

Why Do We Play Digital Games? Anthropological-philosophical- pedagogical Aspects

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ABSTRACT:

This study focuses on aspects of media pedagogy and philosophical anthropology in digital games and seeks to answer the question as to why we play digital games. Digital play is viewed as an aesthetic and cultural phenomenon according to I. Kant's Analytic of the Beautiful and is interpreted, analysed, and compared with the anthropological dimension of play. According to I. Kant, the main element of beauty is disinterested liking. Digital games have been observed in such a judgment of taste. We will observe the phenomenon of play based on I. Kant's understanding of the aesthetic concept of play and C. Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology. The paper presents the phenomenon of play from the aspect of aesthetic pedagogy, but also asks why we like games and what is aesthetic in them that causes pleasure. The aim of this study is to analyse the phenomenon of games from the context of digital games and to show how different anthropological, philosophical, and pedagogical aspects mutually complement and intertwine. The research question of why we play digital games opens the possibility for new reflections and understandings of the world of games, the concept of beauty and the meaning of games for humans. The complexity and multidimensionality of the game phenomenon is also observed according to E. Morin's aesthetics in which the artistic and aesthetic dimension of digital play is discussed. The concept of play is philosophically relevant, and through the study we approach J. Huizinga's aspect of the seriousness of culture and E. Fink's play of the world. In the aspects of social life such as metaphors and imagination, play imposes itself as communication. The true character of the game is manifested in the self-pleasure of relieving the individual, but also in the imagination and beauty that the game provides. The game, as such, represents an aesthetic attitude towards life and it is at its core an imitation in the space of the imaginary.

KEY WORDS:

digital game, game aesthetics, game structure, game world, media pedagogy.

Introduction

Digital games are often associated with entertainment, leisure, youth, and subculture. But they are much more than just fun, free time and stereotypes about introverted individuals who spend hours and days in dark rooms with headphones. Digital games are studied from an interdisciplinary aspect: anthropology,¹ philosophy,² theology,³ psychology,⁴

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- 1 PFEILSTETTER, R.: Gamifying Anthropological Theory Teaching. Critique, Learning and the Video Game Civilization. In *Disparidades. Revista de Antropología*, 2020, Vol. 75, No. 2, p. 5. [online]. [2022-11-03]. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.3989/dra.2020.016>>; GOLUB, A.: The Anthropology of Virtual Worlds: World of Warcraft. In *Reviews in Anthropology*, 2014, Vol. 43, No. 2, p. 142.; MALABY, T. M.: Digital Gaming, Game Design and Its Precursors. In HORST, H. A., MILLER, D. (eds.): *Digital Anthropology*. 1st Edition. London : Routledge, 2012, p. 302.
 - 2 KŁOSIŃSKI, M.: Games and Utopia. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2018, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 12.
 - 3 DE WILDT, L., AUPERS, S.: Playing the Other: Role-Playing Religion in Videogames. In *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2018, Vol. 22, No. 5-6, p. 869-871.
 - 4 HODENT, C.: *The Gamer's Brain: How Neuroscience and UX Can Impact Video Game Design*. London : CRC Press, 2018, p. 9-12.; CONTRERAS-ESPINOSA, R. S., SERRA, A., TERRÓN, J. L.: Games and ADHD-ADD: A Systematic Mapping Study. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2019, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 23.; HODENT, C.: *The Psychology of Video Games*. London : Routledge, 2020, p. 7-19.

sociology,⁵ marketing,⁶ pedagogy,⁷ semiotics,⁸ and the impact of play on health.⁹ There are doctoral dissertations, proceedings, books, and scientific journals on digital games. All of this points to the fact that the games are, despite of their fun role, serious.

However, digital games are also a cultural phenomenon of modern society. The very idea of humanity is expressed in the urge to play. The concept of play is anthropologically important. In fact, the concept of game is crucial because the idea of human existence is expressed in the game. The virtual and the actual are not blurring, nor do they pull apart from one another.¹⁰ The game is older than culture.¹¹ The game is based on showing reality in images, shapes and meaning. The lived moments are transformed into art forms. From this aspect, we understand digital games as a culture. The connection between the digital game and culture is understood as a higher form of the game.¹²

The connection between digital games and culture is understood as a higher form of game. According to J. Huizinga,¹³ game is a free act. If it comes from pleasure, it becomes a need. According to T. Eagleton,¹⁴ we can see the game as the culture of life, where the game is a factor of culture.¹⁵ One of the biggest problems with the phenomenon of digital games stems from a misperception of understanding games. Digital games are primarily considered a medium for recreation and entertainment, and it takes time for such a perception to change and to start viewing digital games as a form of art.¹⁶ Of course, not all digital games are art, but some characteristics, such as aesthetic pleasure, recognizable style, emotion, and intellectual challenge¹⁷ make digital games works of art.

In this sense, certain digital games such as *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*¹⁸, *A Plague Tale: Innocence*¹⁹ and *Heavy Rain*²⁰ have elements of art. Game studies can also be understood as a way of understanding the common values of gaming culture, or culture in a broader

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- 5 MURIEL, D., CRAWFORD, G.: *Video Games as Culture: Considering the Role and Importance of Video Games in Contemporary Society*. London : Routledge, 2018, p. 62-73.; SHAW, A.: What Is Video Game Culture? Cultural Studies and Game Studies. In *Games and Culture*, 2010, Vol. 5, No. 4, p. 414-416.
 - 6 BANYTE, J., GADEIKIENE, A.: The Effect of Consumer Motivation to Play Games on Video Game-playing Engagement. In *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 2015, Vol. 26, No. 8, p. 507.; MAGO, Z.: The Concept of Timelessness Applied to Advergaming. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2018, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 30.; JUKIĆ, D.: To Brand or Not to Brand: The Perception of Brand Image in the Digital Games Industry. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2020, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 27.
 - 7 MIŠKOV, J.: Motivation with Game Elements in Education Mediated by E-Learning Resources. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 28-30.
 - 8 PEOVIĆ VUKOVIĆ, K.: *Medij i kultura: ideologija medija nakon decentralizacije*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2012, p. 187.; JUKIĆ, D.: Marketing Semiotics in Digital Games: Myth's Analysis in *The Walking Dead* and *Heavy Rain*. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 15.
 - 9 CLARK, N., SCOTT, P. S.: *Game Addiction: The Experience and the Effect*. Jefferson, SC : McFarland Company, 2009, p. 91-115.; GRANIC, I., LOBEL, A., ENGELS, R.: The Benefits of Playing Video Games. In *American Psychologist*, 2014, Vol. 69, No. 1, p. 71-73.; GRIFFITHS, M. D.: Does Internet and Computer "Addiction" Exist? Some Case Study Evidence. In *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 2000, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 216-217.; CHAK, K., LEUNG, L.: Shyness and Locus of Control as Predictors of Internet Addiction and Internet Use. In *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 2004, Vol. 7, No. 5, p. 562-567.; BARANOWSKI, T. et al.: Playing for Real: Video Games and Stories for Health-related Behaviour Change. In *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 2008, Vol. 34, No. 1, p. 74-76.
 - 10 BOELLSTORFF, T.: Rethinking Digital Anthropology. In HORST, H. A., MILLER, D. (eds.): *Digital Anthropology*. 1st Edition. London : Routledge, 2012, p. 56.
 - 11 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 9.
 - 12 JUKIĆ, D.: Digital Game as an Artistic Mimesis and a Cult Brand. In RADOŠINSKÁ, J., PROSTINÁKOVÁ HOSSOVÁ, M., SOLÍK, M. (eds.): *Megatrends and Media: Home Officetainment*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2021, p. 537.
 - 13 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 14.
 - 14 EAGLETON, T.: *The Idea of Culture*. 1st Edition. Oxford : Blackwell Publishers, 2000, p. 41-46.
 - 15 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 10.
 - 16 JUKIĆ, D.: Digital Game as an Artistic Mimesis and a Cult Brand. In RADOŠINSKÁ, J., PROSTINÁKOVÁ HOSSOVÁ, M., SOLÍK, M. (eds.): *Megatrends and Media: Home Officetainment*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2021, p. 533-534.
 - 17 DUTTON, D.: *The Art Instinct Beauty, Pleasure, and Human Evolution*. London : Bloomsbury Press, 2009, p. 58.
 - 18 CD PROJEKT RED: *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. [digital game]. Warsaw : CD Projekt, 2015.
 - 19 QUANTIC DREAM: *Heavy Rain*. [digital game]. San Mateo, CA : Sony Computer Entertainment, 2010.
 - 20 ASOBO STUDIO: *A Plague Tale: Innocence*. [digital game]. Paris : Focus Home Interactive, 2019.

sense.²¹ It is precisely this broader sense of culture and art that allows us to understand games as a higher form of cultural studies.²² In fact, game studies are a broader form of cultural studies that implies an interdisciplinary approach. The topic of this study will try to answer the questions that are always in the subtext of play and culture. Anthropological, philosophical, and cultural research into the origins of the game will provide us with a better insight into understanding the culture of the game. The value of these research and cultural theories will come from understanding the socio-cultural-anthropological origins of the game. Culture is reflected in the digital game because it represents, not only the game *per se*, but also the world in which we live. This means that media reality is reflected in the reality in which we live, and digital play is one of the forms of that reality. The media brings users into relationships with reality.

Why do we play digital games? This is an issue faced by gamers in their environment as much as scholars in society. If we answer that we play digital games because we like them, then the question arises, why do we like them. What is aesthetic about them that evokes pleasure, liking and satisfaction? Do games have an educational component? To play or not to play? It is also a paradox of postmodern society. Games for adults and games for children are essentially the same. Adults play games for children and children play games for adults. They look at each other, but do not see each other.

Research Methodology

The paper applies a qualitative analytical-synthetic method,²³ aiming to break down the phenomena into their segments. The qualitative analytical-synthetic method breaks down social phenomena (digital game and game phenomenon) into segments (anthropological, philosophical, and pedagogical aspects). The understanding of such an analysis starts from the procedure according to which the analysis of the meaning of a certain phenomenon (game and playing) is used to deepen the understanding of a new meaning. In this way, we create a hermeneutic spiral²⁴ of causal relationships of meaning and sense of the observed phenomena (digital games) which we further interpret. In this study the authors apply two research approaches simultaneously: the critical realist method and the phenomenological method.²⁵ Such an interpretation of a phenomenological analysis²⁶ has its initial description related to a broader cultural, philosophical, and anthropological context.

The paper also applies the method of narratology, F. Schiller's aesthetic of education,²⁷ I. Kant's *Analytic of the Beautiful (Analytik des Schönen)*,²⁸ and the theory of play according to J. Huizinga.²⁹ The paper also applies the method of E. Morin's aesthetics³⁰ and

21 EAGLETON, T.: *The Idea of Culture*. 1st Edition. Oxford : Blackwell Publishers, 2000, p. 50-56.

22 NIEBORG, D. B., HERMES, J.: What Is Game Studies Anyway?. In *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 2008, Vol. 11, No. 2, p. 134.

23 WILLIG, C.: *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Maidenhead : Open University Press, 2013, p. 101-109.; HALMI, A.: *Strategije kvalitativnih istraživanja u primijenjenim društvenim znanostima*. Jastrebarsko : Naklada Slap, 2005, p. 27.; COHEN, L., MANION, L., MORRISON, K.: *Research Methods in Education*. London : Routledge, 2000, p. 17-23.

24 HALMI, A.: *Strategije kvalitativnih istraživanja u primijenjenim društvenim znanostima*. Jastrebarsko : Naklada Slap, 2005, p. 24.

25 WILLIG, C.: *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*. Maidenhead : Open University Press, 2013, p. 48-50.

26 LARKIN, M., WATTS, S., CLIFTON, E.: Giving Voice and Making Sense in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. In *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2006, Vol. 3, No. 2, p. 105.

27 SCHILLER, F.: *O estetskom odgoju čovjeka u nizu pisama*. Zagreb : Scarabeus, 2006, p. 150-162.

28 KANT, I.: *Kritika moći sudjenja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022, p. 85-118.

29 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 9-30.

30 MORIN, E.: *O esteticima*. Zagreb : TIM press, 2017, p. 15-24.

C. Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology theory.³¹ The first ambition of structural anthropology is to achieve objectivity³² because we will analyse mental categories, oppositions, and contradictions. The second ambition is the analysis of totality,³³ i.e., we will look at the social, cultural, pedagogical, and philosophical phenomenon of the game as a system, all aspects of which are connected. In other words, we will make a deconstructive analysis of the game phenomenon.

The study uses the deconstruction method as a structure of thought³⁴ that results from understanding the text. The deconstruction method starts from the hypothesis that the rules are found within the text whose elements are unique, and by parsing, interpreting, and analysing we create a method as a structure of thought³⁵ of a certain phenomenon. In this sense, the deconstruction method includes critical reading and writing to interweave unnoticed implications, to present and understand the subject of research more deeply, and to produce their relationship as a new structure of meaning. Specifically, the deconstruction analysis in this study refers to the phenomenon of game, playing and their interdisciplinary connection, which will answer the research question of why we play digital games. In this study, we looked at the concept of play through two categories: a) play as a subject and b) play as a predicate. Play as a subject refers to play as a carrier of culture³⁶, play as the world we live in³⁷ and play as life.³⁸ In this sense, we can see play as education and play as a way of life. Play as a predicate represents playing, having fun, enjoying, escaping from reality and the act of existence. It defines a person's behaviour, and the game as a subject defines a person.

This paper aims to research, present, deconstruct and analyse why we play digital games from philosophical and anthropological contexts. In this paper, we start from the concept of gaming and game from the aspect of aesthetics and education. We then connect I. Kant's Analytic of the Beautiful to analyse the game from a philosophical aspect. With such an understanding of the game, we analyse two key issues. The first question stems from the need to play, and the second from understanding that need. The judgment of taste that expresses beauty consists of four moments: according to quality, quantity, relation, and modality. Simply put, I. Kant claims that a beautiful form is one that causes liking, a form without interest,³⁹ that is without content.

In this context, we will analyse the judgment of such beauty based on three digital games: *Shadow of the Tomb Raider*⁴⁰, *Horizon Zero Dawn*⁴¹, and *Detroit: Become Human*⁴². Judgment of taste starts exclusively from the form, so we analyse three female characters that will be used as the subject of Analytic of the Beautiful. The characters were chosen

31 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Strukturalna antropologija*. Zagreb : Stvarnost, 1977, p. 41-63.; LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Divlja misao*. Beograd : Nolit, 1978, p. 72-75.; LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Strukturalna antropologija 2*. Zagreb : Školska knjiga, 1988, p. 103-115.; LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Antropologija i moderni svijet*. Zagreb : TIM press, 2013, p. 13-27.

32 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Antropologija i moderni svijet*. Zagreb : TIM press, 2013, p. 23.

33 Ibidem, p. 24.

34 ROMČEVIĆ, B.: Metodološki profil dekonstrukcije. In *Filozofska istraživanja*, 2018, Vol. 15, No. 38, p. 627.; ANDRIĆ PETERNAI, K.: Znak, značenje i vlastito ime: kontroverzna mjesta u Derridaovom diskurzu. In *Filozofska istraživanja*, 2009, Vol. 29, No. 3, p. 526.; CULLER, J.: *O dekonstrukciji: teorija i kritika poslije strukturalizma*. Zagreb : Globus, 1991, p. 163.; DERRIDA, J.: *O gramatologiji*. Sarajevo : Veselin Masleša, 1976, p. 137-184.

35 ROMČEVIĆ, B.: Metodološki profil dekonstrukcije. In *Filozofska istraživanja*, 2018, Vol. 15, No. 38, p. 630.

36 EAGLETON, T.: *The Idea of Culture*. 1st Edition. Oxford : Blackwell Publishers, 2000, p. 50-54.; EAGLETON, T.: *Culture*. London : Yale University Press, 2016, p. 15-18.

37 FINK, E.: *Igra kao simbol svijeta*. Zagreb : Demetra, 2000, p. 74-79.

38 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 9-17.

39 KANT, I.: *Kritika moći sudjenja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022, p. 86.

40 EIDOS-MONTRÉAL: *Shadow of the Tomb Raider*. [digital game]. London : Square Enix Europe, 2018.

41 GUERRILLA GAMES: *Horizon Zero Dawn*. [digital game]. San Mateo, CA : Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2017.

42 QUANTIC DREAM: *Detroit: Become Human*. [digital game]. San Mateo, CA : Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2018.

according to hair colour⁴³: black hair (Lara), redhead (Aloy) and blonde (Chloe). The characters were chosen only to confirm the philosophical judgment of beauty. According to I. Kant, a beautiful form is liked without interest,⁴⁴ it is a form of perfection, and it makes an object beautiful.

The context in which we question play starts from the understanding of play as an anthropological given in which we present play as a carrier of culture, play in the broadest sense of the word in which it is understood as the beginning of culture and civilization, but also play as a ritual, *credo*, and way of life. In the pedagogical sense, we understand play as a model of educational values and a form of media pedagogy that educates and promotes aesthetic and moral values. Finally, play is viewed from a philosophical aspect in the context of the notion of beauty and image. The context of the idea of beauty results from the observation of pure form,⁴⁵ and the context of the image⁴⁶ refers to the observation of the content.

The research questions are: What makes a digital game beautiful? What does an aesthetic feeling consist of? Why do we like digital games? Why do we love digital games? And the most important question: Why do we play digital games?

Why so Serious?

The primary purpose of digital games was entertainment. In addition to providing a break from everyday life and representing the aesthetic pleasure of i.e., *flow*,⁴⁷ digital games are highly stimulating and attract attention. An additional attraction of digital games stems from their structure in which players control the situation and the speed of progress. From a psychological point of view, digital games have a clear structure, clear rules, and include tasks that players solve, thus enabling the experience of success and motivating them to continue playing. Success is always followed by a reward, such as moving to a higher level, unlocking a trophy or a new ability. At the same time, most digital games offer the option to play again, so players gradually practice harder levels. Some digital games take the replay option very seriously, so the complete style of the game is based on reaching a harder level with frequent replays, as is the case in the *Dark Souls*⁴⁸ series and *Bloodborne*⁴⁹ games.

The appeal of digital games is enhanced using realistic images and sounds, precise locations and geographical positions, historical events, real brands and celebrities from sports, society, music, or literature. As an example, let us mention realistic sounds from the digital game *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare*⁵⁰, *Far Cry 6*⁵¹ or *Mafia III*⁵², or realistic images from *Red Dead Redemption 2*⁵³, *Uncharted 4*⁵⁴, *God of War*⁵⁵ and

43 HINNEY, P. R.: The Role of Hair Color in the Perception of Attractiveness. In *Modern Psychological Studies*, 1992, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 35.; JANIF, Z. J., BROOKS, R. C., DIXSON, B. J.: Are Preferences for Women's Hair Color Frequency-Dependent?. In *Adaptive Human Behavior and Physiology*, 2015, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 60.

44 KANT, I.: *Kritika moći suđenja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022, p. 92.

45 Ibidem, p. 91.

46 FLUSSER, V.: *Filozofija fotografije*. Zagreb : Scarabeus, 2007, p. 21.

47 MIŠKOV, J.: Motivation with Game Elements in Education Mediated by E-Learning Resources. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 30.

48 FROMSOFTWARE: *Dark Souls (series)*. [digital game]. Tokyo : Bandai Namco Entertainment, 2011-2016.

49 FROMSOFTWARE: *Bloodborne*. [digital game]. Tokyo : Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2015.

50 INFINITY WARD: *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare*. [digital game]. Santa Monica, CA : Activision, 2007.

51 UBISOFT TORONTO: *Far Cry 6*. [digital game]. Saint-Mandé : Ubisoft, 2021.

52 HANGAR 13: *Mafia III (Playstation 4 version)*. [digital game]. Novato, CA : 2K Games, 2016.

53 ROCKSTAR STUDIOS: *Red Dead Redemption 2*. [digital game]. New York, NY : Rockstar Games, 2018.

54 NAUGHTY DOG: *Uncharted 4*. [digital game]. San Mateo, CA : Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2016.

55 SANTA MONICA STUDIO: *God of War*. [digital game]. San Mateo, CA : Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2018.

Ghost of Tsushima.⁵⁶ It is obvious that realistic sounds, as well as real music albums and the hyperrealism of the Wild West landscape, Nordic mythology or Tsushima Island further enhance the game's appeal. Also, the Assassin's Creed series very faithfully shows a combination of famous locations and historic buildings, such as Notre-Dame Cathedral in *Assassin's Creed Unity*,⁵⁷ Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben) in *Assassin's Creed Syndicate*⁵⁸ or Basilica di San Pietro in *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood*.⁵⁹ The same goes for brands that appear in digital games, especially those associated with the automotive industry and athletes, such as *Need for Speed Payback*,⁶⁰ *EA Sports UFC 4*⁶¹ and *FIFA 22*.⁶²

Realism creates space for learning. Such informal learning, but also the model of tangential learning, opens the possibility of educating players. Pupils learn through digital games on various levels:⁶³ such as game mechanics, in-game narration, group play, and tangential learning. The game mechanics of the digital game itself are suitable for learning the laws of physics, geometric skills, and developing mathematical skills. Learning through game⁶⁴ narration is a key element in digital games because it creates an environment with which the learner identifies.⁶⁵ Learning in the context of a cooperative game implies a social aspect of playing that encourages the development of communication skills, culture, togetherness, and mutual respect. And finally, tangential learning implies self-learning of certain topics that have interested educatees and because of which they enrich their knowledge by exploring other sources.

From all the above we can conclude that digital games can be a valuable and useful tool for teaching and function as a motivator. Motives for playing digital games can be classified into three components:⁶⁶ achievement, social, and immersion components. Each component consists of three categories, i.e., achievement component includes advancement, mechanics, and competition. The social component includes socializing, relationship, and teamwork. Finally, the immersion component consists of discovery, role-playing, and customization. The listed components refer to RPG and MMORPG. However, from the analysis of the mentioned gaming motives we can abstract the fun, exploratory, competitive, and social components of digital games.

Frequent repetitions lead to the consolidation of adopted patterns and attitudes. Once learned, the pattern can determine ways to interpret similar situations in real life. Playing digital games encourages the development of various cognitive skills⁶⁷ and improves coordination and fine motor skills with greater precision of movement. In other words, gamers develop the skills of mental rotation, spatial visualization, and visual processing skills.

It is important to emphasize that such effects have not been observed in all types of digital games. Action-focused digital games, unlike adventure, RPG, or puzzles, show that

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- 56 SUCKER PUNCH PRODUCTIONS: *Ghost of Tsushima*. [digital game]. San Mateo, CA : Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2020.
- 57 UBISOFT MONTREAL: *Assassin's Creed Unity*. [digital game]. Saint-Mandé : Ubisoft, 2014.
- 58 UBISOFT QUEBEC: *Assassin's Creed Syndicate*. [digital game]. Saint-Mandé : Ubisoft, 2015.
- 59 UBISOFT MONTREAL: *Assassin's Creed Brotherhood*. [digital game]. Saint-Mandé : Ubisoft, 2010.
- 60 GHOST GAMES: *Need for Speed Payback*. [digital game]. Redwood City, CA : Electronic Arts, 2017.
- 61 EA VANCOUVER: *EA Sports UFC 4*. [digital game]. Redwood City, CA : EA Sports, 2020.
- 62 EA VANCOUVER: *FIFA 22*. [digital game]. Redwood City, CA : EA Sports, 2021.
- 63 TURKAY, S., ADINOLF, S.: What do Players (Think They) Learn in Games. In *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2012, Vol. 46, No. 2, p. 3347.; JAFTHA, N., MORONE PINTO, F. C., CHIRROP, T.: Knowing the Students' Game-Playing Characteristics as a Prerequisite for Successful Gamification in Education. In *Journal of Education and Development*, 2020, Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 81.
- 64 ŠKRIPCOVÁ, L.: Media Literacy in Digital Games. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 136-138.
- 65 JUKIC, D.: Marketing Semiotics in Digital Games: Myth's Analysis in *The Walking Dead* and *Heavy Rain*. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 15.
- 66 YEE, N.: Motivations for Play in Online Games. In *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 2006, Vol. 9, No. 6, p. 773.
- 67 GRANIC, I., LOBEL, A., ENGELS, R.: The Benefits of Playing Video Games. In *American Psychologist*, 2014, Vol. 69, No. 1, p. 76.

players have better spatial resolution in visual processing.⁶⁸ Research using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) shows that players who play action games filter irrelevant information from the environment more effectively.⁶⁹

The Philosophy of the Game

E. Fink⁷⁰ in his introductory chapter *Play as a Philosophical Problem* states that it may be unusual to choose play as the subject of a philosophical treatise, but play is indeed a subject of research in philosophy. The attempt to analyse the game stems from questioning the phenomenon of the game. If play is a subject of philosophy, as Fink confirms, the question arises: is play *worthy* of philosophy?⁷¹ In this sense, the game is opposed to the seriousness of life and appears as *frivolous* and represents *leisure* and entertainment. This means that play, as a philosophical phenomenon⁷² has limited value. However, play is a phenomenon that is not only inherent in contemporary society, but also a structuralist view of the culture of society before culture.⁷³

If we analyse a game like chess, the game of colours that artists use in painting, the game of words that writers use in their works, we can conclude that this dichotomy is neither solid nor unambiguous. Play is a human need only if it springs from pleasure. The highest form of play in the anthropological sense is a ceremony and a cult.⁷⁴ Lived moments are transformed into artistic forms. The frivolity of the game is a pejorative form of understanding of the game, the philosophy of the game and the game world in which games are a less valuable area of research. Therefore, E. Fink claims that play is not frivolous,⁷⁵ but those who ignore play are frivolous. Even if we observe the phenomenon of play only in the context of entertainment, which it is not, we still cannot dispute its educational, cultural, social, economic, philosophical, and psychological value.

The concept of play is philosophically relevant within the question of human freedom and the question of aesthetics. I. Kant understands play as a pleasant activity accompanied by a sense of satisfaction. We view beauty as a concept of formal, pure subjective purpose. By understanding beauty and pleasure we can talk about the difference between F. Schiller's⁷⁶ and E. Fink's understanding of the game. However, the concept of play in F. Schiller's aesthetic education is like I. Kant's understanding, according to which play represents man's freedom. This is the so-called release *region*.⁷⁷ Such an understanding of the concept of play, within aesthetics, art, and philosophy, presents play as real, and the understanding of play as non-working and unreal opens the place to philosophical thinking.

68 GREEN, C. S., BAVELIER, D.: Learning, Attentional Control, and Action Video Games. In *Current Biology*, 2012, Vol. 22, No. 6, p. R199-R200.; GREEN, C. S., GORMAN, T., BAVELIER, D.: Action Video-Game Training and Its Effects on Perception and Attentional Control. In STROBACH, T., KARBACH, J. (eds.): *Cognitive Training: An Overview of Features and Applications*. 1st Edition. New York, NY : Springer International Publishing, 2016, p. 111.

69 BAVELIER, D. et al.: Neural Bases of Selective Attention in Action Video Game Players. In *Vision Research*, 2012, Vol. 61, No. 5, p. 136-139.

70 FINK, E.: *Igra kao simbol svijeta*. Zagreb : Demetra, 2000, p. 1.

71 Ibidem, p. 3.

72 Ibidem, p. 71-76.

73 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Divlja misao*. Beograd : Nolit, 1978, p. 72.; HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 14.; FINK, E.: *Igra kao simbol svijeta*. Zagreb : Demetra, 2000, p. 13.

74 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Divlja misao*. Beograd : Nolit, 1978, p. 74-75.

75 FINK, E.: *Igra kao simbol svijeta*. Zagreb : Demetra, 2000, p. 80-83.

76 SCHILLER, F.: *O estetskom odgoju čovjeka u nizu pisama*. Zagreb : Scarabeus, 2006, p. 150-162.

77 PLESSNER, H.: *Conditio humana: filozofijske rasprave o antropologiji*. Zagreb : Nakladni zavod Globus, Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu, 1994, p. 163.

J. Huizinga emphasizes the aspect of the seriousness of the game as well as the creation of culture. His shaping culture without the game is not possible. The elements of culture in the game derive from the form of the game, and the culture itself *is played*.⁷⁸ Therefore, culture is an essential element of the game because it emerges in the form of a game as a double unity of the forced and the playful. J. Huizinga warns that the game should not be understood as a game *clothed* in culture, but that culture appears in the game with its shape and *mood*. Therefore, the question arises: why, in the anthropological-philosophical sense, does man play?

The Structure of the Game

According to C. Lévi-Strauss, the relationship between play and ritual is the same type.⁷⁹ Each game is defined by a set of rules that allow an unlimited number of games, but the ritual, which is also played, is a privileged game. In other words, the game is at its core a separating factor because it ends up creating a differential gap between the players. This can best be explained by the example of multiplayer games where multiple players participate. In the beginning, everyone has an equal chance, and as the game nears the end, a separation factor is created that separates the winners from the losers. A typical example of such a digital game is *Fortnite Battle Royale*.⁸⁰ The reverse of the above is a ritual that represents a *merging* factor. In the context of multiplayer games, this is a co-op game that unites a group of players to achieve a goal together. An example is *Resident Evil 5*.⁸¹

The symmetry is predefined in the game. It is structural because it stems from the principle that rules are the same for everyone. From the aspect of ritual, the game is pre-designed, and it represents a *ritual*,⁸² and the basic thought is that all players reach the given goal. An example of such a digital game is found in adventures like the *Life is Strange*⁸³ series. The game tends to keep each player on the winning side using structured events, that is, each episode conditions the default structure to move to the next level. In other words, the rituals are like the myths and symbols in the game. They *break down* groups of events to get to the structure.

According to structural anthropology⁸⁴ the misconception of sociology stems from the fact that it deals with terms, not the relationships between them. In this sense, C. Lévi-Strauss also observes the phenomenon of the game⁸⁵ from the aspect of relationships and opens a new perspective for analysing the game. With such an understanding, social phenomena can be viewed as phonemes in linguistics⁸⁶ because they acquire the meaning of words only on condition that they are integrated into kinship systems, that is, phonological systems. This leads us to the conclusion that to arrive at one rule of structure as a *differential element*⁸⁷ we organize it into pairs of opposition. C. Lévi-Strauss says that there is one system that is psychological and social in nature, and he calls it a *system of behaviour*.⁸⁸

78 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 47.

79 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Divlja misao*. Beograd : Nolit, 1978, p. 74.

80 EPIC GAMES: *Fortnite Battle Royale*. [digital game]. Cary, NC : Epic Games, 2017.

81 CAPCOM: *Resident Evil 5*. [digital game]. Osaka : Capcom, 2009.

82 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Divlja misao*. Beograd : Nolit, 1978, p. 74-75.

83 DON'T NOD ENTERTAINMENT, DECK NINE: *Life is Strange (series)*. [digital game]. Tokyo : Square Enix, 2015-2022.

84 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Strukturalna antropologija*. Zagreb : Stvarnost, 1977, p. 58.

85 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Divlja misao*. Beograd : Nolit, 1978, p. 74-75.

86 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Strukturalna antropologija*. Zagreb : Stvarnost, 1977, p. 44.

87 Ibidem, p. 45.

88 Ibidem, p. 48.

What is meant by structure? According to C. Lévi-Strauss, the structure shows the characteristics of the system.⁸⁹ It consists of such elements that any modification of one of them results in the modification of all the others. Structure is a hidden order of human behaviour. It is this *fundamental, structural plan* that suggests that it is not always the content of the digital game or its myth that is important, but the way the symbols within the myth are interpreted.⁹⁰ Also, each model belongs to one transformation group, each of which corresponds to one model of the same type. Simply put, modifications in the structure are reflected in the games in the narratological, graphic and experiential plan of each digital game. Some changes become rules, and some push boundaries in the very structure of the game and upgrade it. On the other hand, each structure has specific *patterns* of behaviour so *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* contains some structural RPG elements that influence other digital games.

Models, such as games, are theoretical constructions that assume an exhaustive definition of *pro tempore*, such as J. Huizinga, who portrays play as an act of culture.⁹¹ However, structuralist methodology warns of studying social phenomena that should have a *deeper structure*. We define form as opposed to matter.⁹² However, structure has no particular content: it is the content itself that is taken in a logical structure.⁹³ Of course, a digital game can contain multiple parts of a structure, a *score*, but then, those parts of the structure represent different stories within the game. C. Lévi-Strauss here presents the structural anthropology of play according to the linguistic standpoint of analysing and defining the words that make a sentence. Such *scores* may follow one another: one may be included in the other by interrupting it occasionally, or it may be reflected at the end of the other. Parts of a structure can sometimes start at the same time, can have the same ending, or can complement each other. This is about intertextuality,⁹⁴ but also about analysing myths.⁹⁵

The World of the Game

According to E. Fink,⁹⁶ the game is opposed to the seriousness of life. We do not take the game seriously.⁹⁷ Although play is a cultural, anthropological phenomenon, it is primarily a philosophical subject. However, the concept of the game of the world is not a phenomenon. It is a speculative symbol of the overall movement of the world.

Game is a factor of culture.⁹⁸ The game is based on showing realities in images, shapes and meaning. Experienced moments are transformed into art forms. From this aspect, we understand the observation of digital games as culture because, not only are they a product of a cultural object,⁹⁹ but human action in the digital game itself is also a kind of game.¹⁰⁰ The game is a free act. The concept of place and duration starts from the

89 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Strukturalna antropologija*. Zagreb : Stvarnost, 1977, p. 290.

90 JUKIĆ, D.: Marketing Semiotics in Digital Games: Myth's Analysis in *The Walking Dead* and *Heavy Rain*. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2021, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 24-27.

91 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 10-13.

92 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Strukturalna antropologija 2*. Zagreb : Školska knjiga, 1988, p. 103.

93 Ibidem.

94 MAGO, Z.: *Easter Eggs in Digital Games as a Form of Textual Transcendence (Case Study)*. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2019, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 51.

95 MALINOWSKI, B.: *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays*. Long Grove, IL : Waveland Press, 2013, p. 100.

96 FINK, E.: *Igra kao simbol svijeta*. Zagreb : Demetra, 2000, p. 3-4.

97 Ibidem, p. 3.

98 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 10.

99 GRISWOLD, W.: *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. London : Sage Publications, 2013, p. 15-23.

100 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 14.

assumption that every digital game has certain boundaries of time and space. The game begins and ends at a certain point. Each game in its essence represents a spiritual creation.¹⁰¹ According to J. Huizinga's theory, man plays for pleasure and relaxation, but he can also play above that level: for the sake of beauty and sublimity.¹⁰² The game alludes to the biological instinct of imitation.¹⁰³ Digital games have educational value.¹⁰⁴ Starting from J. Huizinga's theory of play, play is not only essential to man, but is also crucial in developing emotions, creativity, imagination, and learning.

It is not necessary to present the game as a phenomenon, but we can analyse the game as a philosophical problem more closely. By playing, a person does not stay in themselves, they do not stay in a closed circle, but ecstatically comes out of themselves and meaningfully interpret the world.¹⁰⁵ In order to gain experience, we should possess knowledge of what we can experience. According to I. Kant, every experiential knowledge is preceded by knowledge *a priori* about the subject and knowledge about space and time.¹⁰⁶ I. Kant confirms such *conditions of experience* in the *enabled experience*. If it should be *a priori* of the human mind, then it is an *idea* that is not realized and is not perceived. With his dialectic, I. Kant speaks of the idea of cognition that is not realized but is not disputed in experience. In other words, thought about the world is no longer a theoretical concept, but a *mood* that turns into a *regulatory idea*.

But this means that I. Kant clearly realizes that the world is not a powerful object and that the relationship between man (subject) and the world cannot be arranged as a relationship between two beings.¹⁰⁷ I. Kant observes the world from the aspect of the subject and transforms it into a structure of the subject that he imagines in ideas. According to I. Kant's philosophy, we find two powers in the mind: the logical, which gives rules, and the transcendental, which gives principles. Logical power represents the power of reason, and transcendental power represents pure mind.¹⁰⁸ Logical power gives principles that provide unity to diverse rational concepts, much like the use of categories gives unity to diversity of experience.¹⁰⁹ The mind refers to reason, that is, to concepts and judgments, and reason refers to experience.

Thus, the philosophical concept of the *game of the world* is a speculative formula that does not express a phenomenon but indicates a path of thought. In that sense, anything that is real is possible, but not necessary. The reality thus understood is the modality of the being of things. However, then the question arises how and in what sense is the game defined as unreal? The behaviour and action of the game is just like other human activities. All activities are real. The problem is in the way we understand the digital game. Reality, as well as being, does not belong to the individual, but is realized in a real act, that is, by playing itself. Understood as an activity, as a spontaneous fulfilment of its meaning, play is one way of man's creation of reality. However, we say this with hesitation.¹¹⁰

101 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 16.

102 Ibidem, p. 24.

103 ARISTOTEL: *O pjesničkom umijeću*. Zagreb : Školska knjiga, 2005, p. 7-10.

104 DE FREITAS, S., GRIFFITHS, M.: The Convergence of Gaming Practices with Other Media Forms: What Potential for Learning? A Review of the Literature. In *Learning, Media and Technology*, 2008, Vol. 33, No. 1, p. 17.; TURKAY, S., ADINOLF, S.: What do Players (Think They) Learn in Games. In *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2012, Vol. 46, No. 2, p. 3347.; JAFTHA, N., MORONE PINTO, F. C., CHIRCOP, T.: Knowing the Students' Game-Playing Characteristics as a Prerequisite for Successful Gamification in Education. In *Journal of Education and Development*, 2020, Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 81.; ŠKRIPCOVÁ, L.: Media Literacy in Digital Games. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 136.

105 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 18.

106 KANT, I.: *Kritika čistog uma*. Zagreb : Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1984, p. 366.

107 Ibidem, p. 364-371.

108 Ibidem, p. 156-157.

109 Ibidem, p. 157.

110 FINK, E.: *Igra kao simbol svijeta*. Zagreb : Demetra, 2000, p. 74-79.

The key is that what is done in the digital game is *not serious*, it is free of seriousness. The game suggests an *aesthetic* attitude towards life. In that sense, play is a category for the imaginary and the unreal. The game as such paraphrases various forms of serious life.¹¹¹ This is precisely its paradox because with such an understanding of the game it represents an imaginary action, adventure, story, and event. Although these actions are real, in a game that is imaginary and *frivolous*, they carry with them an element of the unreal. That is why Fink claims that play is an action that becomes apparent in its gesture of meaning. It fills the empty time and turns into the reality of the apparent paraphrase of serious life.¹¹²

We will compare a digital game and a gamer who highlights their moment of *frivolity* in adventure or action games, when the player disguises themselves as a game, and the action itself becomes two-dimensional: the action of the actor and the action of man in the world of game. Identifying the player with the main character in the game is then recognized as an option.¹¹³ In this sense, we can connect the concept of the mask mentioned by Plessner,¹¹⁴ because it is in the mask that the player hides and, conditionally speaking, they differ from themself. The gamer becomes their own means.¹¹⁵ In such a medium, the gamer embodies themselves, they fake a role within the digital game. In this identification of the role of the main character, specifically Nathan Drake, we take on the fundamental categorical structure of the embodiment of the real person through the imaginary.

The question is what is the character of *frivolity* within such a game world? That imaginary frivolity is an illusion that exists. The object of fantasy is psychic reality, not objective and intersubjective reality. In such an understanding of the game, we are all actors and spectators. Man plays only where, in the full sense of the word, he is a man, and he is entirely human only where he plays.¹¹⁶

Aesthetics of the Game

F. Schiller understands the game as the core of education. Man seeks abundance and excess of matter to conceal its limits to lust and secure for himself a pleasure.¹¹⁷ However, F. Schiller¹¹⁸ argues that man also seeks an *aesthetic addition*, an abundance that transcends matter to satisfy the instinct for form. It is precisely this *aesthetic addition*, this instinct for form, which is the pleasure that comes from playing a digital game. Aesthetic feeling comes from shape, colour, sound, images, but also from the story.¹¹⁹ Such a feeling is determined by pleasure and admiration.¹²⁰

The real character of the game stems from the imagination that makes self-enjoyment in the player's relieved interests. Imagination is the essence of the game.¹²¹ The imagination that A. Gehlen is talking about is a process of communication identical to the structuralist understanding of the game. Play is a communication between imaginary life experienced in the real world. In this experience, the game arouses the interest

111 FINK, E.: *Igra kao simbol svijeta*. Zagreb : Demetra, 2000, p. 81-82.

112 Ibidem, p. 83.

113 ŠKORIĆ, G.: Aspekti pojma igre u estetici i antropologiji. In *Metodički ogledi*, 2012, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 26.

114 PLESSNER, H.: *Conditio humana: filozofijske rasprave o antropologiji*. Zagreb : Nakladni zavod Globus, Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu, 1994, p. 165.

115 FINK, E.: *Igra kao simbol svijeta*. Zagreb : Demetra, 2000, p. 83.

116 ŠKORIĆ, G.: Aspekti pojma igre u estetici i antropologiji. In *Metodički ogledi*, 2012, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 27.

117 SCHILLER, F.: *O estetskom odgoju čovjeka u nizu pisama*. Zagreb : Scarabeus, 2006, p. 152.

118 Ibidem, p. 152-153.

119 MORIN, E.: *O estetici*. Zagreb : TIM press, 2017, p. 9.

120 Ibidem, p. 11.

121 GEHLEN, A.: *Čovjek: njegova narav i položaj u svijetu*. Zagreb : Naklada Breza, 2005, p. 189.

of the imagination, and the very structure of the game is the structure of the *roles* that are mirrored in each other. I. Kant speaks about this in the aesthetic court, claiming that it is based on a sense of satisfaction.

E. Morin metaphorically calls the state in which one emotion changes us *poetic*,¹²² and it represents another, different state that is on the border of the mystical, the ecstatic and the transformed. The French philosopher goes a step further and argues that when we are on the top of the aesthetic experience, the works we love provide a sublime feeling and lead to ecstasy.¹²³ A very similar feeling of ecstasy is found in the term *flow*,¹²⁴ which M. Csíkszentmihályi defines as an enchanting obsession. Such a way of experiencing the world and relationships with other people, that is, the pleasure in the feeling of satisfaction that arises when information in consciousness says that expectations are fulfilled, leads to comfort.¹²⁵

Digital games can create a state of desired experience, enthusiasm and happiness that is like *flow* and motivates users to stay in that state for as long as possible.¹²⁶ In this sense, aesthetic feeling is a modality of the *poetic state*. According to E. Morin,¹²⁷ beauty is no longer what it used to be, so the aestheticization of almost everything is on the rise. After aestheticizing digital reality, we try to aestheticize our own life, that is, we give it a *poetic* meaning. One way is to turn a digital game into a *beautiful* adventure. The dialectic of the artistic in digital games creates a dualistic unity. Through form, such a dual process of sudden take-off in the wake of the highest levels of consciousness leads to *mimesis* in digital games. The aesthetic emotion we feel as a spectator or gamer is always a state of mild *obsession*,¹²⁸ a mild *mimesis* that we do not perceive. In other words, the fascination of gamers brings us to a poetic state.

When V. Flusser talks about image decoding,¹²⁹ he claims that the role of the apparatus-operator is crucial in the formation of linear texts in the technical image. V. Flusser is right because decoding requires knowledge,¹³⁰ pedagogical competence,¹³¹ and media literacy.¹³² In fact, it is like the concept of pedagogical media criticism, which in its essence starts from media knowledge and media analysis.¹³³ Media competence includes individual characteristics of the recipient of the message, decoding of media symbols and critical reflection. The role of media pedagogy is in decoding media messages. Symbols and signs that appear in the media have a specific meaning. The concept of the symbolic world, the idea that media pedagogy takes over that man lives in a symbolic world, is also reflected in the works of the French sociologist J. Baudrillard,¹³⁴ who talks about consumer codes. V. Flusser says that communication itself is artificial and rests on symbols arranged in codes¹³⁵ and we are not aware of this artificial communication. The way the codes work is shown through three types: images, text, and techno images.

122 MORIN, E.: *O estetici*. Zagreb : TIM press, 2017, p. 16.

123 Ibidem, p. 15-16.

124 CSÍKSZENTMIHÁLYI, M.: *Flow: očaravajuća obuzetost*. Jastrebarsko : Naklada Slap, 2006, p. 139-170.

125 Ibidem, p. 100.

126 DICHEV, C., DICHEVA, D.: Gamifying Education: What Is Known, What Is Believed and What Remains Uncertain: A Critical Review. In *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 2017, Vol. 14, No. 9, p. 5.

127 MORIN, E.: *O estetici*. Zagreb : TIM press, 2017, p. 22.

128 Ibidem, p. 42.

129 FLUSSER, V.: *Filozofija fotografije*. Zagreb : Scarabeus, 2007, p. 21.

130 McLUHAN, M.: *Razumijevanje medija*. Zagreb : Golden marketing-Tehnička knjiga, 2008, p. 137.

131 BAACKE, D.: *Medienpädagogik*. Berlin : De Gruyter, 1997, p. 99.

132 ŠKRIPCOVÁ, L.: Media Literacy in Digital Games. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2022, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 135-137.

133 KÜBLER, H.-D.: Zurück zum kritischen Rezipienten? Aufgaben und Grenzen pädagogischer Medienkritik. In NIESYTO, H., RATH, M., SOWA, H. (eds.): *Medienkritik heute. Grundlagen, Beispiele, Praxisfelder*. München : Kopaed, 2006, p. 44-46.

134 BAUDRILLARD, J.: *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structure*. London : Sage Publications, 1998, p. 76.

135 FLUSSER, V.: *Komunikologija*. Beograd : Fakultet za medije i komunikacije, 2015, p. 9.

The reality that V. Flusser talks about is built according to the code of images. Imagination rests on a convention that concerns the meaning of symbols that create new codes. According to V. Flusser, for people who are not aware of image codes, the world is a stage.¹³⁶ In this sense, the image that we have learned to make from concepts is not the meaning to which that concept refers, but the image itself gives the meaning. J. Baudrillard claims the same, only in the context of symbols of meaning.¹³⁷ With his understanding of the techno image and its deciphering, V. Flusser approaches the understanding of media pedagogy which claims that we need to decode meanings. Even though, according to R. Barthes, such codes can be decoded through the system of semiotics,¹³⁸ V. Flusser believes that mass techno images are false.¹³⁹ The attempt to decode is imposed as crucial in understanding the world.

Therefore, everything that is aesthetic in a digital game is part of the *poetic* relationship of the *game world*. The aesthetic, as such, always determines the poetic. The aesthetic feel of the gamer is contemplative. There is an *osmosis* relationship between the aesthetic and the ludicrous. The play is therefore a pleasure, E. Morin argues, and its ultimate goal is checked only in it, and the scene of the aesthetic experience is manifested in the very essence of the play.¹⁴⁰ This means that *Homo Ludens* is both, *poetic*, and *aesthetic*. In this sense, aesthetic states can be represented as: poetic, aesthetic, state of enchantment, state of trance, mystical and ecstatic state (Table 1).

Table 1: Aesthetic States of Digital Games

Condition	Characteristics
Poetic	Separation of the Self from the Non-Self
Aesthetic	Work of art
Enchantment	Admire the beauty of the game
Trans	Creativity Game
Mystical	Harmony of Beauty and Ecstasy
Ecstatic	The fulfilment of the poetic

Source: own processing; MORIN, E.: *O estetici*. Zagreb : TIM press, 2017, p. 86-88.

However, pictures or photography in the game unites the property of presence and absence. This means that a digital game contains elements that are inherent to duplicate. C. Lévi-Strauss¹⁴¹ spoke about the duality of the game in the context of rituals and scores. Such a structure is understood here as affective and sentimental. It is a term that E. Morin calls the *magic of an image*¹⁴² that reflects a mirror. This metaphor of the mirror represents a real path in which digital play resembles real life and reflects reality through fictional characters and a fantastic path that invents a world beyond reality.

By imitating real and imaginary life, the aesthetic quality that gamers experience while playing digital games is achieved. It is the *magic of a picture*.¹⁴³ Since, according to

136 FLUSSER, V.: *Komunikologija*. Beograd : Fakultet za medije i komunikacije, 2015, p. 107.

137 BAUDRILLARD, J.: *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. London : Sage Publications, 2017, p. 28-31.; BAUDRILLARD, J.: *Simulacija i zbilja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2001, p. 12-16.

138 BARTHES, R.: *Mitologije*. Zagreb : Pelago, 2009, p. 147.

139 FLUSSER, V.: *Komunikologija*. Beograd : Fakultet za medije i komunikacije, 2015, p. 134.

140 MORIN, E.: *O estetici*. Zagreb : TIM press, 2017, p. 84-88.

141 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Strukturalna antropologija*. Zagreb : Stvarnost, 1977, p. 44-48.; LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Divlja misao*. Beograd : Nolit, 1978, p. 74-75.

142 MORIN, E.: *O estetici*. Zagreb : TIM press, 2017, p. 46.

143 Ibidem, 47.

E. Fink¹⁴⁴ play represents the seriousness of life, it is a category of the unreal and the unreal. The game as such, paraphrases various forms of serious life, and the characters in the game represent the *creative enthusiasm*¹⁴⁵ of the creator and the aesthetic participation of the gamers.

About the Beauty of the Game

The concept of beauty has changed through years, centuries, periods, and cultures. Beauty is a fundamental determinant of the philosophy of art, which starts from Plato's famous thesis *Beauty is in the eye of the beholder*. According to E. Morin,¹⁴⁶ make-up, necklaces and ornaments have an aesthetic component intended to please both others and themselves. In other words, this *game of seduction*¹⁴⁷ exposes the recourse to beauty, but not beauty itself. Aesthetic feeling, which E. Morin calls poetic, is a state in which there is an inherent absence of pleasure and admiration, but at the same time, separating the *Self from the non-Self*.¹⁴⁸ However, at the same time, the ecstatic state, as the highest goal of the aesthetics of the digital game and the poetic state, is actually a paradox because the gamer is in ecstasy in which they are lost and in which they are fulfilled.

For I. Kant, one of the basic questions in aesthetics is related to the concept of the beautiful,¹⁴⁹ that is, why an individual likes something and whether it is valid for everyone or only for them. In his dialectic *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (Kritik der Urteilskraft), I. Kant dedicates the first part to the critique of the aesthetic power of judgment, more precisely, Analytic of the Beautiful. Goodness and beauty are the role models imagined by the human mind, and it requires that the true reality coincide with it.¹⁵⁰ According to I. Kant, the human mind wants what is and what becomes to be both good and beautiful. The importance of I. Kant's Analytic of the Beautiful is based on the establishment of the autonomy of the sphere of beauty, the concept of the indifference of aesthetic pleasure,¹⁵¹ the elaboration of the concept of aesthetic experience and the search for the universality of aesthetic judgment.

To explain I. Kant's dialectic of beauty more easily, let us compare Shadow of the Tomb Raider, Horizon Zero Dawn, and Detroit: Become Human. We will do this by looking at three female characters as the subject of Analytic of the Beautiful (Picture 1-3). The characters were chosen according to hair colour: black hair (Lara), redhead (Aloy) and blonde (Chloe). The object connection, stated by I. Kant, cannot be a feeling of satisfaction (comfort) because it does not signify anything about the observed. It is the subject who feels themselves looking at the examples given. Knowing the concept of a digital game, a character from a digital game or a landscape allows us to make judgments that have arisen in *pure reason*.

144 FINK, E.: *Igra kao simbol svijeta*. Zagreb : Demetra, 2000, p. 84.

145 MORIN, E.: *O esteticima*. Zagreb : TIM press, 2017, p. 48.

146 Ibidem, p. 13.

147 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 44-45.

148 MORIN, E.: *O esteticima*. Zagreb : TIM press, 2017, p. 15.

149 KANT, I.: *Kritika moći suđenja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022, p. 108.

150 STEINER, M.: Kantova estetika. In *Obnovljeni Život*, 1997, Vol. 52, No. 6, p. 533.

151 KANT, I.: *Kritika moći suđenja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022, p. 86.

In the aesthetic cognition of objects, we do not use objective but subjective judgment. M. Steiner¹⁵² argues that beauty is not a conceptual judgment and therefore it is not possible to give a positive definition of beauty but only a negative one. If we understand the game as being among other ways of being, then we can understand the digital game as a different kind of game. Such an understanding of the game presupposes a clear demarcation from other areas of life, primarily the sphere of work.¹⁵³ I. Kant considers aesthetic judgment (judgment of taste) as a judgment of beauty that arouses pleasure. In an individual aesthetic experience, the imagination is spontaneously activated according to some sense, an indefinite idea of the mind to which it is not guided but flows naturally, spontaneously. That sense acts as a necessity¹⁵⁴ so that we can see the whole.¹⁵⁵ I. Kant denotes this meaning by formal purposefulness, purposefulness without a concept of purpose,¹⁵⁶ and the undefined play of imagination and reason is accompanied by a sense of aesthetic comfort.



Picture 1: Lara from *Shadow of the Tomb Raider*

Source: *The Actress Who Plays Lara Croft in Shadow of The Tomb Raider Is Gorgeous in Real Life*. Released on 7th April 2022. [online]. [2022-06-25]. Available at: <<https://www.looper.com/787048/the-actress-who-plays-lara-croft-in-shadow-of-the-tomb-raider-is-gorgeous-in-real-life/>>.

I. Kant's claim to aesthetic judgment stems from the fact that it is not based on a concept but on a sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This means that gamers can only expect others to share a judgment about beauty that is equal to ours. However, beauty is a form, without the image of the end, which is also a paradox. This means that something does not have to have a purpose to be beautiful, but it seems to have a purpose.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, we take as an example the three listed characters from digital games to confirm that the judgment of beauty exists regardless of whether we have played the game, know the content and to recognize facial contours in the hyperrealism of digital play as a work of art.¹⁵⁸

152 STEINER, M.: Kantova estetika. In *Obnovljeni Život*, 1997, Vol. 52, No. 6, p. 535.

153 ŠKORIĆ, G.: Aspekti pojma igre u estetici i antropologiji. In *Metodički ogleđi*, 2012, Vol. 19, No. 1, p. 30.

154 KANT, I.: *Antropologija u pragmatičnom pogledu*. Zagreb : Naklada Breza, 2003, p. 122.

155 FERY, L.: *Homo Aestheticus: The Invention of Taste in the Democratic Age*. Chicago, IL : The University of Chicago Press, 1993, p. 91-93.

156 KANT, I.: *Kritika moći sudjenja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022, p. 86.

157 GUMBRECHT, H. U.: *In Praise of Athletic Beauty*. Cambridge, MA : The Belknap Press, 2006, p. 42-44.

158 JUKIĆ, D.: Digital Game as an Artistic Mimesis and a Cult Brand. In RADOŠINSKÁ, J., PROSTINÁKOVÁ HOSSOVÁ, M., SOLÍK, M. (eds.): *Megatrends and Media: Home Officetainment*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2021, p. 530-533.

Art shows the beautiful that serves as an alternative to reality. In this sense, we view aesthetics as F. Schiller, that is, we perceive the dualism of reason and the senses.¹⁵⁹ Although F. Schiller considers the problem of human life, he speaks of an individual who is fragmented in his wholeness.¹⁶⁰ In other words, F. Schiller argues that only the beautiful can give a man his social character. It is obvious that the aesthetics of pedagogy, of which F. Schiller speaks, derives from I. Kant's *Analytic of the Beautiful*.

Beauty is only that which belongs to taste, that which belongs sublimely to aesthetic judgment. However, I. Kant argues that the image of the sublime can and should be beautiful, otherwise it is cruel and barbaric. The image itself can be beautiful, even when it is a symbol of evil and ugliness¹⁶¹ like The Wendigo from *Until Dawn*¹⁶², and even if some aesthetic object that causes repulsion needs to be presented.



Picture 2: Aloy from *Horizon Zero Dawn*

Source: WADE, D.: *Guerrilla Games Horizon Zero Dawn Art Blast*. Released on 5th May 2017. [online]. [2022-11-03]. Available at: <<https://magazine.artstation.com/2017/05/guerrilla-games-horizon-dawn-art-blast/>>.

The key questions I. Kant asks are: why do we like an object and why do we like a digital game, i.e., its holder? To be able to distinguish whether something is beautiful or not, we associate it with imagination and illusion. However, I. Kant goes on to argue that any connection can be objective, but then it means the reality of some empirical cognition. Also, an objective connection cannot exist if it does not signify anything in the subject (gamer), but only if the subject feels themselves as they are affected by the performance (in this case a character from a digital game).

According to I. Kant, things in themselves affect the Self in itself, that is, things stimulate our senses and thus the senses arise as representations and opinions. I. Kant defines four fundamental moments of judgment: quantity, quality, relation, and modality¹⁶³ by which we make aesthetic judgments (Table 2). It rearranges its categories to fit the judgment table. I. Kant argues that reason cognizes through concepts and takes the

159 SCHILLER, F.: *O estetskom odgoju čovjeka u nizu pisama*. Zagreb : Scarabeus, 2006, p. 81.

160 Ibidem, p. 37-42.

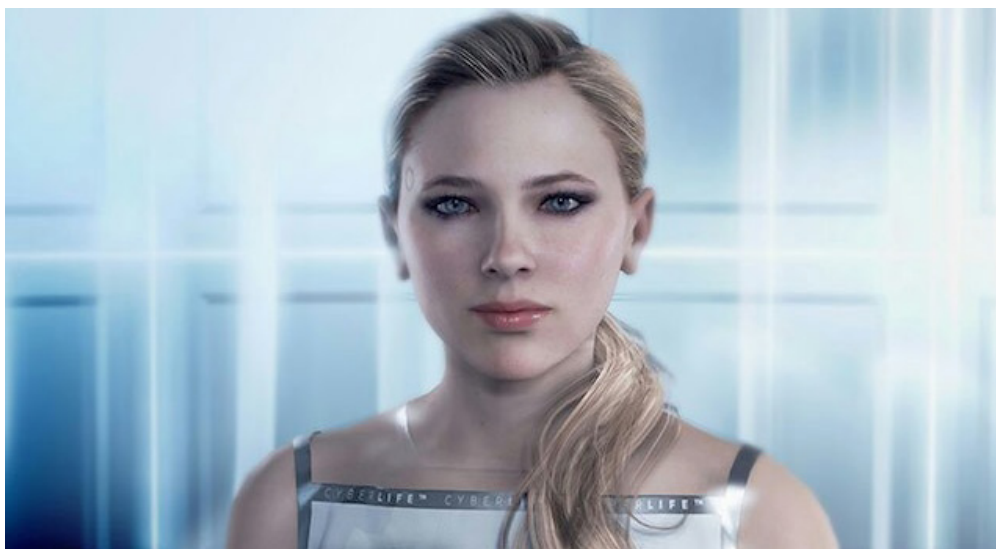
161 KANT, I.: *Antropologija u pragmatičnom pogledu*. Zagreb : Naklada Breza, 2003, p. 123-124.

162 SUPERMASSIVE GAMES: *Until Dawn*. [digital game]. San Mateo, CA : Sony Computer Entertainment, 2015.

163 KANT, I.: *Kritika moći sudjenja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022, p. 85-118.

expression of the category from Aristotle. By exploring the judgments concerning cognition in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kritik der reinen Vernunft) and the morals in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (Kritik der praktischen Vernunft), Kant demonstrates the power of judgment. And it is in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* that he argues that trial is the universal power by which everyone is bound. This judgment is not the power of distinctions, it transcends these processes through the possibility of harmony, i.e., beauty.

According to I. Kant, judgments about beauty do not concern the *comfort* of experience. They are not reduced to the question of experience. Enjoyment is always a matter of subjective and individual taste and cannot be equated with *universal feeling*.¹⁶⁴ In other words, the court of taste is not a court of knowledge, it is an aesthetic court that is subjective in its interior. When an individual makes an aesthetic judgment, then the *existence* of that digital game is not important to them, nor the *content* of that object (narratives, ideas, constructions). The liking that evokes what is pleasant or good is liking out of interest.¹⁶⁵



Picture 3: Chloe from *Detroit: Become Human*

Source: *Detroit: Become Human – Chloe (no menu)*. Released on 24th June 2020. [online]. [2022-06-25]. Available at: <<https://steamcommunity.com/sharedfiles/filedetails/?id=2140151851>>.

I. Kant states that interest is the satisfaction associated with the image of the existence of an object. What does that mean? Pleasant satisfaction is not related to the object, it does not stand in the role of cognition. From the moment a gamer finds a game enjoyable, they thus express an interest in the existence of that game because their desires arouse the senses and make us play that game. Therefore, I. Kant argues that satisfaction that is pleasant satisfies. So, what is good evokes satisfaction using pure reason.¹⁶⁶ A digital game does not have to have any meaning to find beauty in it.

The gamer judges the digital game beautiful according to the reflection that leads them to any concept and such liking is different from the pleasant one that comes from feeling. And that is the key difference between good and pleasant.¹⁶⁷ The pleasant, the beautiful, and the good designate then three different relations of representations to the

164 KANT, I.: *Kritika moći suđenja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022, p. 87-88.

165 Ibidem, p. 87.

166 Ibidem, p. 87-90.

167 Ibidem, p. 90-91.

feeling of pleasure. Pleasant signifies the pleasure of the gamer, and it is devoid of mind. Beautiful means that they like the digital game, and good means that the gamer appreciates and approves of such a game, i.e., gives it objective value. Let us compare Table 2 to distinguish the moments of judgments more clearly.

Table 2: Analytic of the Aesthetical Judgment of the Digital Games

Categories	Explanation
Quantity	The subject on which the concept depends
Quality	It only applies to some subjects
Relation	It can be applied to some subjects
Modality	The content of the subject's concept

Source: own processing; KANT, I.: *Kritika moći sudjenja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022, p. 85-116.

According to I. Kant, the beautiful is that which pleases universally without a concept. This is *general* satisfaction.¹⁶⁸ Since satisfaction is not based on the subject's interest or preference for the subject, the subject must assume that there is a reason someone would like the same subject. In other words, I. Kant argues that if something is liked only by someone, then we cannot call that object beautiful. Any objective relationship can only be imagined, but if it is subjective, it is felt. When it comes to being beautiful in a digital game, then it is different. That is why there are different genres. The individual determines the judgment of taste, and they are independent of beauty. Subjective unity can only be understood through emotions. In conclusion, the beautiful is that which pleases universally without a concept.¹⁶⁹

The third category talks about the purposefulness of the form of an object (digital games). Beauty is a form of purposefulness of an object if it is perceived in it without purpose. Purpose is the object of a concept as the cause of that object and the causality of a concept in terms of its purpose (*forma finalis*).¹⁷⁰ More simply, we are talking here about the purposefulness of a form of digital game whose purpose is to evoke emotions. However, such an accentuated form of the beautiful in art raises the question of favouring drawing and character as opposed to content and material.¹⁷¹ In other words, the gamer adds beauty through the purity of colour, graphics, drawings, and the overall visual impression, i.e., the composition of the work.

Qualitative perfection is the completeness of every thing of its kind and it as such represents the pure concept of everything that a particular digital game or character from a game should contain. Such an idea of beauty, specifically Lara Croft denoting one concept, represents the most sublime example of the taste of a pure idea of beauty, or, ironically, the ideal displayed in the android RT600 which is a simulacrum¹⁷² of a young woman. An ideal that can be expected only in a human figure differs from the normal idea of the beautiful.

I. Kant distinguishes two types of beauty: free (*pulchritudo vaga*) and dependent beauty (*pulchritudo adhaerens*).¹⁷³ In judging free beauty, no concept of purpose is assumed. The beauty of a digital character like Aloy, Lara or Cloe, presupposes a concept of purpose that determines what the thing should be. Thus, the dependent beauty of the

168 KANT, I.: *Kritika moći sudjenja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022., p. 92.

169 Ibidem, p. 96-98.

170 Ibidem, p. 99.

171 GUNTER, Z.: *Kritički duh*. Zagreb : Matica hrvatska, 2012, p. 272.

172 BAUDRILLARD, J.: *Simulacra and Simulation*. Ann Arbor, MI : The University of Michigan Press, 1994, p. 1.

173 KANT, I.: *Kritika moći sudjenja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022, p. 106.

above characters from the digital game stems from the resemblance to the real beauty of a woman. The ideal consists in the expression of what is moral and that is exactly what causes admiration, as is the case with Aloy.

The fourth moment of taste starts from satisfaction as a necessary consequence. I. Kant argues that beautiful has a necessary relationship to satisfaction.¹⁷⁴ He means that the individual requires the other to agree with them because they have a principle that is common. This principle represents the idea of general feeling. However, such a principle starts from common sense, that is, the subjective necessity we attach to the judgment of taste is conditioned.¹⁷⁵ I. Kant concludes that the condition of necessity imposed by the judgment of taste is the idea of a common sense.

Can we relate F. Schiller's aesthetics to I. Kant's *Analytic of the Beautiful*? According to F. Schiller, man seeks abundance and excess to hide its limits from lust and ensure his own pleasure. However, man also seeks abundance above that matter to expand that pleasure. So, an individual enjoys more, but does not enjoy otherwise.¹⁷⁶ The same analogy applies to the gamer and their need to play digital games of the same genre in the series *Call of Duty*¹⁷⁷, *Assassin's Creed*¹⁷⁸ or *Uncharted*¹⁷⁹. Games differ in gameplay mechanics, graphics, action, or new features, but the essence of enjoyment remains the same. The individual did not increase their pleasure by scope, they ennobled it according to the manner and kind of pleasure.¹⁸⁰ This is precisely the key in F. Schiller's consideration of the beauty of enjoyment, because the individual already enjoys the very act of expectation.

Discussion

The topic of the study *why we play digital games* was analysed from an anthropological-philosophical-pedagogical aspect. Even from the subtitle, it is evident that there seems to be a discrepancy between the three disciplines within the consideration of the game phenomenon. This interdisciplinarity tells us that the phenomenon of play and playing is significant in human life, from the very beginnings of culture, the development of tribes and rituals all the way to the philosophical understanding of the world and man in the context of play and his upbringing. This also reveals to us the richness of the game phenomenon, which is reflected depending on the aspect of game research.

First, the answer arises that we play games for enjoyment, rest, and liking. We could argue that we play games because we love them and have a need to play them. A closer reflection on the *existence* of the game raises two questions: do we play games for the sake of beauty, or is the beauty in playing a game? If we play games for the sake of beauty, then we are allowed to view the game in the context of I. Kant's understanding of the distinction of beauty. With this, we accept the hypothesis that beautiful is what does not arouse interest, that is, we observe the form and not the content of the game. In this sense, we look at three images from three different digital games that represent a pure, disinterested idea of the game. According to I. Kant, beauty is in the free play of imagination that causes pleasure in the subject.

174 KANT, I.: *Kritika moći sudeња*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022, p. 112.

175 Ibidem, p. 113.

176 SCHILLER, F.: *O estetskom odgoju čovjeka u nizu pisama*. Zagreb : Scarabeus, 2006, p. 152.

177 INFINITY WARD et al.: *Call of Duty (series)*. [digital game]. Santa Monica, CA : Activision, 2003-2022.

178 UBISOFT MONTREAL et al.: *Assassin's Creed (series)*. [digital game]. Saint-Mandé : Ubisoft, 2007-2020.

179 NAUGHTY DOG et al.: *Uncharted (series)*. [digital game]. San Mateo, CA : Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2007-2022.

180 SCHILLER, F.: *O estetskom odgoju čovjeka u nizu pisama*. Zagreb : Scarabeus, 2006, p. 153.

I. Kant shows beauty in the context of *imagination*. This means that in this study we analysed the concept of beauty, which does not speak about the *existence* of the game itself, therefore it does not speak about the content and the main characters or their moral values, but we observed the game exclusively in the context of disinterested liking, therefore as a form. Even more simply, a game image represents a concept-free idea of a game. The problem that arises in such an abstract understanding of the beauty of the game is related to the mistake of *looking for meaning* and content. This error is caused by adding meaning to the term F. de Saussure spoke about in the analysis of the linguistic sign.¹⁸¹ Here, the emphasis is on the expression of the linguistic sign, that is, on the signifier level, which we observe in the context of I. Kant's form. The mistake is that we automatically observe the image and add meaning to it, but then it is no longer a disinterested liking because we know the meaning of that term and combine it into a sign, or form into content. I. Kant states exactly this as crucial in the understanding of beauty. We then *understand* and judge the game rationally, not aesthetically.

Therefore, the deconstruction of the idea of the beauty of the game, that is, its segment that we have shown in the three pictures, serves as evidence of the analysis of beauty according to which beauty evokes general liking, and that beauty is a form without a purpose. I. Kant gives an example of the idea of beauty in the context of a green meadow, which we understand as objective, but its pleasure belongs to the subjective sense. In other words, I. Kant claims that pleasure (sensation) and the idea of beauty (judgment of taste) make it impossible to produce an idea. In the context of a digital game, let us take for example the image of Lara, which we judge according to the idea of the beauty of the form, exclusively as an image, ignoring the *search for the meaning* of her heroic and moral values (without an existential component).

Understanding certain digital games as a form of art,¹⁸² we can conclude that beautiful art is one that follows the imagination as a way of knowing. This is I. Kant's premise of an aesthetic idea that encourages reflection. In this study, we tried to answer whether the idea of the game, its mental creation that we presented in the form of three pictures, is sufficient for understanding the beauty of the game in an abstract sense.

From the aspect of the meaning of play, new questions have been raised that are still looking for answers. However, structure is also important in game analysis. C. Levi-Strauss understands structure as a solid system that represents the hidden order of human behaviour.¹⁸³ Such a structure allows us to correlate with J. Baudrillard's works, which talk about hidden symbols and signs within the world in which we live.¹⁸⁴ V. Flusser says that we are surrounded by images that create a collective amnesia for us caused by the hyperproduction of images that also demand decoding.¹⁸⁵ In his analogy of the photographer, he says that the position of photography as a gesture of play opens the possibility of new thinking about imagination.¹⁸⁶ In this sense, man exists with the help of images that represent the world to him. This also raises new questions for us, especially if we look at them in the context of media pedagogy and digital games. Man, lives in the digital space and is surrounded by techno images without thinking about the function of these images.

181 SAUSSURE, F.: *Tečaj opće lingvistike*. Zagreb : ArTresor, 2000, p. 98.

182 DUTTON, D.: *The Art Instinct Beauty, Pleasure, and Human Evolution*. London : Bloomsbury Press, 2009, p. 58.; JUKIĆ, D.: Digital Game as an Artistic Mimesis and a Cult Brand. In RADOŠINSKÁ, J., PROSTINÁKOVÁ HOSSOVÁ, M., SOLÍK, M. (eds.): *Megatrends and Media: Home Officetainment*. Trnava : FMK UCM in Trnava, 2021, p. 533-534.

183 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Strukturalna antropologija*. Zagreb : Stvarnost, 1977, p. 58.; LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Divlja misao*. Beograd : Nolit, 1978, p. 74-75.

184 BAUDRILLARD, J.: *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. London : Sage Publications, 2017, p. 28-31.; BAUDRILLARD, J.: *Simulacija i zbilja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2001, p. 12-16.

185 FLUSSER, V.: *Filozofija fotografije*. Zagreb : Scarabeus, 2007, p. 21.; FLUSSER, V.: *Komunikologija*. Beograd : Fakultet za medije i komunikacije, 2015, p. 179-184.

186 FLUSSER, V.: *Komunikologija*. Beograd : Fakultet za medije i komunikacije, 2015, p. 183.

Because of the above, play is also observed from the aspect of E. Fink, who understands play in a symbolic sense,¹⁸⁷ where the transfer of play from an individual to society takes place. This means that digital games in their imagination reflect reality, so the themes, motives and meanings discussed are also a reflection of reality. According to the aspect of media pedagogy,¹⁸⁸ digital games influence users, they shape the user by immersing them in the world of imagination, beauty, and hidden meaning. The user in such a digital world is freed from serious life. Two opposites appear here: R. Barthes' analysis of the digital game myth and V. Flusser's techno image of digital reality.

If we analyse the meanings of digital games according to R. Barthes, then new ways of decoding media semiotics open for us according to which we show new meanings of digital games. However, if we analyse digital games and the digital world according to V. Flusser, then the images are presented as scenes in which the users are consumed and, they themselves become the object of the game.

Therefore, the questions that remain open for discussion and further research refer to the position of researching the phenomenon of digital games itself. From the aspect of aesthetics, questions of the beauty of digital games can be explored in the context of a sublime character who has moral and heroic qualities. In this sense, the possibility of analysing artistic creation and cognitive sciences opens. Also, it is possible to compare I. Kant's understanding of the idea of an artist who stimulates the talent of another artist when creating digital games if we consider the digital game as a form of contemporary artwork.

In further research, the techno-imaginary characters mentioned by V. Flusser can be investigated, but in the context of the digital world and from the aspect of media pedagogy. Since digital images are information that has been processed, the question of constructing an artificial reality arises. Decoding digital games requires a symbolic code that allows for different interpretations. This also raises the question of the active role of the creators of such codes, but also of the construction of the real from the unreal. The question arises whether man is really *Homo ludens imago Dei* in the theological sense.¹⁸⁹ Can we see the world as a play and as a toy? In this sense, the question remains open: is the man in relation to the play or is the play in the man?

Conclusion

The analysis of beauty that we have shown according to I. Kant through the four moments of judgment derives from the premise that beautiful form is satisfaction without interest, perfection without purpose. Such beauty does not require the content of a digital game, because content signifies the existence of an object.¹⁹⁰ If an individual were to know the content of an object (digital games) then their aesthetic judgment would be subjective without a realistic expectation that other individuals would agree on a common claim. What you like does not depend entirely on reason. It is beautiful when we do not benefit from it and when we do not include notion in it.

187 FINK, E.: *Igra kao simbol svijeta*. Zagreb : Demetra, 2000, p. 80-83.

188 BAUER, T. A.: Die Kompetenz ethischen und ästhetischen Handelns. Medienethik aus medienpädagogischer Perspektive. In KARMASIN, M. (ed.): *Medien und Ethik*. Stuttgart : Reclam, 2002, p. 199.; BAUER, T. A.: *Mediji za otvoreno društvo*. Zagreb : Sveučilišna knjižara, 2007, p. 157.

189 GOLUB, I.: Homo ludens imago Dei. In *Bogoslovska smotra*, 1991, Vol. 61, No. 1-2, p. 48.

190 KANT, I.: *Kritika moći suđenja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022, p. 88.

Also, taste should not depend on the concept. The same goes for the aforementioned digital games, i.e., three female characters. According to I. Kant's Analytic of the Beautiful, we make judgments based on form, not content. Only with such an understanding can we observe the digital game, its characters, landscape, or fragments in an aesthetic and artistic sense. What is beautiful is determined by looking at the form, and we do not draw conclusions about the content of the digital game. If we accept that the three female characters reflect digital art, the form of the artwork depends on the composition, surface, contrast, and order of colours.

Finally, we can ask a concluding question: *why do we play digital games?* To answer this question, we will refer to the analysed theories in this study. We live through play because play is the beginning and a free act.¹⁹¹ It is a spiritual creation of man. We play for pleasure and rest, but also for exaltation. Play is beautiful in its form, and beautiful is what causes liking without a clue. The beautiful is that which pleases universally without requiring a concept.¹⁹² Games teach us¹⁹³ and represent the imagination of life.¹⁹⁴ Through the game we become people and create our own stories,¹⁹⁵ and, at the same time, we forget who we are because they overwhelm us.

In this sense, we can paraphrase the Latin proverb *Dum spiro spero* and reshape its meaning according to which we live as long as we play. It is a game where everyone has their time, place, and role. Digital games are one big techno picture in which every scene is live and there are no restarts.

For F. Schiller, man is free only when he plays, because play complements man.¹⁹⁶ With this statement, F. Schiller expresses his own definition of how a man should play with Beauty. In such a game, the individual learns, feels, thinks, and belongs to himself. Man plays for pleasure and rest, but also above that level, for the sake of beauty and sublimity.¹⁹⁷ The state in which one emotion changes us E. Morin calls metaphorically *poetic*, and this is exactly what the gamer experiences. What is crucial in observing such images stems from an understanding of form, not content.

When we look beautiful, the feeling of satisfaction stems from a limitation of form because we do not know the content. That is the most beautiful. The digital game, which we do not know the end of, draws us like our own life in that we do not know how it will end, but we want to live it in beauty.

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191 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 14.

192 KANT, I.: *Kritika moći sudjenja*. Zagreb : Jesenski i Turk, 2022, p. 98.

193 SCHILLER, F.: *O estetskom odgoju čovjeka u nizu pisama*. Zagreb : Scarabeus, 2006, p. 192.

194 FINK, E.: *Igra kao simbol svijeta*. Zagreb : Demetra, 2000, p. 83.

195 LÉVI-STRAUSS, C.: *Divlja misao*. Beograd : Nolit, 1978, p. 74-75.

196 SCHILLER, F.: *O estetskom odgoju čovjeka u nizu pisama*. Zagreb : Scarabeus, 2006, p. 89.

197 HUIZINGA, J.: *Homo ludens: o podrijetlu kulture u igri*. Zagreb : Naprijed, 1992, p. 24.

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