

Baudrillard Sipping Amphetamines: Writing About Random News Articles Part 2

<https://www.reuters.com/technology/exclusive-ukraine-has-started-using-clearview-ais-facial-recognition-during-war-2022-03-13/>

Any technology knowingly prepared to inflict harm must disguise itself as a capsuled remedy into the very arena which it is being inflicted. The makers of the human-machine apparatus that exist as Clearview AI know well the harm their technologies are prepared to inflict.¹ Sufficiently powerful technologies must always be spoken about in the absolutes of their destructive potential. Nuclear weapons are the most potent – firearms are the most common. The first rule: “Every gun is loaded.” A gun propels objects at high velocity – facial recognition gives man identity. Both are prepared to pluck at the periphery, if not the center, of human life. The makers are necessarily aware of their preparedness to inflict harm and instead must rely on promoting the responsibility of users to mitigate ‘misuse’ and disperse harm as needed. *Guns don’t kill people. People kill people.*

People are not always prepared to kill. A gun is always prepared to kill.

What of the capsuled remedy? Are guns not strapped in holsters to deter their own proliferation? Are we not all MAD? Clearview may be used to help identify the faces of loved ones killed in conflict. The reality which atomizes a lifespan into metric is the same which identifies a corpse as countenance – the same God strikes down Lazarus to then summon him once again. What of the balm? Clearview is seeking to alleviate one of the pangs of warfare. War anonymizes as it cuts through flesh; deidentification is a power of war as potent as that which stops blood, creates rubble, phone-calls funeral directors. War is the scythe of the reaper shined in the oils of Lethe, chopping off heads and stealing faces. It is entirely human to be grateful of the opportunity to recognize loved ones; it is entirely necessary to ask questions of those hocking bottles of alethia.

The ouroboros: scan a body with the back-facing camera, upload to database, add to list. These technologies blow in our eyes the somnolent powder of permanent non-finality. *The spirit which stole faces later ran a successful business selling masks.*

I hope that the user-interface of Clearview’s software implementation is as follows:

Soldier holds iPhone above corpse, camera on and parallel to the ground. Small white circle begins to loop around itself over and over and over. A square frames a face. A ding! A dialog-box appears: “You have a match - Open profile.”

One could excuse said soldier for perhaps suffering an acute bout of vertigo.

1. This description of a human-machine apparatus, though commonly relegated to solely the purview of techno-fantasia both lustful and dystopian, is not fulfilling such usage here. The algorithmic calculus performed by an intelligence contained within file-systems and the human reasoning carried into board rooms and discussed on battlefields are co-creators of the vision of humanity endeavored by Clearview AI. That which identifies the face is as integral and public-facing as that which calls it “data” in a press-release. Both human and machine are co-worker, co-leader, co-maker, co-designer.