Aesthetics of Care and Caring for Aesthetics in the Game Play of *Walden, A Game* and *Eastshade*

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Introduction

This paper aims to establish an aesthetics of care in computer game play with an emphasis on two perspectives which are derived from two cases, *Walden, A Game* (Fullerton & USC Game Innovation Lab 2017) and *Eastshade* (*Eastshade* Studios 2019) that will be analyzed in order to unfold the argument. This approach allows to combines two perspectives on computer game aesthetics (Kantian aesthetics and media-aesthetics) and connects them to theories of care with regard to computer games. In the first perspective care is a condition of possibility for aesthetics and in the second perspective the aesthetical view consists of a view of the beautiful as a praxis of self-care which in both games is instrumental to the fundamental care-requirement of both games. I will unfold my argument with the help of the game *Walden, A Game* and *Eastshade* since both are exemplary for both perspectives and combine both aesthetical perspectives differently in one game. To achieve this, I will draw on theories, concepts, and analyses from aesthetics and media aesthetics, phenomenological and existential game philosophy as well as game studies. The paper thereby aims to contribute the discourse on game aesthetics (Cogburn & Silcox 2008, 2008, 2009; Feige 2015; Karhulahti 2011; Kirkpatrick 2011; Leino 2014; Leino 2011; Liboriussen 2008; Myers 2010; Nguyen, forthcoming; Rautzenberg 2014; Sharp 2015; Silcox 2017; Vella 2013, 2014, 2015; Wiemer 2014).

1) In a first step, I will establish the first aesthetical perspective. For this, I will draw on an understanding of aesthetics in the sense of the Greek 'aesthesis' ('sensory perception') which dominated aesthetical theory since Greek antiquity until the 18th century (Martin, 2003) and argue that the condition of possibility of continued perception for computer games is requires a specific kind of care by the player. For this I will draw on Möring's notion of the care-structure of games (Möring 2016; derived from Heidegger 2008) which in the spirit of existential-phenomenological approaches to computer games (Payne 2009; O. T. Leino 2010; O. T. Leino & Möring 2015) argues that the gameplay condition of computer games imposes a fundamental care-requirement on players: to keep playing players have to satisfy the basic condition that is to prevent a game over. In *Tetris* the central care-requirement is to avoid that Tetrominos stack up and the game is over. If the game is over it cannot be perceived since the game switches to the extradiegetic game menu. The same goes for first-person shooters like *Doom* (id Software 2016) or city builders like *Cities Skylines* (Colossal Order & Tantalus Media 2015). The argument is that this caring is essential for the continued perceivability of a game, the perceivability depends on a successful caring. Hence, perception of the game is conditional to the player's performance (cf. Aarseth 1997).

2) This leads me to establish the second perspective which is characterized by a different combination of care and aesthetics. It relies on a Kantian concept of aesthetics being a subjective judgement of taste of something as beautiful, pleasant, good, or even sublime (Kant 2007) as well as to a notion of care in the sense of a Foucauldian self-care. For this perspective I hypothesize that the beautiful, the pleasant, and the good can all be argued to participate in self-care, described by Foucault as "epimelea heautou" (Foucault 2005). According to this logic, perceiving something as beautiful, pleasant, or good and engaging with this can be considered part of self-fashioning and caring for the self [...], defined as caring for the soul" (Miller 2005).

3) Eventually, I will analyze both games, *Walden, a game* and *Eastshade* according to the established perspectives where both interrelations of aesthetics and care, as previously established, occur. *Walden, A Game* models Henry D. Thoreau's famous work *Walden, or a Life in the Woods* (1854) where Thoreau describes his experiment of moving from the industrialized city to a cabin in the forest in order to live a self-sustained life in harmony with nature. Here the player has to care for the player-figure's wellbeing according to perspective one, and take care of its basic needs such as food, shelter, and so on. In addition to this the game also exhibits the second perspective: Additional to the basic care-requirement in the game, from time to time the player has to satisfy an aesthetic care-requirement of the second perspective. It is instrumental to the first care-requirement: the player-figure (cf. Vella 2015) has to take care of observing natural beauty (e.g. performing a view on the lake) in order to fill the inspiration meter so that the image of the game does not change to greyscale only (Pogrebin, 2017). In *Eastshade* the player-figure is a painter who sets out to produce landscape paintings. In the first example caring for the character's existential wellbeing to secure sensual access to the game and caring for the characters aesthetical wellbeing (in the sense of beauty) are distinguishable. In *Eastshade* both perspectives fall into one: the basic care-requirement of the game is to gather sufficient painting material to ensure that the player-figure can continue to produce paintings. Hence, the existential care-requirement of the game is congruent with a caring for beauty in the game. However, here as opposed to *Walden, a game* the player-figure produces art beauty from natural beauty.

Game philosopher Daniel Vella offered a distinction between an aesthetic mode of perceiving landscape in games (2013), where some landscapes are perceived as Heideggerian standing reserve in that they present resources to be exploited for player projects (*Minecraft* (Mojang 2011)) and other landscapes are perceived in the sense of the aesthetic flaneur and are just to be observed (*Proteus* (Key & Kanaga 2013)). The two perspectives and the analysis of the two cases will allow to observe these two separate perspectives in a game simultaneously.

Aesthetics of Care

In the first section, I wish to establish what can be understood as an Aesthetics of Care of computer games. This perspective is derived from existential philosophy, existential ludology, game studies and an understanding of aesthetics as perception "derived from the ancient Greek aesthesis, meaning sensation or perception (see senses), in contrast to intellectual concepts or rational knowledge" (Martin 2003). With the example of *Walden, A Game*, I wish to show that an immanent care logic or care structure is a condition of possibility of the perceivability, of the aesthesis of (some) computer games. As a methodological side note: I understand aesthesis

here as media aesthetics, since perception is always mediated by some material, tool, or some social.

Let me start with the example of the work on which *Walden, A Game* is based on. That is Henry David Thoreau's experiment of a self-sufficient life in the forests of Massachusetts, which he describes in his work *Walden, or, Life in the Woods* from 1854. In the second chapter "Where I lived and what I lived for", Thoreau describes his perception of the environment and the atmosphere at Walden Pond in the morning. He writes e.g. about

- the pond's "smooth reflecting surface,"
- the sky's reflection in the water appears all the more powerful, as if this water itself was the sky: "A lake like this is never smoother than at such a time; and the clear portion of the air above it being, shallow and darkened by clouds, the water, full of light and reflections, becomes a lower heaven itself so much the more important". Here water is understood as a medium that makes the sky appear more powerful.
- Later it becomes clear: Thoreau is even aware that his perception is mediated. For he himself offers even a (media-)aesthetic analysis when he states

    "atmosphere [...] [is the] medium through which we look […] It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look, which morally we can do" (Thoreau 1854).

Thoreau accompanies his observations with some critical reflections concerning the everyday life of the inhabitants of industrialized cities, which are determined by the noise and the rhythm of the "factory bells" rather than by the natural sounds of the woods and their calm atmosphere. The infrastructures of the city determine the perception and life of people differently from the surroundings of the forest. [This critique and the perception of the environment are also the subject of a media ecology.]

When finally reflecting: "It is well to have some water in your neighborhood [...]. One value even of the smallest well is [...] it keeps butter cool," Thoreau thematizes a central element of self-care in his chosen existence which concerns the supply of fresh or edible food.

In 2017 Thoreau's work was adapted as *Walden, A Game* by Tracy Fullerton and her team from the USC Game Innovation Lab. In the form of a computer game, it simulates the experience of Thoreau's experiment. In order for the players to be able to experience Thoreau's work within the framework of the medial capacities of the computer game. Thoreau's transcript of his experiences from the Walden pond as well as Tracy Fullerton and her team's translation of these experiences from text to game require what German philosopher Gernot Böhme would call aesthetic work (Böhme 2013). Thoreau's written descriptions were translated from the textual form into a visually and audibly perceptible computer game landscape which additionally can be manipulated by a player. However, paintings by the so-called Hudson River painters, such as Thomas Cole, who at the same time as Thoreau had an interest in the visual representation of nature, were also used (Fitzgerald, Fullerton, Kovacs, Tukarski, & Zlatos, 2017).

While the atmosphere of the game's landscape is an important element of playing the game, a necessary prerequisite for the experience of the game's landscape, its environment and its atmosphere is the player's catering of the game's inherent care-logic. That is, the players have

to take care of the four necessities of their avatar's life, as Thoreau also describes them in his work: "Food, fuel, shelter, and clothing." If their avatar starves or freezes to death, he dies and the game is Game Over.

However, not only the virtual alter ego of Thoreau dies but also the players access to the game is being denied until the player restarts a previous saved game or starts all over again. As long as the player does not do this she is not able to appreciate the games landscape, its atmosphere and all other kinds of aesthetic dimensions which characterize a given game. As such taking care of the needs of the avatar is a prerequisite to being able to perceive whatever the game is offering.

At the functional level in particular, *Walden, A Game* calls for a form of care that is inscribed in a variety of computer games whose themes are not necessarily about the integrity of an avatar or the environment. Instead, computer games in general are media that primarily demand a form of care from their players so that they do not end prematurely. In Tamagotchi players take care of a simulated pet and in *SimCity* (Maxis Software 2013) or *Cities Skylines* they take care of the well-being of an entire city as mayor. In all cases, players will have to make sure that the game doesn't end prematurely, otherwise they won't know how a game's story will evolve or what other options the game may offer. This caring is essential for the continued perceivability of a game, the perceivability depends on a successful caring. Hence, perception of the game is conditional to the player's performance (cf. also Aarseth 1997).

In other words, if Olli Leino (2009) describes the gameplay condition of computer games – player's responsibility to keep the game at play against the resistance of a game's materiality –, then it is the player's caring for staying a player of a given game in the first place which describes the care-logic of computer games.

Gameplay and aestheticism in approaches to computer games by German visual culture scholars

The interrelation between the care-logic and the aesthesis of computer game play can be found on a more general level. It is not limited to the example of *Walden, A Game*. To better understand the care-logic of computer game play as the condition of possibility of the perceivablility of computer games (aesthesis) on a more general level, I suggest looking at scholarly approaches which conceptualize computer games from the point of view of their image. In the following I will therefore show how the computer game image itself can be understood as an image to care-for.

As opposed to Galloway's opposition of **gameplay *versus* aesthetics/image** for cases of game art these approaches allow thinking of computer games as interplay of **the care-logic of gameplay *and* aesthetics/image**. The following approaches usually draw on concepts from the realm of visual culture (Bildwissenschaft) and they have in common that they emphasize the visual and interactive nature of the computer game.

Cindy Poremba remarks in the very beginning of her seminal article on in-game photography entitled "Point and Shoot" (Poremba 2007) that "digital games are commonly mediated through a (more or less) ambient cinematic camera" (Poremba 2007: 49). Emphasizing a duality of camera and gameplay she points out the player's "hybrid role" in many 3D computer games. She says "as camera avatar, players not only navigate through the

game world, they film it as well" (Poremba, 2007: 49). In most 3D games the player controls two entities, the avatar as well as the camera. This hybridity is represented in the layout of contemporary game controllers with two analog sticks where usually the left stick navigates the avatar and the right stick controls the camera-view.

In his book *Video Game Spaces: image, play, and structure in 3D game worlds* (2008), **Michael Nitsche** primarily analyzes the many facets and layers of video game spaces. He mentions the image when it comes to the mediated space of games. The mediated space is "defined by the presentation, which is the space of the **image plane** and the **use of this image** including the cinematic form of presentation" (Nitsche 2008: 16).

Nitsche emphasizes the **interactivity of computer game images**:

"Players are free to explore and interact with it [the game image] directly. Interactors might enter an expressive cinematic space, but now they can act in it. The necessary eye of the virtual camera makes these spaces cinematic and the interaction makes them accessible much like architectural structures. The player experiences game spaces in a combination of both, continuous navigable space and cinematic space" (Nitsche 2008: 85).

While both Poremba and Nitsche emphasize the significance of the camera and the image in computer game play, there are some approaches of scholars who aim to conceptualize computer games as such from the perspective of the image. For them computer games *are* specific kinds of images.

In game studies the mythical history of the narratology versus ludology debate (Aarseth 2012; Frasca 2003) suggests that games could either be conceptualized as "texts" (narratology) or as "games" (ludology). Between these two options German game art scholar **Stephan Schwingeler** observes the emergence of a third way that is to conceptualize games from the perspective of their image. This perspective is mainly promoted by German media scholar Stephan Günzel and art historian Thomas Hensel (Schwingeler 2014: 139). Apart from carrying the notion of the image in the name "video game", another reason to take this perspective is that computer games consist "to a large extent of images"(Schwingeler 2014: 140). Referring to Lambert Wiesing's modes of images, Schwingeler suggests that the computer (game) image

"exists basically in three modes which differ with regard to motion and perception: 1. the static image [e.g. in game menus], 2. the moving image [e.g. in cutscenes], 3. the interactive simulation image [e.g. in main gameplay]" (Schwingeler, 2014: 140–41).

Schwingeler remarks that static and moving images are commonly perceived passively whereas interactive images are commonly triggered actively by a user during gameplay (Schwingeler, 2014: 141).

Thomas Hensel now emphasizes this dimension of action in game images. He conceptualizes computer games with Kenneth Burke's theory of action and John L. Austin's speech act theory as double image act (doppelter Bildakt). Hensel follows Frieder Nake and conceptualizes digital images on a computer as a manipulable "double image" (Hensel, 2013: 217) which consist simultaneously of a **visual surface** and an **invisible under-side** consisting of (machine readable) code. Emphasizing the coded under-side of the image Hensel continues that computer *game* images are better understood as **performative images** and not merely as representational since while playing a game the player does not merely appreciate the aesthetics of the computer game image but she interacts with these images while performing/playing the game. In other words, interacting with the game's images is an

essential part of a game's performance. Such images do also appear in computer games. Decisive for Hensel though is that computer *game* images additionally allow for two kinds of image acts and can thus be seen as **double image acts**. Firstly, computer *game* images are image acts in the same way as usual computer images are. They exist only in the moment of their execution. Hensel calls this "performativity of first order" (Hensel 2013: 226). Secondly, computer *game* images are "double inter(re)active image acts" in that in computer games representations of objects can turn into these objects. This means that these images refer to their own mediality. As an example Hensel mentions *Resident Evil 4* in which "a two-dimensional painted wine bottle from a still-life [bursts] paradoxically into broken pieces as soon as the player shoots it" (Hensel, 2013: 227). Since the images of the second kind are self-reflexive about their own mediality Hensel classifies them as "performativity of second order" (Hensel 2013: 226).

Stephan Günzel analyses the pictorial nature (Bildlichkeit) und spatiality of first person-shooter games and focuses on the construction of the image as well as its cybernetic nature. He regards computer games as **"interactive image objects"** (Günzel 2012: 44). Günzel's main claim is that the emergence of the first-person-shooter marks the moment in the history of computer games when computer game can be considered an independent and autonomous medium of their own for the first time. The peculiarity of first-person-shooter games is that the player interacts with a particularly constructed 3D-image, a so called "**interactive simulation image**" (Günzel 2012). Constitutive for this image are the central perspective and the visualization of depth in space regardless if the game is a simulation or presents a game world of its own without external referent.

The computer game as a conditional cyberimage to care for

From this brief review of different conceptions of the computer game as an image we can see that all authors refer to some extent to the interactivity of the computer game as an image. It is striking though that none of them refers to the inherent ergodicity (Aarseth 1997) – or, how I would call it – the care-logic of the image. If there is this shift away from ludology, narratology, and cybertext towards a pictorial understanding of games or the game-as-an-image. Then these authors should acknowledge that such games should be considered cyberimages: This means that these images are conditional to the functioning of a cybernetic system and the performance of a player which has to take into account the care-logic of the game.

If the decisive characteristic of the computer game image was merely its interactivity then computer games would be indistinguishable from interactive media art as Leino demonstrated (Leino 2011: 2013). Instead the image of the computer game is not only an interactive 1) image act, 2) double image, 3) cinematic camera image, or 4) simulation image. It is an image that is conditional to the performance and the caring of the player. To me it seems that only Stephan Günzel refers somewhat to this conditionality when analyzing the different images of death and dying in computer games which mark the ending of the game performance – the death screen. The simplest image of this kind shows merely the inscription "game over" on black ground. The more complex images of this kind fade out or color the screen in red like this is the case in *Half-Life 2* (Valve 2004) and *Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne* (Remedy Entertainment 2003) (Günzel 2012: 229–31). Furthermore, Günzel observes that when the simulation image of a game fades out due to a game over the game image is "becoming picturesque" ("Malerischwerden des Bildes") (Günzel 2012: 230). Not much later he remarks

that when dying in a game "death appears as a halt of the image or as the impossibility of interaction" (Günzel 2012: 231).

The computer game image is not about performing any kind of (inter)action but it is at times about performing the right interaction at the right times and in the right place against the resistance of the game. The existence of the computer game image is as precarious and at stake as that of Gadamerian play (2004). Like the player's avatar, the image of the computer game and even the whole existence of the computer game world is subjected to a game's fundamental "gameplay condition" (Leino 2011). Günzel's example demonstrates: if the player does not manage to deal successfully with the gameplay condition the death screen appears. Consequently, in the moment of death the interactive simulation image of the computer game is "becoming picturesque" and loses its interactivity. This is strangely reminiscent of Galloway's paradox of countergaming according to which the medium of the computer game lapses back to earlier image media like moving images or even still images. Yet it does not lapse back from the interactive image but from the conditional image. In the moment of death many computer games lapse back from conditional images to interactive images showing buttons with "push respawn", "quit" etc. written on them or event to still images if the player cannot operate these images. If the player plays unsuccessfully the image ceases to be operable. As such it is not sufficient that these authors speak of the game as some sort of interaction image but they need to acknowledge the existential dimension of the image and call it an existential or conditional image.

Caring for the beautiful (caring for aesthetics)

Now, that I have established how the game's care-logic is an essential part of computer game aesthetics, it is time to discuss games in which caring for aesthetics is part of the care-logic of computer games. Whereas the latter perspective relies on the game as a structure ("The Playboy Interview: Marshall McLuhan" 1969), this perspective focuses more on the game as content.

Let me get back to the example of *Walden, A Game*. I have so far shown that the player has to take care of the avatar's well-being in terms of the avatar's survival in order to be able to see/perceive the game world. This care-logic is not unique to *Walden, A Game* but it is structurally engrained in many different computer games such as *Tetris*. This structure may not be defining for computer games in general but it occurs in many computer games.

In addition to satisfying the structural care-requirement in *Walden, A Game*, the player has to satisfy a second aesthetic care-requirement from time to time which. This care-requirement is that of *aesthetic self-care* and it is instrumental to the first, the basic care-requirement the survival of the player-figure (cf. Vella 2015) or the game.

In *Walden, A Game* the player also has to ensure that the avatar observes natural beauty (e.g. performing a view on the lake) in order to fill the inspiration meter. If the player fails to do so, the image of the game changes to greyscale only and thereby provides an aesthetically different if not limited access to the game (Pogrebin 2017). Hence, altogether *Walden, A Game* simulates both the existential worries of survival in the wilderness, and an aesthetic self-care that consists in contemplating the beauty of nature which may be grasped with Kantian aesthetics. In the latter's philosophy, aesthetics is less about the structuring of perception but about the

judgement of a subjective perception of something as beautiful which is distinct from the agreeable or the morally good (Kant 2007).

It is of course debatable if this taste judgement truly refers to Kant's idea of beauty which is primarily defined by its utter disinterestedness. In a way, the effect of this view as something good – after all it helps seeing the game in color – is engrained and thereby prejudged by the the structure of *Walden, A Game* as something good, and not merely as something beautiful. Following Kant's aesthetics strictly, judging something the pure form of something as beautiful is a matter of a subjective observer who is free of any interest (Majetschak 2016: 45–51). Since a disinterested judgement of taste can only be made by humans. Nevertheless, a game can offer opportunities - like stunning vistas, or a beautiful fauna - which potentially invite for taste judgements.

Hence, in the case of *Walden, A Game* we are dealing with the simulation of an aesthetic perception of something beautiful which from the structure of the game is prejudged as something good. This is the case since the view of something beautiful is instrumental to the basic care-logic of the game. As such making the avatar watch the beauty of the lake is instrumental to not letting the inspiration meter fall and making the image change from color to greyscale.

This seems to provide a perspective of care in the form of a combination of Kant and Foucault. I have already established the link to Kant where I suggested that having to make the avatar look at the beautiful (landscape, environment etc.) in a seemingly disinterested way does still have the form of the interested. It is this view which helps the player filling the inspiration meter to avoid the game image dropping from color to greyscale. In addition, this logic is reminiscent of the Foucauldian self-care (2005) described by Foucault as "epimelea heautou" when researching ancient Greek "cultures of the self" (Menihan 2012). Combining Kant's aesthetics and Foucault's analysis of self-care practices one can say that the view of looking at the lake simulates a form of self-care in the Foucauldian sense. Hence, a form of self-fashioning and caring for the self "[...], defined as caring for the soul" (Miller 2005).

Eventually, also this combination of care and aesthetics is subordinate to *Walden, A Game*'s basic care-logic in that looking at something is not an option for mere pleasure but it is instrumental to the visual access to the game.

In the final section of this paper, I wish to apply both established relations between care and aesthetics with a different game that is *Eastshade*, and I wish to answer the question if the described combinations of care and aesthetics allow to add additional distinctions to Daniel Vella's aesthetics of computer games.

Eastshade and the view of the flaneur becoming a resource/standing reserve

Game philosopher, Daniel Vella, proposes a distinction between two aesthetic, phenomenological modes of perceiving landscapes in games (Vella 2013). On the one hand there are games such as *Minecraft* (2011) in which landscapes are perceived as Heideggerian standing reserve, i.e. landscapes and elements of these landscapes are potential resources to be exploited to realize player projects, or, as I may add, to simply fulfill the basic care-requirement of the game when played in survival mode. On the other hand, there are games such as *Proteus*

(2013) in which landscapes are perceived in the sense of the "postromantic wanderer" and are just to be observed or looked at (Vella 2013). Vella interprets the former mode with Heidegger as the landscape being ready-to-hand whereas in the latter mode landscape is present-at-hand.

Vella's first mode roughly aligns with the care-logic of a game which is the condition of possibility for a game's aesthetics as aesthesis. In the beginning of the paper I have shown how the perceivability of *Walden, A Game* is tied to the satisfaction of its existential care-logic. I have shown how the image of a game is a conditional cyberimage to care for. The second mode, described by Vella as the view of a "post-Kantian Romantic subject" (Vella 2013: 13), is reminiscent of the combination of a Kantian aesthetics (as the beautiful and the sublime) and Foucauldian self-care, for the sake of a player's wellbeing and perhaps not the wellbeing of the game.

Although Vella exemplifies these two modes of aesthetic engagement with two separate games, the view of the "postromantic wanderer" can always be inhabited by a player of the game like *Minecraft*, too. However, this does not work the other way around. It will not be possible that the landscape of *Proteus* is perceived as a form of standing reserve. The player simply cannot use any element of the landscape as a resource to satisfy the game's care-logic.

In the final parts of this paper I would now like to argue that this relation changes in games like *Walden, A Game* and *Eastshade*, where the view of the Romantic wanderer becomes a resource which is instrumental to the game's care-logic.

In *Eastshade* the player controls

"a traveling painter, exploring the island of *Eastshade*. Capture the world on canvas using your artist's easel. Talk to the inhabitants to learn about their lives. Make friends and help those in need. Visit cities, scale summits, unearth mysteries, and discover forgotten places. Experience how your actions impact the world around you" (*Eastshade* description on Steam).

Contrary to *Walden, A Game*, in *Eastshade* the game's essential care-logic does not require the player to perceive of the landscape in terms of resources which are ready-to-hand in order to ensure the avatar's survival such as in *Walden*. In *Eastshade* certain views or framings become a resource for the player to satisfy the essential care-logic of the game.

If the player has to pick up resources in the environment of the game it is material such as wood and fabric to produce a canvas. The latter being the necessary requirement to "paint" in the game. Technically, though, the player does of course not paint but applies a mechanic known from the field of in-game photography (cf. Möring and de Mutiis 2019). To simulate painting the player frames a view of the landscape and presses a button which produces a sort of screenshot that is being stylized to look like a painting.

Now, the game imposes some quests on the player character which require them to produce paintings of beautiful vistas for certain purposes such as

- "Paint The Great Shade - pay 60 glowstones at the Toll Bridge to get there
- Paint from the highest peak in the Restless Reach - complete "The Air Balloon" quest
- Paint anywhere in the Tiffmor Bluffs - you'll need a bloomsac raft or a reed boat
- Paint the view from the very top of the university in Nava - you'll need to complete "The Top of Nava" quest

This means the player has to frame a certain view which is present-at-hand and turns it with the push of a button into something ready-to-hand, an object in the game, a commodity which is of use to satisfy the game's essential care-logic. This adds something to what Günzel called "becoming picturesque" of the computer game image. For Günzel this happens if the avatar of an FPS gets killed and the game changes from the mode of the simulation image to the mode of the still image. In the case of *Eastshade* this "becoming pictureseque" is not an expression of failing to fulfill the basic care-requirement of the game like in Günzel's example. Instead it is realized by means of in-game photography where the image changes from a simulation-image to care for to a still-image, and thereby fulfilling the basic care-requirement of the game. *Eastshade* thereby combines the two aesthetic modes of perceiving landscape which Vella describes and implements them within the care-logic of the game. For *Eastshade* one can say that the view of the landscape is literally turning into a commodity by means of in-game photography. The view turns from being present-at-hand to being ready-to-hand in the form of a picture.

Conclusion

This paper, demonstrated how the basic care-logic of computer games which may be derived from a Heideggerian notion of existential care and argued that this care-logic is a condition of possibility for the perception of many games in general. In addition, it has shown that also the mode of aesthetic beauty as described by Kant and as being part of a form of a Foucauldian self-care is implemented in games and eventually subordinated to the basic care-logic of the games. I initially set out to show two relations between care and the aesthetic where I thought there were two different kinds of care involved and two different kinds of aesthetics, I would now suggest that for the computer games described here there are still two kinds of aesthetics involved (in the sense of aesthesis and of the beautiful) but only one kind of care. It may yield a project for future analysis to see if Foucauldian self-care and Heidegger's existential care would allow to make visible different care-logics in computer games.

Games

CITIES: SKYLINES. Paradox Interactive, PC, 2015.
EASTSHADE. Eastshade Studios, PC, 2019.
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