

Mirror of the Mind: Internet, Cyberocularity and Digital Otherness

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Finally and above all, the mirror allowed man to see what nature had hidden from him.

—Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*¹

Decades before the Internet was conceived, The Supremes' famously infectious song *Reflections* lit up the air waves: "Through the mirror of my mind/ Time after time/ I see reflections of you and me. . . ." Their memorable Golden Oldie began with a driving, hypnotically ringing, steady-state digital pulse that melodically reinforced its catchy, accreting staccato syncopation. Like much of the emerging multitrack mixing of recorded rock and electronic music that pioneered hi-fi and Surround Sound spatiality, the digital pulse has parallel analogs with the flicking of screens and tweaking of computer keys that *move* users through a multiplicity of windows and websites to generate digital *visibility*. This enhanced hypermimetic visuality might be called *cyberocularity*—the eyes stimulate the mirror-image hemispheric lobes of the human brain to generate new optical and cognitive phenotropisms as biogenic adaptors.

Information is constantly being reconfigured by changing frames and windows. Like a labyrinthian intrigue, the Internet serves as a digital mirror of the mind by synthesizing unique parasystemic and holotropic perspectives, even during mundane navigation—surfing to check news, access directories, travel instructions, or shopping on-line. The rapid refractivity of retinal reflexes permutes the implosion of sightlines, in concert with the constant concatenation of saccadic flexions that dart, zip, select and assemble pictorially infometric payloads.

Retinal superimpositions and interruptions pixilate the perceptual interstices to broker a synergetic reciprocity. The otherness of the Web, like the shadow's own surreptitious surveillance smarts, obliquely accrues myriad conflating virtual reflections that accrete and psychotropically breakthrough to a telecognitive

f(r)ission—knowledge arises and rides on the digital currency of bits, bytes, pixels, fractals and sightlines speeding along our two-way eye tracks. Navigating the Web and moving through its zigzagging interconnectivity while alighting on unexpected hits can be likened to moving through electronic or phantasmatic ethers.

Around 1780, the potential bioelectricity residing in living organisms was confirmed accidentally by Italian anatomist and physician Luigi Galvani's famous experiments with dissected frogs' legs that suddenly spasmed, contracted and jumped when the deceased animal's spinal cord was jolted by current from a Leyden jar. Electricity proved to be a physiogenic fact. Nerves and neurons, like electrical circuits, share analogical similarities with regard to the instantaneous transmission of signals, impulses and information. The body, too, is, and is constituted by, an extended electric network. Later, the invention of the radio made the broadcast capacity of brain waves veridically sacrosanct. The Internet, concomitantly the largest cognitive prosthesis ever invented, provides psychotropic electros(t)imulation that enhances neurotransmission and *datatalasis*—the dialysis and dioptrics of informatics!

Through the mirror-like structure of paired human eyes that processes two- and three-dimensional images relayed as pictorial composites, vision is actually multidimensional and holographic. As Chuck Close's paintings demonstrate, the proliferation of signages and fractalised icons embedded as secondary and tertiary sets of configurations within the modular schematics of bytes and pixels in any represented image delivers up mirror motifs and virtualized semioses. On the Net, embedded information is synergized by the kinetic delivery capacity of digital transmission that augments

the visualizing capacity of the entire human biosystem. Intelligence and ocularity are both intracellularly extended.

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Sitting in front of a computer is symbiotic and creates instantaneous dyadic interactions with tacitly shifting kinetic registers having incrementally negotiable exchange ratios. The Internet constitutes an ultimate machine because it promulgates digital fission and thus serves as a super delivery system. Its rapid exponential growth has facilitated the microprocessing of interstitial filaments that continually augment the parameters of any electronic mosaic, and one's reciprocating electronostic reflections rewire the hemitropic convergences of bicameral metaprogramming.

The symbiotic potential of digital messageability arises from the cybertrrophic transactions of the human biosystem when linked up to websites and data banks. Microsoft's Windows' maneuverability options proliferate copious and rapidly configuring arrays of dynamically interpenetrating signs, signages, glyphs, images, icons, imagos, topoi, messages and informatic links having virtually limitless parameters. Leonard Schlain: "In classical times, the Greek logos meant 'the word'; in the twentieth century, it contracted into logo, the icon."²

Television programming began as an extension of cinematography whose initial intent was to bring the movie theater into every living room. TV though, is more continuous and serially animated, and in comparison to the Net, presentationally exclusive and hegemonically selective. The fragmentary interruptions perpetrated by television advertising have conspired to make Attention Deficit Disorder an extended cultural syndrome. Channel surfing interrupts sensorial continuity and splinters attention with randomly kinetic, acoustic and retinal cut-ups, allowing viewers see and hear mosaically and physiognomically. TV and computer are merging just as cell phone and camera have, too.

The Internet on the other hand is much more lexically challenging—readability arises by synergetic content transference. Content isn't controlled by anyone and using it transforms hierarchical formats. It creates instant user-friendly pluralities of discontinuously interactive

configurative topoi with ever-expanding, sustained margins of cognitive leverage. Just as the reflexive gradients enacted by the dialectics of self and other are compounded by the motion of changing surfaces, the Internet functions as a digital mirror that moves the movie theater into one's brain, symbiotically virtualising human consciousness.

The body too is a mirror. While its visage, physiognomy and surface permeability are transparent to the typography of emotions, the human biosystem is constituted by a systems topography of anatomically moving parts, and as it locomotes through the geomimetics of space, its inscriptions and transcriptions interact with networks of extended topologies that intersect realms, signs, sites, domains, fields, vectors, events and habitats. Movement and the flow of information, on the other hand, virtualise the autonomous physical projections of psyche and consciousness. Corporeality, in contrast, refers to the entire phenomenology of *being* being a body

The Net is also constituted by a virtual corporeality—the embodiment (and disembodiment) of a gigantic collective neurosphere. Similarly, a mirror doesn't only reproduce the scene before it, but enhances the virtuality of visibility by viscerally augmenting one's proprioceptive responsiveness. The kinesthetic sense processes reflected semblances and intersecting vectors on the elastic rebound that interconnect multiple (bi)locations. On-line relays of ricocheting sightlines refract palpably converging iconic and isomorphic intersections that coordinate proxemic placements, tangentially impinging referents with *soi-disant* relations.

The flow of information over the Internet constitutes, and is constituted by, a disembodied virtuality. Through interactive typographising, websites build up mobile topologies that are constantly reconfiguring interpenetrating typologies. Classification systems move across conceptual boundaries of multiple disciplines and transmute areas of discourse. Topologies organize and schematize subject domains and their layouts, while typologies synchronize and orchestrate intersystemic categories of reference, inference, and interface.

Metamorphing icons and visually permuting schematics

activate mnemonic, or mnemonic, signs, glyphs, graphemes, and symbols that catalyze their transpositive valences. Their overlays stimulate the retina to scan connections through disembodied interstices while extracting, abstracting and superposing sub- and supraliminal information.

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Reading on-line becomes omnitrop(h)ic by continually recompositing the axially organizing principles and topomorphic assemblage capacities of recompositing typologies. Cyberocularity thus entwines axes of schematic alignments as it pulls in and interconnects chains and helixes of data-defined configurations whose continual repositionings repropotionalize and recontextualize the mosaic currency that elicits and nurtures lexical navigation. Unlike television, with its monocentric focus, the Net enables participants to retool their reading habits. It incites and invites a proclivity of pluralistic praxes.

Beginning in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the jerky pixilation of the magic lantern, kinescope, flip books, nickelodeons and early cinematography challenged the animation registers of the eye by presenting it with a spectral motion-emulsion perception that concomitantly opened up the extended spatiality of the right hemisphere of the brain. Moviegoers quickly learned to read movement gradients, become kinesthetically empathic, and kinelexically conversant with the relative velocities of signs and bodies in motion.

The Internet similarly challenges multiple ways to read simultaneously transmitted information gradients by further inaugurating a *lexitropia*—reading across a synchronistic spectra of heterogeneous ideographic signages whose field parameters strategize vibrating overlays of fractalised (de)signs—digits, letters, particles, pixels, glyphs, symbols and icons. Instead of ideology: ideolexia—the reading and (tele)graph(eme)izing of ideas.

The interdigitated tropisms of digital reading are informed and transformed by permutating topoi whose pictographemics become tacitly transparent to their discursive synergy. They combine and superpose the textural with extended pictorial extensions, calling up supplemental schemas and correlates and creating an electrokinetic ideographemics somewhat reminiscent of

Egyptian hieroglyphs and Chinese pictographs.

The pixotropic integers that inform the compositing codes of pictomorphic elements reconsolidate schemas, essences, gestalts, graphic elements with syntagmatic cathexes—attributes, features and factors that eye and brain build up and deduce from their telemimetic extrapolations of objects, texts, screen fields, images, messages and events—the interpenetrating units of the lexitropic. Reading texts on screen hypermimetises the word, as well as the act of reading itself. Vertical scrolling and interactive screenage, menus, and websites turn the book into interactive electronic typography. Information oscillates.

At a strategic moment in Susanna Clarke's epically engrossing and enchanted novel, *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell*, a story about two British magicians during the time of the Napoleonic Wars, the younger Mr. Strange, upon meeting the older and more famous Mr. Norell, performs a magic trick with a book and a mirror during which he makes them exchange places, so that the reflection of the book is left on the table and the real book comes to reside *in* the mirror. The trick escapes the witnesses but immediately impresses and charms Mr. Norrell.

The book similarly has changed places in our times too through the mirror of the Internet and the future reflections of language, textuality, and discursivity are being transformed by digitality. This echoes the historical transposition of the novel's picturesque trope of inverting the topographies of nature and literature. The Internet is doing more to transform our relationship to language than the other media and its electronic frisson will undoubtedly continue to provoke not only the evolution of the book, but the future practices of reading, too.

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The telethetic transfer agent that enables different computer systems and hypertext softwares to communicate with one another is of course Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), and Hypertext Markup Language (HTML). These cyberthetic metalanguages, composed of algorithmic as well as alphabetically-based source codes, make instant interconnectivity systematically compossible and interactively consolidate network outreach and communication across the entire World Wide Web. HTTP

links usually appear embedded on-screen as highlighted text in blue code words or underscored as bolded titles that light up when the cursor moves over them. A click of the mouse instantly activates related website references. The Internet far surpasses the brain's labyrinthine capacity for free association.

HTTP, invented by Tim Berners-Lee, a computer scientist and his colleagues at CERN in Geneva, Switzerland in March 1989, really created the gateway event of the World Wide Web. Before HTTP, Berners-Lee explains in his book, *Weaving the Web: The Original Design and Ultimate Destiny of the World Wide Web*,³ the emerging hypertext industry was insular and actually resistant to the idea of the Internet.

Like the logical languages of different disciplines, computer systems too require intricate source codes (that is, algorithmic instructions that guarantee their across-the-board logical operations) to translate concepts and operating protocol in order to interface the different organizing principles and structural epistemics of dissimilar discourses. Such link-ups and fortuitous alignments can be likened to the roots and branches of a tree, or to the capillaries, dendrites and nerves of the circulatory and nervous systems whose filaments allow information to be transmitted as signals. Similarly, the hugely extended but diffuse network of the Internet interlinks related data and instantly captures dispersant documents.

Proliferating 'screenhicular' sweeps and broadband connectivity accelerate potentially interconnective chains between subjects, key words, search topics, issues, events, images, schemata, information and reference sources, educational and corporate institutions, think tanks and on-line resources and libraries, and thus unsheet the mirror of informatic transmissibility and potential data transference.

The Internet, actually a disembodied network of networks designed in 1973 and implemented in 1983, is constituted by banks of computers and servers capable of passing information through a vast extended web. It was developed by Vinton Cerf and others, and although he proposed the basics of hypertext as early as 1945, the WWW wasn't actualized until the 1990s. Digitality is discontinuous information synergy.

The Internet's virtual frontier has only begun to forge an emerging digital future. It enhances biosystemic synergy through parasaccadic and multischematic mimetic relays of the ocular system and thus catalyzes the interprecessionary and neurothetic fusion transmission of word and image—a prescient threshold—that activates new programmatic formats with reciprocally reflexive eidetic and cognitive extensions. These virtual mind-machine capacities might be called *teletheletics*.

Or: neurothetics—the transmissibility of cognitive systemicity arises from polyphase wave pattern synchronizations that, like sine waves, induce bicameral transferences that interconnect the sequential, language-oriented and code-bound left brain with the image-enhancing and pixel and fractal processing capacities of the spatially extended right neurohemisphere. Just as rock and electronic music program a driving sonic pulse, the interdigitation of cyberthetic data likewise generates an information pulse, and the Internet further synchronizes *telecognitive* pulse relays.

Digitally morphing physiognomic schematics shift the parameters of isomorphic, boundary-shifting potential of lexical gradients between letter and icon, picture and gestalt, image and syntagem, pixels and fractals, synergizing a transduction of ideographemic elements. Simultaneous deciphering processes of retinal flexions and messageability occur as rod and cone cells extrapolate micro details while rapidly scanning and subliminally comparing multiple on-line fields and topoi. This requires a *dialexic* or double-reading capacity that fields the superpositions between foreground and background to ferret out relevant interprecessionary gradients.

The eye pans laterally to detect cognitive signals in simultaneously uniform, sign-on-sign links, correlates and ciphers as well as all-at-once field or screen sweeps by autoscopically grabbing their pointillistic details. Erratically rapid optical flexions rove and jump between data clusters in fits and starts recursively seeking out patterns within patterns. Information embedded or encrypted in tangentially configured sequences creates phenomorphic transferences. These reciprocal, autocompositive relays between rapidly alternating pictorial, syntactic and syntagmatic modes

and codes enhance the exchange values of each element moving through and informing the *other*.

Cyberthonically mutating metalanguages evolve as a compositing digital currency arises from syncretistic applications by synchronizing interactive linguistic, conceptual and semiotic typographies. These emerge in hybrid interface as one moves over and through larger continua of systems typologies. Extrapolations between wholes and parts occur in rapidly discontinuous synchronization as details, attributes, elements, factors, types, features, similarities, gestalts, categories and images are interconnected, repositioned and abstracted. (Deduction and induction happen concurrently and faster than can be perceived.)

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Digital otherness is thus a concomitant component of virtual reflexivity. It lurks like a holographic phantom just around and beyond the classificatory focus built up by the surveillance of margins and screenloads, teased out incrementally by a click of the mouse or by plying the cursor to reframe and resituate emerging data to configure whatever is potentially knowable.

And the mouse, invented during the 1960s by Doug Engelbart, a researcher at Stanford University, conceived and industrially realized during the early 1980s, launched the disembodied connectivity of word and topoi, and gave computer users instant digital leverage by enabling the prehensile coordination of fingers to click, launch, and move through the topospheres of hyperspace. After all, the Other is what is not *not* seen, known or configured, but nonetheless discloses itself, or is disclosed, tacitly, tactically, tactilily or tangentially.

The problematic of the Other is one of the most fascinating and enigmatic of all existential and phenomenological topics because it constitutes and contests the first and final cipher of being and thus both defines and contraposes selfhood and identity.

Like the famous frogs' legs that jumped when stimulated, the human brain is constantly autoprojecting—thus double and shadow, and their proxy, become disembodied surrogates of any psyche. Electricity, media and digitality

amplify the projectable continuum of individuated consciousness, heightening the contrasts of not-self through the reflective antipodes of virtual negation. The negative or opposite of any being is reflected as, and in, all that is not or cannot be known—whether that is another person, body, figure, screen or the reflection of oneself. The Other can also connote an ontogenic proxy for divinity or deity (*e.g.*, Solar: the God of Electricity!), or a disembodied spirit or ancestor (thus having totemic inferences, too).

The Other presents itself through an elided set of clues, like a mirror reflection, through movement, shadowy inference or oblique innuendo; it thus discloses and connects the subject to the larger circumference of being. Words and images become the agents and objects through which the Other circulates as an electrical reflection or currency, like a silhouette of an unknowable mystery.

Finally, too, the Other is death or its proxy, always observing if not confronting and contesting us, like a thanatonic (*cf.* Blanchot, Castenada). The Other also curries and transcends belief through its reflections, as it moves through the interstices of assembling information and through the uncanny piecemeal Ouija of clicking and surfing, scanning and spying, eyeing and enquiring. Instead of a planchette, a mouse!

A tacit otherness rides the wires like spirits emanating through the fleeting signs of screens and windows—an elusive figure beyond figuration, a face that is more than form and physiognomy; and faceless in the face of its ephemerality, too—it challenges continuity in the way that a mirror's reflectivity makes the margins of vision palpable and virtual. Emmanuel Levinas has aptly cited the Other as an Interlocuter that "exceeds the confines of understanding."⁴ The Other is also the secret agent of mutation, transmutation, standing behind the practices of art and literature.

The juxtapositions catalyzed by screen scrimmage and the concatenation of interactive windows' maneuverability conflate new amplitudes of cognitive apperception. The hyperthetic virtual mirror of the WWW with the motoric capacity for quantum assemblage of electromimetic signages conflates digital analogues like the genetic strands

of the double helix—codes and signages are inextricably embedded in and wound around one another. Syntax has shifted from linear, grammatolexical typography to rescrambled, hyperkinetically interactive and transposable electronic topographies.

Information creates digital and psychic tropisms. Cyberocularity is thus t(r)opolexical—neural transmission and instant transcriptivity convert readability and messagability through and *across* texts, terrains and brains with mercurial border transfer synchronization. First electricity, then electronics, transformed all perceptual, technological and ontological parameters—being resonates before (and after) it figurates *while* and *as* its field alignments reconfigure; the Internet thus transports users past personal identity.

Chuang Tzu: “The perfect man employs his mind as a mirror.” The mind-world—its correlate in Sufism—is ‘Aina Khans,’ meaning the Palace of Mirrors. Thoughts too, exemplified by non-locality, traverse space or exceed spatiality as their parameters interpress in instantaneous transmission or as transmissible reflections.

Transmissibility is a multifaceted all-at-once synergetic capture and disclosure process. Think of how one’s eyes read, automatically extrapolating and recognizing a face in a crowd or extracting necessary data from an unfamiliar sight, sign, screen, text, or field. Digital and cognitive extrapolation have complex analogues with reciprocal correlatives as factors, features, attributes, properties, components, qualities and harmonies are selected and synergize incrementally. Impulses, signals, impressions and percepts build up configurations that transmute gestalts to activate the fluid schemata of perception, whereas the pixel, grapheme and letter are the basic units and cyber building blocks.

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Just as Tim Berners-Lee was confronted with the challenge of solving how completely different, incompatible computer systems could communicate on-line as the Internet, the extrapolation and assimilation, induction, deduction, and transduction of heterogeneous disciplines and discourses requires other codes of logical transference to bridge and amalgamate their structural dissimilarities.

Edmund Husserl, innovative philosopher and founder of phenomenology, employed the word *categorematic*⁵ to denote the complex schematic interplays of wholes and parts that are constantly moving through one another or becoming relationally and logically entrained by realigning the foundations underlying all their givens.

Looking into and through a mirror refocuses and intensifies one’s concentration and perception. The catoptric space of the mirror, the hyperspatiality of the Internet and the psychic continuum of the cogito share a non-linear, all-encompassing reflexivity. The extrapolating capacities of hypertext mirror how eye and brain extract while interconnecting signs and sightlines in continuously inextricable weaves and waves of association, transference and telereference.

Cone cells in the retina enable the eye to scrutinize details that work in concert with the rod cells to increase one’s *dialexis*, or double reciprocating readability, input processing, and delivery capacity, of both eyes as well as their veridical structural transparency potential. Mirror-imaging heightens a holistic or comprehensive overview by furthering the apperceptive interaction and extrapolation capacities of both brain hemispheres. (Linguistics and semiotics have facilitated this same kind of scrutiny for the apperception of lexical signages.) Leonard Shlain: “The integration of alphabetic and ideographic, West and East, and left and right [brain] awaits the next stage in human evolution.”⁶

Just as the alphabet reconfigured the world, the Internet is further reconfiguring multidisciplinary transferences and programming neurolinguistic and metatheoretical capacities. All technology constitutes biosystemic exemplifications (coaxial and helixical have bicameral analogs) that extend through the different media.

Digital transmissibility is the synovial fluid facilitating the fusion indexes of the jointed and joining of words and images via telelexical synchronies. In Buddhist cosmogony, creation originated as a sonic vibration that occurred before reality had a visible incarnation. Because the Internet incarnates as it disembodies and synergizes epistemorphic transmutations, it catalyzes intersensory translations for

us by the kinetic assimilation of typologies that expedite telecognitive transcriptions.

In a *cybertopia*, all horizons and thresholds are digitally porous. Information oscillates telesynchronously via the transparent *pulsion* of signages. The constant revectorization, respacialization, and telethetic recontextuation of supports, words, concepts, images and their components provoke synthetic and syncretic linkages that catalyze neuros(t)imulation.

The Internet can thus be considered a psychotronic motor, crystal transmitter or digital Ouija board that queries by aligning the known with the unknown or not-yet-known (hence, the moving letter, or cursor, as a thanatonic). Language, too, reaches its autogenic fulfillment only by being worked over cybernostically—complex ideas sometimes only emerge piecemeal and require virtual, computerized intervention. As a biotronic and neurolexical technology, the Internet is also a superdelivery hypersystem for networking messages from the Other, others or beyond.

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Virtual transduction moves lexicography across the fields of body, corporeality, brain, media, websites, cultures and machines. Edmund Husserl also coined the words *kinestheses* and *kinesthesias*⁷ to reference how a subject's proprioceptive perception (tactile and motoric) inform cognition by constantly shifting variables coextensive with, and interdependent upon, the body's constantly changing positionality. Muscular proprioception and its apperceptive flexions accrue in response to the body's constantly changing surroundings, environment and experiences to coordinate interpenetrating perspectives, relationships, and representations that transform one's frames of reference.

Husserl: "Every chance alteration of the perceiver's relative position alters his percept, and different persons, who perceive the same object simultaneously, never have exactly the same percepts."⁸ Dancing was the first kinetic medium that preceded the motivity of the word and unsheeted the mirror of disembodied being by activating the mover's bioenergetic field. It thus opened corporeality to the interpenetration of other realms, including the mythic and empathic.

Kinesthesia assures that reflections and reflexions build up a hyperdimensionality. At every moment, body and being are involved in bound and unbound complexes that coordinate intricate factors and ensembles that integrate one's knowledge of self and world that is assembled by virtualized composites of sights, signals and signs. Husserl: "Signs are in fact not objects of our thought at all, even surrogatively; we rather live entirely in the consciousness as meaning or understanding..."⁹

But signs composite and recomposite as syntax, imagery, presentation, self, and screenage—their transcriptive plays and configurative relays of assemblage (as codes) have analogs with bytes, pixels and fractals as the basic micro units that comprise the cybertrophic currency of digitality.

Movement, too, functions as a kinesthetic mirror. Kinestheses contain and maintain mimetic flexions, the incremental microvalics of proprioception that enable corporeality to become reflexive. In the reciprocities and symbiotic exchanges between Internet and neurosystem, changing screens refocus attention and concatenate the vectors of information and their accruing configurations. Virtual kinestheses compress, micromanage and miniaturize the reflection of the world's macro-alignments.

The kinetics of information flow, and one's neurothetic processing, reflect how otherness is sensed through the passage and dialexis of movement's pixels and proxies. Images, icons, photos, pictographs, schemas and their ideogramatics have the capacity to double both the mimetic and tropistic overlays of readability as well as one's sense of self as otherness. Digital mosaic assemblages uncannily materialize unexpected transferences, indexes and insights.

Kinesthesias inflect, synchronize and synthesize experience through the fielding of percepts, associations and the continua of interdigitating data. Virtual fusions continually arise from the conflation that realign visual, lexical and conceptual factors, their schemata (and ensembles of schemata), that are indexed corporeally and typographically through one's kinetic and retinal reflexes. They are cognitively magnified by interactive systems topologies that shift, open, frame, connect, and delimit the margins of reference and classification.

These interpenetrating processes are exactly what is mirrored while working at a computer. Kinestheses also provide and provoke virtual othernesses, including mnemonic and mythemic activation as well as the assimilation of whatever induces, transduces, supports and retrieves memory, mnemonic reflexes and the experience of past (and future) temporalities.¹⁰

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One of the most sophisticated, extensive and astonishingly comprehensive websites that charts a synoptic cartography of the Internet is <http://www.refdesk.com>, founded by Matt Drudge's father, Bob Drudge, at the Library of Congress. Its home page contains an extensive topology of lists and menus of accessible on-line indexes with wide-ranging reference (re)sources that provide users with typologic links to open up a tremendous array of libraries, websites, and data banks that includes dictionaries, atlases, almanacs, encyclopedias, publications, journals and a roster of domestic and international periodicals and newspapers. The site's multischematic topography of classificatory links instantly connects users to specialized systems libraries with extensive cross-referential potential.

Perhaps more than any other website, Refdesk's interactive topographies coordinate a bewildering array of categorical transferences between typologies with vast indexes and intersystemic classification capacities. Cybersthesia facilitates topographies of topologies and typologies of typologies.

Refdesk performs the paramount service of surveying the widest synoptic manifest of information manifolds to insure multisystemic transference with high-speed reciprocity and instant reflexivity. George Soros: "Reflexivity is, in effect, a two-way feedback mechanism in which reality helps shape the participants' thinking and the participants' thinking helps shape reality in an unending process in which thinking and reality may come to approach each other but can never become identical."¹¹ Windows broker reciprocally interactive digital pluriverses.

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Information is indisputably and interconnectively seductive. The tantalizing alignments of riveting details, like a fractalised chain necklace that challenges pattern recognition, spark physiognomic transferences and

information mosaics. These electronic confluences generate a cybermania akin to hypnotically captivating compugames that become nets for capturing and contesting the unknown and unexpected. Texts, sources, sites and connections one didn't know existed pop up regularly during Net searches. Reportage, research, events and phenomena are embedded within constellations of emerging facts while spawning contiguous ensembles. Messages emerge whose enigmatic interconnectivity is partially discerned through embedded, disguised or subliminal links.

Psychoanalyst and theorist Jean Laplanche: "That's what I'm trying to do when I say that there are types of codes that are used to treat something coming from the other." And: "The *message* forces me to translate. There is a force to translate... which is inside the message itself. . . I would say it comes from the unevenness inside the message. I would say the message itself contains the enigma."¹²

The *Other* can thus be likened to an enigmatic undercover operative, secret agent or uncanny phantom delivering up the (un)known via cryptic and encrypted *scriptions* real and imaginary while moving over, through, and across clandestine, occluded, or unfamiliar routes—and through real and virtual interstices. The Other becomes transmissible by collapsing the distances between bodies and events, signs and signals, words and images, objects and references, schemas and gestalts. Its presence is crystallized through tacit interstitial action—by blink, link, word, letter, pixel or impulse coterminous and coactive through and on the pulse.

Levinas: "Language, in its expressive function, addresses and invokes the other. . . Language cannot encompass the other."¹³ And: "We watch and spy on the interlocutor as he speaks and answers questions"¹⁴—the Internet too delivers up and acts as an electronic, or *electototronic* interlocutor that communicates through an extended network of metaconsciousness. One observes the physical action and corporeal cipher of the Other in the kinetics of the dance of information, where otherness appears through a palpable play of kinetic qualities and change of states due to the visceral discontinuity, as well as through rhythmic and plastic transformation.

Cyberocularity thus both resides within and alternately inhabits the lexiphilic eye of the mobile subject in its ongoing symbioses with media and machines. Cyberocularity evolves a telemorphic and pictographemic scrutability that catalyzes the apperception of the Other: the *other* message and the Other's message which are not *not* synonymous—clues and evidence that synergize by providing hyperlinks and interpenetrating chains of discontinuous signifiers.

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The Internet can act as the seditious mirror that exposes what tries to remain hidden, say, behind politics, scandals, celebrities, and transgressions. It exposes what underlies events with an urgent, secret spin and what media spectacles camouflage through covert propaganda. Some examples: after John Kennedy, Jr.'s fatal airplane accident in July, 1999, a considerable amount of Internet traffic claimed undisclosed facts including unreported eye witness accounts that did not appear in newspapers or other media.

These reports confirmed that Kennedy had indeed been in radio contact with the Hyannis airport and was preparing to land his plane, that there was no impenetrable blanket cloud cover as reported. More dramatically, surface-to-air flares were observed ascending to his plane, similar to what others observed just before Flight 800's fatal explosion over Long Island in 1996.

9-11 created an Internet bonanza. The event spawned websites that claimed to expose what has been called one of the largest and most successful military operations and cover-ups ever launched. Websites such as Michael Rupert's <<http://www.copvicia.com>>, Michel Chossudovsky's <<http://www.globalresearch.ca>>, and <<http://www.whatreally-happened.com>> featured incisively informative and controversial reportage not found in any other media—amounting to the *other's* insider's view.

And when it comes to the personal tribulations of politicians and celebrities, news travels faster than digital wildfire. In August 2004, the governor of New Jersey, James McGreevy, was forced to resign because of extortion charges resulting from a tryst with a young, insufficiently experienced Israeli man whom he had appointed his Homeland Security honcho, and who in turn threatened a lawsuit accusing the

governor of sexual harassment. Only on the Internet could one find numerous clincher commentaries that connected the dots to a Moussad intelligence operation gone seriously awry. Persistent web searching realigns convergences that can rectify contraindicated or polarized issues and events by refocusing disinformation. Like double sets of sine waves intercepted in interphase, it enables one to negotiate countervailing viewpoints.

Disciplines and discourses support and sustain systems, but are surpassed by them, too. Systems, like the synergy of ideas in discontinuous interface, might be compared to large ocean liners, whereas concepts and theories that negotiate their passage can be likened to tug boats that ease them into port. The Internet is the biggest clearing house, docking port and delivery engine for the coordination and interaction of all systems.

Electronics moves users to the other side of information formation, to the inside of neutrotransmission, and like the mirror, to the other side of nature as well. The Internet sponsors instantaneous convergences by unsheeting the mirror of disembodied telesynchronous confluences that connect the known with the unknown, making information and knowledge virtually coextensive. Key words act as search ciphers and evince an array of instant hits and clues—abbreviated code signifiers typed into search engines call up indexes of links for further focusing and thus provide the prestidigitation of otherwise unknowable connexions.

Finally, too, this globally interconnected, omnitrophic electronic mirror also reveals the other side of what books, libraries, teachers, newscasters, politicians and ideologues keep hidden, too—the other side of all doxic tropisms that encode and enforce belief systems, with their numbing propaganda.

¹ Sabine Melchior-Bonnet, *The Mirror: A History*, translated by Katharine H. Jewett, 2002: Routledge, p. 157.

² Leonard Schlain, *The Alphabet Versus The Goddess: The Conflict Between Word and Image*, 1999: Penguin/Compass, p. 416.

³ Berners-Lee, Tim and Mark Fischetti, *Weaving the Web: The Original Design and Ultimate Destiny of the World Wide Web*, 2000: HarperBusiness/HarperCollins Publishers.

⁴ Levinas, Emmanuel, “Is Ontology Fundamental,” in *Entre nous: on thinking-of-the-other*, 1998: NY, Columbia University Press (translated by Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav), p. 5.

⁵ Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Vol. II., NY: Routledge, 2002 (translated by J. N. Findlay), see esp. Investigation IV, “The distinction between independent and non-independent meanings and the idea of pure grammar” (beg. p. 47).

⁶ *Schlain*, op cit, p. 186.

⁷ See “The World of the Living Present and the Constitution of the Surrounding World That Is Outside the Flesh” in Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Husserl and the Limits of Phenomenology*, translated by Bettina Bergo and revised by Leonard Lawlor, 2000: Northwestern University Press, pp 132-153.

⁸ Husserl, op. cit., Vol II, p. 195.

⁹ Husserl, *ibid.*, page 210.

¹⁰ In a fascinating essay, *Nostalgia for a Digital Object: Regrets on the Quickening of Quick Time*, Vivian Sobchack cogently analyzes the similitudes that interconnect digital modes of mnemonic compression, the miniaturization of an image’s bites and iconic pixels and their scalar ratios and structurally finds their etiology in Joseph Cornell’s boxes, the cabinet of curiosities, dime museums, and movies as memory boxes. Originally published in *Millennium Film Journal*, Fall 1999, No. 34 and available at <[http://mfj-online.org/journalPages/MFJ#\\$/Vivian_Sobchak.html](http://mfj-online.org/journalPages/MFJ#$/Vivian_Sobchak.html)>

¹¹ *The Theory of Reflexivity* (delivered 4/26/94 to the MIT Dept. of Economics World Economy Laboratory Conference, Washington, D.C.) at <<http://www.geocities.com/ecocorner/intelarea/gs1.html>> Financier and philanthropist Soros explains: “Well, I want to discuss a subject which fascinates me but doesn’t seem to interest others very much... I have written a book about it [reflexivity] which was first published in 1987 under the title *The Alchemy of Finance*; but it received practically no critical examination.”

¹² *The other within: Rethinking psychoanalysis*, an interview with Jean Laplanche, July/August 2000: *Radical Philosophy* (<www.radicalphilosophy.com/default.asp?channel_id=2190&editorial_id=10027>).

¹³ Levinas, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 33.