



7th International Symposium of Interactive Media Design

THE FORMATION OF IMAGE AND UNDERSTANDING SEEING

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(To the memory of Unsal Oskay)

Summary:

In the cyber-age, constantly changing communication networks, produce systems of interdependence akin to natural ecosystems filled with unbelievable artificial intelligence and imagery used interactively in cyber space.

Addictions have been developed for people who are stuck into an authorized lifestyle, audited by computers, televisions and close circuit cameras through the mutations of photography. This situation has brought the border between the environment and the technological creations at the risk of disappearance.

The artificial world and relations we create have grown out of is a natural extension and has become a cultural shock between our bodies and minds. There are robots that can react to human behavior and even think even though they are at a primitive state at the moment. And we, as human beings, watch and support this newly developed communication with curiosity. How can we stop these dangerous developments before they reach to a more threatening level, even to the point of ending humanity?

Within this context, I wanted to emphasize the importance of understanding the forming and usage of imagery especially within its artificial world. For internal audit, we can always rely on art and ethical rules for guidance.

Key Words: Communication, Imagery, Photography, Seeing, Media.

Introduction:

It is absolutely not easy to understand and analyze the adventures of social relationships formed into social ethics and a discipline that took thousands of years.

The most important problem of 'Homo Sapiens' that had the need and feel to shelter under caves and tree cavities was, unquestionably, feeding and protecting themselves from the conditions of mother nature. The Altamira cavity, belonging to the Paleolithic period shows us clearly what kind of strategies the human being used in order to overcome their natural needs, with the mural drawings found on the walls. These drawings, not only being the first examples of socializing, are also an important proof of communication with drawing in our time.

Human being that transformed into a social structure and transferred their hunting skills



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into agricultural skills learnt to get closer to each other with the acceptance of social arrangements and improved expressing themselves to others. The formed structure helped them understand and analyze themselves as well as using this new form into a tool of pressure, amongst first individuals then to the whole society, with show of strength and status. When we analyze the species, we can say that there is only one kind that has a harmonic problem; it's not only with its own but also with kinds, with its behavior. We can see that developing technology was forced by the necessity of staying alive, and this was our first freedom of choice even though it sounds primitive. But in Stone Age, this is choosing one stone or a piece of wood over another to reserve it from its nature in order to shape it and use accordingly. When we start from this ascertainment, we can realize that we have no other choice than using the artificial tools that we created by looking at different species and copied what they have, since the harmony with Mother Nature is not on the functionality of our bodies.

The freedom of choosing, "prohairesis", within the given circumstances, has revolved from evaluating and doing by thinking, after the discovery of transferring out knowledge and aggregation to the next generations by language. But the activity of seeing comes before speaking, therefore even today, we make our choices based on the facts coming from our sense of sight.

The Effect of Visual Materials On Society

Although image first appeared on the scene as a form or art on prehistoric cavity walls, it shaped its form and real evolution by the beginnings of 19th century with the help of technological developments. The excitement of after expressionist period artists and their effort to leave the impression of dark out formed the footsteps to a big discovery. The action of forming image from inside a dark room that was used for painting in the beginning, grew itself out to be the digital image phenomena. Nicephore Niepce photographed the first image on an empty plaque on a summer day.

After cameras became available in our daily lives, neither any artist used cameras obliviously, nor any photographer took the next step without the awareness of other art forms. The untrustworthy or terrifying thing during this process was, the interference of science: physics, chemistry, optical information with the transfer of thoughts.

All kinds of development bring together new problems. This was the reason why the existence of photography first was perceived as a problem and its ethical side was discussed. However, only photography itself cannot form ethical values. It can only move crowds by giving strength to a moment or a dream. The proof of important "moment" or "moments" in human life, a photograph, can be used as a horrible weapon that can end someone's life as well as being used as a tool to save an innocent life.

When we look from this angle, the photography theorist Susan Sontag drives attention to the functionality of photography. She looks at the action of photographing with a different logic. The camera that sees the person in a way he or she can't see themselves, gives valuable information about them that they cannot realize without its help. According to Sontag, this is disrespectful to human being. Because photographing someone makes the person an object that can be directly owned symbolically. "Just like cameras are the harmless versions of weapons made by the society, photographing someone is the harmless version of a murder, a soft murder that is suitable for the sad and scary time being." (Sontag, 1993: 29). Photography artist, chooses the event to photograph. What's left outside the frame is what he or she does prefer. This conscious preference, regardless if it is art or business, whatever it's topic is, may layout the same logic, information or ethical behavior. A camera is just a tool that holds and records images. Human brain can remember what is left in the memory but cannot repeat them, freezes the moment it saved on pellicle or digitally as a photograph. (Can this be a ritual that's passed on to us by our ancestors or the fear of being forgotten?) It reminds us of the same thing every time we look at. Exactly at this tiny diversification, it condenses the sovereignty on targeted crowds that have deflated hopes and endless expectations as a result of capital culture. The speed and perception of images pulls people into the meaningless messages of "buy now, win now". It is actually the encrypted dissatisfaction in our subconscious and the curious structure of our nature that causes this situation of weakness and vulnerability. Also, forming logic into the weird passion of jealousy, the consumer is set to believe that their never to become real dreams are awaiting them in the future. Regarding this topic, Unsal Oskay explains the effects of visual materials and media on society as "Everyone who is forced to live stuck into their inner worlds, see the society as a competitor to himself or herself. Individuals feel inadequate when they sees something that they don't have, even don't need but it fashionable or newly released. In order to let go of this feeling, they push themselves towards consumption. The reason why the individuals do not feel satisfaction is being able to own what they can't afford. Not having brand-named products make them feel like a loss of status within the society. As a result of this, depression and psychological tension grows. (Oskay, 2007. 51)." However, with the artificial world and the web of relationships we create grow themselves out of being the extensions of our nature and causes a shock between our bodies and minds.

Although it is an effective way to produce images from photography, we can say that photography is: an analysis of imagery. Reading photographs or analyzing imagery is in a sense, analyzing them; aesthetic, content, composition, editing and technical wise and coming up with conclusions. Just like literature has its own language and power, photography also has its own expressive ways and communication power. This is a psychological situation where respect and concern is tied together. But the person hitting the shutter release is important for his or her understanding of art, ethical views, education and how and where he or she will use the photograph. When we look at today's conditions, although the improve-



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ment of photography has caused many conveniences, when we look around the world, we realize that the quality of image hasn't improved, regarding arts and aesthetics. Only the anonymous, unqualified imagery has grown massively. When we look at it this way, if this is caused by the will of a corporation, we should ethically analyze the power of that corporation over the society and how it affects the individual and the society psychologically and socially. It is the photographer's view of society that is captured within the frame because the person chooses 'a moment' in life and presents it to the viewer. It is important for the individual to understand the underlying meaning of the image. If the result is an artwork, on the photographer should be educated. It is not different if the photograph will be used as news for press or advertising purposes. While framing the chosen minute; as we call as 'that moment!' editing, agitation, and sometimes even aggression steps in. Photography that was considered as a new way expressing feelings, thoughts, ideas of plastic arts, became anonymous with the latest technological developments on the virtual world, but it also made it hard to determine copyrights, and have control over it as well as expanding its area of usage. The widened area of consuming, and the use of simple recording machines has brought photography to a dangerous level of use of it as a weapon or proof against one.

The people of the modern world use a variety of visuals that are offered in the virtual world in order to offer information to the universe. Visual, acting on directly targeting the external view, is the phenomena of a way of forming our thoughts that are reflections of our hypothalamus. Oscar Wilde says, "The people who judge others by the way they look, can only and only judge them as people who have no particular point of view. The real mystery of the world is not on what's invisible, it is the visible that's mysterious." (Davis, 1987). This saying strongly emphasizes that human nature has a disciplined, yet he has indispensable passion that can be used for a purpose.

Although being behind the camera, regardless if it is an artwork, commercial or journalism seems to cut down the relationship between the camera operator and environment, each act of seeing is a new discovery and relating with the object that is being photographed. The result, differing for the organic eye, is a document that belongs to our past and our future. "Photograph has always been close to the idea of history because it is captured and kept outlook of a person." (Berger, 2003: 64). Just like in the above the example, the tendencies of human towards connecting with the past and the psychology of being affected by what they see is emphasized.

This situation causes the person to be directed by different ideologies or by media, resulting the proof of the weakness of our eye, and the strength of our passion and their openness to manipulation.

In the previous cultures, visuals were perceived as signs sent to the human being. With the development of modern science and philosophy, visual arts gained different meanings. Today, art is no longer believed to be rising from the beauty of nature. Seeing, forming, and editing visuals became an educated discipline. The reason to this is that the person who

has a viewable environment can look around and come across physical, sociological and educational conditions and perceive them differently. However, seeing at the intersection point of creativity, criticism and thinking is an engaging activity with looking, thinking and feeling.

Conclusion:

Even though the human being has an indolent and conservative side, learning, concern, curiosity and sometimes even jealousy is in our nature as well and the more technology develops, the more we discover of the human nature and affect ourselves socioeconomically and culturally. These motives are being abused by capitalist corporations, and/or people who have role in directing the economy by suppressing it. At an interview with Unsal OSKAY in 2007, he said, "Today, every individual sees the happiness of another as a threat to themselves. Although we should find solutions to problems by analyzing the people who face the same problems, since an amorphous society is being built, we get even more complex results. This situation results with pushing the limits of ethics within different disciplines. By promising the individual that his or her life quality will change and telling them that they will have a greater status in the society, they engage people in a more luxurious lifestyle. When we look at it, generally, we see that the aim of capitalist markets is the fast and high return of capital. The advertising industry steps in and takes the role of a bridge between the consumer and the supplier to help fasten the return of capital, thus shaping the economy." (Beykent University, 2007).

When we look at the cultural function of communication, "the characteristic of the mass that will deliver the messages of communication tools and how they will be perceived, forms the areas of life experience and economical tendencies. Therefore, in order to increase the effectiveness of the message, it is a known method to use the conditions of the message, as well as sociological and demographic status of it rather than the language of the tool or the message. Although corporations protect consumer rights, the owner of the product in a way assesses things with their own worldview" (Oskay, 2000: 350). However, when we analyze communication on a different level, with its cultural function, we can easily see that the digital world not only effects the economies but also has reached to the level of affecting internal and external politics, to the point of taking down governments, causing the lives of people.

When we look at the consumed goods, as the capital owner, the goods have a function of change rather than its usage. It is actually using the information as virtual visuals rather than transforming them into written language, using simple logic, just like in the ancient history. This is not true only for commodity used for income or practical usage. The same result is also important for the art market that stands on a different ground. It would be a good move to open to discussion, the negative effects of modern art tools that abuse the



public via media, regardless if they are virtual or real. We can say that the ethics are not being taken into consideration because of the information and visual pollution formed today, by standardizing the art viewers and destroying their diminishing powers.

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