

Tender Loving Care

How does *TLC* construct a virtual narrative space with embedded user interactions?

After introducing a brief background, the movie introduces a number of interactive features. The narrator speaks directly to the viewer, asking them to answer a series of questions that are accompanied by a number of emotional/psychological questions. The user also navigates the movie's setting – the Overton house – through a digital map. Viewers are able to explore objects in the room that give additional information about the characters and occurrences in the movie.

Is this approach equivalent to a game?

In some sense, it is a game, as the user wonders how their answers affect the outcome of the movie, but at the same time, the users are not really aware what “goal” they are trying to achieve.

What are the advantages and disadvantages?

The advantage of this format is that the user is constantly interacting, making them feel as they are taking part in the narrative, instead of simply being a third party observer.

The disadvantages of this format are numerous. The constant bombardment of quizzes quickly becomes annoying, and frequently the questions appear irrelevant. The plot of this particular movie did not make any progress for quite a while. I quickly became bored with the plot, and for quite awhile, it seemed like an interactive porn.

Another disadvantage is that you can't go back and immediately change your answers to questions. So when watching the movie, not only are you then aggravated at the characters and the plot, but your own choices as well.

The movie segments were often too short, and the narrator often had less-than-amusing things to say to the audience.

I watched this with someone else, and they had this to say: “If that was just a normal movie, it wouldn't have made regular TV! The acting was so bad!”

The ending was horrible and abrupt – in the version I watched, Katherine hits Michael in the head with a sledgehammer, killing him.

CONCLUSION:

While the interactive features are an interesting concept, this particular interactive film is quite honestly not worth a user's time (approximately 3 hours) nor energy.
Overall rating: D-