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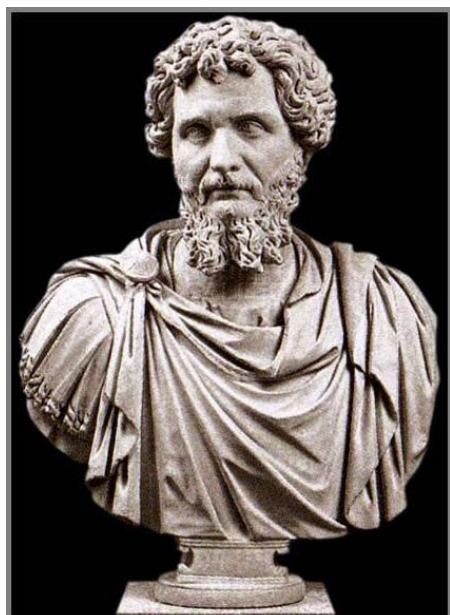
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2 - Worldwide Worship (Adulation) of the Antichrist

<https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Image-2.mp3>

Revelation 13:12B ... And he (the beast from the earth) causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast (from the sea, the Antichrist) . . .



**Roman Emperor
Septimus Severus**

From this Scripture we understand that the earth-Beast (or False Prophet) is the one who propagates “worship” of the Antichrist. In ancient times false prophets or priests could do this for political leaders by promoting the use of crafted images. But generating worship through

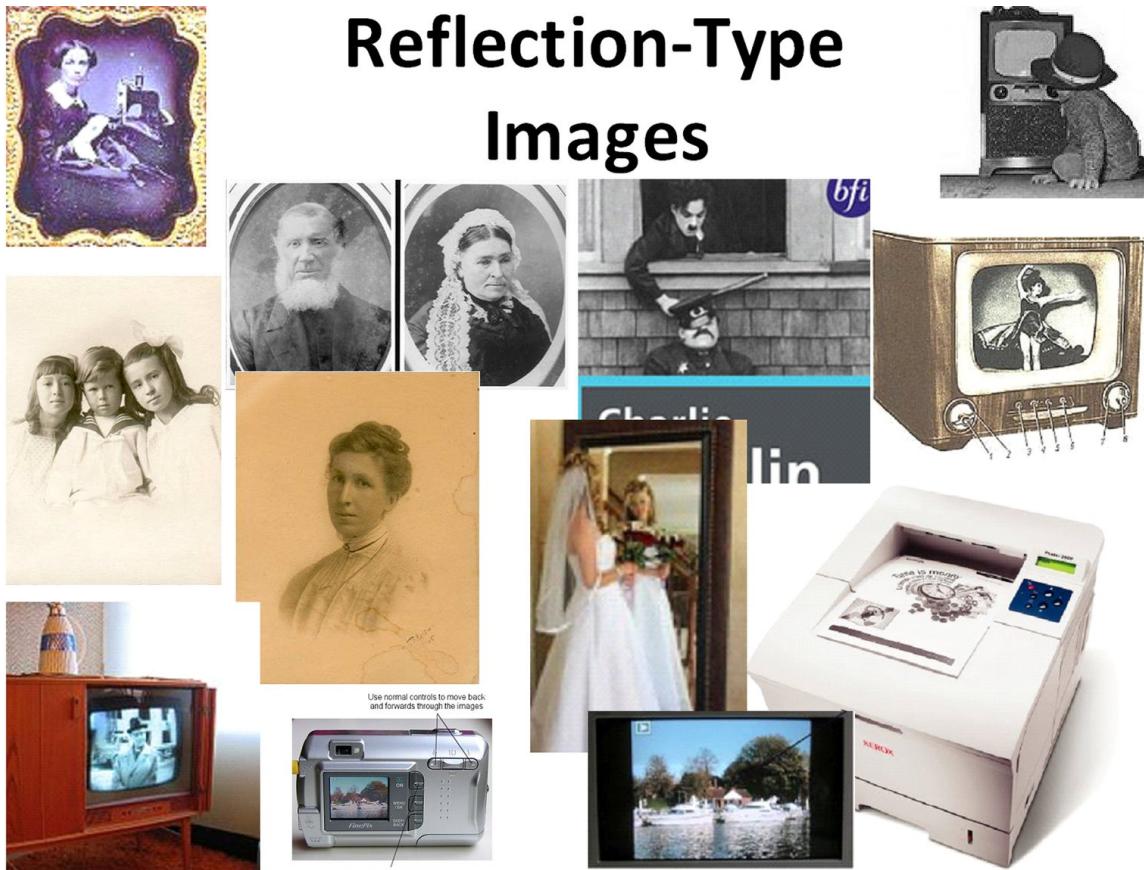
such things - a lifeless bust of Caesar, for example - wasn't so easy. It required injecting a heavy dose of superstition into the process. Through superstition (an exaggerated belief in supernatural agency), people would regard their images as actual incarnations of their gods or demagogues, and thus the images themselves could become objects of fear, devotion, and worship.

But in our modern world with its science-oriented outlook, superstition has lost its credibility; nobody falls for it anymore. Yet the Revelation Book states that the people of the future would indeed worship an image of the Antichrist. How unusual for that to happen in this secular, skeptical age of modern times.

Well, nowadays we don't need superstition because we have, in addition to the original category of crafted images (paintings, sculptures, and so on), a whole new category of image - reflection-type images, broadcasted to us through various devices: television and computer screens, holography, and who know what's coming in the future.

Crafted Images





Like a mirror, television can reflect the persona of political leaders, including their voices, gestures, emotional expressions, charisma, etc. The image is the person in other words. And viewing the image equals being in the presence of the political leader.

It doesn't matter then that the modern world will not respond to religion or superstition. For it is not needed; no superstitious leap of make-believe is required to enliven a broadcasted image. For the image itself is the person (almost); and there's nothing like that electrifying personal presence, transmitted through the media, to generate "worship". It may not be the same as religious worship, but this contact with the Antichrist through television will generate plenty of devotion to and adulation of him; and that would count as "worship".

So it all boils down to one simple fact: the image is supposed to be **worshiped** (according to **Revelation 13:15, 14:9,11, 16:2, 19:20, 20:4**). Nowadays that would be impossible if the image were any kind of crafted

image because humankind, with its scientific orientation, is not superstitious enough to worship such things anymore.

But we do know this: modern people can worship a charismatic leader. (The adulation of Adolph Hitler during the 1930s and 40s is a good example.)

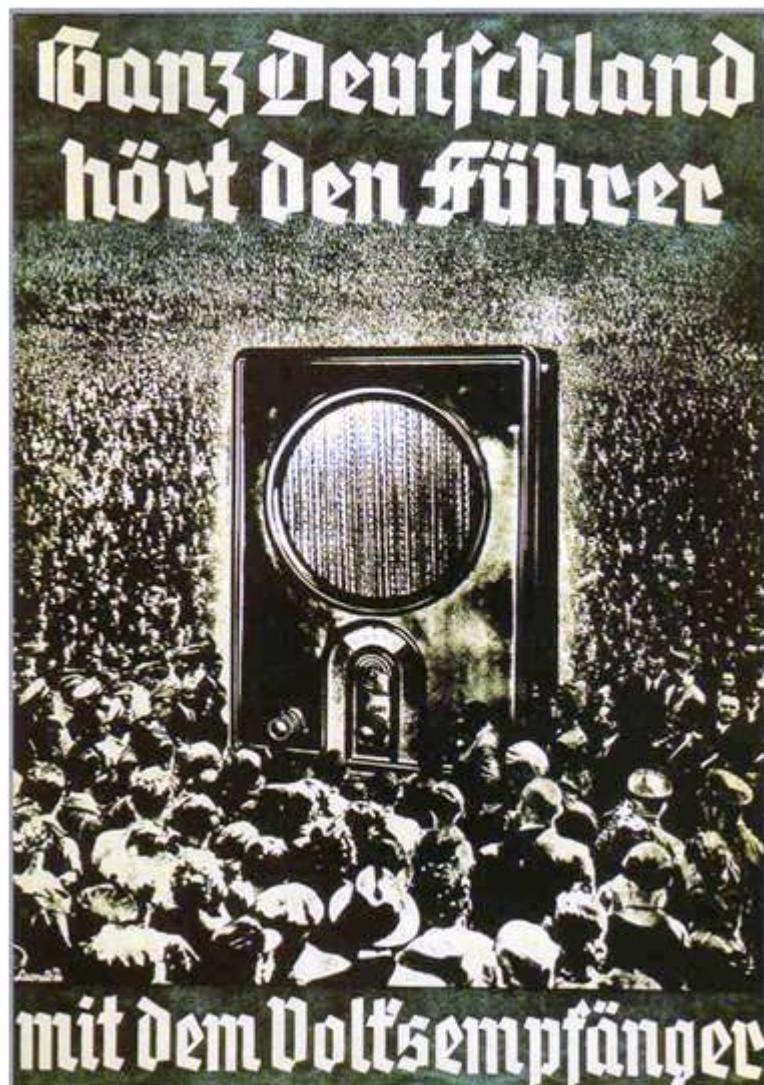
Therefore, if an image is **not crafted**, but is simply a **reflection** (such as a TV image), that could be “worshiped” because such an image bridges the gulf between image and reality. **That would explain then how the secular, skeptical world of modern times will manage - without religion or superstition - to “worship the image of the beast”.**

In fact, TV images have proven to be just as effective in generating worship in a secular, scientific age as crafted images were during the age of superstition. (We can think of the example of Hitler who used radio and movie clips to convey worship of himself to the German people.) Just from a common sense, practical point of view, image-broadcasting would surely be the most effective way for the Devil and his False Prophet to generate worship of their man the Antichrist.

Just imagine if, in the days of Roman emperor worship, Caesar Augustus was able to personally visit every household in the empire. That would have been a terrific way to inspire the adoration of his subjects rather than to deliver a few speeches here and there to the crowds of Rome. But in those days there was no other way of communicating a political leader’s personal presence or charisma.

Well, in our Modern Age, a ruler does have the capacity to appear in person before the whole world. He doesn’t have to rely on dumb idols or superstition to generate worship; he can actually visit every household on Earth through the medium of television broadcasting. The Antichrist won’t have to travel to every city, town, and village in the world and give speeches in person to a wide range of people. All he has to do is use the media, which has the ability to convey the electrifying presence of this powerful leader into every household of the world. (See [Appendix 1](#): an interesting article comparing ancient Rome’s “politics of celebrity” with that of modern times.)

Even before television, during the era of radio transmission, the power of the media to sway public sentiment on a broad scale was being felt in full force for the first time in history. In Hitler Germany people only had to switch on the radio to get, at least, a live “voice image” of Hitler. The German propaganda minister of that era, Joseph Goebbels, understood very well the power of this new technology. To insure that Hitler and his message could be heard throughout the land, he introduced radio sets to the German people at bargain prices and installed loudspeakers on street corners.



Poster from Nazi Germany with the caption, “All Germany hears the Führer with the people’s receiver.”

Goebbels made the following observation: “It is all very well to rule by force, but it is far better to win a nation’s heart.” No doubt, the Antichrist and the False Prophet will be guided by the same principle. And to win the hearts of the world’s people will require skillful use of the media. Though the technology for it has, since the days of Hitler, greatly improved and streamlined, nevertheless, the same basic principle will remain unchanged; that is, through some form of live broadcasting (like TV) the masses of people will have that personal contact with the future demagogue. And that will be the most effective way to generate worship of him.

And so it happened in the 1930’s that radio was used to generate adulation of the Fuehrer, and also to generate a hostile climate against the Jewish people and other European nations. At last, a device had been invented that could convey the personal presence, charisma, and dynamic personality of a political leader.

And this captivated the hearts of the German people for a time. Without realizing it, they were engaging in a form of worship. They were as devoted to Hitler as any “religious” person might have felt towards his god or divine emperor. But, in this case, the object of worship (Hitler) was cloaked in the garb of secular adulation rather than the ancient one of superstitious adoration.

Hitler conveyed his cause through radio by his fiery inspirationalism. But there was another side to the media influence game going on at the same time. While Hitler was ranting and raving in Germany, in the United States, President Franklin Roosevelt, who also knew how to use the media of his day, was cozying up to the American people with his “fireside chats”.

These radio broadcasts served to reassure the American people during the difficult Depression years; his policies had helped to resolve problems caused by the money-grinding culprits who benefited from the Great Depression debacle. During World War 2, however, there were some problems. Certainly, Roosevelt was not dedicated to evil the way Hitler was. And had his policies of cooperation with the Soviet Union continued after his death, the world might have been spared from the Cold War and decades of communist oppression in the nations of Eastern Europe.

So anyway, with these two men, we have two examples from the last century of effective use of the media. Could it be then that the final government will play both roles on the world stage? One to persuade with the calm, soothing voice of reason, and the other to motivate with fiery rhetoric and inspiration.



Two Styles of Media Dominance in the 20th Century

And so it was that radio became, in the earlier part of the 20th century, the first medium to demonstrate this uncanny ability to convey to the public the dynamic presence of a political leader. For the first time in history, the barrier of physical distance was overcome; a whole nation became a public auditorium, as the personal presence, charm, and charisma of the Hitler demagogue traveled beyond the podium straight into every German household. How much more can TV - with its ability to convey both audio and visual features of a person - be capable of doing the same in the near future with the Antichrist?

Or if “television” seems too limiting a concept, we could instead call it

“broadcasting”. And that could include any new inventions that may come along in the future, such as holographic imaging, now in the experimental stages.

The main point is this: broadcasted images, more than any other kind of image, serve the purpose of generating worship in the world of modern times.

Modi campaign rides a 3D wave

Such Rallies Prove A Hit In Hinterland

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The wave of hand and a familiar tone makes the virtual seem even more real.

“I can see our brothers and sisters in Haridwar,” says BJP leader Narendra Modi, adding a salutation to crowds bunched around ‘3D’ screens in remote locations, far from the studio in his Gandhinagar residence.

With a microphone in front and office furniture as the backdrop, Modi speaks to thousands as three-vehicle units traverse state highways and act as force multipliers to carry his campaign message.

Typically, 3D rallies are held in the evenings when Modi has finished the day’s public meetings. The rallies are beamed by satellite and the technology which was used in the 2012 Gujarat polls has improved.

A set of monitors in the special studio in Gandhinagar — there is one at the BJP headquarters in Delhi too — brings live pictures that the

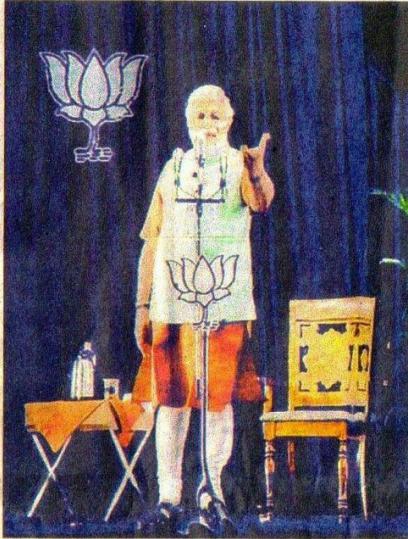
huge asset for the Modi campaign. The uniqueness of the shows and Modi’s speeches are attracting crowds. There is a demand for the 3D vans,” said Chandrashekhar Sharma, who coordinates planning and logistics at BJP’s Delhi office.

Despite certain constraints such as the need for a maidan to set up the large stage and screen, BJP managers feel the technology is worth the tedious planning and hazards such as breakdowns in remote areas.

Gaining in experience, BJP teams in Delhi and Gandhinagar have sought to combine best options with logistics to take Modi’s campaign to politically significant patches of rural hinterlands.

In April, there were nearly 250 hologram rallies in UP, 95 in Gujarat, 82 in Bihar, 52 in Maharashtra, 46 in Andhra Pradesh, 28 in Rajasthan and 26 in Uttarakhand besides a smattering in other states.

The 3D rallies can be particularly useful in hill states like Uttarakhand and Himachal where organizing public meetings is not easy and access to voters can be challenging and not always cost effective. Modi’s conversational tone, he even walks around the studio a bit, helps engage voters who, given the trappings of the “show”, seem to be lapping it up.



SEEMS VIRTUALLY REAL

From India’s main newspaper *Times of India* (8 May 2014 edition). The article examines how 3-D holographic technology proved quite useful in the political campaigning of that general election. It may not be long

before the technology comes along whereby this kind of vivid imaging can be broadcast directly into household living rooms.

From a strictly practical point of view, we can see then that a TV image of the Antichrist would easily fit as an “image” that is to be worshiped by the modern world. And of course, we now have the benefit of historical hindsight, which past generations did not; we know about the existence of reflection-type images that can be broadcasted throughout the world.

But the other criterion we must look at: How does television broadcasting fit in with what the Word itself says? From the looks of it, the description of the “image” in Revelation 13 doesn’t sound very much like a broadcasted image. In fact, it sounds more like a description of an idol than anything else. It is possible, with today’s advanced technology, to create AI-powered, realistic-looking robots that can speak and make gestures. So the image-as-a-robot-idol concept has been popular.

But the broadcasted-image concept has not been explored much in modern commentaries. The purpose of this study then will be to try to understand how the “image” spoken of in the *Book of Revelation* could be interpreted in terms of (TV) broadcasting technology. In time it will become obvious what the “image” really is, but for now it will help to explore the possibility that it might be some sort of broadcasted image.

One drawback with robot technology is the expense; it would be difficult, at present anyway, for communities and individuals to have their own idol. With only a few robot-idols scattered about, that would hinder the proliferation of the worship of the Beast.

Another difficulty too lies in the fact that it is less easy to worship something that is mechanical - a problem known as the “uncanny valley” syndrome. It is much easier to worship a live, broadcasted image because to the viewers they know they are seeing the real flesh-and-blood person himself.

Uncanny valley: In aesthetics, the uncanny valley is a hypothesized relationship between the degree of an object’s resemblance to a human being and the emotional response to such an object. The concept of the uncanny valley suggests that

humanoid objects which appear almost, but not exactly, like real human beings elicit uncanny, or strangely familiar, feelings of eeriness and revulsion in observers. Valley denotes a dip in the human observer's affinity for the replica, a relation that otherwise increases with the replica's human likeness. [Wikipedia] (See news article in [Appendix 2](#).)

It is because of this “uncanny valley” syndrome that cinematographers prefer to use robots that look like robots because they are more likeable that way.

There is also the new phenomenon of AI-powered images. These can create realistic but totally false images of people speaking or engaged in activities. Nowadays, it is popular to think of AI-imaging as some kind of huge breakthrough in the art of image-making.

But a bigger breakthrough has already happened only a few decades ago. The advent of photography, filming, and broadcasting was a greater advancement in the art of image-making than we may realize. For it marked the transition from crafted images to reflected images. That is, exact image-copies of people could be made instantly. And with the addition of being able to copy sound and action, and then broadcast such images over great distances, what an incredible breakthrough it was - to get beyond the limited capabilities of crafted image-making!

Now, if we take a realistic look at AI-imaging, we might see a huge drawback in it - similar to what those who make counterfeit money run into. Forgery may work for awhile, but eventually, as the means of detection improve, the counterfeit bills can be detected, and the money becomes dangerous to use. So it is a risky business. Regardless of how realistic they may appear, to create fake images may not be all that effective in generating “worship”. In fact, such images could even detract from the False Prophet’s purpose of getting the world “*to worship the first beast [the Antichrist]*”. (Revelation 13:12)

The same process happened recently with Photoshop, which also could produce pretty good fake images. But it wasn’t long before the software was developed that could easily detect a Photoshop fake quite easily. So it could be the same story for AI-generated images. Because they might

eventually be detected, chances are they won't be all that effective in fostering worship of the Beast. After all, in our modern, non-superstitious society, who will want to worship an image that is not real?

A real broadcast of a real, living person (who has lots of charismatic persuasiveness) would be the most effective way for the forces of Darkness to generate worship of the Antichrist than any other kind of image. (More on this subject of AI-generated images in See [Appendix 3](#).)

Although the concept of a broadcasted image seems more practical as a way of generating worship amongst the masses of the world's people, to understand how the apostle's description can be viewed in that way is not an easy question to resolve. It will require a nuts-and-bolts approach - a closer look at the Scriptures in the context of the apostle's mindset and cultural background. In this way, hopefully, we can ascertain more precisely what this ancient passage in Revelation 13 is saying.

To start, we must understand that to create a broadcasted image requires a very different process to how images were made in ancient times. But try and explain that to John the Apostle. He hadn't a clue about modern technology, and never in his wildest imagination could he have conceived of broadcasted images - a modern invention that for us is no cause for wonder because we are so familiar with it.

Whatever it was John saw in vision, we can be sure of one thing: his description would have been couched in the terms and understanding of how images were made in his day, not ours. And this is important to understand. For this particular passage in Revelation 13 is not a direct prophecy nor an angel speaking; it is just John himself trying to explain what he saw in vision.

“I have found that reading the Gospels with a first-century context in mind helps me better understand what Jesus meant in both His words and actions.” - [“The Manger and the Inn” by Peter Amsterdam, 11 December 2012](#)

And the same guideline could apply to John the Apostle's words in Revelation 13. The “first-century context” must be kept in mind.

In his book *The Case for Faith*, Lee Stroebel addresses the issue of “apparent conflicts in Scripture” (pg. 38). Two of the mistakes that interpreters make: “forgetting that the Bible uses non-technical everyday language” and “forgetting that the Bible is a human book with human characteristics.”

John’s description of the “image” in Revelation 13, as this study will endeavor to show, merely reflects his clumsy attempt to explain a vision of a broadcasted image, in the “non-technical everyday language” of someone from the 1st century. The vision itself, of course, came from God, but the description of it was left in the apostle’s hands, for as the above quote states, “the Bible is a human book with human characteristics.”

On occasion when a prophet receives a vision, and if he doesn’t seem to be getting the right idea about it, there will be a visit from an angel to correct the prophet to make sure he is getting the right perspective. Some interesting examples of this may be found in Revelation [7:13-14, 17:6-7](#), and [Daniel 8:17-19](#).

But in this chapter 13 about the vision of the *image*, there is no such intervention, and the Lord may have allowed that for a reason. That is, what we have here turns out to be an intriguing example of a time-travel experience - how someone from an ancient time would react to and describe a distant-future invention. Knowing only the 1st century techniques of image manufacture (painting and sculpture mainly), he describes it in the terms he understands. No surprise then that his description sounds like the description of an idol.

To see things from the Apostle’s point of view, imagine trying to explain the workings of TV technology to someone from the 1st century. To make it understandable, we might explain it thus:

“This thing called TV and broadcasting technology will use certain devices known as cameras that can operate in the presence of anyone whose image is to be made (in this case, the Antichrist’s). These devices will be able to manufacture an exact image of him and distribute thousands, even millions, of replicas of the same image into every corner and household of the world. This amazing feat of distributing the images will be performed by harnessing certain invisible forces in the air. These

are known as electromagnetic waves that will carry the images all over the world. Although these ‘waves’ are invisible, this is not a magical process, believe it or not. It is strictly scientific, if you know what I mean. And, mind-boggling as it may seem, TV technology will be able to accomplish this enormous task in only a few seconds. Moreover, the image of the Antichrist will, as in the manner of a reflection, appear to be alive, including having the ability to speak.”

With that our man from the 1st century might get a small handle on understanding this fabulous invention of the future. More likely though, he would think that explanation crazy and just perceive it according to his own understanding about the art of image-making.

Looking at it then from his point of view, how might someone from the distant past describe the workings of TV technology if all he had to go on was a vision of a TV image of the Antichrist? Well, could it not be right here in Revelation 13? Could this not be the actual, firsthand account of someone from ancient times trying to explain how he thinks a modern broadcasted image would work?

Ok, so let's take a closer look at the Apostle's fanciful, first-century explanation for the workings of modern technology (in the next post):

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Appendix 1: News Article

Imperialism as Spectacle (By Justin Raimondo, Antiwar.com, 26 August 2012)

In our own era, the politics of celebrity are played on a vaster scale, with all the magnifying effects of modern communications technology. Think of the American political landscape as one vast electronic Colosseum, where politician-gladiators battle it out to the roar of the crowd, and it's thumbs down on politically incorrect dissenters—who are

regularly thrown to the lions in order to appease the savage appetite of the mob.

Once upon a time our politics were about ideology: that is, political campaigns revolved around issues. “Free silver,” abolitionism, the tariff, the trusts, imperialism—these were the central concerns of Americans who had not yet been corrupted by the new political culture introduced by the advent of television and the accelerated growth of the art of propaganda, both political and commercial.

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The policy of imperialism plays a key role in writing the personal narrative of the ruler: wars of aggression and serial “regime-change” are seen as exhibiting his admirable personal qualities of strength and decisiveness. “Shock and awe” over Iraq was aimed just as much at impressing the American people as inducing the Iraqis to haul up the white flag of surrender.

The evolution of the President as a larger-than-life personality has its Roman precedents. After the modesty of the early Caesars gave way to open megalomania, Roman emperors routinely elevated themselves to the divine pantheon of the gods, and deified their relatives and mistresses. In our age, this deification process has been replaced by the elevation of political figures to the pantheon of celebrities. American politics, having devolved into almost pure entertainment, has become a battle of conflicting narratives—conflicting personal narratives, in which the voters turn thumbs up or down and the arena resounds with their judgment. Will you vote for Richie Rich, the Competent Manager, or the Community Organizer with a Heart of Gold?

*

George W. Bush’s electoral success can be attributed to many factors, no doubt, especially the flaws of his Democratic opponents. Not to be overlooked, however, is his much-touted appeal as the candidate you’d most like to have a beer with—a popular meme at the time, and one that, I fear, fully explains the reason for the eight years of absolute misery he put us through.

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Appendix 2: News Article

Lifelike Robots Made in Hong Kong Meant to Win Over Humans by Kelvin Chan, AP, 15 January 2018

HONG KONG—David Hanson envisions a future in which AI-powered robots evolve to become “super-intelligent genius machines” that might help solve some of mankind’s most challenging problems.

If only it were as simple as that.

The Texas-born former sculptor at Walt Disney Imagineering and his Hong Kong-based startup Hanson Robotics are combining artificial intelligence with southern China’s expertise in toy design, electronics and manufacturing to craft humanoid “social robots” with faces designed to be lifelike and appealing enough to win trust from humans who interact with them.

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Hanson says he makes his robots as human-like as possible to help alleviate fears about robots, artificial intelligence and automation.

That runs contrary to a tendency in the industry to use cute robo-pets or overtly machine-like robots like Star Wars’ R2-D2 to avoid the “uncanny valley” problem with human likenesses such as wax models and robots that many people find a bit creepy.

For now, artificial intelligence is best at doing specific tasks. It’s another thing entirely for machines to learn a new ability, generalize that knowledge and apply it in different contexts, partly because of the massive amount of computing power needed to process such information so quickly.

“We’re really very far from the kind of AI and robotics that you see in movies like ‘Blade Runner’,” said Pascale Fung, an engineering professor at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. “Sorry to disappoint you.”

Unlike toddlers, who use all five senses to learn quickly, machines generally can handle only one type of input at a time, she noted. While Sophia’s repartee can be entertaining, she’s easily thrown off topic and her replies, based on open-source software, sometimes miss the mark.

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As for tackling challenging world problems, that's a ways off, Hanson acknowledges.

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Appendix 3: AI-Generated Images

Nowadays there are some surprising new ways to fashion images via the use of artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms. This new technology can create exact replicas of political leaders' speech and actions. So why not that kind of image rather than a live broadcasted image?

We could compare this type of image-making to the art of forgery. Criminals can make realistic-looking fake passports or counterfeit money. And they often get away with this. But as soon as the forgeries are detected, then they're useless to the criminals who then risk getting apprehended. In the legal world, even photocopies of official documents may be accepted, whereas forgeries, however good they may be, are not.

Likewise, with a live TV image of the Antichrist: As long as people know they're watching the real thing, then that serves the purpose of persuading them to follow the Antichrist. But one could imagine that, if people suspected the image was actually computerized through AI technology, had been doctored up in some way, then they would be less inclined to take it seriously. So, if AI-generated images are to be used, people will still have to think that it's a live, broadcasted image. But, like the art of forgery, it can be a risky business.

We could imagine how people might react to an image they suspected was AI-generated versus how they would feel beholding the Antichrist himself in the form of a real broadcasted image. The former might arouse interest, curiosity, amazement, or maybe amusement. But that is a far cry from feelings of devotion or worship. Just the fact that it's a made-up thing means the image does not have to be taken seriously.

But what feeling would a live TV image generate? Probably, as Hitler's live appearances and radio broadcasts were able to cast a spell over the German people, so the Antichrist's broadcasted (TV) "image" will arouse in people the same kind of devotion, loyalty, desire for service. In short,

true worship.

Like computer technology now, TV was once a new and amazing invention. But after time, we have adopted a certain cultural familiarity towards it. TV, we should remember, does convey that live appeal. Even under the fuzziest of broadcasting conditions, it can induce worship in a way that no other type of modern image can, however intricate or realistic it may be. Nothing beats seeing the real live thing.

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