around on broomsticks and other manifestations of the Evil One.

One legacy of the accompanying collective hysteria, which undoubtedly mined huge veins of displaced parental guilt, was the little city of San Dimas' creation of the nation's first 'child molestation exclusion zone'. This Twin-Peaks-like suburb in the eastern San Gabriel Valley

was sign-posted from stem to stern with the warning: *Hands Off! Our children are photographed and fingerprinted for their own protection.* I don't know if the armies of lurking pedophiles in the mountains above San Dimas were actually deterred by these warnings, but any mapping of contemporary urban space must acknowledge the existence of such dark, Lynchian zones where the *social imaginary* discharges its fantasies.

Meanwhile, post-riot Southern California seems on the verge of creating yet more *scds*. On the one hand, the arrival of the federal 'Weed and Seed' program, linking community development funds to anti-gang repression, provides a new set of incentives for neighborhoods to adopt exclusion and/or enhancement strategies. As many activists have warned, 'Weed and Seed' is like a police-state caricature of the 1960s War on Poverty, with the Justice Dept. transformed into the manager of urban redevelopment. The poor will be forced to cooperate with their own criminalization as a precondition for urban aid.

On the other hand, emerging technologies may give conservatives, and probably neo-liberals as well, a real opportunity to test cost-saving proposals for *community imprisonment* as an alternative to expensive programs of prison construction. Led by Heritage Institute ideologue Charles Murray — whose polemic against social spending for the poor, *Losing Ground* (1984), was the most potent manifesto of the Reagan era — conservative theorists are exploring the practicalities of the *carceral city* depicted in sci-fi fantasies like *Escape from New York* (which, however, got the relationship of landvalues all wrong).

Murray's concept, as first adumbrated in the *New Republic* in 1990, is that *drug-free zones for the majority* may require social-refuse heaps for the criminalized minority. *If the result of implementing these policies (landlords' and employers' unrestricted right to discriminate in the selection of tenants and workers) is to concentrate the bad apples into a few hyper-violent, antisocial neighborhoods, so be it.* But how will the underclass be effectively confined to its own 'hyper-violent' super-*scds* and kept out of the drug-free shangri-las of the overclass?

One possibility is the systematic establishment of discrete *security gateways* that will use some bio-metric criterion, universally registered, to screen crowds and bypassers. The *most elegant solution*, according to a recent article in the *Economist*, *is a bio-metric that can be measured without the subject having to do anything at all.* The individually unique cart-wheel pattern of the iris, for example, can be scanned by hidden cameras *without the subject being any the wiser. That could be useful in places like airports — to check for the eye of a Tamil Tiger, or anybody else whose presence might make security guards' pupils dilate.*

Another emerging technology is the police utilization of *LANDSAT* satellites linked to Geographical Information Systems (*GIS*). Almost certainly by the end of the decade the largest US metropolitan areas, including Los Angeles, will be using geosynchronous *LANDSAT* systems to manage traffic congestion and oversee physical planning. The same *LANDSAT-GIS* capability can be cost-shared and time-shared with police departments to surveil the movements of tens of thousands of electronically tagged individuals and their automobiles.

universeel geregistreerde biometrische kenmerken de menigte en voorbijgangers zouden kunnen doorlichten. *De elegantste oplossing*, aldus een artikel in de *Economist*. *De elegantste oplossing*, aldus een artikel in de *Economist*. *is een biometrie die kan worden gemeten zonder dat de betrokkene er ook maar iets voor hoeft te doen.* Het per individu unieke patroon van de iris bijvoorbeeld kan gescand worden door verborgen camera's *zonder dat de betroffene er iets van hoeft te merken.* Dit zou bijvoorbeeld van nut kunnen blijken op vliegvelden — bij de opsporing van een Tamil Tijger of van hen wiens aanwezigheid verder nog pupilverwijding zou kunnen veroorzaken bij het bewakingspersoneel.

Een andere technologie in opkomst is het gebruik dat de politie maakt van LANDSAT-satellieten gekoppeld aan Geografische Informatie Systemen (GIS). Het is vrijwel zeker dat aan het eind van dit decennium alle grotere metropolen in de vs, waaronder ook Los Angeles, gebruik zullen maken van geosynchrone LANDSAT-systemen om het verkeer te regelen en zicht te houden op de stedelijke planning. Kosten en baten van datzelfde LANDSAT-GIS-vermogen zouden gedeeld kunnen worden met de politiekorpsen om de bewegingen bij te houden van tienduizenden elektronisch gemerkte individuen en hun automobielen.

Hoewel dit toezicht zich in de eerste plaats zal richten op de beveiliging van dure sportwagens en ander speelgoed van de rijken, zal niets kunnen verhinderen dat dezelfde technologie wordt toegepast als equivalent van een elektronische handboei op de activiteiten van hele groepen stadsbewoners. Drugscriminelen en gangleden kunnen van een 'streepjescode' worden voorzien en onder het alziend toezicht worden gesteld van satellieten die 24 uur per dag hun bewegingen in de gaten houden, om automatisch alarm te slaan als zij de grenzen van hun bewakingsdistrict overschrijden. In het licht van dergelijke machtige, Orwelliaanse sociale beheersingstechnologieën zou 'detentie in de gemeenschap' wel eens hetzelfde kunnen gaan betekenen als 'detentie van de gemeenschap'.

## De Buren Kijken

Onlangs nam een zorgelijke delegatie van politieambtenaren uit de ex-DDR contact op met de LAPD. De voormalige Oostduitsers, die sinds hun toetreding tot het Westen te kampen hadden met een massale toename van misdaad en racistisch geweld, waren wanhopig op zoek naar meer informatie over LA's meest gevierde ordehandhaver. Hiermee doelden ze echter niet op commissaris Willie Williams, of zijn voorganger Daryl Gates. In plaats daarvan wilden ze meer te weten komen over 'Bruno the Burglar', de gemaskerde stripboef die te bewonderen valt op de ontelbare borden waarmee de grenzen van de 'Buurtwacht'-wijken worden aangeven.

Het Buurtwacht-project, waarin van San Pedro tot Sylmar meer dan 5.500 surveillancegroepen zijn opgenomen, vormt de belangrijkste innovatie op het gebied van de stedelijke ordehandhaving van de LAPD. In de 'Arbeidersbuurten' van Burgess, waartoe in Los Angeles zowel de koopwoning-wijken van de binnenstad als de oudere arbeidersvoorsteden in de San Fernando- en San Gabriel-valleys gerekend moeten worden, wordt door een gigantisch netwerk van waakzame burens een beveiligingssysteem geleverd dat het midden houdt tussen de

belegerde en tot op de tanden bewapende anomie van de binnenring en de privé-politie van de rijkere omheinde voorsteden.

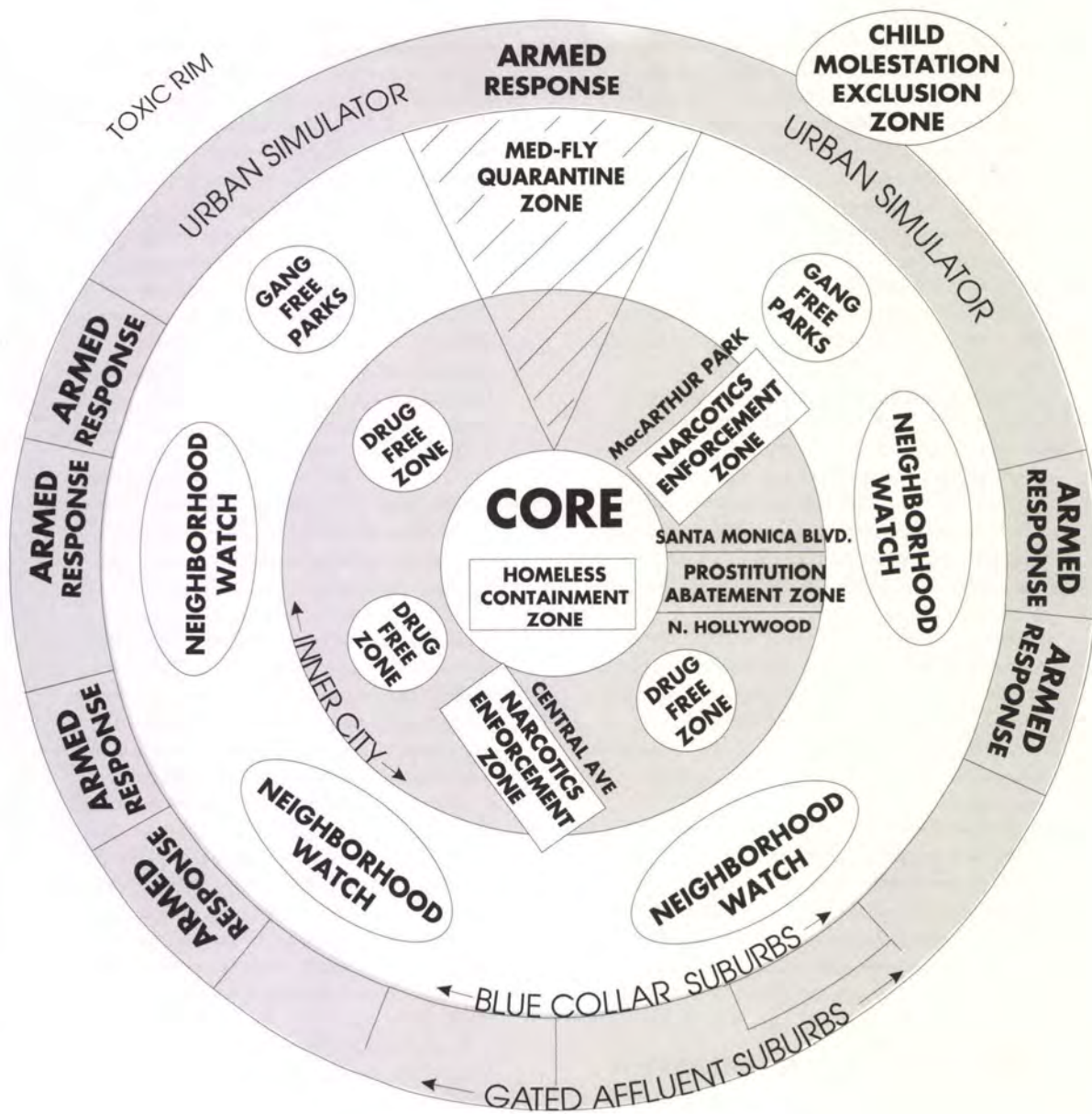
Het idee van de buurtwacht, waarvan het voorbeeld inmiddels is opgevolgd door honderden Noordamerikaanse en zelfs Europese steden — van Rosemead tot Londen —, is het geesteskind van ex-commissaris van politie Ed Davis. Tijdens de nasleep van de onlustencyclus die van 1965-'71 woedde in Southcentral- en East LA, bedacht Davis het project als de basis van een uitgebreidere 'Basic Car'-strategie, die de aanhang van de LAPD in de gemeenschap zou moeten opvijzelen door de totstandbrenging van een territoriale identiteit tussen de surveillance-eenheden en de buurten. Hoewel zijn opvolger Daryl Gates de voorkeur gaf aan de SWAT-teams (zijn uitvinding) boven de 'Basic Car', werden de buurtwachten tijdens de tachtiger jaren verder uitgebreid.

Volgens LAPD-persvoorlichter brigadier Christopher West zijn de per blok georganiseerde buurtwachtgroepen bedoeld ter verhoging van de plaatselijke solidariteit en het zelfvertrouwen van de bevolking tegenover de misdaad. *Onder aanvoering van hun blokhoofden worden buurtbewoners waakzamer gemaakt wat betreft de bescherming van hun wederzijdse veiligheid en bezit. Van verdacht gedrag wordt onmiddellijk melding gemaakt en huiseigenaren plegen regelmatig overleg met de surveillerende agenten om misdaadpreventie-tactieken door te nemen.*

Een buiten diensttijd geïnterviewde agent in een Winchell's donutshop wist het nog beeldender te beschrijven. *De buurtwacht heeft de functie van het wagenkonvooi in een ouderwetse cowboyfilm. De buurtbewoners zijn de settlers, en het doel is hen te leren om met hun wagens een kring te vormen en de Indianen van zich af te houden totdat de cavalerie — dat wil zeggen, de LAPD — hen kan komen redden.*

We hoeven er niet op te wijzen dat deze Wild West-analogie haar duistere zijden heeft. Om maar iets te noemen, wie bepaalt welk gedrag 'verdacht' is, en wie er op een 'Indiaan' lijkt? Het voor de hand liggende gevaar van een programma waarbij duizenden burgers worden ingelijfd als politie-informant onder het officiële motto *Wees op Vreemdelingen Bedacht*, is de onvermijdelijke stigmatisering van onschuldige groepen mensen waarmee dit gepaard gaat. Met name de teenagers van de binnenstad worden gemakkelijk slachtoffer van dit soort onverholven stereotypering en mishandeling.

Laat ik ter illustratie beschrijven wat mij eens overkwam op een vergadering van de buurtwachtgroep in mijn wijk (Echo Park, vlakbij Downtown). Een oudere witte vrouw vroeg aan een jonge agent waaraan ze de hardcore-gangjongere moest herkennen. Zijn antwoord luidde verbluffend eenvoudig: *Gangbangers dragen dure gym schoenen en schoongestroken t-shirts.* De oudere vrouw knikte dankbaar om dit advies van een 'expert', terwijl bij andere aanwezigen het angstzweet uitbrak bij de gedachte aan alle goedgeklede jongeren in de buurt die straks zouden worden aangehouden en gefouilleerd als gevolg van dit belachelijke cliché.



Critici zijn ook bang dat de buurtwachten een dubbele functie vervullen als verkapte partijpolitieke stemmenwinners. Zoals brigadier West beaamde, worden *de blokhoofden aangesteld door de hoofdagenten, en neigt het project er onvermijdelijk toe de meer pro-politie gezinde delen van de bevolking aan te spreken*. Bovendien zijn deze pro-politie activisten in demografische en culturele zin meestal niet bepaald representatief voor hun wijk. In de arme wijken van voornamelijk jonge Latino's zijn de Wachthoofden vaak oudere, autochtone blanken. In wijken waar huurders in de meerderheid zijn, is de typische pro-politie activist huiseigenaar of in het bezit van een koopwoning. Hoewel er officiële richtlijnen bestaan die zouden moeten verzekeren dat de buurtwacht een a-politieke aangelegenheid blijft, worden de blokhoofden over het algemeen beschouwd als de feitelijke buurtwerkers van Parker Center. In 1986 bijvoorbeeld voerde de politiebond als vanzelfsprekend op Buurtwacht-vergaderingen campagne voor herziening van de linkse meerderheidsstem aangaande de kwestie van het staats-Hoogerechtshof.

De nieuwe 'adviescommissies wijkordehandhaving' die werden opgericht na de Rodney King-zaak, kunnen nauwelijks onpartijdiger genoemd worden. De hervormingscommissie onder leiding van Warren Christopher uitte weliswaar kritiek op het niet reageren van de LAPD op de klachten van burgers, maar verzuimde zorg te dragen voor democratisch gekozen adviescommissies. Zoals bij de buurtwachten al het geval was, zijn de commissieleden volkomen afhankelijk van plaatselijke politiecommissarissen. Toen de adviescommissie in Venice het bijvoorbeeld waagde haar goedkeuring te verlenen aan een voorstel voor verkiezingen in de lente van 1992, dat afkomstig was uit politiecommissie-gelederen maar waar de politiebond op tegen was, werden de leden eenvoudig ontslagen door de commandant van de Pacific Division. De bevroese politiecommissieleden weigerden vervolgens tussenbeide te komen ten behoeve van hun eigen aanhangers.

De door de buurtwachten en 'gemeenschap & politie'-projecten gebruikte retoriek mag dan bolstaan van de pionierswaarden die zo uit een Western van John Ford lijken weggelopen, de werkelijkheid van de projecten doet meer denken aan een (ex-) Oost-Duitsland of Zuid-Korea, waar op iedere straathoek politie-informanten staan om op burens en verdachte vreemdelingen te letten.

### Mini-Citadellen en Gerontocraten

Toen ik halverwege de jaren tachtig begon met de studie van 'omheinde gemeenschappen', beperkte die trend zich nog voornamelijk tot de zeer rijke buurten en nieuwbouwprojecten aan de ver afgelegen stadsgrens (bijv. de gebieden die door Burgess werden omschreven als de 'besloten woonwijk' of de 'forensenzone'). Sinds de rellen van 1992 hebben echter al tal van doodgewone woonwijken het recht opgeëist om zichzelf te mogen afrasteren van de rest van de stad. Of zoals één bepaalde krant het verwoordde *De jaren '80 zagen de opkomst van de mini-promenade; de jaren '90 zouden wel eens het tijdperk van de mini-citadel kunnen worden*.

Hoewel misdaad en veiligheid als motief worden aan-gevoerd, zou kapitaalgroei weleens de werkelijke drijfveer kunnen zijn. Sommige makelaars schatten dat 'omheining' de waarde van een huis de komende tien jaar tot 40% zal doen toenemen. Terwijl hele buurten — met inbegrip van zwarte middenklasse-wijken zoals Windsor Village en de Baldwin Hills Estates — zich haasten om een graantje mee te pikken van deze meevaller, begint 'Woonzone IV' van Burgess sterk te lijken op een gefortificeerde honingraat, waarin iedere wijk zich in zijn eigen ommuurde cel heeft afgezonderd. Verder huren de plaatselijke verenigingen van huiseigenaren in veel gevallen een gewapende privé-politiemacht in, bij een van de vele beveiligings-multinationals die zich specialiseren in de beveiliging van woonhuizen. Het behoeft geen uitleg dat dit de 'beveiligingsdifferentie' tussen de binnenstad en de voorsteden alleen maar vergroot.

De vurigste pleitbezorgers van de 'besloten buurt' zijn te vinden in huishoudens waarvan de kinderen de deur uit zijn. De tweedeling van Los Angeles berust dan ook in belangrijke mate niet alleen op de scheiding tussen rijk en arm, maar meer in het bijzonder op die tussen arme jongeren en rijke ouderen. Bovendien wees de telling van 1990 uit dat de kloof tussen de grootste van woning en huishouden in Los Angeles de grootste van het land is. De steeds grotere huizen in de heuvels van Westside en Hollywood, waar 'villificatie' lange tijd in de mode was, worden door de kleine blanke huishoudens van weleer bewoond, terwijl in de rest van de stad de grote Latino-gezinnen op een steeds kleinere oppervlakte gestouwd worden.

Alles bij elkaar is Californië hard op weg een gerontocratie te worden, en elke post-*Blade Runner*-dystopie zal zich dan ook rekenschap moeten geven van de explosieve mengeling van klasse-, etnische- en generatietegenstellingen. Kort geleden gunden drie vooraanstaande demografen uit de staat ons een blik op de mogelijk nabije toekomst. In hun 'sombeste scenario' breekt er in het jaar 2030 een burgeroorlog uit, nadat de heersende klasse van bejaarde, blanke geboortegolfkinderen, die vanuit haar 'bewaakte en beveiligde dorpen' het leeuwedeel van de belasting-opbrengsten in eigen zak steekt om haar eigen geriatrische voorzieningen te bekostigen, haar ijeren wil probeert op te leggen aan de enorme onderklasse van jonge Latino's in 'harrio's' *zonder elektriciteit of bestrating*.

*In de fabrieken werd gestaakt, beveiligingsmuren werden in brand gestoken of omvergeworpen, in de oudere wijken bereikten wapenhandel en prijzen recordhoogtes. De jongere Latino's schilderden de ouderen af als parasieten die alle maatschappelijke voorzieningen hadden genoten toen deze nog gratis waren, en nu botweg de belasting van de arbeiders gebruikten om hun levensstijl op te houden. De ouderen op hun beurt schilderden de jonge Latino's af als buitenlanders die voor de ouderen bedoelde voorzieningen opslokten, als niet-Amerikanen die de Amerikaanse cultuur zouden verzwakken, als van nature misdadig, ziekelijk en zonder rechtsgevoel. Beide partijen maakten zich op voor de definitieve slag.*

• Although such monitoring is immediately intended to safeguard expensive sports cars and other toys of the rich, it will be entirely possible to use the same technology to put the equivalent of an electronic handcuff on the activities of entire urban social strata. Drug offenders and gang members can be 'bar-coded' and paroled to the omniscient scrutiny of a satellite that will track their 24-hour itineraries and automatically sound an alarm if they stray outside the borders of their *surveillance district*. With such powerful Orwellian technologies for social control, community confinement and the confinement of communities may ultimately mean the same thing.

### The Neighbors are Watching

An anxious delegation of police officials from the ex-DDR recently contacted the LA Police Department. The former East Germans, faced with a massive upsurge in crime and ethnic violence following Westernization, desperately wanted to find out more about Los Angeles' most celebrated law enforcement personality. But they were not enquiring about Chief Willie Williams or his predecessor Daryl Gates. Rather they wanted to know more about 'Bruno the Burglar', the felonious cartoon in a mask, who appears on countless signs that proclaim the borders of a 'Neighborhood Watch' area.

The Neighborhood Watch program, comprising more than 5,500 crime-surveillance block clubs from San Pedro to Sylmar, is the LAPD's most important innovation in urban policing. Throughout what Burgess called the 'Zone of Workingmen's Homes', which in Los Angeles comprises the owner-occupied neighborhoods of the central city as well as older blue-collar suburbs in the San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys, a huge network of watchful neighbors provides a security system that is midway between the besieged, gun-toting anomie of the inner ring and the private police forces of more affluent, gated suburbs.

Neighborhood Watch, now emulated by hundreds of North American and even European cities, from Rosemead to London, was the brainchild of former police chief Ed Davis. In the aftermath of the 1965-71 cycle of unrest in Southcentral and East LA, Davis envisioned the program as the anchor of a larger 'Basic Car' strategy designed to rebuild community support for the LAPD by establishing a territorial identity between patrol units and neighborhoods. Although Daryl Gates preferred SWAT teams (his invention) to Basic Cars, Neighborhood Watch continued to grow throughout the 1980s.

According to LAPD spokesperson Sgt. Christopher West, *Neighborhood Watch block clubs are intended to increase local solidarity and self-confidence in the face of crime. Spurred by their block captains, neighbors become more vigilant in the protection of each other's property and well-being. Suspicious behavior is immediately reported and home-owners meet regularly with patrol officers to plan crime prevention tactics.*

An off-duty officer in a Winchell's Donut Shop was more picturesque. *Neighborhood Watch is supposed to work like a wagon train in an old-fashioned cowboy movie. The neighbors are the settlers, and the goal is to get them to circle their wagons and fight off the Indians until the*

*cavalry — that is to say, the LAPD — can ride to their rescue.*

Needless to say, this Wild West analogy has its dark sides. Who, for example, gets to decide what behavior is 'suspicious' or who looks like an 'Indian'? The obvious danger in any program that conscripts thousands of citizens to become police informers under the official slogan *Be on the Look Out for Strangers* is that it inevitably stigmatizes innocent groups. Inner-city teenagers are especially vulnerable to this flagrant stereotyping and harassment.

As an illustration, let me relate what happened at a meeting of my local Neighborhood Watch group (in the Echo Park area near Downtown). An elderly white woman asked a young policeman how to identify hardcore gang youth. His answer was stupefyingly succinct: *Gangbangers wear expensive athletic shoes and clean, starched tee-shirts.* The old woman nodded her appreciation of this 'expert' advice, while others in the audience squirmed in their seats at the thought of the well-groomed youth in the neighborhood who would eventually be stopped and searched because of this idiot stereotype.

Critics also worry that Neighborhood Watch does double-duty as a captive constituency for partisan politics. As Sergeant West acknowledged, *block captains are appointed by patrol officers and the program does obviously tend to attract the most pro-police elements of the population.* These pro-police activists, moreover, tend to be demographically or culturally unrepresentative of their neighborhoods. In poor, young Latino areas, Watch captains are frequently elderly, residual Anglos. In areas where renters are a majority, the pro-police activists are typically homeowners or landlords. Although official regulations supposedly keep the Neighborhood Watch apolitical, block captains are generally regarded as Parker Center's *de facto* precinct workers. In 1986, for instance, the police union routinely campaigned in Neighborhood Watch meetings for the recall of the liberal majority on the state Supreme Court.

The new 'community policing advisory boards' established in the wake of the Rodney King beating are hardly more independent. Although the reform commission headed by Warren Christopher criticized the LAPD's failure to respond to citizen complaints, it failed to provide for elected advisory boards. As with Neighborhood Watch groups, the board members serve strictly at the pleasure of local police commanders. When the Venice advisory board, for example, dared to endorse a Spring 1992 ballot proposal (Proposition F) crafted by the police commission, but opposed by the police union, they were simply fired by the captain in charge of the Pacific Division. The timorous police commissioners then refused to intervene on behalf of their own supporters.

Although the rhetoric resounds with pioneer values lifted out of a John Ford Western, the actual practices of the Neighborhood Watch and Community Policing programs more often evoke the models of (ex) East Germany or South Korea, where police informers on every block scrutinize their neighbors and watch for suspicious strangers.

Eind zomer '92 nam de wetgevende macht van Californië een flinke stap richting de verwerkelijking van dit scenario, door het aankondigen van forse bezuinigingen op het gebied van onderwijs en uitkeringen. De Democraten zwichtten voor de onverzettelijke Republikeinse gouverneur Pete Wilson, die er herhaaldelijk op wees dat het werkelijke probleem *niet de huidige recessie, maar de demografie* was. Wilson rekende uiteraard op de onwil van de oudere blanke kiezers (nog altijd een electorale meerderheid) om nog langer hun steun te geven aan de traditioneel hoge onderwijsuitgaven in Californië, nu de scholen steeds meer bevolkt worden door Latino- en Aziatische leerlingen. Het begrotingsdebat sloeg twee onverenigbare vliegen in één klap: die van de burgerzin en die van het recht op bijstand.

### Parallele Universa

Burgess en zijn studenten, voor wie het Chicago van de twintiger jaren één groot laboratorium was, twijfelden geen moment aan de 'ruwe werkelijkheid' van de fenomenen die zij systematisch in kaart trachtten te brengen. De empirische methode kwam overeen met de empirische realiteit. Het beeld, de mythografie van de stad deed zich niet voor als belangwekkende sfeer op zich. Evenmin schonk de School van Chicago enige aandacht aan de kritieke rol die de Tentoonstelling van Columbia vervulde als ideaalbeeld van de stedelijke planning. De Wereldtentoonstellingen in Chicago (1892 en 1933) waren weliswaar pretparken *avant la lettre*, maar de stedelijke sociologie bood nog geen conceptuele plaats voor de stad *als simulatie*.

Vandaag de dag is het probleem onvermijdelijk geworden. De hedendaagse stad simuleert (of hallucineert) zichzelf op tenminste twee doorslaggevende manieren. Ten eerste verdubbelt de stad zichzelf in dit tijdperk van elektronische cultuur en economie, door middel van de complexe architectuur van haar informatie- en medianetwerken. Wellicht zullen postmoderne *flâneurs* (of 'toetsenbord-cowboys'), zoals door William Gibson voorspeld, binnenkort met hun driedimensionale interfaces kunnen dwalen door de lumineuze geometrie van deze mnemotechnische stad, waar data-bases 'blauwe piramides' en 'kille helix-armen' worden.

In dat geval zal de *urbaine cyberspace* — opgevat als de simulatie van de stedelijke informatie-orde — zich doen gelden als nog beslotener, en nog sterker van enige ware openbare ruimte gespeend, dan de traditionele stad-van-steen. Southcentral-LA bijvoorbeeld is een zwart gat wat betreft data en media, verstoken van enige lokale tv-programmering of verbindingen naar de grote datasystemen. Zoals het in de vroege twintigste eeuw tot een huisvestings- en arbeidsgetto verwerd, ontwikkelt het zich nu tot een elektronisch getto binnen de informatiestad in opkomst.

Ten tweede wordt het sociale verbeeldingsvermogen in toenemende mate belichaamd door kunstmatige landschappen — pretparken, 'historische' wijken en promenades — die los staan van de rest van de metropool. De keizers van de postmoderne filosofie (Baudrillard, Eco, etc.) zijn het er uiteraard over eens dat

Los Angeles de wereldhoofdstad van de 'hyperrealiteit' is. Traditioneel gezien waren de grote pretparken hier altijd in de eerste plaats architectonische simulaties van de film- en televisiewereld. Zo kon je bijvoorbeeld in de oude Selig-Zoo een kijkje nemen op de jungle van Tarzan, of in Knotts Berry Farm en de bijbehorende spookstad Calico mee doen aan een heuse Western. En er was natuurlijk Disneyland, dat zijn deuren wijd open stelde voor het 'Magisch Koninkrijk' van tekenfilmhelden en karikaturale historische biografieën.

Tegenwoordig wordt de stad zelf — beter gezegd, haar ideaalbeeld — echter onderwerp van simulatie. Door de recente neergang van de militaire ruimtevaart-industrie in Zuid-Californië is de toerisme/hotel/amusementssector de grootste werkgever van de regio geworden. De toeristen staan echter steeds minder te springen om de reële gevaren van LA's 'stedelijke jungle' te trotseren. Zoals een MCA-woordvoerder klaagde: *Op iedere straathoek staat wel iemand met een bord Ik werk voor een bord eten, (...) het is niet leuk meer in de stad.*

Volgens MCA en Disney ligt de oplossing in de nabootsing van essentiële delen van de stad binnen de veilige grenzen van hotel-forten en ommuurde pretparken. Als resultaat hiervan ontstaat geleidelijk aan een *kunstmatig Los Angeles*, dat in essentie een ondernemersarchipel is van zwaarbewaakte trekpleisters waar welgestelde toeristen zich kunnen ontspannen, massa's geld uit kunnen geven en het weer 'leuk' kunnen hebben. Een grotendeels onzichtbaar leger laagbetaalde werknemers, zelf veroordeeld tot een bestaan in feitelijke thuislanden zoals de Santa Ana- (Disneyland) en Lennox (LAX)-barrios, moet de simulatie-machinerie draaiende houden.

De competitie omtrent 'authenticiteit' waarin deze gesimuleerde landschappen met elkaar verward zijn, heeft een merkwaardige dialectiek tot gevolg. De simulaties hebben de neiging niet het 'origineel' (voor zover daarvan sprake kan zijn), maar elkaar te kopiëren. Neem het voorbeeld van de meervoudige ofwel exponentiële hyperrealiteiten waarmee de ondernemersstrijd om het monopolie op 'Hollywood' gepaard ging.

### Hollywood(s): De Machten van de Simulatie

Al vijftienzeventig jaar heerst er een wankel evenwicht tussen de vervallen wijk die Hollywood heet, en het glamoureuze Hollywood van de filmwereld. De filmsterren hebben natuurlijk nooit in de *tenement*-vlaktes gewoond en de meeste grote studio's zijn al lang naar de voorsteden verhuisd. Nathaniel West gaf nog de beste beschrijving van het Hollywood van de jaren '30; het tehuis van het 'vlooienvolk' — de figuranten, arbeiders, toneelknechten en mislukte would-be sterretjes.

Het verband tussen het Hollywood uit de verbeelding van het wereld-filmpubliek en zijn aardrijkskundige locatie, moest dan ook zorgvuldig in stand worden gehouden door regelmatig terugkerende rituelen (premières, Oscaruitreikingen, etc.) en de magische opwaardering tot toeristisch bedevaartsoord van een handvol locaties (*de Bowl*, Graumann's, etc.). Maar met de aftakeling van het werkelijke Hollywood tot een

### Mini-Citadels and Gerocrats

• When I first began to study gated communities in Southern California in the mid-1980s, it was a trend largely confined to very wealthy neighborhoods or new developments on the distant metropolitan frontier (e.g., the areas Burgess described as the 'restricted residential district' or the 'commuter zone'). Since the Spring 1992 rebellion, however, dozens of ordinary residential neighborhoods in Los Angeles have demanded the right to gate themselves off from the rest of the city. As one newspaper put it, *The 1980s had their boom in mini-malls; the 1990s may bring a bull market in mini-citadels.*

Although crime and safety are the ostensible issues, increased equity may be the deeper motive. Some realtors have estimated that 'gatedness' can raise home values by as much as 40 percent over ten years. As communities — including black middle-class areas like Windsor Village and Baldwin Hills Estates — race to reap this windfall, Burgess' 'Residential Zone IV' begins to look like a fortified honeycomb, with each residential neighborhood now encased in its own walled cell. In most cases, the local homeowners' associations also contract 'armed response' private policing from one of the several multi-national security firms that specialize in residential security. Obviously this only further widens the 'security differential' between the inner city and the suburbs.

'Empty-nest' households are especially passionate advocates of restricted-access neighborhoods, and there is an important sense in which Los Angeles is not merely being polarized between rich and poor, but more specifically between the young poor and the old rich. Furthermore, the 1990 Census showed that metropolitan Los Angeles has the greatest discrepancy in the nation between household size and home size. On the Westside and Hollywood Hills, where 'mansionization' has been in vogue, older, smaller Anglo households occupy ever bigger homes, while in the rest of the city large Latino families are being crammed into diminishing floor-space.

California as a whole is an incipient gerontocracy, and any post-*Blade-Runner* dystopia must take account of the explosive fusion of class, ethnic and generational contradictions. Three of the state's leading demographers have recently given us a preview of what the near-future may hold. In their 'worst-case scenario', civil war breaks out in the year 2030 after the ruling class of aged, Anglo Baby-boomers, living in 'security-patrolled villages' and confiscating the majority of tax revenues to support their geriatric services, imposes an Iron Heel on a huge underclass of young Latinos who live in unlit, unpaved barrios.

*Strikes broke out in assembly plants, security walls were set afire and toppled, the sale of guns, and their price, soared in the elderly areas. The younger Latinos painted the elderly as parasites, who had enjoyed all the benefits of society when those benefits were free and now blithely continued to tax the workers to maintain their style of living. The elderly painted the younger Latinos as foreigners who were soaking up benefits that should go to the elderly, as non-Americans who were threatening to dilute American culture, as crime-ridden, disease-ridden, and lawless. Each side prepared for a last assault on the other.*

At the end of summer 1992, the California legislature took a giant step toward the realization of this scenario

when it savagely cut the budget for schools and social services. The Democrats capitulated to the intransigence of Republican Governor Pete Wilson, who repeatedly emphasized that the underlying issue is *not the current recession, it is demographics.* Wilson, of course, was calculating that aging Anglo voters (still an electoral majority) were not willing to support the traditional high standards of California public education now that the schools were full of Latino and Asian children. The budget vote, thus, effectively ratified two, unequal tiers of citizenship and entitlement.

### Parallel Universes

Burgess and his students, who took 1920s Chicago as a vast research laboratory, never had any doubts about the 'raw reality' of the phenomena that they were systematically studying. Empirical method was matched to empirical reality. The image or mythography of the city did not intervene as a significant stratum in its own right. Nor did the Chicago School pay any attention to the critical role of the Columbian Exposition as an ideal-type for the city's planned development. Although the 1892 and 1933 Chicago World's Fairs were theme parks *avant la lettre*, urban sociology could not yet make conceptual space for the city as *simulation*.

Today there is no way around the problem. The contemporary city simulates or hallucinates itself in at least two decisive senses. First, in the age of electronic culture and economy, the city redoubles itself through the complex architecture of its information and media networks. Perhaps, as William Gibson suggests, 3-dimensional computer interfaces will soon allow post-modern *flaneurs* (or 'console cowboys') to stroll through the luminous geometry of this mnemonic city where databases have become 'blue pyramids' and 'cold spiral arms'.

If so, *urban cyberspace* — as the simulation of the city's information order — will be experienced as even more segregated, and devoid of true public space, than the traditional built city. Southcentral LA, for instance, is a data and media black hole, without local cable programming or links to major data systems. Just as it became a housing/jobs ghetto in the early twentieth century industrial city, it is now evolving into an *electronic ghetto* within the emerging *information city*.

Secondly, social fantasy is increasingly embodied in simulacral landscapes — theme parks, 'historic' districts and malls — that are partitioned off from the rest of the metropolis. All the post-modern philosopher kings (Baudrillard, Eco, etc), of course, agree that Los Angeles is the world capital of 'hyper-reality'. Traditionally its major theme parks have been primarily architectural simulations of the movies or television. At the old Selig Zoo, for instance, you could enter the jungle set for *Tarzan*. While at Knotts Berry Farm or its Calico ghost town you could participate in a typical Western. Disneyland, of course, opened the gates to the 'Magic Kingdom' of cartoon creatures and caricatured historical biographies.

Today, however, the city itself — or rather its idealization — has become the subject of simulation. With the recent decline of the military aerospace industry in Southern California, the tourism/hotel/entertainment sector has become the single largest regional employer. But

super-gewelddadige achterbuurt, zag de afgelopen generatie ook de aftakeling van de magie en het einde van de rituelen. Het vervagende verband tussen historisch signficator en gesignificeerde gaf gelegenheid tot de herrijzenis van Hollywood in een veiliger omgeving. Zo creëerde Disney in Orlando een verbluffende, Art Déco-afspiegeling van MGM's 'gouden eeuw', terwijl aartsvijand MCA in de Universal Studios, Florida, pareerde met een eigen geïdealiseerde versie van de Hollywood Boulevard en Rodeo Drive.

Intussen leidde de vlucht naar Florida van Disney en Hollywood tot een verdere recessie op de woningmarkt in het echte Hollywood. Na een verbeterde strijd met de plaatselijke huiseigenaren, wisten de belangrijkste grootgrondbezitters de stad akkoord te krijgen met een facelift van Hollywood Boulevard — \$1 miljard. Opzet was de transformatie van de Boulevard in een afgerasterd, lineair pretpark dat gefinancierd zou worden door mega-amusementshallen aan beide uiteinden. Nog tijdens de onderhandelingen met potentiële investeerders echter trok MCA het kleed weg onder de voeten van Hollywood Redux met de aankondiging dat in Universal City, haar nabijgelegen belastingontduikings-enclave, zou worden begonnen aan de bouw van een parallelle stedelijke werkelijkheid onder de naam 'CityWalk'.

CityWalk, bedacht door meester-illusionist Jon Jerde, is een 'ideale werkelijkheid', de samensmelting van het beste dat Olvera Street, Hollywood en de West Side te bieden hebben, in *simpele hapklare brokken*, te consumeren door toeristen en burgers die *geen behoefte hebben aan het avontuur van rondvliegende kogels... in het Derde Wereldland* dat Los Angeles is geworden. CityWalk biedt de bezoeker staaltjes Mission Revival en Art Déco, naast de Moderne stroomlijn en 'LA Lokale Stijl' (de Brown Derby), maar ook 3D-Billboards, een reusachtige King Kong in een 23 meter hoge neon-totempaal en een eigen wijkteam om de veiligheid te waarborgen. Ter verzachting van het pijnlijk kunstmatige gevoel van deze melange, worden een 'tikje oudheid' en een 'vleugje rommel' toegevoegd:

*Door middel van decoratieve uitschieters zullen de ontwerpers de gloednieuwe straat voorzien van een aura van instant-geschiedenis: voor de openingsdag zal een aantal gebouwen zo beschilderd worden dat het lijkt alsof ze tot voor kort bewoond waren. In de terrazzovloer wordt snoeppapier ingemetseld, dat de indruk moet wekken dat het er door vorige bezoekers is achtergelaten.*

De projectontwikkelaars van Hollywood gingen onmiddellijk in de tegenaanval, met de presentatie van een cosmetisch plan (\$ 4,3 miljoen) waarvan één onderdeel de asfaltering van Hollywood Blvd. met 'glitters' van gerecycled glas zou zijn. Opperuimd en beglitterd of niet, het lijkt niet waarschijnlijk dat de oude Boulevard het ooit op zal kunnen nemen tegen de hyperrealistische perfectie op de Universal-heuvel. Zoals de MCA-beheerders geduldig blijven uitleggen, is CityWalk *geen promenade* maar een *revolutie op het gebied van de stedelijke vormgeving... een nieuw type stadswijk* — een stadssimulator. Sommige critici vragen zich oprecht af of we hier niet met een moreel equivalent van de neutronenbom te doen hebben: de stad ontdaan van alle

doorleefde menselijke ervaring. Het nep-fossiele snoeppapier en het overig bedrog: hoor de smadelijke lach van CityWalk terwijl het ieder spoor uitwist van ons waarachtig geluk, verdriet en inspanningen.

## De Vervuilde Buitenrand

Waar houdt de nachtmerrie op? Burgess was niet bijster geïnteresseerd in stedelijke grenzen. Zijn dartboard Chicago loopt eenvoudig over in een vage 'forensenzone' en, daarachter, de Maïsgordel. De stadsgrenzen van Dystopia vormen echter een intrinsiek fascinerend probleem. Men zal zich het onwaarschijnlijke wijken voor de geest kunnen halen van de duistere megalopool uit *Blade Runner* voor het omringende Ecotopia — eeuwwiggroene wouden en onbegrensde wildernis.

Een happy end dat het Los Angeles van het jaar 2019 beschoren zal blijven. Postmodern geograaf Edward Soja wees al op het feit dat de Zuidcalifornische grens nu al, langs een vrijwel ononderbroken omtrek van woestijnen, wordt afgebakend door militaire luchtmachtbases, oefenterreinen en woestijn-oorlogsreservaten. Ondertussen wordt er onmiskenbaar een tweede, niet minder angstaanjagende cirkel getrokken rond deze Pentagon-woestijn. Los Angeles, verstikt door de eigen afvalproductie die haar stortplaatsen doet overlopen en haar kustwateren vervuult, maakt zich op voor de export van haar afval en gifgrond naar de Eastern Mojave-woestijn en Baja California. In plaats van de productie van gevaarlijk afval te verminderen, treft de stad eenvoudig voorbereidingen om de opslag ervan te 'regionaliseren'.

Deze *Vervuilde Buitenrand* in spe houdt onder andere de aanleg in van reusachtige stortplaatsen bij Eagle Mountain (in de voormalige open ijzermijn Kaiser) en mogelijk in de omgeving van de gesloten luchtmachtbasis Adelanto. Verder zal de controversiële bouw van een opslag voor radioactief afval nabij Needles in de Ward Valley doorgang vinden en zullen zwaar vervuulende industrieën, zoals plaatwerkerij en meubelfabriecage, moeten verhuizen naar Tijuana's *maquiladora*-gordel. De gevolgen voor het milieu zouden weleens catastrofaal kunnen zijn.

Zo zullen bijvoorbeeld de 300.000 vaten nucleair afval die men wil opslaan in de open greppels van de Ward Valley, nog 10.000 jaar lang dodelijk zijn. Het radioactieve tritium zal een blijvend gevaar opleveren voor de nabijgelegen Colorado River; lekkage zou deze onvervangbare watervoorziening van het grootste deel van Zuid-Californië vergiftigen. De enorme stortplaats op Eagle Mountain — bijna 4 km<sup>3</sup> — op zijn beurt zal niet alleen het grondwater vervuilen, maar zal ook een giftige smog-sluier creëren boven een groot deel van de oostelijke Riverside County. Verder zal de vlucht naar Mexico van gevaarlijke industrieën, die uiteindelijk een groot deel van LA's petrochemische industrie in haar kielzog mee zal slepen, leiden tot een verhoogde kans op Bhopal-achtige catastrofes.

Kortgezegd zal de vorming van deze afvalgordel leiden tot een versnelde achteruitgang van het milieu van heel westelijk Amerika en delen van Mexico. Nu al is een derde van het bomenbestand van Zuid-Californië door smog verstikt, de diersoorten van de vervuilde



• tourists are increasingly reluctant to venture into the perceived dangers of Los Angeles' 'urban jungle'. As one MCA official recently complained: *There's somebody on every street corner with a 'Work for Food' sign, (and the city) is not fun anymore.*

MCA and Disney believe the solution is to recreate vital bits of the city within the secure confines of fortress hotels and walled theme parks. As a result, *artificial Los Angeles* is gradually coming into being. In essence, it is an archipelago of well-guarded corporate cashpoints where affluent tourists can relax, spend lots of money, and have 'fun' again. A largely invisible army of low-wage service workers, who themselves live in virtual bantustans like the Santa Ana barrio (Disneyland) or Lennox (LAX) barrios, keep the machinery of simulation running smoothly.

Because these simulated landscapes compete with one another over 'authenticity', some strange dialectics ensue. Simulations tend to copy not their 'original' (where that even exists), but one another. Consider, for example, the multiple or exponentialized hyper-realities involved in the corporate battles to monopolize 'Hollywood'.

### Hollywood(s): Powers of Simulation

For the last seventy-five years there has been an uneasy fit between movie-made Hollywood glamour and the dowdy Hollywood district. Movie stars, of course, have never lived in the tenement flatlands, and most of the big studios moved long ago to the suburbs. The actual Hollywood of the 1930s was best described by Nathaniel West: home of the 'flea people' the extras, laborers, grips and failed starlets.

The Hollywood in the imagination of the world's movie public, therefore, was kept tenuously anchored to its namesake location by regular rituals (premieres, the Academy Awards, etc.) and the magical investment of a dozen or so places (the Bowl, Graumann's, etc.) as tourist shrines. But over the last generation, as the real Hollywood has become a hyper-violent slum, the rituals have ceased and the magic has waned. As the linkages between historic signifier and its signified decayed, the opportunity arose to resurrect Hollywood in a safer neighborhood. Thus in Orlando, Disney created a stunning Art Deco mirage of MGM's golden age, while arch-competitor MCA countered with its own idealized versions of Hollywood Boulevard and Rodeo Drive at Universal Studios Florida.

Meanwhile, the elopement of Disney and Hollywood to Florida further depressed real-estate back in real-time Hollywood. After bitter battles with local homeowners, the major landowners were able to win city authorization for a \$1 billion facelift of Hollywood Boulevard. In their scheme, the Boulevard would be transformed into a gated, linear theme park, anchored by mega-entertainment complexes at each end. But while the redevelopers were still negotiating with potential investors, MCA pulled the rug out from under Hollywood Redux with the announcement that its nearby tax-dodge enclave, Universal City, would construct a parallel urban reality called 'CityWalk'.

Designed by master illusionist Jon Jerde, CityWalk is an 'idealized reality', the best features of Olvera Street,

Hollywood and the West Side synthesized in *easy, bite-sized pieces* for consumption by tourists and residents who don't need the excitement of dodging bullets ... in the Third World country that Los Angeles has become. CityWalk incorporates examples of Mission Revival, Deco, streamlined Moderne, and 'LA Vernacular' (the Brown Derby), as well as 3-D billboards, a huge blue King Kong hanging from a 70-foot neon totem pole, and a sheriff's substation for security. To alleviate the sense of artificiality in this melange, a 'patina of age' and a 'dash of grit' have been added:

*Using decorative sleight of hand, the designers plan to wrap the brand new street in a cloak of instant history — on opening day, some buildings will be painted to suggest that they have been occupied before. Candy wrappers will be embedded in the terrazzo flooring, as if discarded by previous visitors.*

Hollywood redevelopers immediately responded to construction of CityWalk with a \$4.3 million beautification plan that includes paving Hollywood Blvd. with 'glitz' made from recycled glass. But even spruced up and glitzified there is almost no way that the old Boulevard can compete with the hyper-real perfection on Universal's hill. As its MCA proprietors have taken pains to emphasize, CityWalk is not a mall but a revolution in urban design ... a new kind of neighborhood — an urban simulator. Indeed, some critics wonder if it isn't the moral equivalent of the neutron bomb: the city emptied of all lived human experience. With its fake fossil candy wrappers and other deceptions, CityWalk sneeringly mocks us as it erases any trace of our real joy, pain or labor.

### The Toxic Rim

Where does the nightmare end? Burgess was not greatly interested in urban boundaries. His Chicago dart board simply fades into the 'commuter zone' and, beyond, into the Corn Belt. The city limits of Dystopia, however, are an intrinsically fascinating problem. In *Blade Runner*, it will be recalled, the dark megalopolis improbably yielded, at its outer edge, to Ecotopia — evergreen forests and boundless wilderness.

No such happy ending will be possible in the coming Los Angeles of 2019. Post-modern geographer Edward Soja has observed that Southern California is already bounded, along an almost unbroken desert perimeter, by huge military air bases, bombing ranges and desert warfare reservations. Now a second, equally ominous circumference clearly is being drawn around this Pentagon desert. Choking on its own wastes, with its landfills overflowing and its coastal waters polluted, Los Angeles is preparing to export its garbage and hazardous land-uses to the Eastern Mojave and Baja California. Instead of reducing its production of dangerous waste, the city is simply planning to 'regionalize' their disposal.

This emergent Toxic Rim includes giant landfills at Eagle Mountain (the former Kaiser open-pit iron mine) and possibly near Adelanto (defunct Air Force base), the controversial radioactive waste dump in Ward Valley near Needles, and the relocation of such polluting industries as furniture manufacture and metal-plating to Tijuana's *maquiladora* belt. The environmental consequences may be almost catastrophic.

Mojave woestijn sterven in hoog tempo uit. In de toekomst zal de dodelijke werking van LA's radioactieve en carcinogene afval zich wellicht doen gelden tot Utah of Sonora. De Vervuilde Buitenrand zal een uitgestorven zone zijn.

### Voor het Ontwaken...

Alle Burgessiaanse diagrammen en analogieën terzijde, wat zal uiteindelijk het ware lot zijn van Los Angeles? Zullen de opkomende surveillance- en repressietechnologieën helpen de klasse- en rassenverhoudingen te stabiliseren, de kloof van de nieuwe ongelijkheid te overbruggen? Zal de ecologie van de angst de natuurlijke orde van de 21ste-eeuwse Amerikaanse stad worden? Zullen prikkeldraad en bewakingscamera's eens dezelfde sentimentele herinnering aan het voorstadsleven met zich dragen, als witgeschilderde tuinhekken en honden die *Spot* heten?

Misschien kan een wereldwijd perspectief ons verder helpen. Het Los Angeles van het jaar 2019 zal de kern vormen van een moederhechel met zo'n 22 — 24 miljoen inwoners in Zuid- en Baja Californië. Samen met Tokio, Sao Paulo, Mexico City en Shanghai zal zij een nieuwe fase in de evolutie vertegenwoordigen: mega-steden met 20 tot 30 miljoen inwoners. Het is van belang te benadrukken dat we het hier niet alleen hebben over een grotere versie van een oude, welbekende soort; het betreft hier een volkomen nieuwe en onvoorziene sociale levensvorm.

In feite weet niemand of fysieke en biologische systemen van een dergelijke omvang en complexiteit wel levensvatbaar zijn. In elk geval geloven veel experts dat de groei van mega-steden in de Derde Wereld uiteindelijk zal uitmonden in milieu-holocausts en/of stedelijke burgeroorlogen. De hedendaagse 'Nieuwe Wereldorde' laat in ieder geval genoeg barbaarse voorbeelden zien van totale sociale desintegratie — van Bosnië tot Somalië — om de reële angst voor een apocalyps in de mega-steden te kunnen bevestigen.

Tokio vormt, ondanks de onvermijdelijke natuur-rampen, de uitzondering op de regel — maar dan alleen dankzij het uitzonderlijk hoge niveau van publieke uitgaven, individuele welvaart en sociale discipline (en omdat Japan in culturele zin veel meer een stedelijke, dan een voorstedelijke samenleving is). Los Angeles echter heeft zich in het recente verleden meer ontwikkeld in de richting van een Sao Paulo of Mexico City, dan van een postmodern Tokio-Yokohama.

Theoretisch gezien is het natuurlijk niet uitgesloten dat een Democratische regering vanuit Washington het komende decennium het Amerikaanse stedelijke verval om zou kunnen keren, door zich te werpen op uitgebreide nieuwe openbare voorzieningen. Maar het zal uiterst moeilijk blijven om het Congres achter investeringen in de wederopbouw van de stadskernen Boswash en Zuid-Californië te krijgen, zolang het begrotingstekort uit het Reagan-tijdperk de binnenlandse politiek blijft domineren. Het voornaamste erfgoed van de Perot-beweging — de meest succesvolle kiezersopstand van de laatste 75 jaar — zou weleens precies die fiscale Gordiaanse knoop kunnen blijken die ze rond enige mogelijke oplossing voor de stedelijke crisis heeft weten te leggen.

Als de hoop op stedelijke vernieuwing, die door de aardverschuiving van Clintons verkiezing voorzichtig werd aangewakkerd, weer teniet wordt gedaan, kunnen de in dit pamflet beschreven dystopische tendensen alleen maar worden versneld. Met name in het specifieke geval van Los Angeles, waar door de recessie al een vijfde van de fabrieksbanen is weggesaneerd, is weinig vooruitzicht op steun van de privé-sector. Zelfs de traditioneel meest optimistische econometrische modellen voorspellen een 'Texaanse' regionale crisis die tot 1997 zal duren; de waarzeggers van de Southern California Association of Governments spreken zelfs van een stabiele werkloosheid van 10-12% die de komende twintig jaar zal aanhouden.

Nu de gouden droom vervliegt, is het moeilijk te blijven geloven in geweldloze sociale vernieuwing. Als de rellen van 1992 een voorbode waren, zou het anomische buurtgeweld zich wel eens kunnen ontwikkelen tot een meer georganiseerde vorm van politiek geweld. Zowel smeris als gangleden praten al met angstaanjagende zakelijkheid over de onvermijdelijkheid van een of andere stadsguerrilla-oorlog. En de groeimetropool Los Angeles is, ondanks alle nieuwe burenmuren en *scanscapes* — zelfs ondanks het toekomstig alziend politieoog — op unieke wijze vatbaar voor strategische sabotage.

Zoals al bleek in Belfast, Beiroet en, in een recenter verleden, Palermo en Lima, is de autobom het anonieme stedelijke terreurwapen bij uitstek (of in de woorden van een contra-spionage-expert, *de surrogaatluchtmacht van de armen*.) Met autobommen werd half Beiroet in puin gelegd, werd een wijk die bekend stond als het 'Beverly Hills van Lima' uitgemoord en werden Italië's zwaarst bewaakte ambtenaren afgeslacht. Als het Britse leger als enige in staat was Belfast uiteindelijk autobom-vrij te maken, was dit slechts te danken aan jarenlange toegewijde arbeid en de constructie van een gigantisch veiligheidsnet rond de hele binnenstad. Een vergelijkbaar preventieprogramma — het sluiten van de snelwegen en de zware versterking van alle openbare voorzieningen, olieraffinerijen en -pijpleidingen en commerciële centra — zou in Los Angeles niet alleen tientallen miljarden dollars kosten, maar ook het einde betekenen van de stad als functionele eenheid.

Kortgezegd belooft LA's wegennet aan de toekomstige stadsterrorist, wat het tropische regenwoud of de Andes-piek de plattelands-*guerrillero* biedt: de ideale uitvalsbasis.

Als wij blijven toestaan dat onze grote steden vervallen tot misdadige Derde Werelden, zal geen ingenieuze, hedendaagse of toekomstige beveiligingstechnologie de bezorgde middenklassen nog bescherming kunnen bieden. De knal van de eerste autobom die afgaat op Rodeo Drive of voor de City Hall, zal ons doen ontwaken uit wat maar een boze droom was — en ons met de werkelijke nachtmerrie confronteren.

vertaling P LA-B

Dit artikel is voor het eerst gepubliceerd in *Open Magazine Pamphlet Series, Pamphlet #23*, Open Media, New Jersey, USA, december 1992.

- The proposed 300,000 barrels of nuclear waste, for example, in the unlined trenches of the Ward Valley nuclear dump will remain lethal for 10,000 years. They will pose the perennial risk of leaking radioactive tritium into the nearby Colorado River, thereby poisoning the irreplaceable water source for much of Southern California. For its part, the immense landfill at Eagle Mountain — 2.5 miles long, 1 mile wide, and 2,000 feet deep — will not only contaminate the water table but also create a toxic shroud of air pollution over much of eastern Riverside County. Meanwhile, the flight of hazardous industries across the Border, eventually including a large segment of Los Angeles' petrochemical production, will increase the possibility of Bhopal-like catastrophes.

In sum, the formation of this waste-belt will accelerate the environmental degradation of the entire American West (and part of Mexico). Today a third of the trees in Southern California's mountains already have been suffocated by smog, and animal species are rapidly dying off throughout the polluted Mojave Desert. Tomorrow, Los Angeles' radioactive and carcinogenic wastes may be killing life as far away as Utah or Sonora. The Toxic Rim will be a zone of extinction.

### Before we Wake...

Finally, leaving behind all the Burgess diagrams and analogies, what will be the real fate of Los Angeles? Can emergent technologies of surveillance and repression stabilize class and racial relations across the chasm of the new inequality? Will the ecology of fear become the natural order of the 21st-century American city? Will razor-wire and security cameras someday be as sentimentally redolent of suburban life as white-picket fences and dogs named Spot?

A global perspective may be useful. Los Angeles in 2019 will be the core of a metro-galaxy of 22-24 million people in Southern and Baja Californias. Together with Tokyo, Sao Paulo, Mexico City, and Shanghai, it will comprise a new evolutionary form: mega-cities of 20-30 million inhabitants. It is important to emphasize that we are not merely talking about larger specimens of an old, familiar type, but an absolutely original, and unexpected, phyla of social life.

No one knows, in fact, whether physical and biological systems of this magnitude and complexity are actually sustainable. Many experts believe that the Third World mega-cities, at least, will eventually precipitate environmental holocausts and/or implode in urban civil wars. Indeed, the contemporary 'New World Order' certainly offers enough grim examples of total societal disintegration — from Bosnia to Somalia — to underscore realistic fears of a mega-city apocalypse.

If Tokyo proves an exception, despite inevitable natural disasters, it will only be by dint of extraordinary levels of public investment, private affluence and social discipline (and because Japan is culturally a highly urban rather than suburban society). In the recent past, however, Los Angeles has begun to resemble Sao Paulo and Mexico City more than post-modern Tokyo-Yokohama.

It may be theoretically possible, of course, for a Democratic administration in Washington over the next decade to begin to reverse American urban decay with

massive new public works. But it will remain extraordinarily difficult to secure Congressional support for reinvestment in the Bos-Wash and Southern California urban cores as long as the Reagan-era deficit remains the dominant issue in domestic politics. Indeed the principal legacy of the Perot movement — the most successful electoral insurgency in 75 years — may be precisely the fiscal Gordian knot it has managed to tie around any resolution of the urban crisis.

If hopes of urban reform, now guardedly raised by the Clinton landslide, are once again dashed, it will only accelerate the dystopic tendencies described in this pamphlet. For in the specific case of Los Angeles, where recession has already wiped out a fifth of the region's manufacturing jobs, there is little private-sector help in sight. Even the most traditionally optimistic business-school econometric models now predict a 'Texas-style' regional slump lasting until 1997, while forecasters at the Southern California Association of Governments talk about steady-state unemployment rates of 10-12 percent for the next twenty years.

As the golden dream withers, so also may faith in non-violent social reform. If last year's riots set a precedent, anomic neighborhood violence may begin to be transmuted into more organized political violence. Both cops and gangmembers already talk with chilling matter-of-factness about the inevitability of some manner of urban guerrilla warfare. And in spite of all the new residential walls and scapes — even the future police eye in the sky — sprawling Los Angeles is a metropolis uniquely vulnerable to strategic sabotage.

As the examples of Belfast, Beirut and, more recently, Palermo and Lima have demonstrated, the car bomb is the weapon of anonymous urban terror *par excellence* (or, as one counter-insurgency expert once put it, *the poor man's substitute for an airforce*). Car bombs have reduced half of Beirut to debris, wiped out a neighborhood known as 'Lima's Beverly Hills', and massacred Italy's most heavily guarded public officials.

If the British Army, uniquely, was finally able to prevent car bombers from entering Belfast, it was only after years of effort and the construction of an immense security cage around the entire city center. A comparable preventative effort in Los Angeles — e.g. closing the freeways and heavily fortifying all the public utilities, oil refineries and pipelines, and commercial centers — would not only cost tens of billions but also dissolve the city as a functioning entity.

The Los Angeles freeway system, in effect, guarantees to the future urban terrorist what the tropical rainforest or Andean peak offers to the rural *guerrillero*: ideal terrain.

If we continue to allow our central cities to degenerate into criminalized Third Worlds, all the ingenious security technology, present and future, will not safeguard the anxious middle class. The sound of that first car bomb on Rodeo Drive or in front of City Hall will wake us from our mere bad dream and confront us with our real nightmare.

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## Brenda



Op de SIGGRAPH '94 in Orlando werd een forum gehouden met als thema:

'Computer graphics — Are we forcing people to evolve?'

De centrale stelling luidde dat de computer graphics-industrie de wereld ingrijpend verandert:

communicatie met 'beeldtaal' neemt de plaats in van communicatie met 'geschreven taal',

en dit heeft gevolgen voor onze manier van denken.

Brenda Laurel was een van de deelnemers aan het forum. Haar bijdrage is hieronder afgedrukt.

De vraagstelling lijkt te suggereren dat het iets 'nieuws' zou zijn om 'mensen tot ontwikkeling te dwingen' — dat wil zeggen, we zouden nog nooit eerder te maken hebben gehad met een culturele of technologische verandering waarbij onze 'biologische' evolutie zich onmogelijk kon aanpassen. Er bestaat evenwel overtuigend bewijs dat de evolutie van de vaste bedrading van onze hersenen ongeveer vijftigduizend jaar achterloopt bij de tijd waarin we leven (Donald, 1991). Dit betekent dat we misschien al optimaal zijn uitgerust voor taal, maar nog lang niet klaar zijn voor perspectivische schilderkunst, fotografie, televisie of computertoetsenborden. Hierbij zijn twee kanttekeningen te plaatsen. De ene is dat we erin slagen om ons aan te passen, zelfs op neurologisch niveau. De bedrading van de visuele cortex van de mens wordt gedurende de puberteit diepgaand beïnvloed door gebeurtenissen — zowel in de eigen biologie als in de omgeving — en dat werkt in op zaken als de dominantie van het zicht, de stereoscopische

waarneming en de perceptie van vormen en patronen (De Valois, 1988; Sekular en Blake, 1994).

De tweede kanttekening is een metacommentaar, een citaat van Marshall McLuhan: *Alles wat de omgeving tot hoge intensiteit opstuwt — of het nu een storm in de natuur is of een gewelddadige verandering ten gevolge van een nieuwe technologie — richt de aandacht op de omgeving. Als we onze aandacht daarop richten, neemt ze het karakter aan van een anti-omgeving of een kunstvoorwerp.* (McLuhan en Parker, 1968)

Zulke anti-omgevingen, meende McLuhan, *openen de deur van de waarneming voor mensen die anders verdoofd leven in een niet-waarneembare situatie.* Met andere woorden, eens in de zoveel tijd worden we wakker geschud door een technologische verandering en dan ontdekken we vol verbazing en consternatie onze media-omgeving, waarna we weer in slaap vallen. Als mensen zich bijvoorbeeld zorgen maken over de commercialisering van de seks, de intensivering van het escapisme en de mogelijkheden voor hersenspoeling in virtual reality, beschrijven ze de culturele

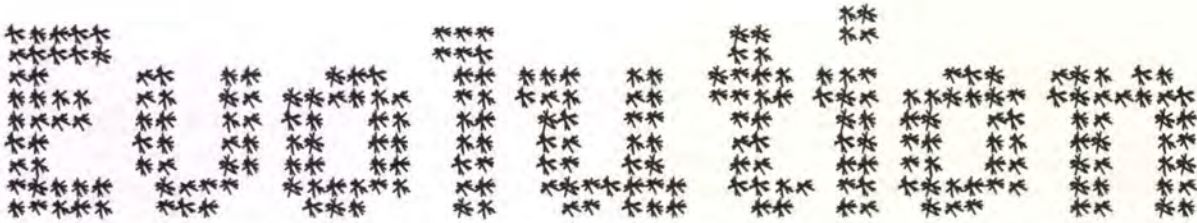
omgeving van de televisie. Ook in onze vraagstelling zou dit verschijnsel kunnen meespelen.

Veranderingen in de hedendaagse media zet mensen er wel degelijk toe aan zich *aan te passen* — dat is niets nieuws. Alleen is de Lamarckiaanse hypothese, dat aanpassingen die tijdens het leven van een individu plaatsvinden erfelijk overdraagbaar zijn, in de meeste gevallen onjuist gebleken. In de culturele evolutie is de metaforische equivalent van erfelijkheid onderwijs — het overdragen van wat er door voorgaande generaties geleerd en uitgevonden is. De culturele, en niet de biologische evolutie, is het onderwerp van de vraagstelling hier. Het probleem is alleen dat we er in deze eeuw zijn achtergekomen dat onze culturele evolutie een diepgaande invloed kan hebben op de overleving, niet alleen van individuen, maar van onze hele soort.

### Representatie

### Werkelijkheid

Op de volgende punten zou ik nader willen ingaan:



- At SIGGRAPH '94 in Orlando a forum was held with the theme 'Computer Graphics — Are we forcing people to evolve?'

The central thesis was that the computer graphics industry is drastically changing the world:

'written-word' communication is giving way to 'imagery' communication, and this has consequences for the way we think.

Brenda Laurel was one of the participants in this forum. Her contribution is printed here.

- The question seems to posit that 'forcing people to evolve' is a 'new' thing — that is, that a cultural or technological change which cannot possibly be accommodated by 'biological' evolution is something that hasn't happened to us before. Yet there is persuasive evidence that the brain lags as much as fifty thousand years behind the times in its hard-wired evolution (Donald, 1991). This would mean that, while we may be optimised for language, we are certainly not ready for perspective painting, photography, television, or computer keyboards. There are two points here. One is that we do manage to adapt, even at the neurological level. The wiring of the human visual cortex is profoundly influenced by events, both biological and environmental, all the way through puberty, affecting things like ocular dominance, stereopsis, and the perception of shapes and patterns (De Valois, 1988; Sekular and Blake, 1994).

The other point is a meta-comment, which I will quote from Marshall McLuhan: *Anything that raises the environment to high intensity, whether it be a storm in nature or violent change resulting from new technology, turns the environment into*

*an object of attention. When it becomes an object of attention, it assumes the character of an anti-environment or an art object.* (McLuhan and Parker, 1968)

Such anti-environments, McLuhan believed, *open the door of perception to people otherwise numbed in a nonperceivable situation.* In other words, every now and then technological change makes us wake up and notice our media environment with great surprise and alarm, and then we go to sleep again; for example, when people worry about the commodification of sex, the intensification of escapism, and the potential for mind control in virtual reality, they are describing the cultural environment of television. There may be just a touch of this phenomenon going on here.

Changes in contemporary media are certainly causing people to *adapt* — this is nothing new. But the Lamarckian hypothesis that adaptations which occur during the lifetime of an individual are inheritable has been shown, in most cases, to be false. In cultural evolution, the metaphorical equivalent of inheritance is education — the teaching of what has been learned and invented by previous

generations. Cultural, not biological, evolution is the issue in the case of this question. The sticky wicket is that we have seen in this century that our cultural evolution may profoundly affect the survivability, not only of individuals, but of our entire species.

### Representation - Reality

Here are the points in the argument that I want to address:

1. that our new media enhance our ability to create compelling representations of imaginary, unreal, or altered objects;
2. that this boosts the divergence of human experience from natural intelligence and/or the natural world; and
3. that this is a dangerous state of affairs.

Concerning point 1: there are two corollaries: — that we can therefore no longer distinguish imaginary or altered objects from actual objects in representations, and — that we can not distinguish representations themselves from actualities.

1. dat de nieuwe media ons vermogen vergroten om fascinerende voorstellingen te maken van verbeelde, onechte of veranderde voorwerpen;
2. dat hierdoor de menselijke ervaring steeds verder zal gaan afwijken van de natuurlijke intelligentie en/of de natuurlijke wereld;
3. en dat dit een gevaarlijke stand van zaken is.

Punt 1 heeft twee consequenties:

- we kunnen bij een representatie niet langer een onderscheid maken tussen verbeelde of veranderde voorwerpen en werkelijke voorwerpen, en
- we kunnen de representatie zelf niet langer onderscheiden van de werkelijkheid.

De eerste consequentie is ongetwijfeld in veel gevallen waar, maar meestal ontstaan er veranderingen in onze epistemologie om dit effect tegen te gaan. Als dit niet het geval was, zouden we niet moeten lachen om de dertig meter lange haai die een jacht opslokt op de omslag van de *National Enquirer*, of stil blijven zitten tijdens een vertoning van *Jurassic Park*. Natuurlijk richt onze zorg zich hier op gevaarlijker effecten — we weten wel wanneer beelden die we zien uit de verbeelding voortkomen, maar toch beïnvloeden ze ons, subliminaal en emotioneel. Als dit een letaal gebrek van ons is, zit dat al wel erg lang in ons — al zolang als we *Homo sapiens* zijn, hebben we representaties van de inhoud van onze verbeelding gemaakt. Het is uiterst moeilijk een domein van de menselijke activiteit te vinden waarin de verbeelding niet aanwezig is en niet op een of andere manier vermengd is met de echte wereld — van paleolithische beeldjes van paardehonden tot de subatomaire natuurkunde.

De tweede consequentie is niet meer dan een heroverweging van de eerste en luidt dat we misschien niet langer weten dat we een voorstelling waarnemen in plaats van een werkelijke situatie, zoals in het volmaakte

vr-systeem. Als een van mijn vrienden ergens open en bloot een voorwerp vindt dat hij kwijt was geraakt, roept hij dat hij opnieuw een bug heeft ontdekt in de simulatie waarvan wij beiden deel zijn. Maar ook dit is een oud motief. Plato verbande de theaterkunst uit zijn *Republiek* omdat hij dacht dat mensen niet in staat zouden zijn om een onderscheid te maken tussen de voorstelling en de werkelijkheid, en dat dit zou leiden tot een gebrekkige oordeelsvorming (Plato zei er niet bij hoe hij omging met het gegeven dat de *Republiek* zelf een bepaalde voorstelling van zaken was).

We kennen allemaal de verhalen over mensen die gillend wegreunden uit vroege filmvoorstellingen, omdat de close-ups eruit zagen als afgeslagen hoofden. We weten ook dat mensen opvallend goed zijn in het waarnemen van de conventies in een visueel medium zodra deze regels zijn uitgevonden — een soort 'onmiddellijke alfabetisering'. De kinderen die we de vr-installatie lieten uitproberen die we vorige zomer hadden gebouwd, koste het nauwelijks moeite om het 'vliegen' onder de knie te krijgen — voor hun ontmoeting met het medium hadden ze er al een zeker kennisniveau over verworven. Dit fenomeen treedt zelfs op als de conventies niet onmiddellijk waarneembaar zijn. Ga eens voor de deur van een bioscoop met de laatste actiefilm staan en beluister hoe de mensen bij het verlaten van het theater lopen te bedenken hoe de special effects zijn gemaakt. Blue-screening, effecten met schaalmodellen, fotoshoppen en morfen zijn al oud nieuws voor zesjarigen.

### Abstract Denken en Representatieve Kunst

Over het tweede en het derde punt maak ik me meer zorgen. Het is zeker een groot probleem als we zover van de natuurlijke wereld afdwalen dat we deze beschadigen in een mate waarin

hij niet langer in staat is een groot aantal levensvormen in stand te houden, inclusief de onze, is dat zeker een probleem. We lijken al een heel eind op deze weg te zijn ingeslagen, maar ik zie geen bewijs dat ons groeiende vermogen om nieuwe soorten voorstellingen te maken daarbij goed of slecht is, behalve in de manier waarop we dat vermogen gebruiken.

Ik denk dat wij de belichaming zijn van een manier van overleven, een manier van in-de-wereld-zijn, die lang voor het patriarchale tijdperk en de uitvinding van het geschreven woord is begonnen. De voorboden van wat we nu zijn, waren de uitvinding en het gebruik van gereedschappen en wapens, maar die waren niet voldoende om ons verder te brengen: andere gereedschap-gebruikende hominide soorten stierven uit zonder rechtstreekse competitie met onze voorouders. Volgens mij begon onze geschiedenis met de eigenschappen die Stephen Jay Gould beschouwt als het unieke bezit van *Homo sapiens* — abstract denken en representatieve kunst. Zoals Gould schrijft in zijn boek *Wonderful Life: (De mensheid is) ... een onwaarschijnlijke en kwetsbare entiteit die met veel geluk succes heeft gehad na een onzeker begin als kleine populatie in Afrika. De mensheid is niet het voorspelbare eindresultaat van een wereldomspannende tendens. We zijn een ding, een onderwerp uit de geschiedenis, niet een belichaming van algemene principes.* (Gould, 1989)

We zijn onwaarschijnlijk, geen uitgemaakte zaak, en evenmin voorspelt de evolutie dat we de voorouders zijn van een nog 'intelligenter' soort dan wijzelf. Zelfs al zou de evolutie ons verrassen en het cybernetische mega-organisme voortbrengen dat voorspeld wordt door Vinge en anderen, laten we zeggen op overeenkomstige wijze als de verschijning van multicellulaire levensvormen, dan nog zou ik niet graag een organisme ontmoeten waarin Servische soldaten de taak van

• While the first point is certainly true in some cases, changes in our epistemology generally arise to counteract the effect. If this were not so, we could not laugh at the hundred-foot shark gobbling a yacht on the cover of the *National Enquirer* or sit still in the theatre during a screening of *Jurassic Park*. Of course, we are worried here about more insidious effects — we know when images we see are imaginary but they affect us anyway, subliminally and emotionally. If this is a lethal flaw, then it has been with us for a long time — we have been making representations of the contents of our imaginations for as long as we have been *Homo sapiens*. We would be hard pressed to find any domain of human activity in which the imagination is not manifest and blended in some way with the actual world — from paleolithic horse-head carvings to subatomic physics.

The second point is really just a recursion on the first, that we may not even know that we are experiencing a representation as opposed to an actuality — the perfect VR system, for example. Whenever one of my friends finds an object that he has misplaced lying in plain view, he exclaims that he has found another bug in the simulation we're both part of. But this, too, is an old motif. Plato banished the art of theatre from his *Republic* because he felt that people would not be able to distinguish the representation from reality, and that this would presumably lead to poor judgment (Plato does not tell us how he handled the fact that the *Republic* itself was a representation).

We all know the stories about people running screaming from early films because close-ups looked like severed heads. We also know that people are remarkably good at perceiving the conventions of a representational medium almost as soon as they are invented — a kind of 'instant literacy'. Children who tried out the VR piece we built last summer had no difficulty coping with 'flying' — a certain level of knowledge about the medium preceded their first encounter with it. Note that this phenomenon works even when the conventions are not

directly perceivable. Stand outside a showing of the latest action film and listen to people's speculations about how the special effects were achieved as they leave the theatre. Blue-screening, model effects, photo-shopping, and morphing are old news even to six-year-olds.

### Abstract Reasoning and Representational Art

The second and third points are more troubling to me. It is certainly trouble if we stray so far from the natural world that we damage it to the point that it no longer supports many kinds of life, including our own. We seem to be well on the path to doing that, but I can see no evidence that our growing ability to create new forms of representation is either good or bad, except in how we use it.

It seems to me that we are the embodiment of a way of surviving, a way of being in the world, that began long before the patriarchal era and the invention of the written word. The precursors to the way we are were the invention and use of tools and weapons, but they were not sufficient to lead to us; other tool-using humanoid species died out without direct competition from our forebears. It seems to me that our history began with those traits that Stephen Jay Gould identifies as belonging uniquely to *homo sapiens* — abstract reasoning and representational art. As Gould points out in his book *Wonderful Life: (Humanity is) ... an improbable and fragile entity, fortunately successful after precarious beginnings as a small population in Africa, not the predictable end result of a global tendency. We are a thing, an item of history, not an embodiment of general principles.* (Gould, 1989)

We are unlikely, not a done deal; nor would evolution predict that we are to be the forebears of an even more 'intelligent' species than ourselves. Indeed, if evolution did surprise us and produce the cybernetic meta-organism that Vinge and others predict, say by a means similar to the appearance of multicellular life, I would not want to meet an organism in which Serbian soldiers were asked to serve as mitochondria. As Vinge observes,

given what it's got to work with, a posthuman meta-organism might well be an almost unimaginably nasty beast (Vinge, 1993). The story of evolution is neither the unfolding of a divine plan nor the inevitable march of sentience toward more and more spectacular manifestations; rather, extinction is the rule. We are much more likely to die out than to transform into a self-aware, infinitely smart, infinitely wise collective shrouded in white light. As far as evolutionary history would predict, the same set of traits that got us into this mess are going to have to be the ones that get us out of it — namely, abstract reasoning and representational art, and the way that they develop in their ongoing dialectic.

I will not drub you with the pre-catastrophic litany of industrialism, pollution, and destruction of the environment and all its dire consequences for the survival of our species. Suffice it to say that regarding the last fifty years of human history has been not unlike watching the Challenger accident over and over in slow motion.

Humanity is indeed an endangered species. We can sit here and be effete about it or we can get up on our hind legs and catch a couple of frisbees. Kids today can parse about five times as much information from a rapid-flow stream of video images as I can. This is part of the tragedy of the seemingly super-human cultural literacy of teens in the 'developed' world — beyond this visual alacrity, they can create, transmit, and receive personally authored information around the infosphere with relative ease; they can successfully distinguish point of view as a component of information, unlike most of their Madison-Avenue-trained parents — in short, they are in an excellent position to pull the pants off of the politics of information that has dominated the last several centuries in the service of a truly toxic turn in cultural evolution...

Humans are able to adapt to their media environment very well, thank you; but I think we can all name — if we dare — the thing that's missing from the formula. Where is the place to stand? Where is the fulcrum from which this

mitochondriën hebben toegewezen gekregen. Zoals Vinge al opmerkt: gegeven het materiaal waarmee zo'n posthumaan meta-organisme moet werken, kan het zeer wel een onvoorstelbaar onaangenaam beest blijken te zijn (Vinge, 1993). Het verhaal van de evolutie is niet gelijk aan het ontvouwen van een goddelijk plan, en evenmin is het de onvermijdelijke mars van het waarnemingsvermogen in de richting van steeds spectaculairdere manifestaties. Uitsterven is eerder de regel. Het is veel waarschijnlijker dat we allemaal doodgaan dan dat we transformeren in een zelfbewust, oneindig slim, oneindig wijs collectief dat gehuld gaat in wit licht. Op basis van de evolutionaire geschiedenis is te voorspellen dat dezelfde verzameling eigenschappen die ons heeft laten verzeilen in de knoiboel waarin we ons nu bevinden, ons daar ook weer uit zal moeten halen — namelijk abstract denken en representatieve kunst, en de manier waarop deze zich ontwikkelen in hun voortschrijdende dialectiek.

Ik zal jullie niet teisteren met de precatastrofale litanie van industrialisme, vervuiling en vernietiging van het milieu, en alle afschrikwekkende gevolgen daarvan voor het overleven van onze soort. Laat het genoeg zijn als ik zeg dat het overzien van de laatste vijftig jaar van de menselijke geschiedenis nogal wat overeenkomsten vertoont met het eindeloos in slow motion herbekijken van het ongeluk met de Challenger.

De mens is werkelijk een bedreigde soort. We kunnen hier blijven zitten en er een beetje vermoeid over doen, of we kunnen op onze achterste benen gaan staan en een paar frisbees opvangen. Kinderen kunnen momenteel ongeveer vijf keer zoveel informatie uit een snelle stroom videobeelden te voorschijn analyseren als ik. Dit is deel van de tragedie van de schijnbaar bovenmenselijke culturele geletterdheid van teenagers in de 'ontwikkelde' wereld — naast

deze visuele scherpte kunnen ze bovendien met relatief gemak zelfgeschreven informatie creëren, verzenden en ontvangen door de gehele infosfeer. Ze kunnen met succes het perspectief onderscheiden als een component van de informatie, anders dan de meeste van hun op Madison Avenue getrainde ouders. Kortom, ze verkeren in een uitstekende positie om de informatiepatrie uit te kleden, die de afgelopen eeuwen de overhand heeft gehad in het kader van een waarlijk toxische wending in de culturele evolutie...

Mensen zijn zeer wel in staat zich aan te passen bij hun mediale omgeving. Maar ik denk dat we allemaal — als we de moed opbrengen — kunnen aanwijzen wat er ontbreekt in deze formule. Waar is het vaste punt? Waar is het draaipunt waarvanaf deze dappere nieuwe soort de vuilnisbelt van de wereld kan veroveren? Welke lamp zal hen leiden bij hun wederopbouw van de werkelijkheid? Niet de snottelijke en pientere voorspelling van de ondergang, zoveel is zeker. Ja, we hebben welbespraakte voorspellingen nodig over wat onze toekomst kan inhouden, met alle enge delen levensgroot uitgeschreven. Maar voor ons die nu leven, bestaat er geen omweg omheen, we moeten er dwars doorheen. Het verkondigen van het einde van het leven zoals wij het kennen is pas het halve werk van de hedendaagse demagoog. De andere helft is de *weg er doorheen* te ontdekken.

### Apathie

Hoe kunnen jonge mensen nog hoop hebben? Al wordt het virus van het deconstructionisme langzamerhand aangenaam on-hip in intellectuele kringen, toch is het nog altijd kerngezond en levend in de Amerikaanse jongerengeneeskunde. Met de slimme nieuwsgierigheid waarmee mensenkinderen wonderbaarlijk genoeg nog altijd geboren worden, beginnen ze dingen te onderzoeken. Al snel krijgen ze boodschappen door over wat er mis is hier op Planeet

Aarde. Terwijl hun broeders en zusters in minder bevoorrechte plekken zich bekennen tot de tamelijk simplistische voorschriften van nationalisme en heilige oorlogen, gaat de postmoderne stam ertoe over de dingen uit elkaar te halen. Ze schillen en peuten aan het vernis van de objectiviteit, aan de verborgen agenda van het consumptisme, aan de zoetgevooidse waarden die ethiek kortsluiten op gehoorzaamheid — gehoorzaamheid aan instituties die niet het welzijn van individu en soort tot doel hebben, maar winst en macht. Ze schillen en peuten tot er van hun slimme nieuwsgierigheid niet meer over is dan een dunne vlam van cynisme, die uiteindelijk naar buiten komt als een stoot apathie. Apathie is de 'omweg' waarop we zullen uitsterven. Dit is geen beeld van alle jongeren, of van een of andere economische of etnische groep jongeren, maar van een niet-triviaal percentage van jongeren. Ze zijn te vinden van Beverly Hills tot Bedford-Stuyvesant.

Het is niet het tekort aan informatie dat hiervoor verantwoordelijk is, en evenmin is dat het verdwijnen van het woord — het 'nieuws' speelt een cruciale rol in de hele trieste ontwikkeling. De economie stinkt, de politiek stinkt, presidenten liegen, sporthelden plegen moorden, wat zal mij het dan nog rotten? Zoals Neil Postman al zei, apathie komt niet voort uit onwetendheid, maar uit een overdaad van informatie waaruit geen actie kan voorkomen, informatie over dingen waarover we geen controle hebben (Postman, 1985) — het leven in een wereld van eenrichtingsinformatie.

Wat wel goed nieuws zou kunnen zijn, is dat de decentralisatie die er in de geopolitieke sfeer plaatsvindt zich eveneens lijkt af te spelen in de wereld van de media. Het aantal tijdschriften in omloop is de afgelopen vijf jaar exponentieel toegenomen. Studenten versturen e-mail en faxen naar Moskou en het Tienanmen Plein. Teenage-meisjes toasten in LA op een video voor



• brave new species can conquer the bullshit of the world? What torch will guide them in their reconstruction of reality? It isn't snotty and smart predictions of doom, that's for damned sure. Yes, we need eloquent foretellings of what the future may hold, with all the scary bits writ large. But for we who are alive right now, there's no way around but through. Declaiming the end of life as we know it is only half the job of the contemporary demagogue. The other is to try to see *the way through*.

### Apathy

How can young people have hope? Although it is growing blessedly un-hip in intellectual circles, the virus of deconstructionism is alive and well in American youth culture. With the bright curiosity that human children are still miraculously born with, they begin to explore. Soon they begin to hear messages about what is wrong here on Planet Earth. While their brothers and sisters in some less privileged places subscribe to the relatively simplistic prescriptions of nationalism and holy wars, the postmodern tribe begins to take things apart. They peel and peel away at the veneer of objectivity, at the hidden agendas of consumerism, at the mealy-mouthed values that short-circuit ethics into obedience — obedience to institutions that have as their goal, not the well-being of either the individual or the species, but profit and power. They peel and peel away until there is nothing left of their bright curiosity but a thin flame of cynicism, which eventually gutters out in a gust of apathy. Apathy is the 'way around' that will make us extinct. This is not a portrait of all kids, or of any economic or ethnic group of kids, but of a nontrivial percentage of kids, and you can find it from Beverly Hills to Bedford-Stuyvesant.

It is not the lack of information that has done this, nor is it the disappearance of the word — the 'news' plays a pivotal role in the whole sad progression. The economy sucks, politics sucks, presidents lie, sports heroes commit murder, how should I care? As Neil Postman observed, apathy proceeds,

not from ignorance, but from a surfeit of information from which no action can proceed, information about things over which we have no control (Postman, 1985) — life in a world of one-way information.

One piece of potentially good news is that the decentralisation that is occurring in the geopolitical sphere seems also to be happening in the world of media. The number of magazines in circulation has increased exponentially in the last five years. Students send e-mail and faxes from Moscow and Tienanmen Square. Teenage girls in LA are toasting video for their friends. People are producing and sharing personal journalism and authentic narratives in all media. These people work through enormous interface obscurities to get at the heartbeat of what they want to do. They are not stopped; they do what works. They make new tools. They ignore intellectual property. With any luck, and the invention or emergence of a good alternative economic model, it may be that literacy in this brave new world will not be shaped and controlled by either the owners of the infrastructure or the content providers of yesteryear. It may be shaped by the revitalisation of the oldest goodest impulses of humanity: to make our experiences into stories and performances and share them with each other — the active impulses of self-revelation and creative imagination. I think that this is still the most reliable transmitter of values — long after church, tv, and politics are debunked, people will still take delight and wisdom from each other's stories.

In my lifetime, I have seen the privileged status of the written word pass on to the television, then from the television to the computer. My work with American children confirms for me that as the computer becomes more transparent the idea of any one medium having an authoritative voice is fading away. With decentralisation comes repersonalisation and a healthy attitude toward appropriation. One thing we can do is work toward assuring that the economics and technology of the net don't beat this impulse into submission.

### Body and Mind

Finally, I want to go further into the question what our new media have to do with our relationship with nature, because this seems to me to be the issue lurking at the bottom of the pond.

In Western culture, we often speak of *science* as being 'a dialogue with nature.' In *The Character of Physical Law*, Richard Feynman notes that both artists and scientists appreciate sunsets, and the ocean waves, and the march of the stars across the heavens. As we look into these things, he says, we get an aesthetic pleasure from them directly on observation. There is also a rhythm and a pattern between the phenomena of nature which is not apparent to the eye, but only to the eye of analysis; and it is these rhythms and patterns which we call Physical Laws. (Feynman, 1967)

The scientist's analytical tools extend the domain of aesthetic pleasure from the visible to the invisible. Representational tools — from elegant equations to scientific visualisations — make the unseen patterns of nature sensible to us again. Too often, I think, we set art and science in opposition to one another. Both are intimately involved with the natural world, and both intend to make sensible representations of phenomena that are in some way unseeable or at least unseen.

In a particular sense, art is a dialogue with *human* nature as well. A painter's brush is in intimate relationship with a painter's hand, with the physical qualities of paint and paper, and with the eye and brain of whoever will see the painting. The *technologies* of an art intersect the *nature* of its materials, its objects, its makers, and its beholders.

Making art with computers is a difficult enterprise because computers make nature so hard to get to. They typically have no sense organs, for instance, nor do they address any of ours particularly well. They have evolved as a race of severed heads, without bodies, without a sense of pleasure, doomed by the arcana of their communication mechanisms to make extremely small talk with

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hun vriendinnen. Mensen maken en verspreiden in alle media hun persoonlijke journalistiek en hun authentieke verhalen. Deze mensen werken zich door enorm duistere interfaces heen om bij de hartslag te komen van wat ze willen doen. Ze worden niet tegengehouden, ze doen wat werkt. Ze maken nieuwe gereedschappen. Ze ontkennen intellectueel eigendom. Met een beetje geluk en de uitvinding of opkomst van een goed alternatief economisch model, zal de geletterdheid in deze dappere nieuwe wereld misschien niet worden gevormd en gecontroleerd door de eigenaars van de infrastructuur of de inhoudleveranciers van vorig jaar. Deze wereld zou vorm kunnen krijgen door de hervitalisering van de oudste en beste impulsen van de mensheid: de drang van onze ervaringen verhalen en opvoeringen te maken en die met elkaar te delen — de actieve impulsen van de zelfonthulling en de creatieve verbeelding. Ik denk dat dit de betrouwbaarste overdrager van waarden is — lang nadat kerk, tv en politiek ontmaskerd zijn, zullen mensen nog steeds plezier en wijsheid halen uit elkaars vertellingen.

In de loop van mijn leven heb ik de bevoorrechte status van het geschreven woord zien overgaan op de televisie, en vervolgens van de televisie op de computer. Mijn werk met Amerikaanse kinderen heeft me duidelijk gemaakt dat naarmate de computer doorzichtiger wordt, het idee begint te verdwijnen dat welk medium dan ook gezaghebbend zou zijn. De decentralisatie brengt een herpersonalisatie en een gezonde houding ten opzichte van toeïgening met zich mee. Als er iets van ons gevraagd wordt, dan wel de inspanning om te garanderen dat de economie en de technologie van het Net deze impuls niet gewelddadig proberen te onderdrukken.

### Lichaam en Geest

Tenslotte wil ik kort ingaan op de vraag wat onze nieuwe media te

maken hebben met onze relatie tot de natuur, aangezien me dat het onderwerp lijkt dat onder deze hele problematiek schuilgaat.

In de westerse cultuur spreken we vaak over *wetenschap* als 'een dialoog met de natuur'. In *The Character of Physical Law* merkt Richard Feynman op dat zowel kunstenaars als wetenschappers *van zonsondergangen houden, en van de golven van de zee en van de gang van de sterren over de hemel. Als we naar deze dingen kijken, zegt hij, beleven we rechtstreeks uit de waarneming een esthetisch plezier. Er bestaan ook een ritme en een patroon tussen de natuurverschijnselen, die niet onmiddellijk zichtbaar zijn voor het oog, maar alleen voor het oog van de analyse. En precies die ritmen en patronen noemen we de natuurwetten.* (Feynman, 1967)

Het analytische gereedschap van de wetenschapper breidt het domein van het esthetisch plezier uit van het zichtbare naar het onzichtbare. Gereedschappen om voorstellingen te maken — van elegante vergelijkingen tot wetenschappelijke visualiseringsringen — maken ons weer gevoelig voor de ongeziene patronen in de natuur. Te vaak plaatsen we mijns inziens kunst en wetenschap tegenover elkaar. Beide zijn innig verbonden met de natuurlijke wereld en beide zijn erop uit zinnige voorstellingen te maken van verschijnselen die op een of andere manier onzichtbaar zijn, althans niet worden gezien.

Op een specifieke manier is kunst bovendien een dialoog met de *menselijke* natuur. De schilderspenseel staat in intieme relatie tot de hand van de schilder, tot de fysieke kwaliteiten van de verf en het papier en tot het oog en de hersenen van iedereen die het schilderij ziet. De technieken van een kunst kruisen met de *natuurlijke eigenschappen* van zijn materialen, zijn objecten, zijn makers en zijn beschouwers.

Het maken van kunst met computers is een moeilijke onderneming, omdat computers de natuur zo op afstand plaatsen.

Zo hebben ze doorgaans geen eigen zintuigen en spreken ze evenmin een van onze zintuigen direct aan. Ze zijn geëvolueerd tot een ras van afgeslagen hoofden, zonder lichamen, zonder gevoel voor plezier, gedoemd door de mysteries van hun communicatiemechanismen tot extreem korte uitwisselingen met mensen die bijna even vreemd zijn als zichzelf. Ik zie ze met lege ogen zitten staren, vastgespiet op staken die niet uit het fort van Graaf Vlad steken, maar uit het bouwwerk van het dualisme tussen lichaam en geest.

Het idee van virtual reality is het tegenovergestelde van deze stand van zaken. Het is er op uit — ongeacht de vraag of het daarin slaagt — om zowel het lichaam als de geest van dienst te zijn. In theorie weigert ze zelfs een onderscheid te maken tussen die twee. VR maakt gebruik van de uitrusting die de evolutie op zo'n schitterende manier bij ons heeft afgeleverd — namelijk ons vermogen om de wereld waar te nemen vanuit een situationeel en lichamelijk standpunt. VR richt zich op de *natuurlijke eigenschappen* van het lichaam — hoe onze zintuigen werken, hoe we ons verplaatsen, hoe we het gevoel krijgen dat we ergens zijn, en hoe dit gevoel van lichamelijke aanwezigheid ons beïnvloedt. Afgezien van de nare kleine applicaties waarvoor het defensie-entertainmentcomplex VR momenteel gebruikt, is het in diepste wezen een techniek die zich poogt aan te passen aan de natuur, anders dan de technieken die de natuur pogen te onderwerpen. We verrichten goed werk als kunstenaars en cultuurmakers wanneer we dit alternatieve potentieel onderzoeken en ontwikkelen.

Wat me uiteindelijk bij de kwestie brengt van de artistieke stijl in de nieuwe media. Een stijl concretiseert een filosofie. Een stijl is de uitdrukking van een verhouding tot de wereld. In een stijl komt zowel een natuurlijke filosofie als een metafysica tot uitdrukking. In artistieke

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• people who are almost as strange as they are. I see them staring vacant-eyed, impaled on pikes that surround, not the fortress of Count Vlad, but the edifice of mind-body dualism.

The idea of virtual reality is the antithesis of this state of affairs. It intends, regardless of how well it succeeds, to accommodate the body as well as the mind — in theory, it refuses to distinguish between the two at all. It makes use of the equipment that evolution has so magnificently prepared for us — namely, our ability to perceive the world from a situated and embodied point of view. VR is concerned with the *nature* of the body — how our senses work, how we move around, how we get the sense of being somewhere, and how the sense of physical presence affects us. Regardless of the nasty little applications in which it the military-entertainment complex is busily employing it, VR is at its root a technology which attempts to conform to nature, in opposition to one which attempts to dominate it. We do a great good as artists and makers of culture when we explore and develop this alternative potential.

Which brings me finally, to the question of artistic style in new media. Style instantiates philosophy. Style articulates a relationship with the world. It implies both a natural philosophy and a metaphysics. In artistic representations, style is the way in which these philosophical materials are used as working hypotheses in the construction of what-ifs.

### Constructivism

In contrast to the slickly literal heavy-metal worlds of virtual entertainment, I would describe most of the artistic virtual worlds that I have seen so far as *constructivist*. Sometimes technological artifact and sometimes conscious choice, the imagery in such worlds is blatantly constructed. Dizzying topologies, illegible structures, surfaces with their polygons showing — sometimes even the algorithms are showing, of which a certain flavour of techno-artist is very proud. The invisible human being, sometimes iconised as a tiny

floating cluster of polygons that one is told represents a hand, is reconstructed as an absence — a disembodied point of view that moves without friction, noise, rhythm, breath. In a medium that tries so hard to surround us and saturate our senses, this denial of the embodied self seems an absurd contradiction.<sup>1</sup>

There are recent historical parallels here. Constructivism as a style in theatrical design is most closely associated with the Russian director Vsevolod Meyerhold, who was reacting at least in part to the style of Stanislavski, in the first third of the 20th century. For method acting he substituted a theory of biomechanics, rejecting psychological realism in favour of a notion of actors as machines who would carry out the explicit directions of their operator. For the conventions of scenic realism, he substituted *constructivism* — the scene as a set of geometrical and mechanistic constructions that could be used by his actors in a gymnastic way. The point of these changes was to make the audience aware at every moment that they were in the theatre. His goal was to induce social action *outside* the theatre, not through the conventional means of empathy and suspension of disbelief, but through theatre as rhetoric, performance as the presentation of argument.

Constructivism was part of a reaction against realism and bourgeois aesthetics that rippled through all of the arts throughout the first half of the 20th century. Many of the anti-realistic movements during this time arose in response to the political horrors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, culminating in World War I (see, for example, Gibian 1971). If reality could be so abominable, then the world was not at all as it had been portrayed. Realism became identified, existentially as well as aesthetically, as a lie — that is, it employed illusions to perpetrate comfortable myths about how the world worked. The deceptive nature of representations themselves had to be unmasked, and disjunctive new approaches to theatrical art — from Tristan Tzara to Bertolt Brecht —

were a cultural necessity. Anger, shock, and political activism fuelled the reaction against realism.

Constructivism and other anti-realistic styles intended to prevent empathy and force intellection — in a sense, severing the head of anger and judgment from the body of nature — negating the biochemistry of empathy, the need to connect, the tendency toward growth. Meanwhile, playwrights like Giraudoux and Anouilh created a more holistic alternative to realism in the form of theatrical impressionism. Impressionism in painting and photography was also influenced by 19th-century romanticism in its reverence for nature as a source of both truth and ecstasy. In contemporary fiction, film, and increasingly, computer graphics and animation, magical realism is the descendant of impressionism. The plausible portrayal of the fantastical brings people to question our constructions of the possible in terms both of nature and human agency. In another sense, magical realism is what comes after the compulsion to dismember. By representing the unseen agencies of dream, spirit, and nature as sensible actors in everyday reality, magical realism speaks of hope, healing, and reconstruction.

Magical realism is but one example of a style — a point of view — that has the power to help us envision how things might be. Like Leonardo's flying machine, our representations are indices to a possible future — a way of making technology, and a way of thinking about the world. The representations made by a culture organise its construction of the possible and galvanise its will.

For myself, as an artist and as a person, working from this point of view reveals the glimmering of a way through. It seems to me that we must be constantly in dialogue with nature, in both the *objects* and the *process* of our work, in the way we think about the eye, the hand, the gesture, about walking, flying, seeing, seeing faces in the clouds, to know not only by unmaking but also by creating, making new, reconstructing the possible, manifesting harmony, instantiating dreams, reifying hope.

<sup>1</sup> This contradiction pervades the military flavors of VR as well. In its training aspect VR must attempt to simulate 'the real thing', but as a realtime interface in warfare conditions, the explicit purpose of VR is to keep the body *out of danger* by keeping it out of the situation. Such crossed purposes are bound to create a deep level of confusion, which spills over into the entertainment-oriented imitations of military VR.

voorstellingen is de stijl de manier waarop deze filosofische materialen gebruikt zijn als werkhypothese bij de constructie van 'stel-datten'.

### Constructivisme

Anders dan de gladde, letterlijke heavy metal-werelden van het virtuele vermaak, zou ik het merendeel van de artistieke virtuele werelden die ik tot nu toe heb gezien willen omschrijven als *constructivistisch*. De beeldtaal in deze werelden is overduidelijk geconstrueerd, soms als technisch artefact, soms als bewuste keuze. Duizelingwekkende topologieën, onleesbare structuren, oppervlakken met hun polygonen open en bloot — soms worden zelfs de algoritmen vertoond, waarop een bepaald slag techno-artisten erg trots is. De onzichtbare mens, soms in beeld gebracht als een piepkleine zwevende klomp polygonen die een hand heten voor te stellen, wordt gereconstrueerd als afwezigheid — een lichaamloos standpunt dat beweegt zonder weerstand, ruis, ritme en adem. In een medium dat zo hard zijn best doet om ons te omgeven en onze zintuigen te verzadigen, lijkt deze verlooping van het lichaam zelf een absurde tegenspraak.<sup>1</sup>

Er bestaan hierbij recente historische parallellen. Het constructivisme is als dramaturgische stijl nauw verbonden met de Russische regisseur Vsevolod Meyerhold, die zelf minstens voor een deel reageerde op de stijl van Stanislavski, in de eerste dertig jaar van de twintigste eeuw. Meyerhold verving het 'methode-acteren' door zijn theorie van de biomechanica, waarbij hij het psychologisch realisme verwierp ten gunste van een opvatting van acteurs als machines die de uitdrukkelijke aanwijzingen van de machinebestuurder opvolgen. De conventies van het toneelrealisme verving hij door het *constructivisme* — het toneel als verzameling meekundige en mechanische constructies die door zijn acteurs op gymnastische

wijze konden worden gebruikt. Het ging er bij deze veranderingen om het publiek er elk moment van bewust te houden dat ze naar theater keken. Zijn doel was om sociale actie op te roepen *buiten* het theater, niet via de conventionele methoden van empathie en het opschorten van het ongeloof, maar via het theater als retorica, de opvoering als presentatie van een debat.

Het constructivisme was deel van een tegenaanval op het realisme en de burgerlijke esthetiek, een reactie die zich door alle kunsten verbreidde in de eerste helft van de twintigste eeuw. Veel anti-realistische bewegingen kwamen in deze tijd op als antwoord op de politieke gruwelen aan het eind van de negentiende en het begin van de twintigste eeuw, culminerend in de Eerste Wereldoorlog (zie ondermeer Gibian, 1971). Als de werkelijkheid zo verschrikkelijk kon zijn, was de wereld helemaal niet zoals ze was afgebeeld. Realisme werd zowel existentieel als artistiek gelijkgesteld aan leugen — dat wil zeggen, het maakte gebruik van illusies om geruststellende mythen te verbreiden over hoe de wereld werkte. De bedrieglijke aard van de voorstellingswijzen zelf moest worden ontmaskerd, en tegengestelde, nieuwe benaderingen van het toneel waren — van Tristan Tzara tot Bertolt Brecht — een culturele noodzaak. Woede, verbijstering en politiek activisme waren de brandstof van de aanval op het realisme.

Het constructivisme en andere anti-realistische stijlen wilden empathie voorkomen en dwingen tot nadenken — in zekere zin wilden ze het hoofd met al zijn woede en verstand afslaan van het lichaam van de natuur — ze ontkenden de biochemie van de empathie, de behoefte om verbindingen te leggen, de geneigdheid te groeien. Ondertussen schiepen toneelschrijvers als Giraudoux en Anouilh een holistisch alternatief voor het realisme in de vorm van het impressionisme in het theater. Het impressionisme in

de schilderkunst en de fotografie was ondermeer beïnvloed door de negentiende-eeuwse Romantiek met zijn eerbied voor de natuur als bron van waarheid en extase. Het magisch realisme in eigentijdse fictie, in films en ook steeds meer in computer-graphics en animaties, is de nakomeling van het impressionisme. Door het fantastische plausibel voor te stellen brengt het mensen ertoe onze constructies van het mogelijke zowel te ondervragen in termen van de natuur als in termen van menselijke bemiddeling. Je kunt ook zeggen dat magisch realisme hetgene is wat er na de drang tot onthoofden komt. Door de ongeziene bemiddelaars van droom, geest en natuur voor te stellen als redelijke deelnemers aan de alledaagse realiteit, spreekt het magisch realisme van hoop, genezing en wederopbouw.

Magisch realisme is slechts een voorbeeld van een stijl — een perspectief — dat ons kan helpen ons een beeld te vormen hoe de toekomst eruit zal zien. Evenals Leonardo's vliegtuigen zijn onze voorstellingen aanwijzingen voor een mogelijke toekomst — een manier om techniek te maken en een manier om over de wereld na te denken. De voorstellingen die door een cultuur worden gemaakt, organiseren de constructie van wat die cultuur voor mogelijk houdt en stimuleren zijn wil.

Voor mijzelf, als kunstenaar en als mens, maakt het werken vanuit dit perspectief een glimp zichtbaar van een 'weg er doorheen'. Ik denk dat we voortdurend in dialoog moeten blijven met de natuur, niet alleen in de *concrete objecten*, maar ook in het *proces* van ons werk, in de manier waarop we nadenken over het oog, de hand, het gebaar, over lopen, vliegen, zien, gezichten zien in de wolken, kennis vergaren, niet alleen door dingen stuk te maken, maar ook door te creëren, dingen te vernieuwen, het mogelijke te reconstrueren, harmonie uit te drukken, dromen te concretiseren, hoop te materialiseren.

vertaling ARJEN MULDER

<sup>1</sup> Deze tegenspraak is ook in de militaire versies van vr binnengedrongen. Als trainingsapparatuur moet vr zoveel mogelijk 'the real thing' simuleren, maar als realtime-interface dat gebruikt wordt in oorlogsomstandigheden is het uitdrukkelijke doel het lichaam *buiten gevaar* te houden door het *buiten de concrete* situatie te houden. Zulke tegenstrijdige doelstellingen veroorzaken een diepe verwarring, die ook is terug te vinden in de op entertainment gerichte imitaties van militaire vr.

## Geert Lovink



- George Legrady recently won one of the three 'New Voices, New Visions' prizes for his CD-ROM,

*An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War*, in a competition sponsored by

Interval Research Corporation, the Voyager Company and *Wired* magazine.

In this interview, the San Francisco based artist discusses the designing and programming of interactive art.

As a follow-up to the CD-ROM, whose subject is Hungary, Legrady recently released on two floppies his new project



about the war in Bosnia entitled [*the clearing*], which you can find on the v.o.l.v.o. CD-ROM. Alongside such socially oriented works,

he also produces conceptually based computer installations which take us along on a voyage to the 'heart of the machine'.

Legrady's work could be seen recently at *ISEA '94* (Helsinki), *Artifices III* (Paris) and *Ars Electronica '94* (Linz).

This interview was conducted in Budapest, where Legrady taught for several months

at the Hungarian Art Academy's new Intermedia department.



• *An Anecdoted Archive from the Cold War* (1993) is an interactive CD-ROM installation project which features Central European personal and official Communist material from the 1950's, in the form of home movies, video footage, family documents, money, news reports, identity cards, and other items from a collection Legrady gathered during the past twenty years. The *Anecdoted Archive* reflects his own particular history in relation to the Cold War. Born in Budapest in 1950 near the end of the Stalin era, George Legrady left with his family for the West during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution.

GLO How did you come up with the idea of putting your collection of Cold War items on a CD-ROM?



GLE I didn't want to carry all the material in my head anymore. All these objects, film footage, images, stories needed to be contextualized and brought together into a concrete form so that they could exist on their own and be made accessible to a viewing audience.

GLO Did you have examples before you started?

GLE I had three references when I began the CD-ROM. The first was the Worker's Movement Museum up in the castle in Budapest, which of course has now been packed away. I was interested in going there in the early eighties because to me it was extremely visible in terms of its fictional narratives. You saw representations of a worker's living room before and after communism; I enjoyed these comparative narratives. I used the museum's floor plan in my archive to situate all of my



stories, both personal and official as a way of interacting with that history. I have also included original material from that museum which I documented in 1983.

The next reference is a Fluxus artist named Daniel Spoerri, who did a work titled *An Anecdoted Topography of Chance*. This work was created out of the chaotic leftovers he saw on his kitchen table one morning after a party. He produced an archive of the things he found by tracing each objects' history, and adding cross-references. The editor of the book and the translator who were also at the party, added their comments as well. The work has the scientific look and feel of an archive with highly entertaining references.

The third reference consists of two books by Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* and *The Archeology of Knowledge*. In these books, Foucault discusses the historical conditions that result through the classification of information. Foucault argues that when archives are created, they become authoritative institutions. They define what is possible and what is not in terms of what can be spoken.



What I wanted to do with this archive of mine was to contrast my personal narrative and family's memories about leaving Hungary with material of communist Hungary from the same historical period. You can navigate back-and-forth between personal and official stories. I was interested in creating a hybrid synthesis between these two points of origins in terms of storytelling and as a way to understand that moment of crisis.

GLO In 1983, communism in Hungary was more or less dead, and you had a chance to look at the propaganda in a historical way.

GLE State control rituals were still very much present. At that



time I remember seeing groups of peasants being taken officially through the Workers' Movement Museum. At the same time, you could buy books at the front desk with reproductions of early political posters. It was apparent that the real audience for these were not those peasants but the Western tourists who came to see communism. The state at that time recognized the new market potential of the old propaganda.

The work I was doing then was conceptually-based, staged photography, influenced by deconstructing advertising in California. When I came to Budapest in 1983 to do research in the Propaganda museum I was interested in the construction of ideological narratives during the transitional period to

• Communism in 1945-52. My desire was to contrast them to the advertising narrative strategies that I was coming across in everyday life in California. I am looking forward to presenting my archive in Hungary. I'm pretty sure that it will have a different meaning here, to a population that has lived through this material as opposed to a Western audience for whom it might be fundamentally exotic. Also through time and repetition in the media, these images may have become reduced to caricatures. Especially in the art world, it's impossible to look at Socialist Realism today without the additional ironic subtext that



re-representation has imposed on it.

GLO *What stories of your family can we find on the CD-ROM?*

GLE There are stories about the house my grandfather purchased in the twenties which was eventually nationalized in the fifties. I'm tracing its story through old home movies and new videos: how he managed to acquire it, how it got nationalized and eventually was turned into a vacation place for factory workers. And then in the seventies it was torched and a hotel was built on its site for workers. But when communism ended the state sold it to a private individual. I like to use comparative scenarios. There's one section with early 1950's old black and white footage of my parents kissing on the



Margit bridge overlooking the Danube and the Parliament in the background. Right next to it I show video footage from 1991 of the same place; it's in color with rock band graffiti on the walls. There are other numerous family home movies and stories of that time.

Other examples of contrasting narratives include the sound piece in the title sequence, in which you hear demonstrators chanting *Democracy! Democracy!* that I recorded in the 1988 Budapest demonstration against the Nagymaros dam on the Danube. At the same time you hear Lenin's voice broadcast over radio to Béla Kun in 1919, congratulating him for setting up the first non-Russian Soviet Republic in Hungary. There is a section on recordings that includes questions and answers put to George Lukacs about his past political mistakes. In that same grouping, there are old propaganda songs and a tape of my family's sounds my father sent to Hungary in 1960. You can hear me playing piano at the age of ten, with my youngest brother crying in the background. Interactive media is ideal for weaving together things you would normally



never have in the same context or sequence.

GLO *How did you represent the year 1956 and the crackdown of the revolution?*

GLE There's a section of books on this topic. A special edition by *Life* that consists of documentary photographs of the street fighting, a British publication that reviews the revolution from a Socialist perspective, also a large unique book from the Hoover Institution which has reprinted the front pages of 13 major newspapers in the world, revealing how each of the countries covered the two stories of the day: the Soviet military re-entry into Hungary contrasted to the British and



French bombing of the Suez canal. In the personal section, I have a set of drawings done by my father, my brother and my mother about our escape across the border. In 1984, I asked each of them to send me drawings depicting six key events in the story. Over time, stories change and crystallise through numerous retellings. I wanted to show how each of them would visually describe the same story but from different points of view. Through the production of this archive, my particular perspective of that era has also crystallized. Everything that went into it has become inscribed as my official story, and overshadows all other possible memories I may have had. Something like when you have a photograph of an event, the photograph's

• powerful inscription makes you forget all the other incidental details.

**glo** For a CD-ROM the interface seems to be of great importance. What kind of interface did you decide to make?

**gle** The interface has the formal look of a museum display device. It has a streamlined, minimalist design as opposed to an *alternative* aesthetic. When you interact with this interface, you don't get the sense of a critique or counter-critique through its style. What you are faced with is primarily an unobtrusive structure of the archive's interface. In other words, you have to activate the mouse to go beyond this structure and get to the stories. The viewer is



forced to search, otherwise all you get is the skeleton of the archive. I wanted it to be as transparent as possible, in the hope that the viewer would realize that the interface through which the stories are accessed is very real and controlling. If the visual aesthetic of the interface would have been too wild, it would have made itself overly visible. A formal, minimalist aesthetic was very important for me. Something that would look transparent, but in time would reveal itself to the viewer as a kind of narrative itself. One other crucial aspect about the archive, is that it takes about an hour to go through everything. Most people will spend 20-25 minutes. So each viewer potentially walks away with a slightly different story, based on their selections and chance.



### [the clearing]

[the clearing], produced in the summer of 1994, is an interactive artwork that explores the language of us news media on the topic of the conflict in Bosnia within a computer game interface. One of the intentions of the project was to make an interesting and technically complex work to fit in as little memory as possible to attain a wide, general audience. In its compressed form, the project fits on two 3.5 floppies. We sit down in front of the PowerBook on the coffee table. George is describing what we are seeing:

After the title phase, which gives you a short explanation of the Yugoslavian conflict, you arrive at the interactive mode, consisting of three stages in the work. I consider the first one as a form of 'military looking.' The mouse is in the shape of a target frame, aimed at an old hunting photograph and it shoots at it, 'searching and destroying' — a terminology from the Vietnam



war. I used an interface design format close to that of a video wargame. I wanted to give it a high-tech look. Part of the research also involved looking at science-fiction movies. I think that the messages we receive are highly shaped by the form through which they come to us. In the us, reality and mass media narratives seem to blur into one, and at that point it's hard to differentiate between what is fiction and what is news.

The background image I used is a traditional hunting photograph from the thirties. I didn't want to use an image that had to do with the conflict itself. I wanted to describe that



reality by making a reference through another thing. To speak through metaphor. Sometimes you get a clearer idea that way than if you were to provide a literal description. This hunting scene shows a highly coded relationship between hunter, hunted and their environment. Three hunters represent authority and the right to hunt. At the far left you eventually recognize five dead deer hanging in the trees. They stand for nature being dominated. For the hunter to hunt you need to have the hunted. Down at the bottom of the image, you see the hunting dogs, assistants, so to speak.

When you click on the mouse, the program moves to the next, quieter stage, which I call 'medical looking.' The target frame mouse is now transformed into a framed



• textbar, and as you quietly explore the image with it, titles of topic sections come up, about 30 of them, such as 'nationalism', 'Bosnian voices', 'ethnic cleansing', 'war crimes'. If you click on the mouse again, you enter the last stage, us news texts for that particular section come on the screen.

GLO *Why did you select such short quotations of one or two sentences?*

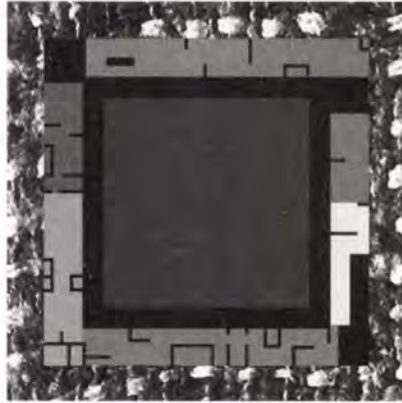
GLE To give a quick understanding of the event. Originally the idea was to have a particular event represented by Serbian, Bosnian and western news commentaries. But that became problematic so I ended up with these condensed blurbs that hopefully describe the issue concisely! American audiences have been trained



through television to respond to fifteen-second infobits. People get bored if you talk too long or go into details. As the viewers go back and forth between the topics, they can quickly sample the information and hopefully can walk away with a general idea of the Bosnian situation after 15 minutes of interacting with the work. Viewers are guided by a sense of discovery through the act of shooting and hunting for quick infobites. You don't quite know what you're gonna come across.

GLO *Many American artists have dealt with the Gulf War in their work. The war in former Yugoslavia started at exactly the same time, in early 1991. How would you compare these two military conflicts?*

GLE My response to this has to do with my personal history. I'm much more closely involved with the Yugoslavian conflict than I imagine a general



American audience to be. I've always looked at the situation in Central Europe. Artists and audiences in the us respond to things that are specific to American culture. The Gulf War made American interests highly visible. Former Yugoslavia is low on the scale of interest for most Americans because they probably don't get it; there's no oil and it's about historical conflict. It's not strategic for the general public. But there is a small group of people who look at the former Yugoslavia as a potential scenario that might repeat in the rest of the world, especially in Russia and Europe. Seen from a highly pessimistic perspective, it could even take place in the us. A major economic disaster merged with ethnic conflict could potentially turn any place into a civil war.

### Equivalents II

*Equivalents II*, another recent project by Legrady, consists of a computer program that produces cloud-like images in response to the viewer's typing text into the computer. Legrady calls it a highly conceptual



work. The program generates the abstracted cloud images based on an algorithm whose perimeters are triggered by the viewer's text. The image begins with 4 squares which are successively subdivided all the way down to the image's pixels. *Equivalents II* uses an algorithm called '2D midpoint fractal synthesis', which is based on the premise that every time you subdivide, you increase complexity by slightly altering the tonal values of the squares from which the new ones are derived. Additional disturbances to this process are added when the program comes across certain words in the viewer's phrase that match those stored in a databank.



Legrady selected words belonging to the language of various (sub)cultural groups that might come across the artwork. For example, there is a list of computer slang terms, a 20 word list from Foucault's *Order of Things* in which he quotes Borges' reference to an esoteric Chinese encyclopedia. But there are also words from tv soap operas, J.G. Ballard's *Crash*, happy and unhappy words, colors, male and female terms. If a phrase contains any of the words in the databank, the appropriate category is flagged and set to trigger disturbances at various stages of the image-making process. When the image is completed, viewers can compare their phrase to previous ones that include matching words. At that moment, the viewer can

• perceive that their typed words might have a different meaning in another phrase. There is also the realization, that their typed phrases have become part of the databank. Thus anyone who interacts with this program leaves a trace behind.

*Equivalents II* was exhibited in *Iterations: The Digital Image*, (catalogue published by MIT Press), at the International Center for Photography, New York, the *Montage '93* festival in Rochester, and recently at Xerox Parc where it was also put on the Internet. Legrady: *One of the premises of the project was to reverse the relationship between image and text. Usually you first have an image which then generates*



*nature. Today we speak of something looking like a photograph as opposed to something looking like nature. For Legrady, the transition from optical-mechanical to digital technologies has led to a new field of representation labelled by Paul Virilio as 'infography'. With the new technologies one can now visualize concepts mathematically that do not necessarily exist in the world. Claude Shannon's definitions of signal and noise from Information Theory is another crucial component of Equivalents II. Legrady: What I am doing is taking random numerical data generated through mathematical algorithms and shaping them, situating them within a cultural context in such a way that they take meaningful form. Shannon's theory defines signal as ordered information and noise as random, unintended information. And since both are information, noise can be as valuable as signal.*

*GLO When you watch this program at work, you get the sense of an inside view of the co-processor. In a way, you treat the computer as a slave. You make it work very hard for us, forcing it to compute intensively to produce the cloud images.*

*GLO* But I also worked very hard to conceptualize this program! And it took a year and a half of close work with Lee Worden, a talented computer programmer to complete it. Questioning the essence of the computer is very much what this project is about. In the museums where the piece is shown, audiences come to it believing in the authority of this technology. My intent through the work is to make audiences aware that subjectivity is a part of computer-generated information. The *Equivalents II* project has come out of a long term goal to come up with a program that would simulate a



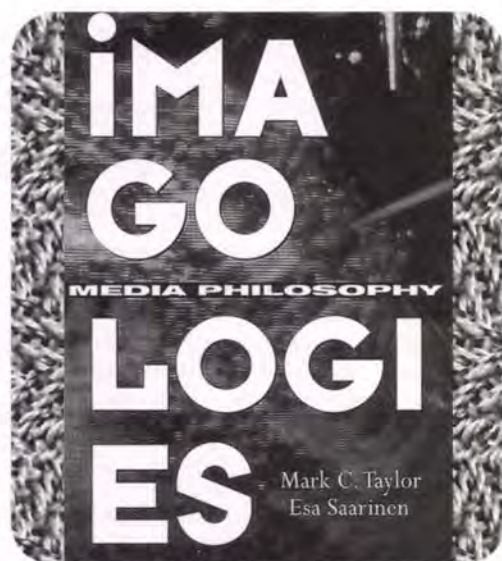
*text through academic analysis or press reviews. This is an artwork that requires a certain amount of patience on the viewer's part, because you have to learn what the piece is about as you do it. The work doesn't tell you anything concrete about itself, but hopefully it reveals its essence to the viewer.*

Legrady named the *Equivalents II* after Alfred Stieglitz's 1922 body of abstract photographs of clouds, titled the *Equivalents*. Stieglitz described these images as functioning on a metaphoric level rather than as literal, visual descriptions of clouds. He considered them as pictures of the chaos in the world, and of his relationship to that chaos. Another reference Legrady mentions are Gerhard Richter's realist and abstract paintings both of which refer to photographic representation. *In the twentieth century photographic seeing has become equated with*



photograph to such an extent that you would not question its authenticity. As images become more complex they enter the realm of the symbolic, like space pictures or medical photos that need an explanation to be understood. I consider computer programming to be an important area of creative activity. Instead of standing in front of a canvas, working intuitively with colors, I have to write mathematical code to realize a concept into form. I have to pre-conceptualise, turn it into language and then see what it does. And it usually does something altogether different than what you initially thought it would do. It's a great mirroring device, letting you know that your logical reasoning is never quite right.

[the clearing], an interactive artwork about the Serbian/Bosnian conflict and the *Anecdoted Archive* from the Cold War are both distributed by base.arts. [the clearing] is available on 3.5 diskettes (Mac or PC), individuals \$45, institutions \$65. *The Archive* is on CD-ROM, individuals \$65, institutions \$120. To order write, call or e-mail base.arts, P.O. Box 78154, San Francisco, CA 94107, USA or telephone (415) 821-4989, base@well.sf.ca.us



MARK C. TAYLOR, ESA SAARINEN

**Imagologies:  
Mediaphilosophy**

Routledge, 1994, ISBN 0 415 10338 x, £ 14.99 (paper),  
ISBN 0 415 10337 1, £ 40.00 (cloth), English text, 320 pp.  
by BAS RAJMAKERS

Now that the realisation is sinking in for more and more publishers that we are in a grey area between the printed book and electronic publications, conspicuous hybrids are appearing on the market. On the one hand we see completely linear novels being brought out in electronic form, such as a number of the Expanded Books from the Voyager Company. At the same time, nonlinear texts which beg for hypertext links and interactive search methods are being offered as printed books.

*Imagologies* by Mark C. Taylor and Esa Saarinen is an example of this latter category. *Imagologies* is an enormous stack of slogans, statements, oracles, confessionals, questions and ukases about the role of the (new, mostly) media. The bits of text are often only a few lines long and impossible to assemble into one narrative. Because the book is printed and bound, an order is imposed, but it is rather an arbitrary one. Today's reader, after all, is used to reading books in every way except from front to back, so one adjusts quite easily to *Imagologies*. Unfortunately there is no index, an instrument that somewhat eases criss-cross reading. I kept having the urge to click on a word to look up the other places where it appeared (a method of navigation which is possible with every word in the electronic Expanded Books).

As one reads, it becomes clear that the authors well realise they are in a grey area: *It's too late for a book, but too early for e-texts*, they state. They finally chose for a printed publication because they wanted to reach those people who are not (yet) familiar with electronic books and networks. Here they mean academics who have yet to poke their noses outside the Gutenberg Galaxy. And these academics will be startled when they pick up *Imagologies*, because the book reads like a cheerful valediction: by the time the last page is turned the Gutenberg Galaxy has gone up in smoke and we see only blips on a screen. The authors began with those blips. The book came about as an educational program which they developed in collaboration. In 1992 this program consisted of a work group on the influence of new communications technologies, held simultaneously in the us

and Finland via video conferencing and e-mail. You can follow all the ups and downs of the preparations and the work group in *Imagologies* yourself, since a large part of the e-mail communication between Esa and Mark runs as a continuous thread through the book. And as it goes with e-mail, there is not only serious discussion but also chatter, philosophising and the odd brief announcement: *Hi Mark, I have to be quick, I'm in my car...* Highly personal texts also drift matter-of-factly through the messages, about the death of Mark's father and Esa's love for his wife Pipsa. Thus *Imagologies* has become a book which not only reflects critically on new media but also simply shows how these media are used in everyday life.

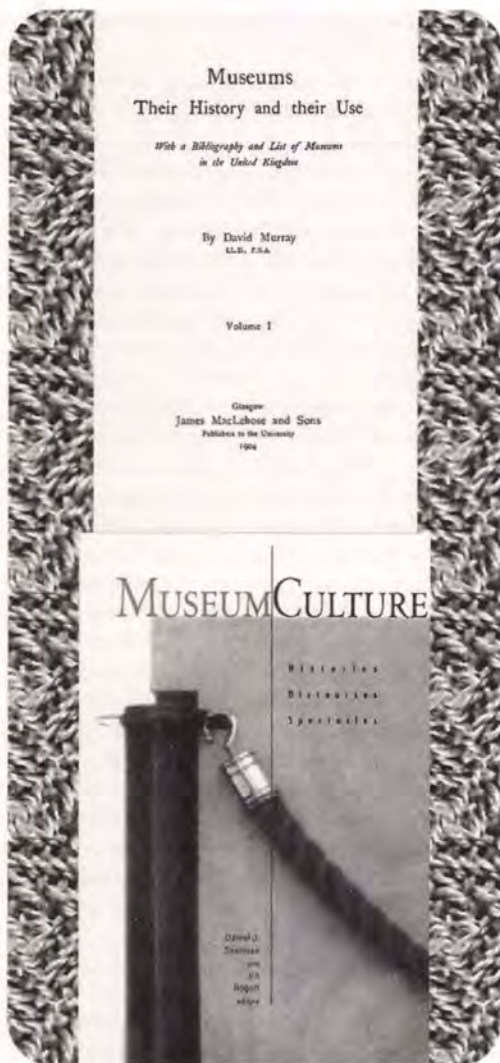
Somewhere in the stream of e-mail messages the two came upon the idea of writing a book. The problem that neither had the time to do it was bent round into an advantage. With the help of e-mail and the Net they developed a form of 'working apart together'. Along with the series of complete e-mail messages the book contains playful explorations of about twenty terms, including *telewriting*, *videovisions*, *netropolis*, *speed*, *cyborgs* and *televangelism*. It is thus proven that in this age a book can be made by people who have no time to write one. Esa Saarinen doesn't even read them: *Personally, I seldom read books. In the midst of speedreading a book takes too much time.* And he suspects that he is not the only one; so *Imagologies* was written for people who have no time to read. Reading has been replaced by scanning: quickly rushing over tables of contents, indexes and book reviews, in the hope that this amounts to having more or less read a book. Esa Saarinen suggests a somewhat different tactic: *Shock-effect reading, that is what I would recommend. Hypertextual reading, in the sense in which you jump around at will in a given textmass, not necessarily intending to grasp the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Instead, you just pump gas in your engine.* He has also used this principle in his classes, with what he calls 'excellent results', because the students care as little for reading as he does himself. He works as follows: students are given a photocopy of a random page from a random book and must let the book inspire them to comment upon it. Through the limitation of that one photocopy it becomes possible to set aside the 'real' context of the text and to concentrate on one paragraph. Freed of the excess baggage formed by the complete book, it becomes much simpler to generate commentary as a reader; or, better yet, to write further.

*Imagologies* seems an advancement of this teaching method: each page is like a photocopy lying in a random stack. Unfortunately, the stack is bound into a book. But as you jump around for a while in the textmass of the book, the glue of the spine gives out and the book takes on a more appropriate form: a stack of loose pages. Pull a sheet from the stack and you will see a largely blank page with a couple of words in crazily styled lettering and a single paragraph of text. This white space, it turns out, is meant for the reader. We are urged to write the blanks full.

Nonlinear, fragmentary and jumpy though the book may be, a series of ideas are developed here into theoretical concepts and commentaries. The most important is 'imagologies', for which the book is named. The basis of this concept consists of the observation that *since image has displaced print as the primary medium for discourse, the public use of reason can no longer be limited to print culture. To be effective, writing must become imagoscription that is available to everyone.* Unfortunately this 'imagoscription' is not developed in detail in this book. Here and there indications and ideas are brought forward that clarify 'imagologies' somewhat, but these fragments cannot be strung together (it is even difficult

to locate all the places where the word appears). One of the theses here is that every book is a also an image, and this is well supported by the unusual layout of the pages, but besides a few drawings and backgrounds, there are no images here. The authors limit themselves to writing about images, tv, video and home movies — while writing with images is precisely what needs to be further explored. Oh well; writing with images via e-mail might have been a bit difficult back in 1992.

translation LAURA MARTZ



DAVID MURRAY  
**Museums**  
*Their History and their Use*

James MacLehose and Sons, Glasgow 1904. English text, 339 pp.

DANIEL J. SHERMAN & IRIT ROGOFF (ed.)

**MUSEUM CULTURE**  
*Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*

Routledge, London 1994. ISBN 0 415 09274 4. English text,  
301 pp., £40.00 (hb), £14.99 (pb)

by JORINDE SEIJDEL

*A Norway house, built of beams without mortar or stone; shoes and sandals from Russia, Siam and Egypt; the skin of a man dressed as parchment; a drinking cup of the skull of a Moor killed in the*

*beleaguering of Haerlem; warlike arms used in China; Chinese Songs, Chinese paper, Chinese books, and a great many other articles from China; Egyptian mummies and Egyptian idols; several Roman coins; a Roman lamp which burns always under ground and another which burned eternally; an hand of a Meermaide presented by Prince Mauritz; a mushroom above 100 years old, which grew on the banks of the Haerlemer river; a petrified toad-stool; a box of very large amber presented by Daniel Beckler; a thunderbolt given by Melchior de Moncheson and a mallet or hammer that the savages in New Yorke kill with, (...). In the 17th century, this bizarre collection made up part of the Chiefest Rarities in the Publick Theater and Anatomie-Hall of the University of Leyden, according to *Museums*, a brilliant study written in 1904 by the Englishman David Murray. There was also the skeleton of an ass upon which sat a woman that killed her daughter; the skeleton of a man, sitting upon an ox, executed for stealing cattle; a young thief hanged, being the Bridegroom whose Bride stood under the gallows, very curiously set up in his ligaments (...). Using extensive primary and secondary research sources and mind-boggling collection inventories, Murray gives a nineteenth-century, historicizing explanation of the museum. Not dull or pedantic, but written entertainingly and with passion: a must for those who have a love-hate relationship with museums. However much you may already know about the history of the museum, Murray pulls you into a fantastic labyrinth of objects and freakish structures.*

Reading about the collections of medieval and sixteenth- and seventeenth-century churches, treasuries and curiosity collections, the antecedents of the museum, one is reminded of the senseless classification system in a 'certain Chinese encyclopaedia' in a story by Borges, which inspired Foucault to write *The Order of Things*. In this mysterious reference work, animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camel-hair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies.

The classification systems of the collections Murray studied are almost as strange. Until the seventeenth century, the place occupied by objects in a collection was determined by their 'correspondence' with regard to material or size. Symmetry was also a primary aim in creating an exhibition. Thus were created the most extraordinary linkages, for example: *an armadillo beside an ostrich egg; a cocoa nut beside a stone swan; a bird of paradise beside a remora*. Most often, the exhibited objects were a hodge-podge of natural and artificial rarities, and were considered a spectacle whose main purpose was to amaze. *For example, the anatomical collection at Dresden was arranged like a pleasure garden. Skeletons were interwoven with branches of trees in the form of hedges so as to form vistas*. Things were selected according to the degree to which they deviated from the everyday and as illustrations of religious or scientific beliefs. A good collection always had giant bones, mummies, human skin, and a unicorn's horn, said to possess wondrous healing powers.

New classification principles emerged in the eighteenth century. This was to Murray's relief, as he looked somewhat askance at the 'unscientific character of the first museums', which were based on 'metaphysics and theology'. As specialisation increased in all areas, art, science and nature became separate fields and correspondence became less important than difference. Separate chapters are devoted to Köhler's classification system and Linnaeus' ideal museum classification.

But in 1816, according to Murray, a museum was still often a collection *Of unicorns and alligators./Elks, mermaids, mummies, witches, satyrs./And twenty other stranger matters*. For Murray, the 'modern' museum is characterised by specialisation and scientifically responsible classification. The nineteenth-century Murray believes in science, progress and history. The museum should illustrate the growth and development of civilisation and the arts. Murray regards the museum as a humanistic storage depot for 'human' knowledge and skill, conveying the best of the best to humanity in an orderly, methodical fashion. How this should be accomplished is the subject of his handbook, suffering as it does from an infectious kind of overload. His conclusion is modest: *The museum of 1897 is far in advance of the museum of 1847; but it in turn will be old-fashioned by the end of twenty years and when the coming century is half-way through its methods and arrangements will probably be wholly superseded by something better. We are ever moving onwards, but we do not reach the goal.*

A devoted museophile, Murray could not regard the museum he advocated as an ideological construction — he was part of one himself. He could not evaluate the museum as an instrument of political power or a potential weapon for controlling history, things and people. For him the modern museum was a principally progressive, enlightened institution. The museum is still struggling with this image. The conservation of culture and nature is still seen as something noble and natural, an act that compensates for the large-scale destruction wrought by continuing modernisation. It would be difficult for museums to perceive that they are inherent to the strategy of the modern, in which the 'new' can only manifest itself if the 'old' is also produced.

We have long since seen the consolidation of the kind of museum Murray desired. We are also witnessing an irrepressible global growth of museums. And if modernisation has run rampant, so has the museum: the way it deals with the world and its objects has expanded outwards. The musealisation of nature and culture has taken on the proportions of a genuine phenomenon of the times. Just as in the distant past, but on a much larger scale, the rare and strange (which may now be anything) is conserved and celebrated. One can only wonder if these preserved objects display any more coherence than the 'fantastic' classifications of long ago.

Of course, 90 years after Murray, there is a serious museum 'discourse' which goes much further than the hackneyed issue of whether a museum should be a temple or a laboratory. Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, the first a professor of Critical History and French Studies at Rice University, the second a professor of Critical Theory and Visual Culture at the University of California, put together the collection of essays *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, a critical analysis of the theory and practice of the museum. The collection 'focuses on museums as the intricate amalgam of historical structures and narratives, practices and strategies of display, and the concerns and imperatives of various governing ideologies'. Recovering the history of the museum is an important goal of *Museum Culture*, as the concealment of this history and the transformation of 'History into Nature' has become a part of the business of the museum, according to the editors.

Fans of French theoreticians like Baudrillard and Jeudy — both of whom, especially the latter, have written about the musealisation of culture — may like to know immediately that they are not referred to here: *Museum Culture* is a museological examination, not a sociological one. The museum is not used as a

metaphor or model to describe the state of culture, but rather is examined in terms specific to museums, from the viewpoint of their own history and practice. *Museum Culture* questions the museum about the role it plays in the formation and maintenance of social ideologies and power structures. In the introduction, it is with a certain pride that the editors note that they share a view of the museum with the authors, one influenced by the classification theories of Foucault and by Adorno and Benjamin, as well as critical studies of gender and colonialism.

*Museum Culture* is divided into *Histories, Discourses* and *Spectacles*. In *Histories*, the contribution of museums to the formation of national and local histories and identities is examined. The essays look at the relationship between the art museum and the creation of a German national identity in the 19th and 20th century (Detleff Hoffman); the ideological aspirations of the founders of the Whitechapel Gallery in Victorian England in their attempt to appeal to the 'people' (Seth Koven); attempts in the us in the last century to close the gap between museum and public (Vera Zolberg); the emergence of the 'eco-museum' in France and the degree to which it has influenced the idea of 'cultural and natural heritage' (Dominique Poulot); and the role of Israeli historical museums in the (idea) formation of a charged Jewish history (Ariella Azoulay).

*Discourses* is about the claims museums make about their enterprise, and is in my opinion the most intriguing part of the collection. In 'The Museum as Metaphor in Nineteenth-Century France', French historian and curator Chantal Georget researches some of the habits which emerging institutions like the modern museum, the department store (the arcade/show window) and the press (specifically, the popular 'museum periodicals', 'printed' museums intended for a broad reading public) took from each other (habits of looking, display, spatial organisation, selling, vocabulary) and how they complemented each other as 'machines of capitalism' in its early phase. 'Quatremère/Benjamin/Marx: Art Museums, Aura, and Commodity Fetishism' by Sherman is a pre-history of museum criticism, in which he draws parallels between the insights of Quatremère de Quincy (an influential French art theorist in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and Secretary of the Académie des Beaux Arts) and those of Marx and Benjamin. Sherman's point of departure is the museum criticism formulated by Adorno in *Valéry Proust Museum*. Adorno condemned museums as cemeteries of art that contribute to the neutralisation of culture. He rejected a situation in which people may only come into contact with art in museums as an artificial one. According to Sherman, Adorno comprehended both 'decontextualization as a strategy of power' and the direct link between the museum and trade. Sherman then takes a step backwards by revealing how anti-museum discourse began at the very appearance of the museum in the writings of the 'museophile' Quatremère de Quincy (who wrote, for example: 'To displace all these monuments, to gather up in this way the decomposed fragments, to put the debris in a methodical order, and to make of such a gathering a practical course in modern chronology: this is, for a practical reason, to constitute ourselves as a dead nation; it is to attend our own funeral while we are alive; it is to kill Art to write its history; but it is not history, it is an epitaph.'). Sherman illustrates how Quatremère had already developed a theory about the commodification of art and the alliance of art and the marketplace. Here, he finds parallels with Marx's notion of commodity fetishism and Benjamin's theory of the decay of the aura.

The final two articles in *Discourses* emerge from specific practical examples: Boris Groys, known for his *Über das Neue*, analyses how the ideal of the Russian avant-garde, 'a unified, all-encompassing space of life in which everyday praxis would coincide with art', could not be realized by the avant-garde itself because it perceived this new unity as the stylistic opposite of tradition: in other words, it could not distance itself from a museum perspective. The Stalinist regime, however, was able to execute this project, a 'struggle against the museum', not by liquidating old culture, but by appropriating it at an ideological level. The consequences for art were fatal, according to Groys. German art historian Walter Grasskamp writes about the politics of the museological embrace of modernism in the Federal Republic of Germany. He concentrates on the first Documenta of 1955, 'reconstructing and discussing it as an incomplete, even inadequate answer to another German exhibition of some national and international importance, the campaign against 'degenerate art' in 1937'.

Finally, *Spectacles* illustrates various moments at which strategies of cultural display embrace the technologies of spectacle. Frederick Bohrer, an art historian specialized in exoticist theory and practice, researches the notion of exoticism in relation to a collection of exotic, ancient Assyrian artefacts added to the British Museum's collection around 1850. He explores various ways the objects were exhibited, the social and institutional loci that determined their representation, and their influence on the emerging popular press. Irit Rogoff contributes a discerning essay on 'how strategies of display actually make the museum the funerary site of uncomfortable or inconvenient historical narratives'. She focuses on the manipulation of gender categories in reconstituting a mode of representation for National Socialist fascism in German historical museums. She concludes that 'museum displays, in their profound anxiety not to replicate the original seductive spectacle, have produced an equally dangerous gendered fiction that is rendering viewers politically neutered through humane empathy and historical mastery.' Anne Higonnet's contribution examines the ambiguous role of feminism in the creation and maintenance of The National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington. The American critic and curator Brian Wallis concludes the book with his thorough essay on how nations sell themselves and practice diplomacy through large cultural festivals and spectacular blockbuster exhibitions. Lured by profit, museums all too easily allow themselves to be used for these organized displays of national self-promotion. They 'narrow our view of a country to a benign, if exotic, fairy tale', writes Wallis.

We cannot know what Murray would have thought of it, but *Museum Culture* is a substantial contribution to museum discourse. These essays have been written with the greatest possible knowledge, though their academic form might be tough going for those who prefer experimental theorising and gay science. The research areas are specialized and some of the authors stick too closely to the paths marked out by the museum itself — unfortunately, this is not really an anti-museum book — but taken together, the essays live up to their aim and 'call attention to the museum's presence and power in the broadest conceivable configuration of contemporary culture'. Those interested in the museum as a metaphor for culture would do well to read the more staid books as well, in order not to lose sight of what the museum, and thus the metaphor, entails.

translation JIM BOEKBINDER



KLAUS THEWELEIT  
**Buch der Könige II**

Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, Basel, Frankfurt 1994, German text  
by VOLKER HEISE AND PETER BERZ

In 1988 Klaus Theweleit sent the first volume of his work *Buch der Könige* (Book of Kings), which up to now has been drawn up in four sequences, on its travels. The passengers were Gottfried Benn, Claudio Monteverdi, Knut Hamsun, Orpheus, Bert Brecht and other kings, of novel, opera, poetry, theatre.

Volume I, entitled *Orpheus — 'and' crossed out — Eurydice*, investigated the simple question: how does one become a king of art? The answer was straightforward and surprising: by means of murder and violence. Elias Canetti had provided the key to this. In *Masse und Macht* (Mass and Power) Canetti depicts the figure of the 'survivor'. He sees him as a sovereign whose power and aura come from the dead upon which he is standing. To one who leaves his enemies and/or comrades-in-arms behind as dead, by cunning and malice, strategy or luck, the position of ruler comes easily. A king's position which, after all, is also that of the historian noting down the history of the battles.

Theweleit transmitted the figure of the survivor into the sphere of art production and thereby passed from Canetti's theory of mass to the analysis of biographical microstructures. It was in the life histories of art kings and superstars that he also discovered corpses; above all, the bodies of women.

Whether the women of the kings of... died of hunger, perished as a result of melancholy or drove themselves/were driven to suicide, their deaths made men into producers of art. 'Hades-connections', as Theweleit calls it, dead women as medial

bridges into the beyond. It is via these women that the greatest tragedies arise, the most heart-rending poems, the chants, which move the hardest heart to pity.

As proof Theweleit unravels a series of kings' biographies in criminological detail. Most of these biographies have little in common, are to be found in different times, in different societies and cultures, yet they are connected by a certain pattern: women's corpses on the one hand, great art on the other.

The criminologist's nose, repeatedly put to the test by Theweleit since *Männerphantasien* (Male Fantasies) — the book which made him into a king himself — is also a strategy in *Buch der Könige II*. He extends his king theory partly by using the same protagonists as in Volume I, from the king to the royal household, to art-states or states of art and their encounters with real powers. What is it that connects Benn with Hitler, Pound with Mussolini, and finally Elvis Presley with Richard Nixon? In answer to these questions, Theweleit's biographical tracking this time tinkers not merely with the life histories of European art production, but with the histories and historical myths of America, with media history and state theory.

In the *Buch der Könige* the history of the teenage revolution following the Second World War is contracted into the tragedy of the King of Rock'n'Roll, Elvis Presley. An entire culture follows Presley — from revolver to the 7" single to the supermarket and drugs — elements which produce Presley, which fall over one another in his biography and radiate from there. A multitude of cultural data and details cross through Elvis' life story and charge up his character until it begins to shine like a STAR and all scientific fuses blow.

The five chapters on Elvis Presley begin with an image: Elvis as gunman, legs apart, revolver drawn, eyes looking for trouble; Elvis, threefold copied, one on top on the other, in silk-screen printing series à la Andy Warhol. 'Elvis, Andy' is the title of the introductory chapter, a parallel biography following this single image. Theweleit tracks down all conceivable and inconceivable connections, parallelisms, facts in this image. Warhol comes from Pittsburgh, a frontier city of industrial serial production. Warhol becomes king of serial art. Pittsburgh is the city from which Westinghouse builds up his electrical empire and where RCA, one of America's first powerful recording companies, has its headquarters. Electricity and radio make Elvis a superstar, the star of the single. In Warhol's silk-screen print there is instead of the 45 single a Colt 45 revolver, produced in Hartford, Connecticut where the Underwood, the first serial-produced typewriter, comes from, and the first typewriting author, Mark Twain... And so a web is spun from biographical trails, medial and technical histories, politics, rock 'n' roll, literature — and the spiders in the web are Elvis/Andy.

At this point Theweleit's biographical process somersaults. Linear life histories mingle into the widely intertwined network of medial and cultural history. Everything is connected to everything else, the places (Hartford, Pittsburgh, Memphis) to the artists (Presley, Warhol, Twain) to the medial technologies (radio, 7" record, typewriter, silk-screen printing), which come from the same geographical places as the artists who come out of these techniques. Finally the network becomes the rhizome, that root which the French philosophers Deleuze/Guattari took in the Seventies as the model for their thinking and writing (and Theweleit was among the first German-speaking authors to work with Deleuze/Guattari's books): no strategic centre, no clear edge, only the names of kings sitting on the roots like precious blossoms.

Theweleit's royal rhizome is, however, not a root but a book, and is called such. It bears its biblical name *Buch der Könige* because, as an alphabetical phenomenon, it appears at the end of the Gutenberg galaxy in sought-after, permanent competition with other media such as film, comics, records — and imitates them: mixing from books, scratching from letters, cineastic deliria sailing on the iconic surf boards of gigantic photo archives. The books of kings take their message from media competition and media imitation, strictly according to McLuhan.

Just as sounds are remixed, Theweleit invents processes for mixing text on endless rolls, stuck together, cut (*Buch der Könige I*), and at the computer as well (*Buch der Könige II*). Trick one: abolishing inverted commas, that classical text operator for the production of science and commentary, as proof of quotation and authorship. Their place is taken up by three different typographies in which scientific and literary texts, royal decrees and catchy tunes, songs and facts are mixed together on one single dance floor of letters. The rhythm is set by Theweleit's favourite punctuation marks, the ellipses ... splitting ... connecting ... pushing ... pausing ... gap-filling ... joker-playing. Céline became famous for his ellipses. He called his writing *ma petite musique*.

Theweleit's music is great and it runs through his writing as sound. Five Elvis chapters pay heed to the constant humming of the pop mantra. 'Instant Karma' is sung, John Lennon flies in, the song comes to the surface of the letters, incantation, cheats its way between dashes and ellipses, spreads itself out, pushes forward text after text on instant karma, Nike-advertising or Warhol — to the point of delirium, up to the great Everything Goes: rhythm, karma, evergreens, lines of poetry turn up, things heard, read, just seen on television, scraps of songs, the shooting stars from the Great Ear, ending, greetings to Bix Beiderbecke, ending in a tutti of the most daring overlappings... then: the end. Enough of the delirium, star. The author drinks coffee, instant, and continues with his text networks at the level of hard facts, the short story of the gym shoe, the murder mystery of Evita Peron's corpse, Voltaire's fat niece. For Theweleit's intertwined books of kings consist of footnotes.

Three layers of this make text and play book. First, there is the main text from the various typographies; then footnotes below the text; and third, footnotes following the text, all written at different times, at different places — triple types, triple ellipses, triple notes of one book which no longer has an apparatus but which is an apparatus. Or: how great is the amount of 20th century knowledge which one can make explode into a royal apparatus? The book dramas of the baroque concluded with the interminable commentary of the writer in which he spread out his entire — at that time scholarly — knowledge of the epoch. But who has really ever read all the footnotes of the baroque? And which alpha-bête will ever develop the technique of integrating the data-scattering of Theweleit's books of kings into one set of reading matter? In a more radical manner than the umpteenth anthology at the Frankfurt book fair, Theweleit's books will have asked the question: is that which is writable also readable? Must that which is writable at the technical level of data processing be readable at all? Not for reason of hermeneutical aporia, not for reason of secret knowledge or immersion in the dust of the mundane, but simply, topically and dramatically: for reason of data volume, of systematically and stylistically operated data overloading.

Theweleit's preferred store for such amounts of cultural data is called 'myth': myths about kings, Sir Lancelot and King

Arthur's round table, the return of Sir Lancelot as JFK, and mythical comic figures such as Captain Marvel, Elvis Presley as the lifelong transformation into King Marvel, fill up the book of kings, the return to the world of the Greek gods not excluded. As myth books, the books of kings follow a film technique, that of superimposition. Myth is layered upon myth, and at the end we see the outline of figures which can deprive the myth of its mystique just as well as they can produce endless new myths and texts of myths. If Foucault systematically cut down discourses with his process of the film cut (cuts between synchronic structures, formerly called epochs), Theweleit's process of superimposition systematically cultivates the increase of discourses. And that is the reason why his books are so thick.

Yet Theweleit does not write in mythical dependence. His superimpositions, manipulations of figures and images are continually being cut up, in chains of clues, in series and in a continual lining up of historical material. *Splits/connections shoot up in serial-production from the confluences on triple-Elvis-hips* ..., and where there are no Colts, there is a geographical location, a date, a letter combination from which traces and sequences of traces follow the next and the next-but-one point of planned overdetermination. Connect-I-cut: with this the books of kings leap through the histories of history and everything becomes present on the platform of the book, just as in Freud on the psychic platform.

Now and again the myths and series which Theweleit serially delivers stop at the hard rock of reality. Rock history, according to Theweleit, is also the history of revolution speeds — 75 / 45 / 33 RPM, i.e. revolutions or rounds per minute. And kings are anything but metaphorical products of art. The criminologist reveals them to be real kings and real powers. They have money, control markets and air fleets, they have courts peppered with schemers, mafiosi, colonels or managers; their subjects are called consumers or fans. In short: these kings preside over places where, in Theweleit's state theory, there are *autonomous art or media states*. However, a state theory beginning thus is not in the least concerned with 'man' and human technologies. It goes straight to the stars, to the gods, the superstars and their mythical orbits.

The only problem is: how to return to history? Not at all, writes Theweleit. For myth and history simply fall together in medial realities in both a metaphysical and physical, temporal and spatial sense. That is the reason why in the *Buch der Könige II*, art producers communicate not only with an absent, dead third person. The sovereigns of art and media states get into direct contact with *parallel national states or informer states*. The collaboration of Gottfried Benn, Ezra Pound or Elvis Presley with Hitler, Mussolini, or Nixon is not explained as a slip, not because of psychic instability or historical misjudgement. Contact with informer-states is dictated by political circumstances in the respective art states. It is their foreign policy. Gottfried Benn does not want to be merely the prince of the poets: in 1933 he wanted to become a real king, i.e. the president of the Prussian academy of arts. Elvis lets Richard Nixon label him a drug cop — as he forges a pact against a power in his own court, his manager and chancellor Tom Parker (whose connections to the mafia are not unlikely). And on top of everything else, that label is a means of expelling drug-greedy English bands from the rock 'n' roll throne. A foreign policy which, in the case of Elvis, is known to have remained a dream.

As a rule, then, collaboration ends in downfall for autonomous art states. Gottfried Benn does not become president

but is forbidden to write and invents internal emigration. Elvis Presley does not handcuff a single dealer, certainly not the likes of John Lennon, and he dies young, his body soaked with Dilaudid. Media, writes Theweleit, are, at the moment they seize power, absolute sovereigns; *they eat up the body whilst they are providing the orbit for the myth.*

translation ANN THURSFIELD



JEAN BAUDRILLARD

**L'illusion de la Fin**  
OU  
**La Grève des Événements**

Éditions Galilée, Paris 1992, French text

**Die Illusion des Endes**

Merve Verlag Berlin, 1994, ISBN 3 88396 116 7, German text,

190 pp., DM24

by GEERT LOVINK

Dietmar Kamper says in an interview with Rudolf Maresch: *Jean Baudrillard is an extremely conservative thinker who certainly does not betray the ideals of the bourgeois revolution. He observes with deep disappointment how they are being sold off cheap by precisely those who appear to uphold them. Those who have to uphold values have already betrayed them.* Baudrillard, who turned 65 this year, was read at the height of his popularity as a sort of liberation theologian proclaiming the end of politics, the social, sex and other ideologies. His objective irony was suited to the euphoria around the circulation of signs and simulacra, believed to have been discovered as a tendency in the art and media of the 1980s. Must we now suddenly view Baudrillard as a secret agent of the Enlightenment?

*L'illusion de la Fin* (The Illusion of the End) does indeed contain indications in that direction, though not explicit ones. His radical media criticism can no longer be interpreted as ironic and is becoming ever harder and more pessimistic, without losing any of its acuteness. Besides Virilio, Baudrillard remains Europe's most important media theorist, following the changes after 1989 more closely than anyone else and writing about them from his own standpoint, without either being born out or falling back into resignation or despair. But there is precious little to laugh about anymore, for even the most brilliantly agile mind.

Waiting for Baudrillard to come out as a rationalist and a democrat would be in vain. Yet something has fundamentally changed in his writing. Baudrillard floats in a void; he has lost his 'scene.' Twenty-five years after 1968, Marxist and psychoanalytic polemicising is no longer worthwhile. The scenery around these



debates has crumbled and collapsed. Referring to the importance of simulacra has become equally ridiculous and redundant; today the artificial and the polished are everywhere and impossible to avoid. *Fake, it's so real; I'm beyond fake.* (Courtney Love) The departure of all the old and the sudden entry of the new has effected nothing, according to Baudrillard at the beginning of the 90s. The new era refuses to arrive; it is as if phenomena have gone on strike and refuse any longer to mean anything. Events have lost their aura and radiate no immortality, glory or salvation. The fall of the Wall was not a party, it was a hangover. After the orgy there is only remorse and melancholy.

For Baudrillard the 90s are no fin de siècle. Since belief in linearity (from point A to point B, from Creation to Judgement Day) has been suspended, without a future to work toward there can no longer be an end either: transfinality. Since 1985 (Gorbachev, Chernobyl) Baudrillard has seen the timeline of history curving back in order to avoid the magic point, the year 2000. We have either overshoot the endpoint through speed, or through slowness and compression will never reach it. History is not over, nor has it been reborn; it has become a rubbish bin, full of waste that will be recycled into infinity. Everything is reused and strewn over the globe. We will have to get used to the idea that nothing can come to an end any longer. Things are de-finite, robbed of their end.

According to Baudrillard it is no longer possible to return in an act of regret or regression to a state of affairs before the vanishing point. *We will never regain history as it was before information and media.* There are no more real actors, nor authoritative interpretations. *What is left is only actuality, 'action' as in film, and 'auction,' the evaluation of events by the price they fetch in the bidding for information.*

According to Baudrillard we are fed up with the *eternal simulation of modernity* and have entered a phase of 'desimulation.' We no longer observe the presentation of a truth, but subject ourselves to a test of credibility. The problem of 'disinformation' in the cases of the Gulf War and the exhumed corpses in Timisoara, Romania lies in the fact that the information itself, and not the events, became the scandal. In the more recent case of the mass rapes in Bosnia, too, the reconstructions centre on the question of how the story was created. The virtual character of contemporary images gives rise to indifference (*It's only television*), distance, scepticism and apathy. Television not only offers us illusions; it also aims to profoundly disappoint us. Illusion and disillusion go hand-in-hand and ensure that the real repels and frightens us. We can thank media makers as well as politicians for taking on this thankless task. The immunising effect of television protects us from an unbearable responsibility. We have arrived at rock bottom; we are careful not to meddle in communication, however much the ideology of interactivity makes us believe otherwise.

As events roll past on the screen and are forgotten as quickly as possible, so at the same time nothing must disappear and everything must be preserved and excavated. What's bad about this is not that we are burdened with a waste problem, but that we are becoming waste ourselves. The Net turns human traffic directly into waste. Baudrillard goes in great detail into Biosphere II, a project beyond apocalypse and the end, *without having solved the problem of the end.* This evil ecology assumes that soon there will only be interactive subjects, without objects. Natural selection has been eliminated, everything is neatly embalmed and offered up to artificial survival.

*The compact disc. It does not wear out, even when one uses it. That is terrible. As if one had never used it, as if one had never existed at all.*

Baudrillard cannot laugh at all at this sort of ad-speak. He shivers at the fallacy of realisation, which wants to exhaust all possibility. Everywhere around him he sees an impulse to perfection, a maximalisation of capabilities, limits which must be reached. The universalisation of data and knowledge is merely a preliminary stage of their disappearance, *just as with stars: their maximum expansion is followed by agony.* The indifference which arises from this is burdened by a lack of difference. The transparent neo-individualist (no longer self-directed but other-directed) *can no longer jump over his own shadow, because he no longer has one.* He no longer differentiates himself from himself and is therefore indifferent to himself; not a schizophrenic but an isophrenic. *Our computers too long for difference — they are autistic, bachelor machines: they suffer, and avenge themselves with an unrestrained tautology of their own language.*

What can still be deployed against medial inflation is an *ironic form of information confusion, a meaningless way of writing*, which keeps pace with the meaningless content of reportage. Does an 'homage to vagueness' lurk behind this? At the end of *L'Illusion de Fin*, in spite of his pessimism Baudrillard gives us a positive outline of the *poetic reversibility of events.* This gives insight into the *radical illusion of the world*, which he presents as a *magical alternative to the linearity of history, the disenchanting confusion and the chaotic profusion of current events.*

translation LAURA MARTZ



MARTIN GIESECKE

**Der Buchdruck  
in der frühen Neuzeit**

*Eine historische Fallstudie über die Durchsetzung neuer  
Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologien*

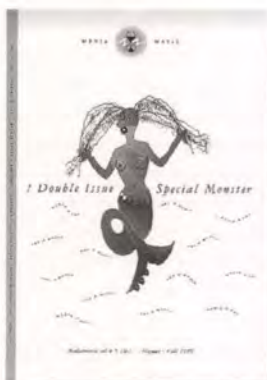
Suhrkamp Verlag (pub), Frankfurt am Main 1991/1994.

ISBN 3 518 58171 6, German text, 944 pp., DM 68

by GEERT LOVINK

The emergence of the 'new media' quite naturally makes one think of the invention of typography. Books and new media are currently seen as natural enemies, each out for the blood of the other. Until recently the book ruled as a monarch over its subjects, all other media. Its 500-year dominion became a constant so taken for granted that it took effort to consider this hegemonic system of knowledge storage and distribution as a distinct medium. This changed with the appearance of McLuhan's 1962 study *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (his breakthrough). This mountain of quotations, however, a hypertext structure *avant la lettre*, has been difficult for historians to take seriously. The same holds true for Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy* and Vilem Flusser's philosophical reflections in *Die Schrift*.

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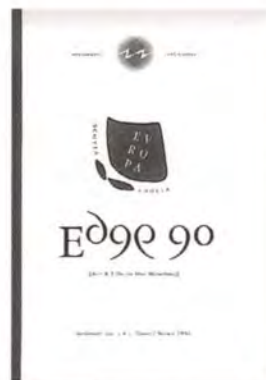


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It is time that the gap was closed between dry library science, where the history of the book is recorded, and speculative contemporary theory. In his ponderous study *Der Buchdruck in der frühen Neuzeit*, Martin Giesecke succeeds in doing this only in part. Giesecke is a literary scholar and linguist, not an historian. He is not gifted in telling a captivating story or writing to the point. What Giesecke can do is build systems, draw diagrams and construct paper hypertexts out of hundreds of pages of notes, name and keyword indexes, and reproductions of documents on Renaissance media politics. Starting from Luhmann's systems theory, he constructs models of the step-by-step development of book production into a complex process of composition, layout, printing, distribution and sale, ending in the connection of the reader to another text. There is a lot here for those who have been in contact with contemporary book production to recognise. This sociological approach to media archaeology differs from the Lacanian psychoanalytic method employed by Kittler et al. While Kittler and co. wish to penetrate as far as possible into the interior of the machine and expose its mathematical logic, Giesecke endeavours to bring in the greatest context possible around Gutenberg's invention of cast letters and the hand-press in 1444. In so doing he limits himself to Germany, and leaves for what it is the hypothesis that it was not Gutenberg but the Dutchman Laurens Janszoon Coster who invented typography (something a Dutchman cannot resist mentioning).

The goal of Giesecke's study is to describe, in terms of information and communications systems, the social community which was created in part of Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries by the key technology of printing. What has been lacking until now, according to him, is a theoretical model of the phenomenon of printing. Giesecke thereby chooses a media-political approach, emphasizing desires and utopian fantasies on the one hand and the social acceptance of the new medium on the other: *People rally round new totems and establish new taboos*. Although he refers now and then to the present, this is not a comparative study. In fact, Giesecke's project may have come out 10 or even 50 years too soon. Though he has unearthed plenty of material from the period around 1500 and has made it accessible in a unique manner, his knowledge of contemporary communications technology is extremely sparse. Yet he does note a parallel between the utopian expectations people had for the communicative powers of the book and those they have now with the computer. It is a joy to read this study with hypertext, CD-ROMs and the Net in the back of one's mind. A surprising conclusion for me was the necessary entanglement of new media with social utopias revealed by Giesecke. Castles in the air inspire experimentation and action and ensure that technical knowledge spreads rapidly. Utopias (from Gutenberg to Rheingold) may be idealistic and naive, but we cannot do without them. Without belief in communicative Valhallas, knowledge stays locked within a small, closed circle of technocrats.

Giesecke's research was completed in 1989 and breathes an 80s' air of German-oriented academics and their social critique of technology. Thus he argues for *minority protection* for the traditional media from the *medial monoculture*, as printing in its day was called upon to protect storytellers. Since Giesecke holds an ecological worldview (another system which seeks to encompass the totality), he wants to draw up a profit and loss account for the new media on the basis of a sort of report on their effects. While as a conservative leftist Giesecke opposes rectilinear rationalisation, at the same time he believes passionately in a rational social debate which could encompass a critique of the new media's destabilising effects via a feedback mechanism and arrive at a deliberate

decision. He wishes to compensate for the deadening, narcotic effects of new media observed by McLuhan simply by talking enough about it, in the hope that an alternative media politics will come out of it.

What makes this extensive study so interesting is its unravelling of the first phase of book manufacture, which remained unchanged until well into the 19th century. Giesecke's method resembles Gutenberg's. He isolates all the steps in the process from each other so that, through a better understanding of the separate elements, a new (discourse) machine is created. Gutenberg's first and most important invention was the type-foundry. After the mechanisation of the production of lead letters, the rest of the setting and printing process followed naturally, although Gutenberg worked on them for years with a large team of artisans and even went bankrupt in the process. From then on precision was the chief concern: the fonts had to have exactly the same shape and size, otherwise the letters would dance and the text become illegible. Conventions were also established, such as those of word division, the length of lines and the placement of pages in a section. Only gradually did it become possible to correct a setting.

Books had been printed for centuries in China and Korea with the help of block-printing and stamps. But unlike books in Europe, these brought about no social changes; rather, their effect was one of stabilisation. These books circulated in Asia on a small scale within the ruling class, and the religious elite despised the vulgar new medium. The German reform movements in the 15th and 16th centuries took a different view. Another difference lay in the early-capitalist relations within which Gutenberg and his successors worked. As private citizens they had to attract venture-capital in order to make large investments, and to recover it. But Giesecke considers type's most significant departure from Asian printing methods and calligraphy to be the pursuit of precision through mechanisation, which gave rise to *artistic proportioning*. This intention of Gutenberg's can be seen in the colophon of the 1460 *Catholicon*, which mentions the *concordia*, the *proporcione* and the *modul* which could be achieved with the new types and conventions. The *ars impressoria* had an aesthetic program from birth.

People praised the new medium for its speed of reproduction, its cost-efficiency as compared to the *ars artificialiter scribendi*, and its standardisation of text production. Printing was seen by all as a gift from God, although the Catholics had their objections. For the Protestants, and Luther most of all, God's word could flow freely and no longer needed a channelling authority. Until Gutenberg, God had released the water only drop by drop. But through his 'last gift' humanity was finally independent. With the source in the people's hands wisdom could bubble up of its own accord, without the requisite personnel tending the sluices and dams. The Catholic church saw printing solely as a means, and denied the printed book's claim to totality. For the reformists, one merely needed to learn to read, so as to make the word of God one's own. All necessary information could be called up from that machine. Biblical memory space was sufficiently filled to last until Judgment Day, and no other books needed be printed or read. Controversy soon arose around which books should or should not be printed, and how access to the new technology should be regulated.

One could already see the mountain of books looming. In a 1539 translation by F. Petrarch headed *Von vberflussz/menge und vile der buecher* we find the rhyme: *Wenig kunst vnd buecher vil/Das ist der narren freuden spil*. In the accompanying illustration we see a man, hands in hair, surrounded by thick, stately tomes. The classes which controlled writing came under pressure, and complained

about 'ink-slinging'. Early book censorship, however, did not target the medium itself, and was according to Giesecke of a defensive nature. The prohibitions which were issued applied only to translations, not to new writings. We see the same arguments recurring in the discussion around whether or not the Bible may be translated. But the advance of the printed vernacular could no longer be stopped, going hand-in-hand with the emergence of a national consciousness (which subsided again a short time later).

In the first decades of typography, besides the famous Gutenberg Bible, there appeared mainly writings which had been previously produced by hand, such as letters of indulgence, textbooks, blood-letting calendars and public proclamations; for instance, the *Türkenkalender* warns Christianity of the consequences of the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Partly what we see here is merely the continuation of mediaeval practices. Yet through a number of examples Giesecke shows that ruptures were becoming visible and a publicity was being formed which broke with the clandestine, informal transmission of information based not on reason but on faith. Sects and secret societies have no interest in new technologies; the texts remain in the hands of the elect. Printing ensures that people get texts into their own hands and read them. Only in this way are public organisations possible.

Giesecke describes the dissemination of information in the 15th and 16th centuries. After the secret of how to build the printing press had moved from city to city, there arose a trade in manuscripts which were locally reprinted many times over. In the beginning printers were publishers as well as booksellers, and the distribution area of a title was extremely limited (and in essence this has changed little since). For example, the *Plague Book* (Ulm, 1473) contained important information about the epidemic and was reprinted everywhere, including additions. Only after 60 years did conventions now taken for granted, like the title page with author's name, year and place of publication plus the name of the printer, develop. Prior to this, authorship had been seen as blasphemous. Furnishing an anonymous public with new information meant that an author betrayed himself as a creator of ideas which no one had yet thought or read. In the era of handwritten copying all attention had focused on the oldest edition, and not on the formulation of new thoughts. Only when authorship was recognised did it become possible to quote other authors. The conventions of citations, footnotes and indexing took shape and thus the accumulation of new knowledge could begin. The title page also makes not the printer but the author punishable for potentially heretical content.

Wild reprinting was curbed. Around 1500 printers were awarded copyrights, for a maximum of ten years, and pirate printing became a punishable offence. Albrecht Dürer used his famous monogram, Luther his 'ML', and their logos became recognised by the authorities, a custom which goes back to the mediaeval privilege of stamp-duty. After the medium had consolidated itself specialist literature began to appear, on such topics as mine-building, herbs, gardening and the famous illustrated *Distillation Book* (Strasbourg, 1505); practical knowledge the buyer could use. And it was already being claimed by this time that learning from books made travelling superfluous. Personal experience on location is expensive and subjective. At the end of the book Giesecke's thematic blurs into perception theory. He maintains that the further development of typographic software is being determined more and more by the search for a relation between text and image, perspective and the dominance of the eye (Leonardo da Vinci).

Giesecke's study makes clear that the introduction of 'new media' is igniting a struggle between politics and the relations of

production (cf. the Clipper Chip and the data highway) and new standards of aesthetics are being introduced, which clear a path for the explosion of knowledge (see www home pages).

translation LAURA MARTZ



PETER SLOTERDIJK  
**Medien-Zeit**

*Drei gegenwartsdiagnostische Versuche*

Cantz-Verlag Stuttgart, 1993, ISBN 3 89322 586 2, German text,  
104 pp.

by WIM NIJENHUIS

In the *Critique of Cynical Reason* (1983) Sloterdijk connected the modern 'cynic' Nietzsche to the asocial Diogenes, who replied to Plato's subtle theory of Eros by masturbating *en plein public*. Sloterdijk dubbed this active polemic with Reason 'kynicism'.

In *Eurotaöismus* (1989) he entered into a new showdown, this time with the philosophy of Heidegger, whose theory of *Gelassenheit* he praised as a third alternative to dissatisfaction with the world, in opposition to the other two: Marxism and critical theory.

For Sloterdijk such resignation is a step toward the positivisation of cynicism. It can be positive on the condition that the current social situation is described in terms other than those of class struggle and progress. He introduces the post-modern condition as a sort of addiction to process. The end of history and the death of utopias have left us in a process of furious automatic development driven by technological innovations and a permanently perverted desire to improve the world.

In this world process we cannot identify ourselves as heroes of history (i.e. avant-garde), but only as 'fools of process', carried along willy-nilly. In the wake of Ernst Jünger's *Totale Mobilmachung*, progress is (cynically) described as mobilisation: that is, acceleration, influenced by the capitalisation of time-gain; escalation of the former, through the raising of the bid of competition; and increased capabilities, influenced by organisational rationalisation and technological innovation. Sloterdijk finds critical theory and Marxism complicit with all this, and argues for a third path: a 'criticism of political kinetics'.

The fault is to be found not in the goal, but in mobilisation and speed themselves. By crossing the philosophy of Heidegger with the language of the Tao, he hopes to strip Freiburg Theory of its nationalist and fascist fallacies. He sees an Asian-tinged stoicism as the way to bring this furious movement to a pause, so that we may speak 'the language of demobilisation'.

It is not surprising that a philosopher who wishes to dissociate himself from the Enlightenment and move beyond Kant (source of inspiration for the engineering system), who declares Hegel and

his dialectical history of the development of consciousness bankrupt, and who accuses Marxism and critical theory of complicity with a hopeless system which generates catastrophe after catastrophe without prospect of a solution in its own terms, should rethink the metaphysical tradition which has led to technological mobilisation all the way down to its religious roots.

Nor is it surprising that in this quest he seeks a structural (metaphysical) dissidence in the past that would be practicable in the present. He seeks the answer in Gnosis. This is a path followed by many philosophers and artists before him: Hegel, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Cioran, Beckett and Baudrillard. Without exaggerating, we may say that a discussion is underway regarding the dissidence potential of the language of Gnosis in the post-historical media age. Within this debate Sloterdijk's position is that a new 'epoch-making' revolution is possible, and that, analogous to Gnosis in the past, it must come from an individual revolution of the soul. His study of Gnosis resulted in a massive work published in 1993 with T. H. Macho, entitled *Weltrevolution der Seele, Ein Lese- und Arbeitsbuch der Gnosis*. The book is not an attempt at a religious-historic consideration of a phenomenon of the past, but rather a collection of texts from past and present which offer a sense of what Gnosis could mean today. This meaning is more closely explained in a book published shortly afterward, *Weltfremdheit*. Sloterdijk's thesis on unworldliness is that, for the first time in history, Gnosis has formulated a dualistic principle which makes it possible to live in this world without being of this world.

The Gnosis investigation provides Sloterdijk with a set of instruments for making a diagnosis of our age which demonstrates that our culture displays signs of a sort of neo-Gnostic turn. After two hundred years of attachment to the world, many people are now turning away from it and thereby spontaneously following the second path of Gnosis. We may read these signs in cynicism, indifference, drug use, the renaissance of Eastern religions, neo-shamanism, the popularity of the Santo Domingo de Silos monks' choir, raves and Ecstasy.

Sloterdijk's *Medien-Zeit* must be read against this background. The summarising catchphrase for this book is: a politics of time. In its nineteenth-century definition, politics is bound in the first place to a territorial condition, namely the nation state. This implies a community which is determined by establishment on a circumscribed terrain, relationships of blood and proximity, conflict regulation by means of territorially-bound administration of law, political representation, and the medial circulation of the words of power from an administrative centre. With respect to the last, only the Christian church, or religion in general, has succeeded over the centuries in circulating words of power not reducible to the territory of the nation state. The modern global media have taken over this characteristic of religious communicative systems.

Why a politics of time? In the nation states, indeed in the form of sedentary settlement, humans' fundamentally nomadic condition has given way to timeliness. The spatially-fixed community of blood relations and proximity saved the anthropological not-yet, or not-anymore, character of humanity by means of evolution over time, which led in the 18th century to the hypothesis of history as linear progression. Proceeding from the nomadic condition, the current debate about the end of history thus introduces a problem for Sloterdijk.

In this forcefield of world, time and religion Sloterdijk situates his first essay, which deals with the metaphysics of the action film and the films *Terminator I* and *II* in particular. He sees the modern

action film as a sort of experimental repetition of prehistoric times, which shows through advanced filmic means how humanity has freed itself from nature via pursuit, flight, turning and shooting back. These are all forms of the distancing which makes it possible for the social inner space of a group to exist. The space between followers and leaders and the throwing distance of stones and spears determined the length of distance. These films ultimately show the primary mechanisms which nation states are heir to.

The second characteristic of the action film has to do with the rush of the strike, which has to do with termination, which comes down to making a hole where there was previously something full, obstinate and wrong. What distinguishes the terminator syndrome from everyday artillery nihilism, however, is the metaphysical addition that a couple of direct hits can be responsible for the salvation of humanity, read: the salvation of the future. Sloterdijk reads a violent-messianistic structure in the *Terminator* films: the one who successfully shoots at the one who threatens to shoot at everything becomes a Saviour, with the firearm as signifier of Salvation.

Here a general text from the Gospels is crossed with the most brazen literature of violence. But what gospel is propagated by the author, James Cameron?

According to Sloterdijk, the cyborgs sent from the hereafter are nothing else than machine angels stuck in the anal phase: their passion is the reduction of the opponent to rubble and waste. In *Terminator II*, on the other hand, we see Media of God, angelic machines, archangels; who, like Gabriel, have a mission. But despite their power, these machine heroes, and also little John (saviour of the world), are ultimately subordinate to the central figure of the mother. In the structural respect she is the heroine of the story. In the form of the child and the missionary machine the man is notably absent, and all lines of force converge in the uterus and spirit of the mother, the model of the new autonomous American woman, who becomes the keeper of the future. Here Cameron proclaims a sort of bio-matriarchal neo-religion. This is ultimately the same gesture used in the past by the Roman Catholic Church to counter Gnosis, directed towards the father figure and the breakdown of blood relation by means of the figure of Mary, Mother of God. And in Mary's wake, subsequently, there appeared territory, the family, blood relation, race...

In his examination of essayism in the media age, Sloterdijk attempts to determine a new role for the essay. The essay is a cultivated way of dealing with the undetermined. It is not an intellectual performance, nor an attempt to propound anything. In the first place the essay has a parrying function. Its intention is thus fundamentally different from that of a metaphysical construction. Two tasks are reserved for the essay. The first has to do with the diagnostics of time, concerned with the assessment of a chance. The second has to do with the status of the essay in the light of multidimensional hypertext. With electronic media and the compression of information which is possible on CD-ROM, book-form rationality has had its day. The development of hypertext spells catastrophe for the linear story structure, which is no match for the new forms of branched and noded knowledge. Faith in argument and evidence thus decline; they are too long-winded. Essayism becomes the art of selection, decision, elimination, and making space within an oversaturated sphere of information. The essayist becomes a sort of lumberjack and navigator, an infonaut, who advises readers which path to follow by means of the cloudy spheres of the hyperessay, of which Walter Benjamin, Paul Valéry and Borges were the pioneers.

The third and last essay in *Medien-Zeit* addresses the role of the information media within a synchronised world community. The most important condition of the social, according to Sloterdijk, is the communicative inner world of the group, which complements a violent distance towards the outside world.

Internally, groups were and are determined by the sonosphere, a space in which the voices of the group-mates can be heard and those of the ancestors can be remembered. The sphere of the natural voices is limited by hearing distance and memory time. Imperial world empires have only been possible on the condition that the acoustic limitation of the social sonosphere was lifted, through the conversion of direct communication into information at a distance through the medium of writing, which also disseminated the word of power.

This status of classical imperial writing was greedily taken advantage of, first by the Church and later by philosophy. The Bible and the book derive their power from the splendour of a Divine or Imperial voice whispering messages from the centre of the world. Within this structure religion followed wordly power and complemented the bond of authority with a message of redemption. It is this communicative double structure which has occupied the inner space of society for centuries. The circulating messages were the instrument of a demiurgic politics, because they provided the conceptual material with which a society could imagine itself a society. A society is the effect of the internalisation of the voices which have been put into writing, which guarantees a sonospheric coherence.

The United States, in particular, has succeeded in making use of the media so that this sonosphere is dissociated from territory, in order to create a world sound and a world imaginary by means of popular music. From this it may be inferred that the restrictions of nation states can be conquered through the media. If nationality has become an anachronism and world community a necessity, then according to Sloterdijk, the creation of the latter is possible solely via the mass media. Shaping a world society through mass media means combining regional and traditional cultures into a horizon of international time, through which currents from the past can be guided into a common current of the future. Thus the media become the fate-determining instrument of the global politics of the future. In this light, says Sloterdijk, to speak of the end of the future and the death of utopia is harmful and self-destructive, because hopelessness is only a peripheral phenomenon of the current transition phase.

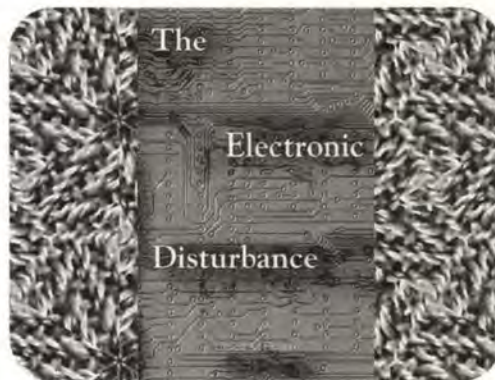
The instantaneousness of global news reporting detaches the masses from tradition and places them in a world characterised by synchronicity. The power of instantaneous news is that all the media users on the planet can be virtually involved in it. The drawback is the news market's selective preference for accidents, scandals and catastrophes.

Writing was the medium of a social form which grouped a coherent sphere around a centre. The mass media, by contrast, do not work with centrally dictated sentences or a monopoly on the transmitters. In this respect they embody the loss of the centre of information, but this does not automatically mean that they have lost the capacity for missionary work along with it. Even empty messages still carry the admittedly broken truth of this, as is apparent in the capacity of (popular) music to occupy the interior of the global sonosphere. The power of this music to address everyone lies in its meaninglessness. A second group which is given its coherence by the media despite the absence of a centre is the culture of experts, which thanks to electronics takes part in an eternally lasting conference.

What is problematic about the media-dependent world community, however, is the urgent situation caused by instantaneousness. Sloterdijk argues that despite the media's capitalisation on accident, disaster and scandal, politics is being challenged to provide a surplus of good news, which he considers the task of political panic management. In his opinion the project of the modern world will depend upon this, because in the past too this project owed its success to the advertising value of good news and the aura of success. All challenges to information technology presently focus on the question of whether the world society will be able to produce good news in sufficient measure.

For Sloterdijk the politics of time is thus not only a question of stoicism and patience, as Florian Rötzer imputes to him in *Kunstforum* (#27(1994)), but also the forcing of a (proper) future in the field of representation. In this sense, then, against his own better judgement, Sloterdijk continues to believe in the salvation of the world by the acting subject.

translation LAURA MARTZ



CRITICAL ART ENSEMBLE

### The Electronic Disturbance

Autonomedia, New York 1994. (anticopyright)

ISBN 1 57027 006 6, English text, 146 pp.

by LAURA MARTZ

This short series of essays from the New Autonomy series is a 'recombinant text' offering a theory of technological resistance in a world where power has moved into an invisible sphere. Critical Art Ensemble are a six-person collective whose multiplicity allows them to range refreshingly across disciplines. Though they appeal to hackers and artists, they are probably mostly to be found bodily somewhere in the academy rather than the street. Resistance is defined here as acting to restore state-usurped power to the individual (which is equated here with political leftism, though it belongs to the libertarian right as well, and called radical, although it does not attack roots, but channels and flow). The CAE read power as 'liquid' in postmodernity, reliant on speed of (trans)action: decentralised and disembodied. Attacking it will thus require new tactics.

The CAE locate resistance at the site of virtuality, of electronic data, by the theory that this is where power plays itself out. A spectacular and paralysing information overload is coupled with a dearth of individually empowering information. In the information 'whiteout', there may be access, but the individual must depend on authority to screen and sort. Individuals' 'electronic doubles' are created in data space, surveillable by- and accessible to power.

Acts of resistance are a gamble since they will likely be coopted and dissipate away into the dominant culture; but CAE

exhort us to 'roll the dice' anyway. Old forms of poetic resistance, however, they warn, are outmoded; appropriation (by power, that is) has killed the old 'certainty of the dialectic'. Old strategies assume power to be fixed and locatable in physical space, and direct their attacks at empty bunkers which are nothing but symbols. Nor should the target be the realm of representation. So protesting in front of the Capitol (or defacing advertisements) won't do it; breaking into their nets and fucking with their data will. The call is to storm the 'bunkers,' both kinds, e- and concrete. Bunkers are nothing more or less than sites of security; panic must be caused, the illusions of security must be disrupted. Resist surveillance; throw noise into the system.

Can technology be diverted to empower the subjects of power? The answer has to do with *whether the technology is accepted as a means of passive consumption or as a means for active production.* (p.135) Systems for sending, not receiving information, hold the most liberatory promise. A network of resistant 'cells' is powerful because it has too many heads to be killed. When one Internet node is destroyed, traffic flows around it, as impossible to trap as a dissipated gas.

Some readers may find it difficult to overlook the way locating oppression in the 'cyber-elite' ignores physically real forms of oppression which are still very much alive and well, and certainly not doomed to die once the head, so to speak (or the eyes?), is attacked. And the book gets a little precious in places — I'm still not sure of the purpose of the excerpts on 'the virtual' extracted from various fathers (all are men) of modern European thought; inserting the word 'screen' into six otherwise unchanged lines of Dante smells a little of grad student pretension. Critical Art Ensemble are probably likely to appeal most to artists in the academy who have some recent (European) theory and ('high') cultural and intellectual history at their disposal.

It might not look much like it used to. But, dispersed as it may be behind its individual terminals, perhaps the American left — if we revise old definitions of it — has still got a few kicks left.



ELIZABETH DILLER/RICARDO SCOFIDIO (ed.)

Visite aux armées:  
Tourismes de guerre /  
Back to the Front:  
Tourism of War

FR.A.C. Basse-Normandie 1994, ISBN 2 9505940 0 X  
by WOLFGANG ERNST

Perhaps the most unfortunate thing about this book is its title: in its fixation on the phenomenon of the tourism of war it does indeed play down the much more cogent insight heralded by its contributions — that of the invasion of (military) realism into the

symbolism of history. At the same time the plan brought up by Italian travel agent Massimo Beyerle of leading his clients up to the very edge of today's battlefields is nothing more than the consistent realisation of the classical historian's phantasm and of the museum's hit of constructing a 'living history': '*As close as possible' implies a certain immediacy* (...) (p.137).

Object violation: it is not until classical memories (e.g. historical towns) come into sight that the new media keep watch. No wonder that the protagonists of the volume, Diller + Scofidio, are architects and that the work is marketed by the Princeton Architectural Press. Behind this however is an understanding of architecture as the *recorded or pre-recorded* (p.14), therefore as a noting-down system, as archi(ve)text: the book project expressly follows the legacy of Paul Virilio's *Bunker Archéologie* and of *Guerre et cinéma: Logistique de la perception*.

Film and television are not only historical waste products of war technology, but in the age of hyper-mediating they become the agents of military strategy. What it was possible to show upon the overthrow of the television image of Ceaucescu in December 1989, followed shortly afterwards by the Gulf War, is, in Thomas Keenan's contribution 'Live from ...', driven as far as the indifference between war of the images (power of representation) and war pictures. It is a fact that news policy and other techniques of dis/simulation were not only the shadow but the condition for D-day as a military operation. There remains as the difference to the electronic streaming of all strategic real-time analysis merely the real blood not mentioned in the book, the realm beyond ROM and RAM.

A book like a video clip; beside the classical footnote there is generally the photo as proof. The angle of the camera as the instrument of historical enlightenment as well as of its agents — the military — focusing the object in the crosshair. June 1944 and the present are the names given to the levels which are repeatedly — literally in book-like fashion — folded on top of one another. To put it more elegantly (i.e. with Vilém Flusser): leafing through this picture book as a method of discourse analysis.

Sifting through the logistics of D-day does indeed require a different form of reading matter; reading matter which counts on discontinuities as D-Day was experienced in reality, instead of it being later transformed into the reassuring continuity of narrative instalments. This also means renouncing line-shaped linearity effects in favour of a non-discursive perception. Finest precision and fastest variation touch each other at this point. Therefore the dichotomy between historic (discursive) and formal (calculating) thinking can be considered to be past, thoughts still lagging behind classical world war remembrances.

This book, written consistently in the language of the victors (i.e. English and French throughout, is the product of a calendrical coincidence, of the travelling exhibition, *SuitCase Studies: The Production of a National Past*, conceived first of all in and for America, and of the 50-year-anniversary of the allied D-day on the coast of Normandy. The producer is then also the agency where art and battlefield run together: the Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain de Basse-Normandie. Publication circles around the *SuitCase Studies* of Diller + Scofidio: 50 Samsonite suitcases with documents each on two central tourist attractions of the American Federal states, heroes' beds and battlefields, *two sites of conflict* (p.46). Minus bed, this machine to national history production makes sense in Normandy too, and most certainly within the context of a flourishing cultural history of nostalgia, of miniature, of memory semiotics. And yet the uneasiness remains that here, with the insight into the power of representation, with the



removal of the difference of simulacrum-reality, there is an even more criminal distraction from the information of realism.

Protection from this temptation is provided by such contributions as those of Frédéric Migayrou ('The extended body: Chronicle of a day with no history'). D-day or H-hour were not historic events as it is no longer possible to narrate that which began as pure series — unless as a return to the chronicle: *At h + 1 minute, the first infantry assault wave will touch land (...)*. Here reference is no longer to body or even to human being, but merely to time itself, wartime. Enter Michel Foucault: *archéologie*, or even *anarchaeology* (p.189), enter too Jacques Derrida (p.188). Accordingly, it was the greatest strategic mistake of Hitler and Rommel not to have replaced the front, the coast, the bunker, the monumental inscription by thoughts of the script as constant dislocation, as *différance*.

The fortunate thing about the book is the reference to the infrastructure and the cybernetics of thought; the archives of memory are no longer so very monumental. *Les lieux de mémoire* (Pierre Nora), but non-places in the sense of Marc Augés. It is however the real archives which set limits to the cultural-semiotic arbitrariness, the *delirious free play of space-time* (p.52). It is at this point that the lack of a hard core historian among the authors makes itself noticeable, one who would have been able to put a stop to the rambles at the level of collective symbolism. What kind of authorities are those, the practices of 'authentication' (p.39), which provide stability to the sign-surfing of *history as a shifting construct* (p.52)?

National memory too has its agencies, an entire industry. 'The Production of a National Past' betrays itself — much more so than at the level of symbolic commemoration — at the level of that *corporate identity* of Normandy depicted in the logos on the jacket of the book, from the *Caisse des Dépôts* to the *Conseil Régional*.

This book does not only stand on the archaeological foundations of World War II, but above all on those of the Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain de Basse-Normandie. The combination of the publication with the data of an exhibition on the production of quasi-sacral national time-spaces tells all: the relationship of art to a military moment can only ever be touristic, metaphorical, posthumous. At the same time as the 50th anniversary of D-day, the Deutsches Historisches Museum (German History Museum) in Berlin is showing an exhibition on World War I as a disaster of classical aesthetics and birth of artistic avantgarde, a document of the helplessness of art towards the reality of technically determined mass wars. As long as the imaginary was still being argued in the form of allegories, art had its unique place as a medium. Since realism no longer dissimulates, this function has died out. When war forces open even the museum of perception, aesthetic thought becomes redundant.

In the last few years the production of a national memory has found its way in inflationary fashion into the historian's field of vision. The agent of this reconnaissance is the logic of the calendar, triggering the symbolic re-experiencing of National Socialism and World War II in a 50-year cycle, thereby raising for moments that which otherwise is perceived archaeologically to the level of historical awareness, as if it were already the ruins of the Roman Empire; *the string commemorative markers and monuments* (Diller + Scofidio) along the Norman coast consists primarily of the works of the Atlantic Wall itself, those fossils of a catechontic attempt at yet again containing space along the inner/outer axis as a friend/foe relationship. Georges van den Abbees' contribution names the price of this protection: *Armor can only protect the site by denying its sight, by blinding it to what may destroy it* (p.252).

Monument landscapes reproduce this anachronism. The 20th century, however, no longer requires an allegorical representation; the agents of realism themselves are becoming monumentable. Realism is however evading any portrayal: the sea, the wounds of D-day, the trauma of its memory, denies itself historic statement. A photo under the title *Plage du débarquement* shows this: the centre of events as an empty patch on the beach, aesthetics of absence, past, per definitionem. *The town of Ste. Mère-Eglise marked its location, Kilometer 00 and Utah Beach marked its, Kilometer 000* (Diller + Scofidio, p.278). *Vision blindée* is the name given to this non-viewing from the viewpoint of the bunker. Since World War II, the dialectics of *Blindness and Insight* of all reading matter (Paul de Man) no longer means simply deconstruction and comparative literature but also radar.

*The horizon, (...) as Foucault observed, is not solely a pictorial notion, but also a strategic one* (p.292). The image aesthetics of military reconnaissance is drastically registered for the book under discussion; in the form of a folding *Special Project*, a map composed of military reports, tourist guides, video (war) games, films and literature breaks into the sphere of classical typography as *mapping*, as a medium of both real (war) and symbolic (monuments) surveying.

The book breaks down at this point and becomes script; the final sentence already announces the abandoning of historical insight to another medium: the cinema. History as subject as well as object has, since two world wars in the 20th century, no longer been negotiated as an alphabetical script but in the image, in the intention of war itself. Friedrich Kittler once described it thus, using Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* as an example: world history is known to have lived in the medium of the book; technical media, on the other hand, allow (beyond the diversionary tactic of their entertainment effect) the variation of just the parameters which only they record. This is corresponded to by an optical layout which, in the language of the electric technician of realism, bears the name *Time Axis Manipulation*.

Monuments are diversion from the real. The fact that *mémoire* has for a long time no longer been negotiated in letters but in images is also shown by another medium in the vicinity of Caen, the closest Norman town to the Allied landing. For it was here in 1988 on the Esplanade Eisenhower that there was an official opening under the name *Mémorial*, which would formerly once have meant museum if it weren't for the absolute supremacy of photography and film in the depiction of the 20th century as the history of two world wars. Jean-Louis Déotte's contribution 'A world with no horizon', based more on the archives of occidental art history and philosophy than on those of war logistics, deciphers the edifice built on former German bunker command headquarters — now pacified to the *Galerie des prix Nobel de la paix* — the entrance of which depicts a rupture, with Walter Benjamin's *Ästhetik des Schocks* (Aesthetics of Shock). The recently opened Historical in Péronne which documents the Somme battlefields in World War I musealiter, is also interspersed with a wood of video monitors narrating the war in concrete film documents. Techniques which strategically determined the wars are now also at the fore of their historical representation. *The past doesn't exist as a file in a computer, easy to call up, manage and engage* (p.214). Soon perhaps.

There is no zero point of hermeneutics, not even in the archaeology of D-day. At the moment of its happening it was already a repeat *the re-conquest of a territory* (p.8) in the shadow of a ghost, the Norman Conquest of 1066 in the reverse direction. Symbolic coding has always been involved as has radio

announcement heralding this moment clothed in a verse by Verlaine. Maybe art does indeed occasionally have functions beyond the metaphors, and be they code names. Juno, Omaha, Sword, Gold and Utah are the names of the sections of beach of Operation Overlord; posthumously searching for her remains and graves (p.208/9), it is Madame Realism in Lynne Tillmann's literary contribution 'Lust for Loss'. Footnote 2 makes it clear: *Madame Realism does not exist, although some readers think they recognize her.*

An astonishing publication; barely still a history book and just short of a breakthrough to the *aisthesis immaterialis*. The final authors' biography states the sources from which the new insight feeds — Thomas Keenan, who is just working on a book on war and publicity with a view to CNN and Somalia 1992/3, *watches a lot of television.*

translation ANN THURSFIELD

ERIK VAN BLOKLAND AND JUST VAN ROSSUM

### DoorMat FAT

*DoorMat digital Random-Flipper-BitPull typeface by LettError*  
The Hague NL tel. +31 - 70 - 360 5025, e-mail evb@knoware.nl  
(LettError makes typefaces, typography, animations and music)

by WILLEM VELTHOVEN

For Mediamatic's Home Issue, Dutch type designers Just van Rossum and Erik van Blokland designed a special typeface. The DoorMat family. It consists of three members: DoorMat Light, DoorMat Medium and DoorMat Fat. The DoorMats are members

of the BitPull genus. An approach to computer type that was developed a few years ago by van Blokland and van Rossum, also the inventors of Beowulf (see MM 5#3), the first random typeface. Mediamatic featured several early BitPull faces in issue 7#1, see our longer discussion of font issues on page 91 of that issue.

BitPull is a typical product of these two rogue PostScript hackers who received their formal typographical training in the 1980s at the Royal Academy in The Hague. BitPull typefaces are not on the market because they would drive any designer who's not a serious geek totally berserk. Some of them might sue van Blokland and van Rossum for mental damage. Technically speaking, every bristle of a DoorMat character is a separate randomised Postscript character. When a designer decides to apply BitPull he or she has to enter a special agreement and sign papers that grant the Letterorists total immunity. Then one receives a special application, The Bitpuller, that will turn any piece of text in a lay-out into total gibberish. The gibberish, when displayed in the proper BitPull font, turns out to be a heap of individual pixels of a so-called bitmap character.

This procedure transforms a couple of trusted tools of the desktop typographer into procedures we still have to find a use for: spell checking becomes pixel checking, character spacing becomes pixel spacing, hyphenation can occur in the middle of an A, word count loses its entire meaning, document sizes skyrocket and so do printing times. What do we get back for all this? Great DoorMats! With individually controllable, randomly shaped bristles! It's a tasting of what digital typography can become in the future. Letters with a mind of their own, fontviruses crawling over our pages. More magazines that come out months too late...



INTERNATIONALER  
VIDEOKUNSTPREIS  
1995

The Television broadcasting company "Südwestfunk Baden-Baden" (SWF) and the "Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe" (ZKM) are mutually sponsoring an award for video art for the fourth year.

In the fall of 1995, 50 art-videos will be broadcast on German television channel 3 and the "Austrian Broadcasting Corporation" (ORF) channel 2.

An international jury will award the main prizes amounting to DM 40.000 and supporting prizes amounting to DM 10.000. The prize ceremony will be presented following the television broadcasts of "The 50 Best".

Ask for information and entry forms from:

**ZKM** | Zentrum für  
Kunst und Medientechnologie  
Karlsruhe

International Award for Video Art  
Postfach 6909 · D-76049 Karlsruhe

**SWF** | **SÜDWESTFUNK**  
Baden-Baden

In cooperation with **ORF** | Supported by **E.L.BANK**

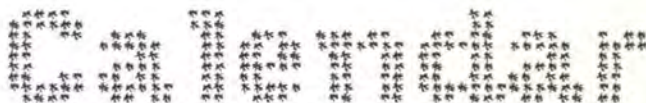
Deadline for entries: June 15, 1995



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**De Bezige Bij – 50 jaar literatuur**

**Dirk van Weelden**  
*Oase*  
Een aanstaande  
vader schrijft  
brieven aan zijn  
ongeboren kind.  
Roman f 34,50



Edited by Geert J. Strengholt

The next Mediamatic calendar will run from August till December 1995. Please send your info before 1 July 1995 to:

Mediamatic, Postbus 17490, 1001 JL Amsterdam, the Netherlands, or fax to +31 (0)20 6263793,

or e-mail editors@mediamatic.nl. Thank you.

## Austria

① Vienna 27 May - 7 Aug '95  
*Rebecca Horn*, exhibition of performance objects, sculptures, installations and films from the '80s,  
KUNSTHALLE, Treitlstrasse 2,  
tel. +43 1 526 0957,  
fax +43 1 8697 7620

① Graz 28 - 29 April '95  
*Quantum Daemon*, symposium on art and art-criticism, NEUE GALERIE AM LANDESMUSEUM JOANNEUM,  
Sackstrasse 16, A-8010  
tel. +43 316 829155

① Graz 22 - 26 November '95  
*Film + Arc*, 2nd International Biennale and Competition on film and architecture, FILM + ARC,  
Rechbauerstrasse 38,  
tel. +43 316 842487,  
fax +43 316 829511  
Deadline for entry: June 20th

① Linz 20-24 June '95  
*Netlife, Ars Electronica 95*, festival for art, technology and society,  
ARS ELECTRONICA, Brucknerhaus,  
Untere Donaulände 7,  
tel. +43 732 761 2271,  
fax +43 732 761 2350

## Belgium

① Knokke-Heist 24 - 27 May '95  
*Art faces Art*, 1st international festival of the art-film. The festival will take place in the Casino, and is organised by vzw/k-com,  
Leuvensteenseweg 30,  
B-1030 Brussel,  
tel. +32 2 218 1055,  
fax +32 2 218 6628

## Canada

① Montreal 17 - 24 Sept '95  
*ISEA 95*, 6th international symposium on electronic art, ISEA,  
307 Sainte-Catherine West, #310,  
H2X 2A3, tel. +1 514 990 0229,  
fax +1 514 842 7459,  
e-mail iseag5@er.uqam.ca,  
www http://iseag5.com.uqam.ca

① Montreal 19 - 25 Sept '95  
*Deuxième Manifestation Internationale Video et Art Electronique*, 2nd international festival on video and electronic art, CHAMP LIBRE, 1908 rue Panet,  
espace 301, H2L 3A2,  
tel. +1 514 597 2533,  
fax +1 514 597 0515,  
e-mail champ\_libre@fc.babylon.montreal.qc.ca  
Deadline for entry: June 15th

## Croatia

① Zagreb 24 - 29 June '95  
*Media-Scape*, international symposium for the Arts, Media and Culture, info at  
MEDIA IN MOTION,  
Wilhelmshavenstr. 24,  
D-10551 Berlin,  
tel./fax +49 30 396 9796

## Germany

① Karlsruhe 15 - 21 May '95  
*Multimediale 4*, media-art festival of the ZKM, ZENTRUM FÜR KUNST UND MEDIEN TECHNOLOGIE, for further info Suzanne Schuck:  
tel. +49 721 9340212,  
fax +49 721 934019

## ① Oberhausen

26 April - 1 May '95  
*41st Kurzfilmtage*, international short film festival, INTERNATIONAL KURZFILMTAGE OBERHAUSEN,  
Grillostrasse 34, D-46042,  
tel. +49 208 807008,  
fax +49 208 825 5413

## ① Osnabrück

6 - 10 Sept '95  
*European Media Art Festival*, international festival for media arts featuring video, installations, internet- and cd-rom projects,  
EMAF, PO-Box 1861, D-49008,  
tel. +49 541 21658,  
fax +49 541 28327,  
e-mail emaf@bionic.zer.de

## Great Britain

### ① Liverpool

29 April - 6 May '95  
*Video Positive 95*, international festival of electronic arts, including installations and special attention for cd-rom, MOVIOLA,  
Bluecoat Chambers School Lane L1 3BX, tel. +44 151 709 2663,  
fax +44 151 707 2150,  
e-mail: moviola@cityscape.co.uk  
The exhibitions continue until 4 June

### ① London 8 - 9 April '95

*Towards the Aesthetics of the Future: Technophobia*, international conference with Philip Tabor, Mathew Fuller, Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, Shin'ichi Takemura and Manuel DeLanda, ICA, 12 Carlton House Terrace, SW1Y 5AH, tel. +44 71 930 0493,  
fax +44 71 873 0051

## Kalender

📍 London 4 April - 7 May '95  
*Self Storage*, an intricate journey through whispering corridors of stored items, sounds and visions jointly installed by Brian Eno, Laurie Anderson and the RCA Acorn Research Cell, ARTANGEL ACORN STORAGE CENTRE, Junction First Way / South Way, For further info: tel. +44 71 930 0493

📍 London 19 - 20 June '95  
*Embodied Knowledge in/with/and Virtual Space*, conference/exhibition to mark the launch of the new MA in Design Futures, GOLDSMITHS UNIVERSITY, further info: John Wood, tel. +44 171 919 7794, fax +44 171 919 7793, e-mail j.wood@gold.ac.uk/ www http://futures.gold.ac.uk/ ideabase/welcome.html

📍 London 24 - 29 July '95  
EVA 95, international conference, tutorials and exhibition about electronic imaging and the visual arts, VASARI ENTERPRISES, Clark House, 2 Kings Road, Fleet Hants, tel. +44 252 815 772, fax +44 252 812 506

### Japan

📍 Nagoya 28 April - 25 June '95  
ARTEC, 4th international biennale opening with a symposium aimed at discussing art, media and technology and effects of technology for society as a whole, NAGOYA CITY ART MUSEUM/ NAGOYA SCIENCE MUSEUM, tel. +81 52 221 0753, fax +81 52 221 0739, e-mail ldfo0226@niftyserve.or.jp

📍 Tokyo 22 - 30 April '95  
*Terrain*, project 1 installation by Ulrike Gabriel, organised by ARTLAB, location at P3 art and environment, basement of Tochoji temple, 4-34 Yotsuya Shinjuku-ku tel. +81 3 3353 6866, e-mail ldfo0226@niftyserve.or.jp

### Netherlands

📍 Amsterdam April '95  
*Schatgraven/Treasurehunt*, 4 dutch artcritics, Renée Steenberg (5 April), Louwrien Wijers (12 April), Rob Perree (19 April) and Wilma Süto (26 April), present their choice of videoworks from the Montevideo collection, MONTEVIDEO, Spuistraat 106, 1012 VA, tel. +31 20 623 7101, fax +31 20 624 4423

📍 Arnhem 8 April - 11 June '95  
*Zelfbeschikking/Self Determination*, exhibition of installationwork by a.o. Eric Duyckaerts and Catharine Richards, GEMEENTE MUSEUM ARNHEM, Utrechtseweg 87, 6812 VA, tel. +31 85 512 431 e-mail info@gma.antenna.nl

📍 Arnhem November '95  
AVE festival '95, international festival for emerging artists working in media arts and experimental film, AVE-FOUNDATION, for info: George Manak tel. +31 85 511 300, fax +31 85 517681

📍 Den Haag  
25 Feb - 30 April '95  
Klaus vom Bruch, recent works on war & peace & art, WORLD WIDE VIDEO CENTRE, Spui 189, tel. +31 70 364 4805, fax +31 70 361 4448

📍 Den Haag 27 - 30 April '95  
World Wide Video festival, international videofestival also exhibiting CD-ROM and CD-I productions, WORLD WIDE VIDEO CENTRE, Spui 189, tel. +31 70 364 4805, fax +31 70 361 4448

📍 Groningen  
13 May - 18 June '95  
*Babage Dreams*, exhibition composed of work by Jaap de Jonge, Kees Aafjes, Peter Bogers, Gerald van der Kaap and Bill Spinhoven, CBK GRONINGEN, further info at Montevideo, Spuistraat 106, 1012 VA, tel. +31 20 623 7101, fax +31 20 624 4423

📍 Rotterdam February - June '95  
WIRETAP, series of informal programmes on the development of non-linear media, organised every last sunday of the month, V2\_ORGANISATIE, Eendrachtstraat 10, 3012 XL, tel. +31 10 404 6427, fax +31 10 412 8562, e-mail v2@antenna.nl

📍 Rotterdam  
22 April - 14 May '95  
Rottkunst, exhibition comprising work of 60 artists working in Rotterdam, located in the former terminals of the Holland-Amerika lijn, STICHTING ATRIUM, postbus 21963, 3001 AZ, tel. +31 10 412 7665

📍 Utrecht  
31 May - 2 June '95  
Imagination '95, international fair comprising tutorials, conference workshops and artshows, JAARBEURS UTRECHT, postbus 8500, 3503 RM, tel. +31 30 955 911, fax +31 30 940 379

### Poland

📍 Wroclaw 3 - 7 May '95  
WRO 95 sound basis visual art festival, 5th international biennale of media art, OPEN STUDIO/WRO, PO Box 1385, P-54137, tel. /fax +48 71 448 369

### Switzerland

📍 Fribourg 30 June - 2 July '95  
*The Incident*, an international symposium to examine art, technology and phenomena under artistic direction of Rob La Frenais. Speakers include Terence McKenna, Ulrike Rosenbach, Roy Ascott, Kathleen Rogers, Keiko Sei, H-R Giger and others. The symposium will be part of a larger artistic programme which includes exhibitions, performances, video, film and music and which takes place as part of the BELLUARD-BOLLWERK INTERNATIONAL 95 festival, case postale 120, CH 1701, tel. +41 37 222 285, e-mail 75337.206@compuserve.com

## Calendar

Ⓜ Geneva 3 - 11 Nov '95  
*6ème Semaine de Vidéo,*  
international video festival Saint  
Gervais, futher info André Iten,  
5 Rue du Temple, CH 1201,  
tel. +41 22 732 2060,  
fax +41 22 738 4215,  
e-mail sgg@dial.eunet.ch  
Deadline for entry: July 15th

### United States of America

Ⓜ Denver 7 - 11 May '95  
*Mosaic of Creativity, Computer  
Human Interaction (CHI) '95,*  
DENVER CONVENTION CENTER,  
info at CHI '95,  
703 Giddings Ave., suite u3,  
Annapolis, MD 21401,  
tel. +1 410 263 5382,  
fax +1 410 267 0332

Ⓜ Los Angeles 5-10 June '95  
*Interactive Media Festival,* 2nd  
festival for artistic and creative  
applications of interactive  
technologies, for further info  
tel. +1 415 357 0100 x114,  
fax +1 415 357 2170,  
e-mail info@spark.com,  
www http://www.arc.org/

Ⓜ Los Angeles  
6 - 11 August '95  
*Siggraph 95,* 22nd conference on  
computer graphics and interactive  
technologies,  
tel. +1 312 321 6830,  
fax +1 312 321 6876,  
e-mail siggraph@siggraph.org

Ⓜ New York until 4 June '95  
*Sixty years of Design,* exhibition  
on the occasion of the 60th  
anniversary of the design  
collection, MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,  
11 West 53rd street,  
tel. +1 212 708 9689

Ⓜ New York  
15 March - 25 June '95  
*1995 biennial Exhibition,* the  
Whitney museum's signature  
exhibition of the most significant  
developments in American art,  
film and video over the past two  
years, WHITNEY MUSEUM,  
945 Madison Avenue,  
tel. +1 212 570 3633,  
fax +1 212 570 1807

Ⓜ New York  
15 - 18 June '95  
*2nd New York Video Festival,* for  
the moment planned to take place at  
the Knitting factory.  
For further info contact John  
McGeehan, HARVESTWORKS  
DIGITAL MEDIA ARTS,  
596 Broadway, Suite 602  
tel. +1 212 431 1130,  
fax +1 212 431 8473,  
e-mail harvest@panix.com  
Deadline for entry May 15th

III KUNST- UND AUSSTELLUNGSHALLE DER BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND

# V I D E O R O O M EXHIBITIONS 1995

A G N E S H E G E D Ü S  
B E T W E E N T H E W O R D S  
M A R C H 1 0 - M A Y 7

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• A complete dossier on what we say here has been filed during a meeting with a Dutch Embassy in Paris. The meeting has been followed by meetings with authorities in Amsterdam. The documents are being considered in the criminal investigation. They tend to suggest a political background to the attack. Even if this is the case, however, as the Dutch authorities point out, there may be little that one can do about it publicly. So, in whatever is recorded now, we focus on implications, on effects, on consequences, and not on causes. For no matter who is to blame for this attack (and any individual who might be arrested will not disclose his or her backing), we of the world will need to live with the effects.

The joint venture, named Giant Algae System, or GAS, was to spearhead the most rapid transition possible from a fossil fuel base for industrial economies to a solar energy base, chiefly manifest as clean-burning methane or hydrogen gas from fast-growing ocean plants, but allowing as well by its pricing structure for other forms, often more direct, of sun-derived energy. A governing paradigm came from the Fat Corner performances of Joseph Beuys, which affirmed that the material processes in society should pass through a hydrocarbon phase for thorough cycling.

Of course any attempt to effect major changes in the world energy industry will prompt concern, and possibly opposition. Everyone knows that a transition beyond the fossil fuels will occur. Everyone knows that it should occur as soon as possible: a world body of scientists had said in 1990 that this transition demands a 60% reduction (replacement) 'now, or else', and this scientific verdict, despite the Rio or other such conferences, has not changed. Almost everyone even has a sense that technical solutions are not so terribly difficult to reach: an industrial society, properly motivated, could build a non-polluting energy base. The question of Whether is solved. What remains are the questions of What (the precise choices of technology) and – more dangerous – Who. There was an episode, for example, called World War One, which decided that the Who for fossil fuels would be the US and UK, and also The Netherlands, but emphatically not Germany.

And there is an episode in March 1995 in Berlin, in which it will be asserted that the Who for the post-fossil era, the country with the best and most advanced collection of intellectual and industrial property for the next phase in human evolution on this planet, will be the country having the lead in policy beyond fossil fuels: not the US, or the UK, or The Netherlands. Anything about the UK or The Netherlands would be conflated within the centralization of intellectual and financial property intended for Europe in Munich (European Patent Office) and in Frankfurt (European Central Bank), and while they continue with the relative short-term wealth bases of fossil fuels, those in Germany will focus on the more permanent solutions. Decisions would be made more by the State, which can oversee the technological options, than by the market. For this, a new ministry is formed, a Super-Ministry, which in public has been casually described as the Zukunftsministerium, or Ministry of the Future.

Really? And in what sort of society is deciding on the Future something consciously done by the State? As opposed to the free and open market, with competition between different technologies and ideas by independent parties?

In Germany as well, apparently also with subvention from the State, has emerged a Museum of the Future. Sort of a Noah's Ark. Not yet a real building with works of art, because in most cases there are no works, just ideas. Just documents. The aim is to establish an archive. An archive of that which has not proven itself to happen, or to be worthwhile, but which in being documented is judged to have value. The archive covers current artists and art groups, along with various future-scenarios think tanks. In one place (or computer file), in one dignifying institution (the 'museum'), there appears all the candidate options for future industrial and social development. (There is no entry for war – probably because wars are conducted chiefly over questions about the future, and both the Museum and Ministry of the Future presume to have obviated it.) All this may sound wonderful until we get to such questions as:

Who gets included, and who not?

Is there any security of intellectual property in being archived?

Would anyone with serious plans to realize want to be so indexed?

How much real world plans or technologies, like those for war, appear?

By what competitive criteria are selections made?

Is it possible to archive an untested idea before it has been produced?

Who will have the right to develop the archived ideas?

Why are the authors of ideas sometimes named, and often not?

How can the future, which is unknown, be museified?

The answer to the last question, regrettably, indicates why there is a museum of the future, and why as well there is a proposed Ministry of the Future: in order to assert control, often hidden, from above, separate from free-market forces, to the advantage of a particular jurisdiction.

The intent of the Future Ministry, as described in the German press, is to establish a clear *Energiepolitik* and *Technologiepolitik* for Germany. Not the European Community, but Germany. Given that State intrigues will decide, of course vested interests will dominate. Of course most decisions are removed from the free market, including any free-ranging art-based efforts. In March, in Berlin, there will be an authoritative declaration on the State policies regarding solar energy in relation of course to established Environment (and nuclear) Ministry approval of nuclear energy. This declaration will be made to the world, for adoption hopefully by the world, in a world conference meant, by the hosts at least, to be the first big follow-up to Eco 92, in Berlin.

If some artists happen to have different ideas, and if – worse – they happen to try to build on their ideas in the real world, efforts will be made to exclude them from the Future. When you are deciding on the Future, and holding up a model for all the world to adopt, you cannot afford to be contradicted by allegedly artistic voices which present

• competing, variant scenarios. So, in spite of the constitutional rule in Germany that 'art is free' (a rule continually undermined by the State practice of curating, choosing and subventioning most art), there have been several, shall we say, chilling events.

An artist exhibiting at the Munich *Kunst/Ökologie/-Kultur* show, which was subventioned chiefly by the Ministry of the Environment, which is also the Ministry for Nuclear Safety, (thus foreclosing certain discussions) happened to make a comparison of solar-energy research and development, including levels of state funding, in Germany, Japan and the United States, revealing that Japan was the leader. The work, credited to Betty Beaumont, was exhibited but – in an action unheard of in Art – it was removed, along with her name, from the catalog. Whatever she showed was to be erased from any archive for the Future.

Those artists invited in 1991 to take part in an apparently low-key exhibition in Rio, at the Eco 92, sponsored by the local (Brasilia) branch of the Goethe Institute, could find themselves in 1992 in an elaborate

unification within Europe, but also a single global policy on environment, development and high culture. Wanna join?

It remains to be seen if those who do not or cannot join, who would maintain an independent position in the art world, at least, will be able to pursue their plans for the future, even if at variance with those of a single nation-state's foreign ministry, environmental (and nuclear energy) ministry, and, as some call it, Future ministry...

These persons, recognized to be artists, are allegedly free under the German Constitution to do as they desire, providing no violation of law. Would that freedom remain if, time and again, artistic actions and exhibitions are tightly co-ordinated within the timetables and policies of that one state's, as one calls them, 'interlocked' ministries? With, of course, harm for those who act otherwise.

And worse, given the global ecological mess, harm to the many, many people – such as the prominent German solar-power activist and Bundestag member Hermann



catalog with the preface, regarding global ecology policy, by the Foreign Minister of Germany, and could learn by 1994 that just as their Rio show had been transferred to a prestige museum in Berlin, so the Rio Conference – courtesy of the same Foreign Ministry of Germany – was being transferred also to... Berlin.

State ambitions have become global and comprehensive. One could even say totalistic. So, if an artist should happen to take an initiative which is seen as competitive with or embarrassing to the agenda of the environmental ministry and foreign ministry in Germany, then that artist faces a threat of marginalization, at least, as what they do – in their free imaginative life – does not conform with wherever – be that Rio, or Berlin, or Sydney, or even the PS 1 Museum in New York – those particular ministries work to shape not just German culture, nor European culture, but global culture. This aligns with the slogan of the German environment ministry, *Globaler Umweltschutz* (Global Environmental Protection), and public statements by the foreign ministry, calling for a *Zukunftssicherung* (Future Assurance) that grants one the power to stop 'every civil war'. Out of Germany would come not just a certain territorial

Scheer – who seek an open, competitive field, a sort of eco-industry Silicon Valley, in order to see the world they want achieved.

LESSON. If creative, enterprising persons are confined to curated culture, and to archiving their innovations in idea-bins of the future, all within the framework of policies decided by ministries of a certain State, then the historical necessity of today – for an environment which works – will not be met. Attempts to block, contain, control or officially curate the initiatives of artists must be broken. Leave such pioneers free to address the urgent questions of today as they will, and some of them – in the course of competition – will survive and succeed.

All we advocate, in our relative impotence, is a mere return to the basic principles of free and democratic (as opposed to State-directed) societies: Separation of Church (including Art) and State; Freedom of Enterprise and attendant Sanctity of Contracts and Private Property; Restriction of Government to Regulatory rather than Decision-Making Roles, to avoid Tyranny. This was said, and achieved, in the 18th Century, more than 200 years ago. Have we progressed.

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