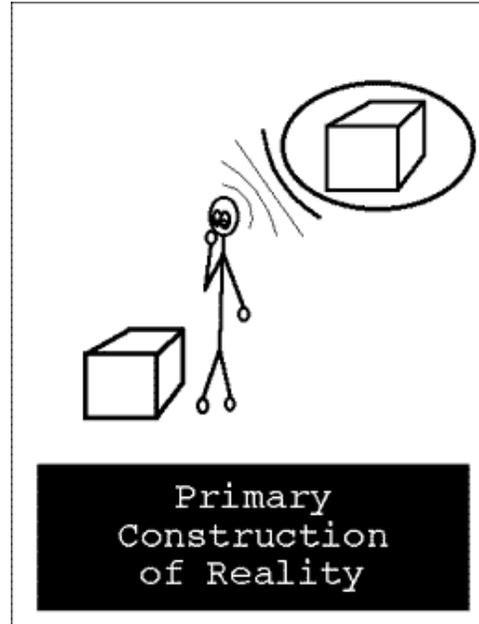


Virtual Reality and the Human Condition

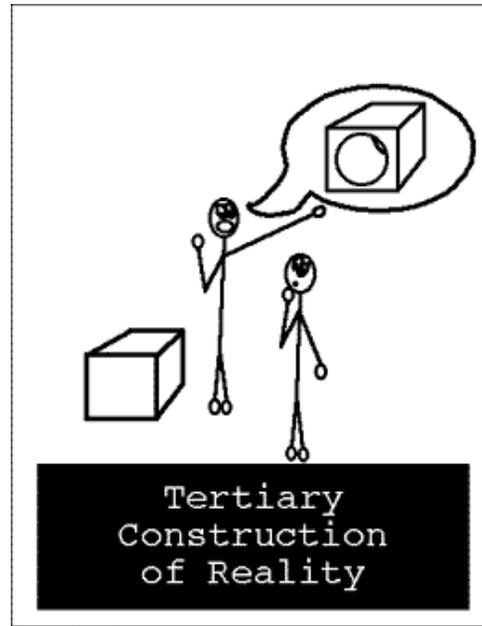
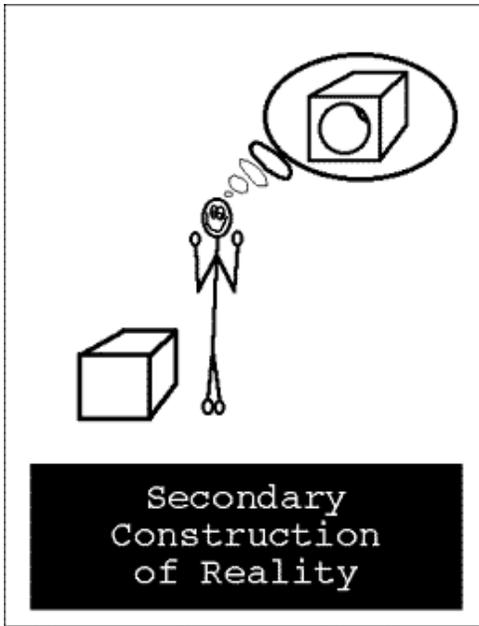
By James Zdralek

Before discussing Virtual Reality and the human condition, the foundation of the discussion should be set solidly by clarifying reality. Our perception of space is a false image of approximations and missing information. We cannot see heat emanating from bodies and lights. We cannot detect any ultra violet coloring or locate the sources of radiation . We lack the ability to visualize the sixty hertz flicker of lights or the inch per decade movement of a foundation. The information that is filtered or not detected by our sense organs is lost to us and not included in the world we construct for ourselves within our heads. This virtual construction of what the world is has a high degree of accuracy but has small differences between each individual because the constructions occur in different engines that have been fed different parameters and equations.

The first virtual environment we all experience is the one we are born into. In this environment we are not allowed to control the parameters or create new equations and dependencies. We are forced to accept the perceived environment as it exists in our heads. We can try to alter it to our liking using our limited understanding of causality. To help us understand and in preparation to change the world we create another virtual environment.

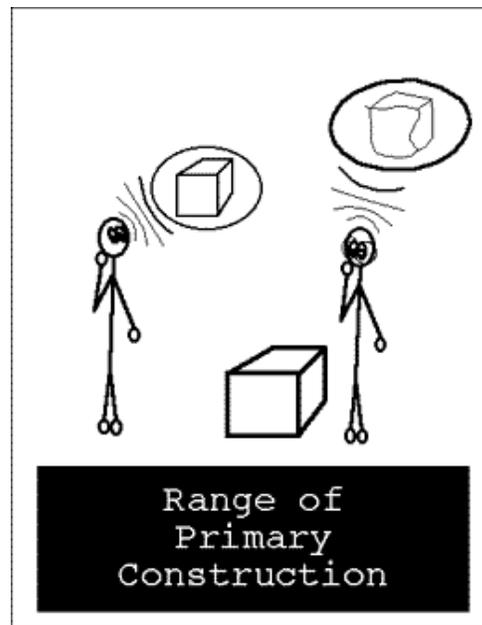


The second virtual environment we experience is the one we perceive when we close our eyes and dream, imagine or remember. This constructed world is stuck inside the cavity in our skulls and so it can help only the individual who constructed it. To effectively and rapidly change the environment we experience we must communicate the environment we imagine to others who can assist us with these changes.

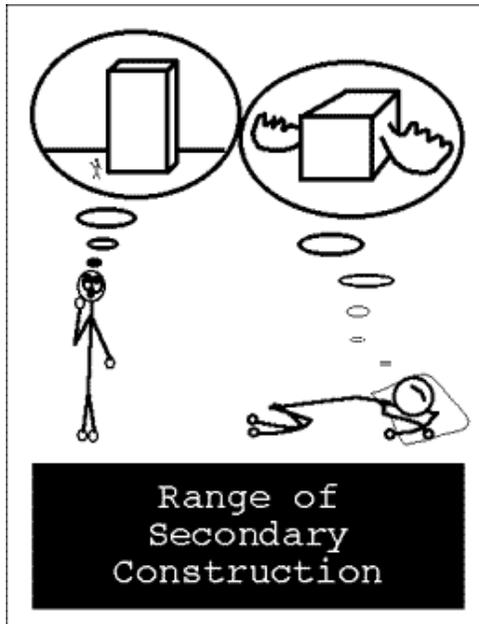


The third virtual environment we experience is constructed by someone else and is communicated to us. The base method has no need for special tools and only requires a shared history in the same perceived world so that gestures and sounds are associated with memories. A new world is imagined by the receiver and the virtual environment is shared. The communications involved in sharing an imagined world should be as rich in information as possible. The senses should be stimulated in such a way that the constructed environment that is shared is as accurate as needed by eliminating all possible miscommunications or non receptions.

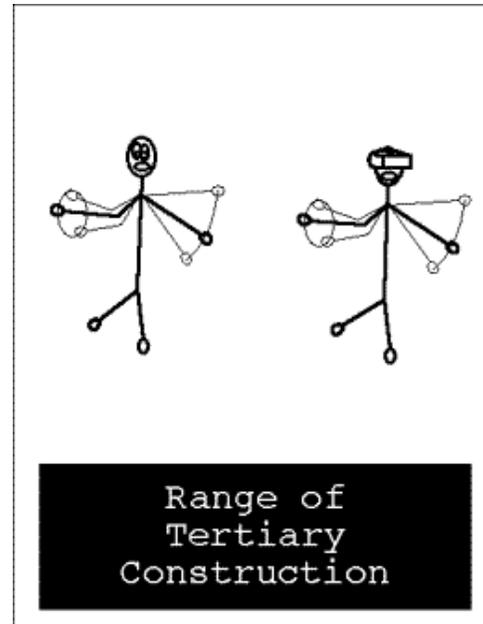
Within each of the constructed environments there is a range. Within the first constructed environment the ability of the person to perceive accurately creates this range. The most realistic world would be constructed by a highly perceptive, observant person with well-maintained sense organs. The least real world would be constructed by a hallucinating, imaginative person with faulty sense organs.



The second virtual environment has a range of self constructed environments that starts at the historic memory of a situation that is highly impressed upon the brain because of its intensity or importance. The range travels to the other side of the scale where a fleeting dream teases the brain with images and sound.



The third virtual environment has a range that extends from the communication experienced with gesturing and oration to cave paintings to books and then to the equipment laden end called Virtual Reality. This third virtual environment has two differing but similar situations.



The caves in prehistory and the Virtual Reality used today. The Virtual Reality that is created for biologists, scientists, engineers or surgeons will enable the human race to survive the next depression, plague, meteor or famine. This is very similar to the cave dwellers of ancient history who created paintings and clay sculptures of animals that were used in ceremonies that helped them practice for the future. Before the season of the hunt the shaman would introduce the hunters into the world of the future where they would attack virtual mammoths made of clay while practicing and planning for the future. This practice for life in virtual environments increased their ability to survive. Similarly Virtual Reality environments will help us survive. The human condition encourages the continual expansion of our vocabulary and the invention of new media. What is called Virtual Reality is just one of the different tools and techniques that enhance our ability to communicate.