Philosophical Foundation for Interaction Design

Matthias RAUTERBERG

2014
The Tao that can be spoken of is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name.

The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth. The name is the mother of the ten thousand things.

Send your desires away and you will see the mystery. Be filled with desire and you will see only the manifestation.

REF: Lao Tzu (400 BC) translated by Tolbert McCarroll
http://www.owlnet.rice.edu/~laotzu/text/thetao.txt

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."
John 1:1-5
The Four Causes

Aristotle [384 – 322 BC]

Charles Darwin [1809–1882]

Carl Jung [1809–1882]

Francis Bacon [1561–1626]

physics

meta-physics

By / Efficient

Into / Formal

For / Final

From / Material

"archetypes as universal forms"
From Descartes till Today

René DESCARTES  
[1596-1650]  

Karl POPPER  
[1902-1994]  

John ECCLES  
[1903-1997]  

res cogitans  -  mind  
res extensa  -  body, matter, etc  

about 350 years later…

World-3: knowledge in objective sense  
World-2: states of consciousness  
World-1: physical objects and states
Kant, requires that we frame the epistemological problem in an entirely different way. The crucial question is not how we can bring ourselves to understand the world, but how the world comes to be understood by us.

**Analytic a priori** judgments include all merely logical truths and straightforward matters of definition; they are necessarily true.

**Synthetic a priori** judgments are the crucial case, since only they could provide new information that is necessarily true.

REF: Kant, I. (1781) Kritik der reinen Vernunft.
Flores and Winograd (1990) illustrate the ‘thrown-ness’:

“When giving a lecture, you are in a situation that
(I) you cannot avoid acting (doing nothing is also an action);
(II) you cannot step back and reflect on your actions;
(III) the effects of actions cannot be predicted;
(IV) you do not have a stable representation of the situation;
(V) every representation you have of the ‘situation’ is an interpretation;
(VI) you cannot handle facts neutrally; you are creating the situation you
are in”.

Dorst characterizes engineering as design activities as ‘thrown’ into a design ‘situation’.

A design situation based on ‘thrownness’, is a typical situation characterized by

(1) no possibility for ‘reflection’ (see (I), (II), and (V)), and
(2) no stable and predictable reality (see (III), (IV), and (VI)).

The designer creates and synthesizes the situation while he/she is acting in it.

The Reflective Practitioner

Donald SCHON [1930-1997]

Concrete experience [1]

Observation and reflection [2]

Forming abstract concepts [3]

Testing in new situations [4]

How to achieve ‘Reflective Competence’?

REF: Courtesy of Will Taylor, Department of Homeopathic Medicine, National College of Natural Medicine, Portland, Oregon, USA, March 2007
Reflections through the God’s Eye View

• The “God’s eye view” is based on the fundamental distinction between:
  
  • God versus the World
  • Perceiver versus Perceived
  • Subject versus Object
  • Meta-Physics versus Physics

This is the standard view in Science!
The Cartesian Anxiety

The Primacy of ...

1600

R. Descartes

1900

M. Merleau-Ponty

2000

Paul Dourish

- perception
- action
- cognition
- emotion

/ industrial design ■ designed intelligence
So, what’s left after Descartes?

Decrease the “God’s Eye View” perspective.

Increase the “First Person View” perspective.

Connect with the environment through action.

Find a proper balance between all three.
Phenomenology

“Humans do not see and act on the physical qualities of things, but on what they mean to them.”

Designing Systems from Inside Out!

System boundaries

Norbert WIENER [1894 – 1964]

Gregory BATESON [1904-1980]

Margaret MEAD [1901-1978]

What we need is Conscious Design!

'aware': knowing about relationships, facts, etc.

‘responsible’: being committed to action of ethical value

Our Future lies in OUR hands…
The End

Leci n'est pas une pipe.