

ii[d] *The Precarious*

Tristan Harris, a former product philosopher working for Google, now co-founder of an advocacy group *Time Well Spent*, focuses on introducing moral integrity to software design (Bosker). Harris believes software itself is engineered - designed - purposely. One could claim it is a consumers' personal responsibility to exert self-control when confronted with digital enticement. However. Most are not aware of *behind the screen* manipulation by those whose moral challenge is to destabilize any existing resistance to obscure manipulative technology. Perhaps we have reached the point that we have to acknowledge we have lost the relationship of control we thought we had with technology. Controlled from behind an opaque screen, we are also, not unlike the scientists in *Arrival*, losing fundamental trust. He proposes to change the fundamental premise of software design by inviting product designers to adopt a "Hippocratic oath" to impede the production of intentionally harmful software. He hopes this will also renew a sense of agency in users removing us from a design ethic based on creating addiction.

QR-code YouTube (02:46)

The amputation process was swift.



Continue here...

The Hippocratic oath is based on the principle: "first do no harm" (*Primum Non Nocere*), which is invoked when debating the use of intervention that carries an obvious risk of harm but holds a less certain chance of benefit. The screen separating us from and binding us with the Internet presents new sets of rapidly changing symbols and codes that are often confusing. Vilém Flusser (*Does Writing*) stated "Premodern man lived in a world of images, which meant the world. We live in a world of images, which theories regarding the "world" hope to symbolize " (36). But how are we expected to understand code *deliberately* designed to mislead? The market dominates space online, using yesterday's conventions *in pretence*. The codes we are accustomed to and are literate in, do not

apply here. As a result, most of us are unknowingly functionally illiterate, staring at symbols we do not understand in full, allowing ourselves to uncritical “click” and “like” bingeing. We were and are involved in the very creation this new technology and so it does not actually feel particularly alien or malicious. However. This system is intentionally built from gathered information concerning both our personal and consumer needs thus commodifying our vulnerability. Intentionally keeping us in a haze: most of its authors (software developers) have positioned themselves behind a screen dictated by commerce. Screens resembling the membrane created by the *Heptapods* in *Arrival* only here the motivation to move towards connecting remains consciously vague. Obtained knowledge concerning our addictive nature integrated into its design that in return invites us to feast on our tendency to overindulge: a remarkable form of digital cannibalism (!) Mutual trust is based on transparency. The smartphone inflicts a sharp stinging pain.

Tristan Harris proposes conditions needed to become literate actors and recreate, rearticulate *trust* by bringing moral integrity to software design through the introduction of a *Hippocratic oath* for code authors. He proposes to use the *language of law*, inherent to causality which is the base of linearity and found in each sentence we write: grammar. This cultural object is one part of the much more complex construction of precarity.

How to resist this invasive conception here represented by a tool of which its acceptance and consequential usage leads to questionable change in attitude towards concepts of personhood? A seeming triviality as growing loss of individualized desk space is an acceptance of this implicit imposed tool leading to quasi-self-imposed collaboration...actors within precarity. As your Smart phone is your desk, there is no need to physically conjoin in teams. A Serresian game of ball, played out under increased diminishment of unions. Set out by Neo-Liberalism, a new unification course arises...one of individualized uncertainty based on self-sufficiency, where ununified individual parts form the whole.

Everyone says modern life, coming out of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was about too much happening, things moving too fast, assaulting you, too much stimulation, too many distractions....

But they have it backward.
Modernity' s about the emptiness, the drift.
All those things going on were a cover, to mask the emptiness.
Once people realised life was empty and boring, they couldn't face it.
They had to have all those things going on to make them forget, to deny it, make it go away,
go back to a time before they knew that life was empty and boring.
(Charney 13)

Jack, the first elephant *Artis* held captive¹ ... received a "mercy shot" from his keeper while gazing from in his cage. Too *wild* to handle he refused domestication. His reluctance to "adapt" led to his demise. His gilded skeleton, a trophy of colonial triumph and craftsmanship a prominent, sinister exhibit in the zoo's archive.

¹ www.artis.nl/nl/ontdek/artis-verwacht-olifantje/olifanten-historie-artis. Accessed on May 1, 2018