

What if the mirror was also aware?

If you were trapped in a room with tons of mirrors how would you feel in comparison to a blank room, which would be more unnerving?

What would it be like to watch ourselves, watch ourselves?

our relationship with the mirror

Does looking in a mirror separate us from others?

What is our expectation when looking into a mirror?



## CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness is the appearance of a world (Metzinger)

Instead of picking apart what consciousness is, I wonder how visual representations of ourselves influence our identity and self-awareness

Thomas Metzinger, author of *Philosophy of the Mind*, and founder of the Association for Scientific Study of Consciousness explains:

"The quality of consciousness is that appearing not if the world is the real world, because we still have appearances in dream states and in hallucinations, the problem of consciousness deals with that element of appearing (not if that appearance is correct to the outside/perceived world)

Consciousness allows us to have a model of the world as a whole and a model of an inner image of self.

What is the difference between an unconscious representation of body vs. one that consciously appears/subjectively appears?"

Does looking in a mirror change our idea of self?



## SELF AWARENESS

The idea of self is both physical and symbolic

A mirror allows us to have a certain type of self-awareness in which we can meditate on our own face, body language. A mirror allows us to see our bodies as a whole. A mirror helps us to compare ourselves to others, distinguish ourselves from others. A mirror allows us to watch ourselves.

The following are a few impromptu thoughts on mirrors by Bill Seaman:  
"Mirrors have many uses. Mirrors can be pointed in many directions. Mirrors were used to reflect light down corridors in the pyramids. Mirrors on the outside of buildings are used to obscure what is going on inside...Funhouse mirrors intentionally distort. Our eyes have a positionality on our body mirrors let us transcend that positionality and define a new perspective of viewing the body.

Mirrors allow us to view parts of our body that are not usually visible to us."

Do any cultures operate without mirrors?

our relationship with self

How do you know what you look like when you learn a dance?

## BODY AWARENESS

Seeing ourselves in our minds eye. When we think, we are acting in imagined space

Body consciousness developed in animals because anything that is conscious is something that one can attend to. Thomas Metzinger explains that through this awareness we can form concepts about the world and have selective motor control. Sleepwalkers are a good example of people without awareness of their body. They hurt themselves because they are not context sensitive or conscious of their surroundings.



How photography influenced a societal emphasis on controlling the expression of emotion?

## SELF REPRESENTATION

Self portraits as self study



Will the neosentient want to control their own face/interface?

## CONSTRUCTED SELF

A result of our technological development and need to communicate. We create and rely on these representations. The digital and virtual is not bound by time or space

The internet acts as an epistemological mirror of the human consciousness and, thus, is uncanny in it's nature (Tony Oursler)

Cinema technologies organize time and space (Cinematic Architecture, Schöning)

As perceiving subjects in the world we select and combine what we see, shifting our attention simultaneously away from and towards objects in the world. Our bodily orientation, our directionality of looking and hearing, expresses the intentionality of our perception. And as this is an embodied facets orientation is defined in time and space so it follows that our perceptions are equally grounded in a particular spatio-temporal moment. (Digital Encounters, Aylish Wood)

The universe is not made, but is being made continually. It is growing, perhaps indefinitely, by the addition of new worlds. (Henri Bergson)

Would the neosentient have a desire to "see" itself, what would that be like?

How does portraiture effect self awareness, identity, and communication?

## NEOSENTIENT & SELF-REPRESENTATION

The neosentient could alter and craft its own self image

If technology currently detects and relays a representation to us, the neosentient could knowingly alter that representation according to what it wanted to communicate, or how it wanted to relate. The human face acts as an intermediary between the entailments of the body and the outside environment. In a similar way humans interact with machines via a constructed interface. We already have technology in which the form or interface of the specific matter or representation changes. How might a neosentient change its representation because it is self aware?

Facialization is defined as "a system of coding bodies according to a centralized concept of subjectivity or agency in which the face, literally or metaphorically is the conduit for signifying expressing and organizing the entire body" (Munster, 122)

How might the neosentient change in response to it's reflection?

our relationship with technology



For more thoughts and friendly conversation see the "Neosentient as a Mirror" film exploration at [www.phenomenologic.com](http://www.phenomenologic.com)

Would we want a relationship with a neosentient in which it relayed a different reality to us?

## TECHNOLOGIC AWARENESS

This is a chart marked by a series of increasing encounters ones reflection via a mirror. The continuum ranges from hyper aware (cant ignore) to unaware (don't notice).

less exposure

Terror Curiosity Delight

What might it be like for a society of people to never had seen themselves in a mirror?

In a journal titled *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, Edmund Carpenter writes about a tribe in Papua New Guinea who had never been exposed to a mirror, photography, or film.

In his article called *The Tribal Terror of Self Awareness* he writes:

"The notion that man possesses, in addition to his physical self, a symbolic self, is widespread, perhaps universal. A mirror corroborates this. It does more: it reveals that symbolic self. The symbolic self is suddenly explicit, public, vulnerable."

"A still photograph moves us towards the isolated moment. It arrests time. It exists in pure space. It emphasizes individualism, private identity, and confers an element of permanence on that image."

"...they would do more than just cast a reflection on a mirror, they could leave a permanent imprint on that mirror, an imprint that would preserve forever this moment, this man."

"The technology that hoisted man out of both his environment and his body, allowing him to enter limbo at will, has now become so casual, so environmental, we make that trip with the numbness of commuters, our eyes unseeing, the mystery of self-confrontation, self-discovery gone."

Do we notice our reflection?

The mirror becomes the way by which we see ourselves

more exposure

Expectation

Reliance

Numbness

What is the function of a room with many mirrors? For example, consider the Hall of Mirrors. The purpose of the mirrors do not facilitate interacting with others, but seeing one's self interact with others. For everyone else, you can already see. Ultimately, these mirrors operate in order to interrupt being engaged, it can then control the social ritual and pull the person's bodily behavior and image into blatant objectivity.



Using other people as mirrors

In some ways, the mirror technology creates less of a need to use other people as mirrors. I wonder which is more forgiving: self, the mirror, or others?

It is normal that we wouldn't always be attentive to this stimulation because just like our bodily processes we can only be attentive to so many things, our body alters us when we should be attentive. In a sense we must ignore some processes to be attentive to other more abstract cognitive processes

Biologist Ursula Goodman says "We have self-experience without being aware/distressed of the bodily mechanisms (sleep/wake cycles, heart rhythms, coordinated movements)"

Have mirrors changed our social behavior?

Does looking in the mirror promote individuality?

Has our awareness of our reflection changed as we have gotten more used to it?

Try reflecting on reflection, try an experiment where you don't look into the mirror for a week

the neosentient's relationship with the mirror

## NEOSENTIENT & SELF-AWARENESS

Will the neosentient be both apparatus and observer, of course it will (Seaman, Neosentience)

The neosentient would not just be detecting and relaying a representation to us but also is aware of their own representation and perception of reality. It could detect one thing and relay something else. (We often feel this way with humans.) It could relay a representation that was endowed with additional pertinent information.

What would a neosentient see in a mirror?

our relationship with the neosentient

At what point do we decide that technology not just reflecting us, but it is not us but something else?

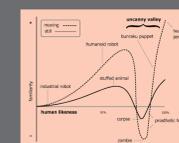
## NEOSENTIENT AS MIRROR

The neosentient will have it's own phenomenology as well as effecting our own, but we will have to recognize that switch.

At what point do we decide that technology is not just reflecting our sentience but has gained it's own?

The Uncanny Valley, which theorizes that as inanimate objects become closer in appearance to the human form and face, mankind will find them increasingly disturbing and therefore cast into the realm of the uncanny. (Tony Oursler's description)

We can also consider the schemas and affordances of other objects. If an object took on a phenomenology, what or how might it sense. What would be it's memory, context, or sensitivity? What could be the phenomenology of a camera, telescope, or plane, all of which are intermediaries for the post-human body allowing vision, magnified clarity, and flight?



We look past a mirror not at a mirror

### REFERENCES

The art of human-computer interface design (1990). In Mountford S. J. (Ed.), Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/UNC2342845>

Being & time : The emergence of video projector (1996). In Mayer M. (Ed.), Buffalo, NY: Buffalo Fine Arts Academy. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/UNC376774>

Botler, J. D. (2003). In Gromala D. (Ed.), *Windows and mirrors : Interaction design, digital art, and the myth of transparency*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/NCU524104>

Cinematic architecture (2009). In Schöning P. (Ed.), London: Architectural Association. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/NCU2252575>

Dawey, J., 1859-1952. (1934). *Art as experience* New York, Capricorn Books (1959, c1934). Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/UNC61101472>

Dixon, S. (2007). *Digital performance : A history of new media in theater, dance, performance art, and installation*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/DUKE003854632>

Dourish, P. (2001). *Where the action is : The foundations of embodied interaction*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/UNC64027700>

Goldberg, B., 1915-. (1985). *The mirror and man*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/NCU643152>

Hayles, N. K. (1999). *How we became posthuman : Virtual bodies in cybernetics, literature, and informatics*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/DUKE002549591>

Holl, S. (1994). In Pérez Gómez A. (Ed.), *Questions of perception : Phenomenology of architecture*. T ky : ando Y., Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/NCU867024>

Melchior-Bonnet, S. (2001). *The mirror : A history*. New York: Routledge. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/NCU1464312>

Munster, A. (2006). *Materializing new media : Embodiment in information aesthetics*. Dartmouth, N.H.: Dartmouth College Press : Published by University Press of New England. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/NCU1893986>

O'Neill, S. (2008). *Interactive media : The semiotics of embodied interaction*. London: Springer. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/NCU2194547>

Oursler, T. (1998). In Lodi S. (Ed.), *Tony oursler*. Milano: Charta. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/NCU1477177>

Pendergrast, M. (2003). *Mirror mirror : A history of the human love affair with reflection*. New York: Basic Books. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/NCU1642434>

Performance and technology : Practices of virtual embodiment and interactivity (2006). In Machon J. (Ed.), Basingstoke England : New York: Palgrave Macmillan. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/NCU1944611>

Principles of visual anthropology (1975). In Hockings P. (Ed.), The Hague: Mouton. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/UNC6159247>

Wood, A. (2007). *Digital encounters*. London ; New York: Routledge. Retrieved from <http://www2.lib.ncsu.edu/catalog/record/NCU1978100>

This poster was designed and curated by Alexandria Jarvis // NCSU Master of Graphic Design '2012 // under the direction of Bill Seaman during Spring 2011. Inter-Institutional Seminar at Duke entitled "Body as an Electrochemical Computer" // For more information contact Alexandria Jarvis at [www.phenomenologic.com](http://www.phenomenologic.com) or contact Professor Bill Seaman via Duke University