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MUSIC 256A

Chapter 3 Reading Response

I love reading this book. When I was younger, I played a lot of games on my phone (I still do!), and these games included many Smule apps. I played Smule Ocarina for a time, so it is fascinating to read Ge’s process, and all of the thought that went into designing the app. One thing’s for sure – Ge definitely practices what he preaches. Principle 3.7 states “Prompt users to experience *substance* (not technology),” and I really think Ge accomplished this in Ocarina. Never once did I, as the user, think about how the app was built, what went into the design, or who was behind the app I was using. I simply experienced playing an ocarina (terribly, I might add!). When reading about how each button is multiple circles layered on top of each other, each with its own animation and style, that blew my mind. The design of these simple buttons is so good, it never occurred to me that this was anything *but* a button, which is exactly what I think he was going for. I can’t even imagine how much time Ge spent designing this button, how many iterations he went through, and most users will never even give it a second thought, but *that’s the point*, and I think that’s super cool to think about. I also think the buttons were a big reason I liked the game, and played more than one game, because those buttons were satisfying to touch and play with. I believe that this was Ge’s goal, and he nailed it. However, while this is all interesting, it also sort of cast a shadow over the idea of design – when looking at designing in this context, you realize that being a designer must be a thankless job, especially if the designer is good, because her ultimate job must be to hide her work as much as possible, and purposefully spend time making sure nobody will realize how great her work is.

One other thing I wanted to discuss is Zeno’s Dichotomy “Paradox”. This is not the first time I’ve seen this idea, but every time, I hate it. I think Ge explained it really well, and I now have a better handle on the concepts, but I think the overarching idea is pointless. Yes it’s true that if you traveled from point A to point B by constantly only walking half the distance you had left, you *theoretically* might not ever reach point B. However, as we all know, this is never the case, because that’s not how the physical world works. This is not to say we shouldn’t study it and dissect the ideas presented, but at the end of the day, Achilles *will* catch up to and surpass the turtle, and you will reach your destination, no matter how you try to get there. I did, however, *really* enjoy this line of thinking when discussing the arrow. Theoretically, nothing is ever moving, which is wild to me. True, that this is also not how the real world works, but I think it’s so much more interesting and important than travelling half distances. How am I even typing right now, if I can’t move? This, unlike Zeno’s “paradox”, seems like a true paradox to me, and something that I would truly love to hear more about.