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A few words on the digital and playing (chess)

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Check mate IRL! Check mate online! A few words on the digital and playing (chess)

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Abstract

Chess is one of the oldest and most well-known games in history. In our recent times there is even something like a “chess turn”, according to the spread of chess playing has become; also as a motif in film, TV, etc. is in line with this tendency. A few reasons for this are likely to be seen in: the pandemic, the TV series *The Queen’s Gambit*, and the digitization of everyday life the latest three/four decades.

This will be a presentation about the sensorial differences between playing chess IRL (In Real Life) and online. Some examples will be put forward here, in the digitization of the chess discourse. *First* of all: the fact that many chess games today are being played online (on platforms like chess.com, lichess, and more). *Second*, the chess computer as an invention. *Three*, influencers, and live streaming of chess tournaments. Differences in sensing, feeling and experiencing the playing of chess online vs IRL will be discussed in some different aspects, especially: touching, seeing, and hearing. Theoretically, I will draw mostly upon Elleströms concepts of media, and the material and sensorial modalities. I will also make use of reflections on digital intermedialities put forward in Bruhn/Schirrmacher (2022), and chess literature.

As a background, one can see that chess is in focus in my ongoing research project, entitled *Chess as/in Culture (-s)*, in which chess is discussed *as a culture* (chess clubs, chess theory, the rating system, the star system, the medialities of chess, the digitization of the game, chess in the urban space, and more), but also as being *represented in different media and art forms*, including popular culture expressions (film, TV-series, graphic novels, musicals, music videos, fiction, poetry, drama). Central parts in this project deals with the digitized forms of playing chess.

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Mikael Askander (1970-) is an Associate Professor of Intermedial Studies, at Lund University, Sweden. His research is mainly focused on literature, popular culture, intermediality, and digital cultures.

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