Prazerosa – Interactive Reading Chair

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ABSTRACT

This article describes how to promote reading amongst children, changing the focus on the languages traditionally involved in the print, to the reading environment and adding other interactive languages, has led to the invention of: “Prazerosa – Interactive Reading Chair”. The intention is to generate a peculiar reading environment, an immersive one, created through interactivity. The reader already constructs in his imagination, when reading a book, to real sensations felt through his body, vary accordingly with the narrative’s characteristics. This article is started by describing a possible interaction between reader and Prazerosa. After which, it will lay all the paths taken regarding aesthetics, literature, mechanics, electronics and computation, to arrive to the desired immersive reading environment. This approach combines the interactive and virtual between the reader, the visual languages present in the book, and the machinery and luminosity of languages introduced by Prazeroza.

KEYWORDS
Augmented Reality, Book, Immersion, Interactivity, Literature, Reading Environment, Reading Promotion, Virtual Reality

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is mainly a solitary act. A sui generis dialogue is established between the reader and the book, joining the author’s creativity with the reader’s imaginary, on a share from witch emotions and knowledge emerge. However, reading and the taste for reading is not something inborn. As it is common knowledge, sometimes all it takes is a positive experience in the reading act, and the reading bug will stay with you for life.

The intention with the artefact Prazerosa as seen in figure 1, while instigating the youngsters’ curiosity for its use, is to make that moment something remarkable in their career as readers (Poslaniec, 2004, p. 18) or as future readers through an unparalleled reading experience. Furthermore, by not changing the paper book format trivial task nowadays by digitalizing it and posterior increase of interactivity), but by providing a very special and unique immersive reading environment, it is explicit the desire to maximize the interaction between the traditional book and its reader.

A possible interaction scenario: let’s imagine Prazerosa in a corner, of a common space for books, in a library or a book store. The chair is in a “refusal” position, unreachable: backwards and very high.

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Figure 1. Logo (by Ana Marques)

Can be assumed as an evidence of a sad expression, but at the same time haughty (metaphorically speaking). A potential reader enters the space. Chooses one of the books prepared for the interaction and gets closer to Prazerosa, the light in the room changes; Prazerosa trembles lightly, starts a rotation motion until it faces the reader; comes down and once arrived to its lower position, invites the reader to its lap, flashing the reading light; the reader accepts the invitation and sits down. Prazerosa thanks by slightly leaning back and climbing, climbing, climbing… until the haughty position is once again reached; inclines a bit more offering the reader a privileged, very comfortable, pleasurable position; the space lighting adjusts again; the reading light is turned on, adapting to the reading act. The reader can start, everything is ready for him/her to enjoy an immersive reading experience. In the course of the reading, page by page, according with the visual language (illustration, iconography and photography) of the book, the reader will feel in his/her body the machinery and lighting languages. While leaving the installation space, he/she is faced with books from the same collection or the same author, exposed on a small table, in order to arouse his/her interest in reading after that immersive experience, even without Prazerosa, in another space, for example at home.

In the next sections, the process leading to this “possible interaction” of the child reader with this media-art digital installation will be described.

2. CONCEPT AND TECHNOLOGY

In the genesis of this innovative device is our desire to create a very peculiar, immersive, unique reading environment that leads children to read. It will be through the media convergence of the Transmedia Narrative (TN) and the Augmented Reality, of the resulting interactivity, that we will try to create this sensation of immersion in the reader.

To what the reader already constructs in his imaginary when reading a book, real sensations will be added, felt through his body, making the reader virtually part of the story. These sensations are pursued through the use of interactive movements – rotation, elevation, tilt – and also with the environment light modulation which the chair will provide accordingly with the narrative. Thus, in that reading, depending on the story, the rhythm, Prazerosa will try itself to participate in the narrative, exuberating and metamorphosing the readers feel, adding up machinery and light languages to the visual ones already present on the book (text and illustrations).
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