What Production of Presence and Mimesis have in Common

Jan Söffner
University of Cologne, Germany
{amr69@uni-koeln.de}

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to open up the discussion on presence to questions about the influence of the presumed ontic status of the perceived on presence experience. In order to develop an approach considering this item, experiences of tele-presence have to be distinguished from those of 'pure' presence on the one hand and 'fictional' presence on the other: Fictional presence depends on an 'as-if' experience that is due to a communication act, whereas 'pure' presence is due to the belief in an un-biased perception that allows also non-communicative items to occur. Tele-presence is a grounds for intersection between these two issues that allows an experience of two realities to 'take place' in the same time and place. The relations between these three concepts among each other and regarding virtual presence (as a broader concept) are discussed and a definition for hyper-presence is introduced.

> *… a presence to be felt and known.*
> *(Percy Bysshe Shelley, Adonais)*

1. Introduction

The Vatican recently decided to declare a papal blessing valid if watched in real time transmission – and void if watched from a recording. Evidently Roman Catholicism not only counts on the ontological premises of a divine presence in its rituals – but also on its transmission (a belief that evidently has a tradition in iconological theories of real presence deriving from the middle ages). The concept underlying the papal definition, though, also occurs in more secular contexts; e.g. the sense of watching a recorded repeat can profoundly affect the experience of a spectator – even if the sensual stimuli and information factor are the same. An analogous difference can also occur in the case of interactivity – when 'being there' is equated to 'doing there' (cf. [27]) in real time, and thus if phenomena of immersion (cf. [14], [18], and [25]) are concerned. It is problematic to distinguish a given person's ontology from her/his perception, for the simple fact that we cannot see them as two psychological entities completely separated from one another. This means, that in order to describe the whole phenomenon of presence experience, the conditions of involvement (understood in Singer and Witmer's sense as "a consequence of focusing one's energy and attention on a coherent set of stimuli or meaningfully related activities and events" [42], p. 227) and immersion (the psychological "state of perceiving oneself to be enveloped by, included in, and interacting with an environment" [ibid.]) are not sufficient as long as one does not consider the presumed "reality status" (an issue that, at least according to Erwing Goffman, is implicitly present in any framing process organizing experience – cf. [17], p. 8). In other words: Research on the experience of 'being there' must question the status of this 'there' – it must ask, whether it is considered to be a 'nowhere', an 'elsewhere', an 'everywhere' or even something else – as in the first example (because Christians believe God to be elsewhere *and* here at the same time, as He is beyond earthly concepts of time and space).

Evidently these premises are in contrast to the branch of presence theory that regards tele-presence experience as due to "willing suspension of disbelief" (cf. [10]). In saying this I do not want to question the excellent work that has been done according to this definition – though I think that it regards only one part of possible presence experiences. Indeed, "willing suspension of disbelief" (cf. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Litteraria*, chapter XIV) being one of the most famous definitions of the conditions for "poetic faith" to occur, the kind of presence defined this way cannot be but fictional (for a discussion of this term see chapter 4 and 5). To put this question in a more concrete way: The fact stated by Aristotle (*Poetics* 4; 1448b), that we can feel pleasure in watching the most accurate imitation of something we would find horrible and disgusting in reality, can still be considered proof of this fact and remains open as a question – especially for presence research: If one of the participants of a video conference should suffer a heart attack, it should at least be hoped, that nobody on the other side of the transmission would see this with pleasure – even if she/he is a fan of horror movies and violent video games.

2. Presence Ontology

2.1. Philosophical approach

Of course the question about ontological aspects of presence have been broadly discussed. The simplest approach has recently proposed by Luciano Floridi [13] who put forth a definition of tele-presence – opposed to approaches discussing tele-presence according to what

he calls "epistemic failure". In order to give a different

solution his attempt is to base presence theory on what he calls "successful observation" – conceived as openness towards information (he gives the example of a motion detector), with the condition of the 'observer' being a "property bearer" and/or "source of interaction" in a remote area. Presence and tele-presence for him are thus not ontologically different from one another – they differ only by means of remoteness. Accordingly tele-presence, for Floridi, is to be distinguished less from simple presence and more from tele-epistemics (the latter being the ability to get to know something about the remote area while not necessarily being present there as an acting or property bearing entity).

Indeed this model seems to be an accurate description of the ontological side of presence devices. But as (on purpose) it lacks any kind of psychological issues, some questions may arise to its usefulness for describing presence experience. Floridi's reason for this limitation is his purpose to avoid Cartesian subjectivity. Though one could object, that not all psychology is Cartesian (for another option see chapter 2.5.). And lacking this consideration one can also argue, that Floridi's proclaimed "non-Cartesianism" (ibid. p. 666), if applied to psychological questions about presence, even shows some strong affinities to Cartesian thought, which non-Cartesian psychology could avoid. This fact can easily be shown, by comparing Floridi's concept of "successful observation" with James J. Gibson's thoughts about successful action (cf. [16]). Gibson's theory sees perception as a part of action in an environment – and this state of embedding is due to avoiding distinctions between sensual perception and conceptual representation. By distinguishing an 'observing' from an 'observed' instance, Floridi undermines this state – and clings to essential aspects of Descartes' thought: In talking about observation we still have to deal with something that changes the mere impulse of something present which requires space (a *res extensa*) into something represented and therefore abstract (which is the task of an *ens cogitans*). To say it in Niklas Luhmann's terms: A "first order observer" (about whom Floridi is implicitly talking) excludes himself from the observed as a "blind spot" (and it will be the "second order observer" to observe the first order observer in this status of being excluded). And if one starts to talk about psychology, an 'observer' (be she/he a first order or a second order observer) must therefore be defined as the very entity, that *does not* feel its being imbedded into its environment – otherwise she/he would be an immersed participant and not an observer. Accordingly the likely misunderstanding of equating Floridi's "flow of information" (ibid. p. 666) with the famous sense of 'flow' in presence experience must be avoided: The first is a metaphor for the process as a whole – the second one for a particular experience from within that can also be due to other issues.

2.2. 'Ecological' Approach

Instead of trying to describe only the 'real' ontology of presence therefore also the ontologies of given people have to be considered. This fact has been brought up by Giuseppe Mantovani and Giuseppe Riva – who also tried to scrutinize theories on the base of 'epistemic failure' – though this time by stating that "actors, that move within VE [virtual environment] are aware of the fact that they are interacting with a synthetic environment" ([30], p. 542) – and that therefore one cannot do without ontology (or better: "ontologies", as they correctly put it). To solve this problem they developed an "ecological" theory about presence based on a constructionist epistemology. This theory though, is only apt for describing ontologies as issues in the interaction of persons and their environment from a sociological point of view. This point of view though, cannot be presumed to be the meta-epistemology of all given persons possible – and therefore the trap about this approach is the risk of confusion between theoretical description parameters, and judgments about presence experience of the people acting 'from within': And this way they lack consideration about the issue where sense of presence mainly takes place.

Very promising seems the approach of Zahorik and Jenison [27]. Convincingly in the beginning these authors put forth a definition of presence as 'being-in-the-world'. In introducing Martin Heidegger's thoughts about "throwness" (Geworfenheit) and "readiness-to-hand" (Zuhandenheit) into presence theory, they allow for a distinction between presence as existence in a worldly context defined as state of acting on the one hand, and on the other interpretation requiring stable (mental) representation that takes place necessarily outside action (for a closer discussion see chapter 2.5.). The problem about this approach is though, that by afterwards equating not only presence, but also 'being' with 'throwness' and 'readiness-to-hand' Zahorik and Jenison exclude fundamental aspects of Heidegger's ontology (or even ontological concerns as such) from their interest. 'Being' for Heidegger is not only due to immanent acting, but also to transcendence taking place in this immanence. Without considering this aspect of ontic 'openness' (Erschlossenheit and Entschlossenheit) we are indeed much nearer to what Heidegger called "Benommenheit" (takenness): a pure state of attention in which only the fact of 'inhibitness' or 'uninhibitness' (Enthemmung) towards possible actions count (cf. [21] p. 352f.; 361). And it only is this missing consideration that allows for the equation of the prior with James J. Gibson's ecological theory about perception. And – even more important for the aim of my paper – it is also due to this lack of ontological 'depth' that Zahorik and Jenison do not and cannot distinguish between environments presumed as 'virtual' and those presumed as as 'real' (cf. [27], p. 87) – a distinction that was unproblematic for Floridi.

2.3. Semiotic Approach (with many thanks to Michael Cuntz)

Umberto Eco has proposed a different solution (cf. [11], pp. 337-392, especially 363-386). Similar to Floridi's theory of successful observation, Eco defines television at its "pure state" (understood as 'closed-circuit' real time presentation) as having to be sharply distinguished from cinema and photography – but not from mirrors. The reason is the following: If mirrors were (hypothetically) placed in a kind of chain formation, images of something that could not be seen from the place where this chain ends, could be 'transmitted'. Accordingly real time TV and mirrors are *prothesises* of human perception: They show things in a state of presence (things that would vanish from the screen if physically taken away). Cinema and photography are instead *communication media*: They are in a position to imbed images taken from the physical world into a communication act, because they 'freeze' them – and by doing so they make them refer (indexically) to something *absent*.

Evidently, speaking in Floridi's terms, Eco here is dealing only with tele-epistemics and not with telepresence; but this distinction is not valid for Eco's view: His definition of presence and absence is not grounded on the ability to be interacting or to bear properties in a remote area – but on a semiotic model of the sign as "something that stands for something else in its absence" (ibid. 368): Presence for him is accordingly defined negatively as a fact of non-signification. Everything that can be perceived is thus present as long as it is perceived as itself and not in the state of referring to something else.

Nevertheless this solution causes another problem: And this problem is about presence as an effect: Even the most hypothetical 'chain' of mirrors cannot present, say, Jupiter other than as the small spot which as it can be seen by the naked eye. For the logical restriction to categorical questions based on the sharp distinction between presence and representation, this is no problem: For Eco Jupiter is present – and this is all there is to say about it. For the question of the experience of immersion and involvement though, the factor of improved perceptibility is essential: Presence experience will begin only, when Jupiter is looked at through a telescope – and the question is, whether a toy telescope be sufficient for this experience, and how sense of presence could be improved by using, say, the Hubble-Telescope. Analogous questions can arise to the TV image's ontological presence considering its capability to lie (capability essential for Eco's concept of a sign): Of course it is true that a closed circuit real time TV transmission is ideally not able to lie about existence (because it is "produced only in the presence of the object") – or its 'thisness' (or *haecceitas* to use the term put forth by medieval philosophy). Nevertheless, it *is* able to lie about its qualities or properties (its 'whatness' – *quidditas*) by means of presenting it as being located elsewhere (i.e. near), lacking the third dimension and olfactory issues, being bigger, smaller, distorted, black and white, and so on. Eco's limitation of defining presence only according to thisness or *heacceitas* makes any whatness or *quittitas* only a question of more or less *further* information, that has nothing to do with presence itself. Presence research is about gradual questions – this definition instead only answers a categorical one.

But Eco's approach is not only problematic for the psychology of presence – it is also problematic for semiotics of presence: The capability to present half-truths by means of biasing the presented items indeed opens a realm not only between deception and reality, but, by doing so, it also shows a space between sign and non-sign – an ambiguous realm, which Eco fails to consider. For example: As is well known, so-called real time transmissions always present a certain delay. This delay is physically reducible only to the speed of light, and it can be extended as much as the director likes. So where does 'freezing' begin and where does presence end? Is a soccer match transmitted with a ten second delay already lacking the status of presence and introducing the status of communication? The answer would probably be yes if we have to deal with a human intervention delaying the transmission and no if we have not. This answer, though is not very convincing if one compares this case with the 'presence' of Proxima Centauri, which without human intervention shows up here with a four year delay – a knowledge that can deeply influence presence experience (everybody knows the experience of asking whether a given star that she/he sees still exists). A third problem arises again from the theory of the observer implicated here (or even the lack of such a theory). This problem can easily be seen when considering the case of a *fata Morgana*: Technically speaking this natural phenomenon can be considered a mirror – it is thus a 'mirage'. Its more mystical name though, due to the fabulous enchantress Morgana, derives from the fact that for an unprepared person it could easily be understood as a miracle close to visionary experience (and thus, according to Eco's own presumptions as a sign). Now indeed when speaking about psychological phenomena of involvement and immersion the question is not, what a *fata Morgana* is in optical theory, but as what it is perceived. And, unusually for his thought, Eco's theory of presence – like Floridi's – lacks the consideration of differing ontological presumptions.

2.4. Anti-Hermeneutic Approach (with many thanks to Michael Cuntz, Florian Mehrltretter and Andreas Kablitz)

Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht [19] recently proposed a different concept of the sign. From the title of his work *Production of Presence – What Meaning Cannot Convey* it is clear, that his thoughts see signs not only in the function of simple signification. As an alternative option he opens also the process of "coupling […] a substance (something that requires space) and a form (something

that makes it possible for the substance to be perceived)" (ibid. 81-82) as a condition for a thing to become a sign. One has accordingly to conclude, that there are two ways for sense to arise: Either it occurs in a purely mental way (according to semiotic theory) or as located between sensual perception and mental cognition. This second concept of a sign allows therefore for a condition, in which the "spiritual" aspect is inherent to a material one, so that it cannot be conceived as absent but rather as present: If for Catholic ontology Christs spiritual substance is present in the consecrated host, for a believer this spiritual issue can be experienced in its material form. Another example would be the presence of, say, the Boca Juniors in their soccer stadium: Put in a Saussurian way, the players would simply *be* the Boca Juniors – or *signify* the Boca Juniors in their absence. Though both solutions are not very convincing: Nobody would go to a stadium to see something absent – nor would anybody believe the players to simply *be* the ideal 'spiritual' essence of the team (if they play badly, spectators will insist that they be substituted in order to make the true Boca Juniors more real). For Gumbrecht's second kind of a sign, though, presence would be a question of a form that is fulfilled in a more or less felicitous way (so that the 'real' Boca Juniors would be present only in their best actions and in the most intense interactivity between the players, the audience, and, most important: Diego Maradona). This example shows, how open this concept is towards gradual questions of presence. Though it also shows that the conception of form ("something that requires space") has to be opened to temporal aspects in order to be relevant for presence theory: It also requires time – be it durative or be it ephemeral.

This concept of 'signification' offers some advantages for presence theory. First: It cannot be without consequences for the theory of the observer: Gumbrecht's sign standing for something in its presence sees not only the signified, but also the understanding entity (the *ens cogitans*) as being in the same ontological space – and unlike in Floridi's theory, Gumbrecht does not imply a theory of the observer that would necessarily have Cartesian presumptions if applied to psychological questions: His Anti-Cartesianism is not based on the materialization of the *ens cogitans* (as was Floridi's), but on the materialization of signification as such. Second: Being the process of sense occurring now due to the distinction of material being and formal qualities it has no problems regarding the 'whatness' (quidditas) of presented items. Therefore questions about bias factors etc. are even essential and not accidental to it. The problems mentioned about bias in tele-presence (even the delay factor in a real time transmission) can now be scrutinized as facts of making presented items *more or less* present. Third advantage: According to this theory there are even no problems regarding perceptive issues about presence: If for Eco the possibility to "relate a sign token to a type" ([11] p. 368) is constitutive for a signification taking place afterwards, Gumbrechts sign makes 'signification' already take place inside this primary cognitive process. By opening a) the signified towards perception and b) signification towards presence, this approach promises therefore *vice versa* to open phenomena of tele-presence towards aspects of signification.

When considering this kind of signification, some questions can arise though, whether this sign is really a sign – or rather an ordinary token-to-type cognition: What can it be that makes Gumbrecht's "spiritual" aspect exceed the simple mental representation of a type? Indeed I think that this 'sign' has nothing of a sign, unless a special kind of ontology can be presumed when perceiving it – an ontology changing cognitive types from something purely mental into something "spiritual", universal or true: A similar ontology does not seem very close to our modern eyes – even though it shows at least affinities to e.g. the epistemology allowing a conception of a physical law to literally take place within a given phenomenon. A more striking example for such a kind of ontology is that of certain medieval philosophers, who conceived some 'types' as 'universals' – or platonic thought conceiving them as 'ideas'. Though there are still existing contexts (or 'frames' – cf. [17]) in which similar ontologies can occur: E.g. the soccer stadium of the Boca Juniors.

The most serious problem for presence research is though again the purpose to do without psychology also present in Gumbrecht. While reading his text, at times I could not figure out, when he was talking about ontology and when he was talking about effects of ontology on experience. I myself feel neither capable of developing a complete ontology – nor is this my aim. When speaking in terms of psychology though, some issues about presence have to be put more clearly (e.g. token-to-type cognition cannot only occur in cases of involvement or immersion – but it can also take place in quite a skeptical way; it therefore has not necessarily to deal with presence experience.

2.5. A Psychological Approach to Presence (with many thanks to Klaus Martin Schulte and Hans-Georg Soeffner)

To sum up: Presumed ontology cannot be searched for without considering the 'ecological' aspects 'being-in-the-world' – nor without taking into account effects of transcendence. The latter aspects though, cannot be considered without at least thinking about signification and signs. Vice versa, though, theories of the signs must be grounded on a psychology open for ontic as well as for ecological questions – otherwise they remain irrelevant for presence theory. The centre of consideration must therefore be psychology – and to show the ways a similar psychology could go I now want to recur to some aspects of the phenomenological psychology of Erwin Straus [45], i.e. his distinction between 'livingly experiencing' (erleben) and experience of 'understanding'/'getting to know' (verstehen).

This distinction is quite close to (and partly deriving

from) Heidegger's distinction between 'being-in-the-world' and interpretation. The most important difference between the two options for Straus is about constructing time and space: The Euclidian space with its three dimensions and their being differentiated from time (at least in the non-Einsteinian everyday knowledge about the world) for Straus is open only to our understanding – and this understanding is accordingly defined by an abstract and extraterritorial point of view. Living experience is instead marked by the symbiosis a being (be it human or an animal) that is capable of motion with its at least potentially moved environment. In this latter experience time and space are not divided one from the other. 'Living experience' occurs in and as a continuum without dimensions – or with only one: distance. The concept is therefore about 'being able to touch' or 'being able to be touched' and the length of the time-space this event would require to happen. This does not mean, though, that this continuum of experiencing was simple: Evidently there is not only one distance, but many of them. The experiencing person therefore finds herself or himself lodged in to several options of motion, like a spider in its net. The border of the perceptive horizon is to be seen as the realm from where things coming *appear* and into which things passing away *disappear*. And this coming and going is all there is about past and future: 'Living experience' takes place only in a present that is in continuous change, into which always something can intrude, and in this way its field never can be overlooked a whole: Instead it remains in a constant state of 'un-concludedness' ("Un-Ganzheit"). And (like in Heidegger's concept of 'throwness') it is only this condition of "Un-Ganzheit" the reason, why 'living experience' is not open to 'understanding' and *vice versa*: Only concluded issues can be 'understood' – and this concludedness cannot occur as far as the being is included in the space of living experience. Understanding therefore requires to get but rather extraterritorial to the understood (condition for the Euclidian space differentiated from time to occur); it necessarily divides a knowing subject from its known object (or an *ens cogitans* from a *res extensa* – to say it in Cartesian terms). "We live in the present tense and know in the perfect" ([45], p. 393) – is Straus' conclusion – but this metaphor is not quite precise: Perhaps it should be reformulated as follows: 'We live in sentences without – and we understand in sentences with a finite verb.'

These psychological insights, further developed by Merlau Ponty ([31] pp. 314-315) who theorized 'living experience' as the "space of the present" (champ de present), have been brought to new actuality by neuro-psychology, where a very similar concept of a 'primary' space of senses has reappeared under the name of "motor space" (cf. [38]). Considerations have already been fruitful for the theory of presence and immersion (cf. [25] and in a certain sense also [14] p. 268). Also Frank Biocca and Jin Kim Yung Choi [6] seem to be referring to a similar conception when they state that the "human sensorimotor system is designed to experience the world as whole, merging and synthesizing input form different sensory modalities in an ongoing and dynamic form". The term 'sensorimotoric' though, has to be understood in a broader sense of the word: The described state of experiencing evidently results from cognition without which a constitution of a "form" would be impossible. We therefore have to deal with a complex construction of an environment – a one-sided one, unable to reflect its being split into multiple realities – but nevertheless highly complex: It is built of interferences from perception, motor activities, and results of learning (e.g. the spontaneous 'knowledge' about stable and unstable surfaces or 'mental mapping' (cf. [23]). This relatedness of motor cognition to a sort of knowledge (or better: a set of presumptions) is – so to speak – the 'missing link' between ecological theories of perception and action and the immanently experienced items Heidegger would have conceived as ontological openness (even near to his concept of "unhiddedness" – "Unverborgenheit"; an etymological translation of the Greek term *alêtheia*). Though not wanting myself to get too metaphysical, I would like to recur to a more psychological and concrete way of describing the phenomenon – i.e. Edmund Husserl's concept of "appresentation" ("Appräsentation" – cf. [24] pp. 111-123): Husserl with this term refers to a status of "also-there" ("Mit-da") in perception, i.e. things that spontaneously occur, even though they are not perceived in a physical way. He himself gives the example of the reverse or far side of things (that occurs as 'present' also in motor perception – even though a camera would not be able to 'see' it). Accordingly Husserl conceives appresentation not as due to an "act of thinking", but as part of "primordial perception" – a state in which everything 'other' can only occur as part of the 'own' (of course it is this very theory that has deeply influenced Heidegger's 'being-in-the-world' as well as Straus' 'living experience'). Though Husserl does not limit his thoughts to far sides, presumed weight, softness or so on – but he puts this concept at the base of the perception for describing others as 'subjects' that occur as presumed bases of their own "original sphere"; i.e. highly complicated phenomena of 'depth' that can be presumed as inexhaustible – and for which Husserl accordingly uses the term "horizon". To say it again: These phenomena occur already to primordial perception, to which in his terms everything can appear only as part of the same continuum: Therefore appresentation for Husserl is a fact of "immanent transcendence". Straus himself was expert on Husserl's phenomenology. And he drew according conclusions about the construction of 'lived' reality: 'Living experience' for him is a grounds for the intersection of sensorimotoric and ontic issues in the experience of being embedded in a spatiotemporal continuum or, again 'ongoing form' – i.e. the status of un-concludedness mentioned above.

2.6. Being there

Similar distinctions about conceptual understanding

and immersive perception, interpretation and being-in-the-world or even perception for action and perception for conceptual cognition (for the latter see [32]), can have far-reaching consequences for the psychology of signification. 'Concludedness' as a property of signification and its relatedness to understanding has accordingly been discussed by Andy Clark [9] who described the process of signification in a way, that by means of "'freezing' our own thoughts in the memorable context-resistant, modality-transcending format of a sentence, we [...] create a special kind of mental object – an object, that is amenable to scrutiny from multiple angles, is not doomed to alter or change each time we are exposed to new inputs or information, and fixes the ideas on a high level of abstraction from the idiosyncratic details of their proximal origins in sensual input" (ibid. p. 210). This kind of redefinition of Pierce's concept of "thirdness" as a generalized property made independent from its property-bearer by mental means, is based on the assumption that understanding experience is open to a semiotic concept of signification only – being a 'signified' ideally something ideally concluded and therefore absent: A "mental object", that is freed from its links to sensual input by the same means also constitutes the entity which thinks the object in a state of being 'extraterritorial' to it (because of its being concluded) – and at the same time independent from sensimotoric issues. The (semiotic) sign is accordingly closely related to the condition of the Cartesian *cogito* and of Straus' "understanding": The distinction between a signifier and a signified (i.e. the independence of the signified from sensual data) can be seen as the basis for the extraterritorial status of observing, which is necessary for both of these concepts. Indeed Clark therefore conceives this linguistically formed approach to the world as an approach of "second-order cognition".

Nevertheless to control "real-time, real-world responsiveness" ([9] p. 8) (i.e. things occurring inside 'living experience') not only direct "tuning of basis responses" (ibid. p. 4) plays a role. To give a simple example: The sense of 'knowing' that God is helping (i.e. being present as an agency inside the own actions) can strongly influence experiences and even actions: The fire-man who saved the veil of Veronica at Turin stated afterwards that he would not have succeeded without the help of God (i.e. in my mind without believing God to be present in his actions). Similar experience is due to ontic 'depth' that can occur as appresented in 'living experience': If the ontic status of a given 'reality' is due to its depth (i.e. its not being concluded), this ontic status is not only open to epistemology (i.e. the possibility of controlling the ontic status of a reality by means of sensual objects already stated by William James – cf. [26] p. 301): The relatedness to 'the' world can indeed occur also as being co-present (appresented) as an additional dimension of depth inside the environment that in a certain way makes a second reality occur inside „motor space", "champs de present" or "living experience".

In my eyes only the Gumbrechtian theory conceiving some signs as being able to reach a kind of generality or 'thirdness' taking place *inside* the same sensual world, allows for the conception of the full range of this interrelation between presumed ontology, sensual cognition and 'living experience'. And it does so in theorizing signification as a work on the form – in a very broad sense of the word: As stated above: 'Form' is for Gumbrecht is the mere condition of something being perceived – and this means: it can also be perceived in a state of 'living experience'. And to finally let the cat out of the bag, this work on the form or shape is at the base of my definition of tele-presence experience: *A non-representational (a-semiotic) coexistence of (at least two) different beings – or better: the experience of two concurrent presences overlapping in the same continuum of time and space by means of one taking the form of the other.*

The relation between these two presences can be manifold, and indeed is not a problem, but the most important issue about it: It can be the concurrence between the senses of distance (optical and acoustical) and the senses of unmediated spatial contiguity (the haptic and the gustative – the olfactory sense is to be seen as intermediate) – linking some spiritual issue to the former (for an example see chapter 3). It hypothetically could even be the concurrence of a complete being 'there' involving all the senses while only knowing to be 'here' (e.g. the hypothetical case of a pilot knowing to be steering a real aircraft by means of remote control from the perfect copy of a 'real' cockpit procuring all sensual stimuli the 'real' aircraft provides). It can be, though, also the concurrence between a purely spiritual item and a corporal one (as in the case of Christ's presence in the sacred host that nobody can feel or taste – if no miracle occurs). The only four conditions about this kind of presence taking place are:

1) That the present and the tele-present item can be separated from one another (because otherwise we would have to deal with simple presence) – and that distance plays a role for the distinction (otherwise the prefix 'tele' would be senseless).

2) That the relation between the two items is not of mere signification but of realization of a form, so that both can be seen as present at the same time and in the same place (and not the one to be the absence of the other). This allows therefore for a gradual condition of the fulfillment of presence because of the fact that a form can be realized in a more or less perfect way.

3) Tele-presence must have access to 'living experience' allowing for immersion to occur.

4) The presented item must have a presumed ontic 'depth' that is appresented. This factor can be lived as a presumed relation to simply a remote part of 'reality', but also as a relation to 'truth', to the 'infinite', or else; and it can e.g. occur as the "un-hidden"

(Heidegger) or of a human being as a presumed other "original sphere" (Husserl – cf. [24] p.113) or agency (cf. [15]).

Indeed virtual communities can be seen as a striking example for the last of these conditions. In discussing this phenomenon Mark T. Palmer ([36]) limits his considerations to phenomena of communication between humans – excluding relationships between humans and machines, which he considers as deceptive. Though it is well known that machines have no intentions – and therefore they cannot lie. Humans can lie – also and especially if they construct avatars. So why should deception be an aspect of machines? Considering the so called "Eliza Effect" (cf. [4]) of a machine behaving in a way that people would believe it to be steered by a human, the reason, though, gets quite clear: Deception occurs here as a falsely presumed of 'depth' vs. 'surface': The machine has nothing 'behind' the appearance, it only has a surface – whereas the presumed human agency would have another ontic status due to a human avatar being unpredictable – i.e. relatedness to something un-concluded.

3. Antique Theories of Mimesis

Evidently this option of defining presence especially the aspect of two presences being there at the same place and moment without a fact of representation occurring seems quite unusual for our modern eyes (and I think, that this is also the reason, why it has been taken into consideration only by Gumbrecht). Indeed very few theoretical research has been done into this direction and the concept accordingly seems quite vague or week. I nevertheless hope to find a remedy for this problem in my attempt to reanimate antique theorems.

The oldest example of tele-presence can be seen in the Homeric conception of the bard (aoidós). When for example the bard of the Iliad invokes the present Muses to sing about the Danaeans coming to Troy he states that ten throats, ten tongues, an indestructible voice and a heart of iron would not be sufficient to reveal the number of the heroes (cf. *Iliad* 2,484-93): Evidently the mere information plays no decisive role here, but rather, as Grace M. Ledbetter stated, a „divine knowledge that has the immediacy and pleasure of sensory experience" ([33], p. 13) having to present a „past object in a way that present objects are known" (ibid. 21). The suggestive or even synaesthetical power of chant can also be concluded from the Sirens episode the Odyssey (12,39-54 and 12,158-200). Their song makes their island – the shores of which in 'reality' being covered with the fleshless bones of their victims – seem beautiful and inviting. The Sirens are c indeed limited to two senses – the optic and the acoustic one, i.e. the 'bodyless' senses of more 'indirect' presence. And also their existence seems to be beyond the present: They know the past and the future, but they evidently know nothing about Ulysses being bound to the mast of his ship and his companions having their ears anointed with wax. Accordingly they address Ulysses not, as usual, by calling him 'many-sided and artful' (polymetes), but "great glory of the Archeans" (what he was in the battle of Troy and "renowned" (what he will be in the song of the Odyssey). The lack of the present is exposed as a 'higher' realm beyond concrete time and space. A parallel to this state can be observed in Ulysses' journey to the Hades. The dead he encounters there are similarly restricted to the optical and the acoustical: They can be seen and heard, but they cannot be hugged. And like the Sirens they know the past, the future and things far away – but they do not know the present. The status of non-corporality seems to be a great problem for the dead; indeed they are very eager of the blood of animals sacrificed to them evidently giving them a rest of haptic experience. Corporal presence evidently is the realm of true being in the Homeric world, whereas the hereafter is defined as a lack of corporality – even though it is related to knowledge inaccessible to living people: i.e. the dead seem to see things in their absence. The Sirens accordingly reflect a state of pure chant *as* a state of death – i.e. a state without a body that can be equated with absence from the present and at the same time presence of the absent. And this is possible as a fact of doubling presences by means of dividing the senses: The Sirens use song in a deceptive way trying to pull Ulysses' body into the space of their chant. That which is haptically present for the bound Ulysses contradicts the space offered visually and acoustically to him.

Though this quality of chant doubling presence can also be inverted into the positive: In singing and acting a bard can literally lend his body to the dead: He restores these optical and acoustical creatures with that what they lack – and therefore they will be lived as half-present, as can be seen from too emotional reactions (cf. Odyssey 1,337-344 and 8,485-545). Voice, mimics, and gestures have to be as close as possible to the truth (not the reality) of the heroes. This fact is made possible by a divine help not opposed to human technology – but at the base of it: The gift of the Muses (daughters of Mnemosyne, the Goddess of Memory) is a presence-based kind of memory, the place of which is performance. By means of metric rhythm (with a close link to the cultic dance) and melody of the language itself (due to the musical accent of ancient Greek) they grant a sacred order of time and space in song accessible to human practices (cf. [2] 61f.): A kind of divine high tech called mousikê ('the Muses' technique') allowing for tele-presence as accordance to a true form. The process of making present, some centuries later, has been given the name mimesis (mímêsis).

As Plato he discusses questions of education he accepts the concept of mimesis in all its facets (even musical issues can play a role for education – cf. *Laws* 664a-667e): E.g. in his *Republic* (392a-397b) a warden-to-be becomes a true warden by means of mimesis that leads him to correspond his behavior to the 'idea' of a warden – and therefore the ontic qualities of wardenship become his own. On the other hand he is very eager to avoid mimesis in its quality to lead into a double presence (as described above for the Homeric concept

about it). His argument – best exposed in his *Ion* – is very simple: If in a bard's chant the presented persons really were present, the bard would have to have access to all knowledge and techniques of the persons exposed by him – which evidently he has not (bard is not a warrior – otherwise he would know, how to fight). Mimesis therefore is good, if leads to 'pure' presence; it is bad and deceptive, if it is there for itself and doubles presence (i.e. if we have to deal with tele-presence).

Aristotle takes up aspects of both the Homeric and the Platonic concept: Like them he conceives mimesis as presence of the presented characters in the presenting body of the actor – by means of perfectly forming it into the form the presence of this other requires: According to him by this means a "this one [the actor] is becoming that one [the presented character]" (*Poetics* 4,19); This doubledness of presence though, is no more ontologically problematic as it is in Plato: Like in the Odyssey it enables pleasure to be felt and even moral psychological and physiological purging (the catharsis). This fact is only possible though, because the reality status of mimesis is no more due to tele-presence in the presented items – but to the author's knowledge about probability (that on its side depends on truth). Instead of performance, it is creation, instead of relatedness to 'ideas' it is epistemic control that grants the ontic aspects: Truth is taking place in the probability of the things presented – whereas the presence factor is no more granting its ontology but is now a mere effect. Presence is no more connecting, but *actualizing* truth.

4. Presence and Mimesis

4.1. Fictional Presence and Tele-Presence

The third of these options is evidently much closer to modern theatre theory than are the first two. Indeed from Aristotle's theory of mimesis to a concept of mere theatrical representation it is only a small step. Already Roman theatre performance often was interrupted in order to have the 'best' scenes repeated – a practise evidently apt to undermine the experience of 'appresentation' of ontic truth necessary for presence experience. And I myself do not think it to be a simple coincident that Roman entertainment on the other hand had to recur to simple presence: In order to experience the presence of heroes, Romans had to watch real gladiators fighting.

Up to now corporal presence of an actor and represented role are understood as categorically distinct from one another in theatre theory (so that the one can only be seen as the absence of the other; and in the best of the cases this fact causes a switching of two according states of perception – cf. [12]). This distinction has also had effects on media theory. Of course it is true that cultural sciences nowadays deeply scrutinize the concept of mimesis (as imitation – slightly distorted meaning of the word deriving from translation into Latin) and even replace it by the notion of simulation (and thus focus the creativeness – poíêsis – instead of the ontological background); and it is also true, that concepts of fiction have essentially changed as they are often replaced by the notion of virtuality (focusing the status of construction instead of the ontological status as grounds for 'reality'). Though not finding a way back to a concept of presence based on the notion of accordance to a form, this epistemology is still based on the dialectics of presence vs. representation, so that a doubled presence cannot be discussed.

It is also on this grounds that presence research has partly followed the problematic way to define tele-presence as an 'as-if' experience – i.e. as 'epistemic failure, as willingly taking something represented for present by means of 'suspending disbelief': Because of this 'as if'-condition, I would like to call this kind of presence experience *fictional* presence. To avoid misunderstandings: Unlike in novels or movies the term 'fiction' here does not refer to what the things re-presented communicate, but only to the status of the 'presence' in which they are presented. E.g. a neat virtual reconstruction of a historic environment in a museum is a fact of fictional presence of (nearly) non-fictional issues, whereas a live transmission of a theatre performance of *The Tempest* is a fact of tele-presence of a fictional issue. In the case of fictional presence, presence experience is therefore due to 'surface' perception – i.e. to what in cinema would be caused by 'special effects': We have to deal with a presence working only on perception without including apperceptions of ontic 'depth'.

Even though both can occur in virtual environments this kind of presence experience has to be distinguished form facts of making present something distant (i.e. when talking about tele-presence. Here indeed our mediatic reality re-actualizes aspects of the more antique form of mimesis – i.e. the reality status depends not only on a truth communicated inside the presented world – but also on ontic depth in presence experience: The question about the simulation of the presented reality in this case is not only about its being constructed, but more than this it is about making a remote form present in a near substance. An example taken from fiction: In Jean Philippe Toussaints recent novel *Fuir* (Paris 2005) the protagonist, while having sex with a Chinese woman in the toilet of a Chinese train, is disturbed by the ringing of his cell phone. As he leaves the rest room to respond, his wife, drowned in apathy by the news of her father's death, describes the Paris sky she is seeing at the same time (cf. pp. 45-58). Like in Homer the acoustic presence of the voice (as such) is important in its fidelity, the exactness of its form: The presence experience would have been impossible via a Morse-Alphabet. Like in Homer this voice evokes a mental image causing a second presence concurring with corporal presence of the 'here and now' to arise – the narrator feels close to the emotions of his partner even though (or because) her apathy causes her to talk about something else. And like Ulysses upon hearing the Sirens' voice the narrator fails to construct a coherent reality of the double binding, he cries, and at the end he hugs his Chinese lover with a hug

that is destined for his wife. The present woman is giving a corps to the absent, as the bard did to the dead (and in fact the narrator states, that to him the telephone has always been close to death – cf. ibid. p. 44).

By this means modern technology of tele-presence seems to show strong similarities to the Muse's technique. It is again the factors of the presented not being concluded and the taking place as a realization of a form (in Toussaint's novel the voice) allowing both to be present at the same time. And again it is the (presumed) ontic status of something being present in this form even if not completely 'here' that allows this presence to literally 'take place' – only that this ontic status is now much closer to our own secular everyday life than is the ontic status of the dead being present in the body of a singer or Christ's spiritual body being present in a piece of bread.

4.2. Tele-Presence and Hyper-Presence

Of course there is still an important difference between these issues: The cell phone makes present only something far away, whereas the Bard, the sacred host, and Plato's Warden make present something beyond space and time. Considering this item obviously requires a rediscussion about spatial issues. Stating the advent of a new spatiality that is due to changes in media technology is not very new or original: Similar things like those I am going to deal with in this chapter have been stated not only (but much more intensely) since the notion of the 'virtual community' came up (cf. [37]). The problem about these notions is that sometimes it is not very clear, if the interrelations between the 'virtual' place (for example a chat 'room') or space (for example the notion of 'links' and 'hyper-links') and perceptive models of space experience: E.g. the notion of cyberspace can refer either to a metaphorical space of the medium itself as "all-embracing power" (cf. [22], p. 91) – or to the concrete spatial experience of its users; the notion of a virtual place can either be understood metaphorically as a multi-user dungeon (because of certain analogies to e.g. a "corner bar" – cf. ibid. p. 24) – or it can be considered as being due to concrete perceptual experience of places "recreated" by technical means (cf. [46], p. 205).

The most interesting issue about these frequent confusions seems to me the interrelations they mix up – i.e. spatial closeness and abstract or spiritual contiguity. According to Euclidian parameters this is evidently impossible, because neither the multi-dimensional structure of e.g. the Internet nor its accessibility to everything structured by the number of 'clicks', nor its relatedness to the arbitrariness and predilections of the use can easily be translated into three dimensions. The fact, that nevertheless spatial metaphors, half-metaphors and concrete terms are constantly used to describe this 'space', though, makes it very probable, that a non-metaphorical 'sense of space' is involved in these media themselves (i.e. *not* in what they represent, but in what their technique as such is experienced by their users) – a

fact similar to the ancient Greek's thoughts about music (the Muses' technique) as means of presence.

Generally this space beyond Euclidian spatiality is conceived as an "extension of our mental space" (cf. [1], or [22] p. 91—98). Though I think that it also has to be discussed in a way more open to 'living experience', 'champ de présent', 'motor space' or simply: To presence. The striking issue about this fact has (though without considering presence experience) stated by Rebecca Bryant (cf. [8]): According to her Cyberspace is structured by distances that have to be considered as temporal – a concept very close to Straus' definition of spatiotemporality in 'living experience'. And I now would even like to go so far as to define the spatial notions about technically transmitted presence as extensions of this kind of 'champ de présent' – in just the same way as Marshall McLuhan has defined media as extensions of our body.

This means though a redefinition of the concept of spatiotemporality – as quite different issues enter into the mere concept of distance: Contiguity or nearness are brought as much as possible in the line with the human arbitrariness of felt or desired affinity restructuring space and time experience. Even though one could even say that a similar kind of presence is also functioning in any kind of prayer, modern technology is constructing a new space of living experience that is in a much sharper concurrence with the material or Euclidian space than it has ever been. For the audience of a Greek bard or for a Catholic the experience of doubled experience was a quite unusual one. For us nowadays it is a part of every day life. E.g.: As I was traveling some moths ago in a train, a lady, with whom I had chatted to could not resist to the temptation to call the convent she had spent her youth in while the train passed it. Somewhat later she called her husband while passing a place they had passed together an important time in their lives. Modern communication technology creates new coherences in time space (opening new possibilities for emotionally coherent space and time experiences) and new discrepancies (see the example put forth by Toussaint's novel) that are not accessible to Euclidian 'dimensions', but to a space, in which the multiple distances can count also in their mediated form.

The problem for defining this kind of presence experience according to terms of tele-presence is the difficulty to talk about physical distances, about things 'far away' and thus far-present: *tele*-present. More than this we have to deal with another kind of spatiality making these distances even obsolete and allowing presence to take place in a higher, more spiritual space. Though again no new theory has to be developed, but an old (pre-Cartesian) one has to be adapted to our reality in order to describe this space. Again Plato plays an important role here; this time, though, we have to talk about the realm of the ideas as such. In his *Phaedo* Plato describes how it is possible for the souls to loose their heavenly status. By being hurt their form is damaged, and this loss of accordance to the forms of truth is equated to spatial distance: A hurt soul is no more able to

follow the flight of its true essence, and it falls on earth, where it has to find a body. The realm of ideas is a realm where affinity is contiguity and discrepancy is distance. Of course this 'myth' has some metaphorical aspects. But it is difficult to say how metaphorical this equation of spatial and conceptual distance is. In fact also astrology counts on this kind of structure: The heavenly 'real' distances of the planets are to be seen as ever changing affinities (whereas the contingent distances of the sublunar world are simply casual). Also theories about paradise can show a similar structure: When Dante describes his *Paradiso*, or when Bernardus Silvestris his *Cosmography* in the realm of the heavens, this higher form of spatial coherence is the structuring principle (beatitude is conceived as spatio-conceptual nearness to God). Even more interesting for my purpose is the case of the highly influential (and equally underestimated) Italian renaissance philosopher and medic Marsilio Ficino. He conceptualized not only a similar 'truer' space (as the space of the platonic ideas), but also the means by which the material world could get in contact to it; and again this is due to a perfection of form and embodiment: The purging of the inner spirits (that – according to contemporary medical theory – are produced by the liver, purged by the heart and a miraculous 'web' in front of the brain in order to then move mental activities) through dietarily means, makes the mind more receptive to the higher forms (cf. *De vita* II). And if these forms are then transmitted by means of according the mind to them and thus perceive them from within, this forming process can be equated to an approximation in the other, truer, spiritual space: Therefore at the same time cosmological spirits enter – a procedure Ficino (*In Platonis Ionem*) defines as 'inspiration'. The inspired person then is able to 'be in' the higher reality – a state Ficino calls 'fury' (translating the Greek term 'mania' Plato used in his *Phaedrus*) – and to produce a higher, inspired, poetry that makes accessible the higher truth also to others.

Now I do not consider it to be a coincidence that, when Marconi invented the radio, the 'space' of the radio waves was called by the same term that not only astrologers and natural philosophers, but also Aristotle, Plato, the Platonists and the Neo-Platonists had used when talking about the fifth essence of intellect that governs the heavens – i.e. the word Ether. Also for the radio the Ether marks a second space beyond Euclidian distances, accessible to everybody everywhere – even though located nowhere. And in a way it is also structured by affinities – only that these affinities now are no longer the affinities of a higher truth, but rather those of human arbitrariness and predilections (switching on or off, or choosing the right channel). It thus links affine people to a common space beyond Euclidian dimensions in a less metaphysical way.

I would now like to call this special case of presence 'hyper-presence': First because it is structured by affinities accessible to and constituted by human arbitrariness as is the so-called hypertext. Second because (e.g. by people who want to marry on TV) it

often seems to be experienced as the space of something 'above' things real. Third because it shows some similarities Baudrillards concept of "hyper-réalité" [1] (though I do not want to follow his concept of simulacra derived from Saussurian roots for phenomena of presence): In fact by means of special effects it nowadays is possible to make things much more present than presence itself (cf. [43]). Television is often closer to the action and has more perspectives on it than a real spectator ever could be or have – a fact made evident by the necessity of large video screens in stadiums that increase presence experience (even though they contradict the celebration of physical presence).

6. Conclusions: Presence – Fictional Presence – Tele-Presence – Hyper-Presence

The experiences of Presence (a sense of 'straight-forward' sense of 'being there'), fictional presence (the experience of 'being there' due to a presumed 'as-if' ontology), tele-presence (the doubling of two presences at the same place by overcoming spatial distance), and hyper-presence (the doubling of two presences at the same time by creating a new space) often cannot be distinguished neatly from one another. For example in Homer the dead heroes are tele-present in the bard if one considers the Hades as an island – and they are hyper-present, if one thinks of the Hades to be beyond sublunar spatiality. A more striking example of the interference between these concepts can also be seen in the complex phenomenon of virtual reality: Nowadays even a concludedly constructed virtual environment cannot often be overlooked, as it is designed by many different people who often do not communicate with each other about what they are doing. And it is by having less and less effects of concluded constructions that virtual reality becomes more apt to ontic presumptions (as a 'second universe') due to the fact that this way more 'depth' can occur as appresented. Even more interesting, though, is still the case of interpersonal virtual environments: I would even go so far as to state that if (as Mark T. Palmer states) "[interpersonally used] VR provides the user with control over the shapes, forms, and textures of his or her world" in order to "express mental and emotional states" in a better/more adequate way ([36] p. 294), this refers not only to what I define as the ontology of tele-presence: It even is a re-definition of Platonic ontology on a personal basis: The more a *form* is accorded to an essence considered as 'true' (i.e. in most of the cases also good and beautiful), the more present a given person feels as (i.e. in) her/his avatar. Virtual reality therefore seems to be a technical means of realizing (and trivializing), what Plato conceived as only spiritually possible (cf. [22], pp 91-86-91). On the other hand again this sense of the 'real' is also related to an appresented ontic 'depth', supposed in humans.

The latter of these conditions also allows presence

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[1] In this latter way, the term has also been used by Waterworth and Waterworth ([47], p. 509).

technology for the adoption of "effects of the real" (effets de réel) once theorized by Roland Barthes [3] for fiction – but easily translatable into questions on virtual reality: The "effect of the real" for Barthes consists in the fact that a given item seems to be not invented. This "referential illusion" according to him is due to elements that escape a smooth construction of a text – allowing for what Goffman would have called a "frame shift" from a frame of fiction to real-world frame [cf. 17]. Evidently this kind of an effect is due to signification (in the semiotic sense of the word): Like in Aristotle the reality status is searched for as accordance of the represented to truth. Other kinds of "effects of the real" though, have been introduced e.g. into telenovelas long ago – and phenomena of tele-presence occur here: For example, in the case of extrapolations of an election taking place at the same time as the transmission (not as the production) being embedded into the fictional reality in real time (or nearly). Also in virtual reality 'effects of the real' can accordingly consist in dysfunctionality of a given item for construction (Barthes), in a sense of being related to something inexhaustible, and also in openness to influences from another inexhaustible reality (i.e. of elements or traces of tele-presence).

The problem for presence experience is though, that it can only be perfect where it is lived and (ontologically) presumed as non-mediated. Perfect experience of presence is therefore only ideally possible in the realm of tele-presence (in its concrete realization it would mean the perfect sensual and presumed ontological accordance of the two presences to one another – making the experience tele-presence therefore become an experience of presence itself). The same can be said for the concept of Hyper-Presence: In order to be really one with Christ's body (i.e. without this body also being a piece of bread), the believer would have to enter Paradise – in order to enter the 'true' realm of hyper-presence the bride and groom in a TV-wedding should see only their presence in the virtual place on the screen (but in fact they are in a place filled with cameras and spotlights). Perhaps it is this double lack (presence being less present in one way than hyper-presence and more present in the other), that generates the most sophisticated combinations of these three forms of presence experience – trying to give a body to hyper-presence and to make bodies more present than present:

While writing this paper I could not avoid getting involved in the euphoria the soccer world cup. And having spent one of the best years of my life in Florence, in the beginning 'my' team was not only the German, but also the Italian one. Now, as is also well known in the United States, the sense of being scattered all over the world is a very important aspect of Italian patriotism; therefore Italian TV does not only show the soccer games, but also – later in the evening – the reactions of the 'italiani all'estero' (the Italians abroad). My city has one of the most important Italian colonies, that uses to gather half a block away from my place to watch Italy's matches. So at the beginning of the world cup I took part in the following kind of event: In an Italian bar a large TV-set was placed onto the open street, where (important issue for the form of the 'real thing') the Italian (and not the German) real time transmission was shown. During the transmission – as in front of every maxi screen during the world cup – people would behave as if they themselves were in a stadium, while Italian TV-cameras were taking this event. Evidently some people behaved even more enthusiastic knowing that they would perhaps be shown on TV. Perhaps, one could suspect, they believed the players of the Italian team were going to watch their cheering after the match and thus be comforted and motivated for the next match – but this solution does not consider the fact, that people would behave just the same, when TV cameras were off. So where were people acting? To answer this question, I think it should be put in a different way, i.e.: Where was Italy? 1) On the soccer ground that was *tele-present* to the spectators. 2) In the *present* bodies of the Italians acting. 3) In the *hyper-presence* of television making a 'truer' Italy arise where all Italians are ethereally linked. The total and holistic 'Italy' this way evidently was present nowhere, but therefore it had to be presented everywhere – in the most coherent form one could give it on a grounds so scattered. I got more and more enthusiastic in 'getting into' this event.

This fractal kind of presence though, can also be a reason for failure of presence experience: When I returned to the same bar to watch the final, many things had changed in the meantime: Everybody knew about this place and its events, therefore too many people who just wanted to watch people watching were there, and I myself had been rather disappointed by the Italian way of winning matches in order to forget scandals: The particular form of Italy realized by this particular Italian team was one I did not want to be as present as the supporters wanted to make it. As I finally understood my disappointment leaving no solution, I went home – only to find out, that Italian TV was about ten seconds faster than the German one: From the cheering Italian crowds I always knew everything important already before it would occur on my television. Too many concurring senses of presence took place at the same time – blocking the last bit of coherent experience. Indeed I rarely felt so disappointed about production of presence as I did in the night when I finished this paper.

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