POSTER SESSIONS

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EXODUS

EXODUS Exodus was a virtual tele-performance whose star-
ting point lied in the Israeli desert of Negev. I spent the five
days of Ars Electronica 1995 (June 20-25) in the desert, and
each day I followed the biblical trail of the prophet Moses.
Included in my equipment I had a portable GPS (Global
Positioning System) which was linked to a modem and a cel-
lular phone This equipment made it possible for World Wide
Web users to follow my movements in real time The GPS pic-
ked up data from several navigational satellites and sent it to
the nearest Internet server via cellular phone. Many digital
desert landscapes were stored in the Internet server and can
still be accessed through the WWW When Moses led his
people out of slavery, nobody sensed what a radical effect this
event would have on the development of human history. Man
with his new consciousness was transformed into a new spe-
cies both through his experience of liberation and through his
acceptance of the Ten Commandments. I want to use this
important event in mankind's history as a metaphor for the
newly developing man at the end of the twentieth century.
Mankind's emigration into the virtual net and the liberation
from time and space associated therewith changes our cons-
ciousness just like the experience of presence in absence. The
new ubiquity, not only passive but also active, creates the
"Information Man". The philosopher Vilem Flusser said in rela-
tion to this that materialized terms like "soul", "spirit","identity"
"I", or "self" would have to be reconsidered. My desert expe-
rience put me in a new relationship with reality both through
my isolation from the "flow of information" and through the
awareness that the outside world was ever-present through
the Net and could register my isolation. Maybe the "omnipre-
sence of God" is nothing other than the experience of the indi-
vidual with the more highly developed consciousness of socie-
ty. The novelist Stanislav Lem, in his theo-fiction novel Solaris,
described this as the Oceanic Consciousness. So it seems
that the technology of the Net helps man to develop a new
impression of reality that will have both sociological as well as
political consequences.