

CORRELATIONS OF CULTURE, GAME PRINCIPLES AND MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

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ABSTRACT:

The study deals with culture, acting principles and media productions. From this aspect, the authors argue for the premise of their correlation, applying interdisciplinary approaches to the analysis of sources and applying hermeneutic, phenomenological-reductive and causal approaches. In the study, they highlight the penetration of game elements into culture, the influence of game elements on human behaviour and identify them in people's everyday activities. They recognise game elements in the various social roles of individuals that determine their social behaviour and actions as well as their game actions. They deal with game principles and related game rituals, forming an integral symbolic part of socio-culture and artistic culture. They conceive the theoretical starting points mainly in relation to the game principle of mimicry. They reflect the dimensions of games in the interface of their purpose, utility, creativity and aesthetic qualities. They point to the audience's capacity for narrative immersion in the context of their fascination with games and media content. In this context, they define and conceptualise the term "narrative audience introspection" and point to the spectacularity of games and media productions.

KEY WORDS:

artistic culture, culture, game, game principles, game rituals, media staging, narrative immersion, narrative introspection, player, socio-culture, spectacularity

1 Introduction: The Cultural Essence of Game Principles

At the outset, we find it necessary to state that we share the view of the eminent Dutch historian J. Huizinga, according to whom creative play is inherent only to homo sapiens¹ and has a culture-forming function, i.e.,

¹ Remark by authors: We hold that the anthropological nature of play is related to both the endowment of creativity and the acquisition of a pleasurable human feeling from the game's fantasised worlds. These are inherent in only one species in the world – man. S. Freud also draws attention to this obvious fact. He points to the playful life of children creating their own world with a special order on the basis of fantasising and desires. He argues that adult man seemingly abandons the forms of childish play, but indulges in his fantasies. Formally and realistically, he is giving up childish play. Indeed, society expects him to give up both games and fantasising and to be active in the real world. He is ashamed of his fantasy escapades as childishness unacceptable for an adult. See: FREUD, S.: *O člověku a kultuře*. Prague: Odeon, 1990, p. 82-83.

it is older than culture.² Equally inspiring for us is the opinion of the French sociologist R. Caillois.³ On the one hand, he built on the earlier views of J. Huizinga; on the other hand, he polemicalised with him and offered new, broader and more structured views of play to science. He defined the basic principles of play in the context of established play practices and the social mission of games. However, one important aspect of both authors' views on play is the same. It is the advocacy of the thesis of the culture-creating function of games. Particularly in the early days of human development, culture was 'played', i.e., it developed in game rituals. R. Caillois accuses J. Huizinga of deliberately overlooking the description and classification of games, their psychological causes, and also criticises his excessive focus on the "fecundity of the spirit in the sphere of culture". On the other hand, he praises his ability to "detect play where no one before him had recognised its presence or influence".⁴ Like J. Huizinga, R. Caillois defines the act of play as a free activity that cannot be imposed on anyone, otherwise play would lose its entertaining, extraordinary character. They agree that play, as a purposeful activity, escapes everyday routine activities, is something that diversifies the everyday, is a temporary excursion into a special world. At the same time, it is typical of play as a purposeful activity that its course has precisely defined rules, time and space, although its course and outcome are always uncertain.⁵

In this study, however, we work with the premise that games and the game principles contained within them transcend the purposeful act of play and are recognisable in a holistic culture. In our view, game principles reflect some psychological characteristics of human beings, i.e., their innate and acquired characteristics.⁶ In defining the individual game principles, we draw on the typology of R. Caillois, as we consider it the most comprehensive. And although he published it more than half a century ago, it is still relevant today. The term "game principles" is given by R. Caillois in the context of situating games in four categories. They are Agon, Alea, Mimicry and Ilinx (Vertigo). In his view, there is one dominant principle in each category. When an individual plays football, skittles or chess, where it is necessary to show knowledge, skill and sufficient competitiveness, we see the dominance of the game principle Agon (in Latin struggle, competition). If the player relies on luck or fate and plays roulette or throws dice, we observe the dominance of the game principle Alea (Latin name for dice games). Dominance of the game principle of Mimicry (in the sense of imitating others) presupposes the creation of an illusory character, for example, when children play the pirate and actors play Nero or Hamlet. The principle presupposes theatrical performance or theatrical interpretation. When children spin around (get dizzy and then fall down) during the play, they do so in order to induce in themselves a strange state of loss of orientation and awareness of clear boundaries by their movements. In such cases, the play principle of Ilinx or Vertigo dominates (Latin: Vertigo).⁷

Huizinga's revelation of play in various manifestations of human activity is related to his premise that play is older than culture. According to him, culture itself was born in play, it was created by play, but with the development of culture into higher forms, the relationship between play and culture changed. Play later recedes into the background, manifesting itself in cults, religion, poetry, theatre, etc.⁸ Starting from this platform of opinion, we argue that the phenomenon of play is represented in many activities, manifestations, and ideas; it represents the creative power of each individual and is thus a significant co-creator of human culture. In this study we work with the concepts of culture, socio-culture and artistic culture. We consider it important to categorise these concepts in adequate levels of meaning, and thus to show the overlaps of game principles into the different structures of the phenomenon of culture.⁹

2 HUIZINGA, J.: *Jesení středověku. Homo ludens*. Bratislava: Tatran, 1990, p. 222.

3 For more information, see: CAILLOIS, R.: *Hry a lidé. Maska a závrat*. Prague: Nakladatelství studia Ypsilon, 1998.

4 CAILLOIS, R.: *Hry a lidé. Maska a závrat*. Prague: Nakladatelství studia Ypsilon, 1998, p. 25.

5 See: CAILLOIS, R.: *Hry a lidé. Maska a závrat*. Prague: Nakladatelství studia Ypsilon, 1998, p. 31-32; HUIZINGA, J.: *Jesení středověku. Homo ludens*. Bratislava: Tatran, 1990, p. 226-229.

6 Remark by authors: We are not concerned with psychological typologies of human personality. In the context of the issue under study, we focus on natural qualities such as competitiveness, liking and need to show off in different roles, indulging in fate or betting on so-called luck and seeking various exciting situations.

7 CAILLOIS, R.: *Hry a lidé. Maska a závrat*. Prague: Nakladatelství studia Ypsilon, 1998, p. 35-48.

8 HUIZINGA, J.: *Jesení středověku. Homo ludens*. Bratislava: Tatran, 1990, p. 222-239.

9 Remark by authors: We prefer a synthetic approach to the conceptual grasp of the phenomenon of culture based on cultural-anthropological, sociological and axiological perspectives. We consider the work of Z. Slušná, who distinguishes two subcategories of the concept of culture. In the 'broader' sense of the word, the umbrella term "culture", according to her, generalises all manifestations, including artifacts, values, norms and beliefs, which are associated with a particular community or a particular society (authors' note: in the study we call this term

The aim of the study is to argue for the premise of a correlation between culture, acting principles and media productions. We use an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of the issue, drawing on sources mainly from the fields of game studies, media and cultural studies, psychology, sociology and historiography, and philosophy, applying hermeneutic, phenomenological-reductive, and causal approaches. Through the above perspective, we select and analyse relevant facts and arrive at a generalisation and synthesis of the findings in the formulated conclusions. In the study, we highlight the ways in which game elements penetrate culture in its broadest sense, the so-called holistic culture. We also examine the influence of game elements on human behaviour in different situations resulting from existing social relations in the socio-cultural environment. They can also be clearly identified in a person's everyday activities, in their various social roles that determine their social behaviour and actions. We are also concerned with game principles and related game rituals, which, in our opinion, form an integral symbolic part of socio-cultural and artistic culture. From these aspects we formulate a premise about the distinct anthropological nature of culture, games and media productions and their interrelations. We conceive the theoretical background in particular in relation to the acting principle of mimicry and reflect on other acting principles against this background. We reflect on the dimensions of games at the interface of their purpose, utility, communicative practices, creativity and aesthetic qualities. We show and argue that the capacity for narrative immersion of the audience plays an important role in the reception of games. However, we also find that individuals' ability to empathise more deeply with media content is related (and very closely related) to this. In this context, we define and conceptualise the term "narrative audience introspection". In the context of delineating the defining characteristics of games, game principles, and game rituals, we draw attention to the evident characteristic and qualitative essence of games, their spectacularity. We are led to this observation by the exhibition of theatrical pageantry by the actors of ritualised acts in those play situations in which the play principle of mimicry is dominant. According to our analyses and empirical evidence, it is present in all kinds of media productions, which we understand as specific productions. In this context, we stress that the condition for the success of the moment of mimicry in media productions with the audience is its public presentation, popularity or recognition of the authenticity of the illusion.

2 The Anthropological Nature of Game Principles

In defining and conceptualising key terms, we articulate the premise that play is an ontological constant of homo sapiens. We base this claim on the premises of E. Fink's philosophical study. The latter, in agreement with J. Huizinga and R. Caillois holds that play is multifaceted, provides temporary release, often requires a rich imagination and adherence to rules, but on a voluntary basis. Play is important in spite of appearing as something unrealistic, insubstantial¹⁰ in the background of essential human endeavours. The appeal of play can also be found in its ability to provide a release, a relaxation, a kind of escape

"holistic culture"). In the 'broader' sense Z. Slušná understands the term "culture" as the cultural dimension of the social world. It includes all everyday manifestations that have a formal and symbolic character: social practices and activities, rituals, manifestations of lifestyles such as fashion, food culture, body culture, etc., as well as public civic rituals – civic culture, political culture, etc. In its "narrow" sense, the term "culture" is associated with the arts sector, including artistic types belonging to high culture, as well as mass culture and popular art (see: SLUŠNÁ, Z.: *Súčasná kultúrna situácia z pohľadu teórie a praxe*. Bratislava: Comenius University, 2015, p. 23-24). In this study, we use the term "socio-culture" to refer to the "broader" concept of "culture" because, in our opinion, it semantically best corresponds to its elementary characteristic, which is the overlap with the practices of the social world. In the case of the definition of the 'narrow' concept of "culture", i.e., "high culture", we prefer the term "artistic culture", because all artistic practices applied at different levels of culture, in artistic genres, can be included here, regardless of the assessment of their aesthetic quality and the application of aesthetic criteria or the aesthetic canons in force.

10 Remark by authors: A person socialised in a society shares its values, submits to socio-cultural regulative rules, and on the basis of these sets individual goals corresponding to the chosen or assigned social roles. Play as they remember it from their childhood years is no longer essential; what is essential is the fulfillment of expectations from their social roles. These determine the individual's priorities, such as education, career, family, lifestyle, different kinds of self-fulfilling activities, etc. D. Bell emphasises the importance of individual social roles, particularly because it is in these roles that people find their identity – see: BELL, D.: *Kultúri rozpor kapitalizmu*. Prague: Sociologické nakladatelství, 1999, p. 107.

from the flow of time¹¹ and stereotypical everyday life. According to E. Fink's hyperbolic vocabulary, play offers the individual almost 'pagan' pleasures, such as carelessness, sensual joy, mysterious bliss or rapture.¹²

But play also has a wider dimension than the pleasurable escape from the shackles of everyday life. It represents the cosmos – the order, the symbol of the world, the being of man, and therefore has an anthropological essence. Man tries to understand the order and events in nature and society through symbols, he perceives analogies and is guided by them. According to E. Fink, the game is itself a symbol of the world, "it becomes a cosmic metaphor of all appearances and disappearances of the essence in the space-time of the world", it is the basic "mode of human being".¹³ We believe that behind the notion of "mode of being" it is necessary to look for a broader interpretation of the game in terms of its functions in society, as well as the rules by which it binds the actors and participants of games to a certain way of thinking and acting. Indeed, the pragmatic imperatives, i.e., the ontological regulatives of the human being, are associated with the game principles derived from the way of thinking and acting and the anthropological nature of the player. These are also reflected in their life. This premise confirms the truth of the assumption that play is a purely anthropological phenomenon that transcends the understanding of being and significantly co-creates both the scenery and the mental setting of a holistic human culture.

Obviously, the anthropological nature of play determines certain criteria of quality. Indeed, any game requires the approach of a human genius capable of creativity, imagination, logic, discipline, physical hardship, a lived sense of happiness, adherence to rules, but also risk-taking. From this aspect, the game has several characteristics. It can be multifaceted, functionally multidimensional, it can be fascinating for each player with its entertaining, escapist possibilities, but also with other possibilities for self-realisation, such as the acquisition of skills or social contacts. In addition to the well-known benefits that the game provides, its educational, socialising and enculturating function should not be forgotten. Although the game is a world with its own rules, according to B. D. Elkonin it mirrors the social world and the relationships existing between individuals.¹⁴ Therefore, it can be stated that the game has another significant characteristic besides the fact that it participates in the co-creation of culture. It reflects a given culture in a certain historical period; it is therefore a historical category. Not only have games and their characteristic game principles participated in shaping the mentality of individual cultures and civilisations, they are also present in the process of shaping contemporary tastes, lifestyles, morals and norms. In other words, games significantly reflect the ideological sphere, the hierarchy of professed values, i.e., the mental level of a holistic culture, and at the same time mirror the technical-technological level of society.

But the fact remains that people usually associate games with fun, with passing the time, with something unproductive that only gives a person a sense of interest, a pleasure for the 'soul', or relaxation. Such a layman's view of play has its justification. After all, even J. Huizinga writes about play being of no apparent utility. This does not mean that he denies its utility, but on the contrary, he sees it in the enlivenment of everyday routine. Those who play must indeed follow the rules, but it is their free, individual choice. At the same time, he says, "play has an end in itself, accompanied by a sense of tension, joy and the awareness of an existence other than everyday life".¹⁵ The question arises, however, whether play is really without utility and whether it is unproductive. After all, questions about the utility of games and pastimes have occupied the minds of thinkers since the time of Ancient Greece. Plato, for example, saw the purpose of play as preparing children for their future activities as adults. In play, the child proves what they are capable of, and this needs to be developed. For him, therefore, it is important to cultivate that which would lead the soul of the playing boy to love what will be his duty when he grows up and becomes a man.¹⁶

11 GÁLIK, S., OPRALA, B.: Temporal Changes under the Influence of Digital Media. In *Communication Today*, 2021, Vol. 12, No. 1, p. 8.
12 FINK, E.: *Hra jako symbol světa*. Prague : Český spisovatel, 1993, p. 248.
13 FINK, E.: *Hra jako symbol světa*. Prague : Český spisovatel, 1993, p. 31, 68-77.
14 ELKONIN, D. B.: *Psychologie hry*. Bratislava : Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 1983, p. 24-25.
15 HUIZINGA, J.: *Jeseň stredoveku. Homo ludens*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1990, p. 44.
16 Remark by authors: Plato perceived the educational character of play against a background of clear benefits for the formation of personality. The unforced activity, the imitation of the adult world in children's play, the development of skill, of ways of thinking, the unconscious exercise of logical procedures in thought, can all be included in an understanding of the act of childhood play from antiquity to the present day.

Although at first sight the utility of play and emotion seem to have nothing to do with each other, in play it turns out that the opposite is true. Unquestionably, the role of emotions in a person's life, and thus in games, is important. Emotions determine the extent of our humanity, empathy, and conscience. They reveal the state of our disposition, they belong to the personality equipment of a person. "The idea of man as an emotionless creature, driven by a cold, unfeeling reason, is largely frightening."¹⁷ Humans are driven by emotions and purposely induce emotional states that provide them with certain feelings of fascination, pleasure, tension, but also release. However, the list of emotional states is much broader. In particular, joy, cheerfulness, happiness, joy, anger, sadness, fear, anxiety, tension, jealousy, anger and even hatred¹⁸ are among those most commonly associated with play. The need to satiate different kinds of emotions belongs to the basic psychological structure of human beings. People, according to A. H. Maslow, have their needs, capacities and various tendencies based on genetic basis.¹⁹ These genetic peculiarities account for the fact that when we have a certain need, we get into a state of tension, and by satisfying that need, we reduce the tension. H. A. Murray, for example, cites situations where people have a need to actively increase psychological tension in order to increase the feeling of pleasure when they have fulfilled the need. This is the case, for example, when satisfying sexual needs. After the sexual foreplay and act comes the climax accompanied by pleasure and satisfaction. However, there are also situations where the feeling of pleasure is part of an activity leading to the satisfaction of another need and the actor does not necessarily increase or decrease psychological tension in doing so. Such situations can be seen during gaming or the need to create artistically.²⁰ Based on the above, it is clear that there is merit in linking play and games with fun, but it is necessary to be able to identify the deeper purpose and meaningfulness of play and games.

For an individual, play can have a purely hedonistic meaning because it provides specific pleasures. Hedonism²¹ in relation to the enjoyment of both play and media entertainment is understood and interpreted as both the emotional, experiential pleasure derived from a favourite activity and as entertainment that produces pleasure of the senses. In the context of the reception of film production B. M. Oliver and A. A. Raney introduce the term "hedonistic motivation" in addition to the term "eudaimonic motivation".²² The term "eudaimonism"²³ expresses the recipient's efforts to educate themselves, to cultivate themselves. In our opinion, even games in the spirit of eudaimonic motivation offer a high degree of utility. It consists of the player's desire to hone their skills and abilities, but also to demonstrate their gaming prowess. These player ambitions challenge the stereotypically traditional views of the general public about the game as unproductive entertainment. When J. Huizinga speaks of play as an activity with no "apparent utility", he underlines its hidden qualities, i.e., he affirms its undeniable utility for the player.²⁴ In the spectrum of the relaxing and cultivating functions of games, the views about the addictive and unproductive nature of games can be considered as wrong. Understanding the usefulness of games for individuals and communities, in conjunction with their entertainment and relaxation functions and their cultivation functions, puts them in a completely different light. It is in the light of the knowledge of the creative and life-giving utility and purposefulness of games that their anthropological nature is confirmed.

Compare to: PLATO: *Zákony*. Prague : Nakladatelství Československé akademie věd, 1961, p. 43.
17 SUCHÝ, J., NÁHLOVSKÝ, P.: *Pozitivní emoce*. Prague : Grada Publishing, 2012, p. 13.
18 Compare to: SMĚKAL, V.: *Pozvání do psychologie osobnosti*. Brno : Barrister & Principal, 2002, p. 290.
19 MASLOW, A. H.: *Motivation and Personality*. New York : Harper, 1970, p. 340.
20 MURRAY, H. A.: *Explorations in Personality*. New York : Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 123-125.
21 Remark by authors: There is a difference between the Ancient Greek understanding of the term "hedonism" (Greek *hedone* – pleasure) and its contemporary meaning connoting profane pleasure and enjoyment. In Hellenistic philosophy, it represented concrete principles for justifying moral demands, i.e., the good is defined as that which causes people pleasure; evil, on the contrary, as that which leads to their suffering.
Compare to: KICZKO, L. et al.: *Dejiny filozofie*. Bratislava : Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 1996; LONG, A. A.: *Hellénistická filozofie: Stoikové, epikurejci, skeptikové*. Prague : Oikoymenh, 2003.
22 OLIVER, M. B., RANEY, A. A.: Entertainment as Pleasurable and Meaningful: Identifying Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motivations for Entertainment Consumption. In *Journal of Communication*, 2011, Vol. 62, No. 5, p. 986-988.
23 Remark by authors: "Eudaimonism" in the Ancient Greek understanding is the expression of a person's moral behaviour on the basis of which the desire to be happy is fulfilled. Gaming can also be considered in terms of hedonistic pleasure and the eudaimonistic desire for happiness. It has its own purpose within the range of hedonistic pleasure and eudaimonic motivation.
24 See above.

3 Cult, Creative and Aesthetic Dimensions of Games

The search for the purpose of play is related to the human gift to challenge, to seek answers to questions about life, about being on earth, the afterlife, about finding ways to survive, to live, and about frustrations and threats in the community and in nature. If the utility of play is measured by benefits related to human benefits, whether in a relaxing or cultivating position, the purposefulness of play points to a broader cultural context. The search for the purpose of play in itself in the context of culture leads us to the origins of play rituals²⁵ and their association with cultic rituals in the early period of human history. An excursion into the period when culture began to play offers insight into the very nature of human culture and human endeavors. According to J. Huizinga, it was typical of early society to secure worldly well-being through sacred acts. They were practiced through rituals, sacrifices, mysteries in the form of pure play. This is evidenced, for example, by the struggles of shamans with evil spirits.²⁶ At first glance, shamans were different from other members of the community. They were dressed in ritual garments and covered in masks. R. Caillouis depicts their ritual struggle as taking place through rich gestures, eloquent pantomime, rule-following and intricate figures in dance as part of his journey through a magical journey expressed in an exciting play performance.²⁷ The mask is very important for the shaman, because in it he acquires a new identity and helps him to open the cult games. "Once he hides in it, that's when the game begins."²⁸ However, it should be emphasised that the religious games played in the Paleolithic, Neolithic, Ancient, Medieval and Modern periods were spectacular in nature.²⁹ This is evidenced by a number of graphic, written or oral rituals and ceremonies held on feast days. These days were exclusively devoted to the celebration of deities. Cult, religious ideas, religion as a coherent system of ideas, dogmas and moral principles, and the associated rituals, are an important part of a holistic culture. From the earliest beginnings of human history, man has performed various manifestations of hierophany³⁰ to honour the sacred, to reconcile with it, or to atone for the violation of moral transgressions.³¹ He manifested his sincere relationship to the sacred as opposed to the profane, the unholy, the mundane, through cults, myths, religious systems, and their associated rituals. Cults, myths, and religious systems simultaneously demonstrated his relationship to the transcendent world and represented the universality of the idea of the human spirit in the eternal recurrence of recurring rituals and sacred acts. Sacred cult games reflected the recurring regularity of nature. Sacred rites and rituals reflected the continuity of the seasons, celebrating the fixed cycle of life.

25 Remark by authors: In social and cultural anthropology, the term "ritual" (synonyms – rite, ceremony) refers to a set of activities that have a well-defined course and goal. There are different types of rituals depending on group participation and goals. Rituals are usually associated with magic and religion. Of interest to anthropologists, these may include rituals performed by shamans, healers, sect leaders, secret societies, initiation rituals, etc. Compare to: SOUKUP, V.: *Sociální a kulturní antropologie*. Prague : Sociologické nakladatelství, 1993, p. 128-129. We use the term "game ritual" in the context of the role-playing roles of players of different kinds of games to refer to specific situations. In them, the player, under the observance of prescribed game rules or under the pressure of social action, performs learned typified actions. Game rituals can be observed, for example, in the opening of the Olympic Games, championships, etc., in sports disciplines, where etiquette requires, for example, bowing towards the opponent, shaking hands at the end of a match, drinking alcohol in card games, or even the typified bowing of actors in front of the audience after a theatrical performance.

26 HUIZINGA, J.: *Jesení středověku. Homo ludens*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1990, p. 224.

27 HUIZINGA, J.: *Jesení středověku. Homo ludens*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1990, p. 224.

28 FINK, E.: *Hra jako symbol světa*. Prague : Český spisovatel, 1993, p. 184.

29 Remark by authors: The rituals performed were, according to our findings, of a spectacular nature. This claim can be supported by the theatrical performance of ritual practices in magical acts, cult or religious ceremonies described by cultural anthropologists, historians and religious scholars. See, for example: TYLOR, B. E.: *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom*. Cambridge : Cambridge Library Collection, 2012; FRAZER, G. J.: *Zlatá ratolest*. Prague : Mladá fronta, 1994; ELIADE, M.: *Posvátné a profánní*. Prague : Česká křesťanská akademie, 1994. The spectacularity of plays, play rituals and media productions is their fundamental characteristic and qualitative essence. See below.

30 Remark by authors: From a combination of the Greek words: *hieros* (sacred) and *phainéin* (to appear). M. Eliade's term "hierophany" expresses that which reveals itself as the most important essence, that which aids man in reflecting on life, its meaning. The author regards the history of religion as an accumulation of hierophanies, i.e., manifestations of sacred realities. From the most elementary hierophany, such as the manifestation of the sacred in an object, a stone, a tree, to the highest hierophany, such as the incarnation of God represents for the Christian. See: ELIADE, M.: *Posvátné a profánní*. Prague : Česká křesťanská akademie, 1994, p. 10.

31 Compare to: ELIADE, M.: *Dejiny náboženských představ a ideí. Od doby kamenné po eleusínske mystériá I*. Bratislava : Agora, 1995.

Play was primordial, according to J. Huizinga; the worship of the cult became play, but this did not mean to denigrate its sacredness. "The sacred act remains an important aspect included in the category of play, but in this classification its sacredness is not disparaged."³² In this context, it can be very clearly observed, for example, in the cultic games and processions in Ancient Greece dedicated to the fertility god Dionysus. From these, as is generally known, later emerged the great ancient drama of the theatre. Among other things, it contained elements of the cycle of life, national myths, religious ideas and profane rituals in the form of various competitions, celebrations and other manifestations of an entertaining and secular nature. Christian liturgical rituals, passion plays, dramatic performances and the manner of celebration at Christmas or Easter were also returns to the sacred. They were annual reenactments of significant biblical events in which believers commemorated the birth, death and resurrection of the incarnate God, Jesus Christ. Secularised play rituals also have their repetitions, but their purpose is pragmatic and commercial, appealing to the popularity aspect and therefore emphasising their spectacularity.

Games in the history of cultures have had other benefits for individuals and societies. This is evidenced by a number of well-known historical events that have become the subject of literary, dramatic or cinematic works, as well as numerous popular and historiographical studies. From a cultural, anthropological and sociological point of view, it can be said that the Olympic Games in Ancient Greece, for example, were not only a religious act but also a prestigious event. They consolidated the cultural identity of the Greeks, strengthened their physical and mental fitness and historical memory and self-confidence, and at the same time fostered diplomatic relations with the entire world of the time. By watching gladiatorial duels, the murder of convicts, etc. in Ancient Rome, the crowd in turn discharged their emotions, enjoying unadulterated, vivid experiences. In these plays, the audience played its significant role as both observers and actors, creating an emotionally charged atmosphere. The gladiators offered them everything that embodied the mental potential and ideals of Roman social formation – fighting skills, determination, conquest, heroism, even a sense of battle strategy. The messages of the symbols of "bread and circuses"³³ expressed the very essence of Roman culture, as well as the Roman sense of rational calculation and pragmatic action. The tradition of Roman genius was also translated into the ornamental and decorative culture of the Middle Ages, creating a sublime synthesis of Christian morality in the guise of transformed games designed for different states. For example, when a medieval knight participated in tournaments and displayed his armour, equipment, weapons and martial arts for admiration, he clearly declared his social affiliation and role, ostentatiously playing the role of protector of the noble ladies of the court and of his lord's interests. If the medieval executioner, wearing a veiled face-mask, beheaded convicts to the sound of drums and the shrieking of the crowd, he likewise represented a clearly defined role in a social game determined by the norms and laws of a given community. The specificity of the role played by the medieval executioner lay in the skill of beheading, or in other drastic ways of escorting people out of this world. The medieval crowd, like the ancient one, witnessed a unique spectacle in the spirit of entertaining reality shows, full of flamboyant ceremonies, contests or bloody performances. They watched in fascination the games of those who performed courtly or fairground shows, or administered justice, as well as those who committed evil, transgressed against the law and morality, and acted the roles of convicts.³⁴ The spectacular scenery of the square and the execution ground was part of the play's performance of justice and provided an audience-giving thrill similar to the ancient theatrical contests in honour of Zeus, or the Christian passion plays, or Shakespeare's plays at London's Globe Theatre in the early modern period. In addition to the emotional experience, the thrill of the action of the plays and the fascinating imagination, they were captivated by the rituals of the plays, the mastery of the performance of the plays, the products of human genius sublimating the realities of the culture of the time. These useful qualities did not disappear even in later periods of human history, when the modern period replaced the Middle Ages with its bold return to the rationality of the ancient tradition and its relevance to games and media production in the sense of "bread and circuses".

32 HUIZINGA, J.: *Jesení středověku. Homo ludens*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1990, p. 239.

33 See: FUTRELL, A.: *Blood in the Arena: The Spectacle of Roman Power*. Texas : University of Texas Press, 1997; KYLE, D. G.: *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome*. New York : Routledge, 1998; DUNKLE, R.: *Gladiátoři: Krutá podívaná ve starověkém Římě*. Prague : Věšhrad, 2011.

34 Compare to: LE GOFF, J.: *Kultura středověké Evropy*. Prague : Odeon, 1991.

The creativity of man, the sense of harmony of forms, the refinement of the environment, of objects, the perfection of crafts, of techniques for the processing of materials, the general technical and technological progress are undoubtedly reflected in the development of games. They can be reflected in their generic typology, forms, rules, refined obstacles that players have to overcome or in the mastery of fabricating illusion, improvisation, etc. We consider art to be a specific phenomenon that influences the form of games and the relations of players, actors and spectators to them. Man is a creative creature, which manifests itself in the way he copes with the natural environment, in the way he constructs a social and personal identity, and in the way he is able to sublimate the legacies of previous generations and create new works of art. These reflect the continuity of humanity's creative history materialised in works of art. They help generations of inheritors of cultural legacies to create new worlds full of fantasy, imagination, new sensuality and new ideas on a proven, solid foundation. We consider artistic creation and the resulting artistic culture to be a phenomenal manifestation and result of the unique gifts and abilities of human beings, capable of creatively grasping reality and reshaping it through the prism of their seeing, feeling, and rational judgment. It transforms it into values oscillating between the beauty of spirit and the beauty of matter. Man's gift to create art has influenced diverse playful expressions, because playful principles are inherent in the mentality of both the creative man – *homo creator*³⁵ – and the man who plays – *homo ludus*.³⁶ The very act of playing sublimates the aesthetic experience. According to F. Schiller, it is as much the result of our senses as of our rational understanding.³⁷

Each game not only offers an aesthetic experience, but also possesses aesthetic qualities.³⁸ However, it should be stressed that they are represented differently in different games and game rituals. In terms of judging games on the basis of artistic, aesthetic and intellectual qualities, it is possible to observe different degrees of penetration of artistic elements or inspiration, corresponding to the canons of beauty and contemporary taste that were in force at the time. Indeed, man tends to be receptive to the reception of art, and tends to judge human creations on the basis of an inner sense of the aesthetics of expression, of the harmony of visual elements and of what is considered beautiful and socially desirable in a certain historical period. This is why E. Mistrík perceives the relationship between art and man in the dimensions of the purely human need to reciprocate art, to walk behind it, because it represents both a fiction and a true construction of this world, and although it pretends to be true, “*it is false and therefore beautiful*”.³⁹ A beautiful false reality offers man both an optimistic perspective and an aesthetic quality. A. Hauser sees them in offering a better alternative for man and his everyday experience of reality. In fact, art meaningfully corrects the life of the individual, compensates for the deficiencies in his existence.⁴⁰ The influence of art on games, on the way they are realised, their visual representation, the dramatisation of the course of the game and the rules and procedures chosen in connection with them, is unquestionable. For example, the spectacular scenery stirring the senses in the mythological stories in honour of Zeus were prime examples of the skill and talent of Greek builders, sculptors, painters, actors, orators and playwrights. A different aesthetic quality was offered by the plays during the popular festivals of the Roman Saturnalia, when feasting, drinking and games of all kinds – from the table through the obscene to the sadistic – were performed. Huizinga aptly demonstrates the relationship between play and art with the example of poetry. It was born in play because it has not only an aesthetic function, but also a vital, social and liturgical one. Poetic games remain forms of games, they are “*games with words and speech*”.⁴¹ The same principles of the application of the aesthetic function in games can be observed in the case of the influence of the visual arts – painting, sculpting or architecture. They combine playful exploration and experimentation

35 Remark by authors: The concept of *homo creator* (man-creator) expresses a cultural principle, the substantive premise of which is the cultivation of man on the basis of socialisation, education and practice. V. Šabík states that the prerequisite for the achievement of human creativity is his ability to apply non-traditional methods. These condition key processes such as innovation, quality, new ideas, theorems and their application and shaping in practice – see: ŠABÍK, V.: *Diskurzy o kultúre*. Bratislava : Spolok slovenských spisovateľov, 2001, p. 82.

36 Remark by authors: J. Huizinga introduces the term “*homo ludus*” (playing man) into scientific writing. In his theoretical concept, he points to the equal nature of playing and creating. He understands play as a cultural phenomenon, arguing that “*culture emerges and develops in play as play*”. See: HUIZINGA, J.: *Jeseň stredoveku. Homo ludens*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1990, p. 221.

37 SCHILLER, F.: *Výbor z filozofických spisů*. Prague : Svoboda-Libertas, 1992, p. 169.

38 CAILLOIS, R.: *Hry a lidé. Masky a závrať*. Prague : Nakladatelství studia Ypsilon, 1998, p. 100.

39 MISTRÍK, E.: *Vstup do umenia*. Nitra : Enigma, 1994, p. 4.

40 HAUSER, A.: *Filozofie dějin umění*. Prague : Odeon, 1975, p. 50.

41 HUIZINGA, J.: *Jeseň stredoveku. Homo ludens*. Bratislava : Tatran, 1990, p. 113.

with shape, colour, expression, harmony, etc. Each game thus implies both artistic practices and aesthetic functions. They are distinct; sometimes more, sometimes less. But they have a common characteristic. They manifest themselves against the background of the games; scenery, its game principles, accepted rules, game rituals, and in the players who theatrically perform their roles.

4 Spectacularity of Game Principles and Media Productions

The spectacularity of games and the game principles and game rituals contained in them is their fundamental characteristic and qualitative essence. We are led to this statement by the evident theatrical spectacularity of the actors' ritualised acts in various play situations. Spectacularity is not only part of the particular game reality, but it turns out to shape the everyday manifestations of individuals' behaviour as well. We consider spectacularity as an essential prerequisite for the fulfilment of most game principles. It is reflected in game rituals and, consequently, in the actions of individuals in different life situations. A prerequisite for the spectacular behaviour of a playing individual is both their level of involvement in the game situation and the natural need to stand out and impress in the group. The theses formulated by G. Debord point to man's ability to identify with spectacular, illusory phenomena and objects.⁴² We note that the contemporary's ability to identify with certain phenomena and objects is strongly asserted in a world crowded with the various attractions of popular culture, and thus also in the media and game worlds. What we want to draw attention to, however, is the fact that a fundamental prerequisite for the identification of players and audiences, no matter what game they play, what roles they occupy, and what roles they empathise with, is their identification with the illusion of the senses. The illusion is the source of their lived reality. In this context, J. Baudrillard's well-known concept of “*hyperreality*”⁴³ points very clearly to individuals' reasons for crossing the thresholds of the boring everyday and indulging in media simulations of reality, for transgressing the boundaries of the mundane and looking up to images and icons of the ideal world.⁴⁴ It is because this distant cosmos is both approached and idealised for them through media content saturated with colour and flashy gaming rituals as well as the performances of role-playing protagonists. It is clear that the appeal of the media offer is that it is able to simulate and at the same time represent reality very effectively.⁴⁵ Media content and images, irrespective of the type of medium, situations and genre representations, have always fascinated with their spectacular and entertaining nature. In this respect, J. Radošinská and J. Višňovský consider digital games in particular to be the source of the most visible and fascinating experiences. In fact, they fascinate audiences in particular with their spectacularly entertaining and enticing game environments.⁴⁶

42 See: DEBORD, G.: *Společnost spektaklu*. Prague : Intu, 2007.

43 On this, see the understanding of humans as *homo medialis* (see: GÁLIKOVÁ TOLNAIOVÁ, S.: Media and Truth in the Perspective of the Practice and Life Form of the Modern “*Homo Medialis*”). In *Communication Today*, 2019, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 8) who can create different levels of simulated reality, including stereotyping. See also: FEDOROV, A.: Schools and Universities in Audiovisual Media: Experts' Opinion. In *Communication Today*, 2019, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 119.

44 See: BAUDRILLARD, J.: *Simulacra and Simulation*. Michigan : University of Michigan Press, 1994.

45 Remark by authors: In relation to the application of game situations, we understand and define the term “*media*” in its institutional, technical-technological and distributional platform and in the same consensus as most of the relevant authors. They agree that media offer both numerically unlimited and limited audiences the possibility to reciprocate specific contents; they are therefore the source of a specific mode of social communication. From these perspectives, media contents are produced on the basis of different purposes and impacts – educational, informative, entertaining, socialising, or aimed at orienting the recipient in a certain area of social practice. From the point of view of media production, the purposes and the themes chosen in their context are also expressed in different genre types and formats, typical of the different types of media. Compare to: O'SULLIVAN, T., DUTTON, T. B., RAYNER, P.: *Studying the Media*. London : Arnold, 1998; ROSENGREN, K. E.: *Communication: An Introduction*. London, Thousand Oaks : Sage Publications, 2000; MAGO, Z.: *World of Advergaming: Digitálne hry ako nástroje reklamy*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2016; MCQUAIL, D.: *Úvod do teórie masovej komunikácie*. Prague : Portál, 2009; VRABEC, N., ZACHAR, M.: Press Agencies' News Service as a Tool to Support Media Literacy Development. In *Media Literacy and Academic Research*, 2018, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 43-53; ŠKRIPCOVÁ, L.: Participative Culture in Community Media. In *European Journal of Media, Art & Photography*, 2017, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 98-101; BUČKOVÁ, Z.: Typology of Game Principles in Digital Games: A Case Study of Mafia III. In *Acta Ludologica*, 2019, Vol. 2, No. 1, p. 42-54; JIRÁK, J., KÖPPOVÁ, B.: *Masová média*. Prague : Portál, 2009.

46 RADOŠINSKÁ, J., VIŠŇOVSKÝ, J.: *Aktuálne trendy v mediálnej kultúre*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2013, p. 52-53.

In the context of the operation of all types of media and their broader definition, it is also necessary to reflect on D. Kellner's statement. According to him, it is important not to look at the media only in a strictly dichotomous way, i.e., as instruments for the production and dissemination of popular culture or entertainment serving the recipients to fulfil their own pleasures.⁴⁷ In particular, we believe that the capacity for "narrative immersion" and "narrative introspection"⁴⁸ in recipients has a significant contribution to their socialisation with the media. The latter offer them engaging content in a more appealing, if simulated, quality than everyday images, themes and their interpretive narratives of everyday life, preserved by stereotypes and normative imperatives. The power of the media and its ability to equip recipients with patterns of behaviour and social communication lies in its fascinating otherness. On the other hand, it is a fact that the relationship between social action, the social behaviour of individuals and the reception of media content is not just a two-sided affair, but involves the whole of culture. This fact is confirmed by the analyses of J. Meyrowitz, emphasising the socialising role of mass media. He sees behind it mainly their influence on the recipients' endowment with a "cultural stock of definitions of situations".⁴⁹ D. Croteau and W. Hoynes also recognise the media as a powerful socialising agent. At the same time, they argue that the influence of the media on the socialisation of recipients depends on the media formats and on the characteristics of the audience.⁵⁰ If we agree with this theory, then it is clear that the claim about the socialising role of the media cannot be absolutised because it is driven by other factors. According to our premise, media culture also reflects the socio-cultural environment and reshapes its contents according to its own ideas and for its own purposes. However, it can reshape it in different ways – setting up a relentless mirror or creating an ideal, carefree, showy, funny, romantic, tragic, etc. world. The media world, however, cannot be completely detached from the socio-cultural world, because the latter forms the basis of the action of cultural elements that are more or less reflected in media narratives.⁵¹

Absolutisation of the process of socialisation of the recipients through the media is also impossible because in the socio-cultural environment individuals play their own typified roles, just as they do in the media world. E. Goffman characterises them as dramatic representations of the rights and duties of individuals. Each of them plays multiple social roles, created for different situations. The performers can "perform them on different occasions to the same audience".⁵² According to M. van Ments, the notion of role represents the strength of group norms and social pressures on both the individual and the group, while characterising their social behaviour. Adequate behaviour is required of each role that a person occupies. They can choose from a range of types of appropriate behaviour.⁵³ In the context of socio-game roles, we emphasise that the socialising role of the media and the socialisation of individuals within a socio-cultural environment do not contradict the hedonistic and eudaimonic motivations of the recipients of media content. Socialised audiences merely desire a world that they understand; according to J. Baudrillard, contemporaries want to live their lives in hyperreality because it has become natural to them and because they were born into it.⁵⁴

On the basis of the preceding premises and reflections, it can be concluded that the common denominator of the interrelation between games and media is the phenomenon of specific media productions. We understand media productions as specific productions whose conditions for success with the public are public presentation, popularity and recognition of the authenticity of the illusion.⁵⁵ The notion of public became

47 KELLNER, D.: *Media Spectacle*. London: Routledge, 2003, p. 29.

48 Remark by authors: According to M. L. Ryan, the ability of "narrative immersion" allows the reader to cease to perceive the surrounding world, to enter the fictional world of the literary story. See: RYAN, M.-L.: *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. "Narrative introspection" is, in our opinion, a logical consequence of narrative immersion. It enables the recipient to penetrate more deeply into the plot. The intrigued recipient – the fellow-player – empathises with the emotional state of the actor, experiencing with him the joys and the sufferings. Narrative introspection leads them to confront the protagonist, to participate in the resolution of their situation on the basis of their own experience, their courage to confront the enemy or to step out of line and speak up in the face of injustices by the state authorities, etc.

49 MEYROWITZ, J.: *Všude a nikde. Vliv elektronických médií na sociální chování*. Prague: Karolinum, 2006, p. 32.

50 CROTEAU, D., HOYNES, W.: *Media/Society: Industries, Images, and Audiences*. London: SAGE Publications, 2014, p. 17.

51 Remark by authors: See the definitions and characteristics of media culture pointing to the interdependence of the interaction of the two worlds – the media and the socio-cultural – in, for example: PRAVDOVÁ, H.: *Determinanty kreovania mediálnej kultúry*. Trnava: FMK UCM, 2009; HEPP, A.: *Medienkultur. Die Kultur Medialisierten Welten*. Bremen: Springer VS, 2013.

52 GOFFMAN, E.: *Všichni hrajeme divadlo*. Prague: Nakladatelství studia Ypsilon, 1999, p. 22.

53 VAN MENTS, M.: *The Effective Use of Role Play: A Handbook for Teachers and Trainers*. London: Kogan Page, 1983, p. 7.

54 BAUDRILLARD, J.: *Simulacra and Simulation*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1994, p. 6-7.

55 Remark by authors: We share the opinion of D. Prokop, who, in the framework of defining the basic features of mass media, con-

associated in particular with the change in political conditions at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, with the reading of the press, first in the family circle, later in the salons where debating café societies were formed. J. Habermas points to these circumstances and underlines the importance of the birth of a literary public institutionalised in such an environment. In the literary public, he recognises both what remains of a decaying feudal, courtly society and the embryonic form of a new civic public.⁵⁶ It is debatable, however, whether the formation of the public can be situated only in the period of the gradual demise of feudal societies and the emergence of new political and economic orders under the tutelage of the periodical press. We are inclined to the view of D. Prokop, according to which the reading of the popular press, the emergence of a new economic order does not mean that the public was formed in the 18th century. In this period only the concept of "public" was expanded and established.⁵⁷ After all, public assemblies of the people are known from the history of antiquity and are best known from the heyday of Athenian democracy.

The above arguments lead us to prefer the term "audience" in connection with the reception of the content of media productions, regardless of whether it is passive or active, or whether other qualities and features can be attributed to it. We are in favour of J. Dewey's definition of the term "audience" because he characterises it very broadly and yet very aptly – as a social unit composed of interested individuals.⁵⁸ It is also clear from the foregoing that this audience has specific characteristics. In fact, the individuals concerned are able to stage, according to E. Goffman, "their own selves", and in a particular way. The individual performs their character on the social stage and tries to convince others of the authenticity of their identity. However, their own identity – their 'self', is only a product of a well-performed social role.⁵⁹ Social role-playing, however, has its normative limits because culture itself is normative, possessing a stock of definitions of situations that translate into typified individual behavior. P. Berger draws attention to the phenomenon of typified behaviour. According to him, social action is not only guided but also typed, because the basis of social roles includes both typed expectations and typed reactions.⁶⁰ The staging of the self by individuals under the influence of the normative socio-cultural environment is therefore considered a key to understanding both the scripts of media productions and the typification of acting rituals, including the typification of actors – actors cast in specific roles.

The simulation of reality, the identification of individuals with protagonists, the fascination with spectacular phenomena and objects, place media, games and culture on a correlative plane. The media offer the recipients specific fascinations of real and fictional life games, life situations, characters in their roles, conflicts and love scenes, etc., while conveying aesthetic experiences and inducing different emotional states. They also enable them to identify with idols or actors in plays experiencing similar vicissitudes or vicissitudes of life. R. Caillois's typology of acting principles logically suggests that Mimicry is the dominant acting principle in media productions. Caillois mentions their presence, among other things, in the example of watching popular mass sporting events. According to him, when observing sporting events, one can very clearly see the application of the moment of Mimicry transmitted from the actors to the spectators. "The very identification with the athlete creates a moment of mimicry akin to that of the reader inhabiting the novel, the viewer the hero of the film."⁶¹ One can agree with Caillois's assertion of the dominance of a certain game principle, but never a solitary one, because it is interspersed with other game principles. In the case of the game principle of Mimicry, these are the principles of Agon and Ilinx. We interpret this position of Caillois to mean, for example, that a spectator watching the rivalry of opponents appreciates strength, technique, and skill, and can become ecstatic at the athletic feats performed. In the case of sports games, we find his view of the Alea principle of play, which strictly excludes Mimicry from the moment, questionable. The reason for the exclusion is that the Alea principle requires the actor to be idle and expectant, full of tension.⁶² However, it is questionable to

sidered alternative concepts to the notion of media productions – narratives or stories. He preferred the notion of media productions because they include narratives, stories, as well as the aspect of arranging. See: PROKOP, D.: *Boj o média. Dějiny kritického myšlení o médiích*. Prague: Karolinum, 2005, p. 11.

56 HABERMAS, J.: *Strukturální přeměna veřejnosti*. Prague: Karolinum, 2000, p. 90.

57 PROKOP, D.: *Boj o média. Dějiny kritického myšlení o médiích*. Prague: Karolinum, 2005, p. 10.

58 DEWEY, J.: *Rekonstrukcia liberalizmu*. Bratislava: Kaligram, 2001, p. 56.

59 GOFFMAN, E.: *Všichni hrajeme divadlo*. Prague: Nakladatelství studia Ypsilon, 1999, p. 22.

60 BERGER, P.: *Pozvání do sociologie: Humanistická perspektiva*. Brno: Barrister & Prncipal, 2003, p. 101.

61 CAILLOIS, R.: *Hry a lidé. Maska a závat*. Prague: Nakladatelství studia Ypsilon, 1998, p. 43.

62 CAILLOIS, R.: *Hry a lidé. Maska a závat*. Prague: Nakladatelství studia Ypsilon, 1998, p. 42.

what extent the game actor, in this case the performing athlete, does not calculate in the execution of game rituals and the resolution of game situations with the principle of chance, luck or even gambling when they find themselves in a deadlock situation.

In the case of the application of the acting principle of Mimicry, it is necessary to distinguish between media productions not only according to the individual roles, but also according to the situation, the environment and the medium. The change of identity, the empathy with the illusory being, with the new role, influences the player's behaviour. New identities, new roles are offered to the players. But it is necessary to distinguish between two categories of players. In the first category are the players who stage their 'self' within a variety of social events and social practices. For example, they can be in the roles of athletes, politicians, salesmen, craftsmen, teachers, lawyers, IT specialists, parents, etc. The second category includes players changing their identity in an organised and purposeful way for a certain purpose. In their transformed roles, they theatrically perform for the audience. That audience purposefully seeks out the reception experience of the media production. The protagonist transforms into their role during a carnivalesque, theatrical performance, radio, television production or film, transforming into a new identity. This may be a transformation into mythical characters, into film heroes or into familiar figures from history. They perform flamboyantly, sovereignly, aware of their new identities, they play their roles responsibly because they know that what is expected of them is what the audience desires.

5 Conclusion: Correlations of Culture, Game Principles and Media Productions

We recognise that it is important to distinguish between different forms of media staging and different possibilities for narrative immersion and introspection. As an example of this claim, we can point to typical formations in which the acting principle of Mimicry is realised and dominates. From this point of view, one cannot compare a carnival with a theatrical performance or a film or television adaptation of a novel or short story, or with a documentary film or reportage. There is, for example, a difference between role-playing in the atmosphere of the popular carnival in Venice, where the stage is usually a public space, and role-playing in front of a theatre audience or film cameras. Carnival has its own unbridled, peculiar spectacularity of the protagonists of media productions. Their roles are obvious because they are shaped by the costumes and the purposes of the play – to show off and have fun. The plot unfolds under a cloak of anonymity, a burlesque atmosphere completing the exuberant spectacularity of carnivalesque culture. The degree of narrative immersion and introspection of the audience of a parade of carnival masks and costumes is much lower than that of an audience of a theatrical or film production. The audience of a carnival exhibition is more fascinated by the pageantry, extravagance, and the unusualness multiplied by the aesthetic experience of the decorative and rich shapes and colours of the main protagonists. The moment of the game principle of Mimicry is clearly dominant, but against this background the agon signalling the competition between the players for the audience's favour is clearly outlined.

The theatre audience, for example, has a different way of applying the principle of Mimicry and also different expectations from media productions and their protagonists. The audience's reception is determined by its genre awareness, the expected enjoyment connected with the subconscious aesthetic experience and the cathartic effect of participation in the plot. A. Hauser also notes another aspect of audience motivation in this context. According to him, people go to theatrical performances because they want to hear "skilful speeches and soaring triads, witty repartee and witty jokes, and they relish the flood of words as a form of battle on which every dramatic performance is based".⁶³ We express the conviction that the attraction of theatre for the audience also lies in the reassurances it provides. It knows what to expect from a performance, what is the usual scheme of the plot, the performance of the characters, the dialogue, the design of the stage and

the scenic equipment in theatre art. A. Hauser calls these certainties the conventions of stage, scene, time and space constraints. Although the drama unfolding on the stage is an idealised existence, the plot features live actors, real props in real time and space. The audience accepts the role reversal of the protagonists of the action – the actors – because theatre cannot exist without it.⁶⁴ A specifically prepared actor comes to the theatre or film stage in the primary, socio-cultural role of an actor and in the secondary role of the character he plays. S. Matejovičová points to the dimension of artistic rendering of the role, when the actor provides the audience with his acting art in an original way. In a complex harmony of his body, voice, sensitivity and intellect with the character and in harmony with the directorial, dramaturgical, artistic, musical thinking and feeling, taking into account the psycho-social mission of his role and the audience present.⁶⁵ It can be stated that the degree of narrative immersion and introspection of the theatre audience is considerably higher than that of the audience of carnival ceremonies. In the case of a successful performance, the audience is fascinated by the plot, the actors' performances, and takes away the aesthetic experience of the artistic complexity of the stage scenes. The genres of dramatic art, the dramaturgy and the acting performances of the protagonists determine the dominance of the application of the principle of Mimicry and the degree of participation of other acting principles, especially Agon and Ilinx. It is clear, however, that the moment of the acting principle of Mimicry is dominant, but also that Agon obviously looms in its background, signalling the competition between the players for the audience's favour and reflecting the turbulence of the dramatic action.

But the carnival, the theatrical performance, etc. are more than an illusion, a fabrication, a simulation of reality that is more realistic than reality itself. Media productions and the acting principle of Mimicry are human creations; they are created on the basis of real life, real social roles of individuals and their typified behaviour. They are therefore a purely anthropological phenomenon, which, however, transcends the understanding of being and significantly co-creates both the scenery and the mental setting of human culture. Media productions more or less reflect the ideological sphere, the hierarchy of professed values, morals, norms, the mental level of the community, and are also determined by technical-technological progress. They are the image of cultures in their developmental stages and in historical periods; they can be considered as a historical category. Games, game principles and rituals are also present in the process of shaping contemporary tastes, lifestyles, morals and norms. They require the talents of a human genius capable of creativity, imagination, imagination, logic, discipline, physical hardship, adherence to rules, but also risk-taking. They are multifaceted, functionally multidimensional, fascinating in their entertainment, escapist possibilities, but also in the possibilities of self-realisation, for example in the acquisition of skills or social contacts. Christian liturgical rituals, passion plays, dramatic play performances and the way of celebrating at Christmas or Easter, etc., were also returns to sacred storylines. Secularised play rituals also have their repetitions, but their purpose is pragmatic and commercial, appealing to the popularity aspect and therefore emphasising their familiar spectacularity. Every game offers an aesthetic experience, possesses aesthetic qualities, implies artistic practices and aesthetic functions. They manifest themselves against the backdrop of the games' scenery, its game principles, accepted rules, game rituals, and in the players who theatrically perform their roles. It is also for this reason that we argue that the spectacularity of games and media productions is their fundamental characteristic and qualitative essence. Media contents and images, regardless of the type of media, situations and genre representations, have always fascinated and continue to fascinate actors and audiences with their spectacular and entertaining nature. The capacity for "narrative immersion" and "narrative introspection" in the recipients plays a significant role in this process. All of the above factors and phenomena clearly indicate the correlation of culture, acting principles and media productions.

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