Two by Brenda Laurel

The 6 Elements and Casual Relations Among Them

Star Raiders: Dramatic Interaction in a Small World
The 6 Elements and the Casual Relations Among Them

Can human-computer interaction be considered a drama?

Laurel says yes.

This excerpt Aristotle’s Poetics guide lines for a beautiful drama to compare the parts of HCI to those of drams.

Aristotle says that a drama in an Organic Whole, to say that it is a collection of necessary components.
The SIX ELEMENTS

- Action
- Character
- Thought
- Language
- Pattern
- Enactment
Spectacle – Is the sensory output of both drama and HCI and traditionally is audio and visual. Though there are several examples of stimulation of the other sensory functions of tactile, taste, and smell. This is why spectacle is not only visual. These sensory phenomena are the building blocks of drama and HCI.
The perception of patterns is pleasurable for humans. In drama this mostly comes from auditory melody of speech. In computer interaction this pattern can take place with visual and other sensory pleasing arrangements.
The expression of thought through words is diction. The HCI expresses itself from its own language of icons, menus, alert sounds, and animation sequences.
Thoughts are the internal unseen processing of external inputs. A character’s thoughts are implied by their actions, the same is expressed through a computer’s output and carried out by its programming.
Characters or agents are representations of the actions. You can have a drama with no characters as long as there is an action. And even though it seems as if the characters are in control of their actions, truly their actions are only there to show the action. Computers also are agents of actions.
The action is the collection of the whole. A drama is an object made up of incidents that are structurally related to one another. A drama represents an action. A good action is not so long that you forget the beginning. It is pleasing to people to know an end to an action.
A beautiful drama or interaction is when the organic whole works well together like a being.
Star Raiders
Developed in 1979 for Atari by Douglas Neubauer
Traditional Drama Structure of Star Raiders

- Exposition – scanning of galactic chart
- Rising action – encounters Zylon ship
- Crisis – threat to star bases
- Climax – moment when outcome determined
- Denouement – action from climax till finale
- Conclusion – star fleet rating message