

A Study on Symmetrical and Asymmetrical Design in Media Communication

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ABSTRACT: Symmetry and asymmetry are present in both technology and relative world. For past many years, focus seems to be more on supporting and fostering symmetries in every facet of working functionalities. This research paper will emphasise on symmetrical and asymmetrical use of design in media communications. The paper will unwrap the different forms of symmetry and asymmetry present in both media and contemporary awareness system. The uses of the different compositions are also described under website, game design, photography, communications and poster colors level. From this paper, it can be understood that proper emphasize on media space will embody multiple forms of asymmetry and does so work in response to unique needs of media communication.

KEYWORDS: Symmetry, asymmetry, media, design, communication

I. INTRODUCTION

In any realm of space, there is symmetry as well as asymmetry whether it is proposition of a flower or a constructive system of dynamics. There is a balance present in both technology and in the ways technology is appropriated. Finding the proper balance in any creation is an essential part of building quality visual communication. If your design is out of balance, the actual message can get lost in the process. Hence, the key element of communication is balance. The key elements, proportion and hierarchy suffer primarily in the process of achieving balance. But before we jump onto how they get impacted, it is important to know the several types of balance available in nature and in compositions.

In general, there are two ways to model human relationships in software. An “asymmetric” model is how Twitter currently works. You can “follow” someone else without them following you back. It’s a one-way relationship that may or may not be mutual.

Facebook, on the other hand, has always used a “symmetric” model, where each time you add someone as a friend they have to add you as a friend as well. This is a two-way relationship, and it is required to have any relationship at all. So as a Facebook user there is always a 1-1 relationship among your friends. Everyone who you have claimed as a friend has also claimed you as a friend (Porter, 2009).

An asymmetric model allows for more types of relationships. I think the benefits go further than that. I think that the asymmetric model better mimics how real attention works...and how it has always worked. Any person using Twitter can have a larger number of followers than followees, effectively giving them more attention than they give. This attention inequality is the foundation of the Twitter service. Note that this is a structural concern of the software, not just a philosophical leaning. The information architecture (IA) of the Twitter service was designed in such a way to do this from the start. The IA of Facebook does not allow this. In a similar way the structure of a building determines the activity of those who enter it, the structure of social networking software determines the activity of those who use it. And from these initial, structural decisions the future of the services are, at least partially, determined (Porter, 2009).

By understanding the basic types of balance, one can easily define the communication process. Even though if a media composition is following asymmetrical design, it can still benefit by focusing on some dominating elements and enhancing the weak ones.

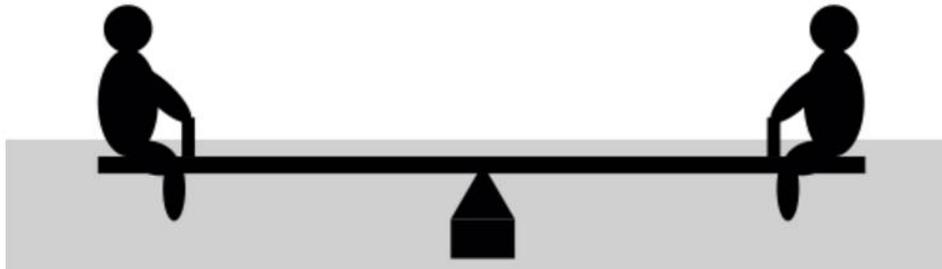
Balance is available in every facet of life, whether it is physical being or a composition. Assume that two people of equal weight and size are sitting on each corner of a seesaw. The following image appears to be in balance as they are at equal distance from each other and same proportion (Bradley, 2015).

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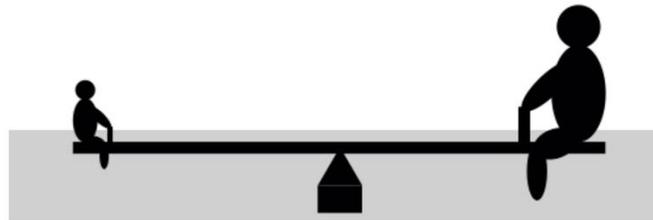
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On the other hand, if one of the people is much bigger, the seesaw will be out of balance. However, if we know that the other person is bigger than the first but if the larger person slid in toward the centre then the seesaw will be at balance again. The force of larger person is reduced by being closer to fulcrum (Bradley, 2015).



Unbalanced seesaw.



Asymmetrically balanced seesaw.

II. TYPES OF BALANCE

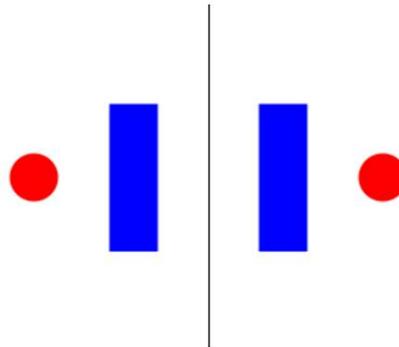
There are four ways to balance a composition. The first one is the example of symmetrical balance. A symmetrical balance occurs when equal weights are on equal sides. A wedding invitation is the perfect balance of symmetrical balance. The downside of this composition is that it's boring. The half of the composition mirrors the other half and it becomes difficult to change anything. In symmetrical website, everything reflects around a vertical axis down the centre page. The logo, navigation bar, circular images, heading, three columns are centred. These kinds of websites are pleasing to eye, further increasing the attraction of these elements (Bradley, 2015).

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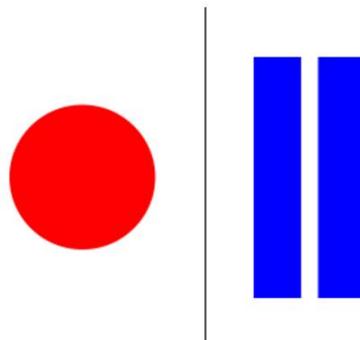
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Symmetrical balance.

Asymmetrical balance comes from unequal visual weight on each side. One side might be dominating whereas the remaining might have lesser focal points. This balance is more interesting as compared to the previous one. It evokes feeling of dynamism, vitality and energy. The mass of the asymmetrical webpage is a large rectangle that's composed of a grid of smaller rectangular images. It feels very strong and stable. Overall, it's very balanced and looks like it's not going anywhere (Bradley, 2015).



Asymmetrical balance.

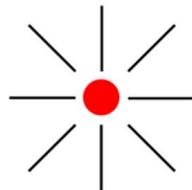
Next is radial balance. As the name suggests, the element radiates from a common centre. In this type of balance, maintaining a focal point is easy because it's always in the centre. There is a strong point of attraction as everything radiates from centre and leads to centre. In the radial based website, everything revolves around the centre of the page, as the three rings of image rotate around the centre circle (Bradley, 2015).

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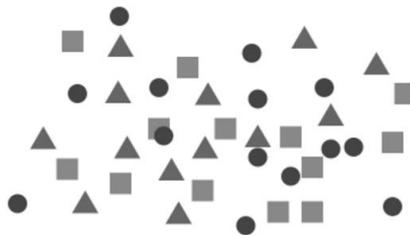
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Radial balance.

Lastly, Mosaic balance results from a balanced chaos. The abstract paintings are best example of mosaic balance. Though it lacks distinct focal points and elements share a uniform emphasis, but somehow it all works together. Content heavy websites such as news and magazine websites exhibit mosaic balance as well. You might recognize the home page to be all over the place and isn't symmetrical (Bradley, 2015).



Mosaic balance.

III. USES OF SYMMETRICAL AND ASYMMETRICAL DESIGN IN VARIOUS MEDIA SOURCES

WEBSITE – Most of the traditional designs symmetrical layouts works well as it feels balanced and unthreatening. One such example of symmetrical website design is Apple. Their website is known for creating beauty through simplicity. To attain a harmonious look of symmetry a balance of color, design and picture is required in websites. However, there are sports brands which use asymmetrical layouts to draw eyes where they want to be; mostly call to action. Though there is asymmetry in the designs but it easily conveys movement. Both Nike and Gatorade use asymmetrical designs for their logos.

A psychologist Edward Bulloch conducted an experiment about visual weight using buckets of paint. Subjects were given one bucket of red paint and another of pink. Standing in front of a 10 foot wall that was divided horizontally, they were told to paint each half of the wall a different color. Practically all the participants painted pink on top and red at the bottom. Pink is visually lighter and painting it below the heavy red looks unnatural. Keep in mind red is the heaviest color, then blue, next green, and finally yellow (Harper, 2016).

So, when we design it is vital to consider not only functions but also feelings. Symmetry attracts customers, makes user feel balanced and focuses movement, whereas results of asymmetrical design is opposite.

GAME DESIGN – The most suitable example of symmetrical game design is tic-tac-toe. To familiarize you with the game, both players have the same actions available to them, with the ability to fill any of the empty squares with their

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symbol. Because both players have identical goals and affordances, this game completely depicts symmetry in every facet. The only imbalance is deciding which player will go first, as it gives them advantage.

On the other hand, asymmetrical games give different players different possible moves or different goals to win. On the simple side of things, the board game risk does this when played by the mission rules. Here players have the same kinds of moves, but they have different goals.

It should be obvious that designing an asymmetrical game is quite a challenge. Despite our mathematical models of predicted value, it is impossible to say how important each category really is for victory. But nowadays asymmetry is preferred in games as compared to symmetry and set patterns. Children nowadays love to play games which infuse critical thinking and out of the shape characters. Therefore, the only way to find balance is to playtest and see what players do. As soon as one character shows a clear domination, we change the attributes (Ganon, 2009).

PHOTOGRAPHY – A balanced photograph often allows the viewer’s eye to be drawn throughout the image equally, without resting too heavily on one certain aspect of the image. Photographs that are improperly balanced are often less appealing to look at, especially if the ‘heavier’ part of the image lies too far left or right. Symmetry is achieved in photographs when both sides of image hold equal weight. Each photograph is equally balanced if split down the middle, yet one is literally symmetrical and the other uses different elements of the composition to appear symmetrical. On the other hand, asymmetrical balance is a bit more difficult to achieve. The more you are consciously aware of asymmetrical balance in your own personal compositions, the easier it will become in your daily practice. Many professional photographers prefer asymmetrical balance due to the complexity of the image. When an image is symmetrically balanced, that symmetry is initially obvious to the viewer. However, when an image is asymmetrically balanced, the viewer must spend a little more time looking at the image to realize fact (Academy, 2014).

COMMUNICATIONS – The most important part of communication is message. The original meaning of message should not be distorted while communicating. Some researchers do simple exercises with clients to know the rhythm patterns, symmetrical design, and asymmetrical design. Below is an exercise to communicate emotion through design using lines.

How to use lines to communicate emotion (more examples):

ACTIVE	PASSIVE	STRUCTURAL BOLD, STRONG	NONSTRUCTURAL FLUID, SOFT	IN MOTION	NONRATIONAL, CASUAL RELATED, INTERESTING HUMAN	ERGATIC, FLAMBOYANT CHARTIC, COMPLEX	LOGICAL PLANNED, ORDERLY
STABLE	UNSTABLE	STABLE	UNSTABLE	FLOWING, ROLLING	FORMAL, PRECISELY INFERNAL, DOGMATIC	RISING, OPTIMISTIC SUCCESSFUL, HAPPY	FALLING, PESSIMISTIC DEFEATED, DEPRESSED
POSITIVE BOLD, FORCEFUL	TENUOUS UNCERTAIN, WEAKENING	THE HORIZONTAL MOBILE, DRAMATIC, RESPONSIVE, OPENING	THE HORIZONTAL EARTHLY, CALM, STANDARD, SATISFIED	INDECISIVE, WEAK	PROGRESSIVE	REGRESSIVE	RISE ATTAINMENT BOLD, HAPPY SUPPORTIVE
PRIMITIVE SIMPLE, BOLD	EFFUSIVE	FLAMBOYANT	REFINED	INDIRECT, FLOODING	CONCENTRATING, ASSEMBLING	DISPERSING, FLEEING	HIDDEN INTERRUPTED, REVERSED
JAGGED, BRUTAL HARD, UNWELCOMING MACHINE, PICTURESQUE	CROWN-LIKE, TENDER SOFT, FLOWING FORMING, BEAUTIFUL	ROUGH, RASPING GRATING	SMOOTH SWELLING, SLIDING	DIRECT, SURE FORCEFUL, WITH PURPOSE	OPPOSING	CONNECTING, CROSSING	PARALLEL OPPOSING WITH HARMONY
INCREASING CONTRACTING	INCREASING EXPANDING	DYNAMIC	STATIC FOCAL, FIXED	EXCITED, NERVOUS JITTERY	OPPOSING WITH PRECISION	OVERLAPPING, DRIVING	GROWING, DEVELOPING

For most of the complete and most reoccurring emotions, symmetrical lines are used whereas for distorted feelings asymmetrical designs are used to convey the message properly. It comes as natural when communicating frustration, sadness and anger as there are more asymmetrical lines than symmetrical. But communication is balance of both, symmetry and asymmetry (Lindsay, 2016).

COLORS – There is no escaping color and moods. Colors often have different meanings in various cultures. Distinct color depicts diverse moods, compositions and meaning. Black is the color of authority and power. It is popular in fashion because it makes people appear thinner. It is also stylish and timeless. Black also implies submission. The color

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white reflects light and is considered a summer color and is popular in decorating for fashion. The most emotionally intense color, red stimulates a faster heartbeat and breathing. It is also the color of love. Red clothing gets noticed and makes the wearer appear heavier. Since it is an extreme color, red clothing might not help people in negotiations or confrontations. The color of the sky and the ocean, blue is one of the most popular colors. It causes the opposite reaction as red. Because of its symmetry it is often used in bedrooms.

While blue is one of the most popular colors it is one of the least appetizing. Blue food is rare in nature. Food researchers say that when humans searched for food, they learned to avoid toxic or spoiled objects, which were often blue, black, or purple. When food dyed blue is served to study subjects, they lose appetite. Green, brown, and red are the most popular food colors. Red is often used in restaurant decorating schemes because it is an appetite stimulant and ensures symmetry (Johnson, 2000-2017).

POSTERS – A successful composition means that you have arranged, distributed, aligned and compiled your design in a way that not only looks good but is also highly functional and effective. Whether you're communicating an idea, some information, or simply a feeling or emotion, your design is telling a specific story, so be sure to choose a focal point that helps this story get told in the strongest, most effective way. A common use of leading lines in a poster is that you might be familiar with is within flowcharts. Flowcharts use lines to direct your eye from one point to the next in an obvious way. Leading lines can also guide you to various tiers or points of information. Of course, not every design created will have such obvious lines to adjust to direct viewpoint, but this doesn't mean you're up the creek with no paddle. Find shapes and lines within images and graphic elements and use them to direct the eye in certain ways (Stribley, 2015).

IV. SCOPE

However, every reader gets away with not reading every post without much notice, but the expectations and obligations may not be symmetrical. The activity of looking at something attractive is a continuous process of learning and a part of human nature.

In some situations, asymmetric communications is not satisfactory. An example is two-way, full-motion videoconferencing, in which broadband data must flow in two directions between two end users. Another example is File Transfer Protocol (FTP) applications in which the volume of upstream data is considerable. For communications of this type, broadband cable modem, optical fiber, or broadband wireless Internet access is available in some locations. At the time of this writing, symmetric broadband is not generally available outside of metropolitan areas.

V. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have made following contributions:

- We have identified several types of balance, forms of symmetry and asymmetry.
- We have also identified uses of symmetry and asymmetry in distinct types of media communication – website, game design, communications, posters and colors.

Asymmetries can be a valuable part in the media and designs and they ought to be explored alongside symmetries as a part of active design space of collaborative system

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