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UpDate: The MGS 'Face' In A Different Light

From: **Lan Fleming** <apollo18@swbell.net>
Date: Sun, 13 Aug 2000 21:18:31 -0600
Fwd Date: Mon, 14 Aug 2000 20:28:24 -0400
Subject: UpDate: The MGS 'Face' In A Different Light

I've posted an evaluation of Mark Kelly's orthorectified "Mars Face" enhancement that Tom Van Flandern put on his web site. My evaluation is at URL:

<http://www.vgl.org/webfiles/mars/face/newface.htm>

The enhancement was intended to show what the Face would look like at the resolution of the MGS camera but at the lighting and viewing angles of the lower-resolution Viking images. The Viking images were acquired under more suitable conditions for viewing a face than the half-profile illuminated from beneath the "chin" that was actually imaged by the MGS.

While I point out in my evaluation what I see as some flaws in the enhancement, I think the overall work is valid and the result is powerful: a representation of a humanoid face that is undeniable. Based on comparisons with the Viking images, I don't see any justifiable way to jiggle the lighting or proportions of the MGS Face image in a way that could arrive at a depiction that differs significantly from the Kelly enhancement. This is not the result of digital trickery. Kelly neither added features not in the original image nor removed features that were present. The match in lighting and positions of features with the Viking images is good.

While some people will deny that this enhancement can be valid, I don't think that they will be able to say exactly why it isn't valid. No doubt, it will be claimed that it is the result of wishful thinking. That was my first reaction to it as well, and that was exactly the reason why I decided to compare it to the Viking images. But I saw no specific discrepancies that I would attribute to wishful thinking. I don't expect anyone else will be able to find any, either.

I think the Kelly enhancement may eventually have an explosive impact on public opinion. It may even motivate NASA to acquire additional images of the Face as they've promised to do, if only to refute Kelly.

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