ANXIETY PLATFORM

Anxiety; About and Around Which It Seeks to Recognize

by

PINAR PAÇACIOĞLU

Submitted to the Institute of Social Sciences

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts Visual Communication Design

Sabancı University

Spring 2004

ABSTRACT

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Pınar Paçacıoğlu

M.F.A., Visual Arts Visual Communication Design

Supervisor: Elif Ayiter

Spring 2004, v + 33 pages

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Anxiety has no proper place. So is the self in CMC.

In the project , 2D graphics (Photoshop, Freehand), Dreamweaver, After Effects and Acid Pro is used.

Keywords: anxiety, repression, cathexes, psychoanalysis, Internet, disembodied-self, virtual communities, identity

ÖZ

KAYGI PLATFORMU
Aradığının Etrafında ve Hakkında

Pınar Paçacıoğlu

Görsel Sanatlar Görsel İletişim Tasarım Yüksek Lisans Programı

Tez Yöneticisi: Elif Ayiter

Bahar 2004, v + 33 sayfa

Yaşadığımız yüzyılı tanımlamak için kullanılan terimler arasında en genel olarak kabul göreni 'kaygı çağı'dır. Günümüzde birçok kaygı yaratıcı bariz sebepler (savaşlar, politik ve ekonomik karışıklıklar, doğal felaketler, vb.) vardır, ama bunun yanında özelliklede gelişen teknolojiler düşünüldüğünde, Bilgisayar Aracılı İletişim daha az belirgin, ama daha derin bir kaygı sebebi olarak karşımıza çıkar. Teknoloji bizim sosyal ilişkilerimize, kimliğimize aracılık etmektedir ve buna bağlı olarak değiştirmektedir. B.A.İ deki sanal toplum ve kişi kaygının karakter özelliklerini göstermektedir.

Kaygı Platformu kaygıya bir cevap bulmayı amaçlamaz, onun yerine kaygının ikircikli, tanımlanamaz yapısını yansıtmayı amaçlar.

Kaygının yeri yoktur. Tıpkı B.A.İ.'deki kişi gibi.

Projede , 2B grafik (Photoshop, Freehand), Dreamweaver, After Effects ve Acid Pro kullanılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: kaygı, bastırma, kateksis, psikanaliz, internet, cisimsiz benlik, sanal toplum, kimlik

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Introduction:

> " Now there are times when a whole generation is caught... between two ages, two modes of life, with the consequence that it loses all power to understand itself and has no standards, no security, no simple acquiescence."
>
> -Herman Hesse,
> Steppenwolf

Among the different labels applied to describe the present century, the most generally accepted one is "the age of anxiety". Anxiety is a pervasive and profound phenomenon of the twentieth-century. And it is not only become recognized as an important problem in the understanding of behavioral disorders but also in other areas like literature, sociology, philosophy, etc...

> "We move on
> ...This stupid world where
> Gadgets are gods and we go on talking,
> Many about much, but remain alone,
> Alive but alone, belonging-where? -
> Unattached as tumbleweed."
>
> W. H. Auden (May,122)

The irreversible flow of events makes difficult for us to understand what is going on around us, people become inadequate to realize their selves. It is obvious that the position of the self, in relation to the pressure from others, and from the flow of events, is ambiguous indeed. What is self, ad what is not self? Even if we could find the ideas we need for living in this world, it is difficult to escape the feeling that these ideas would be outmoded by the time we found them (Frankel, 1965:74).

There are some obvious anxiety-creating situations in our day, such as wars, political and economical confusions, disasters, but also a less obvious but deeper source of anxiety is the new technologies, but more specifically the Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). Technology is beginning to mediate our social relationships, our self-identities and our social life. We are beginning to create disembodied modes of interacting, new 'on-line' or 'virtual communities', new forms of social relationships (Featherstone and Burrows, 1995:13)

In the anxiety platform, the aim is not to get a solution for anxiety but to generate anxiety with the media that I believe is reproducing anxiety, helping against anxiety and showing the very character of anxiety. In an other way, the 'psychotopography' (Lupton, 98) of the human/computer relationship, how humans think, feel, share and experience their anxiety in the net and what is the effects of these new virtual communities is the main issue of the platform.

AN ANALYSIS OF ANXİETY

The avoidance of anxiety and unpleasure dominates the individual's life from the very beginning (Freud, 1986: 521). Anxiety as a feeling has obviously unpleasurable character, but this is not a complete description of its quality; not every state of unpleasure we call anxiety. Anxiety must have other specific characters that are actually the main problem of the theorization of anxiety. The development of a reliable chronology of defensive process, definitions for its theorization are the tasks of psycho-analytic theory, which has priority, but which has not yet been solved (Ibid.,521). We will realize, in the lights of Freud's contributions to anxiety, that it has no one definition, or its character cannot be listed easily or cannot be explained simply in terms of cause and effects, outer and inner.

Repression:

In the case of anxiety what is at issue is a kind of blockage: anxiety can be considered as the product of an obstacle standing in the way of reaching discharge, so that this uncharged

energy become free-floating, and is discharged through the symptoms that Freud describes as the "core- symptoms of (anxiety) neurosis" and which consists in the tendency of the free-floating energy to "attach itself to any suitable energy at any time"(Weber, 2000:86). The problem is the "coming-together" of such energy with mental representations. What characterizes anxiety is the absence of stable, enduring cathexes as the precondition of pleasurable discharge (Ibid., 87) which can be defined as repression.

In the heart of the Freud's theory of repression, there is the "inhibition" of the tendency for energy to distribute itself in accordance with the "pleasure principle:"

> "Let us bear this firmly in mind, for it is the key tot the whole theory of repression: the second system can only cathect an idea if it is in a position to inhibit any development of unpleasure that may proceed form it."(Ibid.,75)

In the *Interpretation of Dreams*, he describes that anxiety results when the repression breaks down and the repressed begins to reimpose itself upon consciousness (Ibid.,87). We can say that when something is said to be repressed, it implies that it persist in some unrecognized form (Schneiderman, 158). So the return of the repressed seems to be the cause of anxiety. But in his later research, we come up that he reversed his idea about repression and states that anxiety is the cause of repression. We will talk about this later when we will talk about anxiety' s double character, and how we cannot define it simply in terms of cause and effect.

The point of departure for repression is his analysis of dream:

> "It will be see that the chief characteristic of these process is that the whole stress is laid upon making the cathecting energy mobile and capable of discharge; the content and the proper meaning of the psychic elements to which the cathexes are attached are treated as being little of consequence." (Weber, 2000: 70)

At first, in the early periods, the case was only the denial, turning against the self, but then when the psychic differentiation between the self and the surrounding world between

inner and outer has taken place, the unpleasant elements of the inner life can be displaced into the outer world (Freud,1986: 521). And repression, which is the fundamental problem of the study of the neurotic process, is the denying the translation of the object-cathexes into word-cathexes. That makes to appear the problem of the relation of the psychic to the social order, the relationship of the individual with the pre-existing language system, the social cultural context. Accordingly, Freud's later characterization of repression become as:

> "If repression consists in the nontranslation of a thing-representation into its corresponding word-representation, anxiety entails an even more radical nontranslation, that of energy into representation."(Weber, 2000: 87)

The problem then is the relation of the psychic and non-psychic. That's why it is complicated and hard for the theory that seeks to comprehend it to find definitions or solutions: anxiety both simulates and dissimulates the relation of psychic to nonpsychic, of internal to external (Ibid., 87) This difficulty relates the double character of anxiety.

Anxiety is About and Around Which It Seeks to Recognize:

Anxiety is located on the periphery both of the psyche and of psychoanalysis itself. On the one hand it seems to be a reaction to an external, real danger, on the other hand it become a reaction that reproduces itself as it were the very danger it strives to react against (Ibid., 88). It is in the same time recognized, expected situation of helplessness, and in the meantime unrecognizable (can only be recognized by being displaced, dislocated, and disfigured)(Ibid., 91). Anxiety has no proper place. The ego then tries to organize itself and try to project the trauma as an event and as an external danger and try to confront it.

> "In short, it seeks to appropriate the "economic" disturbance of incessant displacement by displacing it outwards and forwards, by making it into a Vor-stellung: a re-presentation, to be sure, but also, literally, something that is placed-out-in-front, spatially as well as temporally." (Ibid., 92)

The ego is the real seat of anxiety (Freud, 1936: 80) Anxiety is an affective state, which can be experienced by the ego. It develops its organization through the formation of perceptual objects; a perception that functions as danger-signal signifies not merely the object it represents but the unrepresentable loss of perception itself:

> "The first condition of anxiety that the ego introduces is therefore that of the loss of perception, which is equated with the loss of object. (Weber, 2000: 93)

One can try to explain anxiety as a reaction to a danger- real in the sense of external, objective- but as we described anxiety cannot be explained simply in terms of cause and effects, or outer and inner. It is not possible to locate anxiety. Actually the attempts to define anxiety, to find its causes can as well be anxiety it self. And psychoanalysis, for which "thought" was always a matter of "signals", thinks no differently: it repeats the anxiety it describes (Ibid., 98)

Repression, Anxiety and the Self:

What is the effect of anxiety to the character of the self?

One cannot separate the awareness of self above all these debates. What if a person fails to adequately perceive what is going on around him, cannot realize the events, details which will have greater consequence to him, if what the self should learn about itself will remain unlearned because unperceived (Schneiderman, 157)? It may be impossible to trace the events that have culminated in a given effect upon himself. What has been lost is the capacity of one's realization of self, and of having communication with other selves. It is a fact that "inner gratification" depends on recognition of both the individual subject and that of the society and culture to which it belongs. (Weber, 2000: 68).

CMC - COMPUTER MEDIATED COMMUNICATION

There are many discussions about the general conditions of life but one of the

important concerns of this century is changes in the communications system and changes in the relationships of the people with their computers, with their selves and with their society. New communication systems are often presented as a key to easy and fast communication, more equitable society, and a better life. Long-distance communication is not something new of course. But its increase in it convenience makes its effects more obvious. It changes our social relations, our relations with nature and also our relation to our selves. It does not create independent social spaces, it relies on existing communication, but actually has its own. It creates a community, thinks like friendships, public life, interaction, etc...(Jones, 8) I will discuss this issue in three main lines:

- computers as a tool
- the distinctive and defining characters of the Internet as a cultural sphere, its
   effects to our understanding of the experience of community
- the psychology of virtual personhood

Computers as a Tool:

"Digitality is among us"(Baudrillard, 1993: 61)

The relationship that we have with our computers has different characteristics that set it apart from other technology we use. Using it whether for communication or entertainment or getting information does not change that it has a core importance in our life. We have emotional relationships with computers. I will try to picture this relation with Lapton's "The Embodied Computer/User" article:

" Our love affair with computers, computer graphics, and computer networks runs deeper than aesthetic fascination and deeper than the play of the senses. We are searching for a home for the mind and the heart. Our fascination with computers is more erotic than sensuous, more deeply spiritual than utilitarian."(Heim,1992: 61)

What is important is that computer/human relation, being rather a simple matter of self versus other, becomes more like blurring of the boundaries between the self and the computer.

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When this is the issue, the object ceases to remain as an object but become a medium, a tool for impressions and expression.

> " The intimate objects, when touched or on the body for a long time, become extensions of the body image and sensation"(Lupton, 98)

This is a useful point for understanding the blurriness and importance of the computer/user relationship and its effects on identity. We all have emotional relationships with our computers. And this relation changes our identities, our culture:

> " This relationship is symbiotic: users invest certain aspects of themselves and their cultures when 'making sense' of their computers and their use of computers may be viewed as contributing to individual's images and experiences of their selves and their bodies. Our interactions with computers inscribe our bodies..."(Ibid., 99)

But it is necessary for us to expand these debates and continue with global interlinking of the computers: the Internet.

Type of Technology Does Matter:

> "A rapidly expanding system of networks, collectively know as the Internet, which links millions of people in new spaces that are changing the way we think, the nature of our sexuality, the form of our communities, our very identities"(Turkle, 1995)

Computers are used by individuals to link into information networks and exchange messages in real time with others around the world. The Internet is the foremost among the other information and communication technologies that promise to significantly impact the day-to-day circumstances of all social relations (Foster, 22). What take attention of the people to the Internet is its power, speed and novelty as a medium of person to person communication, global tours, global entertainment. Internet makes people feel all the senses through their eyes and fingers. People join to the newsgroups, surf in the different sites, and play games with someone that he/she doesn't know. The reason basically is the basic desire for social interaction: they have something to share, talk, ask, or they want to belong to a

place. There is an expectation of exchange (as we know that the medium is the message, it seems social exchange is reduced to getting a response (Baudrillard, 1993:61)), of sociability, even of empathy in conversations, which generally we can call, that may involve personal concern, playful banter or philosophical debates (Porter, 1997:xi). Whether the type of usage of the net is, the term community is the right term to use for this virtual relation.

Virtual Community is Real:

Like our existence in the physical world, our existence in cyberspace is characterized by the tensions that emerge between the individual and the collective. There are differences between physical world and cyberspace but there are both real. Cyberspace is a place where different kind of communities is build.

Virtual Community is built by a sufficient flow of "we relevant" information. It is collective cultural memory: its narratives created by its inhabitants, it is life as lived and reproduced in pixels and virtual text (Fernback, 37). The collective identity resulted in around others who are seen as similar to the "me"(Foster, 25).

Figure 1: Geekzone Forum Page

But we should not underestimate the importance of the idea that a person's personality depends on being a member of a community.

> "One's deepest identity is the one which binds one to one's fellow humans; there is something common to all man and getting in touch with this common element is getting in touch with one's real self."(Ibid.,24)

So how does CMC effect the self?

And are the virtual communities structured around personal identity or communal identity?

Who Am I When I Am Online?

We all have in the Internet (in order to use newsgroup, or e-mail account, etc…) profiles, passwords, username (we can say we have a kind of signature in the net). Each profiles is a digital effigy manipulated by those who are the owner of the groups, or have access to the database. For example if you are not given an answer to one of the question, which the response is required, you will not be able to join the site. These manipulated effigies will propagate changes in identity (Monk, 36). They also perform your identity in your absence. It is like your very being is photocopied (Ibid.,37).
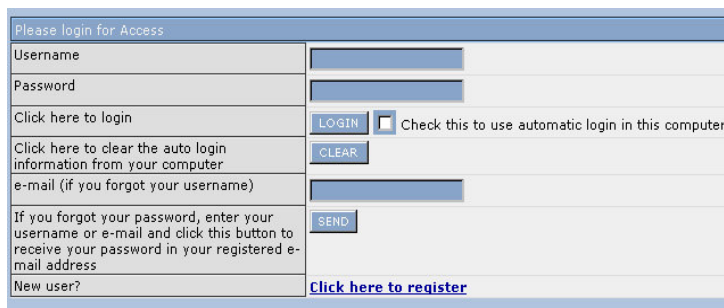
Figure 2: Geekzone login page
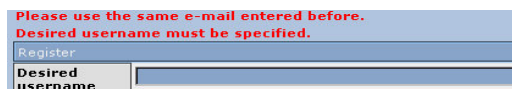
Figure 3: Geekzone notice message

Figure 4: Geekzone profile page

The loss of personality is often accompanies the mediation of communication via computer (Jones, 7):

Firstly, CMC seems fixing your identity, but it provides multiple identities and mobility. Secondly, there is a fact that individuals are seeking to communicate their vision of self in public, which is also valid for virtual community. They are communicating with other, but CMC may embodies a situation in which "the other is not really other, but is actually a moment in my own self-becoming". In such a situation, one might term the computer-mediated subject a conscious one but one without self-consciousness (Foster, 27).

Communication involves dialectic between unconscious centrifugal and centripetal tendencies in self-expression. CMC magnifies this ability simultaneously to express both the self and the other, the individual and the community (Ibid.,27).

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CONCLUSION

One of the main point of CMC is that people are not restricted by the traditional boundaries of time and space. This experience of dislocation in time and space (Wilbur, 11) can both be a source of anxiety but also can help individuals to see their own identities in a different perspective. Let me state this with the part about one of Lacan's seminar I read in Wilbur' article:

> "In his seminar of 1953-54, Lacan used an elaborate diagram to explain the dynamics of ego formation. Through a combination of curved and plane mirrors, an imagined subject is made to see two distinct objects, a vase and a bouquet, as if the vase contained the bouquet. This trick done with mirrors, Lacan says, is the necessary mechanism of misrecognition by which human subjects are able to imagine that they possess a coherent identity. In Lacan's diagram, the virtual space "behind" the plane mirror is where the subject imagines (through misrecognition) that its self exists as a unity (rather than some disorganized collection of identifications." (Ibid.,11)

I think we can draw analogies between the "behind plane mirror" and behind computer plane screen" concepts. There is some sort of self-therapy work going on behind the plane of computer screen.

The position of communities and the self in CMC is showing the very character of anxiety. As I said in the beginning anxiety is in the same time recognized, expected situation of helplessness, and in the meantime unrecognizable (can only be recognized by being displaced, dislocated, and disfigured). The body in the net is deterritorialised, and dislocated.

Project Insights:

Anxiety Platform is designed as to form a virtual community where everybody will have equal voices can speak or share its photos, stories, and music anytime with anyone in this community about anxiety. The visual language of the platform includes some forms which are implicit designs that the reader or the writer perceives either connected with the text or as abstractions situated outside the text. It is designed in order to give the concept of "loss" and "instability", especially in the video it is mostly emphasized.
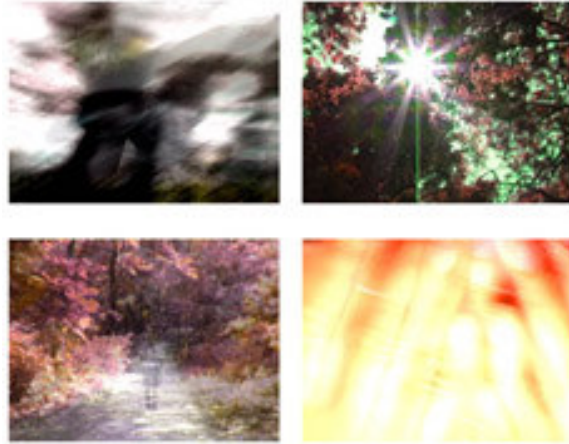
Figure: 5 Frames from video

The colors and lines and photos are chosen in order to give these concepts. And they are not evident; one has to feel the imperceptible character of the designs.

The anxiety platform is not looking to find an answer or solution to anxiety. But instead display the double character of anxiety.

Anxiety has no proper place.

So is the self in CMC. As Marcus Novak says:

> " I coin the word pantopicon, pan + topos, to describe the condition of being in all places at one time, as opposed to seeing all places from one place. The pantopicon can only be achieved through disembodiment, and so, though it too speaks of being, it is being via dis-integration, via subatomization of the consciousness, rather by concentration or condensation."(Joyce, 225)

It seems like the virtual is where all the action takes place (Wilbur, 12).

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APPENDIX A

Samples from Platforms' WebPages:

-Projects' Presentation Page

-Platforms' Corporate Web Page

-Platform Web Page Samples: Login and Gallery Page

ABOUT PROJECT

WEBSITE
PROMOTIONAL PRODUCTS
WALLPAPER
INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL
LOGO
CORPORATE IDENTITY

VLADISLAV ZARA THESIS PROJECT EMBROSS UNIVERSITY
FRANK PLACIDOGLO

Kaygı Platformu'na hoşgeldiniz...

İnsan olarak dünyamızda üç ilişki düzeyi vardır:
Doğa-içerisinde-varlık olarak biz, başkalarıyla-
olan-varlık olarak biz ve kendisi-için-varlık olan
biz. Bu ilişki düzeyleri arasında ki bağ, hangi
yanımıza ağırlık vereceğimiz ve bunla tutarlı
davranışlar takınma çabalarımızla sağlıklı olma
biçimimiz arasında doğrudan bir bağlantı vardır.
Her zaman karşı karşıya olduğumuz, hangi
yanımıza ağırlık vereceğimiz sonusuna uygun bir
yanıt bulmak ve yine bu yanıtla tutatlılık gösteren
tutumlar takınmak zorundayız." Bu tutarlılık yanlış

kaygıplatformü

platform hakkında

kaygı platformu giriş

galeri   linkler   arama   deney-im   kitapçı   son haberler   k-tasarım   makale

iletişim

kaygiplatformü

iletişim

galeri
profilim
forum
üye profili
arkadaşlarım
arkadaş arama
sohbet odaları
psikologla sohbet

>>> favorilerime ekle
>>> ana sayfam yap

kısa bir kaygıplatformu turu!!!

kullanıcı adı:

şifre:

gönder >>>

yeni üyelik >>>>>>>

kaygiplatformü

iletişim

• galeri
profilim
forum
üye profili
arkadaşlarım
arkadaş arama
sohbet odaları
psikologla sohbet

>>> favorilerime ekle
>>> ana sayfam yap

fotoğraf

‹‹‹ geri dön

‹‹‹ kendi fotoğrafını paylaş

Corporate Identity:

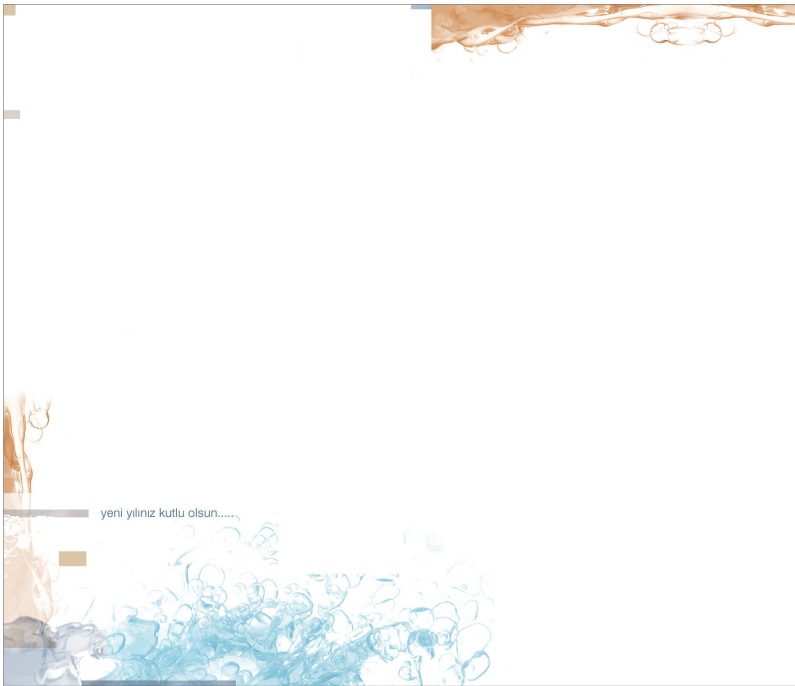-Stationary

-Celebration Carts (Birthday and New Year)

- Calendar

kaygıplatformu
da–mla s–akizi sok–ak. 23-/4
bes–iktas—istan–bul
te–l: (212–) 23–4 –56 7-8
www.kaygiplatformu.com
kaygıplatformu
pına–r paça–cıoğl-u
tas-arım-cı
da–mla s–akizi sok–ak. 23-/4
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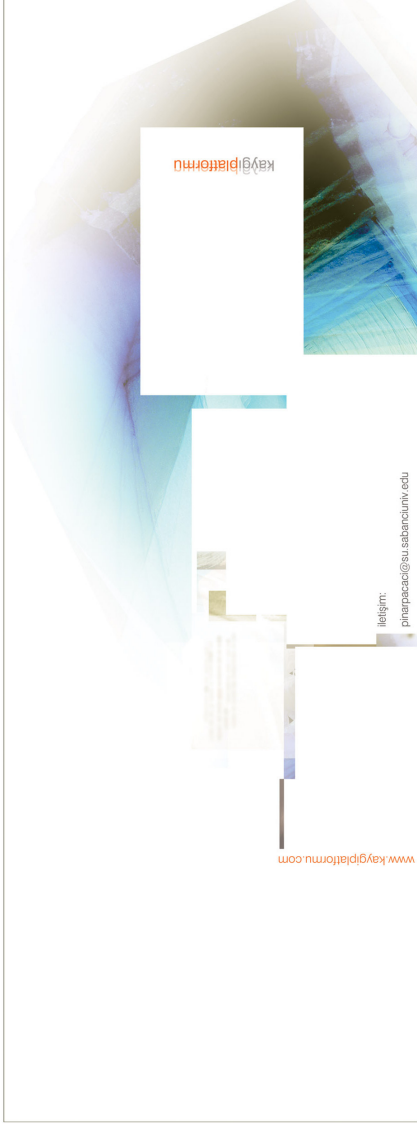Doğum günününz kutlu olsun.....

yeni yılınız kutlu olsun......

Kaygının temel nedeni bir yandan varolmamızın ana tanımlarında bilinç, seçim yatarken diğer yandan sonlu varlıklar olmamızı, sınırlılığımızı bilmemizdir.

kaygı platformu /// 2004

Introductory Materials:

- Brochure

- Flyers

- Posters

İletişim:
pinarpacaci@su.sabanciuniv.edu

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İşte kaygı platformu bu amaçla kurulmuş bir alandır.

Burada insan olmanın sorumluluğunu taşırken kendimizi keşfe çıkarmamız gerekir.

Kendimizi kandıran üç düzeyi
çakıştırıp bahaneler bulabiliriz
ki bu sonunda kendini
tanımayan kendini
gerçekleştirememiş varlıklar
olmamıza neden olacaktır.

Bu tutarlılık yanlış
anlaşılmamalı ve insanı
kendisine yabancılaştıran
bir etken olmamalıdır.
Aksine kişinin kendine
açık, bu üç ilişki düzeyine
açık olması olarak
düşünülmelidir tutarlılık.

Kaygı Platformu'na hoşgeldiniz...

İnsan olarak dünyamızda üç ilişki düzeyi
vardır:
Doğa-içerisinde-varlık olarak biz, başkalarıyla-
olan-varlık olarak biz ve kendisi-için-varlık olan
biz. Bu ilişki düzeyleri arasında ki bağ, hangi
yanımıza ağırlık vereceğimiz ve bunla tutarlı
davranışlar arasında doğrudan bir bağlantı
biçimimiz arasında çabalarımızla sağlıklı olma
vardır. Her zaman karşı karşıya olduğumuz,
hangi yanımıza ağırlık vereceğimiz sorusuna
uygun bir yanıt bulmak ve yine bu yanıtla
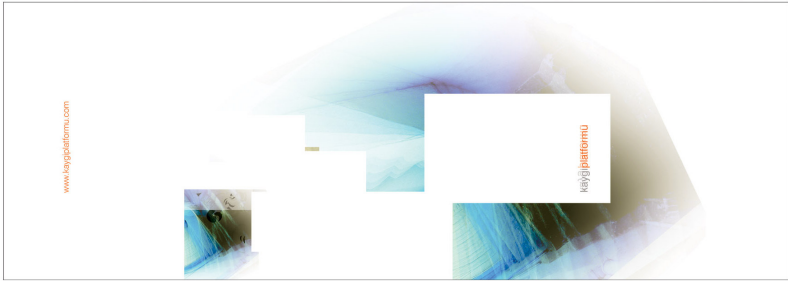tutatlılık gösteren tutumlar takınmak
zorundayız.*

Kaygının temel nedeni bir yandan varolmamızın ana
tanımlarında bilinç, seçim yaparken diğer yandan sonlu
varlıklar olmamızı, sınırlılığımızı bilmemizdir.

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···

I have neither the ~~wit~~ intelligence
nor ~~I~~~~t~~~~is~~ desire to create my own New Media.

Click on the evocative ~~words~~ below for insight
New Media
into how I have accomplished
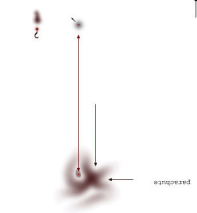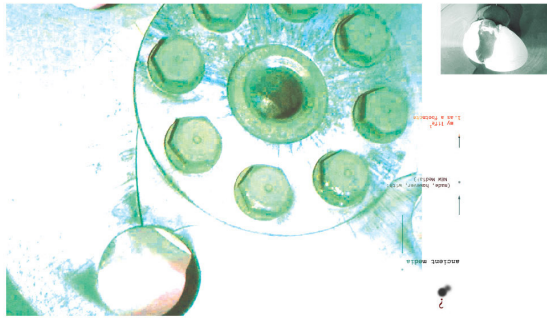via the intelligence and **desire of others.**

parachute   →

?

ancient media

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(made, however, with:
NEW Media!)

my life[1]
1. As a footnote

Promotional Materials:

- Cartpostales

- Bookmarks

- Shopping Bag and T-shirt
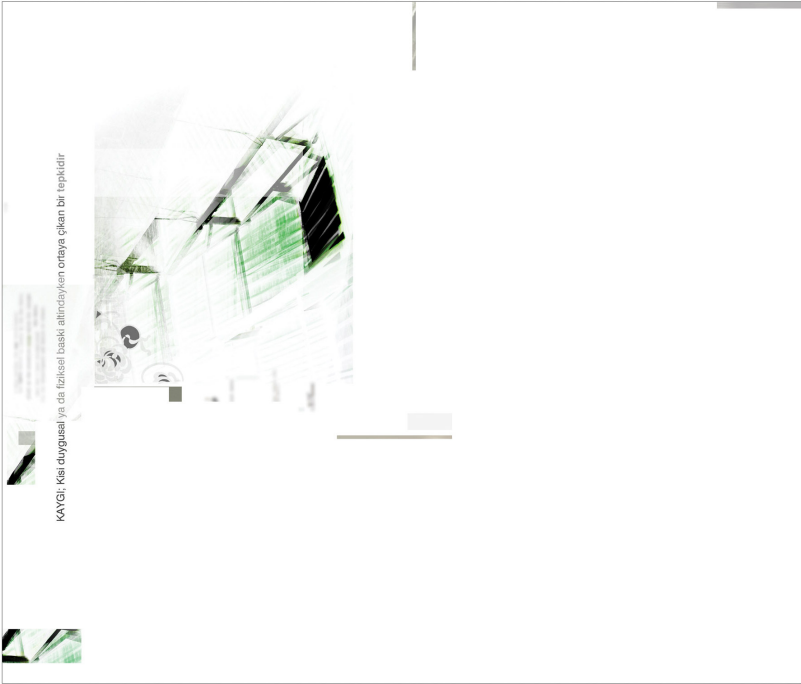
KAYGI: Kişi duygusal ya da fiziksel baskı altındayken ortaya çıkan bir tepkidir
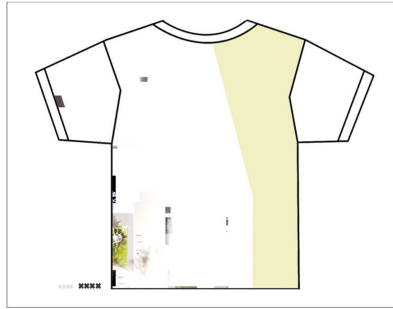
APPENDIX B

PROJECT CDROM

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