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## SECOND-ORDER ART AND ENTERTAINMENT

Roy Ascott

### Abstract

The paradigm of the second-order state has long informed both cybernetics and the arts. Since Heinz von Foerster's *Cybernetics of Cybernetics* of 1974, these fields have come to be enriched by telematic networks, eliciting interactive, non-linear, distributed behaviour, and the embrace of the observer as a participant in these systems. Second-order cybernetics challenges models of society, culture, the arts and entertainment, as well as science, to recognise that everything is connected, everything is in flux, and all hypotheses are transitory. An example can be found in second-order narrative. "La Plissure du Texte: a planetary fairytale" (1983) exhibited an early form of distributed authorship, in which the reader was the writer of a text, within a worldwide telematic network, involving role playing in an open-ended scenario. A current example is here, now, at the Incheon International Digital Art Festival, called "The Second Life of La Plissure du Texte", in which the pleasure and pleating of the text remains, but now played out by avatars, within a new kind of semantic space, putting the mind into orbit in an entirely textual universe.

Second-order entertainment computing, with its high technological horizon, like Second-order Art, with its moistmedia substrate, and like science at its cutting edge, demands research that is speculative, anticipatory and visionary. All computer-mediated, digitally generated, entertainment scenarios, whether constituting Real Life, Second Life, Artificial Life, Augmented Life, or Multi-Life, involves thinking out of the box, seeking to move the mind, the senses, and the arena of action beyond the initial frame of inquiry. The recognition and development of second-order senses is important here. Entertainment computing must not only pleasure the mind but enter the mind, expand it, and reward its changing perceptions. Mind research will produce its own protocols, engaging with knowledge in new ways, creating new language, new frames of reference, new systems and behaviour. Entertainment, education, art and science may syncretise to generate fields of experience that will be creatively associative, risky, connective, transformative as well as intellectually, artistically and even spiritually challenging.

Finally, we can recognise the emergence of the second-order self, with our desire to create multiple identities, not only in the metaverse, or in social networks, but in the flesh, on the street. We are many selves, and we are both entertained and enhanced by the variables of being that technology now offers. The single-self organism is a biological necessity that is evolving into the multiple-self as a post-biological fact.