

Facets of Fun – Babbling Incoherently? Personal Reflections

The Reflective Practitioner

Still, both my own integrity and the scientific practice requires me to try and analyze the pros and cons of the methods I propose, as well as the outcome of the projects, which has been done in each facet respectively. This has been an introvert process. In this, I and other designers can be classified with the pertinent words of Donald Schön (1983); we are .reflective practitioners.. Schön discusses the current positivistic view of technical rationality, saying that it is focused on problem solving whereas it ignores the aspect of problem setting, which he describes as .the process by which we define the decision to be made, the ends to be achieved, the means which may be chosen. (p 40), claiming that in the real world, problems are not clear textbook problems with all matters defined; they are puzzling, multi-faceted and sometimes hard to distinguish and delimit. The process of doing this is what Jones (1992) (see footnote) refers to when he talks about the designer as a self-organizing system. In doing this, the designer is reflecting-in-action; he or she is .learning by doing. or is .feeling the way about. or is engaging in .trial-in-error.. All of these activities demand that the designer is alert, analyzing, open-minded and ready to act on whatever the analysis results in. Since I see myself as a reflective practitioner, the cases in this book can be seen as descriptions of my (and my colleagues) conscious reflections made in the action of designing whatever was to be designed. By making these reflections the chosen design tool is analyzed and evaluated too, in the same way.

Being a Designer – a Matter of Art, Skill or just Having the Right Neurosis?

It is my true belief that design is not science. To me, design is a skill, closer to art than to engineering⁶⁹. Jones (1992, p. 45 - 57) speaks of three ways to regard the designer. The designer can be seen as a magician or a black box; demands are input and via various magic processes an output in the form of a design is created; this is the creativity-oriented view. A rational viewpoint is that the designer is instead a glass box, through which the way the input is processed to output is clearly viewable, being an explained, logical, rational process. And last but not least, the designer can be seen as .a self organizing system. that is capable of finding ways through the unknown territory of each new design task. Personally, I believe that no design⁶⁹ Jones (1992) claims it to be an even mixture of art, science and mathematics process ever can be carried through without at least one magic, unexplainable black box spark. Jones describes this creative spark in wonderful way, saying:

.Perhaps it is not so much a question of being creative or uncreative but of being blessed or cursed with the right blend of experience and neurosis to be able and willing to resolve the particular kind of conflict that exists within a given design situation..

John Chris Jones – Design Methods (1992), p 47

My point here is that even though the tools described in the upcoming facets can be seen as ways to support glass-box design and self-organizing designer systems, all of them contain elements of black box design. Thus the projects and tools described below are not absolute recipes and certainly not the absolute truth; they are meant to be inspiration. Use whatever you ideas you like, tweak them, twist them, and turn them upside down if you believe that will aid your design process. And let me know how it worked!

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footnote: Jones (1992) claims it to be an even mixture of art, science and mathematics