ETHICS IN DESIGN

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It's meaningful to have an overview of the impact of the designer's actions as rule builders. Placing an object into a context has an implicit authority. The ideology printed in a design will drive the interaction that will happen through its use and the context where it is placed.

We usually have the belief that because of our knowledge in design practice we are the most prepared persons to design itself, but no rule that we, as a society, have built, is fundamental and true. These rules depend on many factors: society, personal beliefs, or economic interests, but none of them are purely true.

The act of designing is a tool to reinforce or change realities. Landscapes full of material and non-material props generate narratives, and ways of seeing the fundamental act of living. People, generally speaking, understand designers as actors that build realities by translating ideas to actualities that will take a part within landscapes.

According to Cambridge's dictionary, translating is the act of changing words into a different language or form. This definition has the potential to interpret what is a language. If we consider design as a tool to create realities and material cultures, it can be seen as a formal language that allows people to interact, and understand the world. Linguistic and abstract languages can also be material ones.

The ethics inside the proposition of understanding materiality as a language are many and complex. If there is no rule that is objective how can we be sure that our designs are "good"?– We cannot. that is the uncertainty that designers have to question and remodel during their design process.

Artifacts morality

It's important to define the relationship between human beings and reality. To make connections and links between entities, we use mediators. Mediators are rarely not technological: the line between nature and technology is getting increasingly diffuser. Artifacts play a fundamental role in the constitution of realities. If we think about the metallurgical development, we see the change in people's realities. Back then, new perceptions emerged from daily life to even war planning.

Possibilities emerge from materiality that helps people to choose and make decisions by enhancing ones and narrowing others. Artifacts have a dual reality—are hybrid objects–designing those artifacts is a moral act: the action of translating ideas into materiality. Does this implicate that all the artifacts that had been used for fatal finals are designed with this purpose?

Designers cannot control all the possibilities that appear when an artifact is released in a context. This is why designers should develop methodologies for researching the ethical

implications of their design activities, and try to cover as many possible stabilities that the artifact could accomplish as they could.

Speculative design as a research tool for ethical implications

Speculative design is a practice that has been developed more in the last years and I find it a tool to speculate about future and ethical implications of technology. I've been talking about the realities that artifacts can create and the decisions we can take. The possibilities that technology opens up can be called, according to Ihde, "multistability". One of the problems related to ethical implications is that they often reflect on them after the design is finished.

Speculating is based on imagination (Dunne & Raby, 2013) and through this, we can imagine alternatives for the future. It's not thinking about new kinds of products, but about ethics or social beliefs. Speculative design outputs help us to understand the complexity and the interconnections that human artifacts can have in the future while experimenting with them.

Ethics implications in my design practice

In my practice, I try to design through the estrangement of the things that we have surrounded us and question, first, the main narrative that we are living through things, and second, the new realities that these weird objects *(technologies)* can build.

Prostheses were used in many ways during history. The common definition of protheses relates to the replacement of a missing body part with an artificial one. We can say that missing body parts could be parts that we hadn't intrinsically in us but that we need to interact with the context. With this assessment, we can reconsider the prosthetic limits. Is a knife a prosthetic object? In that sense, are not all objects prostheses?

we can find a subject-object relationship implicit in the conception of prosthetics. The subject becomes bigger and other experiences also become reachable to him thanks to the object that ultimately, is absorbed by the body becoming one with the subject. When we displace this conception into what we consider "technological artifacts"—like chips or sensors—and we start to reproduce the prosthetic meaning, we lose the agency of these artifacts. We tend to shape technology into us when the reality is that this technology shapes us in a deep sense.

One implication coming from becoming one with the prosthetic is that we embody a new reality. We no longer identify ourselves without the artifact. We stop perceiving the *otherness* of the artifact.

Through my practice, I implant human common prosthetics in regular machines to provoke an uncanny feeling in the user. The perception of *otherness* in objects generates a dialogue between this technology and the person in which the technology is no longer conceived as a product but as an entity.

The gestures that we have to perform to interact with the artifacts are about care and recognition of the other and ourselves. Do humans gain more or less control of their lives? I tried to give humans a meaningful interaction with the artifacts that surround them, artifacts that are linked to the interaction to answer properly. In a sense, humans gain more control and attention to their relationships but less control over the objects.

My project's values are freedom, autonomy, and curiosity. As it is an exploration of the relations between humans and technology, is not thought of as a commercial one but as the development of design methodologies that help designers to challenge the commercial and linear narratives inside the technology paradigm.

My project's best-case scenario is related to the explorations in this methodology and the objects that I've been developing as meaningful and helpful for other designers. In the worst-case scenario, the methodology application does not awaken anything in the sector and the objects become weird gadgets inside the market as short-term designs.

I tried to apply the concepts that I mentioned above in the project and I tried to make them explicit within its materiality, using coercive influence as the function and seductive with the aesthetic. As we saw, the design seeks to influence behaviors in a particular way, so why not display this influence radically to see better its possibilities and ethical constraints?

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