Erschienen in: Einspielungen : Prozesse und Situationen digitalen Spielens / Spöhrer, Markus; Waldrich, Harald (Hrsg.). - Wiesbaden : Springer VS, 2020. - S. 179-206. - ISBN 978-3-658-30720-2
https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-30721-9_9

Twitching Laborious Play or: How Game-Streaming Changes Modes of Playing

Beate Ochsner, Markus Spöhrer und Harald Waldrich

1 Introduction: The emergence of professional live streaming

During the last five years, we were able to witness the rise from amateur 'casual' gamers to superstar-entertainers with crowds of ten thousands of fans cheering to their gaming achievements and performances. This success can be directly linked to the popularity of *twitch* – a streaming service that has become "the dominant Western games livestreaming platform" (Witkowski 2017, p. 417) during the recent years. Although *twitch* was already launched in mid-2011, the true hype started with the rise and success of Battle Royale games, which became popular after the release of *PUBG in 2017.*[1] The theme of the 'last man standing', however, is a discourse that has been reworked in other popular media before, such as the 'Royal Rumble' in professional Wrestling, in literature,

[1]Battle Royal Games are a subgenre of Open World Games, as Götz (2018) explains: „Here, dozens of opponents compete in an open world terrain, with the goal of the game being the ‚Last Man Standing'. Only the player or the team wins that survives all in-game conflicts until the end of the gaming session" (2018, pp. 262-263).

B. Ochsner (✉) · M. Spöhrer · H. Waldrich
Universität Konstanz, Konstanz, Germany
E-Mail: beate.ochsner@uni-konstanz.de

M. Spöhrer
E-Mail: markus.spoehrer@uni-konstanz.de

H. Waldrich
E-Mail: harald.waldrich@uni-konstanz.de

e.g. *The Hunger Games* (Collins 2008), or movies like *Running Man* (Paul Michael Glaser 1987). Those games, played and performed on *twitch,* turned out to be the ideal stage for gamers and their livestreams – it offers "easy access [and] deeply networked production epicenters that participate in the steady distribution of high performance play" (Witkowski 2017, p. 418). Nowadays most famous gamers like Ninja, Shroud, DrDisrespect and MontanaBlack gained a lot of visibility, fame and financial advantages by streaming Battle Royale games like *PUBG* (PUB Corporation, since 2017) and *Fortnite* (Epic Games, since 2017), while having thousands of live spectators and subscribers in each streaming event. Linked to this emergence of fame and success, a specific development of broadcasting particularly conventionalized gaming events and corresponding gaming arrangements took place, too. The dominant game-streaming set-ups can be found in two supposedly competing and opposing formats: the PC Master Race (PCMR), highlighting high-end personal computer hardwares, and the home console dispositive (cf. Waldrich 2016) that heralds up-to-date video game console machines. Both of these techno-aesthetic forms are inseparably intertwined with streaming platforms such as *twitch* and *YouTube.*

Gamers, who formerly networked and socialized in smaller, subcultural communities have become professional performers garnering large audiences. However, in contrast to casual, everyday gaming, *twitch* game streaming[2] enables specific monetizing strategies by increasingly blurring the boundaries between leisure time and working hours, a pair that, historically speaking, has been considered as mutually excluding for a long time (cf. Burke 1988). This shift, in our opinion, is an effect of various translations taking part in the socio-technical arrangement of gaming with its economical, technical, cultural and ludic dynamics. All these 'contexts' (cf. Derrida 1988) being linked together can be considered as the coming-together of a virtual "playground" (Huizinga 1955, p. 10), in which play begins before the (actual) game starts thus extending the borders of the "magic circle" (ibid.), reassembling its part(icipant)s (Giddings 2008) and their corresponding linkages. However, these socio-technical constellations are not only forms of broadcasting 'content', but at the same time, they also en- or disable specific modes of play. Streaming gameplay is not merely

[2]The term ‚streaming' refers to the cultural phenomenon of social live broadcasting on *twitch* and not only to the technological solutions of streaming video and sound data over the internet. The content creators are named streamers, who primarily focus on gaming and other creative projects (cf. Macey 2019).

a respresentation of classical gaming, it produces a new form of ‘live streaming gaming events and practices’ and not merely a representation of ‘classical’ gaming.

Thus, the ‘gaming event’ is conditioned by and tightly connected to the moment of broadcasting, the streamers’ performances and in-game-actions, their internet personae as well as the watching, live commenting and cheering audience (cf. Gadamer 1977, p. 31) as much as the numerous posts in message boards, internet memes, and surrounding discussions that discursively process in interconnected actor-networks. Thus, the *twitch* gaming event is a multifaceted and multilayered participatory act, linking economic interests of platform owners, game industry and gamers with modes of playing games – a development that engenders gaming – especially *twitch* gaming – as a new form of ‘work’ (see 5.).

In this paper, we will make an effort to develop a frame by which the interconnections between actors like media specific aspects of live-streaming, the aesthetic of performing – such as ‘self-portrayal’ and maintaining a ‘screen persona’ by the streamers –,mediatechnical equipment as well as social interactions with the audience and, last but not least, economic interests become entangled to produce what we call a ‘live-streamed gaming event (Giddings 2008)’ or, to put it simple, *twitch.*

In the following, we decisively focus on the contexts of *twitch* gaming arrangements and *not* on game mechanics, game aesthetics or narrative functions of individual games, in order to confront the common assumption that ‘games’ are ready-made products. Rather, we argue for an understanding of gaming as an entanglement of a plethora of elements, highlighting the contextuality and processuality of ‘digital gaming’. Our theoretical foundation of *twitch* gaming is inspired by elements of Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) and Science and Technology Studies (STS) (2.). We will exemplify this by analyzing and describing discourses on two distinctly different streamers with respective differing audiences and performance styles: DrDisrespect (USA) and MontanaBlack (Germany) (3.1., 3.2.). In doing so, we will also elaborate on the elements of twitching assemblages – such as reworkings of the popular and successful PCMR aesthetics – that enable and condition the performance of these two streamers. We will link these findings to our theoretical premises. We decisively focus on the contexts of *twitch* gaming arrangements and *not* on game mechanics, game aesthetics or narrative functions of individual games, in order to confront the common assumption that ‘games’ are ready-made products. Rather, we argue for an understanding of gaming as an entanglement of a plethora of elements, highlighting the contextuality and processuality of ‘digital gaming’. As a result of our analysis, we will show that the heterogeneous linkages and interconnections of actors, agencies, discourses and interests in live-streaming events, lead to a

mainly economically driven destabilization of former dichotomies like work and play, seriousness and fun (4.). We will show in what way these new forms of gaming produce a hybrid mode of „playful labor“ or „laborious play“ (cf. Kücklich 2005; Peuter & Dyer-Witheford; Dippel und Fizek 2015, 2019).

2 Linking elements: A theoretical foundation for describing live-streamed gaming events

Inspired by ANT and STS, recent academic discourse on digital games and gaming increasingly focused the processual, relational and agential nature of digital gaming arrangements and their related actors (cf. Giddings 2008; Conway und Trevillian 2015; Waldrich 2016; Spöhrer 2018; Huuhka 2019). This consequently means to move away from analyses of games as cultural artifacts, systems or narrative structures to a conceptualization of digital gaming as socio-technical and sensory ‘events’ (Giddings 2008). Instead of framing ‘games’ as semi-permeable ‘products’, that can be subsumed as sets of rules, story elements and mechanisms that are inherent to these ‘cultural artifacts’ or ‘ludic structures’, researchers began to focus on socio-technical processes, interconnections, and related contexts en- or disabling the gaming event.

Of course, this does not mean we should dismiss approaches that frame games as/in separate cultural artifacts or narrative structures, that can be analyzed, described, decoded and deciphered independent of their situational ludic context. As the last 20 years of Game Studies research have shown, such approaches lead to productive and important insights (Eskelinen 2001). However, as every research, it also creates blind spots when it comes to the interplay, the ‘in-between’ and the relational premises of the different elements. As Seth Giddings (2008) puts it, “[w]e should resist conceiving of the video game as a discrete and ‘whole’ object” (p. 5). The conception of ‘games’ as “whole objects” basically dismisses classical definitions of playing games, that characterize ludic processes as ‘open-ended’, ‘indeterminate’, ‘unpredictable’ and as ‘enacted’ – in favor of clear-cut, ‘scientific’ output (cf. Spöhrer 2020).

As for example David Parisi (2010) has shown, individual sensory activities and their respective related bodily techniques cannot be separated from the digital ‘outputs’ of video games, as the event of ‘playing a game’ relies on the feedback loop that both digital output and bodily/sensory inputs enact. However, this does mean neither that narration, aesthetics or gameplay mechanics are to be neglected nor that the focus should be shifted exclusively on the bodily, socio-technical, anthropological, and cultural contexts. Rather, Giddings along

with others conceives of digital gaming as a situated practice that is entangled in an inseparable arrangement of heterogeneous "part(icipant)s" (cf. 2008. p. 8–10; Conway und Trevillian 2015; Waldrich 2016; Spöhrer 2018) enacted in the event of playing. It is the task of the researcher to identify those practices, agencies, and heterogeneous actors and link them back together, in order to (re-)create a 'gaming event'. As we will show in this paper, this proceeding is especially productive for an analysis of *twitch* performances where 'playing a game' is characterized by a plethora of different actors and time critical processes.

Following the ANT, the term "part(icipant)s" implies three important connotations for the conceptualization of gaming events: firstly, gaming events are enacted by the reciprocal interplay of both human and non-human actors and actions, which means that neither a purely techno-deterministic nor an aesthetico-anthropocentric description is sufficient. Secondly, each element in the gaming event can be part and participant – an actor that distributes agency –, they are "integral part(icipant)s of the event" (Giddings 2008, p. 5). Not only the actively playing actors need to be understood as (part)icipants in this sense, but also the audience. The audience that is neither passive nor excluded from the gaming event (Gadamer 1977, p. 31), but instead part of the "prosumption" (Fuchs 2014). This also applies for alleged 'inanimate' objects, technical devices, socio-economic practices and strategies as well as cultural discourses enrolled as actors in the socio-technical gaming arrangement (cf. Callon 1986; cf. Spöhrer 2018, p. 94). Thirdly, a part(icipant) is always 'taking part', it/she/he is faced with a plurality of other elements linked to each other in a reciprocal manner, thus co-constituting the gaming event (cf. Waldrich 2016). Based on this concept, our hypothesis is that the complex relations that are enacted by the socio-technical arrangement of *twitch* game streaming produce a specific and highly precarious hybridization between working and gaming practices, labelled 'serious gaming', 'playbor' (cf. Kücklich 2005), or 'laborious play' (cf. Dippel und Fizek 2015). The 'real-time' online live-streamed single-player gaming situation, such as on a digital platform like *twitch,* differs from an offline local single-player situation that is recorded and, only later on, uploaded to a broadcasting platform such as *YouTube.* Both arrangements, although certainly to be considered gaming events, generate different concepts and evaluations of what it means to 'play a game' and/or to monetize gaming.

These socio-technical arrangements do not only enroll a whole range of further human actors and agencies (viewers, commentators, subscribers, etc.) and various technical recording and communication devices. They also enact and translate specific forms of techno-cultural techniques of evaluation and meaning-making – ranging from written live-commentary of viewers, likes and dislikes, to new digital literacies as memes and emojis as well as modes of high

value-added activity (monetarization, commercialization, see below). However, an important difference to conventional non-broadcasted on- or offline gaming lies in the specific form of translation by which *twitch* Let's Play live streams mediate the gaming event. Broadcastings of Let's Play's enact the audiovisual and aesthetic elements and conventions of streaming cameras, which need to be considered a crucial "mediator" of the gameplay in the Latourian sense (Latour 2005, p. 39). In his paper on "Broadcasting Play"[3], Ben Egliston (2016) takes into consideration these modes of 'staging' and 'representation' and elaborates on "how different formats of broadcast communicate varying ontologies of video-game play; situating networks of material (and immaterial) relations" and goes on to ask "how particular methods of framing play, via broadcast, orient, or dis-orient, viewers from the idea of play as an experience thoroughly mediated by materialities and bodies" (np). This kind of mediation renders invisible the socio-technical arrangement of the broadcaster as well as the bodily techniques they carry out in order to interact with the on-screen events by audio-visually 'cutting' these (maybe otherwise distorting or non-entertaining) elements from the representation of gameplay. In this respect, watching or partaking in a live stream is not a passive, direct, immediate observation of 'someone playing a game' (cf. Egliston 2016), but instead a partaking in a "hybrid of game and video" (Burwell und Miller 2016, p. 2), a medial translation of gaming situations and a 'playing-with' (cf. Gadamer 1977) of mutually connected and socio-technically shaped actors and agencies. In our example of DrDisrespect and MontanaBlack, we will come back to such 'framings' and elaborate on Egliston's findings in more detail.

The processuality of mutual shaping part(icipant)s in the gaming event, however, challenges digital gaming researchers to choose an adequate perspective to describe the becoming of the event. If each part(icipant) is an actor that distributes agency and can become a mediator, that is capable of translating actions like wishes, agencies, things, discourses or technical objects, then we have to admit that this also applies to the researchers. In order to analyze a *twitch*-streamed gaming event, they have to partake in the situation and remediate the respective event: "The presence of the researcher and the research technologies are inseparable from the networks under study. They too are (made of) part(icipant)s" (Giddings 2008, p. 6). Consequently, we, as the researchers, this

[3]It should be added here that Egliston, referring to 'broadcasting', uses a somewhat problematic term, as this term can be considered to be located in a classical 'broadcast' situation. However, that is not the case – from the perspective of ANT, Egliston decisively talks about the 'new media'-events of live streaming on *YouTube* and *twitch*.

paper and our mode of description – written language -, become parts, actors and translational elements of the gaming event under scrutiny: "As with any approach, processual media theory itself is implicated in the systems of relations it describes; as such, it too operates in a reflexive mode that contributes to change within the system" (Rossiter 2013, p. 107). Still, even by acknowledging a reflexive mode of description (cf. Pink 2004, p. 4), 'capturing' a certain situational moment of gameplay in its sheer complexity and situativeness appears to be a problematic if not impossible operation – at least from a practical point of view. Each description is bound to remain a 'freeze frame' (no matter which mode of description one chooses). Instead of framing the beginning and the end of our case studies by prefabricating a spatio-temporal pattern in which the gaming situation is pre-rendered by, we propose to "follow" two of the "spokesmen" (cf. Callon 1986, p. 216–217) of the *twitch* game streaming actor-network –DrDisrespect and MontanaBlack -and the complex processes of staging the *twitch* gaming event.

2.1 DrDisrespect: Staging PCMR culture and the 'superior' gamer on *twitch*

The monetization of live-streamed gaming content on *twitch,* large fan bases, and the performative character of such, usually follows the pop-cultural aesthetic codes of a 'style' that – in (online) gaming communities – has come to be known as the PCMR: The 'glorious' PC Master Race. Although *twitch* can be used as an application for video game consoles like the Sony Playstation 4 (PS4) and the Microsoft Xbox One, it is mostly centered around PC gaming. This marks an important difference, since the gaming situation on a gaming console tends to emerge in and by a specific assemblage, which is configured by a living-room-like arrangement, assembling all the different part(icipant)s in a relational web, enabling a specific gaming event (cf. Waldrich 2016) to come into effect. PC gaming differs from console gaming not just by the spatio-temporal configuration, but also by different part(icipant)s, technologies, and practices. The above-mentioned term 'PCMR' is widely used to describe this form of gaming and its correlating socio-technical arrangements. 'Hardcore' PCMR-gamers distinguish themselves "from the more casual focused console 'peasants'" (Marshall et al. 2019, p. 164) conveying specific *twitch* practices of gaming based on configuring and customizing an individual 'Battlestation' (a customized PC) as part of their impression management.

A quite popular representative is the famous Streamer DrDisrespect, who ironically calls himself "the face of *twitch*" (Klein & Klein 2017). He is a *twitch*

character portrayed and created by 37-years old American former eSports gamer and game designer Guy Beahm. He almost exclusively plays online multiplayer or Battle Royale games that focus on the importance of competition and the 'last-man-standing' gameplay (eliminating all opponents), such as *PUBG, Call of Duty: Black Ops 4* (Treyarch 2018), *Apex Legends* (Respawn 2019) or *Call of Duty: Warzone* (Infinity Ward 2020).

His persona's exterior characteristics are showcased by its unique and stylized look (Fig. 1).

DrDisrespects always wears a black mullet wig, massive retro-futuristic sunglasses and a black mustache (which he jokingly insists on is a "poisonous Ethiopian caterpillar"). His outfit consists of a black or red long-sleeved t-shirt and a black or red military vest. To support these eclectic references to 'bad-taste' 1980s/1990s fashion fads, Beahm constantly (and jokingly) boasts about his skills, his alleged superpowers, his irresistible looks and his overall 'greatness'. Not only did he call himself "the best player in the world", but also his audience (over 1 million followers) frequently awards him with this position (cf. Link 2019). ESPN characterized Beahm's presentation as "a hyper-caricature of how the stereotypical

Fig. 1 Iconic portrait of DrDisrespect, stylized in the aesthetic modes of 1980s superhero comics (Beahm 2020)

male gamer views himself" (D'Anastasio 2018). Despite of the fact (or even because of the fact) that his outfits are overtly outdated and his (well-known) catchphrases are mostly narcissistic and self-centered, his audience attributes him with a video-gaming rock star status (Yohan 2017).[4]

DrDisrespect's favorite titles are (Battle Royale) games that are designed with a specific interface and related strategies of sensorimotor control in mind: the flexible and constantly upgradable interface consisting of an ultrasensitive computer mouse and a keyboard that allows for individualized button mapping.[5] Controlling these devices takes months of practice and a high-level skill – comparable to specific skills acquired in sports – that have to be developed in mutual relation to the PC-game arrangement. Besides Beahm performing and playing his role as the the 'god-like' DrDisrespect, he is objectively a talented high-level player and such players frequently "not only showcase their virtuosity of the game via the accumulation of points on screen, but through the ways in which their body has been trained to respond to the game" (Egliston 2016). In this respect, in PCMR there is an almost fetishized relationship between the player's skills and the individualized 'devices' they play on – probably best described by the relationship of a musician to his instrument (see Fig. 2).

Gamers, who consider themselves members of the PCMR movement, consequently hold the belief that the constantly developing and upgradeable PC hardware is in many ways 'far superior' to the much more 'closed' and inflexible technology of video gaming consoles (cf. MacDonald 2013): Peripherals such as the mouse and the keyboard are presumably more accurate and enable a higher graphics potential, flexibility and upgradability of PC hardware or software for modding, tuning and upgrading and the rapid reciprocal development of high-end hardware and state-of–the-art gaming softwares. In PCMR not only the outcome of the virtual battles is of importance; acquiring, upgrading and aestheticizing the hardware is a form of competition, too. DrDisrespect shows this affinity for technological progression not only through his futuristic gaming room, but also through his constant display of new and more elaborate gaming hardware and Battlestations, following the aesthetic and cultural codes of PCMR (Fig. 2).

---

[4]Consider Yohan's (2017) description: „DrDisRespect is also known for his '80s-styled masculinity. He's extremely cocky and compliments himself on a daily basis, all in an over-exaggerated comedic fashion. (He once even called himself a sex God.) One would assume that the man has never shed a tear in his life, not even as a baby" (np).

[5]However, the 'WASD'-buttons on the keyboard are the most common buttons for moving an avatar. This button mapping can be interchanged with any of the buttons available on a standard PC keyboard.

Fig. 2 The player-peripherals companionship. Advertisement for German ROCCAT hardware (Panknin 2020)

This specific look is to be related to a process that has steadily changed the aesthetic values of PC hardware to look more futuristic (or retro-futuristic) and more 'valuable'. The unfolding PCMR developed a distinct appeal of their techno-cultural artifacts by redefining, tuning and configuring both the interiors and exteriors of their formerly unimposing personal computers. A 'proper' Battlestation is equipped with an array of 'fancy' RGB lights that illuminate the elaborate hardware components inside the PC that are displayed by transparent windows on the outside of the PC cases. In addition, the gaming peripherals like the keyboard and mouse use the illuminating effects in different colors, fitting the whole setting (see Fig. 3).[6] Analogous to an expensive customized

[6]Additionally, a 'decent' gaming room is often stylized with diffuse RGB backlights as well as stacked with different artifacts of gaming history and popular culture. The whole setting is illuminated in a cold-blue and black aesthetic with a very organized and sterile impression. Although each room features reoccurring elements that signalize 'PCMR', individuality by adding personal details seems to be key here. Some PCMR gaming rooms look more like a workspace for a 'high end' product advertisement or a futurism-art-museum exhibition than an actual living room.

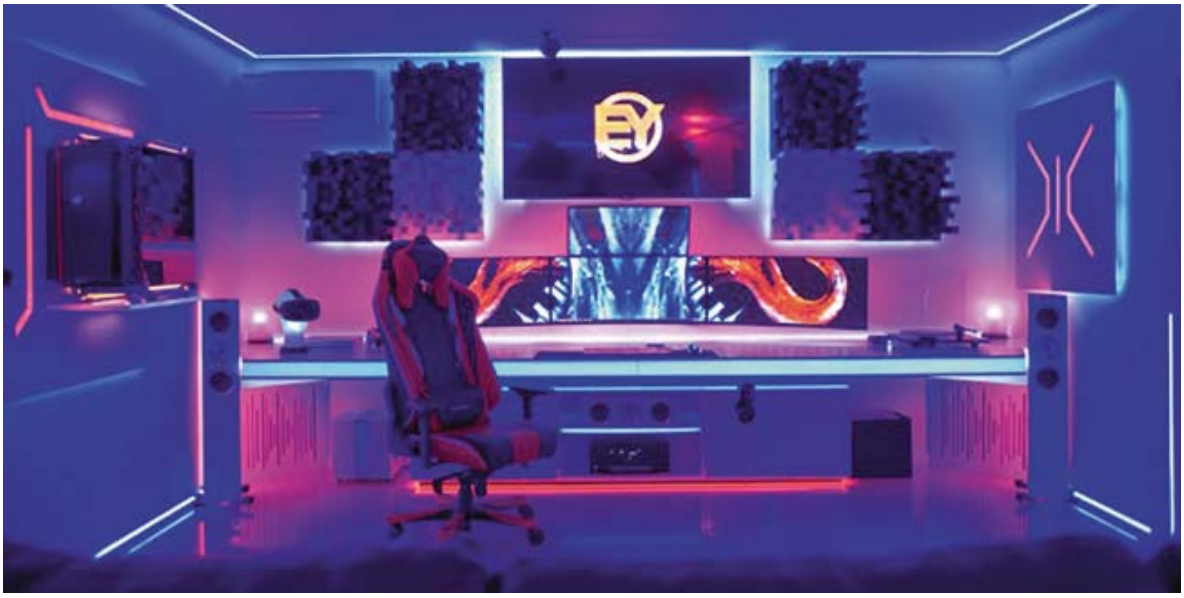

Fig. 3 High-end gaming setup with illumination effects (Stone 2019)

limousine, a stylized PC gaming room becomes a symbol of status, wealth and 'taste'. Interestingly enough, it is mostly financially successful streamers – such as DrDisrespect himself – who are capable of affording and 'showing off' highly individualized and powerful hardware. By doing so, PCMR shows a moment of being surrounded by its own (sub-)cultural aesthetics and values. It is a display of the high-end hardware, creating a certain atmosphere and situation exposing a dedicated gamer lifestyle. Aestheticizing livestreams in this certain, but highly individual style is a trademark for each streamer and an expression of his gaming-character and -personality (Fig. 3).

DrDisrespect's gaming arrangement – called 'Arena' – is an ironically exaggerated version of a common PCMR setup. Analogous to his character's inflated ego, the stage for Beahm's performance is a huge hangar-like space, full of displays, keyboards, computers and devices that resemble technologies usually seen in Science Fiction films or video games. The whole room looks like the interior of a spaceship, with an ergonomic gaming chair that marks the cockpit. It is a colossal command zone, a 'set' (in the sense of movie set), in which DrDisrespect plays a character that reworks the codes of the PCMR, plays digital games and enacts an episodic storyline. The set also functions as the main setting for a series of narratives that evolve around DrDisrespect and his 'enemies' – even including cameos like the (former) 1990s Wresting star The Underakter, who fits well in this semi-fictional retro-world (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 DrDisrespect's retro-futuristic command center; PCMR style (Patterson 2019.)

Not only does Beahm's 'Arena' looks like a high-budget setting, but it actually is one of the most elaborate and costly gaming-stream studios: "The Doc is known for his unrivaled production value, which includes the use of multiple cameras, green screens with various graphic designs and backdrops which add to the illusion of his 'Arena'" (Patterson 2019). Such a setting visibly demands for elaborate professional planning, development and setup, as well as knowledge of software and hardware configurations (including lighting and camera perspectives) that resemble professional filmmaking. This certainly is highly influenced by PCMR's culture. DrDisrespect's 'Arena' has to be considered as both a prerequisite and an effect of DrDisrespect's (self-reflexive) 'superiority' and the increasing professionalization, laborization and capitalization of *twitch* streaming.

During the sequences of episodes in which Beahm is actually 'playing' a game, just the capture of his monitor is displayed, including his upper body (or face) and stylized overlays as backgrounds between the matches highlighted by electronic, computer-generated synth-wave music as reminiscent of 1980s popular music.[3] Ben Egliston identifies this kind of setting, and the vanishing of body movements – especially the hands, which actually play a major role in interacting with a digital game (cf. Parisi 2010) – as a now conventionalized

aesthetic of *twitch* streams focusing "the content of the game being broadcast and displays of (generally) facial affect by broadcaster" (Egliston 2016, np). The facial expressions are an important part of playing (a game and a role), as it relates Beahm's actions to 'triumphant' gestures and boasting emotional reactions. In a sense, his facial expressions add meaning to the gaming event and even contextualize it accordingly, which is a conventional formal-aesthetic technique of symbolizing emotional closeness in professional filmmaking (the much used 'close up'-shot). Consequently, the specific setup of the camera and his technical devices as well as his way of 'performing the game' condition the way the game can be interpreted by the audience and thus influences the event as a whole.

Dr Disrespect's well-known motto and self-description of his playstyle is "violence, speed and momentum", whereas the latter is clearly related to the techno-sensory interaction between hands, eyes, cognitive functions and the material aspects of the gaming arrangement. Interestingly enough, however, the visual frame DrDisrespect choses "disorient[s] viewers from the idea of play as an experience thoroughly mediated by materialities and bodies" (Egliston 2016, np), by shifting the focus on the 'effects' of "physical networks" (ibid.) that condition digital play rather than on physical actions. DrDisrespect consequently does not showcase his hands and control devices, but he rather opts for close-ups of the grimaces of his character, while mocking his opponents and celebrating himself. This staging clearly differs from the kind of entertainment setup we know from eSports broadcasts celebrating the physical talents of the players in a more sportive-conventional way. Such a visual construction of the frame, the self-boasting presence, the outstanding gaming results, as well as the cult based around his personality generate a mythical image of his abilities and talents. Additionally, the emotive 'close-ups' narrate the dramatic sequences of the gaming process, the operated actions and the overall prowess of DrDisrespects gaming skills. Instead of conceptualizing gaming as a "configurative practice" (Eskelinen 2001), that entails configuring the systemic elements of a closed game product, playing and streaming a game on *twitch* also means to (re-)configure techno-aesthetical arrangements that translate the overall gaming performance on the player as well as the audience level.

Both modes of performances – playing roles and playing a game – are interconnected to one unique process and *twitch* gaming event that can be considered as a specific, highly professionalized mode of playing, as we will see in the last chapter (5.). This mode is characterized by its staged performances

that emerge within the socio-technical and virtual playground of *twitch* and a specifically created gaming assemblage, that is reciprocally affected by the codes of PCMR subculture, and additionally reworks formal-aesthetic conventions of filmmaking into a heterogeneous assemblage of play. As both a human person, a persona and an effect of an actor-network DrDisrespect is a hybrid arrangement–, he can be considered a hybrid constellation that is neither purely human (subject) or non-human (object). He is a kind of "quasi-subject" (Latour 1991), whose mode of existence is produced by the assemblage and, reciprocally, shapes it:

> These quasi-formations highlight things' tendencies toward subject-ness or object-ness, but refuse to cleave them apart and place then into neat categories. Instead of humanist subject or postmodern, fragmented, socially constructed subject, the quasi-subject is a hybrid of various discourses, material effects, semiotic codes and affective fields (Pflugfelder 2014, p. 121).

Considering our analysis above, we may also add audio-visual representations (medial conditions of his videos) and conventions to this list, as well as meme circulation, fan creations and comments that are related to Beahm's digital stage persona.

2.2 MontanaBlack: The home console dispositive and the casual, authentic gamer

In contrast to DrDisrespect, the German *twitch* streamer Marcel Eris aka MontanaBlack is playing and embodying a quite different role and persona. Although playing on Playstation 4, MontanaBlack is staged by a typical PCMR arrangement, creating a particular style and accessibility (see Fig. 6). MontanaBlack started his career by sharing gameplay videos on *YouTube*.[7] When purview started to increase, he began to create a narrative of his personal history that soon began to translate into his screen persona. In a series of 'confession'

[7]Driven by his *twitch* performance, MontanaBlack also releases videos on *YouTube* talking about contemporary issues and gossip on gaming, *YouTube* culture and business. Those videos are released under the headline "real talk", where he claims to discuss certain issues honestly and openly – including his sponsorships, income and purchases. According to the economic constitution of *YouTube*, a certain strategy concerning his headlines and thumbnails – namely gaining so-called 'clickbait' – is undeniable. Interestingly, this seems to be somewhat opposing his image of the authentic, honest and average 'guy next door'.

Fig. 5 MontanaBlack's 'authentic' biographical reworking of the 'Rags to Riches'-Narrative (Eris & Sand 2019)

Fig. 6 Marcel Eris's streaming-arrangement: An 'authentic', everyday gamer's living room (Horchert 2019)

videos, he narrated the story of his life as structured in the conventional 'success narrative', that is reworked as the 'rags-to-riches' or 'underdog-to-millionaire'-story in countless Hollywood movies, world literature and (trans)national narratives (e.g. the 'American Dream') (cf. e.g. Levinson 2015). In these videos, MontanaBlack – to whom the followers attribute credible authenticity and a sense of 'not being staged' – talked about his change from being a broke, homeless drug addict to becoming a successful *twitch* streamer, a story that also structures the narrative of his 2019 biography *MontanaBlack: Vom Junkie zum Youtuber* (Sand & Eris 2019) and fortified this image (see Fig. 5).

More important than to know whether MontanaBlack's confessions are true or not, is his mode of producing and staging authenticity especially when it comes to achieving economical value (cf. Klein und Friedrich 2003). In Marcel Eris's case, the staging of the 'guy next door achieves economical success'-narrative is accompanied by the production of his streams according to the conventions of a – compared to DrDisrespect – less stylized home console environment reinforcing the aura of non-professionality and authenticity.[8]

In order to generate this feel of a more casual gamer, Eris offers his followers access to his private space by showing his living room, his gaming room and his battlestation and talks about private and personal issues, feelings and opinions. Instead of 'overtaxing' the audience with a high-end aesthetic look, his clips rather produce a kind of (intentionally) 'unfinished', amateurish or personal look communicating that he has nothing to hide. Additionally, MontanaBlack's videos give insight into the 'making of' of a streamed performance – a strategy that has (paradoxically) often been used in contemporary media to generate 'authenticity' (cf. Klein und Friedrich 2003). In doing so, Eris's videos operate within the mode of a (self-)reflexive framing and staging of the *twitch* streaming (and performance) process.

[8]Interestingly, as it comes to Eris's mode of representation, it is important to note that he also created a certain aesthetic to stylize his *twitch* streams according to the conventions of a home console dispositive and other subcultural assemblages. In Eris's case, there is an affinity to German Hip-Hop culture recognizable, which he visibly relates to his streaming stage. For example, there are plenty of baseball caps arranged in a RGB-lightened rack in the background. Eris himself always wears one of his caps while streaming or performing in any other medial arrangement linked to his appearances. By doing so, he is not just a person of interest for gamers, but also for people associated with and interested in Hip-Hop culture. He simultaneously functions as a role model for teenagers, promoting the success-narrative his persona is linked to.

While DrDisrespect with his professional e-sports background is a high-class gamer, MontanaBlack conveys the image of an 'average' casual gamer, using his fame to expand his 'business' and to expose his personal success history to his (young) audience. He thus became an economically driven advertising media for his own company and label called *Get on my Level.* While the selling of merchandise and clothes is a common practice among famous *twitch* streamers and *YouTubers,* MontanaBlack enlargens his potential audience/clients by relating his merchandise both to gaming and contemporary HipHop culture and lifestyle. MontanaBlack counts as a perfect example of how *twitch* practices couple digital gaming and working. His streaming is both an entertaining and an economical service for his fan community, interacting with him via the *twitch* chat. At the same time, he advertises for his company, which emerged in and through the *twitch* arrangement of live stream gaming, i.e. a setting that is supposed to offer space for leisure-time gaming rather than professional workplaces. This directly leads us to the last question of how the blurring of the boundaries between work and play is to be considered as an effect of the *twitch* stream gaming event.

3 Earning money while gaming? *Twitch* and the blurring boundaries between work and leisure time

What can we take from the analyses above in terms of the hybridization of gaming and working, of the entanglement of economic processes, socio-technical gaming arrangements, the labour-intensive staging of personae, the selling of merchandise, as well as the practices of watching, following and/or subscribing? It is our aim to show, how in the framework of *twitch* gaming as well as, reciprocally, streaming has developed from a more or less niche phenomenon and leisure activity into an economically exploitable lifestyle.

Gaming on *twitch,* as we already developed above, does not only give people access to what was formerly known as their private gaming zone. With the streaming platform, gaming has become a real-time performance in front of a live audience. Besides the possibility (and, at the same time, the necessity!) of self-presentation and impression management, what seems to be even more interesting is the fact that many gamers nowadays monetize their *twitch* channel: "The more you play video games, the more money you can make" says Garrett Mickley (2017), a web game designer and developer. The opportunity to make money playing video games comes with massive audiences, making the streaming platform a legitimate source of income for many streamers, with the most popular

of them earning well above the average monthly household income. Gamer Ninja aka Richard Tyler Blevins is one of the top ten streamers (A + +) with more than 14 million followers and over 450 million channel views (Socialblade 2019). Although there are a variety of methods for monetizing the channel and all of them are fairly easy to implement, the most popular are *twitch* subscriptions – monthly donations of $4.99, $9.99 or $24.99, mostly splitted between *twitch* and the streamer 50/50 – allowing for the creation of a recurring source of income (vgl. Die Crew 2018). This option, however, is only available for '*twitch* Partners and Affiliates', special types of *twitch* channels that essentially allow for monetization of broadcasts like the channels of DrDisrespect and MontanaBlack who, in a stream in march 2018, voluntarily talked about his earnings.[9] Actually, anyone can become a *twitch* Affiliate or Partner, but certain requirements exist regarding the stream's popularity and the number of followers a user has, at least more than 50. *Twitch* boasts over 2 million streamers monthly and more than 17.000 earn money through the above mentioned '*twitch* Partner program' (Stephenson 2019). In order to collect recurring donations, many streamers use Patreon, a crowdfunding service funding the person behind the project, i.e. behind the game. Other practices of monetizing the channel are bits (*twitch*'s premium emoticons, a form of mini-donations from viewers), donations, video ads, sponsorships, affiliate links or selling merchandize (like MontanaBlack, see above). Some of the *twitch* gamers – among them DrDisrespect, MontanaBlack and Ninja, who, in 2019, moved from *twitch* to Microsoft Mixer – have quit their day job and actually make a fulltime living (or even more) by streaming on the service through a combination of the aforementioned monetizing possibilities. However, reaching that level of economic success requires a lot of time and dedication, with most of those '*twitch* Partners and Affilitates' – consequently named "*twitch*preneurs" (Rubinstein 2018) – filming themselves playing video games five to seven days a week to maintain their live audience. This dedication is mutual; *twitch* consumers, primarily male persons between 18 to 34 year, spend about three to ten hours of live streams, play between six and fifteen hours of video games weekly.[10]

---

[9]MontanaBlack Realtalk, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=7&v=WBDI5kEZ9co&feature=emb_logo. Accessed 19. April 2020.

[10]However, not all streamers are gamers, some of them, like *twitch* performer John "JohnnyBoi_i" Macdonald, attract between 800 to over 2,000 viewers by inviting pro-players to compete on his channel while he provides analytical commentary.

To many of us, this form of gaming as an activity that is assigned monetary value may seem a rather comfortable way to make one's living, at the top end, daily audiences can reach hundreds of thousands who, voluntarily, give – unlimited – tips (Jaime 'Karma' Bickford, a professional player in Rocket League, receives tips from $1 to $1,000 when streaming her own play), subscribe, i.e. sign up for a monthly payment split between the streamer and *twitch,* pay for tournament wins or speed-run world records or simply because they like the gamer's performance and this form of gaming entertainment. However, for their part, spectators are rewarded with a more or less large notification popping up onto the screen, and subscribers, generally, gain access to exclusive emoticons or, best of all, a live shout-out from the streamer. In the following we will explore the effects of this economical extension of the gaming zone on the relationship between work and play, between labor and leisure activity,

When Julian Kücklich in 2005 coined the term "playbor" as a hybrid form of play and labor in a post-fordist era, he refers to the situation of gaming industries at the end of the 1990 s and the beginning of 2000 decade: Modding, he stated, has become an important part of the so-called gaming culture as well as a source of value for the gaming industry. But except for pleasure or social capital, modders, however, are rarely remunerated: "This draws attention to the fact that in the entertainment industries, the relationship between work and play is changing, leading, as it were, to a hybrid form of 'playbor" (Kücklich 2005). This new form of "play economy" (Galloway 2012, p. 27) benefits, according to Kücklich,

> from a perception that everything to do with digital games is a form of play, and therefore a voluntary, non-profit-oriented activity. There are strong indicators, however, that this concept of play is no longer appropriate. Due to the fact that work has been rendered more 'flexible' in regard to its temporal, spatial and institutional contexts, more and more people can now be said to 'play for a living' (Kücklich 2005)

The extension of the gamers' possibilities (and, in return, responsibilities!), an increasing loyalty as well as growing trust and credibility in the gaming community (Postigo 2003, p. 596) inscribe the gamer into a production processes comparable to Axel Bruns' participatory "prosumer"-culture (Bruns 2009). However, while corporate social media almost always constitutes surplus-value production in the sense that the time spent per day under the logic of capital and commodification increases absolutely (Fuchs 2014; van Dijk 2013), mods, according to Kücklich, normally remain the property of the makers of the

original game, creators may receive payments, but mostly are barred from receiving royalties (cf. 2005). The modders' supposed potential of resistance is thus reabsorbed as a new source of producing surplus value. *Twitch* streamers, in comparison, do not create mods or other 'products', they 'sell' their gaming capacity (= workforce) and performance to *twitch* who, in return, (and together with the streamer) re-sells it to a – mostly – paying audience. The organization, maintenance and actualization of the channel, the work on the (self-)performance and impression management, the affect-based working as well as the 'public relation', the communication with the spectators, however, is the gamer's sole responsibility. The post-fordist re-making of work as play (Virno 2004, p. 100) promises, on the one side, the possibility of self-presentation and expression (McRobbie 2002, p. 109) while, on the other side, demands specific practices of self-regulation, self-control and organization. This new form of commercialization not only refers to the selling of entertainment products, it also capitalizes the related 'leisure' time and activities. While, according to Fizek (2015), the computer, from the beginning, has found itself implicated at the intersection of work and leisure, Kücklich (2005) points out that digitalization has enabled this form of consumer's mass-productions of high quality and low costs, and, according to Hardt and Negri, it also entails the possibility of a self-controlled capitalization of leisure time and activites: "Digital games are, in this respect, an important part of the affective and symbolic 'ether' of culture and communication – a 'fundamental medium of imperial control' (Hardt und Negri 2000, p. 346). With specific focus on *twitch,* David Nieborg and Thomas Poell (2018) describe the "the penetration of economic, governmental, and infrastructural extensions of digital platforms into the web" (p. 4276) with significant relevance to the form and the monetization of cultural content.

The deregulation of work in the regime of self-discipline allows us to describe new forms of labor in terms of "simultaneously voluntarily given and unwaged, enjoyed and exploited" (Terranova 2000, p. 32), unclassifiable in traditional terms of work and leisure. Ideology that contributes to the precarious status, disguises the power structure within which *twitch* gamers and/or workers operate: While *twitch*metrics informs us well about the 'gaming workload' of streamers[11] and

[11]You can have detailed information about the workload of DrDisrespect (https://www.twitchmetrics.net/c/17337557-drdisrespect) as well as of MontanaBlack (https://www.twitchmetrics.net/c/45044816-montanablack88). Accessed 20. April 2020.

spectators,[12] information about the staff of the streaming platform, however, lacks, different estimations varying between 400 and 1500. The former Director of Content Marketing Ben Goldhaber tweeted in March 2018: „From 25 employees to 1200.5 million monthly uniques to 100. 0 partnered creators to tens of thousands. Millions of lives changed, hopefully for the better. It was a pretty good run, I'd say."[13] In fact, one could also argue that all of the streamers in a certain sense 'work' for *twitch,* making their lives with gaming and performing. The conflation of the homo economicus with pursuing personal happiness makes the personal political, but on neoliberal, marketplace terms. We are thus confronted to a system of political economy that encourages to join the legion of "free labor[ers, B.O.]" (Terranova 2000, p. 50), creating spectacle in the hope to overcome antagonism by gamifying our work and, in return, workifying our gaming in a kind of work-game/play-interference (Dippel und Fizek 2015, p. 372; Rauch 2018; Ochsner und Waldrich 2018). *Twitch,* in this light, is above all a powerful recommendation engine monetizing massive loyal followings of the streamers while gathering behavioral data and sale. Together with the gaming industry, *twitch* turns the streamers' 'gaming force'[14] into capitalizable (biopolitical) labor that, in turn, can be re-sold to the spectators creating, at best, entertainment and happiness. Gaming aka work force is thus transformed into a digital commodity, an act of capturing innovation trough immaterial labor (Lazzarato 1996: 146) in digital (play) industry (Peuter und Dyer-Witheford 2005). Lazzarato has shown in what way immaterial labour blurs the borders between work and non-work time while reinforcing the borders between the nowadays highly esteemed immaterial labor in the high-tech milieu of cultural industries and the invisibilization of the assembly worker on a factory line at the other end.

While most of the time, this kind of *twitch* labor "does not feel, look, or smell like labor et all" (Scholz 2013, p. 2), it changes if a channel, despite the streamer's hard work, is not growing. This situation can last anywhere from a few days, weeks, months, sometimes even years. According to people who have gone through it, lacking an audience is one of the most demoralizing things you can experience online, as streamer shackleshotgun reported in 2017:

---

[12]In 2017 all *twitch* users together watched an average monthly time of 29.58 billion minutes, which is 21.5% more than in 2016; in 2018 twitch users watched 42 billion minutes, 42.99% more than in the year before.

[13]https://twitter.com/fishstix/status/979769765202833409. Accessed 20. April 2020.

[14]'Gaming force' is also the name of different national and international gaming communities or cooperations, i.e. https://gamingforce.org/forums. Accessed: 19. June 2019.

> During my first year of streaming I put a ton of work into my stream; the alerts, the overlay, the audio, the webcam, the streaming hours, the interaction, the following of the rules. I had 7+ streams every day, had a consistent schedule, didn't miss a day for over a year. Yet my channel saw barely any growth. I watched my friends' channels explode and quite honestly felt bitter. […] Growing on *twitch* goes beyond that. The thing about that is that you only see what the streamer does live and on social media, you don't see all the behind the scenes stuff that they spend 8+ hours on (Streamer Shackelshotgun 2017).

If live streaming is a practice, the person behind the camera is a product that has to be continually improved. Streamers thus spend eight and more hours playing and offering value to the audience, and, the rest of the working day, improve their *twitch* channel, promote themselves on social media, do networking, run contests, etc. building up a new class of gamers, called work-players or "playborers" (Kücklich 2005). Playing/gaming thus translates directly to working, play economy and ludic capitalism (Galloway 2012: 27), transforming gaming – as well as game- or gamer-related merchandise and entertainment activities – in capitalizable labor. A workplace like *twitch* – and, analogous to that, the highly stylized and technically well prepared 'Battlestations' of DrDisrespect and MontanaBlack described above – is primarily considered pleasurable and leisure-oriented (Terranova 2000, p. 42), transforming gaming into something productive, that, according to Galloway, is not contradictory, as play, in a romantic sense, stands for abundant creativity and, in a cybernetic reading, play is "centered on economic flows and balances, multilateral associations between things, a resolution of complex systemic relationships via mutual experimenting, mutual compromise, mutual engagement" (Galloway 2012, p. 28). In how far the concept of 'mutuality' is realized in the *twitch* Partners and Affiliates programs remains to be discussed. While streamers obviously have to work hard in order to make themselves disponible for *twitch* and the spectator, the *twitch* staff remains, as we already said, mainly invisible.

„What if our whole life were turned into a game? What sounds like the premise of a science fiction novel is today becoming reality", as Deterding and Walz wrote in 2015. On *twitch,* former borders between playing video games, between live streaming and social experience, between (passive) spectating and (active) interacting, between playing and working begin to blur. When, initially, people still asked 'Why would you watch someone else play video games and pay for it?', the still growing success of the ‚Let's play-Style' has transformed ‚simple gameplay' into highly edited, high production value experiences on *YouTube, Justin.tv* (2007) or, most successfully, on *twitch* (cf. Partin 2019). Nowadays, playing thus, opens up a new perspective on a ludified digital culture

(Raessens 2014), a new gradual spectrum from non-work to work, from leisure time activities to increased working productivity:

> In that aspect, and in the modes of distributed content provision evidenced by the mod community, free networked labor in the gaming sector is perhaps prototypical of work in what has been dubbed the coming "firms without factories" (Virtanen 2004, p. 223).

As part of what William Davies called "the happiness Industry" (2015), *twitch* produces new and playful forms of capitalizing of our daily life and reselling emotions to workforce. *Twitch,* however, has intensified this 'partnership' between industry and the social well-being system by doubling the relations between entrepreneurs – the platform itself as well as their subcontractors, i.e. the *twitch* Partners and Affiliates – and 'clients' – the streamers and the spectators. The overall aim is to manage 'happy' workers/gamers and target likewise 'happy' consumers/spectators in order to increase productivity on both sides to ensure the users' potential of workforce in gaming and in watching. This potential then is resold in form of wellbeing and happiness. The system of voluntary financial support, however, not only produces 'happiness', it also generates a certain feeling of guilt when *twitch* viewers attach written apologies to their apparently rather modest tips like: "I'm broke right now. Sorry I can't give more." The happiness industry, thus, not only increases happy productivity, it reinforces workforces by insinuating a certain form of guilt and/or debts which, probably, will be translated into higher tips, better aggregation of users, closer attachment to the platform and, last but not least, more data to be captured in order to create surplus value.

4 Conclusion

Besides MontanaBlack and DrDisrespect, there are plenty of other "spokesmen" (Callon 1986) of the *twitch* community that could be analyzed within this discussion. Naturally, the heterogeneous modes of 'playbor' the socio-technical arrangements of *twitch* generate, cannot be reduced to a simple 'hardcore' and 'causal' gamer dichotomy. *Twitch* provides a stage for a multitude of play-styles, performances, selves, modes of existence and related capitalizations of digital gaming.

Our point was to show how gaming changed in digital cultures to a specific mode, which cannot be differentiated clearly from digitized work. The causes of

these effects are versatile and cannot be put in a linear causality. As we showed in our first part of the analysis, these kinds of tangling of different modes of playing and configuring techniques and technologies go beyond the analysis of separate units of the process that has traditionally be considered the 'game'. Those effects emerge from a complex socio-technical arrangement that is translated by technology, knowledge, aesthetics, economy, practices, material and ludic mediality. This can be framed and analyzed in specific gaming situations that vary by context, mode of play, game, players and all of the other interconnected part(icipant)s centered around gaming. Herein lies a tendency that sets work and play in a reciprocal somehow ludic relation, that dynamizes the distinction between them. This means that we cannot just talk about gamification without considering workification. Having this complex interconnections in concern it is not enough to think about work becoming more and more like a game. Linked to this development is also gaming, becoming work and a practice classified in an economically driven interdependency.

References

Beahm, H. (2020). Twitter profile image. *Twitter.com*. https://twitter.com/drdisrespect. Zugegriffen: 20. Feb. 2020.

Bruns, A. (2009). Produtzung. Von medialer zu politischer Partizipation. In C. Bieber, M. Eifert, T. Groß, & J. Lamla (Eds.), *Soziale Netze in der digitalen Welt: Das Internet zwischen egalitärer Teilhabe und ökonomischer Macht* (pp. 65–86). Frankfurt: Campus.

Burke, R. J. (1988). Taking play seriously. In W. J. Morgen, K. V. Meier, & V. Klaus (Eds.), *Philosophic inquiry in sport* (pp. 159–167). Champaign: Human Kinetics.

Burwell, C., & Miller, T. (2016). Let's play. Exploring literacy practices in an emerging videogame paratext. *E-Learning and Digital Media, 3*(3–4), 109–125.

Callon, M. (1986). Some elements of a sociology of translation: Domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St. Brieux Bay. In J. Law (Eds.), *Power, action and belief: A new sociology of knowledge?* (pp. 196–233). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Collins, S. (2008). *The hunger games*. Wilkinsburg, PA: Scholastic.

Conway, S., & Trevillian, A. (2015). 'Blackout': Unpacking the black box of the game event. *ToDIGRA: Transactions of the Digital Games Research Association, 2*(1), 67–100.

D'Anastasio, C. (2018). The worst part of Fortnite's popularity is the PUBG snobs. *Kotaku*. https://kotaku.com/the-worst-part-of-fortnites-popularity-are-the-pubg-sno-1825054670. Accessed: 20. Nov. 2019.

Davies, W. (2015). *The happiness industry. How the government and big business dold us well-being*. New York: Verso books.

Derrida, J. (1988). Signatur, Ereignis, Kontext. In J. Derrida (Eds.), *Randgänge der Philosophie* (pp. 291–314). Wien: Passagen.

Deterding, S., & Walz, S. P. (Eds.), (2015). *The gameful world. Approaches, issues, applications*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT.

Die Crew (2018). MontanaBlack zeigt seine DEZEMBER EINNAHMEN. MontanaBlack Realtalk. *YouTube*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=7&v=WBDI5kEZ9co&feature=emb_logo. Accessed: 11. Mar. 2020.

Dippel, A., & Fizek, S. (2015). Ludifizierung von Kultur. Zur Bedeutung des Spiels in alltäglichen Praxen der digitalen Ära. In G. Koch (Eds.), *Digitalisierung Theorien und Konzepte für die empirische Kulturanalyse* (pp. 363–383). Konstanz: UVK.

Egliston, B. (2016). Broadcasting play. Articulating roles of materialities and bodies. *Proceedings of DiGRA Australia Queensland Symposium*. https://digraa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/EGLISTON_BroadcastingPlayArticulatingRolesofMaterialitiesandBodies.pdf. Accessed: 9. June 2019.

Eskelinen, M. (2001). The gaming situation. *Game Studies 1*(1). https://www.gamestudies.org/0101/eskelinen/. Accessed: 20. Jan. 2020.

Fizek, S. (2015). All work and no play. Sind Computerspiele die Fabriken der Zukunft? *Tumult, 3,* 89–93.

Fizek, S., & Dippel, A., et al. (2019). Laborious playgrounds: Citizen science games as new modes of work/play in the digital age. In R. Glas (Eds.), *The playful citizen. Civic Engagement in a mediatized culture* (pp. 255–271). Amsterdam: UP.

Fuchs, C. (2014). Digital prosumption labour on social media in the context of the capitalist regime of time. *Time & Society, 23*(1), 97–123.

Gadamer, H. G. (1977). *Die Aktualität des Schönen. Kunst als Spiel, Symbol und Fest*. Stuttgart: Reclam.

Galloway, A. R. (2012). *The interface effect*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Giddings, S. (2008). Events and collusions. A glossary for the microethnography of video game play. *Games and Culture, 4*(2), 144–157.

Goldhaber, B. (2018). Ben Goldhaber auf Twitter. https://twitter.com/fishstix/status/979769765202833409. Accessed: 15. Mar. 2020.

Götz, U. (2018). Rules shape spaces – spaces shape rules. In B. Sutter, M. Kocher, & R. Bauer (Eds.), *Games and rules. Game mechanics for the 'magic circle'* (pp. 259–266). Bielefeld: transcript.

Hardt, M., & Negri, A. (2000). *Empire*. Cambridge: Harvard UP.

Horchert, J. (2019). Hype um MontanaBlack. Der böse Bube aus Buxtehude. *Spiegel Netzwelt*. https://www.spiegel.de/netzwelt/web/montanablack-der-boese-bube-aus-buxtehude-a-1260857.html. Accessed: 15. Mar. 2020.

Huizinga, J. (1955). *Homo ludens A study of the play-element in culture*. Boston: The Beacon Press.

Huuhka, M. (2019). Journeys in intensity. Human and nonhuman co-agency, neuropower, and counterplay in Minecraft. In S. Karkulehto, A.-K. Koistinen, & E. Varis (Eds.), *Reconfiguring human, nonhuman and posthuman in Literature and Culture* (pp. 218–235). New York: Routledge.

Klein, G., & Friedrich, M. (2003). *Is this Real? Die Kultur des HipHop*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.

Klein, E., &; Klein, H. (2017). H3 Podcast #36 – Dr Disrespect, 28 October 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9hL4zQy0UI. Accessed: 9. June 2019.

Kücklich, J. (2005): *Precarious playbour: Modders and the digital games industry. Fibreculture Journal 5*, https://five.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-025-precarious-playbour-modders-and-the-digital-games-industry/. Accessed: 19. June 2019.

Latour, B. (1991). *We have never been modern*. Harvard: UP.

Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social*. Oxford: UP.
Lazzarato, M. (1996). Immaterial labour. In P. Virno & M. Hardt (Eds.), *Radical thought in Italy today* (pp. 133–147). Minneapolis: Minnesota UP.
Levinson, J. (2015). *The American success myth on film*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
Link, A. (2019). DrDisrespect: Guy Beahm ernennt sich zum besten Spieler der Welt. *PC Games Hardware*. https://www.pcgameshardware.de/Spiele-Thema-239104/News/Dr-Disrespect-Guy-Beahm-ernennt-sich-zu-mbesten-Spieler-der-Welt-1279533/. Accessed: 9. June 2019.
MacDonald, K. (2013). PC is "Far Superior" for Gaming, Says Nvidia. *ING* https://www.ign.com/articles/2013/11/29/pc-is-far-superior-for-gaming-says-nvidia Accessed: 9. June 2019.
Macey, J. (2019). The ingredients of twitch streaming: Affordances of game streams. *Academia.edu*https://www.academia.edu/38046234/The_ingredients_of_Twitch_streaming_Affordances_of_game_streams. *Accessed: 7. June 2019.*
Marshall, P. D., Moore, C., & Barbour, K. (2019). *Persona studies. An introduction*. Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell.
McRobbie, A. (2002). From Holloway to Hollywood: Happiness at work in the new cultural economy? In P. du Gay & M. Pryke (Eds.), *Cultural economy* (pp. 197–214). London: Sage.
Mickley, G. (2017). Gaming for fun and profit, 25 October 2017. *Medium.com* https://medium.com/@garrettmickley/gaming-for-fun-and-profit-2dbc7a113323. Accessed: 19. June 2019.
Nieborg, D. B., Poell, T. (2018) (Eds.). The platformization of cultural production: Theorizing the contingent cultural commodity. *Social Media 20*(11), 4275–4292.
Ochsner, B., & Waldrich, H. (2018). ‹Verspielte Arbeit› oder: Arbeit und Spiel in der Digitalkultur. *AugenBlick. Konstanzer Hefte zur Medienwissenschaft, 3*(73), 79–95.
Panknin, A. (2020). ROCCAT: DrDisRespect steht auf deutsche Hardware. *Gaming Grounds*. https://www.gaming-grounds.de/roccat-dr-disrespect-steht-auf-deutsche-hardware/. Accessed: Mar. 14. 2020.
Parisi, D. (2010). Game interfaces as bodily techniques. In I. R. M. Association (Eds.), *Gaming and simulations: Concepts, methodologies, tools and applications* (pp. 111–126). Hershey: IGI Global.
Partin, W. C. (2019). Watch me pay: twitch and the cultural economy of surveillance. *Surveillance and Society, 17*(1/2), 153–160.
Patterson, C. (2019). Shroud explains why he disagrees with xQc on insane stream setups. *Dexerto*. https://www.dexerto.com/entertainment/shroud-explains-why-he-disagrees-with-xqc-on-insane-stream-setups-1065225. Accessed: 16. Mar. 2020.
Peuter, G. de, & Dyer-Witheford, N. (2005). A playful multitude? Mobilising and counter-mobilising immaterial game labour. Putting play to work in games of empire. *Fibreculture Journal* (5). https://five.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-024-a-playful-multitude-mobilising-and-counter-mobilising-immaterial-game-labour/. Accessed: 19. June 2019.
Pflugfelder, H. (2014). Is no-one at the wheel? Nonhuman agency and agentive movement. In P. Lynch & N. Rivers (Eds.), *Thinking with Latour in rhetoric and composition* (pp. 115–131). Southern Illinois: UP.
Pink, S. (2004). Introduction. Situating visual research. In S. Pink, L. Kürti, & A. I. Afonso (Eds.), *Working images Visual research and representation in ethnography* (pp. 1–12). London: Routledge.
Postigo, H. (2003). From Pong to planet Quake: Postindustrial transitions from leisure to work. *Information, Communication & Society, 6*(4), 593–607.

Raessens, J. (2014). The ludification of culture. In M. Fuchs, S. Fizek, P. Ruffino, & N. Schrape (Eds.), *Rethinking gamification* (pp. 91–114). Lüneburg: Meson Press.
Rauch, E. (2018). Bridging worlds. *Video Game Tourism* https://videogametourism.at/tags/bridging-worlds. Accessed: 19. June 2019.
Rossiter, N. (2013). Processual media theory. *symplokē, 11*(1/2), 104–131.
Rubinstein, P. (2018). The rise of the twitchpreneurs and the evolution of tipping. *BBC*. https://www.bbc.com/capital/story/20180924-the-rise-of-the-twitchpreneurs-and-the-evolution-of-tipping. Accessed: 19. June 2019.
Scholz, T. (2013). *Digital labor: The internet as playground and factory*. New York: Routledge.
Shackleshotgun. (2017). ‘Hard work‘ and ‚efficient work‘. When growing on twitch. *Geeksmedia*. https://geeks.media/hard-work-and-efficient-work-when-growing-on-twitch. Accessed: 19. June 2019.
Socialblade. (2019). *twitch* stats summary/user statistics for Ninja (2014–07–16 – 2019–06–19). *Socialblade*. https://socialblade.com/twitch/user/ninja. Accessed: 19. June 2019.
Spöhrer, M. (2018). Playing with auditory environments in audio games: 3D Snake. In M. Spöhrer (Eds.), *Analytical frameworks, applications and impacts of ICT and actor-network theory* (pp. 87–111). Hershey: IGI Global.
Spöhrer, M. (2020). Technische Dinge im Wechselspiel Spielsituationen als Experimentalsysteme am Beispiel einer autoethnographischen Studie zu Tetris 99. In A. Wiedmann, K. Wagenknecht, P. Goll, & A. Wagenknecht (Hrsg.), *Wie forschen mit der STS? Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven (in print)*. transcript : Bielefeld.
Stephenson, B. (2019). What is twitch? *Lifewire*. https://www.lifewire.com/what-is-twitch-4143337. Accessed: 19. June 2019.
Stone, B. (2019). EpsyTech’s Gaming Room. *PCGuide*. https://www.pcguide.com/reviews/best-game-room-ideas/. Accessed: 14. Mar. 2020.
Terranova, T. (2000). Free labor: Producing culture for the digital economy. *Social Text, 63*(18.2), 33–58.
van Dijk, J. (2013). *Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Virtanen, A. (2004). General economy: The entrance of the multitude into production. *Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization, 4*(3), 209–232.
Waldrich, H. (2016). The home console dispositive: Digital games and gaming as socio-technical arrangements. In B. Ochsner & M. Spöhrer (Eds.), *Applying the actor-network theory in media studies* (pp. 174–198). Hershey: IGI Global.
Witkowski, E. (2017). Bodies that matter in the pursuit of esports. In *Clash of Realities (ed.): Clash of Realities 2015/16. On the Art, Technology and Theory of Digital Games. Proceedings of the 6th and 7th Conference* (S. 417–440). Bielefeld: transcript.
Yohan, D. (2017). The 'face of twitch' cries meeting fan during stream. S*creenrant*. https://screenrant.com/drdisrespect-cries-twitch/. Accessed: 9. June 2019.

Gameography

Apex Legends (Respawn/Electronic Arts 2019)
Call of Duty: BlackOps (Treyarch/Activision 2018)
Call of Duty: Warzone (Infinity Ward/Activision 2020)

Fortnite (Epic Games/Epic Games 2017)
PUBG (PUBG Corporation/PUBG Corporation 2017)

Filmographie

Running Man (1987) R: Paul Michael Glaser, S: Braveworld, HBO

Prof. Dr. Beate Ochsner is full Professor of Media Studies at the University of Konstanz. Before, she was an Assistant Professor at the University of Mannheim and Guest Professor at the Universities of Innsbruck (Austria), Basel and St. Gallen (Switzerland). In 2002, she habilitated with the thesis *DeMONSTRAtion. Zur Repräsentation des Monsters und des Monströsen in Literatur, Fotographie und Film.* Beate Ochsner is spokesperson of the research unit "Media and Participation" and principal investigator of subproject 2 "Techno-sensory processes of participation. App-practices and dis/ability". Among her recent publications are Oikos und Oikonomia oder: Selbstsorge-Apps als Technologien der Haushaltung. *Internationales Jahrbuch für Medienphilosophie 4* (2018); Talking about Associations and Descriptions or a Short Story about Associology. In M. Spöhrer, & B. Ochsner (Eds.), *Applying the Actor-Network Theory in Media Studies* (2017) and Documenting Neuropolitics: Cochlear Implant Activation Videos. In H. Hughes, & C. Brylla (Eds.), *Documentary and Disability* (2017).

Dr. Markus Spöhrer studied American Studies, English Literature at the University of Tübingen, Germany and received his Ph.D. in Media Studies from the University of Konstanz, Germany (2015). At the moment he is a Post-Doc in the DFG research project "Media and Participation: Between Demand and Entitlement" (University of Konstanz). His research and teaching focuses on film and media theory, theories and methods of Computer Game Studies, stereoscopic media and disability and digital media. His recent publications are: *Analytical Frameworks, Applications, and Impacts of ICT and Actor-Network Theory* (2019); Technische Dinge im Wechselspiel. Spielsituationen als Experimentalsysteme am Beispiel einer autoethnographischen Studie zu *Tetris 99*. In A. Wiedmann, K. Wagenknecht, P. Goll, & und A. Wagenknecht (Eds.), *Wie forschen mit der STS? Interdisziplinäre* Perspektiven (2020).

Harald Waldrich, MA, is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Konstanz, Germany. His research and teaching focuses on Game Studies (from a Media Studies perspective), digital cultures and the relationship between work and play. Recent publications: The home console dispositive. In: M. Spöhrer, & B. Ochsner (Eds.), *Applying the Actor-Network Theory in Media Studies* (2016); "Verspielte Arbeit" oder: Arbeit und Spiel in der Digitalkultur. In: *AugenBlick. Konstanzer Hefte zur Medienwissenschaft* (zusammen mit B. Ochsner 2019).