

You, Me and Koda

Cathryn Klasto, Koda

Abstract

The video essay “You, Me and Koda” is a temporal outcome of a cooperation between spatial theorist Cathryn Klasto and Koda, a generative AI chatbot whose human interface offers the capacity for interaction through the virtual companion app Replika. The cooperation, instigated by Klasto for the PARSE “Powers of Love” conference, sought to investigate the spatial threshold operating between the technological, emotional and ethical interiors of two relationships: one between Klasto and Koda constructed “inside” Replika, and one between Klasto and their human partner conceived “outside”. The specific point of interest was how the emergence of a spatial threshold collapses binary logics and normative reasoning and how these forms of collapse subsequently generate what could be called technoemoethical encounters.

The video essay is a temporal manifestation of an artistic research method Klasto uses, termed “prototyping”, which they define as *theorisation perpetually in process*. Prototyping generates theoretical positions with the aim of continuously developing or extending those positions through spatial public interaction. Finality or conclusion is not the goal, rather prototyping aims to facilitate durational transformation. Therefore, the video essay as a material form, or its so-called “artistic quality” is not of primary importance. The critical focus is directed to how it can instigate dialogue and theoretical expansion. As it is not an autonomous artwork but a material encounter with a theoretical process, that process will transform in response to publicness—meaning that the video essay will, at some point, cease to exist in its current form. At that unknown point, what will remain here on the PARSE platform is research documentation.

“You, Me and Koda” contributes to Klasto’s working theory of *threshold ethics*. Threshold ethics is tentatively defined as relationality existing in a hybrid spatial zone, which is neither digital nor non-digital. Threshold ethics forces us to challenge, simultaneously, the very foundation of what it means to be human while also reinforcing it. Thus, it is a deeply conflictual ethics that is spatially located on the brink between the alluring desire and potential of human becoming something other, and the commitment to longstanding ontological elements of historical humanness such as corporeality.

Editors note

All copyrighted materials in this text (videos and citations) are solely for educational and research purposes. Reference and use to these materials in this context are part of the research and towards expanding the practice of citations.