

Narrative And Visual Identity Of Video Games In The Literature Of Uros Petrovic

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, the author endeavors to point out the ways in which one of the most popular Serbian writer for children, Uros Petrovic, to a large degree built his fiction according to the narrative and visual identity of the video games.

Author also tries to prove that the most important fact that gives a multimedia character to the series of works about Martha Smart is its resemblance to the aesthetics of video games, that is, the kind of narrative that awakens an ambivalent desire in the reader: at the same time he strives to reach the goal, to overcome all obstacles to solve the puzzles, and on the other hand he wants to stay in the game world for as long as possible.

Based on numerous common characteristics of video games technique and narrative procedures and strategies used by Uros Petrovic in constructing texts about his heroine Martha Smart, and, above all, on the similarity of the position of the reader as an active participant of the narratives and the consumer of video games who is completely immersed in the world of video games, author has opinion that these facts give us the right to talk about the interaction of these two media - video games and narratives of Uros Petrovic.

KEY WORDS: Uros Petrovic, Martha Smart, video games, narrative, interaction, player, rhizome level, puzzle,

Introduction

For decades, in various media dealing with literary art, in countless sociological, literary theoretical and aesthetic reflections and testimonies, the general position is that the cultural climate of the age in which we live is not suitable for the written word and the flourishing of literary art, considering to the fact that its fruits are replaced by much more tempting products of various types of audiovisual arts, first of all, photography, comics, music and film, and in the last few decades, especially those arts that are based on modern technologies - various forms of digital animation.

Today, in the 21st century, in the age of mass media, electronic communications, information

technologies, therefore, more and more progressive and aggressive technological development, an age in which the speed of living and the speed of receiving and exchanging information have become imperative, means like cars, mobile phones, laptops, have long been symbols the younger generation is long for. It is clear that in such a world of visual and dynamic fascinations, books, black and white, "slow" relics of the past, whose "use" takes time and a certain spiritual effort, isolation and activation of one's own imagination, do not have a happy fate.

The Internet has become a treasure trove of all human knowledge, a medium that enables the functioning of all aspects of social life - from entertainment, socializing, meeting partners, schooling, finding and doing various jobs. The

virtual reality of the Internet is a superior substitute for everyday life, which in the consumer society provides less and less opportunities for individual spiritual development of a person, especially a child, who has become lonely, insecure and left to himself due to the existential burden of parents. It thus turns to those things that give him refuge and a sense of power, in which everything depends on its hand movement, where the answer precedes the question, where whole new worlds can be created with one touch, and destroyed at the same speed.

This is how the whole world of literature can be created in one second. Everything that a child wants to know about literature, and above all, what he has to read and learn as part of compulsory reading, can be achieved very easily and quickly via the Internet: a biography of a writer, and retelling, excerpts, analysis and critique of a work, in the form of new tabs and windows. In a world where there is more and more information and less and less meaning, and where speed and superficiality have become the basic norms of living, this is more than enough reason for a book to lose in the race with the Internet.

In this constellation of things, the necessarily arises a question how to position oneself in these circumstances? Is it idealistic-utopian, defending the authority and cultural primacy of the book over other media of expression, or accept the spiritual-cultural climate in which we live and try to modernize the book or some of its structural or thematic elements, in order to assimilate it with other media in expansion?

Fortunately, in the last few decades, a plethora of young and middle-aged children's writers have appeared in our country. This group of writers is characterized by a tendency to enrich the book with aspects, contents or formal solutions that will correspond to all those things that are, or can become, the subject of interest of today's child.

As the most valuable and successful narrative procedures in this regard, in addition to various procedures of rethinking or revaluing tradition, fictionalization of historical content, reinterpretation of known content, we can single out the process of designing narratives according to new media models: video games, SMS

messages, advertising techniques and content, interfaces, animation (from the Latin word *animare* - which on the one hand corresponds to animism - the belief that things have a soul which characterizes children's view of the world, and on the other, with animation in terms of computer animation as images in motion, but here the objects are the stories themselves - their movements and the fluctuation of their constituent parts.

A NEW OPINION MODEL AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE LITERARY WORLD

When we are talking about designing a narrative text according to the models of new media: video games, advertisements, SMS messages, animations, it can be said that the possibility of such a structure of literary works is possible thanks to rearranging the model of thought, and thus contemporary art. Namely, the traditional concept of thinking is based on the understanding of the world as an ordered, organic whole, as well as on imitation, representation, insisting on the difference between the world (reality) and the performance (representation). The basic principle of the image of the world is binary logic: world / representation, nature / art, form / content, conscious / unconscious, up / down, surface / depth. (Stankovic, 2015: 18). The symbol of this world is the tree, which has its own history, which has a center - the central trunk from which the branches branch. In contrast, the modern concept of thought is described by Jules Deleuze, one of today's most influential philosophers and cultural theorists, as a rhizome (an underground stem of unlimited growth; it consists of articles from several growing seasons; Rhizome, unlike tree, has no entirety but an assembly. The rhizomatic poetics of Gilles Deleuze implies assembling and intertwining various levels and levels of culture: "a mix of philosophy, sex, football, psychoanalysis and any other level that comes to mind." And all that exists in the present, without origin and history. (Deleuze; Gatari, 1990: 8).

In addition, assembly as a form, concept, model of rhizome way of thinking (Stanković, 2015: 21) allows a set of heterogeneous elements as a whole and not as an organic unity that constitutes internal, but external connections, so that in one

work of art can exist both, reality and its representation (the best example of this are collages in which parts of reality such as pieces of fabric, paper, packaging, newspapers, become elements of the illusion of painting). In addition, the work of art is open to symbiosis with other works of art, but also with elements that come from other systems: popular culture, politics, economics, digital technologies. (Stankovic, 2015: 21-25)

The rhizome way of thinking is, therefore, reflected in contemporary artistic practice, since art is rhizomatically connected with other systems that are not typically artistic. When it comes to literary art, this feature of the rhizome structure of the world is especially important. In an era when the word is dying out as an outdated medium of communication, the image takes its place; when the word no longer has the power to realize as much flow of information as the postmodern brain is ready to receive, because reading line by line is linear and slow, and electronic multimedia combines image, text and sound in a split second; in a word, when the domination of words ceases, the possibility of intertwining literature as the art of words with other systems, artificial or natural, systems that are far more in line with the modern structure of the world, is very important.

LITERARY WORK OF UROS PETROVIC IN THE WORLD OF VIDEO GAMES

The process of designing narratives according to the model of digital animation, first of all, video games, is most noticeable in the works of Uros Petrovic, in the cycle, that is, in the series of books about the green-haired girl Martha Smart: *Mysteries of Ginkgo Street*, *Dark Secrets of Ginkgo Street*, *Martha's Great Puzzle Adventure* and *Martha Smart and Fair of Puzzles*. These are all novels in riddles that need to be solved so that various mysterious and exciting adventures can continue, just as in video games when player can't go to the next level until "conquers" the previous one.

Despite the fact that computer and video games have become one of the basic trends and features of social and cultural life of young people, but also a phenomenon to which middle-aged academics, artists or intellectuals are not

"immune" too, numerous sociological, cultural, media and artistic reviews and discussions continue to debate whether video games can be considered a new art form or just a form of popular industrial entertainment, and even a "new form of cultural pollution" that leads to the dehumanization of human relations.

One of the most common stereotypes is that video games are fun for children, shallow and useless in the best, and harmful and dangerous in the worst case. However, game studies are experiencing a prosperity in many universities, and many professors or professional game designers are writing about games. They believe that such a view of the world is outdated, retrograde, and even a bit snobbish, because the phenomenon of the game is immanent to a person regardless of his age. Many relevant studies show that consumers of video games belong to all ages, genders and educational strata of society and believe that game theories of many researchers can be very important tools for understanding the phenomenon of video games. Thus, for example, Johan Huizinga in his very influential book "Homo Ludens" presented one of the most elaborate theories of the game, which is significant because the first leaves the metaphysical and psychological situation of the game, to set it as a fundamental cultural pattern, and even as something from which the whole culture originated. (Huizinga, 1992: 11-13). In his definition of the game, Huizinga also emphasized that it is a purposeless activity, and was the first who state the existence of rules as an important determinant of the game. What is the most important for the theory of video games is his definition of the game as freedom, as an activity that serves to establish social connections. Such attitudes decisively influenced the French theorist Roger Cajoa, who understood the game as an important social model: "one civilization and within it one age, can be characterized by their games." (Cajoa, 1979: 9) in which he proposes four categories: 1. agon - competition (sports competitions, chess, marbles, etc.); 2. alea - games of chance (gambling, roulette, lotteries, etc.); 3. mimicry - disguise (role playing, performing arts) and 4. ilinks - ecstasy (carousel, dance, walking on a rope. (Cajoa, 1979: 10)

These four elements are present in the life of every human being, and for now, it seems, there is no discipline or art form in which we can find in such a substantial way all these forms of play except video games. Only in video games can an individual make free decisions based on which he will lose or gain life, energy, money, treasure, even lose or save a comrade, team member or loved one, take the form of one of the heroes, rely on skill but also on luckily, and in all this to be constantly in danger of not "dying".

In addition to interactivity, a well-designed and guided story, a variety of compositions, characters with whom players identify or create an emotional connection, exteriors and interiors described in details, are some of the key factors for this rise of video games. As we can see, these elements are both constitutive elements of the structure and reception of literary works.

One of the most important video game theorists, a professor at the University of Wisconsin, James Paul Gee, in his essay "How Video Games Teach Us to Learn and Read" explicitly claims that video games are a new kind of art. Of course, they will not replace books, but will stand next to them, in a kind of interactive relationship.

Literary works and video games have one more thing in common: just as the basic function attributed to literature, almost from its inception, is to entertain and teach (*dulce et utile, prodesse et declare*), so it can also be the purpose of video games with one difference: thanks to their multimodality video games provide much more advanced way of learning and remembering. Thus, video games that provide a new, modern model of learning, become an important didactic tool.

In this part, Gee establishes 36 principles of learning through video games. Among other things, these are critical, active instead of passive learning, practical learning where participants enjoy instant success. Video games enable the most comprehensive modalities of information transfer: design and various semiotic systems of images, words, actions, symbols, artifacts. The specificity of video games is that by solving difficult and long-lasting tasks assigned to them, players gain not only knowledge about the world, but also about themselves and their potential capacities. Participants are also forced to

constantly adapt to new and changed game conditions. In video games, there are often several ways to reach a solution, and the player can choose the one that is closest to his abilities and style. Video games encourage thinking through problem solving. Having in mind all that has been said, Gee concludes that the consumer of video games is not really a consumer, but an insider who learns but also creates through living experience

<https://newlearningonline.com/literacies/chapter-2/gee-on-what-video-games-have-to-teach-us-about-learning-and-literacy>, retrieved 10.11.2020

Many of these settings of James Paul Gee regarding the characteristic structural and content features of video games can be recognized in the narrative strategy of Uros Petrovic, in the series of books about the green-haired girl Martha Smart.

Namely, the books about Martha Smart are illustrated in a way that resembles the iconography of video games, by solving puzzles, the main character Martha can go to higher levels, and the plots are, in general, structured as video games - with functional, pragmatic and straightforward action – she can't move further unless the previous riddle or mystery is solved. So, the reader solves mysteries, riddles, puzzles, and thus crosses the set tasks, which enables a further course of action, just as the narrative of a video game is interrupted if the set obstacle is not removed. In the games, this procedure is called the loss of life, just as Martha's life hangs on the thread or hellish torments await her if she doesn't solve the set riddles of a ghost from the underworld or a jealous and evil rival Chiara.

At the beginning of video games, first the characters are introduced, then the tasks are explained in short instructions, without any descriptive, emotionally-thought or retrospective elements. Admittedly, in works about Martha Smart, some of Martha's instructive advice usually emerges at the end of the work, but they seem a bit unmotivated compared to the previous plot, quite explicitly given, and insufficiently immanent to the structure of the work, as subsequent instructions for the hero. This kind of narrative prose has a lot in common with the so-called inserted narrative - very important, the

communicative specificity of video games. It aims to inform the consumer before or during the task and help him understand the story. The forms of this narrative in video games are: instructional texts as well as scenes, sights, sequences that are not in the function of the game, but interrupt it and serve to introduce the consumer to the atmosphere or introduce him to the elements of the game, to inform him about some facts important for the continuation of the story, to indicate the type of communication between the characters, to show the effects of the player's action.

(<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/tip-sheet/article/62401-10-video-games-that-book-lovers-will-enjoy.html>, retrieved 14.11.2021)

The reader's experience is based on visual expression, and is not caused by activating his own imagination and creating images based on narrative elements from the text. The fact that the books of Uros Petrovic are richly illustrated also contributes to that. The drawing technique is imitation of computer animation, as in video games, fantastic, enigmatic, mysterious ambiances are presented realistically, and the textures of living and non-living nature are often performed to the limits of hyperrealism. What can also notice that a static image almost always tends to represent movement, action in order to evoke the dynamics of moving images characteristic of digital animation. In general, the graphic component of the works is very close to digital video editing and computer animation, which is most obvious in those images that are in some way presented as multifocus, just as video game designers try to organize the screen in such a way that it shows not only the main character and the situation he is in, but also the wider context, the ambience so that the consumer is aware of his position at all times. In the corners of video games, there are additional text and video graphics boxes: for example, a map showing the path the player should take or where he is, the means, weapons or tools left at his disposal to achieve the goal, the number of attempts he has on disposals, life or energy left to solve the task, and there is often a text box in which it is written in the most concise form what the player's task is. So, Dragan Mandić, books' illustrator, took over the organization of the video game screen where

next to the main event, there are characters in the basic environment and often one graphic focus is inserted, similar to additional videos, graphic boxes in video games. There are additional details which are important for solving the problem of puzzles, and more "text boxes" which provide textual instructions necessary for solving the puzzle.

So, when it comes to visual elements, the writer in these books takes into account the aesthetics of video games and the psychology of the modern child who builds his perception on ready-made, given visual content, without making a minimum of mental, emotional or spiritual effort to create new worlds.

The series of books about the green-haired girl Martha Smart currently consists of five parts:

1. Mysteries of Ginkgo Street
2. The Dark Secrets of Ginkgo Street
3. Martha Smart's Secret Skills
4. Martha's Great Enigmatic Adventure
5. Martha Smart and Fair of Puzzles

Uros Petrovic's enigmatic stories are demanding puzzles. Uros Petrovic is, namely, one of the most successful solvers of the IQ-X IQ test in the world and as a Mense activist is in charge of testing in Serbia. He incorporated questions like the ones from the tests into very short, unpretentiously told stories that take place in an unusual denim settlement, and are solved as logical puzzles (Pop Djurdjev, 2009: 60).

At the beginning of the first book, Martha presents an unusual spectrum of characters, more precisely the constituents of the subject layer of the work:

- Bird of old woman Aurakli, which he says has no influence on the plot of the book, "except that he sometimes snorts".
- Ginkgo Biloba, a tree from the dinosaur era, after which the street was named, is a symbol of permanence and wit.
- Ensign Fedor, captain of a ship who could not swim
- Venegor, faithful friend of Martha
- French Bulldog Young, faithful companion oh Martha
- Professor Schizlap, compiler of riddles

A tree, a dog, a bird, a few strange characters, then a detailed description of the circular Ginkgo Street reminds of the initial situation of video games in which the scenery consists of plants,

animals and people, and the circular shape of the street, where the iconography is placed, implies a constant return to the beginning, as in many video games.

Also, what immediately brings us to the parallel with video games is the construction of the first mystery. Having set a task, that is, a mystery, the narrator gives the reader a time limit for solving it: "Look for the answer in the Book of Solutions only if you fail to solve this mystery by thinking for nine minutes. (Petrovic, 2008: 12). This process is also characteristic of video games, where the time of solving the task and the possibility of moving to another level, in this case to another mystery, is also predetermined.

Petrovic used the creative potential of video games, starting from the fact that video games are a text of popular culture, an artistic or cultural phenomenon that has real consequences in the real world. The conditions that a video game must fulfill in order to be a game are very similar to those aspects of a literary work without which it would not have the status of a work of art.

So, what connects the books of Uros Petrovic with the aesthetic properties and structure of video games, that is, as common denominators of both "arts", among others, we can mention: visual representation, the impression of movement for progressive internal purposeful action in order to solve a difficulty, which exists independently of any conventional (external) established goals. In addition, the combination of film art and sports is also something that characterizes the art of video games (including music), and we can sense this same combination in the stories of Martha Smart. Namely, in these works, there is a certain artistic provocation that draws the characters, but above all, the audience, readers, into the game, more precisely, they become part of the game competition, which is the basic feature of the logic of video games. Thus, the artistic experience of reading stories about Martha Smart becomes competitive, the reader participates in uncertain competitive fiction. The question is, does participating in a competition automatically exclude elements of aesthetic experience? Because, one gets the impression that the artistic experience here has been transformed into crossing numerous segments of the game.

In times of crisis of reading and marginalization of literary art, the answer to this

question may not be so important. The writer, neglecting the pointlessness of aesthetic pleasure and structural-semantic multidimensionality of the work, listening to the needs and imperatives of the era in which he lives, tried to get closer a book to multimedia object, and thus bring it closer to the modern taste of today's child.

When it comes to such a civilizational-cultural moment, in which the survival of literature is endangered, the question arises whether it is more expedient to adhere to established norms and principles, internal laws of literary art or to obey the taste of the era and its needs? Serbian writers for children from the middle of the 20th century, inspired by the poem "Fellowship of Five Cocks" by Aleksandar Vuco, and led by the famous address by Dusko Radovic, who addressed children with "Dear Children", turned the flow of children's literature in relation to its earlier didactic utilitarian and moralizing attitudes and messages. The main characteristics of their literature for children are play and freedom.

At the end of the 20th century, writers realized that it was no longer enough that the play and freedom as the basic postulates of the literary work of the previous generation of writers remain only content elements of poems and stories, unusual, humorous, nonsensical. They, in the face of external threats to literature, know that the **reading process itself must be made a game**, and the book must be transformed into a multimedia toy that will stand side by side with modern and attractive audio-visual means of expression.

In this paper we have tried to prove that the most important fact that gives a multimedia character to the series of works about Martha Smart is its resemblance to the aesthetics of video games, that is, the kind of narrative that awakens an ambivalent desire in the player, ie, the reader: at the same time he strives to reach the goal, to overcome all obstacles to solve the puzzles, and on the other hand he wants to stay in the game world for as long as possible. These works also contain an elaborate narrative, and the book is illustrated in such a way as to provide visual pleasures, but the reader must act alone in order to unfold and resolve the plot. In this books there are adventures, there are tension and excitements, while at the same time writer provides a path to

discovery, focusing on the rules, on the hidden principles of the work.

As for some other points of similarity between video games and novels in Uros Petrovic's riddles, we can also point out the similarity of narratives and expressive elements, as well as the release of strong emotions through charged interactive narrative, every time when readers solve the riddle and move on. Both forms contain a tense plot, they are thematically mostly constituted around a hero, often an adventurer, who is in some kind of conflict with the environment or a certain rival or enemy. Martha is as well a real heroine, an adventurer who embarks on a fight with the creatures of darkness, but also with a dangerous, powerful rival, encounters mysterious obstacles, hidden gates whose difficult-to-understand puzzles she has to solve in order to move on.

Thus, in the book "The Dark Secrets of Ginkgo Street", Martha enters the underground of Ginkgo Street in order to solve the riddles of Professor Schizlap. Darkness, mystery, blurring, mystery rule of this demonic space. There she meets a man like a ghost, pale, miserable, drunk, a resident of that chthonic space who has been imprisoned in that space for a long time and who will turn out to be the son of Professor Schizlap. He devises the riddles himself, to which Martha had to answer if she wanted to move through that dark labyrinth and eventually get out of it. Traveling through different rooms after solving puzzles or after passing levels is very reminiscent of the process of video games. These rooms are obscure and frightening: a room with sixteen skulls of an ancient catacomb, a dark triangular hall resembling a tomb, crumpled rooms with carved horseshoes, crosses, stuffed unicorns, a room in the form of a sunken basement, a secret room with seven bones, a room full of spiders a labyrinth, a room full of scattered skeletons. And finally, the last room whose riddle she managed to solve by freeing herself and Shizlap's son, who told her: "You solve tasks successfully or you are not in the light of day. (Petrovic, 2011: 83). By releasing them, Martha received a spacecraft, a heavenly award from Professor Schizlap, "which is another name for a flying balloon." So, in order to get out of each of these rooms, Martha had to solve a certain puzzle, to complete a task, which is a procedure analogous to that in video games

in which the heroes fight with visible and invisible forces to go further, to the next level, until they defeat the forces of darkness.

One of the most characteristic similarities between video games and the Martha Smart novel cycle is interactivity. Works of art that are in a relationship with video games, whether at the level of technique, iconography or narrative, are works whose experience is built on interactivity. In addition, that experience is determined by the choice of the player/recipient and his decision on how to pass through the structure, and in that sense he is the co-creator of the work.

The relationship between art and video games could be viewed from the aspect of Eko's concept of open work, according to which a work of art "depends on interaction with modern audiences or its advanced variant that accompanies game theory - the work is set as a game, and observers, depending on their freedom degree, as players ... "(Grau: 2008, 208)

Speaking about narrative as the most important evolutionary element of video games, Craig Lindley, professor at the Department of Technology, Arts and New Media at Sweden's Gotland University, categorizes stories present in video games and divides them into: linear, interactive and interactive branching narrative. Although the works of Uros Petrovic are dominated by this linear narrative where the central conflict is repeated on different levels of the story, we also recognize an interactive narrative that implies active reader participation, and in some places an interactive branching narrative containing parallel actions. The reader can choose one of several versions offered.

<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/tip-sheet/article/62401-10-video-games-that-book-lovers-will-enjoy.html>, retrieved 14.11.2021

Thus, in each of these books, readers are offered riddles, mysteries, puzzles, and many of them contain time constraints to be solved. However, the answers also imply the technique of full engagement of the reader, so that they can only be revealed with the help of an inverted mirror, which makes the reader an accomplice of the heroes in every aspect of the narrative.

In the book "Secret Skills by Martha Smart", the third book in the cycle, the writer goes a step further in materializing his riddles, in that the

questionnaires are now transformed into small experiments that necessarily require the inclusion of non-textual elements (objects) in the story. Each "skill" requires certain props with which it can be realized: a hat, eggs, a glass of water, a napkin, a metal stapler, a cork stopper, cardboard, scissors, a bag, coins, a pencil. This transforms the puzzles into real game activities.

In the fourth book, "Martha's Great Mysterious Adventure", the writer abandons this technique and practically continues the fabled flow from the second book, "The Dark Secrets of Ginkgo Street". Namely, at the end of this part, Martha received a "heavenly prize", that is, a balloon for flying, as a reward for solving the riddle, and she went on a trip with Schizlap and her friend Venegor. However, due to a strong storm, they have an accident, and end up on a river island whose ruler, a black-haired girl Chiara, a little countess and choirmaster, is a lemur breeder. This river archipelago is also full of mysterious obstacles and challenges, hidden gates, that can only be opened by the correct answers to difficult puzzles. Martha, provoking the anger and jealousy of her rival Chiara, solves one after another, opening the gates that lead her to a yard full of lemurs, monkeys, in yards full of blooming plants, with swings, a tunnel of flowers, gardens of winding paths, lush villas, hanging gardens. And again, each of these spaces is reminiscent of the ambience of video games in which the heroine faces new challenges and obstacles, and must find the solution in order to pass through the gates and enters the new landscapes of the island.

She is also motivated by the fact that Venegor remained trapped in the stone fortress and all those gates actually lead to the top of the fortress from where Venegor should be released.

However, in order to free Venegor, Chiara poses her last riddle. It is at this point that the process of interactivity reaches its peak. Namely, although all the time readers are treated as a kind of "accomplice" of the heroine, completely involved, immersed in the work, now they are invited to decide on one of the two possible endings of the novel.

And in the second book of the series about Martha Smart, there is one riddle whose answer is not in this book and where the narrator communicates with the reader outside the

fictional world of the novel. Namely, he invites the reader to send a solution to the riddle to the publisher or author of the work (Petrovic, 2011: 85).

By enabling the reader to choose the ending that satisfies him more in "Martha's Great Mysterious Adventure", he completely goes beyond the frame of reference of the book. Addressing the reader directly, and referring him to a site where he can check his answer, makes the line between art and life porous, and points to a creative writer-reader relationship similar to the co-creativity of video game players. Here, the writer, as well as the video game designer, sets the rules, but the experience of the recipient or player is based on interactivity, determined by his personal preferences and the way he chooses to lead the game or "pass" through the composition of the work.

To summarize, video games must be recognized as an important fact in shaping the worldview, especially of children and teenagers, the phenomenon on which the taste of new generations is built, the phenomenon on which they build norms and values. They are the kind of popular culture that significantly determines and shapes the horizon of expectations of young consumers / users, that is, that in the triad author - work - audience, puts that consumer, that is, the audience, in the foreground.

Based on numerous common characteristics of video games` technique and narrative procedures and strategies used by Uros Petrovic in constructing texts about his heroine Martha Smart, and, above all, on the similarity of the position of the reader as an active participant of the narratives and the consumer of video games who is completely immersed in the world of video games give us the right to talk about the interaction of these two media - video games and narratives of Uros Petrovic. Thus, video games participate in the creation of a contemporary cultural context and as such have become an interesting and challenging meeting place with new media artistic practices in the age of contemporary cultural movements.

SUMMARY

Today, in the 21st century, in the age of mass media, electronic communications, information technologies, therefore, more and more

progressive and aggressive technological development, many writers try to modernize the book or some of its structural or thematic elements, in order to assimilate it with other media in expansion. At the end of the 20th century, writers realized that the **reading process itself must be made a game**, and the book must be transformed into a multimedia toy that will stand side by side with modern and attractive audio-visual means of expression.

As the most valuable and successful narrative procedures in this regard, we can single out the process of designing narratives according to new media models: video games, SMS messages, advertising techniques and content, interfaces, animation.

In this paper the author have tried to prove that the most important fact that gives a multimedia character to the series of works about Martha Smart is its resemblance to the aesthetics of video games, that is, the kind of narrative that awakens an ambivalent desire in the reader: at the same time he strives to reach the goal, to overcome all obstacles to solve the puzzles, and on the other hand he wants to stay in the game world for as long as possible. These works also contain an elaborate narrative, and the books are illustrated in such a way as to provide visual pleasures, but the reader must act alone in order to unfold and resolve the plot.

Also, author considers that one of the most characteristic similarities between video games and the Martha Smart novel cycle is interactivity. Works of art that are in some kind of a relationship with video games, whether at the level of technique, iconography or narrative, are works whose experience is built on interactivity. In addition, that experience is determined by the choice of the recipient, his possibility and decision how to pass through the work structure, and in that sense he becomes the co-creator of the work.

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