

# Libidinal Player Types Framework for Gamification

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## ABSTRACT

This paper presents a theoretical player types framework based on the concepts of death and eroticism. It states that gamification research and development has avoided these concepts and proposes a framework that includes the Eros and the Thanatos as two new and complementary player types' axes. The paper also proposes a series of libidinal player types for each axis and finally discusses the validity of this approximation to player classification.

## Keywords

gamification, player types, framework, motivations, libido, eroticism, death

## INTRODUCTION

Player types frameworks, most of them based on Bartle's (1996), map players in Action-Interaction axis and World-Players axis: "Killer" (Act on other Players), "Achievers" (Act on the World), "Socializers" (Interact with Players) and "Explorers" (Interact with the World). Other frameworks go further by adding other axis, i.e., for types of motivation (Marczewski 2013).

Marketing, HHRR, etc., and also gamification research and development seem to avoid the concepts of death and eroticism as motivational elements such as breeding, sexualized socialization, self-preservation, instinct and the fear of death, etc. The mention of such topics seems to be a taboo and a self-censorship commonly accepted, as Sapetti (1998) puts it:

"Roger Caillois, in *Man and the Sacred* tells us about two kinds of timings: one is the profane time (work time) which is characterized by respect to injunctions; on the other hand there is the sacred time (sexual liberty) [...] In this case work time demands a reasonable attitude in which both exasperating and boundless movements which have been released during transgression times (partying or playing games) are not allowed".

On the other hand Tornos (2011) states:

"Capitalist Society's rules have incorporated desire into themselves but stripping its own transgressive capacity. Desire doesn't happen as a consequence of a law or rule which must be transgressed; desire becomes incorporated to the norm and, therefore, the transgressive experience proves unnecessary."

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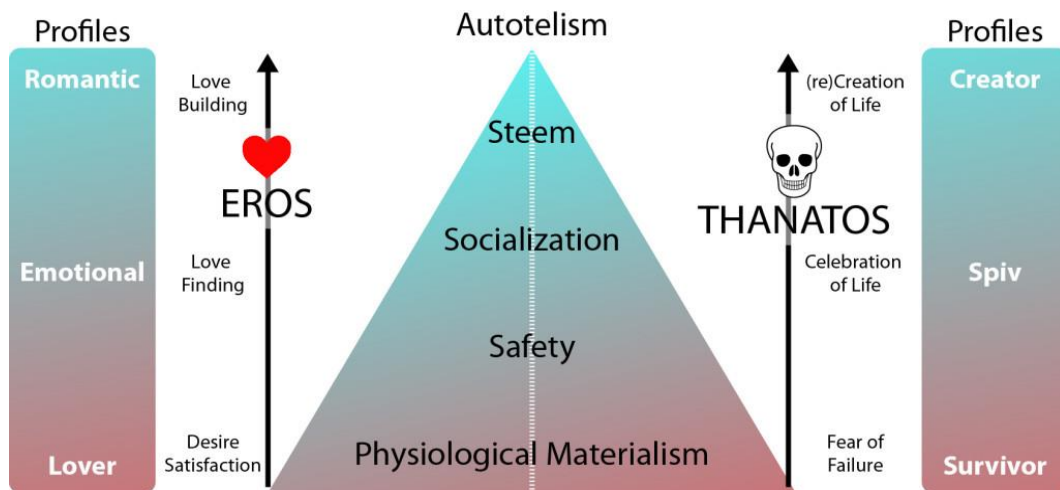
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That means, using eroticism (even when it's closely linked to the game) on capitalist gamification contexts would be like a transgressive invasion. Marketing has been and is precisely one of the most effective mechanisms to incorporate the desire stripped from transgression. It can be said marketing has become an expert on appealing our most basic instincts, sometimes in a very crude manner<sup>2</sup>, bounding them into a normativity scheme of polished and superficial morality.

To Bataille, eroticism and death are close related, acting as two of the greatest human drives: "Eroticism, it may be said, is assenting to life up to the point of death" (1962). According to this the most important human motivators are based on the following complementary tensions: the Eros (breeding and or erotized socialization needs) and the Thanatos (the fear of death and the intense desire to live).

### FRAMEWORK DESCRIPTION

The proposed theoretical framework marks a "bataillian" turn by including the Eros (eroticism) and Thanatos (death) as two new vertically projected parallel axes on Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), as shown in Figure 1: From the fear to death (physiological and primitive self-preservation) to the full enjoyment of life (self-selfness); from desire satisfaction to love building, relationships and environment development contribution<sup>1</sup>.



**Figure 1:** Libidinal Player Framework based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Bataille's view on Eros and Thanatos.

The framework also defines new player profiles according to their relationship with these new axes (as shown in Table 1):

<b>Player type</b>	<b>Intrinsic Motivation</b>	<b>Extrinsic Motivation</b>
<b>Survivor</b>	Fear of Failure / Death	Avoiding hunger, pain, etc.
<b>Spiv</b>	Desesperately enjoy life	Showing off his/her high standard of living
<b>Creator</b>	Being a vector for growth	Becoming focus of recognition
<b>Lover</b>	Desesperately get sex	Avoiding anxiety of not covering the sexual needs
<b>Emotional</b>	Getting a couple	Showing off his/her new couple
<b>Romantic</b>	Becoming a vector for emotional growth	Becoming a recognition focus by friends, family, etc.

**Table 1:** Motivations of libidinal player profiles

## CONCLUSIONS

In my opinion one unique player can adopt some different profiles or evolve according to its desires, circumstances or needs. Even when it's almost obvious that we –who luckily belong to a developed world and enjoy gamification kindnesses- often have the base of our Maslow's hierarchy of needs covered, we had not to underestimate the use of components related to our most basic instincts to design some aesthetic experiences into our gamification designs: survival dynamics, life enjoyment, creation, eroticism, sexualization, etc. Alternatively seems that motivators with more impact are indeed related to our most primary/lower instincts (in the pyramid's base).

Some data such as the number of users searching affair/relationship partners in comparison with users who want to cultivate more elaborate relationships suggest that maybe it is needed to activate other kind of more complex –and maybe extrinsic-motivators, due to assuming more active roles through an intrinsic manner taking us out from the comfort zone we usually like to stay on (the medium-bottom part of the pyramid, the physiological, protection and socialization needs). Climb the Eros and Thanatos pyramid is harder than staying in the base. Some effort, energy, creativity, communication... are needed to climb, that indicates us that basic intrinsic motivators of fear of death or having sex needs are more powerful at the base and become weaker as we go up.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> This framework assumes that not necessarily all player's desires have been satisfied (even the most primary ones) therefore players might be influenced by their absences, in contrast to many other frameworks that accept that as a fact. It should also be noted that our range of decisions brings us up or down the axis depending on how we feel ourselves related to when and what we have to decide, therefore the roles wouldn't remain changeless.

<sup>2</sup> During the 80's some brands used coarse pictures of women in lingerie or sensual metaphors on computer and video games advertising.

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