

Roberto Gutierrez

40003920

Elio Bidinost

CART360

Critical Response: Emotional Interaction

The chapter on “Emotional Interaction” from *Interaction Design: Beyond Human Computer Interaction (3rd edition)*, explores how people emote in relation to technology. It provides, throughout, example figures meant to explain how different companies or people see emotional interaction with technology and design. These types of figures are not uncommon in textbooks relating to specific focuses, but what makes these examples interesting is how they reflect on the points being made as a whole by the chapter, in a rather cynical manner. Some of the figures can be comedic, or generally make an attempt at an emotional connection with the reader/viewer. This recalls back to an earlier point made during the chapter, which relates to how emotional connections are made by companies in an attempt to sell a product or or service to someone.

It is not difficult for one to become disillusioned and paranoid with those around oneself, when one has come to understand certain key aspects about human psychology. These aspects of Human psychology go on to have greater impact and possible repercussions when studied alongside the attempts made at creating more expressive or emotive machines, and having them interact with people. The aspects of emotional interaction discussed eventually turn to the use of emoticons and general principles of User Interface, or UI, Design. The examples presented are old and as such help to display how advancements in this have been made, things like Clippy feeling intrusive leads to the understanding that for a general UI design such things should be avoided. However this also brings to mind the idea of how this info could be used for the opposite idea. Sometimes in art and media it is fun or the goal to be intrusive and maybe even obnoxious, this can serve to send a particular message to the users and help in the conveyance of a message. This has increasingly been done in Games as of late, with some games such as Undertale or NieR:Automata making use of UI objects and pre established menu objects to convey a feeling, by messing with them and the player.

It is interesting to see how Games have changed and diverged in part from some of the principles explored in this section of the chapter. Some games have begun to explore more visually cluttered but structured UI designs in order to be more stylish and appeal to the consumers. Some of the newer design principles would have been avoided earlier due to how they can often integrate diegetic and non diegetic aspects from the world into how they are accessed and explored. One principle does remain fairly common throughout though, and it is the association of real world objects with digital equivalents.

As of late, particularly in games, the new emotional interaction is made through mechanics that subvert pre-established ideas about how things should work and look, or a further exploration of certain mechanics unique to the medium. The way certain subversions and mechanics are explored have a similar effect to the Anthropomorphism and Zoomorphism discussed in the chapter as well. More specifically the Anthropomorphism, as human qualities can be attributed to objects by designers or even Transferred to objects, and concepts by people.

Tapping into an audiences' different emotions is always a goal when working with either products or art. Anthropomorphism is a well explored concept when trying to connect people to objects, animals or products. However, as discussed earlier, it can also transfer to concepts that have no actual physical form. An example of this would be Games like NieR:Automata, and other Yoko Taro games like the predecessor. These Games make use of the save files in a way others usually don't, by incorporating them into the story in an impactful manner that makes one feel as though the save file itself has a weight, personality and meaning. There are many ways in which emotional models can be explored in new media so as to add further weight to user experiences that other mediums cannot.

There are still many ways creators and developers could explore emotional interaction between their works and audiences. What I personally look forward to most is how negative emotional experiences could be explored to create positive ones: I.e. exploration of pain and Loss to achieve empathy. This is what piques my interest more as opposed to the more common and sort of basic exploration of the use of colours and appearances to sell products, though it is hard to deny that that's how the world turns.

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