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**Martin Heidegger's Conception of Being-in-the-world: A
Philosophical Critique of Gaming and Being**

by

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Philosophy

in the Department of Philosophy at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

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March 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr John S. Sanni for his invaluable guidance and support throughout the completion of this work. Dr Sanni's goodwill and expertise have been instrumental in shaping this research approach and enhancing this work.

I would also like to sincerely thank the Department of Philosophy at the University of Pretoria, particularly Dr. Mpho Tshivhase, the post-graduate administrator, for their assistance and support. Their welcoming and accommodating environment has made it easy for me to feel at home at the department and the University.

Lastly, I want to thank Daniel Reddy for his encouragement and kindness during this process. His constant support and motivation have meant the world to me.

ABSTRACT

Martin Heidegger's philosophy provides insight into how technological advancements impact human experiences and existence by highlighting the relationship between humans and their surroundings. He posits that technology leads to widespread objectification of the world, causing a lack of authentic connection and a sense of detachment and alienation. His term "enframing" illustrates how technology shapes our perception of reality, potentially diminishing our appreciation for the beauty and complexity of the world. Heidegger calls for a complete reorientation in our approach to technology beyond mastery, and he recognises the link between technology and the essence of being itself.

Augmented Reality (AR) technology in games like Pokémon GO offers a unique opportunity to merge virtual and real-world elements, creating a hybrid reality for users closely tied to their immediate environment. Unlike traditional video games, AR games have no spatial boundaries and can be played anywhere, blurring the line between reality and the game world. Pokémon GO encourages players to explore their physical surroundings, interact with landmarks, and participate in cooperative social events, where players physically engage with their surroundings. Integrating digital objects into the environment can influence everyday life and offer a distinct view on being-in-the-world and authenticity in players' lives.

Engaging Heidegger's phenomenology within the gaming framework, specifically Pokémon GO, allows us to explore the connection between being-in-the-world and the gaming experience. This comparison helps us understand

the connections between phenomenology and gaming. It examines whether gaming experiences offer modes of being that intersect with fundamental human concerns to recognise authentic being within their everyday use.

KEYWORDS: Martin Heidegger, Phenomenology, Being-in-the-world, Dasein, Pokémon GO, Augmented Reality, Authenticity, Gaming, Being

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and Context

Miguel Sicart believes that the idea of play is essential. In *Play Matters* (2014: 5), Sicart argues that play is a fundamental part of our moral well-being, contributing to a healthy, mature, and complete human life. We experience the world through play (2014: 99) and discover who we are and what we can say. For Sicart, play is a way of engaging with and expressing our being in the world, and it helps us understand what makes us human in a humanistic way (Sicart, 2014: 5, 6). Through play, we develop an understanding of our surroundings and ways of engaging with others (2014: 1), and this play is extended into the digital realm. Computer games have contributed to the rise in the cultural importance of games as a form of play, leading to a surge in interest in games and the dominance of digital games in our leisure economy (Sicart, 2014: 98).

According to Sicart (2014: 98), “Computers are excellent play pals: their characteristics help us augment the world, delegate activities, and deputise users. Computers can provide an enhanced perception of the world, a different layer of data, and feedback that can contribute to play”. This perception has been made even more pervasive with the introduction of augmented reality (AR) games. It has led to intertwining digital objects with the physical world, creating a digital presence in everyday life (Liberati, 2017: 212).

These games have expanded the concept of play and interaction by allowing digital objects to be visualised in the surrounding environment without

spatial limits. While these digital objects are not part of the everyday world, they have been shown to influence the reality where players and non-players live their everyday lives (Liberati, 2017: 229).

The effects of AR games on the world are not limited to the games themselves; they also potentially shape the everyday lives of players. Gaming has emerged as a significant facet of modern human experiences through the process of gamification, which integrates game elements into products and services to enhance users' involvement (Fuchs *et al.*, 2014: 95). This phenomenon has led to the widespread availability and acceptance of computer games across different age groups, ethnicities, genders, and subcultures (Fuchs *et al.*, 2014: 132).

The ludic culture¹, characterised by lifelong game engagement, has become a defining feature of modern times. This acceptance carries implications for self-perception, reality comprehension, and the negotiation of our place in the world, but also adds to an understanding of the potential for games to bring about positive experiences, such as joy, self-discovery, and pleasure, contributing to a fulfilling life for individuals and society (Fuchs *et al.*, 2014: 16).

With ludic culture, location-based games caused the evolution of urban interactions and the emergence of game interactions in public (Fuchs *et al.*, 2014: 232). These games utilise geo-locative data and metadata to create

¹ Ludic culture refers to a cultural shift that brings playful experiences to the centre of the use, design, and study of media and technologies (Fuchs, *et al.*, 2014: 12).

game-like experiences connected to check-ins, badges, rewards, and leaderboards in various games, usually accessed through mobile phones.

In these games (Fuchs *et al.*: 232) a digital map of a real-world environment becomes a territory for exploration, socialisation, and interaction within a game – extended into the world outside of the game, which is experienced simultaneously. These interactions offer shared moments between players but also reduce players to data points for gamification.

Gamification as a practice applies game design elements and principles in non-game contexts, where features of games are inserted into these non-game contexts (Fuchs *et al.*, 2014: 50). Gamification has been described as a technique that seeks to apply game-like elements to various aspects of life, such as fitness, education, and work, to make them more engaging and interactive (Fuchs *et al.*, 2014: 229). However, it has also been critiqued for its potential to exploit users and reduce complex experiences to simple stimulus-response interactions. This technological reconfiguration of human experiences prompts the exploration of how these experiences relate to overarching inquiries about being and meaning in the context of games embedded in everyday life.

This study explores the interplay between gaming and phenomenology using the example of augmented reality (AR) gaming, which relies on location-based strategies. This study is centred on Martin Heidegger's insights and the evolving nature of human experiences in gaming environments. Heidegger's philosophy presents a framework rooted in the phenomenological exploration of

“being-in-the-world”, asserting that human existence is fundamentally characterised by our interconnectedness with our environment and interactions with other human beings (Heidegger, 1962: 6). If digital hybrid realities are part of that interaction, we need to think about what this environment entails, and the nature of our being in relation to authentic existence within digital hybrid-realities.

1.2 Problem Statement

This study centres around a key research question: How does Martin Heidegger's philosophy of “being-in-the-world” shed light on the significance of gaming experiences and their impact on our sense of being, particularly in terms of authentic being-in-the-world. Heidegger emphasises the intrinsic connection between humans and their environment. Therefore, this study investigates how Heidegger's insights can help us comprehend the implications of gaming experiences for our sense of being, especially in light of the prevalence of gaming as a mode of being.

In gaming, individuals traverse a spectrum of virtual spaces and temporalities, each fostering a distinct mode of being. This prompts essential questions: Are these new modes aligning with Heidegger's concept of authenticity? Do these experiences genuinely facilitate engagement with the world, or do they signify a detachment from what Heidegger would call an “authentic mode of being-in-the-world” (Heidegger, 1962: 264)?

AR gaming itself, as a technology, also needs to be reassessed. If AR gaming intertwines so much with everyday life, can it lead to authentic being-in-

the-world? From Heidegger's perspective, technology, as commonly understood in the modern world, is not authentic in the traditional sense of revealing the truth or essence of beings. Instead, it represents a mode of revealing that transforms the relationship between humans and the world and challenges traditional notions of authenticity and truth (Heidegger, 1977: 35).

1.3 Purpose of the study

This philosophical analysis first reviews Heidegger's phenomenological philosophy and how it offers an understanding of the world. I will examine the relationship between Heidegger's philosophy of being-in-the-world and the impact of gaming experiences on human existence. Heidegger underscores the intertwined nature of individuals and their environment. Thus, the primary objective of this investigation is to elucidate how Heidegger's philosophical tenets can enhance our understanding of how gaming experiences influence our sense of being.

The core objective of this study is twofold. First, it aims to explore the resonance between Heidegger's philosophical underpinnings and the multifaceted dimensions of gaming experiences. Secondly, it seeks to reveal the extent to which gaming encounters offer authentic modes of being that intersect with fundamental human existential concerns. Central to this inquiry is a thorough examination of *Dasein*, a foundational concept in Heidegger's philosophical framework. In the context of gaming, the research investigates whether experiences within digital realms can authentically manifest as modes of being and offer additional insight into Heidegger's question of "What is being?".

1.4 Significance of the study

This project aims to probe into the philosophical dimensions of human experience within the contemporary digital landscape by transcending surface-level gaming assessments. It also aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue concerning the influence of technology on human existence. More specifically, it seeks to pinpoint potential pathways for authentic human involvement within the virtual realms that gaming offers.

Delving into Heidegger's philosophical framework, this study seeks to unravel the intrinsic nature of human experience in a way that considers the digital era. It also sheds light on how individuals engage with virtual environments and their implications for human existence and consciousness.

1.5 Research objectives and sub-questions

The primary research objectives that underpin this dissertation are centred on evaluating the alignment between Martin Heidegger's philosophical framework and the domain of gaming experiences. At the core of this investigation is the exploration of the authenticity of being-in-the-world as it pertains to gaming and its implications for human existence.

The first objective involves delving into the resonance between Heidegger's philosophy of being-in-the-world and the landscape of gaming experiences. Through a synthesis process, this objective aims to unearth the underlying connections between Heidegger's phenomenological insights and the world of gaming, thereby shedding light on how these seemingly disparate realms may intersect and inform one another.

The second objective is to examine how gaming experiences can offer authentic modes of being that intersect with fundamental human concerns. By scrutinising the authenticity of being-in-the-world within the gaming context, this objective navigates the boundary between the virtual and the real, probing whether gaming can serve as a conduit for genuine engagement with the world. As a case in point, this exploration is exemplified through a focused study of a popular location-based game, Pokémon GO.

Guided by these research objectives, the overarching aim of this project is to probe three interconnected sub-questions that engage Heidegger's philosophy, gaming experiences, and human existence:

- 1) Can being-in-the-world authentically manifest through the medium of digital games? This sub-question grapples with whether digital experiences within gaming have the potential to transcend their virtual confines and facilitate genuine engagement with the world.
- 2) Do digital games have phenomenological meaning within the realm of human experience? This sub-question seeks to unravel the nuanced dimensions of phenomenology in gaming, exploring how digital realms intertwine with lived experiences and prompting reflections on the phenomenological significance of such interactions.
- 3) Can certain games offer a pathway to imminent transcendence? Imminent transcendence is understood here as a human projection within the world. This sub-question delves into the transformative possibilities presented by specific games, examining whether they

enable players to transcend their immediate realities and venture into novel spheres of existence.

1.6 Research methodology

This study will employ philosophical analysis. I rely primarily on the desktop research methodology, which entails an extensive and critical review of primary and secondary literature relevant to the research question. This approach offers a comprehensive understanding of Heidegger's philosophical framework, its manifestations, and its intersection with gaming.

1.7 Dissertation Structure

This project is divided into six chapters, including the introduction and conclusion. The first chapter introduces the study's background, context, problem statement, purpose, and research objectives. It also outlines the study's scope and limitations, research methodology, and dissertation structure. The chapter establishes the central research question, setting the background for the preceding chapters.

Chapter Two of this dissertation delves into Martin Heidegger's conception of Being-in-the-world. It introduces Heidegger's philosophical background, including his entry into phenomenology and the historical context of his philosophy. The chapter explores Heidegger's theoretical framework, focusing on being, "being-in-the-world", "authenticity", and his contribution to phenomenology. It also discusses the foundations of *Being and Time* and why being is essential, laying the foundation for dissecting Heidegger's concepts and establishing a framework for subsequent analyses. The chapter also

introduces Heidegger's later work, specifically *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, to discuss the impact and influence Heidegger believes technology will have over being.

In the third chapter of this dissertation, I explore the phenomenology of games. It delves into the conceptual landscape of the gaming phenomenon and scrutinises the implications of Heidegger's philosophy within this context. This chapter discusses the relationship between Being-in-the-world and gaming, examining aspects such as immersion, dwelling, attunement, and the release offered through gaming. It also provides a conclusion on games played worldwide, offering insights into the unique aspects of gaming experiences and their implications.

Chapter Four focuses on the unique aspects of the mobile game Pokémon GO. It explores the paramount reality of augmented reality, the beginnings of Pokémon, and the introduction of Pokémon GO. The chapter investigates the basic gameplay of Pokémon GO and the Pokémon GO community and concludes by examining the game's potential ethical and moral implications. It also discusses how Pokémon GO provides a unique gaming experience by encouraging players to explore their physical surroundings, interact with landmarks, and engage in cooperative social events, setting it apart from traditional games. The chapter aims to establish whether Pokémon GO offers semblances of authentic being-in-the-world and how it allows players to be with others and engage with the world.

In Chapter Five, I explore the connection between Martin Heidegger's philosophy and Pokémon GO. It investigates how the game encourages players to engage with the physical world and others, aiming to determine whether it offers semblances of authentic being-in-the-world. The chapter synthesises the concept of being-in-the-world to examine how the game allows players to interact with their surroundings and fellow players, ultimately questioning whether it provides an authentic experience of being in the world, particularly concerning existential themes such as death. It also looks at the essence of technology and how this essence is part of the "enframing" aspects of gaming.

The final chapter of this study delves into the transformative impact of technology on human existence, particularly in the context of gaming. It re-introduces the central research question, aiming to investigate the relevance of gaming in the contemporary technological and cultural landscape, synthesising the unique aspects of the mobile game Pokémon GO, examining its potential ethical and moral implications and its encouragement of players to engage with the physical world. This chapter provides an overview of Heidegger's notion of "being-in-the-world" in order to ascertain whether Pokémon GO offers an authentic experience of being-in-the-world.

CHAPTER 2

Martin Heidegger's conception of Being

2.1 Introduction

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was born in Messkirch, Germany. He studied at the University of Freiburg, where he graduated in 1913 (Inwood, 1997: 1). He also studied modern philosophy, where he encountered Edmund Husserl², who significantly influenced his philosophy and writing (Inwood, 1997: 2).

Heidegger's contributions to existentialism, phenomenology, and ontology have considerably shaped the philosophical understanding of human existence. Phenomenology, a branch of philosophy that endeavours to describe phenomena through conscious experience rather than abstract principles or generalisations, has been instrumental in unravelling aspects of subjective experiences such as perception, memory, and imagination, thus offering unique perspectives on reality itself (Husserl, 1991: 148 –151).

Heidegger's philosophical exploration is rooted in the tradition of phenomenology initiated by Husserl, and this chapter serves as an introduction to the intellectual underpinnings of Martin Heidegger³, contextualising his ideas within the broader framework of existential thought and laying the groundwork for their application to the domain of gaming.

² Husserl is credited as the founder of the phenomenological movement in philosophy (Moran, 2005: 1-3).

³ Heidegger dedicated *Being and Time* to Edmund Husserl "in friendship and admiration" (Heidegger, 1962: 3). The dedication is a testament to Heidegger's respect and appreciation for Husserl, who was his mentor and reflects their intellectual and personal connection. However, it is understood that their relationship became strained (Husserl, 1997: 2).

2.1.1 Historical context of Heidegger's philosophy

Comprehending the depth of Heidegger's ideas involves reviewing the historical backdrop against which they were conceived. The genesis of phenomenology can be traced back to René Descartes and Immanuel Kant⁴. Their pioneering efforts brought novel perspectives towards understanding consciousness, perception, and reality, paving the way for philosophers like Husserl to delve deeper into these domains (Smith, 2018: 11-16).

It was not until the late nineteenth century that the term 'phenomenology' gained recognition when Austrian psychologist and philosopher Franz Brentano introduced it as part of his program to reinvigorate Aristotelian logic (Smith, 2018: 11-13). According to Brentano⁵, actual knowledge could only transcend mere appearances if one focused on intentionality and the directedness of mental states toward objects or concepts (Safranski, 1998: 24-25). This marked a significant departure from previous schools of thought, many of which had prioritised abstract reasoning and *a priori*⁶ truths detached from concrete experience.

Husserl built upon Brentano's foundation by developing his methodology known as the "epoché" or bracketing (suspending) of all preconceived judgments about the world. By suspending our habitual assumptions and

⁴ It's accepted that phenomenology was practised before Husserl used the term 'phenomenology'. In the time when Descartes and Kant characterised states of perception, thought, and imagination in their individual Philosophy, they were part of originating and practising phenomenology (Smith, 2018: 14;15).

⁵ Brentano was also Husserl's teacher. His work focused on the nature of God's existence and the concept of intentional objects, which are aware of something that exists and present themselves to an individual. Brentano's ideas laid the groundwork for the development of phenomenology and influenced subsequent philosophical discussions about consciousness and intentionality (Safranski, 1998: 24; 25).

⁶ The term '*A priori*', coined by Kant, implies that necessary knowledge of an experience (forms and categories) is met. (Runes, 1972: 16).

biases, Husserl posited that we could access a purer form of consciousness where phenomena are central (Smith, 2018: 16-17). One crucial aspect of Husserl's teaching involved introducing students to the "Eidos" or "noema" concept - a nexus connecting perceived content with perceiving subjects⁷. For example, when you see a red apple, your visual perception of it becomes intertwined with your awareness of seeing it (Smith, 2018:17). It offered a revised perspective on issues traditionally addressed within other disciplines, such as epistemology and ontology.

Under Husserl's guidance, Heidegger received intensive training in phenomenological analysis and began crafting his unique interpretive framework centred around "being" rather than simply appearing. While Heidegger initially adopted the concept of the "Eidos", he eventually departed from Husserl's strict adherence to eidetic reduction⁸ (Safranski, 1998: 84). Instead, Heidegger sought to explore the ontological dimensions inherent in everyday life, arguing that authentic existence involves more than just dispassionate observation but requires active engagement with one's surroundings (Heidegger, 1962: 88, 168, 172). These differences underscore the diversity within the phenomenological tradition itself and highlight Heidegger's originality as a thinker.

⁷ Heidegger's departure from Husserl's phenomenology led him to develop his concepts, such as *Dasein* and Being-in-the-world, which are central to his philosophy of existential phenomenology (Sheeman & Palmer, 1997: 204).

⁸ Eidetic reduction is a method used in phenomenology to uncover an object's or experience's essential features. It involves a process of imaginative variation and intuition to distil the universal and essential aspects of an object or experience, stripping away individual or contingent characteristics to reveal its fundamental essence (Husserl, 1931: 69-71)

A central theme in Husserl and Heidegger's phenomenology is their quest for a new form of realism, one rooted in direct experiential contact with phenomena instead of relying solely on theoretical constructs. Both philosophers reject the notion of an objective reality independent of human experience and emphasise the importance of lived experience as a valid source of knowledge. Husserl's phenomenology involves rejecting the immediate acceptance of objective reality (Husserl, 1931: 25). This reduction aims to uncover the essential structures of consciousness and experience rather than assuming the existence of an objective reality as a starting point (Husserl, 1931: 95).

Heidegger argues that the traditional understanding of objectivity, which emphasises a disinterested mode of being, overlooks the more fundamental ways a person engages with the world. Heidegger believes that subjectivity can uncover reality, as *Dasein* orientates itself in the world (Heidegger, 1962: 270). Heidegger argues that our everyday involvement in mundane activities often prevents us from fully appreciating the underlying structures of being due to the emphasis we place on objectivity. Heidegger sought to move beyond Husserl's focus on consciousness and the subject-object dualism. He emphasised the concept of "Being-in-the-world" which focused on the everyday experience of being in the world rather than abstract consciousness (Heidegger, 1962:173).

Heidegger's approach aimed to uncover an area that lies before differentiations such as scientific, value-judging, or worldview approaches, seeking to understand how reality is experienced before it is arranged in these ways that places it as either subjective or objective.

“But if an understanding of Being is constitutive for primitive Dasein and for the primitive world in general, then it is all the more urgent to work out the 'formal' idea of worldhood or at least the idea of a phenomenon modifiable in such a way that all ontological assertions to the effect that in a given phenomenal context something is not yet such-and-such or no longer such-and-such, may acquire a positive phenomenal meaning in terms of what it is not.” (Heidegger, 1962: 113). He suggests the importance of understanding phenomena (experiences or observable facts) within their context, and that any ontological assertions or statements about the nature of being need to be understood in relation to the particular context or phenomenon in which they arise. This departure from Husserl's initial phenomenology marked a significant shift in the development of phenomenological thinking, due in large part to Heidegger's insistence on contextual emphasis.

2.2 Heidegger's entry into phenomenology

Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1962) provides a context for appreciating his later works and their impact on contemporary thought. *Being and Time* clarifies his unique interpretive methods and concepts that continue to shape modern philosophical discourse. Heidegger's hermeneutic approach, in particular, involves interpreting phenomena based on their inherent meanings rather than imposing preconceived notions onto them (Vasterling, 2014: 2). This approach emphasises the importance of understanding the world as a holistic web of references, connecting things and human beings in practices, rather than as an aggregation of things and events, according to Vasterling.

For Safranski Heidegger emphasised the importance of understanding the meaning that emerges from the phenomena rather than approaching them with preconceived ideas or biases. This approach aligns with his broader philosophical views on the nature of being and existence, emphasising the need to engage with phenomena in a way that allows them to “show themselves” and reveal their inherent meanings (Safranski, 1998: 153). As a result, Heidegger stressed the need to interpret human existence within its lived context and uncover its fundamental structures and the nature of being itself (Safranski, 1998: ix; 82-84).

This hermeneutic approach of interpreting phenomena based on their inherent meanings rather than imposing preconceived notions allowed Heidegger to make clear the importance of understanding the meaning that emerges from the phenomena themselves (Safranski, 1998: 356, 357). *Dasein* is central to Heidegger’s philosophy, which means “being-there”. It denotes physical presence and the unique mode of being that characterises human existence. Unlike other entities that merely exist or happen to be, *Dasein* exists authentically when aware of itself as part of a broader network of meanings (Heidegger, 1962: 21-23).

This notion forms the cornerstone of Heidegger’s conception of being-in-the-world. Rather than viewing individuals as isolated entities detached from their surroundings, he articulates that people fundamentally exist among others and their environment. “Consequently, if we inquire about Being-in as our theme, we cannot indeed consent to nullify the primordial character of this phenomenon by deriving it from others-that is to say, by an inappropriate

analysis, in the sense of a dissolving or breaking up” (1962: 170). As a result, our sense of self emerges from how we interact with and make sense of our world, reinforcing the notion that identity is inherently relational. He goes on to suggest that Being-in should be understood as the "between" that characterises the relationship between Dasein (human existence) and the world. However, he cautions against interpreting this "between" in a simplistic manner, as it risks assuming the existence of pre-given entities (subject and object) and thereby missing the deeper ontological meaning of Being-in. (Heidegger, 1962: 170).

2.3 Heidegger’s notion of “Being”

In *Being and Time*, the concept of Being pertains to the essential nature or essence of entities and what it means for something to exist, a being of entities. (Heidegger, 1962: 26). Heidegger believes that traditional philosophy has overlooked the fundamental question of Being, resulting in a distorted view of reality.

"If the characteristics of their Being can be yielded without falsification, then these entities must, on their part, have become accessible as they are in themselves. When we come to what is to be interrogated, the question of Being requires that the right way of access to entities shall have been obtained and secured in advance" (1962: 26).

Heidegger suggests that the question of being requires that entities themselves be interrogated regarding their being. However, in order to do so accurately, entities must be accessed as they are in themselves, without

falsification. This necessitates a careful examination of how being manifests in different entities and how it is accessed and understood.

To uncover the essence of being and its importance for human existence, Heidegger explores how Being is experienced and lived through our existence (1962: 69), intimately intertwined with our being-in-the-world. The distinction between *Dasein* and Being-in-the-world pertains to the extent and orientation of their focus. Being refers to the fundamental question of existence. At the same time, Being-in-the-world describes the specific mode of being that characterises human existence, emphasising our inseparable connection to the world around us.

“What is meant by "Being-in"? Our proximal reaction is to round out this expression to "Being-in 'in the world' ", and we are inclined to understand this Being-in as 'Being in something' ["Sein in ... "]. This latter term designates the kind of Being which an entity has when it is 'in' another one, as the water is 'in' the glass, or the garment is 'in' the cupboard. By this 'in' we mean the relationship of Being which two entities extended 'in' space have to each other with regard to their location in that space” (1962: 79).

Being-in-the-world suggests that our existence is not a detached or isolated state. Instead, a mode of being is always involved with and embedded in the world (1962: 84), where it builds relationships with the world around it. Being-in-the-world is not a trait or feature that can be separated from human existence. It is not something that we possess or acquire. Instead, it is an

essential aspect of our being (Heidegger, 1962: 84). Through our being-in-the-world, we can encounter and interact with entities in our environment by “Being alongside” the world (1962: 81) and being-in-the-world encompasses not only spatial relationships but also our entire existence and how we navigate and comprehend the world (Heidegger, 1962: 82). Being is not a static concept, but rather a dynamic and temporal phenomenon that is rooted in time and closely linked to our understanding of temporality.

“The existential-ontological constitution of Dasein's totality is grounded in temporality. Hence the ecstatical projection of Being must be made possible by some primordial way in which ecstatical temporality temporalizes” (1962: 488).

We must then see Dasein's existential-ontological constitution as grounded in temporality, and it is through this temporal structure that the ecstatic projection of Being becomes possible.

The "ecstatical projection of Being" refers to the way in which Dasein, through its temporal existence, projects itself into the world and engages with entities. Heidegger is exploring how Dasein's temporal existence allows it to have an understanding of Being and to comport itself towards entities within the world (Heidegger, 1962: 488).

Being is rooted in phenomenology, which Heidegger views as essential to understanding lived experience and our relationship with the world (Heidegger, 1962: 60). He places great emphasis on critical self-analysis and the importance of uncovering the true nature of being rather than relying on

superficial assumptions or preconceived ideas about what being entails (Heidegger, 1962: 60). He argues that being is the most fundamental question underlying all other inquiries. “The question of the meaning of being must be formulated. If it is a fundamental question, or indeed the fundamental question, it must be made transparent, and in an appropriate way” (1962: 22). Drawing on the works of his predecessors, Heidegger contends that philosophers throughout history have neglected the question of being, instead focusing on specific entities or beings (Heidegger, 1962: 24).

As part of Heidegger's commitment to depart from the methodological flaws in the philosophies of his other philosophers, which did not address what he viewed as the fundamental concerns of Philosophy, he formulated novel concepts such as *Dasein* that have had a lasting impact on philosophy (Safranski, 1998: 147). The work of *Being and Time* challenges traditional philosophical approaches by emphasising human existence as embodied, temporal, and situated, thereby influencing subsequent discussions about subjectivity, temporality, and authenticity (Safranski, 1998: 149). *Being and Time* also helped shape Heidegger's later philosophical developments and his influence on existentialism and hermeneutics (Safranski, 1998: 172).

In the context of *Being and Time*, Being refers to the fundamental nature or essence of entities (Heidegger, 1962: 26). It is the question of what it means for something to exist or to be. Heidegger seeks to uncover the essence of being and explore its significance for human existence.

Heidegger's approach to understanding Being is based on lived experience. How we encounter and relate to the world is a fundamental preoccupation of Heidegger's philosophy, about how the world becomes unhidden (Heidegger, 1962: 60). He emphasises the importance of self-critical analysis and the need to uncover the character of Being rather than relying on empty assertions or preconceived notions, by writing: "That entity which in its Being has this very Being as an issue, comports itself towards its Being as its ownmost possibility" (1962: 68).

This offers the background to why Heidegger postulates that being is considered the issue because it is the fundamental question that underlies all other questions and inquiries.

2.3.1 The importance of Being

This foundation of Being established in the previous section was only possible with Heidegger and his critique of Greek philosophy, specifically Plato.

Heidegger critiqued Plato for his understanding of truth as "Aletheia"⁹ and for his concept of "ideas"¹⁰ or "forms"¹¹ (Dreyfus, 1993: 5, 6). Heidegger believed

⁹ "Aletheia" refers to truth or disclosure in Greek philosophy. It is associated with the concept of truth as unconcealedness or the state of not being hidden (Plato *et al.*, 2013: 241).

¹⁰ In Plato's philosophy, "ideas" refers to the eternal, unchanging, and perfect forms or concepts that exist beyond the physical world. These ideas are the ultimate reality and are the essence of all things. Plato uses the concept of ideas to explain the nature of knowledge and reality, suggesting that the physical world is a reflection or imperfect copy of true ideas. The pursuit of knowledge involves understanding these eternal ideas and their relationship to the changing world of appearances (Plato *et al.*, 2013: 23)

¹¹ Plato describes forms as the unchanging principles of all that exist, representing the ultimate essence or nature of things. The aim is to discover the definitions of things and the unchanging principles of existence, ultimately leading to understanding the ultimate principle, the form of the good. The forms are the actual reality behind the changing physical world, representing the pure and unchanging essence of concepts and phenomena (Plato *et al.*, 2013: 209; 239)

that Plato's understanding of truth¹² as "unconcealment" did not fully capture the nature of truth, and he criticised Plato's concept of "ideas" as static and separate from the world of everyday human experience. Heidegger argued that this understanding of truth and being led to neglecting the "ontological difference" between beings and Beings (Dreyfus, 1993: 2, 5, 6). Heidegger's phenomenology emphasises the importance of subjective experience and the role of interpretation in understanding Being. He believes that the Greek method, as exemplified by Plato, tends to objectify and reify Being, reducing it to static and abstract entities (Heidegger, 1968: 62, 63).

Heidegger's critique of Plato made his preference for phenomenology over the Greek method clear, which stems from his belief that the Greek approach has lost touch with the original understanding of Being, as it was lived and experienced by Greek thought (Heidegger, 1968: 63). Heidegger argues that his phenomenological approach, by focusing on the concrete and immediate experience of existence, offers a more authentic and meaningful way of engaging with the question of being (Heidegger, 1968: 63).

The difference between Heidegger's philosophy and Plato's lies in their respective approaches to the question of Being. Plato's philosophy is characterised by its focus on transcendent "forms" and abstract concepts, which Heidegger sees as a departure from the original understanding of Being.

¹² Plato understands truth as the correspondence between the eternal, unchanging forms or ideas and the changing world of appearances. He posits that the physical world is a reflection or imperfect copy of true ideas, and truth is found in the unchanging nature of these ideas. For Plato, knowledge involves understanding these eternal ideas and their relationship to the changing world of appearances (Plato *et al.*, 2013: 211, 234).

Heidegger's phenomenology emphasises the subjective experience and interpretation of *Dasein's* existence in the world and its lived experience.

Heidegger criticised Plato for mixing ontology and ethics, which he believed should be kept separate, and for failing to recognise the ontological difference (Gonzalez, 1963: 46, 71). He also saw Plato abandoning the Socratic dialectic and adopting a distinct method of collection and division. Heidegger insisted on attempting to see and say "Being" directly, bypassing both beings and λόγοι (reasoning), while Plato turned to λόγοι (reasoning) and how the truth of being manifests itself therein (Gonzalez, 1963: 335, 336).

Heidegger aimed to uncover the original meaning of being by critically engaging with Greek thought. This critical examination of Greek philosophy allowed Heidegger to develop his understanding of being and phenomenology (Ingwood, 1997: 15-17). Heidegger critically re-evaluates Plato's ideas and redirects attention to different aspects of truth and liberation (Safranski, 1998: 233). As a result of this engagement, *Being and Time* became a fundamental analysis of *Dasein*. It crystallises the results of Heidegger's reading, lecturing, and thinking over the previous decade and points the way ahead to his later works (Inwood, 1997: 7, 8). Heidegger's work emphasises the question "What is Being?" as a central theme, arguing that it is essential to ask this question, which has long been forgotten in the paradigms of the Greek method (Inwood, 1997: 7).

Heidegger suggests that Being contrasts not only with knowledge but also with "beings" or "entities" and that understanding Being is crucial to the

sciences and is the central philosophical question we should focus on (Inwood, 1997: 15). Heidegger argues that the history of philosophy, including Plato's work, has overlooked the question of the meaning of *Dasein*, leading to a neglect of the fundamental ontological (Heidegger, 1962: 22). Heidegger says that; "Based on the Greeks' initial contributions towards an Interpretation of Being, a dogma has been developed which not only declares the question about the meaning of Being to be superfluous" (1962: 22).

Heidegger's critique of Plato is essential because it challenges fundamental aspects of the Western philosophical tradition, particularly regarding the nature of truth, being, and human existence (Safranski, 1998: 223, 224). By questioning Plato's emphasis on abstract, transcendent forms and rational contemplation, Heidegger encourages re-evaluating philosophical perspectives, prioritising theoretical abstraction over lived, embodied experience. This critique opens new avenues for understanding the nature of truth, existence, and human identity, offering alternative perspectives that emphasise the interconnectedness of being and the significance of everyday experience (Safranski, 1998: 278).

A critique of Plato was required to establish the concept of being-in-the-world because Heidegger believed that traditional ontology, which was influenced by Plato's and Aristotle's ideas, had overlooked the fundamental existential structure of *Dasein*, or human existence, as being-in-the-world.

2.4 Being-in-the-world

Heidegger suggests that we cannot understand the meaning of *Dasein* without considering the nature of its being, and he emphasises the significance of the world as the context for understanding the nature of being (Heidegger, 1962: 91, 133).

Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world underscores the interconnectedness of human existence with the world in which it exists. He argues that the world is not merely an external environment but is integral to the nature of *Dasein*'s being, calling aspects of the world “Things” or “Things of Nature” (Heidegger, 1962: 91). He explains “That characteristic of Being which belongs to Things of Nature (substances), and upon which everything is founded, is substantiality. (Heidegger, 1962: 91, 92).

Heidegger's critique of traditional ontology aimed to redirect philosophical inquiry towards understanding *Dasein*'s existence as being-in-the-world, emphasising the interconnectedness of human existence with the world in which it exists is also revealed (Heidegger, 1962: 91). He points out that even if an ontology, based on the mathematical natural sciences, were to explain the being of nature very precisely, it would still fall short of capturing the phenomenon of the 'world'. This is because the natural sciences deal with entities within the world, not the world itself as a phenomenon. Heidegger suggests that we might consider starting with the entities that *Dasein* primarily interacts with, such as “Things” that hold value for us. These “Things” might seem to reveal the world in which we live more deeply (Heidegger, 1962: 92).

Heidegger explains being-in-the-world as a fundamental and unitary phenomenon that constitutes the essence of *Dasein* (Heidegger, 1962: 78). Heidegger argues that being-in-the-world is not a mere confrontation with an external entity but is the essential structure of *Dasein*, enabling it to take up relationships towards the world (Heidegger, 1962: 84).

He emphasises that *Dasein's* existential spatiality can only be understood when Being-in-the-world is recognised as an essential structure of *Dasein* (Heidegger, 1962: 82) – and includes all the “Things” that make up the world. As a result, one can only understand his concept of being-in-the-world coupled with *Dasein*.

2.4.1 Dasein

For Heidegger (1962: 33), *Dasein* refers to human existence or being. Heidegger uses the term *Dasein* to emphasise the distinctive nature of human existence and to explore the ontological structures of beings, which are the same structures *Dasein* itself possesses (Heidegger, 1962: 62).

Dasein embodies the entirety of human existence, encompassing its relationship to Being, its understanding, and its existence in the world. One of its defining characteristics is its distinctive relationship towards its Being. *Dasein* is not a mere biological or psychological entity but an active participant in the quest to uncover the meaning of its existence (Heidegger, 1962: 31).

Dasein begins to uncover its existence through its inherent mode of being-in-the-world. Heidegger emphasises that *Dasein's* primary kind of being is always "outside" alongside entities it encounters and belongs to a world already

discovered (Heidegger, 1962: 89). This means that *Dasein's* existence is inherently intertwined with the world. Heidegger emphasises that when *Dasein* directs itself towards something and “grasps it”, it does not move from an “inner sphere” to an “outer sphere.” Instead, *Dasein's* primary mode of being is always “outside,” engaged with entities in the world (Heidegger, 1962: 89). This means that *Dasein* is inherently in relation to the world and its entities, not enclosed within an internal, isolated realm.

Its mode of being involves a constant interaction with entities and the world. *Dasein's* state of being includes projection¹³, which involves disclosive being towards its potentiality-for-being¹⁴. *Dasein* can understand itself in terms of the world and others or in terms of its own most potentiality-for-being (Heidegger, 1962: 264).

Dasein is far more than a mere biological or psychological entity. It encompasses the entirety of human existence, including our relationship to being, our understanding, and our place in the world. One of the most critical facets of *Dasein* is our unique relationship to our being. Rather than passively existing, we actively question and seek the meaning of our existence. Constantly preoccupied with our being, we care deeply about our understanding of ourselves, our potential for being, and our possibilities for the future.

¹³ *Dasein's* projection is a constitutive structure of its being-in-the-world. Heidegger describes projection as the being of *Dasein* in which it understands its possibilities as possibilities. This means that *Dasein*, as long as it exists, is constantly projecting and understanding itself in terms of possibilities (Heidegger, 1962: 185).

¹⁴ “Potentiality-for-being” refers to the inherent capacity of *Dasein* to be open to and engage with its own possibilities of existence. Heidegger uses this term to describe the fundamental mode of being of *Dasein* where it is always projecting and understanding itself in terms of its potentiality-for-being (Heidegger, 1962: 183).

The essence of *Dasein's* being is defined by its “thrownness”¹⁵ in the world. *Dasein* is born into a specific historical, cultural, and social context that shapes its perception and potential for action. Rather than a hindrance, this initial placement is a foundation for *Dasein's* connection to the world. *Dasein's* factual reality encompasses its bodily form, social position, and historical context (1962: 241), contributing to how it perceives itself and its capabilities.

For Heidegger (1962: 32), *Dasein* is a constantly evolving entity, projecting itself towards possibilities and potential ways of being. Its potentiality-for-being extends beyond its existence, encompassing its understanding of the being of other entities. *Dasein's* understanding of Being (Being of beings) is not independent of its existence but develops through its interactions with the world and ongoing process of self-understanding.

Heidegger emphasises that *Dasein's* growth is not a linear progression or predetermined path but a dynamic and complex process. Its self-understanding is not fixed but evolves through its ongoing experiences in the world (Heidegger, 1962: 90). Through reflection and self-examination, *Dasein* can gain deeper insights into its existence and potentialities.

Due to its thrownness, *Dasein* constantly projects itself towards different ways of being and potential courses of action. For instance, John Sanni (2017) argues that Heidegger’s notion of projection does not only reveal human desire to project towards future possibilities but that there are economic implications in

¹⁵ The term "thrownness" conveys the sense of *Dasein's* existence as being delivered over to a world where it finds itself without having chosen or willed its own existence. It underscores the givenness and historical situatedness of *Dasein's* existence (Heidegger, 1962: 321).

Heidegger's concept of projection. These projections are an integral part of being-in-the-world. Non-projection of *Dasein* would entail a state in which *Dasein* does not engage with its possibilities and potentialities and does not understand itself in terms of its existence (Heidegger, 1962: 185). Non-projection would imply a lack of engagement with its existence and a failure to recognise its potentiality-for-being (inviting possibilities). This would result in a lack of self-understanding and a failure to engage with its being-in-the-world authentically.

Projections are influenced by *Dasein's* understanding of itself and its possibilities and its historical situatedness. The evolution of *Dasein* is inextricably linked to its interaction with the surroundings. *Dasein* dwells in a world that has already been explored and deciphered by the collective "they"¹⁶. This world presents *Dasein* with both opportunities and limitations for its growth. *Dasein's* interpretation of the world and its potential is influenced by its interactions with other beings and its perception of the environment, which influences *Dasein's* understanding of the world (Heidegger, 1962: 208).

As *Dasein* interacts with the world, it can broaden its outlook, question established beliefs, and uncover fresh growth opportunities. This process

¹⁶ "They" refers to the impersonal, everyday social norms and conventions that shape and influence *Dasein's* existence. The "they" represents the public environment and the average everydayness that *Dasein* finds itself in, and it significantly influences *Dasein's* understanding of itself and its possibilities. The "they" is characterised by its tendency to disburden *Dasein* of its Being, accommodating *Dasein* by disburdening it and thereby retaining and enhancing its dominion. It is a phenomenon that is always alongside *Dasein*, yet it tends to vanish whenever *Dasein* presses for a decision, presenting every judgment and decision as its own and depriving *Dasein* of its answerability. Heidegger emphasises that the "they" is not a specific, identifiable entity, but rather a pervasive and elusive aspect of everyday existence that shapes *Dasein's* understanding of itself and its world p. 167. The "they" is an existential, primordial phenomenon that belongs to *Dasein's* positive constitution, and it has various possibilities of becoming concrete as something characteristic of *Dasein* p. 167. (Heidegger, 1962: 165, 166, 167)

involves a continual cycle of self-discovery, self-interpretation, and self-evolution. Time is also a crucial factor in *Dasein's* development. *Dasein* is always situated within a temporal environment¹⁷, and its perception of time influences its encounters and potential. *Dasein* contextualises itself by interpreting the passage of time through dating, which imbues experiences and occurrences with meaning and importance (Heidegger, 1962: 466). Heidegger emphasises that *Dasein* is "thrown into the world" and must "temporalise" itself, meaning it must structure and make sense of time as part of its existence. This structuring of time is also intrinsic to *Dasein's* being (Heidegger, 1962: 466). The fundamental idea here is that *Dasein's* existence is grounded in temporality and the growth and development of *Dasein* is not a solitary pursuit. *Dasein's* existence is intertwined with its relationships with others, and these social interactions shape its progress.

Being-with¹⁸ is at the core of *Dasein's* essence, and its understanding of itself is deeply influenced by its connections with others (Heidegger, 1962: 156). Through these connections, *Dasein* gains valuable insights, new perspectives, and meaningful challenges that contribute to its progress. While external factors are significant in *Dasein's* development, they can also engage in self-reflection and self-determination. By embracing resoluteness, *Dasein* can make genuine choices and become accountable for its existence. This proactive approach

¹⁷ The temporal environment refers to how time structures and influences the context in which *Dasein* is situated. Time is not merely a neutral or abstract concept but plays a fundamental role in shaping the environment in which human existence unfolds (Heidegger, 1962: 29).

¹⁸ Being-with entails the interconnectedness and sharedness of human existence with others. It signifies that individuals do not exist in isolation but are always already situated within a social and relational context. This relational context shapes the way individuals understand themselves and the world around them. Being-with is not merely a contingent aspect of human existence but is constitutive of *Dasein's* essence (Heidegger, 1962: 154; 160)

empowers *Dasein* to shape its development and strive towards its potential for Being (Heidegger, 1962: 466).

2.4.2 Care

A significant aspect of *Dasein's* ability to gain insight is through care-being. According to Heidegger's account in *Being and Time*, care is essential because it is the foundation of our being. It is not merely a series of transactions or a natural compulsion but the foundation of our existence as human beings (Reed, 2022: 11). Care is an essential disposition of human beings, a particular kind of being, and understanding care in an ontological fashion is vital to accurately describing Being as a whole. For Heidegger, care is the ontological structure that underlies *Dasein's* existence, and it signifies *Dasein's* fundamental mode of Being, which is characterised by its concerned engagement with the world and its possibilities.

Dasein's desire for authenticity is why care is important. It is through care that *Dasein* can fully engage with the world, make choices, and confront the inevitability of death, thereby living a more authentic and fulfilling existence (Heidegger, 1962: 351). The notion of care elucidates the deeply embedded interconnectedness that governs our relationships with ourselves, others, and our surroundings. As Heidegger posits, this interconnectedness is not a mere byproduct of human coexistence but a fundamental aspect of our being-in-the-world. Heidegger notes that "Because Being-in-the-world is essential care, Being-alongside the ready-to-hand could be taken in our previous analyses as a concern, and Being with the *Dasein*-with of Others as we encounter it within-the- the world could be taken as solicitude" (1962: 237). This suggests that our

existence in the world involves a fundamental concern for the things and people around us.

Recognising that our existence is characterized by care, we acknowledge that our actions and decisions invariably impact the well-being of others and the environment. This realisation prompts a moral imperative to act responsibly and ethically, fostering a sense of stewardship for the world and its inhabitants (Steven, 2022: 13). Our existence is defined by caring, and our actions and decisions invariably affect the welfare of others.

As a result, care influences choices by being the foundation for *Dasein's* engagement with the world and its possibilities (Heidegger, 1962: 237). Care then highlights the importance of objects in the world by emphasising the way *Dasein* engages with and relies on these objects to allow *Dasein* to engage with the world and its possibilities in the world (Heidegger, 1962: 100).

2.4.3 *Dasein* as a “Being-in-the-world”

Since the importance of care suggests that engagement in the world is a crucial factor for *Dasein*, it means that *Dasein* is shaped by its existence in the world. As a result, Heidegger would argue that being alone is ontologically impossible. This is a crucial aspect of his concept of being. *Dasein*, or human existence, is essentially characterised by its relational nature, and being-with is a fundamental mode of existence (Heidegger, 1962: 156).

Heidegger emphasises that even when an individual is factually alone or not in the physical presence of others, they are still existentially connected to others and to the shared world in which they exist (Heidegger, 1962: 157). This

interconnectedness and sharedness are integral to *Dasein's* existence, and being alone is not a state of complete isolation or independence from others. From an ontological perspective, Heidegger suggests that being alone is not a fundamental or primary mode of human existence. Instead, even in moments of solitude, individuals are still existentially connected to the shared world, and this interconnectedness shapes their experiences and understanding of being (Heidegger, 1962: 206).

Since *Dasein's* existence is not isolated or detached from its surroundings; instead, it is always situated within a specific context that encompasses both the physical environment and other beings – it forms an integral part of being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 84). The concept of being-in-the-world suggests that our existence is always intertwined with the presence of others. Our interactions with those around us shape our understanding of ourselves, and our practical involvement in the world characterises our existence. This lived, embodied knowledge emerges from our everyday engagements and activities and is influenced by the physical environment and other beings we encounter (Heidegger, 1962: 153-156).

Being-in-the-world emphasises that *Dasein's* understanding of being is not merely theoretical or conceptual. Instead, it is a tangible, experiential understanding arising from *Dasein's* daily interactions and pursuits. *Dasein's* existence is characterised by its practical involvement in the world, its concerns, and its projects (1962: 245). Being-in-the-world challenges the traditional notion of human existence as an isolated and autonomous entity. This perspective emphasises the fundamental connectedness and interdependence of human

existence within a broader context of the world. It also emphasises the importance of considering the larger context and interconnectedness.

2.4.4 Being-towards-death

We've now established that being-in-the-world and *Dasein* are almost inseparable for Heidegger. Through these elements, he believes we can begin to answer the most critical question: "What is being?" To start this engagement, Heidegger emphasises being toward death.

Being towards death signifies that human existence is always oriented towards mortality, and this orientation shapes how *Dasein* exists in the world. The possibility of death cannot be avoided but is instead an intrinsic part of *Dasein's* existence, revealing¹⁹ itself as the possibility of the absolute impossibility of *Dasein* (Heidegger, 1962:294).

Heidegger argues that the awareness of death is essential for *Dasein's* self-understanding and authenticity. Recognition of one's mortality can lead to a profound reorientation of existence, prompting *Dasein* to confront its finitude and meaning (Heidegger, 1962: 295). By acknowledging the inevitability of death, *Dasein* is motivated to live authentically and make the most of its finite existence (Heidegger, 1962: 304). For Heidegger (1962: 299), authenticity refers to *Dasein's* ability to exist in a manner that is true to its own most potentiality-for-being. Authentic existence is not about conforming to a

¹⁹ "Revealing" refers to the process through which entities are brought into the open and made accessible for understanding. It is a fundamental aspect of Being, particularly in the context of *Dasein's* existence. Revealing is not just about making something visible or known; it encompasses the broader idea of uncovering the truth of an entity, bringing it out of concealment and allowing it to be encountered in its full significance. This process of revealing is intimately connected to *Dasein's* existence and its engagement with the world (Heidegger, 1962: 263).

predetermined set of rules or ideals but embracing one's unique possibilities and potentialities.

The problem with authenticity is inauthenticity, characterised by *Dasein's* absorption in the "they" (Heidegger, 1962: 220). Inauthenticity leads to alienation and isolation, which speaks against the ontological potential of *Dasein*. Inauthenticity entails a mode of existence of *Dasein* characterised by a lack of authenticity in its Being. Inauthenticity is not a state of "less" Being or a lower degree of Being, but rather a distinctive kind of Being-in-the-world, entirely fascinated by the 'world' and the 'they-self'²⁰ (Heidegger, 1962: 220). Heidegger explains that inauthenticity does not mean that *Dasein* removes itself from itself and understands 'only' the world. Instead, the world belongs to Being-one's-Self as Being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 186).

Being-one's-Self refers to the authentic existence of *Dasein* (Heidegger, 1962: 370). It signifies being faithful to one's self, in contrast to the "they-self," which is characterised by being absorbed and influenced by public norms and social conformity (Heidegger, 1962: 161). Being-one's-Self is associated with unwavering existence, whereas *Dasein* is oriented phenomenally by the meaning of its authentic potentiality-for-being. In this state, *Dasein* unveils its primordial phenomenal basis, which allows for the authentic questioning of the being (Heidegger, 1962: 371).

²⁰ The "they-self" is characterised by being disburdened by the "they" and accommodating the tendencies of the "they" by disburdening *Dasein* of its Being, thus enhancing the stubborn dominion of the "they" (Heidegger, 1962: 165). In this state, everyone is the other; no one is himself, as the "they" dictates the kind of Being of everydayness.

By understanding inauthenticity, Heidegger aims to highlight the pervasive influence of societal norms and the tendency for individuals to lose touch with their authentic selves and to resist being absorbed by the "they-self" (Heidegger, 1962: 220). Heidegger aims to highlight that when people are true to themselves, they open the doors to a greater comprehension of their existence. Embracing authenticity allows us to confront the inevitability of our mortality, leading to a richer appreciation of life and a more meaningful interaction with the world around us (Heidegger, 1962: 305).

Additionally, living authentically has societal implications²¹ beyond the individual. Heidegger (1962: 312) believed that embodying authenticity can inspire others to question their sense of self and strive for a more genuine way of being. In this way, we positively influence those around us, encouraging them to embrace their uniqueness and challenge societal norms. Heidegger contends that the anticipation of death reveals the finitude and temporality of *Dasein*, forcing it to confront the meaning and significance of its existence (Heidegger, 1962: 295). And it is through authenticity that this can be actualised.

2.5 The Importance of time for Heidegger

The anticipation of death alludes to the recognition of time passing. According to Brandom (1983: 391), Heidegger's inquiry into the nature of Being

²¹ The concept of authenticity places great importance on personal growth and transformation, challenging the conformity and uniformity that often pervades society. It inspires individuals to question societal norms, values, and expectations to pursue a more meaningful and genuine existence (Heidegger, 1962: 220). Authenticity also fosters a strong sense of personal accountability and responsibility, encouraging individuals to take ownership of their choices and actions instead of blindly following the crowd or succumbing to social pressure (Heidegger, 1962: 335). As a result, people become more engaged and active members of society, with a heightened awareness of how their decisions impact themselves, others, and the world.

necessitates a fundamental rethinking of time not as a mere sequential ordering of events but as an existential structure intrinsic to *Dasein's* being itself. This perspective diverges sharply from traditional metaphysical views of time as an external entity or a measure of change.

Time is intertwined with *Dasein's* existence and its engagement with the world. Time is not just a neutral framework within which *Dasein* exists but an essential part of *Dasein's* being-in-the-world. According to Heidegger (1962: 306), time is intimately connected to *Dasein's* care and projection towards potentiality-for-Being. As a result, it's crucial for *Dasein's* understanding of the world and its existence. Time ultimately shapes *Dasein's* choices and interactions with entities within the world (Heidegger, 1962: 471).

This analysis foregrounds the notion that our understanding of time cannot be divorced from the human experience of existing in the world. Unlike the linear, sequential time of clocks and calendars, Heidegger's temporality is complex, and it includes the past, present, and future, where the future is not merely what happens next. Still, it is intimately connected to an individual's potentialities and choices. Understanding the past, present, and future as linear and separate entities does not capture the true essence of time (Heidegger, 1962: 460). Instead, Heidegger argues that these temporal dimensions are interconnected and are integral to *Dasein's* existence because *Dasein's* care and its projection towards potentiality-for-Being are deeply intertwined with the past, present, and future, and how these temporal dimensions shape *Dasein's* understanding of the world and its existence (Heidegger, 1962: 474).

2.5.1 Temporality

Heidegger critiques traditional temporal idealism²² and its understanding of Being and reality as being only "in the consciousness" (Heidegger, 1962: 251). He argues that temporal idealism's focus on the consciousness as the source of Being fails to clarify the ontological understanding of Being and its relation to time.

Heidegger emphasises the significance of imagination in understanding time, as it allows us to grasp the temporal nature of existence. He contends that contemplating time and the limitations of human existence is crucial for comprehending the fundamental essence of being. He advocates for prioritising these concepts as central to our identity and understanding of existence (Sheeman & Palmer, 1997: 429).

Heidegger suggests that if idealism emphasises that being cannot be explained through entities and is transcendental for every entity, then it is problematic for being (Heidegger, 1962: 251). For Heidegger, our temporal existence is characterised by a forward projection towards future possibilities, grounded in our past experiences, while always being in the present. As a result time determines our existence and being-in-the-world because it is always situated concerning where we find ourselves.

2.6 Being and Technology

Heidegger's *Being and Time* laid the foundation for his philosophy. It explains how being in the world is closely tied to human engagement, the environment,

²² Temporal idealism refers to the philosophical position that emphasises the significance of time in shaping human experience and existence (Sheeman & Palmer, 1997: 429).

and our understanding of ourselves and others. In his later work, such as *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (1977), Heidegger shifted his focus from individual existential analysis to a broader examination of how technology impacts human existence and the world. According to George Pattison in *The Later Heidegger* (2000: 11) his views differ from the *Being and Time*-era in several ways. One significant difference lies in the way the question of being is addressed. Heidegger's later philosophy shifts away from the existential analysis of *Dasein* found in *Being and Time* to a focus on the oblivion of being in an age of technological enframing. This shift reflects a change in emphasis from human existence to a broader concern with the history of Being and its impact on humanity. "Heidegger undertook a re-examination of the philosophical commitments that had led to it" (2000: 38).

In this re-examination later Heidegger's perspective is characterised by a less anthropocentric view, emphasising a sense of resignation and expectation, and a focus on the fourfold of earth, sky, death, and the gods, as opposed to the existential analysis of human existence found in *Being and Time* (Pattison, 2000: 12).

Heidegger's fourfold refers to the interconnectedness of earth, sky, mortals, and divinities, providing a framework for understanding the world and human existence. It represents a departure from the anthropocentric focus of his earlier work and emphasizes a more holistic understanding of existence, illustrating the interdependence and interconnectedness of these elements. This interconnectedness offers a way of envisaging the world that goes beyond

human-centered perspectives and emphasises the broader context of human existence within the world (Pattison, 2000: 176-185).

Later Heidegger is more holistic in understanding being by emphasising the interconnectedness of various elements in his philosophy. According to Pattison (2000: 101-103) this interconnectedness offers a more comprehensive view of the world and human existence, highlighting the broader context of human life within the world. Heidegger's later work also introduces a critical reflection on technology and its impact on human existence, highlighting the alienating and transformative effects of technology on our relationship with the world (Pattison, 2000: 48, 49).

The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays builds on some critical aspects of Heidegger's earlier work. While *Being and Time* primarily focus on the meaning of being and the nature of human existence, *The Question Concerning Technology* extends these ideas to explore the essence of technology and its relationship to human existence.

One aspect that continued from *Being and Time* is Heidegger's critique of the metaphysical tradition and its understanding of reality. As I have discussed, Heidegger challenged the traditional metaphysical approach that reduces reality to objects and subjects and instead emphasises the importance of human existence and its relationship to Being. Later Heidegger is still challenging its underlying assumptions and questioned the seemingly opposing yet fundamentally unified aspects of modern thought and culture (Pattison, 2000: 17). Pattison believes that he argues that the tradition is characterised by

profound uniformity and hidden presuppositions, which he believes are often overlooked by its proponents. He also emphasizes the need to overcome metaphysics and situates his thought in a constant and decisive relation to the history of philosophy, preparing the way for a new kind of thinking by reinterpreting the philosophical tradition (Pattison, 2000: 188). This critical approach reflects Heidegger's attempt to challenge and transcend the limitations of the metaphysical tradition.

Later, Heidegger also argues that technology alters our lives by impacting our perception and engagement with the world and with other beings in it. He asserts that contemporary technology, which prioritises efficiency, control, and practical value, has revolutionised our connection with the world and ourselves. A notable effect of technology on our way of life is its inclination to objectify all things. In this technological age, living and non-living entities are objects to manage and control. This objectification encompasses nature, life, and history, which are investigated and analysed as subjects of study within science (Heidegger, 1977: 27).

Pattison (2000: 53) explains that Heidegger is arguing that technology alters lives by transforming the way we relate to the world and ourselves. For Pattison he is contending that technology shifts our understanding of revealing and unconcealment, leading to a mode of revealing that conceals the true nature of being-in-the-world. In essence, Heidegger argues that technology alters lives by changing our understanding of the world, our relationship with it, and our place within it, ultimately leading to a transformation of our existence and the way we relate to the world.

The tendency to view the world as a mere tool or object diminishes our ability to connect with and engage in meaningful experiences. This depersonalised stance is detrimental to our very being. Heidegger takes issue with the impact of technology on our thinking processes. By constantly analysing, calculating, and ordering our environment through technological means, we risk becoming disconnected from the world around us. This mindset of control and manipulation can lead to a sense of alienation and loss of authentic connection with our surroundings. He believes technology reveals the world as standing-reserve²³ rather than a source of more profound human value and meaning (Heidegger, 1977: 27).

The essence of technology lies in enframing, how technology shapes our understanding and interpretation of the world. Enframing involves the process of framing or structuring our perception of reality through the lens of technology and its effects on society, which is how the real reveals itself as a standing reserve (1977: 19). Enframing produces an instrumental view of the world that influences our perception and understanding of reality, as we tend to see everything in terms of its usefulness and utility (Heidegger, 1977: 27). This instrumental view of the world can lead to a loss of reverence and appreciation for its inherent value and beauty.

It's worth noting that Heidegger's later work doesn't necessarily view technology as inherently harmful to our being. Instead, he raises concerns

²³ "Standing-reserve" refers to how everything is ordered and positioned to be immediately available for use or exploitation. It represents a mode of existence in which objects, resources, and even human beings are seen primarily in terms of utility and availability for human purposes. The idea of standing-reserve reflects the pervasive influence of modern technology, where everything is ordered and positioned to be on call for further ordering and utilisation (Heidegger, 1977: 16).

about its potential adverse effects on our understanding of ourselves and the world. He argues that modern technology can lead to losing our authentic relationship with being and distorting our reality experience. According to Heidegger, technology can cause us to disconnect from nature and the world (Heidegger, 1977: 38). As we become more reliant on technological devices and systems, we may lose touch with life's natural rhythms and cycles. This can lead to a sense of alienation and a loss of our sense of belonging.

Furthermore, technology may also contribute to a sense of powerlessness and dependency. While we may think that we are in control of technology, Heidegger argues that technology, as the essence of modern technology, is beyond our control: "Thus we shall never experience our relationship to the essence of technology so long as we merely conceive and push forward the technological, put up with it, or evade it (Heidegger, 1977: 4). According to Heidegger, technology is beyond our control because it is deeply intertwined with the nature of being itself (Heidegger, 1977: 37). Technology has its logic and demands that shape our way of being-in-the-world. This can result in us feeling dominated by technology, trapped and unable to escape its influence. This means that technology, as the essence of being itself, will never allow itself to be mastered by humans, as that would imply that humans are the masters of being. Therefore, the pervasive influence of technology is deeply rooted in the essence of being and cannot be fully controlled or overcome by human action alone (Heidegger, 1977: 38).

Heidegger suggests that correcting technology's influence necessitates a fundamental shift in our understanding and relationship to it. He argues that we

must move beyond merely conceiving, pushing forward, putting up with, or evading technology (Heidegger, 1977:3). Instead, we must strive to understand technology's essence and relationship to it. This involves recognising that the essence of technology is not something technological in itself but rather a mode of revealing and ordering that shapes our existence (Heidegger, 1977: 5).

Through deep reflection and questioning, we can recognise how technology influences our lives and consider how we might foster a different relationship. This process involves being attentive to how technology reveals and conceals aspects of truth and being and striving to maintain a critical and reflective stance towards its influence (Heidegger, 1977: 33).

2.6.1 Enframing

According to the above section, it is evident that Heidegger perceives technology as a force that can distance individuals from their authentic selves and their potential for being. The influence of technology on individuals is reflected in how they interact with the world. Heidegger identifies the essence of modern technology as enframing (Heidegger, 1977: 23).

Enframing, as conceptualised by Heidegger, is a mindset that underlies modern technology and permeates daily habits of thought and speech. It involves objectifying the world and experiences in a way that makes them available for use, manipulation, and transformation to serve specific goals and purposes (Pattison, 2000: 2, 3).

Enframing is not a form of technology itself, but it is intrinsically connected with the world of technology, demanding certain technological outcomes and

determining the world as a resource for technological manipulation (Pattison, 2000: 65). It is a process that intimately concerns humanity, drawing individuals into a web of calculation and exchange that is the world-as-resource p. 75.

Enframing is a mode of coming to presence of Being, revealing an aspect of Being that serves to define entities, albeit in a partial or one-sided manner p. 82.

Enframing, which is a mode of revealing, challenges individuals and imposes upon them the real in the form of order, as standing-reserve. Essentially, technology reshapes the world and all its contents as a standing-reserve, or a resource to be utilised for human purposes (Heidegger, 1977: 18).

Moreover, the concept of enframing as a way of revealing profoundly affects *Dasein*, leading to its truth of existence being entrapped with oblivion and distancing humanity from being (1977: xxxiii). This alienation from being is a direct result of enframing's mode of revealing, which shapes the way humans perceive and interact with the world through technology (Heidegger, 1977: 38).

Enframing can also lead to a sense of powerlessness and dependency. At the same time, we may initially believe that we can control and master technology. Heidegger (1977: 164) argues that technology is beyond our control. It has its logic and demands that shape our way of being in the world. We become subject to the dictates of technology, constantly striving to keep up with its advancements and demands. This can create a sense of being dominated by technology, where we feel trapped and unable to escape its influence.

However, it is worth noting that enframing also carries the potential to save humanity from its alienation and facilitate a crucial relationship with being (Heidegger, 1977: 14). This indicates that while technology impacts *Dasein* by shaping human existence and revealing the essence of modern technology as enframing, technology also can foster a deeper understanding of being and a more genuine connection with the world.

Heidegger suggests that technology cannot be overcome in the traditional sense. Instead, he proposes the idea of "restorative surmounting" of technology. "Restorative surmounting", as suggested by Heidegger, refers to overcoming or addressing technology that involves restoring it to its concealed truth (Heidegger, 1977: 38). It is a form of overcoming that is not about mastering or controlling technology but rather about restoring it to its authentic essence. This process is likened to getting over grief or pain, suggesting it involves a profound transformation or healing of the relationship between humanity and technology (Heidegger, 1977: 38).

Heidegger emphasises that this "restorative surmounting" involves a fundamental shift in how humans relate to technology, aiming to establish a more authentic and essential relationship between humanity and the technological world (Heidegger, 1977: 38). Heidegger (1977: 39) also notes that man's essence must open itself to the essence of technology to establish an essential relationship between technology and man. This opening to the essence of technology is different from simply affirming or promoting technology and its means. It involves a deeper understanding of the essence of technology

and its impact on human existence. This is essential due to technology's potential to shape how humans interact with the world and each other.

2.6.2 Releasement

Releasement and enframing are important concepts in Heidegger's philosophy and are relevant to this project's general argument. Enframing, as a mode of revealing, is associated with technology and represents a danger to humanity's relationship with Being. On the other hand, releasement refers to the process of freeing ourselves from the constraints of technological revealing and embracing a more open and receptive way of encountering truth and being. Releasement involves acknowledging the danger of enframing and the potential loss of our free essence, and it requires a deep understanding of our innermost indestructible belongingness within granting (Heidegger, 1977: 27-28).

According to Godzinski (2005: 119), releasement is not merely a passive resignation but an active engagement with the essence of things by letting them be in their truth without imposing our preconceptions or desires upon them. This notion proposes a mode of existence where one is open to the experience of being without the need for domination or possession.

In Heidegger's view, such a stance is crucial in the modern age, where technology and human desire for power threaten to obscure the fundamental nature of our relationship with being. Releasement is about cultivating an attitude of openness and attentiveness to the world, allowing us to encounter beings in their authenticity and engage with the world in a more meaningful and less instrumental way.

Heidegger argues that the prevailing enframing attitude towards technology - a mode that sees nature as a standing-reserve for human exploitation - necessitates a counter-movement towards releasement (Heidegger, 1977: 37). This stance does not entail a wholesale rejection of technological devices or advancements, but instead, it advocates for a more thoughtful and restrained engagement with technology, one that recognises its potential to conceal as much as it reveals.

By adopting a posture of openness, or what Heidegger describes as “letting be”. Letting-be refers to allowing things to be as they are without imposing our preconceived notions or conceptual structures upon them. It involves openness and receptivity to the true nature of things, allowing them to reveal themselves as they are, rather than as standing-reserve or resources for human use (Heidegger, 1977: 47).

Letting-be is a fundamental aspect of our relationship with *Dasein*, as it involves acknowledging the essence of things and allowing them to reveal themselves (Heidegger, 1977: 43). So doing, individuals can foster a more harmonious relationship with technology in a way that respects the mystery and integrity of the natural world. By letting-be and allowing an openness to the world and a recognition of the intrinsic nature of beings, it encourages an engagement with the world that respects the finitude and temporality of existence. The importance of openness to Being-and-the-world, rather than seeking transcendence in the traditional sense of transcending the finite realm to reach an absolute or infinite state. This encourages an engagement with the

world that respects the finitude and temporality of existence (Heidegger 1977: xiv).

2.7 Conclusion

In summary, Martin Heidegger's contributions to philosophy, deeply rooted in existentialism, phenomenology, and ontology, have significantly impacted our understanding of human existence and reality. By building on the foundations of other philosophers such as Husserl, Heidegger's exploration of "being" instead of mere appearance has provided a unique perspective on authenticity and existence. He emphasises active engagement with one's surroundings, moving beyond traditional notions of objectivity, which challenges us to reexamine our relationship with the world and the structures of being.

Through the phenomenology lens, Heidegger advocates for a form of realism grounded in direct experiential contact with phenomena, rejecting the idea of an objective reality independent of human experience. Their philosophical inquiries into consciousness, perception, and reality offer a rich tapestry of thought that continues to shape contemporary philosophical discourse and our understanding of the complexities of human existence.

Heidegger challenges the traditional metaphysical paradigms that reduce reality to mere objects and subjects. He emphasises the significance of human existence and its inherent connection to being. He examines the transformative impact of technology on our lived experiences, highlighting how the modern technological ethos of efficiency and control has led to a pervasive objectification of the world around us. He argues that this objectification hinders

our ability to engage meaningfully with our surroundings, fostering a sense of detachment and alienation. He cautions against the dangers of becoming trapped in a mode of thinking that prioritises manipulation and control at the expense of authentic connection and appreciation for the intrinsic value of existence.

Heidegger's concept of "enframing" underscores how technology shapes our perception of reality, framing our understanding through its utilitarian lens and potentially eroding our reverence for the beauty and richness of the world. Enframing offers a vital shift in Heidegger's phenomenology. While he acknowledges that technology is not inherently vicious, he cautions against its potential to distort our relationship with Being, leading to a loss of connection with nature and a pervasive sense of powerlessness and dependency. Ultimately, Heidegger posits that addressing the influence of technology requires a fundamental reorientation in our approach, one that transcends mastery and acknowledges the intrinsic intertwining of technology with the essence of being itself.

CHAPTER 3

The Phenomenology of Games

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Two offered insights into Martin Heidegger's examination of being, which goes beyond conventional understandings of existence and uncovers the intricacies of human experience through ontological exploration. Heidegger viewed Being as a pivotal aspect of his inquiry into the essential nature of existence rather than a mere philosophical abstraction. By challenging the views of ancient Greek philosophers such as Plato, Heidegger's phenomenology is beneficial to explore in the modern era. He considered the concept of 'being' in the technological age, laying the foundation for the authentic and inauthentic use of modern tools.

Heidegger's analysis explores how entities manifest within the world and how we, as beings in the world, engage with them. *Being and Time* lays the groundwork for understanding our interconnectedness with the world, providing insights into the essence of human existence. Heidegger's philosophical framework challenges traditional metaphysical paradigms by rejecting the notion that being is a static and abstract concept or attribute and instead pursues a comprehensive understanding of how entities manifest and interrelate.

At the heart of Heidegger's philosophical inquiry lies the crucial idea of *Dasein*, which encapsulates the very nature of human existence. It captures how humans engage with the world and navigate their path through life. This

concept emphasises the undeniable interdependence between an individual's being and the various factors that shape it, including the environment, context, and social interactions. Ultimately, it highlights the inextricable link between our existence and the complex web of relationships we forge within the world around us to form an understanding of the world. Heidegger (1962: 43) states that:

“Our preparatory Interpretation of the fundamental structures of Dasein with regard to the average kind of Being which is closest to it (a kind of Being which it is therefore proximally historical as well), will make manifest, however, not only that Dasein is inclined to fall back upon its world (the world in which it is) and to interpret itself in terms of that world by its reflected light, but also that Dasein simultaneously falls prey to the tradition of which it has more or less explicitly taken hold.”

This suggests that people typically rely on their surroundings and define themselves in relation to the world. Additionally, they often adopt traditions and ideas from others. Being-in-the-world represents a departure from traditional Cartesian dualisms²⁴, as advocated by Heidegger's philosophy.

From this perspective, human existence is an ongoing interplay within a network of relationships encompassing the physical environment, cultural influences, societal dynamics, historical contexts, and personal experiences. This interplay fundamentally shapes how humans interact with the world and

²⁴ René Descartes' philosophical doctrine of Cartesian dualism posits that the universe consists of two distinct and independent substances: mental substances (*res cogitans*) characterised by thought, consciousness, and non-spatial extension, and material substances (*res extensa*) characterised by extension in space and lacking thought or consciousness (Descartes, 1641).

ultimately interpret their existence (Dreyfus, 1995: 29-32). This perspective recognises that humans are not passive sensory information receptors, but actively interact with their surroundings, derive meaning from those interactions, and establish their identities within the world around them.

Similar to this, Alfred Schuetz used the example of “paramount reality” to also distinguish the phenomenological importance of being in the world, and how it assists in creating meaning. The term "paramount reality" refers to the primary or central reality that is of utmost importance or significance to an individual. In the context of the article *On Multiple Realities* (1945) Schuetz uses the phrase to describe the world of physical things, including one's body, the realm of locomotions and bodily operations, and the reality within which communication and the interplay of mutual motivation becomes effective. This reality of the physical is considered paramount over the many other sub-universes of reality, and it is the world of working as a whole that stands out as paramount over others (Schuetz, 1945: 549).

The “paramount reality” is important because it forms the basis of an individual's practical experiences and proves the unity and congruity of the world of working as valid. It is the natural reality that individuals are not ready to abandon without experiencing a specific shock that compels them to shift the accent of reality to another one (Schuetz, 1945: 550). This reality is essential for individuals as it is the field of domination and practical interest, and it governs their actions, projects, and attempts to master the world (Schuetz, 1945: 548).

This realm is daily life, and it is subjective in the sense that it is the most real or fundamental stratum of reality from the perspective of the individual. This means that the subjective experiences and perceptions of individuals play a crucial role in defining what is considered the “paramount reality” (Kassam, 1991: 195). This reality provides the framework within which individuals anticipate the future repercussions of their actions and engage with the world in a meaningful way (Schuetz, 1945: 549).

Heidegger observes that meaning is not a fixed characteristic inherent in objects but rather an ongoing process of interpretation and assigning significance (Heidegger, 1962: 193). He argues that meaning is an existential framework of disclosed-ness²⁵ that belongs to understanding and is filled in by the entities discoverable in that disclosed-ness. He emphasises that *Dasein*, or human existence, is the only entity that can be meaningful or meaningless, and meaning is not a property attaching to entities but is a part of *Dasein's* Being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 193).

Heidegger's view of meaning aligns with the idea that it is an ongoing process intimately tied to human existence and understanding rather than being a fixed characteristic inherent in objects. Therefore, our perception of self and the world is not imposed upon us externally; it is formed through the continuous interplay between ourselves and our environment. Schuetz (1945: 551) holds a similar stance, that Phenomenology emphasises the subjective nature of experience and the importance of understanding the structures of

²⁵ Disclosedness refers to the fundamental state of being of *Dasein*, characterised by its openness to the world and its active engagement with entities (Heidegger, 1962: 263, 269).

consciousness that give meaning to our experiences . In phenomenology, meaning-making is closely tied to the concept of intentionality, which refers to the directedness of consciousness towards objects and experiences.

“Paramount reality” helps to create meaning by providing the framework within which individuals engage with the world and assign significance to their experiences. It is within this reality that an individual's practical experiences and actions take place, allowing them to anticipate the future repercussions of their actions and engage with the world in a meaningful way (Schuetz, 1945: 554). This approach highlights the importance of understanding the lived experiences of individuals and the ways in which they make meaning of the world around them.

This chapter aims to establish if that environment, and the lived experience, can also be digital and if the environment could be engaged through gaming. This is why it is crucial to examine the phenomenology of gaming and explore how it integrates with the principles advanced by Heidegger and Schuetz. That is the objective of the upcoming chapter.

3.2 Phenomenology and Gaming

Phenomenology, understood as the philosophical approach that delves into human experience, explores the ties between consciousness, perception, and existence. Broadly put by Jeff Malpas in his foreword to *The Phenomenology of Real and Virtual Places* (2019: vii), “Phenomenology is concerned with the relationship between appearance and place, and it aims to understand how place and phenomenology are interconnected”.

When applied to gaming, phenomenology offers insight into the nature of gameplay and how it shapes our sense of being-in-the-world. As we've established in Chapter Two, phenomenology provides a rigorous framework for examining the structures of consciousness and how we experience the world. Phenomenology influences gaming by providing a framework for understanding the player's experience and the nature of virtual spaces. It considers the player, gaming platform, and virtual space as an interconnected assemblage, where each element contributes to the overall experience of play (Champion, 2019: 336). Phenomenology also informs the study of player experiences in virtual environments, such as exploring the relationship between the player's embodied interaction with the game and the digital space (Champion, 2019: 337).

By applying phenomenology to gaming, I hope to uncover the layers of players' experiences and shed light on how individuals immerse themselves in virtual worlds while navigating the interplay between reality and fiction (Liberati, 2017: 1, 2). Video games provide a unique opportunity to delve into the complexities of consciousness, perception, and being in gaming.

In *Alien Phenomenology, or What It is Like to Be a Thing*, Ian Bogost suggests that computer and digital games require an appreciation for their distinct phenomenological reality. Bogost's work allows for the exploration of gaming and phenomenology, creating ties with how aspects of gaming can have significance phenomenologically. To start, the study of the subjective experiences and perspectives that emerge from playing and interacting with these games falls under digital game phenomenology (Bogost, 2012: 9).

According to Bogost, understanding computer games requires more than just analysing them through the lens of human experience or as representations of reality. Instead, we should appreciate digital games' unique qualities and features as distinct objects.

Bogost's approach to the phenomenology of digital games involves examining how players interact with game mechanics, narratives, and virtual environments. This encompasses the emotions, sensations, and cognitive processes that arise during gameplay, including a player's immersion in the game world, their ability to make decisions and act, and the novel experiences and perspectives that emerge from engaging with the game's systems (Bogost 2012: 10, 12, 13). Approaching computer games from this perspective, where we accept that we can be engaged in virtual environments, allows us to appreciate these environments' distinct qualities and experiences. It encourages us to consider how games shape our understanding of the world and our relationship with technology.

Jonathan Boulter, in his work *Parables of the Posthuman: Digital Realities, Gaming and the Player Experience* (2015), argues that games shape understanding by providing a practical realisation that the human is a fluid, dynamic, and discontinuous entity, thereby extending the human and altering its conception of itself:

The game locates the player within a complex network of exchanges, all mediated by technology: player-console/computer, player-avatar, and player-narrative. This economy of technological exchange initiates a practical experience of what I term the “posthuman”: the game enacts the

fantasy of extending past the limits and limitations of the human.
(Boulter, 2015: 2).

Boulter gives insight into the phenomenological investigation of gaming by showing that aspects of gaming allow for interaction and engagement that is more far-reaching than merely an activity. According to Boulter, the concept of the "posthuman" is characterised by several assumptions, including prioritising informational patterns over material manifestation, viewing consciousness as an epiphenomenon, and seamlessly integrating human beings with intelligent machines (Boulter, 2015: 27). This perspective goes beyond theoretical considerations and is explored as a practical experience. Through digital gaming, the "posthuman" is depicted as a parable that illustrates what it means to be posthuman and offers a potential model for what this state of being may entail (Boulter, 2015: 125). Humans are active participants in gaming through their engagement with the game, the console or computer, the avatar, and the narrative. The player's interaction with these elements initiates a practical experience of the "posthuman". This experience extends past the limits and limitations of the human, altering the player's perception of the human subject and consciousness. The player's active, bodily, and phenomenal participation in the narrative unfolding is seen as a practical realisation of the "posthuman" (Boulter, 2015: 27).

For Boulter, the phenomenology of games ultimately involves the player's bodily, active, and immediate experience as they engage with the game. This experience is distinct from other forms of media consumption, such as reading a novel or viewing a film, due to the player's control over the avatar's movement and the physical responses involved in gaming. The player's interaction with the

game is a practical realisation of the “posthuman”, extending the boundaries of the self and human experience (Boulter, 2015: 130-131).

Conversely, Bogost's exploration of the phenomenology of games is rooted in what he refers to as an "alien phenomenology," which refers to an experience of the world from the viewpoint of a non-human entity. He argues that games are not just representations or simulations but are systems that operate with their logic and rules, which can convey meaning and make arguments (Bogost, 2012: 90-100). This perspective suggests that games have their separate phenomenology or way of appearing to beings and that understanding this phenomenology is essential for comprehending games' unique experiences. Ultimately, the rules and mechanics of games shape players' experiences and convey meaning (Bogost, 2012: 100). When one considers Boulter's argument that playing a game is active participation in the world and Bogost's position that games operate in their unique phenomenology, it is evident that these elements are necessary connected to Heidegger's *Dasein*.

Dasein, as we've established in Chapter Two, refers to human existence, including its engagement with the world and its active participation in the process of interpretation and assigning significance (Heidegger, 1962: 26, 32). Heidegger emphasises that *Dasein's* existence is characterised by its involvement in the world and ongoing engagement with entities, which is essential to understanding Being (Heidegger, 1962: 84, 156). Games offer these elements since humans can actively participate in a game, while the game itself has its own *Dasein* that informs the player.

According to Boulter (2015: 18) games signify the interconnectedness of human beings with the world they inhabit, emphasising the idea that humans are not isolated entities but are fundamentally intertwined with their environment. He goes further to argue that the player's immersion in the game world and the active engagement with the game environment reflect the notion of being-in-the-world as a practical experience (Boulter, 2015: 58).

We can accept then that games allow for active participation rather than passive observation. Players can interact with virtual environments, adopt various roles, and make decisions influencing the story unfolding. This interactivity aligns with the fundamental principles of phenomenology, which prioritise direct engagement with conscious phenomena (Cerbone, 2006: 12). For this engagement to take place, Boulter suggests that a person can become engaged in a game through interpellation²⁶, where the game's mechanics, physics, and rules draw you into its dominion and fill you with its spirit (Boulter, 2015: 63). This process involves the player's active participation in the game's logic and economies, creating a reality that surpasses the player and immerses them in the game world. The engagement with a game is a bodily and immediate experience, distinct from other forms of media consumption.

Bogost (2012: 87, 88) states that this engagement depends on game rules and mechanics. He emphasises that games convey meaning through their “procedural rhetoric”, which refers to how the rules and mechanics of a game

²⁶ Interpellation involves the game's mechanics and narrative, compelling the player to become part of its world and rules. The player is interpellated into the game's ideology, transforming it into a subject within its narrative and mechanics. Interpellation is part of the process of creating a sense of immersion and engagement (Boulter, 2015: 40, 41, 42).

can make arguments and convey meanings. This engagement occurs as players interact with the game's systems, allowing them to experience and understand the meanings and arguments embedded within the game. The rules define the boundaries and possibilities within the game, influencing how players engage with the game's systems and mechanics. Therefore, game rules play a crucial role in structuring players' experiences and interactions while playing a game (Bogost, 2012: 23-29) and ultimately to “be in the game” (see next section).

Bogost and Boulter’s analysis of engagement in gaming creates a link between gaming and Heidegger’s conception being and being-in-the-world. According to Heidegger (1962: 32, 35), engagement refers to *Dasein*’s active involvement and commitment to the world and its ongoing process of interpretation and assigning significance. This engagement is crucial because it forms the basis for understanding the nature of human existence. Heidegger emphasises that *Dasein*’s existence is characterised by its active participation in the world and ongoing engagement with entities, which is essential to understanding Being (Heidegger, 1962: 89, 117).

Dasein’s engagement reveals how human existence is intertwined with the world and how meaning is derived from this interaction. There is also an emphasis on the active role of human beings in shaping their understanding of the world and themselves, emphasising the significance of their involvement in the process of interpretation and significance assignment.

A key aspect of the assignment is the language of games. This specific language can be seen as the rules, mechanics, and “procedural rhetoric” of games (Bogost, 2012: 54). When these elements are experienced as the language of the game, these aspects can significantly impact players by shaping their experiences, influencing their decision-making, and evoking emotional responses. This impact occurs through the ways in which the game's language structures the player's interactions, communicates narratives, and presents challenges. The language of games can affect players' cognitive processes, emotional engagement, and overall immersion in the game world, ultimately shaping the meaning and significance of the player's experience (Bogost, 2012: 54).

The concept of language in the context of games can be understood in a broader sense, beyond traditional linguistic communication. In exploring the essence of language it is suggested that language is not limited to verbal or written communication but encompasses a broader understanding of communication and expression (Heidegger, 2009: 21, 22). In Heidegger's analysis of language in *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language* (2009: 29), language serves as the medium through which human existence is articulated and understood. In exploring the essence of language, it is suggested that language is not limited to mere communication but is intertwined with the essence of human existence.

Language enables the expression of thoughts, emotions, and experiences, allowing individuals to make sense of their existence and the world around them. It is through language that concepts, beliefs, and values are

conveyed, shared, and preserved, contributing to the formation of meaning and identity (Heidegger, 2009: 139, 140).

It is through the rules, expressed in language, of games that players understand the boundaries, objectives, and constraints of the game, while mechanics provide the systems and actions through which players engage with the game (Bogost, 2012: 54). It is through this language that games are able to evoke emotions, and offer compelling experiences that are distinct from other forms of media and art (Bogost, 2012: 53).

In the same way the essence of language, as suggested by Heidegger, is not for language to merely be a tool for communication (Heidegger, 2009: 28). The essence of language encompasses its role in expressing thoughts, emotions, and experiences, as well as its function in conveying meaning, preserving culture, and shaping identity (Heidegger, 2009: 140). He views language as a world-forming power that preforms and brings into jointure the Being of beings (Heidegger, 2009: 142).

Heidegger's notion of language is important in games, particularly in the context of the player-avatar relationship. The avatar serves as the common language of the game and the player, forming the basis for the emergence of meaning in the game experience. Boulter suggests that games can be viewed as hermeneutical events where the player-avatar relationship forms a common language through which meaning emerges similar to the way meaning emerges through text encounters (Boulter, 2015: 63).

Games are then categorised as hermeneutic events due to the interpretive and meaning-making processes that occur through the player's engagement with the game, and the emergence of meaning in the game experience is linked to the understanding of the relationship between the avatar, the player, and the game which is why language, in the form of the player-avatar relationship, plays a crucial role in shaping the meaning and experience of games (Boulter, 2015: 64).

Heidegger (2009: 141) states that "The essence of language essences where it happens as world-forming power, that is, where it in advance preforms and brings into jointure the beings of beings". Through this, the true essence of language lies in its ability to shape and form the world, bringing together different aspects of existence, rather than in its misuse or mere communication of thoughts, and as such is a part *Dasein's* alignment with its being-in-the-world and *Dasein's* ability to comprehend its reality.

3.3 Being-in-the-Game

Although not a traditional philosophical term, "Being-in-the-game" is a nod to Heidegger's "being-in-the-world", as it delves into the existential and phenomenological facets of being fully immersed in a gaming environment, particularly in modern video games. "Being-in-the-game" describes the subjective feeling of being fully present and engaged in a video game or virtual environment according to the paper *Being "in the game"* (Cox, Jennett, & Cairns, 2008: 1, 2). The authors argue that "Being-in-the-game" can have different meanings for different people. Some gamers describe it as being immersed to such an extent that they feel like they are the character they are

playing (Cox *et al.*, 2008: 6). In contrast, others use the phrase to emphasise their high involvement in the game without necessarily feeling like they are the character (Cox *et al.*, 2008: 7).

Therefore, "being-in-the-game" does not always mean feeling a sense of presence in the virtual environment. Instead, the sense of being in a virtual environment, where participants feel like the events they see, hear, and feel are happening, even though they know they are not actual events (Cox *et al.*, 2008: 3-9).

This sense of presence can vary among gamers, and it is not solely dependent on the game being in the first-person perspective or the gamer being able to empathise with the character. The feeling of "being-in-the-game" can occur due to a high level of involvement in a game, where players become immersed in the narrative and feel like they are a part of the world presented to them (Cox *et al.*, 2008: 6). This sensation is frequently connected to a sense of immersion, where the player becomes deeply invested in the game and feels connected with the game world and its characters (Cox *et al.*, 2008: 6, 7).

For Boulter (2015: 58), "being-in-the-game" involves the player's active engagement with the game's environment, mechanics, and narrative, which creates a sense of presence and agency. For him, that sense of being is an immediate experience since "being-in-the-game" transforms the player's engagement with the game world (Boulter, 2015: 89).

According to Boulter (2015: 3), the power of games lies in their ability to expand and transform one's sense of self, consciousness, and subjectivity. By

creating an immersive space, games challenge traditional ideas of what it means to be human, allowing for a “posthuman” experience. This transformation of “being-in-the-game” occurs through active participation in the game's narrative, mechanics, and virtual world, leading to a shift in perception of the self (Boulter, 2015: 13, 19).

Dasein's awareness of its being-in-the-world is a fundamental aspect of its existence. Heidegger emphasises the importance of *Dasein's* self-awareness and understanding of its existence concerning the world (Heidegger, 1962: 102). This awareness is crucial because it forms the basis for *Dasein's* active engagement with the world and its ongoing process of interpretation and significance assignment (Heidegger, 1962: 84). Heidegger's concept of being-in-the-world underscores the inseparable connection between *Dasein's* existence and its environment, highlighting the significance of self-awareness in shaping one's understanding of the world and one's being. Awareness of being in the world is essential for understanding human existence.

Boulter believes that “being-in-the-game” might differ somewhat from “being-in-the-world”. While the player may experience a sense of immersion and extension of self within the game, this does not necessarily require a continuous, self-reflective awareness (Boulter, 2015: 23). Instead, the player's consciousness is guided by the entity on screen and the protocols of game design, leading to a state where the player is both present and absent to themselves, but there remains an intricate relationship between the player's consciousness and the game environment, that is cornerstone to “being-in-the-game” (Boulter, 2015: 66, 103).

When entering a virtual world, players are transported into a multi-faceted experience that defies traditional perceptions of reality. As they explore video game environments, players navigate physical spaces and digital landscapes ingeniously crafted by game developers (Bogost, 2012: 58). This coexistence of worlds, the player's presence in both the natural world and the game world, results in a unique phenomenological terrain.

Being-in-the-world encompasses a player's interaction with their physical environment and sensory perceptions. However, when it comes to "being-in-the-game," a new layer of existence is introduced, the game's virtual world. Players assume roles, solve puzzles, conquer challenges, and establish relationships with virtual characters. This dual existence can create a sense of ambiguity between reality and fiction, prompting an exploration of how players navigate these layers of experience. It's important to note that "being in the game" is still part of "being-in-the-world," as both are experienced simultaneously and through the same lens of *Dasein*. As a result, gaming serves as a focal point for *Dasein*'s experience, as both realities constantly interact (Bakels, 2021: 31). Phenomenology allows us to delve into the process of navigating this multi-layered experience.

The experience of being fully immersed in a game is a vital aspect of the gaming world. Players don't simply observe the game environment; they become a part of it. This concept of immersion is fundamental within Heidegger's philosophy, as it challenges the idea of a separation between the mind and the external world. This separation, implicit in the cartesian dualism, leads to an incomplete understanding of human existence. However, in the

world of gaming, this dualism is dissolved. Cartesian dualism implies that the mind remains distinct from the body and the world, leading to a fragmented understanding of human existence.

However, in gaming, this dualism is shattered. For Boulter (2015), player engagement with the game blurs the boundaries between mind and body (2015: 12) and the distinction between the real and the virtual. This challenges the traditional cartesian view of the self as a singular, unified entity and presents a more distributed and fragmented model of subjectivity (Boulter, 2015: 58).

3.3.1 Game Immersion and Falling

One crucial aspect that challenges Cartesian dualism is the state of immersion. Gaming refers to the sensation of being wholly engrossed and absorbed in a game to the extent that the player feels a profound sense of presence.

Immersion in the context of gaming is complex. For Boulter (2015: 2), the player's sense of self is extended into the game environment and the avatar, and this extension of self leads to a state where the player is both lost to their genuine self (in the world) and is found within the game environment (Boulter, 2015: 22). While Boulter believes that the physical world is not a part of immersion, the body still plays an active role in a game. For him, the gaming experience can be immersive, challenging traditional notions of self-awareness and subjectivity, blurring the boundaries between the real and the virtual. It emphasises the philosophical and existential implications of this immersive experience, offering a unique perspective on the nature of consciousness and identity within the gaming environment (Boulter, 2015: 56-58).

To be immersed in the game, the body is still an active part of the immersion since motor control, the hands and eyes are all required. Boulter describes players as embodied beings when they engage with digital games. He believes the player's physical presence, sensory perceptions, and bodily movements are integral to their game experience (Boulter, 2015: 58-61). Ultimately, the body's role is highlighted in controlling the avatar's movements, experiencing sensory feedback, and engaging with the game's spatial and temporal dimensions (Boulter, 2015: 63). For him, the body is not detached in the immersion, it is a part of the experience.

Heidegger describes *Dasein's* state of immersion in the world as characterised by *Dasein's* familiarity with the world and its active engagement with entities within the world (Heidegger, 1962: 107, 155). This immersion is essential to *Dasein's* existence, as it constitutes the basis for *Dasein's* active involvement in the world and its ongoing process of interpretation and significance assignment.

Heidegger emphasises that *Dasein's* immersion in the world can lead to a specific kind of being that he refers to as "falling"²⁷ (Heidegger, 1962: 222). When *Dasein* is in a state of "fallenness", it involves a motion that constantly tears understanding away from projecting authentic possibilities. (Heidegger, 1962: 223). In this state, *Dasein* is engaged in a downward plunge into the groundlessness and nullity of inauthentic everydayness, which remains hidden

²⁷ Heidegger uses the terms "falling" and "fallenness" to describe the state of being in which individuals find themselves when they are not fully attuned to the authentic nature of existence. The idea of "fallenness" signifies a state of disconnection from the deeper meanings and truths that underlie existence (Heidegger, 1972: 43; 110).

from *Dasein* by how things have been publicly interpreted (Heidegger, 1962: 223). This downward plunge into and within the groundlessness of the inauthentic Being of the "they" has a kind of motion that constantly tears the understanding away from the projecting of authentic possibilities and into the tranquillised supposition that it possesses everything or that everything is within its reach (Heidegger, 1962: 223).

Heidegger's concept of "fallenness" highlights the tendency of individuals to be absorbed in a conformist and inauthentic mode of existence, where genuine possibilities are neglected in favour of accepting societal norms and interpretations. As a result, immersion can distract an individual from authenticity. However, Heidegger suggests that "falling" can have a positive aspect, as certain moments of "fallenness" can fully engage and immerse *Dasein* in activities or experiences that offer a more profound sense of presence (Heidegger, 1962: 224).

He emphasises that the condition of "falling" is not something separate or detached from everyday existence but is intrinsic to the very nature of *Dasein*. "In falling, nothing other than our potentiality-for-Being-in world is the issue, even in the mode of inauthenticity. *Dasein* can fall only *because* Being-in-the-world understandingly with a state of mind is an issue for it." (Heidegger, 1962: 244). Heidegger argues that *Dasein's* fall can only be truly understood when considered in relation to its Being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world is the fundamental characteristic of *Dasein*, signifying its inherent connection to the surrounding world and its embeddedness in everyday life. "Falling" is not an external event or a deviation from authentic existence; instead, it is a

modification or a particular way everydayness is experienced or seized upon existentially.

Heidegger (1962: 244) rejects the idea that existence is something authentic that floats above the “falling everydayness”²⁸. Instead, he suggests that existential authenticity involves recognising falling as an essential ontological structure of *Dasein* itself. In this context, “falling” is not a deviation from a norm or a corruption of human nature but a fundamental aspect of *Dasein*.

According to Heidegger, his proposed interpretation of being-in-the-world does not allude to empirical or factual claims about the corruption. However, he emphasises the significance of referring to the existential structures outlined in his philosophy when asserting *Dasein* as being-in-the-world. To attain genuine understanding, any worldview that makes claims about *Dasein* must acknowledge and comprehend these existential structures. Recognising and comprehending the state of “falling” can urge individuals to question and carefully scrutinise the norms and conventions they have unquestioningly accepted (Heidegger, 1968: 224). This can ultimately lead to authenticity for *Dasein*.

3.3.2 Gaming and Dwelling

To fully immerse oneself in a game, immersion requires the world presented in a game and a player’s body to be actively engaged in the game environment.

²⁸ The concept of “falling everydayness” refers to the state of being in which *Dasein* is immersed in the everydayness of the world (Heidegger, 1962: 298). This “falling everydayness” is associated with *Dasein*’s active involvement in the world and its ongoing process of interpretation and significance assignment (Heidegger, 1962: 276).

According to Heidegger, our interconnectedness with the environment and interactions fundamentally shapes our existence.

As Heidegger presents it, dwelling²⁹ is not just a superficial act of occupying space but rather a mode of being that encompasses familiarity, care, and a sense of responsibility (Heidegger, 1962: 98). Dwelling refers to the way *Dasein* is situated in the world and how it is concerned with its environment. It is not merely about residing in a physical space but encompasses the equipment for residing and the arrangement of the environment (Heidegger, 1962: 98). As a result, dwelling characterises our very being-in-the-world and is not something that can be chosen or avoided. To exist is to dwell (Malpas, 2005: 109).

Heidegger stresses the significance of everyday life in understanding dwelling. He asserts that essential structures persist and shape our being in our average, everyday existence (Heidegger, 1962: 49). These "basic concepts" include the arrangement of the environment, which in turn offer insights into the nature of dwelling and help us understand how our existence is fundamentally formed (Heidegger, 1962: 29, 30). This means that dwelling is not a separate or isolated aspect of our being but an integral part of our daily experience.

Heidegger believed that dwelling involves a profound connection and attunement³⁰ to our environment. For Heidegger, dwelling and attunement are

²⁹ Dwelling is not about categorising being but rather about understanding the fundamental nature of *Dasein*'s existence and its relationship to its environment. Dwelling forms part of *Dasein*'s existence and its way of being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 70).

³⁰ In the context "Being and Time," the terms "attunement" and "mood" are used interchangeably to refer to the existential state of mind that characterises *Dasein*'s way of being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 172). The terms describe the affective disposition or mood that influences *Dasein*'s experience and its way of dwelling in the world.

interconnected aspects of *Dasein*'s existence. Attunement refers to *Dasein*'s state of mind or mood, influencing its way of being-in-the-world. The relationship between dwelling and attunement lies in the fact that *Dasein*'s attunement, or mood, affects its way of dwelling in the world. For example, when *Dasein* is anxious, it experiences a sense of uncanniness and feels "not-at-home" in the world, which influences its dwelling (Heidegger, 1962: 233; 234). Therefore, attunement plays a significant role in shaping *Dasein*'s experience of dwelling in the world.

In digital gaming, Bogost (2012: 3) "dwelling" can be understood as being present and attentive to the world of objects and things around us. It involves acknowledging and appreciating the existence and interconnectedness of various human and non-human entities. Dwelling as an active process involves engaging with the world around us. Through this interaction, we gain insight into our existence, which is also possible within games. By considering the notion of "being-in-the-game," we can view gaming as a form of dwelling that immerses us in experience, thanks to the immersion it generates.

3.3.3 Attunement

Heidegger's concept of dwelling as a way of being-in-the-world involves attunement. *Dasein* needs attunement because it is a fundamental aspect of its existence and way of being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 32) Attunement, or mood, is not just a passing psychological state but reveals essential ontological structures of *Dasein* where it plays a significant role in *Dasein*'s existence (Heidegger, 1962: 32).

Heidegger emphasises that mood, or attunement, is a primordial being for *Dasein*, which discloses *Dasein* to itself before all cognition and volition (Heidegger, 1962: 175). Mood reveals the burdensome character of *Dasein*'s existence and can bring forth a sense of uncanniness, ultimately providing insight into *Dasein*'s authentic potentiality-for-being³¹ (Heidegger, 1962: 277; 316).

Similarly, Boulter (2015: 57) feels that mood is tied to emotional engagement within games. Mood encompasses how games elicit emotional responses, create connections with virtual environments, and influence players' feelings and attitudes. Understanding mood is crucial because it sheds light on the emotional and psychological impact of gaming, including how games can affect players' well-being, sense of enjoyment, and overall experience within virtual environments.

Attunement is essential for understanding *Dasein*'s authentic potentiality-for-being since it reveals *Dasein*'s thrownness and its existential condition (Heidegger. 318; 390). As a result, attunement is an essential aspect of why immersion and dwelling offer the potential for games to reveal the world to a person. And allow them to signify their potentiality-for-being.

3.3.4 The releasement offered through gaming

Heidegger's concept of releasement (section 2.6.2) is another way in which engagement in gaming is unique. When individuals engage with video games,

³¹ Potentiality-for-Being is intimately connected to *Dasein*'s understanding and attunement, influencing how *Dasein* engages with the world and its existence. In essence, potentiality-for-Being is a fundamental aspect of *Dasein*'s existence, encompassing its possibilities, choices, and ways of being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 384).

shifting the focus from a mere consumption of content to a more mindful and open encounter with the virtual world, releasement encourages a state where one is not solely driven by the desire to achieve or conquer but is instead open to experiencing the game in its entirety, including its aesthetic, narrative, and interactive dimensions (Ruffino, 2015: 30). This approach contrasts with the prevailing attitude in video game culture that often emphasises achievement and mastery.

By adopting Heidegger's perspective, players can find themselves more deeply immersed in the virtual environment, appreciating the intricacies and artistry of the game beyond the surface level of gameplay mechanics. This shift towards releasement could potentially lead to a more enriched and meaningful interaction with video games, where the focus is on “being-within-the-game” in a manner that is free from the constraints of traditional gaming goals and objectives (Ruffino, 2015: 29). As a result of this releasement, there is a sense that technology revealed itself, and within the context of enframing, the player now have a choice on how to view the game as part of their being-in-the-world.

In the evolving player-game relationship, releasement could also mean challenging traditional dynamics of control and engagement. This idea reimagines how players interact with game worlds, suggesting a shift from dominating to coexisting, from conquering to experiencing their presence in the game (Ruberg, 2020: 17).

Ruberg's analysis posits that such a transformation could lead to a deeper, more meaningful connection between players and games, where the

emphasis is placed not on achieving predetermined goals but on the journey and the multitude of experiences that games can offer (Ruberg, 2020: 27). This perspective not only enriches the player's experience but also opens up new avenues for game design, where developers can create environments that prioritise exploration, narrative depth, and emotional engagement over traditional metrics of success and failure.

For Boulter (2015: 2), gaming reveals a practical, material demonstration of the philosophical notion of the posthuman, locating the player within a complex network of exchanges mediated by technology. For him, gaming technology works to reveal what play means, in some radical fashion, to forget about the technology that enables play, leading to a state of effacement where the subject disappears when real play takes place (Boulter, 2015: 66). This suggests that gaming reveals the complex relationship between the player and technology, as well as the transformative nature of the gaming experience.

3.4 Games in the World

The potential for gaming to shape our sense of identity and understanding of the world is becoming increasingly evident since it allows technology to reveal itself, except for immersion. However, there is still a divide between the experience of being "in the game" and being present in the physical world.

This is because immersion and attunement in gaming require active participation. By offering a unique perspective on the world through non-human entities, such as game characters and objects, gaming allows for a distinct form of engagement. Bogost (2012: 9, 10) believe that players can gain valuable

insights and perspectives on the nature of existence and their world and community through immersion in virtual worlds.

To fully embrace the world of games and immerse oneself in it, one helpful concept is "ontography"³². As explained in *Alien Phenomenology, or What It's Like to Be a Thing*, this approach aims to reveal the intricate relationships and inter-objectivity among the units within a given context or system, such as a game (Bogost, 2012: 53).

According to Bogost, interconnectedness is the key to understanding how objects relate to each other. Objects are not isolated entities but depend on and affect other objects in their environment (in this case, games). These connections can take many forms, such as physical, spatial, causal, or conceptual. For instance, in a computer system, the interconnectedness of components is evident in how the CPU, memory, storage, and input/output devices collaborate to carry out tasks and exchange data (Bogost, 2012: 9).

Inter-objectivity highlights the notion that objects possess their own identity and capacity for action while also being interconnected and impacted by other objects. It acknowledges that an object's characteristics are not limited to its traits but are also shaped by its interactions with other objects.

This idea challenges the belief that an object can be fully comprehended in isolation from its surroundings (much like being relies on its being-in-the-

³² The term "ontography" is not a widely used or well-known concept, but it has been employed in different fields and contexts. For example, Richard F. Kitchener, in his book "The World View of Contemporary Physics," defines ontology as the theory of the nature of existence and ontography as its description. Similarly, Michael Lynch, a scholar in science and technology studies, suggests that ontography is a descriptive alternative to grand-theoretical approaches (Bogost, 1999: 35-38).

world). For instance, a shipping container is not solely a physical entity. Still, it is also influenced by its association with the cargo it carries, the vessel it is transported on, and the logistical mechanisms that govern its movements (Bogost, 2012: 22). A game or device on which a game is being played is then as much part of any immersion the game provides since it is, in essence, a part of the whole experience.

The physicality of computers or gaming devices allows us to include them in *Dasein's* engagement with the world. Recognising the interconnection and interdependence of units within a given system provides a more thorough and nuanced understanding of the world. This insight allows us to observe how objects are intertwined in complex webs of relationships and how these relationships shape their behaviour, properties, and significance (Bogost, 2012: 22).

For Bogost "ontography" catalogues. It records the presence of various units and their interactions without clarifying or describing them. He notes how games, such as puzzle toys and video games, offer opportunities for players to manipulate and interact with objects, revealing their behaviours and relationships (Bogost, 2012: 54). Games are intricate systems that involve multiple elements, including players, rules, mechanics, and objects. These elements work together to create the gameplay experience, as Bogost (2012: 33) notes. However, this idea of interconnectedness extends beyond the game itself to the larger gaming ecosystem. Games do not exist in isolation but within a network of players, communities, and platforms. Players can interact through

multiplayer modes, online forums, and social media, forming connections and shaping each other's experiences.

Furthermore, gaming platforms and technologies play a crucial role in shaping the interconnectedness of games, providing infrastructure for online play, content sharing, and community building (Bogost, 2012: 9). Ultimately, this interconnectedness underscores the dynamic and interactive nature of the gaming experience, fostering a sense of engagement within these virtual environments.

3.4.1 Thrown into the game

Heidegger's idea of thrownness is also essential when it comes to the gaming experience. In the gaming context, thrownness refers to the feeling of being thrust into a digital game world without prior knowledge or control of the game, similar to the existential concept of Heidegger (Caselli, 2019: 12).

This concept is often represented through the *awakening of avatars* in the game, who experience disorientation, confusion, and a lack of memory or identity, akin to being "thrown" into the world without a clear understanding of their surroundings or their own identity. The *awakening of avatars* is the introductory phase where the avatars come into existence within the game world (Caselli, 2019: 2). This awakening often involves the avatars experiencing memory deficiencies, movement restrictions, or non-responsive controls, which can turn into a tutorial as users familiarise themselves with the game, and their being-in-the-game (Caselli, 2019: 2).

For Caselli (2019: 12), the awakening can also coincide with recovering memory or identity, symbolising a transition into the game world and acquiring skills and power. This also serves as a narrative and aesthetic device to strengthen the bond between the avatar and the player, encouraging critical reflection on the existential implications of the avatar's emergence in the game.

This sense of "thrownness" emphasises the avatars' innocence and unpreparedness, as well as the player's shared experience of feeling abandoned in the game world (Caselli, 2019: 13). The absence of memory and goals in the game can serve as a game design device to express the avatars' estrangement and allow players to exert their existential freedom within the game world. In the end, this strengthens players' ultimate immersion.

As the avatars awaken and begin to explore the game world, players are encouraged to identify with the avatars' struggles and to guide them through their journey, fostering a sense of empathy and connection with the game characters and its world (Caselli, 2019: 5). This shared experience and the avatars' awakening can also serve as a narrative and aesthetic device to facilitate the birth of a "self-avatar," encouraging players to reflect on their own identity and memory within the game world – which strengthens the immersion further.

3.5 Conclusion

Phenomenology is a philosophical approach that examines the connections between consciousness, perception, and existence. When applied to gaming, phenomenology offers valuable insights into the nature of gameplay and how it

influences our sense of being-in-the-world. Using phenomenology to analyse gaming, we can uncover the complex layers of player experience and understand how individuals immerse themselves in virtual worlds while navigating the interplay between reality and fiction.

Ian Bogost suggests that computer and digital games require an appreciation for their unique phenomenological reality. This approach, known as digital game phenomenology, focuses on the subjective experiences and perspectives that emerge from playing and interacting with these games. It examines how players engage with game mechanics, narratives, and virtual environments, including the emotions, sensations, and cognitive processes that arise during gameplay.

Jonathan Boulter argues that games shape our understanding by providing a practical realisation that the human is a fluid and dynamic entity, extending the boundaries of the self and altering our conception of ourselves. Games create a complex network of exchanges between the player, the console or computer, the avatar, and the narrative. This technological exchange initiates a practical experience of the "posthuman," where players extend past the limits of the human and redefine their perception of the human subject and consciousness.

Both Bogost and Boulter highlight the importance of the player's bodily and active experience in gaming. The player's control over the avatar's movements and the physical responses involved in gaming distinguish it from other forms of media consumption. This active participation in the game world

allows players to practically realise the "posthuman" and expand their understanding of themselves and their relationship with technology.

In the next chapter, the onus is to look at the mobile game Pokémon GO and establish its appeal as a game that allows immersion and one that could have the potential for technology to reveal itself and allow for technological authenticity.

CHAPTER 4

The Uniqueness of Pokémon GO

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Three explored the experiences that digital games provide, whether played on a computer, console, or mobile phone. These games allow players to fully immerse themselves in a new world, creating a sense of "being-in-the game". We delved into the importance of cognitive imagination and the extension of oneself into the game's digital world.

This chapter aims to investigate whether Pokémon GO provides a thoroughly engaging experience for the player's potentiality-for-being, or if the game is simply another example of technological enframing, despite its ability to offer a complete sense of being-in-the-world.

4.2 The Paramount Reality of Augmented Reality

To delve into the unique nature of Pokémon GO, it's important to touch upon one of its defining features - its status as an Augmented Reality (AR) game. AR technology can enhance our senses by superimposing virtual objects onto our visual field.

While computer scientist Ivan Sutherland first introduced the concept of augmented reality in the late 1960s, it didn't gain widespread recognition until Boeing engineer Tim Caudell coined the term "augmented reality" (AR) in the early 1990s (Turner, 2021: 1). What sets AR apart is its ability to seamlessly blend virtual and real-world elements in real-time, creating an interactive and immersive experience for users (Turner, 2021: 4).

One of the unique features of AR games is their ability to integrate digital elements seamlessly into the real world, essentially turning the player's surroundings into part of the game (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 218). Unlike traditional video games, AR games are not restricted by spatial limitations and can be played anywhere, thereby blurring the line between reality and the game world (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 221, 224).

AR's differentiator relies on its potential to change the relevance of places in the "paramount reality"³³ and indirectly shape our world (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 228). In addition to gaming, AR applications designed for tourism, museums, education, and other purposes can also benefit from these unique characteristics, as they allow digital objects to be perceived like those in AR games (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 227).

The essential significance of everyday life or "paramount reality" lies in its role as the cornerstone of human reality across all spheres. Alfred Schütz (1963: 353) asserts that the daily grind constitutes the very essence of our lived reality, serving as the prototype for our experiential understanding. Moreover, the fundamental reality of everyday life hinges upon individuals' innate comprehension of their social environment.

³³ The term "paramount reality" pertains to the limited scope of meaning we commonly refer to as our everyday reality. This encompasses tangible objects, verifiable facts, and occurrences that are either currently or potentially within our grasp, as well as lower-level representations of natural objects that have been reshaped into social constructs. This version of reality serves as the model for our perception of the world, and the world of our daily routines is the most essential aspect of this reality. While common sense may take reality for granted, it gains credibility and significance through practical experiences that demonstrate its consistency and coherence (Schütz, 1963: 343; 344; 345).

Schutz's analysis, as outlined by Dorothy Emmett (1972: 81, 82), delves into the layers of reality that individuals navigate, emphasising the intersubjective world as the "paramount reality". This is the world of everyday life, where meanings are shared, and social actions take place, highlighting the significance of the social world in shaping our perceptions and experiences. This position resonates with Heidegger's being-in-the-world because it highlights the inherent interconnectedness of individuals with their environment, suggesting that our understanding of reality is always contextual and embedded within a world already laden with meanings (Emmett, 1972: 82). Both philosophers converge on the idea that reality is not a singular, objective entity but is instead profoundly subjective and intertwined with human existence.

The concept of "paramount reality" in the context of AR is particularly noteworthy. It implies that the digital components of AR become an integral part of an individual's daily life, influencing their experiences and interactions regularly. Rather than simply serving as an extension of reality, AR is deeply embedded in the user's day-to-day existence (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 221).

The effectiveness of AR lies in its ability to enhance normal perception by superimposing virtual objects onto a user's visual field in real-time (Turner, 2021: 4). This, in turn, allows us to think of AR as different from simply accessing a computer, or using technology or the internet because when it is in use, it forms part of "paramount reality". Adding AR to games offers more pervasive gameplay (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 225). Additionally, AR games can potentially change the relevance of places in the "paramount reality" and indirectly shape our world by its inclusion in gaming (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 228).

We can explore AR's impact on our being-in-the-world by incorporating AR into the "paramount reality" concept. Schüetz's research (1962: 3) highlights how being-in-the-world shapes our perception and interaction with our surroundings. This insight helps us recognise the integration of digital objects into our environment and their influence on our daily lives.

4.3 Origin of Pokémon

Pokémon was born from Satoshi Tajiri's (1965) fond childhood memories of catching insects in Tokyo's vanishing suburbs, where urbanisation was taking over. Tajiri's original game idea centred around collecting and trading creatures (Vered *et al.*, 2023: 10) paying homage to his childhood pastime. When creating Pokémon he aimed to create a game that puts collecting at the forefront rather than competition. He envisioned creatures (Pokémon) that could be traded among players, designed for play on the Nintendo Game Boy³⁴ (Vered *et al.*, 2023: 11). Tajiri, a game designer and trade magazine editor, eventually realised the game, realising his historical affection for collecting. In 1996, Japan saw the release of the first Pokémon games, *Pokémon Red* and *Pokémon Blue*³⁵, which popularised the idea of capturing, training, and battling Pokémon worldwide (Vered *et al.*, 2023: 2023: 6).

The Game Boy's unique feature of linking via cable enabled players to connect and exchange Pokémon with other players, which was an essential

³⁴ The Nintendo Game Boy was a handheld video game system released in 1989. It was designed to be inexpensive, lightweight, and efficient. It became an immediate success and was supported by popular games (Kent, 2021: 415, 416).

³⁵ Satoshi Tajiri's strategic decision to release two distinct yet comparable games aimed to foster social interaction and trading between players. Each game version features exclusive Pokémon, prompting players to engage in trading to capture all the Pokémon available in the game (Kent, 2021: 566).

aspect of Tajiri's original concept of emphasising socialisation and connectivity through gaming. The portability and multiplayer capabilities of the Game Boy made it the perfect platform to realise this vision, allowing players to enjoy their Pokémon adventures while interacting with friends (Vered *et al.*, 2023: 14).

The Pokémon franchise has established itself as a global phenomenon partly due to the series of games which began with *Pokémon Red* and *Pokémon Blue*. Since then, the series has continued to captivate players with its unique concept of collecting Pokémon in a fictional world tied to real world locations.

Each iteration of the game is based on a geographical region aligning it with existing geographical spaces, rather than purely fictional game settings, and the game has taken inspiration from Japan, Great Britain, France, Portugal and Hawaii. The Pokémon franchise keeps the attention and imagination of players due to this unique combination of real-world inspiration and fictional elements. Each series of Pokémon games, set in these unique regions helped inspire the game map's designs, the Pokémon found in each game, and the cultures introduced to players within the game (McGowan & Alcott, 2022: 3).

4.4 The Introduction of Pokémon GO

Building on the idea of Pokémon in the real world and the game history of introducing geographical locations to the fictional narratives in the game, the Pokémon franchise evolved beyond its traditional console-based role-playing games with Pokémon GO in 2016. This mobile AR game brought the franchise

to a new generation of players and expanded its global reach, as noted in *The Ultimate Pokémon Guide* (2023: 16).

Pokémon GO offers a unique and immersive experience that aims to provide players with a sense of community by combining nostalgia, innovative gameplay, and the ability to connect with others, realising a core element of what made the game so successful: players' ability to play together. Niantic, a San Francisco-based company renowned for its AR game Ingress³⁶, developed Pokémon GO. The game merges the Pokémon franchise with AR technology, building on the success of its predecessor Ingress (Vered *et al.*, 2023: 41).

According to *The Ultimate Pokémon Guide* (2023: 42), the game was officially launched in July 2016, quickly garnered widespread attention and popularity, becoming a global phenomenon. One of the critical factors that contributed to its success was its innovative use of AR, utilising the player's smartphone camera and GPS to overlay virtual Pokémon onto real-world locations. This created a unique and immersive experience for players, as they could see and interact with Pokémon as if they were in their surroundings.

Pokémon GO is also hinged on its unique attribute that is familiar to players who have played or joined previous iterations of location-based games or applications. In 2009, a similar social media application, Foursquare, was launched, which popularised location-based connectivity. Foursquare was

³⁶ Ingress is an AR game developed by Niantic and Google in December 2013. It involves two opposite factions trying to defeat each other by activating international portals, which are in famous places of cultural significance and geolocalised with GPS coordinates. Players physically go to these locations to interact with digital objects, visualised as placeholders on a map of the real world, and accessible only through mobile devices (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 215).

founded in 2009 by Dennis Crowley and Naveen Selvadurai (Fuchs *et al.*, 2014: 74). The application's location-based functionality allowed users to "check-in" to various venues using their smartphones, such as restaurants, bars, stores, and parks. Users were rewarded with points and could achieve "mayorships" and badges based on their tally of check-ins at various locations (Fuchs *et al.*, 2014: 74). The application fostered a unique sense of competition over leisure and encouraged users to engage in expenditure and competition based on movement around their environment. Foursquare was also noted as a tool to connect people throughout cities via its location-based technologies (Fuchs *et al.*, 2014: 75).

Pokémon GO managed to gamify this concept of using locations as community gathering points in the same way as Foursquare by allowing players to finally catch Pokémon as they would have in the games preceding it. In addition, the game's accessibility and simplicity played a role in its popularity. Pokémon GO is free to download and play, making it easily accessible to a broad audience, and the gameplay mechanics are straightforward, involving capturing Pokémon, collecting items, and battling Pokémon (Vered *et al.*, 2023: 42).

The social component of Pokémon GO also played a role in its appeal. Due to its location-based technology, the game incentivised players to discover their surroundings and engage with one another. Through team participation and exclusive events, players fostered a genuine sense of community and companionship through the game, and this promoted in-person get-togethers and meetups among players (Vered *et al.*, 2023: 43).

4.4.1 Basic gameplay of Pokémon GO

To play Pokémon GO, a player must explore their surrounding environment to find and catch Pokémon (Copperman, 2016: 13). When a Pokémon is nearby, the player's smartphone vibrates or chimes, indicating its presence. Players aim and throw a Poké Ball³⁷ to catch the Pokémon (Copperman, 2016: 33-35).

Pokémon are generated by a server and located physically in the players' surroundings by anchoring them to GPS locations. Players use the game's map as a navigator to physically move in the everyday world and capture the creatures (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 216).

The GPS locations include Gyms in Pokémon GO. Gyms are real-world locations where players can battle and train their Pokémon. Once players reach level 5, they can choose a team and use Gyms to earn points for their team by defending their respective Gyms. To protect these Gyms, players need strong Pokémon and awareness of where their Pokémon is defending territory for their team (Copperman, 2016: 91). Players can also challenge Gyms owned by rival teams to attempt to take them over for their team. Gyms are usually located in active places such as sporting arenas, public parks, and monuments (Copperman, 2016: 94).

Visiting a friendly Gym allows players to increase their team's points and make it harder for the opposing teams to take control. Visiting a rival Gym will enable players to battle the opposing team's Pokémon and bring their team

³⁷ A Poké Ball is an essential item in the Pokémon GO used to catch and store Pokémon. When a Pokémon appears, players can aim and throw a Poké Ball at it to capture it. The goal is to land the Poké Ball on the Pokémon to catch it. Different Poké Balls, such as Great Balls and Ultra Balls, become available as players level up, and they have increased effectiveness in catching rarer and more powerful Pokémon (Copperman, 2016: 35).

closer to conquering the Gym. Players can then claim a Gym for their team by leaving a Pokémon to defend it. Successfully defending a Gym for a whole day earns players a bonus, which provides PokéCoins³⁸, the in-game currency, and other rewards (Copperman, 2016: 109). The game is designed to be constantly accessible and has no limitation in time and space, allowing players to engage with it anywhere and at any time (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 214).

According to Copperman (2016: 27), the game is enhanced by PokéStops, which are real-world locations where players can gather items such as Poké Balls (to catch Pokémon), Potions (to heal Pokémon hurt in Gym battles), and Eggs (to hatch new Pokémon through walking or running). When a player walks close enough to a PokéStop, it changes shape, and they can interact with it by spinning the photo disc on the in-game map to receive items. Once the available items are claimed, the PokéStop will turn purple for five minutes before players can revisit them for more items (Copperman, 2016: 27).

These locations are often found at places like museums, art installations, historical markers, and monuments (Copperman, 2016: 67). For catching and spinning PokéStops, players must actively engage with their environment by walking or traversing public spaces (Copperman, 2016: 67). As a result, Pokémon GO allows immersion by enabling players to move between different realities. Players can immerse themselves in the game world by using the

³⁸ Players can use PokéCoins to purchase various items in the in-game shop, such as Poké Balls and Potions. Additionally, players can use PokéCoins to buy storage upgrades for their Pokémon and other in-game enhancements. PokéCoins can be obtained by purchasing them with real money or earning them through strategic gameplay (Copperman, 1996: 119).

smartphone application to capture Pokémon and re-emerge in the “paramount reality” (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 225).

The game's digital objects share the exact spatial locations as the real world, and players can freely move between these realities, influencing their actions in the real world based on the game's "finite province of meaning"³⁹ (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 225). This movement between realities allows the game's values to be valid within the game's context, but they can still influence the actions performed in the real world where the game is engaged (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 225).

4.4.2 The Pokémon GO Community

Pokémon GO allow groups of players to engage in the game, often through in-person socialisation and cooperative play (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 3). The Pokémon GO community is known for forming groups to participate in game events, such as raids⁴⁰, which are cooperative social events where players battle powerful Pokémon to capture them (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 3).

These player communities often gather in local hotspots, such as city centres or parks, to play the game together and participate in events during which Pokémon spawn more frequently. Rare Pokémon would be easier to acquire (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 11, 12). The game encourages socialisation

³⁹ The "finite province of meaning" refers to a concept in phenomenology that describes worlds or realities that are valid only within their limits, such as in the case of films, literature, arts, and games. These worlds are not inferior or less important for the subjects, but they are built upon the paramount reality. In the context of AR games, the “finite province of meaning” is the digital world created by the game, where players interact with digital objects and characters, and these interactions are confined to the game's context (Liberati *et al.*, 2017: 219; 220).

⁴⁰ A raid in Pokémon GO typically requires players to form groups to capture a particular Pokémon located at a Gym, as they are often too challenging to be accomplished by a single player (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 7).

through these in-game events, such as Community Days⁴¹. Players frequently organise events in their local communities independent of the game developers to take part in events (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 4). The community is also known to form online social groups, and the game has been observed to bring people together in temporal and spatial dimensions (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 4).

In Pokémon GO, locations hold significant meaning for players as they serve as virtual landmarks and waypoints that players visit to play the game. These locations became part of the mental topography of the players, influencing how they experienced and navigated their physical surroundings (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 15). Topography refers to the detailed mapping or description of the surface features of a place or region, including its natural and artificial features such as mountains, rivers, roads, and buildings (Malpas, 2010: 66). In Pokémon GO, players develop a mental topography of their environment by associating physical locations with in-game landmarks. This mental mapping allows players to navigate and restructure their understanding of their surroundings based on the in-game locations, influencing their perceptions and interactions with the physical spaces around them (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 15).

In a work titled, *Pokémon GO to Pokémon STAY: How Covid-19 Affected Pokémon GO Players*, Dunham et al. (2022:15) observe that people enjoy playing together in Pokémon GO for social interactions and cooperative play. These are significant motivators for players, fostering community and shared

⁴¹ Community days in Pokémon GO are monthly in-game events that feature a specific Pokémon and provide gameplay bonuses and increased spawn rates of the featured Pokémon of the day (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 4).

experiences. The game provides opportunities for players to form ad-hoc groups, engage in collaborative activities, and share a common goal, contributing to a sense of togetherness and camaraderie (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 15).

Pokémon GO is noted for its co-creation aspects as a community-based game. This involves the positive value outcomes⁴² experienced by users, which includes improved physical and mental well-being, enjoyment, and exploration of the environment, thereby promoting a healthy and active lifestyle for individuals (Elo *et al.*, 2022: 9) and extending by fostering a sense of belonging (Elo *et al.*, 2022: 18).

These positive aspects are, however, counteracted by Pokémon GO's co-destructive aspects. These aspects align with the concept of adverse value outcomes, such as hindering perceived fun or enjoyment, inactivity, lack of gaming community, exclusion based on geographic location, inability to achieve personal goals, and challenges in maintaining health and well-being goals that are expected from the game (Elo *et al.*, 2022: 29). These experiences can have a detrimental impact on the mental, emotional, or physical well-being of players.

The positive and negative aspects of the game align with personal value attachment, and if the game has a negative effect, players have the choice to stop playing altogether or wait for the game to incorporate aspects that realign the game with their autonomy (Elo *et al.*, 2022: 20).

⁴² Positive value outcomes in the context of Pokémon GO include experiences that align with users' values and contribute to their well-being. These outcomes may involve improved physical and mental health, enjoyment, a sense of belonging, pleasure, and ambition (Elo, *et al.*, 2022: 8, 15).

4.5 The flow of AR games

When Pokémon GO stays aligned with positive value outcomes for players, people continue playing the game due to its community factors, the flow experience and nostalgia that is a part of the game (Ghazali *et al.*, 2019, 2).

The flow experience is characterised as total absorption in an activity, where individuals have clear goals, exercise control, lose self-consciousness, and experience time distortion (Ghazali *et al.*, 2019, 6). Flow is vital in the game because it contributes to the beneficial effects that players experience, such as improved mental, social, and physical well-being. It enhances the overall gaming experience and potentially leads to positive outcomes for the players and complete immersion in the activity (Loveday & Burgess, 2017: 8).

This allows Pokémon GO to have an additional layer within the phenomenological model of immersion. According to Roberto Di Letizia's paper, *What is it like to be an Avatar? The Phenomenology of Immersion in Computer Games* (2014: 3) in computer games, the phenomenological model of immersion is a three-phase process. In the engagement phase, players learn the game mechanics and assimilate sensorimotor skills into their body schema, making the game experientially transparent. This phase involves discovering the affordances and obstacles in the virtual environment and using the digital body as a prosthetic extension to achieve intentional projects in the game world (Di Letizia, 2014: 6). This phase of immersion is strengthened when playing Pokémon GO due to the physical body's role in the game, as the immersive part of the Pokémon GO (Aluri, 2017: 10).

The second phase of immersion, the engrossment phase, requires the player's avatar to become a prosthetic extension of their body, and the player's emotions are directly affected by the game. The player feels the avatar obeys their will, and the digital body's designed structure predetermines affordances and obstacles of goal-directed in-game actions, making the game world appear habitable and full of familiar things or activities (Di Letizia, 2014: 10).

With Pokémon GO, it is the player's mobile phone or device that becomes the extension, as it tracks the GPS signal that will cause the player's onscreen persona to follow maps, turn toward significant aspects of the game and show whether players are approaching Gyms and Pokéstops, It is this interaction with the augmented world within the real-world experience contributes to players feeling a part of the world in the game (Aluri, 2017: 2)

The third phase, total immersion or presence, involves the player feeling embodied in the game world. This occurs when the player can interact with the 3D game space, represent the game environment as an egocentric space originating from their own body, and use the avatar as a navigable point of view provided by a camera device. The player is fully engaged with the in-game actions and does not think of the game space as external to themselves but instead localises objects and positions within the game space egocentrically (Di Letizia, 2014: 10). This signals how deeply game immersion in Pokémon GO runs, as players are immersed in dual-realities while playing the game. As a result, it represents an optimal experience where individuals are fully immersed in playing Pokémon GO, such as playing a game, with total concentration (Loveday & Burgess, 2017: 6).

4.6 Conclusion

In this Chapter, we looked at AR technology and how it can enhance our senses by superimposing virtual objects onto our visual field, creating an interactive and immersive experience for users. AR games can integrate digital elements seamlessly into the real world, turning the player's surroundings into part of the game.

AR's differentiator relies on its potential to change the relevance of places in the "paramount reality" and indirectly shape our world. AR is deeply embedded in the user's day-to-day existence and can potentially change the relevance of places in the "paramount reality". The integration of digital objects into our environment influences our daily lives.

We also established the beginning of Pokémon as a game and how it evolved into Pokémon GO. Importantly, we established that Pokémon GO is unique because it encourages players to explore their physical surroundings, interact with landmarks, and engage in cooperative social events such as raids, where players must form groups to complete challenges.

Additionally, the game's mechanics, such as capturing and defending Gyms, create a sense of territoriality and playful antagonism, allowing players to assert dominance over specific locations. The game's emphasis on exploring the environment sets it apart from traditional games, requiring players to physically move and interact with their surroundings.

In Chapter 5, Pokémon GO will play a role in synthesising being-in-the-world to ask if this game, which allows players to be with others and engages them in the world, offers semblances of authentic being towards death.

CHAPTER 5

Pokémon GO and Being

5.1 Introduction

In the previous Chapter, we established how Pokémon GO offers engagement in the world and how that, in turn, can be seen as being-in-the-world. The following Chapter aims to introduce the connection between Heidegger's philosophy and Pokémon GO. The aim is to show the resonance of Pokémon GO as an engaged experience in the world, which speaks to its relationship to immersion, authenticity, and Heidegger's being-with-others.

This chapter will also demonstrate how Pokémon GO embodies the essence of technology and serves as a reliable tool for player engagement. First, we must show how to establish a relationship between the game and Heidegger.

5.2 Being-in-the-world and Pokémon GO

Heidegger's legacy lies in his transformation of phenomenology and his emphasis on the lived experience of *Dasein*. In Chapter Two, we established that Husserl was one of Heidegger's earliest mentors in phenomenology, but their approach was different. Heidegger moved away from Husserl's focus on consciousness as a theoretical construction and instead emphasised the need for a hermeneutic phenomenology of the facticity of lived experience, which became the basis for the phenomenology of *Dasein* in *Being and Time* (McNeil, 2020: 1). Husserl's central phenomenology focused on consciousness and its

intentionality, aiming to be true to "the things themselves" and emphasising the theoretical and acts of reflection (McNeil, 2020: 2).

Heidegger stressed the historical and cultural embeddedness of human existence, rejecting philosophical conceptions that treat the essence of human beings as something independent of historical place and time. Heidegger understood that human existence is rooted in a unique but transient place with all the filiations of language, cultural practices, and traditions. This emphasis on the historical and cultural embeddedness of human existence highlights the interconnectedness of human life with the specific historical context in which it unfolds (Raffoul & Nelson, 2013: 4).

Dasein, place and time are significant as they shape the embeddedness of human existence. The place is not merely a physical location it is understood in terms of *Dasein's* existential spatiality, representing the "yonder"⁴³ of the world that is ready-to-hand⁴⁴ and the place of *Dasein* as a concern (Heidegger, 1962: 156). Existential spatiality, as discussed in *Being and Time*, captures the essence of how *Dasein's* existence is intertwined with its understanding and experience of space and place, emphasising the significance of these dimensions concerning one's being and existence (Heidegger, 1962: 138, 347).

Jeff Malpas, in *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place: Explorations in the Topology of Being* (2012: 6), believes that physical places have value for

⁴³ "Yonder" is a spatial and existential orientation connected to *Dasein's* Being-in-the-world and disclosedness. It is part of the spatiality that determines *Dasein's* "location" and is grounded in Being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 171).

⁴⁴ See next section.

Heidegger as they are not just locations but are also significant in terms of the way they influence thinking. Heidegger asserted the situated, 'placed,' character of thought (Malpas, 2012: 247). It underscores the interconnectedness between human beings and their surroundings, highlighting the significance of the environment in shaping human cognition and understanding.

This place signifies how *Dasein* is situated and engaged with the world, highlighting the importance of involvement with entities within the world (Heidegger, 1962: 419). For Heidegger, place is the proper focus of thinking, the proper horizon, and the proper grounding, indicating his value on physical places for *Dasein*'s realisation of potentiality-for-being (Malpas, 2012: 11).

The interconnectedness between human beings and their environment suggests that physical places play a role in shaping experience, and places have existential and ontological value, influencing human existence and how we engage with the world. Our active involvement with physical places is not separate from our identity and existence but is constitutive of it. Therefore, Heidegger's philosophy points to the significance of engagement in physical locations as a fundamental aspect of human existence and understanding of the world (Malpas, 2012: 230).

This active involvement creates a link between Heidegger's thinking of place and Pokémon GO. The value of place in Pokémon GO is significant, as the game increases visitation to local attractions worldwide, motivating players to spend more time in their immediate place (Williams and Slak-Valek, 2019: 1).

The game's location-aware AR feature requires players to engage with the physical world to obtain Pokémon and interact with other players, making it a form of leisure that enhances a person's exposure to a place and improves feelings and knowledge about that place (Williams and Slak-Valek, 2019: 3, 15).

Pokémon GO is designed to correspond with real-world locations, creating a one-to-one spatial and temporal relationship between the game and reality (Larsen *et al.*, 2019: 43). The game's spatial dimension is central to this activity, as it generates a hybrid space where game elements appear and disappear based on the player's physical location (Cacchione *et al.*, 2019: 206).

Place and space are significant for understanding being and being-in-the-world as they are intertwined with *Dasein's* existential spatiality. This orientation plays a role in *Dasein's* engagement with entities within the world (Heidegger, 1962: 421). Pokémon GO influences being-in-the-world by intertwining the digital and physical realms, shaping players' actions, intentions, and activities within the real world (Liberati *et al.*, 2019: 57).

The game encourages players to include their interactions with their surroundings into daily routines that promote interaction with place. Their situatedness aids learning and understanding within the context or situation where the game places them. In the game, they might have to spin a PokéStop or catch a creature in the hybrid reality (Cacchione *et al.*, 2019: 210). It creates a context for players where they place importance on their spatiality, shaping their interactions and perceptions of individuals within the hybrid space (Cacchione *et al.*, 2019: 211). Central to the concept of being-in-the-world is our

mode of being. Our very existence unfolds primarily within our dealings with entities around us. As a result, Pokémon GO forms part of that being-in-the-world for players when we consider that it places us within a specific historical moment in time and place.

The mode of being in Pokémon GO involves engaging with the game's AR, and its spatial dimension requires players to move within the real world to accomplish in-game tasks, such as hatching eggs and collecting items, shaping the experiences and actions of the players within this hybrid space (Cacchione *et al.*, 2019: 206). This active engagement is crucial for *Dasein* to understand its existence and to navigate its relationships with the world and other entities within it (Stenstad *et al.*, 2019: 67). By actively engaging with the world, *Dasein* can uncover the meaning of its Being and develop a deeper understanding of its being-in-the-world.

5.3 Immersive experience of playing Pokémon GO

In Chapter Three, we established that *Dasein's* awareness of its being-in-the-world allows a transference where *Dasein* can be actively engaged in place, where place forms part of a digital game. While this immersion is considered an extension of the self in a game, it forms part of a tool that allows *Dasein* to realise its situatedness.

Tools are essential to Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein* since tools help show aspects of being-in-the-world in ways that foster authentic existence. In *Motives for Playing Pokémon GO, and Their Associations with Problematic and Health Behaviors*, Ágnes Zsila and Gábor Orosz (2019: 71, 72) believe that

people play Pokémon GO for a variety of reasons, including social interaction, physical activity, nostalgia, enjoyment, curiosity, and the releasement from boredom. Research indicates that players have incorporated the game into their daily activities, with an average playtime of 1.5 hours per day (Söbke *et al.*, 2019: 137).

The game is often played while walking to other activities, and players have developed strategies to include it in their daily routines (Söbke *et al.*, 2019: 137). This incorporation of the game into players' lives includes it in what Heidegger terms "average everydayness". It refers to the ordinary, habitual way of existing in which *Dasein* maintains itself daily (Heidegger, 1962: 422).

This concept encompasses the everyday state of mind, the comfortableness of the accustomed, and how *Dasein* 'lives unto the day' (Heidegger, 1962: 422). Average everydayness is not to be understood in terms of calendar days, but it signifies a temporal character in the signification of the 'every day'. It is a way of existing that is familiar to *Dasein* and is familiar to it through that state of mind (Heidegger, 1962: 422).

This state-of-mind refers to the existential constitution of *Dasein*. It is a way in which *Dasein* is disclosed to itself before all cognition and volition and beyond its range of disclosure. This state of mind is based upon thrownness, meaning finding oneself in some state of mind between average everydayness and the "ready-to-hand" (Heidegger, 1962: 390).

The ready-to-hand concept in *Being and Time* refers to how tools are present in everyday activities (Agu, 2023: 5). Heidegger describes how tools

become seamlessly integrated into our activities when we use them without conscious thought. The ready-to-hand is always relational to how entities are encountered in their everyday usefulness and practicality (Heidegger, 1962: 114). This would be the pre-theoretical way we perceive the world, emphasising tools and equipment's functional and contextual nature in our activities. But these tools are either valuable or not in their end goal. According to Heidegger, when *Dasein* can realise its possibilities using objects around it, it gears towards authenticity (Heidegger, 1962: 5).

Suppose Pokémon GO can be seen for its Average everydayness, which is consciously or unconsciously incorporated into players' daily lives. In that case, we should also be able to identify the ready-to-hand aspects of the game. Tools reveal themselves in two ways. The first way is ready-to-hand, where tools seamlessly integrate into our activities without conscious thought, becoming part of the background as we use them (Agu, 2023: 5). The second way is present-at-hand, which occurs when tools break or malfunction, causing us to become consciously aware of them as objects (Agu, 2023: 5).

Ready-to-hand tools represent the seamless integration of tools into our activities without conscious thought. This mode of being with tools allow us to engage authentically with the world around us. When tools are ready-to-hand, they become part of the background of our activities, enabling us to focus on our tasks and goals without being distracted by the tools themselves (Agu, 2023: 5). This is significant in understanding how *Dasein* interacts with the world and how authenticity can be realised through everyday activities.

Pokémon GO's AR features are valuable in showing its readiness-to-hand by

creating a sense of immersion that allows players to interact with Pokémon (Ortiz de Gortari *et al.*, 2019: 23) without constant awareness of the tool itself (in this case AR).

The lack of temporal awareness and the spatial correspondence between the game's structure and real-world locations contribute to the immersive experience, as players' movements in the real world are reflected in the game. Additionally, the game's ability to capitalise on existing outdoor activities, such as walking, even when the game is not in use, further enhances the immersive experience for players (Zsila *et al.*, 2019: 90). When Pokémon GO is not actively in use by the player, it still tracks players' steps that allow them to hatch eggs, and that, in turn, rewards players when they do actively engage with the game again in use (Jimenez *et al.*, 2019: 152, 153).

This immersion and its aspects of readiness-to-hand allow Pokémon GO to be seen as an avenue for *Dasein's* being-in-the-world. As we established in Chapter Three, immersion through games enables a realisation of being through engagement in the digital world, allowing self-reflection outside the game world.

As a result, ready-to-hand Pokémon GO facilitates engagement with the world. Heidegger implies that the goal of the ready-to-hand is to enable us to effectively interact with our environment and engage in practical activities without being obstructed by the unavailability of tools or equipment (Dreyfus *et al.*, 2000: 339). This, in turn, allows Pokémon GO to form part of 'everyday coping' where *Dasein* deals with the world and its concerns in its everyday

existence. *Dasein* constantly copes with the ready-to-hand entities it encounters in its environment (Heidegger. 1962: 403).

5.4 Pokémon GO's potentiality-for-being

In the previous section, I have shown that we can consider Pokémon GO as ready-to-hand, since it is tied to our being-in-the-world, and that it, in turn, should be able to provide insight into our authentic mode-of-being. Heidegger places emphasis on the importance of establishing a relationship with one's mortality as a critical aspect of authenticity. He argues that *Dasein's* authentic existence involves its being-towards-death, which allows for confronting the inevitability of one's mortality and recognising it as an essential part of one's existence (Heidegger, 1962: 303). Authentic being-in-the-world is important because *Dasein* confronts its potentiality-for-Being and takes responsibility for its choices and actions (Heidegger, 1962: 186).

Potentiality-for-Being is central to the understanding of *Dasein's* existence and its relationship to the world. Heidegger (1962: 119) says; “*Dasein* always assigns itself from a "for-the-sake-of-which" to the "with-which" of an involvement ; that is to say, to the extent that it is, it always lets entities be encountered as ready-to-hand.”

This indicates that *Dasein's* potentiality-for-Being is oriented towards specific possibilities and involvements. *Dasein's* potentiality-for-Being is essential for its solicitude for others, concern with the world, and its own self (Heidegger, 1962: 183) as a result.

Additionally, Heidegger's analysis underscores that *Dasein's* potentiality-for-Being is transparent to itself in different possible ways and degrees, and understanding is the Being of such potentiality-for-Being. Therefore, potentiality-for-Being shapes *Dasein's* existence, its possibilities, and its relationship to the world (Heidegger, 1962: 183), underscoring its significance in Heidegger's existential-ontological framework.

By acknowledging and embracing the finitude of life, *Dasein* gains a deeper understanding of its existence and can make authentic choices based on this awareness. This relationship shapes how *Dasein* engages with its potentiality-for-Being and the possibilities of existence (Heidegger, 1962: 309). Suppose the ready-to-hand aspect of Pokémon GO forms part of this understanding. In that case, it needs to fundamentally allow a player to be true to themselves, make choices, offer engagement with one's being, and create awareness of the impact of choices on one's authentic self.

One aspect where Pokémon GO offers a way to identify *Dasein's* potential-for-being is through the game's inherent attunement to the world. Attunement discloses the world in a certain way, shaping *Dasein's* understanding and interpretation of the entities it encounters. In so doing, it can reveal different aspects of the world and influence how *Dasein* relates to the entities within it (Heidegger, 1962: 318).

Pokémon GO influences thinking about the world and making choices by integrating the virtual game world with the physical environment, thereby shaping players' perceptions and actions. The game's design encourages

players to explore and interact with real-world locations, affecting their choices and activities (Liberati *et al.*, 2019: 56, 57). Players may modify their daily routines to visit specific in-game locations, affecting their actions and interactions with others in the real world (Liberati *et al.*, 2019: 56).

This attunement leads to engagement. Pokémon GO has been found to impact travel choices by leveraging AR to introduce virtual objects (PokéStops and Gyms), which translate into incentives in the real world (Guo *et al.*, 2021: 1). The game's nature and social components can enhance long-term user engagement through game elements that can encourage collaboration and increase players' walking and cycling distance of players (Guo *et al.*, 2021: 13).

The goal-setting elements of the game also strengthen engagement through gamification, where users can set personal goals, such as catching all types of Pokémon and walking a certain distance in a week – which translates to rewards in the game, such as Pokéballs, additional eggs and experience points (Guo *et al.*, 2021: 40). This can foster a sense of ownership and achievement among players (Guo *et al.*, 2021: 40). This goal-oriented design enhances the gameplay experience and promotes physical activity, contributing to the overall appeal and success of Pokémon GO (Söbke *et al.*, 2019: 137). Let's consider that Dasein's being is intimately connected to its physical engagement with the world (Heidegger, 1962: 95). The engagement that walking with Pokémon GO provides adds a layer towards its attunement.

During the initial lockdowns during the Covid-19 pandemic, Pokémon GO is said to have highlighted space's importance by redefining how players interacted with their physical surroundings (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 1; 2).

Before the pandemic, players left their homes to play the game, and these in-game locations served as waypoints to navigate and contextualise space, altering the legibility of their surroundings (Dunham, *et al.*, 2022: 17). The pandemic prompted a shift in the game's mechanics, allowing players to play more comfortably from home, but Pokémon GO underlines the importance of space by influencing players' mental maps of their surroundings, redefining the meaning of locations, and reshaping their interactions with the physical environment (Dunham, *et al.*, 2022: 19).

According to *Pokémon GO to Pokémon STAY: How Covid-19 Affected Pokémon GO Players* (2022: 13) the game prompted some players to contemplate mortality, particularly in the context of the pandemic. According to the paper, one participant in the study used the game to obfuscate existential questions related to the pandemic, finding it to be a means of coping with the challenges presented by the health crisis (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 13). While the game did not explicitly focus on mortality, it indirectly influenced players' thoughts and emotions related to the uncertainties and challenges posed by the pandemic, and the game allowed them not to feel isolated while contemplating the pandemic (Dunham, *et al.*, 2022: 13).

The game served as a reminder of authentic engagement in the world (pre-pandemic) when players were allowed to walk and engage with the AR

elements of the game. Still, it also allowed for rumination about being-towards-death. Engaging with Being-towards-death is important for *Dasein* because it reveals the fundamental nature of Dasein's existence. Heidegger argues that an authentic engagement with the possibility-of-death is crucial for Dasein to understand the significance of its choices and actions (Heidegger, 1962: 294).

By confronting the possibility of death, *Dasein* gains a deeper insight into its ownmost potentiality-for-Being and the finitude of its existence. This engagement with death allows Dasein to recognise the urgency and authenticity of its choices and actions, leading to a more profound understanding of its existence and the possibilities available to it.

Pokémon GO to Pokémon STAY: How Covid-19 Affected Pokémon GO Players (2022: 13) mentions that playing Pokémon GO during the pandemic yielded several positive outcomes for players. Furthermore, the game provided structure and purpose to the players' lives, affording them a sense of normality and meaning during uncertainty (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 14; 18).

This also facilitated socialisation, allowing players to connect with family members and engage in communal play, which served to maintain and strengthen communication within families (Dunham *et al.*, 2022: 14; 18), which all contributed to the authentic nature of the game.

5.5 Heidegger's idea of being-with-others

In the previous section and Chapter Four, we touched on social play, which is an active part of Pokémon GO. Humans fundamentally exist in a state of

coexistence with other beings, forming part of a larger temporal world teeming with life.

Dasein's existence is essentially characterised by its being-with-others. The presence of others is not just a social or psychological condition but is a fundamental ontological characteristic of *Dasein's* existence (Heidegger, 1962: 156, 160). This coexistence with others shapes *Dasein's* understanding of itself and its possibilities.

Measured against Pokémon GO elements of the game, such as social interaction, social presence, and achievement, influence the understanding of the world by providing players with gratifications that allow them to engage in creative, imaginative, and social experiences within the game environment (Bueno *et al.*, 2020: 3; 4). The game creates bonds between players through its gameplay, where players often engage in joint activities, such as hunting for Pokémon together, which fosters a sense of togetherness and community (Koskinen *et al.*, 2019: 111). This encourages players to share information, resources, and experiences, leading to collaborative interactions and teamwork (Koskinen *et al.*, 2019: 111).

Heidegger argues that sharing information and being social is essential for *Dasein's* understanding of itself and the world. By sharing information and engaging in social interactions, *Dasein* participates in a co-state-of-mind and a co-understanding with others, which is crucial for its existence (Heidegger, 1962: 206).

The importance of this social interaction is understanding and interpreting for *Dasein* (Heidegger, 1962: 211). Social interaction can lead to idle talk, a phenomenon that constitutes the kind of being of everyday or the everydayness of *Dasein*. Idle talk involves the spreading of discourse without a primary relationship to the entity being talked about, often leading to groundless communication and a lack of genuine understanding (Heidegger, 1962: 212).

The danger of Idle talk can lead to ambiguity and misunderstanding, affecting the genuine possibilities of Being because Idle Talk can cover up genuine understanding, which is essential for *Dasein*'s possibility-of-being (Heidegger, 1962: 218). This deepens the thrownness of *Dasein* due to the formation of the "they" or the "das Man." The "they" represents the anonymous, public, everyday mode of existence, characterised by conformity and average understanding (Heidegger, 1962: 219).

In *Being and Time* (1962: 165) the "they" disburdens *Dasein* of its Being, accommodating it and retaining its stubborn dominion. This leads to the loss of individuality and authenticity. This results in a situation where everyone is the other, and no one is himself, as the "they" becomes the "nobody" to whom every *Dasein* has already surrendered itself.

The "they" prescribes the way of interpreting the world and Being-in-the-world, limiting *Dasein*'s possibilities and determining the referential context of significance for its being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962: 167). The dominance of the public way in which things have been interpreted holds *Dasein* fast in its fallenness, leading to a suppression of genuine understanding (Heidegger,

1962: 221). This contributes to the tranquillization of *Dasein*, leading to a dimming down of possibilities (Heidegger, 1962: 239). This is detrimental for *Dasein*.

While Pokémon GO could lead players to the “they” and lead to a state of entrapment in the “They” the caution would still be within players themselves to identify the idle talk in playing groups, and whether aspects of the game, like its affordances with engagement in the world could rather lead to potentiality-for-Being. The ultimate goal of authenticity is to lead to Being-towards-death, and if we consider that the lack of social interactions during Covid-19 had an effect on some players where the game led to ruminating on *Dasein*’s existential concerns the being-with-others from the perspective of playing Pokémon GO is a problem. It offers both authentic aspects and inauthentic aspects of being-in-the-world. But the technological aspect of the game is yet unexplored.

5.6 Pokémon GO and the Essence of Technology

Technology, such as computer games, can enframe us by shaping our understanding and world experience. According to Heidegger, technology frames the world by revealing it in a particular way, which can narrow our perception and engagement with reality (Malpas *et al.*, 2000: 226).

In computer games, the enframing effect may manifest as a shift from an embodied, situated mode of engagement with the world to a more restricted, representational mode of interaction (Malpas *et al.*, 2000: 227). This shift can impact our sense of place, our perception of the world, and our understanding of our mortality, potentially leading to an overestimation of human capacities

and an inability to recognise the proper scope of human activity (Malpas. *et al.*, 2000: 227).

In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* Heidegger establishes that technology represents the mode by which humans engage with entities such as tools, techniques, artifacts, and instruments that enable them to interact effectively with their surroundings.

Unlike conventional interpretations of technology merely as equipment or machinery, Heidegger proposed viewing it as a fundamental aspect of human existence, shaping individual identities and societal structures. Central to his discourse on technology is enframing, which means framing or confining (Heidegger, 1977: 20).

Enframing involves the transformation of nature and culture into resources that can be exploited for human purposes, guided by a calculative rationality (Heidegger, 1977: 20; 27). This calculative rationality represents a mindset that seeks to quantify, analyse, and order the world according to predetermined frameworks and goals (Heidegger, 1977: 48).

The goals are often oriented towards efficiency, productivity, and the optimisation of resources for human benefit (Heidegger, 1977: 26).

This mode of rationality emphasises mathematical and quantitative methods to assess and manage the world, often at the expense of other ways of understanding and relating to reality (Heidegger, 1977: 48).

Heidegger's critique of calculative rationality is rooted in the idea that this mode of thinking reduces the richness and depth of human experience and the

world around us to mere resources to be exploited for human ends, neglecting intrinsic value and meaning beyond utility (Heidegger, 1977: 48).

The AR technologies employed by Pokémon GO are significant here by reducing landmarks and real-world locations to PokéStops and gyms, the technology allows those places to lose their independent character and become part of a larger system governed by the predetermined rules of the game.

This enframement creates a space that leads to community-minded being-with-others, but the collective uses these spaces as resources to be exploited to play the game for in-game gratification. Players intend to continue playing Pokémon Go, indicated by the positive impact of gratifications such as enjoyment, fantasy, escapism, social interaction, social presence, achievement, and self-presentation on the continuance intention to play the game (Beuno, *et al.*, 2018: 7). These gratifications are associated with motivations such as alleviating boredom, engaging in creative and imaginative worlds, and interacting with others (Beuno, *et al.*, 2018: 7).

The commercialisation of Pokémon GO is evident through its substantial revenue generation, with over \$2 billion in revenue since its release in 2016. The game has engaged in partnerships with various businesses, such as the collaboration with McDonald's Japan to designate their locations as in-game Gyms or PokéStops, aiming to increase foot traffic and sales (Jimenez, *et al.*, 2019: 156). This commercialisation demonstrates the game's ability to leverage its popularity for business partnerships and revenue-generating opportunities.

The desire for power underpins the essence of Being and the driving force behind all existence (Heidegger, 1977: 75) It is not merely a desiring or striving after something, but rather a commanding, with its essence rooted in the conscious disposal over the possibilities for effective action. The desire for power is the principle of a new value-positing, as it takes place consciously out of the knowledge of its principle and simultaneously adheres to this securing as a value posited out of its own principle,

The commercialisation of Pokémon GO reveals aspects of its standing-reserve. The standing-reserve, as described by Heidegger, refers to the way in which everything is ordered and revealed by modern technology to be immediately available for use or exploitation (Heidegger, 1977: 16). This manner in which everything is commanded into place and ordered according to the demanding rule of modern technology, presenting itself as revealed and available for use. The standing-reserve encompasses the transformation of objects and entities into a resource that calls for further ordering, losing their character as objects and immediately at the will's disposal (Heidegger, 1977: 27, 173). The standing-reserve represents a shift in the essence of technology where the capacity of technology can determine the nature of everything else, including human existence (Kouppanou, 2018: 8).

Pokémon GO impacts existence in several ways. It blurs the boundaries between the virtual and physical worlds, influencing the actions and decisions of players in their daily lives (Liberati, 2019: 56; 58). When we become enframed by technology, our relationship with the world and ourselves changes. Pokémon GO's power to influence our being-with-others, and its ultimate way of allowing

players to engage with the world leads to a sense of enframement since we would interpret the world as it is revealed to us in the game.

This enframement, places demand on nature where space is reduced to gyms and PokéStops. In effect the game enframes all beings and things to resources or energy to be extracted, stored, and used accordingly (Claxton, 2019: 227). This results in the domination of calculative thinking and the reduction of intrinsic value, acknowledging only extrinsic value where the value of things or beings in the game is based on their utility or usefulness as resources (Claxton, 2019: 227). The way Pokémon GO can be exploited to sell products, by being a group activity speaks to it's ability to allow enframement by technology which affects our perception of the world and ourselves, leading to a reductive self-understanding and a denial of intrinsic value.

This enframing impacts our being-in-the-world by changing our relationship with the world and ourselves. This domination of calculative thinking limits our perception of the world and what is possible, preventing us from engaging with the world in a way that does not reduce everything to resources to be optimised and used (Claxton, 2019: 226). This estranges us from the true nature of Being.

5.7 Conclusion

Martin Heidegger's insights into the interconnectedness between human existence, place, and time have paved the way for a deeper understanding of being-in-the-world. By emphasising human life's historical and cultural

embeddedness, Heidegger highlighted the importance of recognising the unique but transient nature of human existence within specific contexts.

Dasein's existential spatiality underscores the significance of how individuals perceive and engage with space and place, shaping their being and existence. Physical locations hold value as mere settings and influential factors in shaping human cognition and understanding.

This interconnectedness between individuals and their environment finds resonance in phenomena like Pokémon GO, where the fusion of digital and physical realms enriches players' experiences and interactions with the world. Pokémon GO exemplifies how technology can enhance our engagement with physical spaces, blurring the lines between virtual and real-world experiences and ultimately shaping our actions, intentions, and activities within the broader context of being-in-the-world.

The immersive experience of playing Pokémon GO serves as a form of entertainment and offers a unique lens through which to view being-in-the-world, tools, and authenticity. By seamlessly integrating the game into their daily routines, players embody Heidegger's notion of "average everydayness," where the game becomes a familiar and habitual part of their existence.

Pokémon GO creates a unique space for players to interact with the environment and each other, fostering social interaction, physical activity, and nostalgia. The game's ability to immerse players by tracking real-world movements, even when not actively playing, underscores its readiness-to-hand aspect, enhancing the overall gaming experience.

The analysis of Being-Toward-Death in Pokémon GO provides a unique perspective on the game's role in facilitating authentic modes of being and engaging with mortality. Dasein's authentic existence involving being-towards-death highlights the significance of acknowledging one's mortality as an essential aspect of existence.

By embracing the finitude of life, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of their being and make authentic choices based on this awareness. The integration of Pokémon GO with the physical environment allows players to attune themselves to the world, shaping their perceptions and interactions with entities within it. The game's adaptation during the Covid-19 pandemic underscores its ability to redefine players' interactions with physical spaces and prompt contemplation of mortality amidst global challenges.

Heidegger's concept of being-with-others sheds light on the profound interconnectedness between individuals and their environment, emphasizing the significance of social interactions in shaping one's understanding of oneself and the world.

Pokémon GO fosters collaboration and community building among players, and the parallels with Heidegger's philosophy become evident. The game's capacity to facilitate joint activities and shared experiences mirrors the essence of coexistence and mutual understanding advocated by Heidegger. However, as highlighted by Heidegger, the potential pitfalls of idle talk and conformity caution against the dangers of losing individuality and authenticity within collective social structures.

The balance between authentic engagement and the risk of succumbing to societal pressures, symbolised by the concept of the "they," underscores the complex nature of being-in-the-world. As players navigate the dualities of genuine connection and superficial interactions within the game, the imperative lies in discerning between enriching communal engagement and shallow discourse that hinders genuine understanding. This underscores relationship between technology and being-in-the-world where the enframing effect of Pokémon GO can lead individuals to transition from an embodied, situated engagement with the world to a more restricted, representational mode of interaction. This would lead us away from authentic existence by realising one's ownmost potentiality-for-Being (Heidegger, 1962: 169). Within this enframing, we cannot break free from the dominance of the "they" or embrace individuality and authenticity. In the end, with the enframing nature of Pokémon GO in mind Heidegger writes in *Being and Time* (1962: 169) Dasein cannot confront its ownmost potentiality-for-Being, which is the possibility of choosing and projecting itself upon possibilities that it has inherited and that it can project as possibilities of its own.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, we have delved into Martin Heidegger's contributions to phenomenology and its relevance in understanding the concept of Being and being-in-the-world. This exploration has enabled us to examine the connections between phenomenology and gaming, with a focus on Pokémon GO. Our analysis of the game has allowed us to investigate how certain aspects of the game influence our being-in-the-world.

Chapter Two introduced Heidegger's conception of being-in-the-world and his contributions to existentialism, phenomenology, and ontology. We examined his philosophical roots in the tradition of phenomenology initiated by Husserl and his departure from Husserl's adherence to eidetic reduction.

Further, we explored *Being and Time* and its impact on contemporary thought. We highlighted Heidegger's hermeneutic approach to interpreting phenomena, emphasising the importance of subjective experience and interpretation in understanding Being. In this context, we introduced the concept of *Dasein* to embody human existence and its relationship with Being. Our discussion of Being-in-the-world underscored the interconnectedness of human existence with the world and others, with being-with-others being a fundamental aspect of our existence. We emphasised the importance of potentiality-for-being, which prompts authentic living and confronting our finitude.

Chapter Three examined how phenomenology, a philosophical approach exploring human experience, consciousness, and perception, can be applied to

gaming. Specifically, we looked at how studying player experiences in video games can provide insights into consciousness and being-in-the-world and connected these ideas to Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*.

Chapter Four explored the concept of Augmented Reality (AR) in the context of Pokémon GO and its unique features. We established that AR technology enhances our senses by overlaying virtual objects in the real world, creating an interactive experience. We also highlighted how the game fosters socialisation and encourages collaborative activities, contributing to a sense of community and togetherness.

In Chapter Five, we engaged with Heidegger's phenomenology in the context of Pokémon GO. We highlighted how Heidegger emphasises human existence's historical and cultural embeddedness and its interconnectedness with specific historical contexts. We connected Pokémon GO as a part of this embeddedness, with its AR features contributing to its readiness-to-hand by creating an immersive experience that allows players to interact with the game world. However, we also discussed how enframing, a concept introduced by Heidegger, limits our understanding of reality by turning nature and culture into resources for human use. We established that this enframing by technology alters our relationships with the world, reducing spaces to game elements like gyms and PokéStops.

In conclusion, our analysis aimed to answer whether Martin Heidegger's being-in-the-world provides insights into the significance of gaming experiences and their impact on our sense of being an authentic being-in-the-world. While

we cannot come to a concise answer, our exploration established that Pokémon GO provides engagement with the environment and fosters being-among-others. The literature suggests that gaming experiences can transcend their virtual confines to foster genuine engagement with the world, aligning with Heidegger's concept of authenticity. However, our examination also highlighted the limitations of technology and its impact on our relationships with the world. Heidegger's framework emphasises the intrinsic connection between humans and their environment, and his insights can help us comprehend the implications of gaming experiences on our sense of being-in-the-world.

Throughout the previous chapters, I inquired whether Martin Heidegger's being-in-the-world sheds light on the significance of gaming experiences and their impact on our sense of authenticity. Although we cannot provide a definite answer, this research suggests that Pokémon GO facilitates engagement with the environment and enables social interaction.

According to existing literature, gaming experiences can transcend virtual boundaries to cultivate a genuine connection with the world, aligning with Heidegger's authenticity concept. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of Pokémon GO relies on *Dasein's* objectivity to reach its potentiality-of-Being. Heidegger's framework highlights the intrinsic bond between humans and their surroundings, and his insights can help us understand how gaming experiences affect our sense of being. Our study aimed to investigate whether gaming experiences offer authentic modes of being that intersect with fundamental human concerns and to evaluate whether these experiences genuinely promote engagement

with the world or signify a detachment from Heidegger's authentic mode of being-in-the-world.

By encouraging players to explore their immediate environment, the emphasis on physical movement and interaction with real-world surroundings provides entertainment and a unique perspective on being-in-the-world and its authenticity. As players incorporate the game into their daily routines, it becomes an intrinsic part of their existence and embodies Heidegger's concept of "average everydayness." However, this integration may also influence the "They" and raise questions about authenticity.

When we consider technology in a specific situation, such as playing a game, technology exerts control over the revelation of truth by treating beings as resources or power reserves, dominating all other ways of revealing the truth (El-Nazri, 2018: 190, 191). This control poses a danger that could erase the possibility of authentic existence through manipulation, and AR gaming would be subjected to this approach.

Pokémon GO manipulates space and place by recontextualising mundane, everyday locations into spaces of possibility using AR, but this also transforms physical locations into potential spawning grounds for Pokémon, altering the perception and use of these spaces (Palmer, 2014: 97). This manipulation of space and place raises questions about the commodification of human movement and the potential exploitation of physical locations for corporate-sponsored advertising (Palmer, 2024: 98).

Shortly after the 2016 release of Pokémon GO, the game was used to market McDonald's restaurants in Japan, significantly increasing sales and revenue and increasing market capitalisation of the restaurant in Japan (Calvo, 2019: 2). The game used McDonald's locations as PokéStops and Gyms, where players could compete in the game – and it in turn resulted in estimated daily visit increase of 1.5 million to McDonalds restaurants (Calvo, 2019: 3). This exploitation of physical locations for corporate-sponsored advertising, contributed to the inauthenticity of space (Palmer, 2024: 98).

Inauthenticity arises when places are designed to be impersonal, lack a sense of history, or fail to evoke a specific cultural presence. The inauthenticity of a place can stem from the absence of personalisation, erosion-by-use, and responsive interaction, which are essential elements of real-world places (El-Nazri, 2018: 233, 234). When this happens, places may contribute to a feeling of displacement and worldlessness, particularly for those who are denied access to the experience of belonging to a place (Vallelly, 2018: 308, 311).

When the virtual space is inauthentic, that space enframes a person by influencing their experiences, perceptions, and interactions with the environment (El-Nazri, 2018: 324). The nature of this can lead to concerns about the loss of authentic, unmediated experiences and the potential for overreliance on digital technology for everyday activities (Palmer, 2024: 97). If the average everydayness of engaging with Pokémon GO is considered, the potential authentic being-in-the-world it can provide, is sullied by its use of AR and real-world mapping that reduces it to standing-reserve.

The inauthentic nature of Pokémon GO, when viewed as technology, is in its power to convert space to places of exploitation for humans. Pokémon GO only reveals its inauthenticity in creating virtual space that is intertwined with the real world. In this space, Pokémon GO has become linked to environmental destruction, bodily harm, and disruptions in public spaces. These disruptions include littering and damage to sensitive habitats (Palmer, 2014: 103) and a mere tool for exploitation.

The research objectives of this project included:

- i) To explore the resonance between Martin Heidegger's philosophy of being-in-the-world and the landscape of gaming experiences and uncover the underlying connections between phenomenology and gaming.
- ii) To examine the extent to which gaming experiences offer authentic modes of being that intersect with fundamental human concerns.

To answer the first objective, we have shown that phenomenology offers insight into the nature of gameplay and how it influences our sense of being-in-the-world. It focuses on the subjective experiences and perspectives that emerge from playing and interacting with games. It examines how players engage with game mechanics, narratives, and virtual environments, including the emotions, sensations, and cognitive processes that arise during gameplay. As a result, games can impact a player's sense of being-in-the-world.

To answer the second objective, we managed to examine the extent to which gaming experiences offer authentic modes of being that intersect with

fundamental human concerns by questioning whether digital experiences within gaming can transcend their virtual confines to foster genuine engagement with the world, aligning with Heidegger's concept of authenticity. We illustrated this by examining Pokémon GO, a game that not only allows engagement with the environment and fosters a sense of being-among-others, but also utilises location through its AR capabilities to reduce engagement to standing-reserve.

Three sub-questions supplemented these objectives:

- i) Can being-in-the-world authentically manifest through the medium of digital games?
- ii) Do digital games harbour phenomenological meaning within the realm of human experience?
- iii) Can games allow players to engage in the world?

The answer to sub-questions i) and iii) lies in the investigation into the authenticity of Pokémon GO within the framework of Heidegger's philosophy. It provides a nuanced perspective on the game's role as a phenomenological entity. In exploring this authenticity, Pokémon GO emerges as a unique lens to examine being-in-the-world. The game's encouragement of players to explore physical surroundings, interact with landmarks, and participate in cooperative social events suggests a potential for authentic engagement with the world.

However, the determination of this authenticity becomes intricate, as it necessitates the evaluation by individual *Dasein* to discern if Pokémon GO genuinely contributes to their potentiality-for-being. The concept of enframing introduces a critical dimension, suggesting that while Pokémon GO is integrated

into a player's being-in-the-world, it might primarily function as a tool for resource exploitation rather than fostering genuine engagement.

Nevertheless, adopting Bogost's (2012: 114) "alien phenomenology", another pertinent perspective exists. If we view Pokémon GO as its own entity striving for authenticity as its own phenomenological "being".

The game's unprecedented success has influenced subsequent location-based games, leading to a replication of its achievements (Alha et al., 2023: 2). This replication trend has resulted in a mainstream recognition that hinders innovation and limits the potential evolution of AR technology within the gaming sphere because of Pokémon GO's unique existence in that space.

Examining Pokémon GO as a distinct phenomenological entity, the game's authenticity hinges on its ability to provide players with genuine and meaningful experiences. This authenticity, according to Bogost (2012: 54), is cultivated through elements like its compelling narratives, immersive gameplay, and the capacity to evoke emotional responses. By this measure, Pokémon GO's success and enduring popularity underscore its efficacy as a phenomenological entity with authentic characteristics. Viewing Pokémon GO as an authentic being in its own right enriches the argument, emphasising it as a complex and meaningful entity within the gaming landscape. While Bogost does not assert that as entities, games have the responsibility to create meaning, they possess the potential to do so through their unique form of interactive expression and engagement (Bogost, 2012: 53)

As its entity is now influencing the development of similar AR-based games, we have to see the game as a non-traditional entity. The game's reliance on existing infrastructures, such as Google Maps and Niantic's earlier location-based mobile game, Ingress, suggests that Pokémon GO is built upon pre-existing frameworks and technologies (Palmer, 2024: 105). While the game is significant and influential, it is also interconnected with broader technological and infrastructural networks. It is ultimately the language of Pokémon GO, through its use of AR and exploration goals, that it creates its own world-forming power that allows individuals to feel immersed in the world. Chapter three (section 3.2) mentioned that language can perform and bring into jointure the beings of beings, indicating that it plays a fundamental role in shaping our understanding of the world and our place within it (Heidegger, 2009: 22).

For Palmer (2024: 100), Pokémon GO utilises language to guide players in their exploration and gameplay in addition to its use of AR. One of the key characters, outside of the player and their avatar, is Professor Willow, the in-game non-player character. Professor Willow provides instructional dialogue that informs players about the game's mechanics and encourages them to explore the world to catch Pokémon. This language serves to familiarise players with the game's features and its use of mobile technology. This language and its technology give Pokémon GO its distinct identity as a digital platform and cultural phenomenon (Palmer, 2024: 101).

With its language, that encourages players to explore, Pokémon GO as its own entity leads people to spaces of standing-reserve, answering sub-question ii) in revealing its unique phenomenological meaning, one where

games potentially work, entertain and immerse, to enframe through its own being as an entity ultimately.

According to Heidegger, technology is not an isolated or independent entity but rather a phenomenon deeply connected to the essence of the modern age and the revealing of being itself. We need to remember that the essence of technology is not equivalent to anything technological and is not a mere instrument of human making or control. Our relationship with technology goes beyond the physical devices and tools we use. Understanding technology requires more than creating and advancing it, accepting it without question, or trying to avoid it. We are constantly influenced by technology, and Heidegger warns against seeing technology as neutral and ignoring its true nature, which can lead to a lack of awareness about its impact. Heidegger notes:

“Thus we shall never experience our relationship to the essence of technology so long as we merely conceive and push forward the technological, put up with it, or evade it. Everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it. But we are delivered over to it in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral; for this conception of it, to which today we particularly like to do homage, makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology” (1977: 4).

At its core, Pokémon GO serves as a digital companion to the exploration of being-in-the-world and offers as Heidegger suggests a deeper examination of the essence of technology, beyond its surface manifestations, in

order to gain a fuller understanding of its implications for human existence. As players traverse physical landscapes in search of virtual creatures, they are confronted with the impermanence of existence. This confrontation is not explicit; it is woven into the game's design. It's this design that encourages existential questioning by redefining the significance of places in players' lives. In the quest for Pokémon, players are drawn to diverse locations, some mundane and others culturally or historically significant – but also places that require contemplation. Measured as a phenomenological study Pokémon GO has a way to infuse phenomenological meaning into the lived environments of players. It calls into question everydayness, but above all calls into question the multifaceted way technology is able to reveal itself.

Therefore, I recognise that Pokémon GO is not merely a form of entertainment but a nuanced expression of technology's capacity to shape and deepen our understanding of being-in-the-world.

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