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bad code a genesis tale

McLuhan zoomed in on bad code. He did a bad code primer. It was seminal, Rosette Stone grade. When Douglas Coupland wrote the posse “helped to codify and articulate the genesis of Media Theory that would explode in 1962.” Coupland was writing about the Gutenberg Galaxy. The Galaxy is by McLuhan, but it owes much - good bones - to Walter Ong’s Ramis hunt.

The Galaxy opens with a man clutching a map. Then he starts cutting at it. The man is King Lear. The map is his kingdom. Lear’s foul seed Goneril and Regan watch. Goneril and Regan are the evil brand sisters, breakout creatures from the then new media, visual literacy. Ever saccharin, ever on message Goneril and Regan are the flattest of the flat merchants. They are über bad code. Like the Bard’s script, the Galaxy tracks the sisters and the code. It follows them as they battle Cordelia and Edgar and all the dimensionally amplified. We know how it ends: a hollowed out man on a gory, bloodied stage.

King Lear is a presentation of the new strategy of culture and power as it affects the state, the family, and the individual psyche:

*Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.
Give me the map there. Know we have divided
In three our kingdom;*

In *King Lear*, as in other plays. Shakespeare shows an utter clairvoyance concerning the social and personal consequences of denudation and stripping of attributes and functions for the sake of speed, precision, and increased power. His insights appear so richly in his lines that it is very difficult to select among them. But with the very opening words of Goneril's aria we are deep in them:

*I love you. more than words can wield the matter;
Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty:*

The stripping of the very human senses themselves will be one of the -themes of this play. The separation of sight from the other senses has already been stressed in Lear's expression of his "darker purpose" and his resort to the mere visual map. But whereas Goneril is ready to strip off sight as an expression of devotion, Regan rallies to her challenge with:

*.. I profess Myself an enemy to an other joys
Which the most precious square of sense professes,*

Regan will strip off all the human senses so long as she possesses Lear's love.

The allusion to "*the most precious square of sense*" shows Shakespeare doing an almost scholastic demonstration of the need for a ratio and interplay among the senses as the very constitution of rationality.

The stripping of the senses and the interruption of their interplay in tactile synesthesia may well have been one of the effects of the Gutenberg technology. This process of separation and reduction of functions had certainly reached a critical point by the early seventeenth century when *King Lear* appeared. But to determine how far such a revolution in the human sense life could have proceeded from Gutenberg technology calls for a somewhat different approach from merely sampling the sensibility of a great play of the critical period. *King Lear* is a kind of medieval sermon-exemplum or inductive reasoning to display the madness and misery of the new Renaissance life of action. Shakespeare explains minutely that the very principle of action is the splitting up of social operations and of the private sense life into specialized segments. The resulting frenzy to discover a new over-all interplay of forces ensures a furious activation of all components and persons affected by the new stress.

King Lear is a kind of elaborate case history of people translating themselves out of a world of roles into the new world of jobs. This is a process of stripping and denudation which does not occur instantly except in artistic vision. But Shakespeare saw that it had happened in his time. He was not talking about the future. However, the older world of roles had lingered on as a ghost just as after a century of electricity the West still feels the presence of the older values of literacy and privacy and separateness. Kent, Edgar, and Cordelia are "out of phase" in the language of W. B. Yeats.

"Strike flat the thick rotundity of the world" cries Lear as a curse to snap "the most precious square of sense," And the striking flat, the isolation of the visual is the great achievement of Gutenberg and the Mercator projection.

* Gutenberg Galaxy - Standard Text
King Lear - Itlalized Text

KING LEAR MAKES THE
DIVISION OF HIS KINGDOM
BETWEEN GONERIL AND REGAN,
TO THE DETRIMENT OF CORDELIA,
HIS THIRD DAUGHTER, WHOSE
UNEXAGGERATED PROFESSION
OF LOVE FOR HIM AROUSES
HIS DISPLEASURE



But McLuhan and Ong thought it might be different this time around. Change the ending. A whole someone might walk out, a thing less flat. They imagined new electronic technologies - digital communication mediums - might integrate ear and eye. Dimensional tableaux would usher artists better able to map and peer. Then good things could happen. There could be new platforms and better sighted selves. That's what the corner media lab and its scrapped progeny the Media Box was after. But players need tools. Need ever changing costumes and props. And a traveling road show needs a base station to launch. NEED SUPPORT. Can't do it alone. Sometimes it's there and works. Some times not. In the end it didn't work out for the media lab.

Lear

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the bug code smells

There are other maps out there, not just a bard's storyboard: maps to navigate a bad code terrain, and maps to ride out a face-off with the FLAT. There's something from a British art critic-historian. Walter Ong had his say. And new kit has cropped up from the digerati. Claire Bishop is the art historian. Her "Artificial Hells" is ace source material on the social turn in the arts as sinkhole. It's a must have saccharine biopsy textbook. Walter Ong wrote about the bugs that clutch creatives, what holds them back as cartographers. He mapped the map-makers or at least the ones that mattered. And then there are the programmers. But they don't call it bad code. They call the bugs Code Smell.

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common code smells

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Claire Bishop: Artificial Hells

But since participatory art is not only a social activity but also a symbolic one, both embedded in the world *and* at one remove from it, the positivist social sciences are ultimately less useful in this regard than the abstract reflections of political philosophy.

Without finding a more nuanced language to address the artistic status of this work, we risk discussing these practices solely in positivist terms, that is, by focusing on demonstrable impact. One of the aims of this book, then, is to emphasize the aesthetic in the sense of *aisthesis*: an autonomous regime of experience that is not reducible to logic, reason or morality.

It should be clear by now that I am trying to argue for a more complicated understanding of delegated performance than that offered by a Marxist framework of reification or a contemporary critical discourse rooted in positivist pragmatics and injunctions to social amelioration (as discussed in Chapter 1), all of which reduce these works to standard-issue questions of political correctness.

Walter Ong: Evolution, Myth and Poetic Vision

One of the great evolutionary philosophers of our day, Father Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, has been accused of writing often as a poet. But we are hard put to find poets who make creative use of evolutionary insights comparable to Teilhard's. Teilhard faces forward, into the future, as, in its brighter moments, does the rest of our world, permeated as it is with evolutionary thinking. But the poets and artists tend to exalt the present moment, when they are not facing the past. There is here certainly some kind of crisis concerning the relationship of the poet or artist to time.

The poet has always been ill at ease, to some degree, in the world of actuality.

The plight of the modern poet and artist is truly extreme. The poet or artist is acutely ill at ease in our present life-world. The earlier life-world belonged to the poets in great part because it was so largely constructed out of the archetypal images which poetry and art tend to favor. If to a degree the modern world has rejected the poet because it demands a reorganization of his sensibility which is utterly

terrifying. If the poet speaks for his age, he tends to speak for those who turn away from the characteristic awarenesses of modern man concerned with history and time. With some exceptions, in his sense of time and history and of the succession of events the poet thus has tended to be an aborigine, a primitive. Some maintain that the poet or artist must continue always to be such. I do not believe that he can afford to do so. Of course, no one can prescribe how a poet must speak. If, however, the poet is going to speak for modern man, he is going to have to take into account somehow man's total consciousness, even though this entails a reorganization of his own psyche and of the entire tradition of poetry so drastic as to fill us with utter terror. Very possibly, the archetypes in the psyche are themselves in process of being reorganized under pressure of present discoveries. How subconsciously archetypal can archetypes be when they are the objects of knowledge as conscious as that which we bring to them today? Let us be honest in facing the future of poetry and art and man. What will poetry be like ten thousand or one hundred thousand years from now? Will man be able still to live with his once fascinating little dreams of recurrence?

Tech Speak

- a definition, wiki wise
- In computer programming, code smell is any symptom in the source code of a program that possibly indicates a deeper problem. Code smells are usually not bugs -- they are not technically incorrect and don't currently prevent the program from functioning. Instead, they indicate weaknesses in design that may be slowing down development or increasing the risk of bugs or failures in the future.
- Duplicated code: identical or very similar code exists in more than one location.
- Large class: a class that has grown too large. See God object.
- Feature envy: a class that uses methods of another class excessively.
- Inappropriate intimacy: a class that has dependencies on implementation details of another class.
- Refused bequest: a class that overrides a method of a base class in such a way that the contract of the base class is not honored by the derived class.
- Lazy class / Freeloader: a class that does too little.
- Contrived complexity: forced usage of overly complicated design patterns where simpler design would suffice.