Chapter 1
Cyber-Culture, Cyber-Art, and Mnemonic Energy

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ABSTRACT

The word cybernetics has a very rich etymology. On the other hand, Norbert Wiener's Cybernetics and Society (1950) has very fluid style with its literary intertextual texture. Cyber prefix defines many aspects of life. Today, cyber-culture has gained new meanings due to virtual art activities during COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. Cybernetics has shown its impact on artistic creativity with two exhibitions, Cybernetic Serendipity (1968, London) and Software (1970, New York), which featured early examples of digital-art, cyber-art, and new media performances. Cyber-art is a very broad category. There are countless cyber-artists. In the institutional context, Can't Help Myself of Sun Yuan and Peng Yu (2016), Memory of Topography of teamLab (2018), and The City As A House of Rebecca Merlic (2020) are three valuable works. This subject was developed under the light of the ideas of Benjamin, Wiener, Deleuze, and Guattari, and the specified examples were analyzed with the descriptive method.

"The past is everything

The future is nothing;

Time has no other meaning"

(Cărtărescu, 2014:77).

ETYMOLOGY MATTERS

We can't do anything that we can't imagine, we can't describe anything that we can't think and we can't develop anything that we don't know. Because everything is a question of imagination, design and process and the truth of any phenomenon relatively exists in its origin.

Therefore, the etymological inquiry of the related concepts when working on any subject, illuminates the path of the research and allows its mapping.

Etymology is determined in this way in a Cambro-Briton magazine published in 1820 (Vol. 1, No.10): "Etymology…is the art of disengaging words from the adscititious incombrances, which time or custom may have produced, and of restoring them to that simplicity, which belonged to their original character" (n.a.1820, p.367). In the same article, the following determination of M. de Gebelin was also included:

"In the most ancient Oriental tongues, there exists a word, written in Hebrew תום, which we write and pronounce indiscriminately Tom, Tum, Tym. It is a radical word signifying perfection in a proper or physical sense, and, in a figurative or moral one, accomplish-ment, truth, justice… The Greeks, again, uniting with this word the term λόγια, which implied with them discourse or knowlege, made of it the word Ετυμολογία, which we pronounce Etymology, and which, consequently, signifies a perfect science, and they designed thereby the knowledge of the origin and import of word" (pp.367-368).

The etymology of a word expresses the historical and cultural adventure of that word. Hence, etymology is an extremely vivid discipline: …in etymology, certain mental qualities associated with creativeness, memory, vividness of association, and even visual impressionability play a part at least as crucial as that of straight indoctrination…, it is nonetheless true that important phases of etymological inquiry may and should be placed under rational control" (Malkiel, 1962, p.202).

On the other hand, scientific and technological inventions and related disciplines mean new paradigms and their respective cultural and artistic reflections and products. Naturally, the inventors, scientists, philosophers, artists, writers name these new fields of activity in new terms, in other words, they make neologism such as Joseph Nicéphore Niépce's Héliographie (1827), Sir John Herschel's Photograph (1839), The Cinématographie of Lumière Brothers (1895), Vannevar Bush's Memex(1945), Norbert Wiener's cybernetics (1948), William Gibson's Cyberspace (1984), Bard & Söderquist's Netocracy (2000), Luciano Floridi's inforg (1999) etc.

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