MORE THAN REALITY
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We describe innovations in terms of what they replace. Only after decades
do we come to understand the pervasive impact of new technologies on our
culture. The automobile was first the horseless carriage. It replaced the
carriage, looked like a carriage, and moved at the speed of a horse.
Decades later, the automobile has transformed our landscapes, the pace
of our travels, and our concept of space. The television replaced the radio.
Television programs were first radio programs with pictures. Decades
later, the television has transformed our evenings, the pace of our
senses, and our concepts of news and entertainment.

The computer is first a symbol processor. Although decades have
barely passed, it is transforming our concepts of information and
information processing. But the computer has yet to be understood for
what it is of itself, we still view it from the impoverished model of
what it replaces. McLuhan said that computers extend our central nervous
system. But our CNS is not a symbol processor, it is a reality generator.
The essence of the computer revolution is yet to come, computers are
essentially generators of realities. Cyberspace, virtual reality, embodies
the fundamental nature of computers, the creation of a diversity of
realities.

We have seen the shell, the narrowness of sequential computation, in
the processing of one dimensional strings of symbols. Zeros and ones.
We have seen the image, the flatness of pixel computation, in the
desktop metaphor. Icons and mouse-clicks. Now we can prepare to see
the meat, the sensory surround of situated computation, in cyberspace.
Inclusion and unconstrained realities.