

Cyborg Fictions

Mythical and fictional elements are involved in the analysis of technology.

KATHLEEN ROGERS

In the section Cyborg Fictions, there are six essays which deal with the nature of subjectivity. Each writer is seeking a language to question self-identity. The titles include: *Cyberspace – The Ultimate Destination*, *Bioapparatus*, *The Status of Partial Explanations* (excerpts from the diary of a feminist cyborg), *Notes Towards a Theory of the Bioapparatus as a Site of the Conquest of Mind/Body Dualism*, *Virtual Reality* and *The Cabinet of Death* (that's mine). I think we are already multi-layering a number of metaphors here. We have got cyborg fiction which in itself is a metaphor, and then these which are inside that.

From reading the essays, I have made the observation again that they appear to deal with the cybernetic world as an enclosure. All of them explore the question of self-identity in the subjective form. They deal with the cybernetic world as an enclosure of identity using various metaphors. The subjective experience cannot be defined and it requires space for exploration and expression. To find containers for subjective experience is a fascinating task and attempting to find words for the containment and framing of identity is a fundamental activity.

It seems that some of us desire to open the Pandora's Box and embrace the monsters of the human psyche and some do not. We have in front of us, in the bodies of words, and in these essays, the psychological landscape of *Total Recall* which is described by Adam Boome, Lorne Falk's diaristic approach, the classical memory systems that Raphael Lozano describes, the peep show, the gross pantomime, the theatre, the house, the museum, the commodity and the haunted house (which relates to my essay, *The Cabinet of Death*). [...]

Raphael's memory theatre draws from an earlier labyrinthian model, the classical memory theatre of ancient Greece – an invisible memory system which has informed mystical, philosophic and scientific practice. [...]

Rafael Lozano Hemmer

Virtual reality: A theatre that contains the ideas of all things, except, of course, the idea of itself.

Praises then for such a theatre, a structure that is neither internal nor external, that has neither interior nor exterior, yet it is hermetically sealed. And hermetic it is, for it is based on the Latin translations that the great Ficino made of one Hermes Trismegistus, and thus its magic. This theatre grants *anima* to icons, much in the same way that Egyptians gave angelic spirit to their statues as described in the *Asclepius*. Magic as it should be, for the theatre recovers the latent divinity of man, whose intellect is drawn from the very substance of God. This structure will help Him remember the universe, for the microcosm can fully remember the macrocosm within its divine *mens* or memory.

A theatre where you stand on the stage, that is your eye, looking out at 360 degrees of icons which are really talismans. Memory is a place, a place where viewers attend only one at a time (unless your rank does not permit your attendance in the first place). Approach and recognize in an instant all that you have already seen and experienced. A vast pantheon of ideas, ideas that cannot sleep for there is never darkness under the reign of *Lumen*, *Sol*.

And here it is at last, a place where memories of the celestial and inferior worlds are stored in an infinite number of little drawers, each drawer underneath the stamp of its classification, a classification that is the fabric of all designs. Open up a drawer and find *imagines agentes*; extrapolate the *imagines* back to where they seem to come from, and release that which is otherwise hidden within the depths of the human mind. But what is this theatre other than a highly ornamental filing cabinet?

Virtual Reality¹

¹ Adaptation of recollections on the Memory Theatre of Giulio Camillo Delminio, whose wooden theatre made him one of the most famous Italians of the sixteenth century. References from Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966); quotations from the script of the play *Immediacy* by A. Kitzmann and R. Lozano, 1991.