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OF FAIRIES AND "DOCILE DAUGHTERS"[1]: UBISOFT MONTREAL'S *CHILD OF LIGHT* AS AN ADAPTATION OF GABRIELLE-SUZANNE DE VILLENEUVE'S *BEAUTY AND THE BEAST*

Abstract: The following article analyzes Ubisoft Montreal's art game *Child of Light* (2014) as an adaptation of the eighteenth-century fairy tale *Beauty and the Beast* (1740) by Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve, the less famous original of Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont's *Beauty and the Beast* (1756). While Villeneuve drew from the late seventeenth-century French salon fairy-tale tradition, her novel-length tale represented an ideological turning point, ultimately subordinating women's independence and freedom to act in the public sphere, propagated by older upper-class *salonnières* in their fairy tales, to the bliss of love and family, typical of the bourgeois private sphere.[2] As the designers announced prior to the release that the game was meant to concentrate on growing up to adulthood, self-sufficiency, and independence, instead of marriage (it thus does not feature the character of the Beast/Prince),[3] it could be assumed that *Child of Light* should enter into an intertextual dialogue with Villeneuve's text by interpreting and transforming its women characters, concentrating on women empowerment and the ability to act in the public sphere/outdoors. I focus on the game's transposition of Villeneuve's caste of powerful, independent fairies and, somewhat surprisingly, of the self-sacrificing heroine, or a "docile" daughter,[4] trained to abdicate her desire. Aurora, the player character, may not sacrifice herself for the sake of the man, but still must sacrifice her longing for a family to become an egalitarian ruler devoted to public service, which, in

[1] T. Majkowski, A. Zarzycka, *Romance: The Transmedial Romance of "Beauty and the Beast"* [in:] L. Bosc, P. Greenhill, N. Hamer, J.T. Rudy (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Media and Fairy-Tale Cultures*, Routledge, New York–Abington 2018, p. 598.

[2] See V.E. Swain, *Beauty's Chambers: Mixed Styles and Mixed Messages in Villeneuve's* Beauty and the Beast, "Marvels and Tales" 2005, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 197–223.

[3] N. Grayson, *Child of Light Devs on Poetry, Female Characters*, "Rock, Paper, Shotgun", 13.10.2013, https://www.rockpapershotgun.com/child-of-light-devs-on-poetry-female-characters (accessed: 10.05.2023).

[4] T. Majkowski, A. Zarzycka, *Romance…*, op. cit., p. 598.

the end, appears to peculiarly disempower her. Thus, *Child of Light* may be seen to nonetheless reiterate conservative values rather than propose a tale of women empowerment.

Keywords: *Child of Light*, video-game adaptation, fairy-tale adaptation, *Beauty and the Beast*, Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve

Introduction

Child of Light, a small digital-only art game by Ubisoft Montreal, one of the world's largest AAA studios, was released in 2014 as "an RPG inspired by fairy tales."[5] Characteristic of hand-painted graphics and rhymed dialogues, the JRPG-style, 2D side scroller takes the player on a journey in mythical Lemuria, where a little Austrian duchess, Aurora, wakes up on an altar in a dark forest after she died of chill on Easter Friday night, 1895. She will soon fight her stepmother, the evil queen, with might and magic, and restore the sun, the moon, and the stars, stolen by her monstrous step-sisters. The game's story visibly mixes fairy-tale motifs with loosely adapted historical circumstances and pseudo-science.[6] This does not make it atypical, though, considering present-day fairy-tale transformations in multiple media: "In postmodernity 'the stuff' of fairy tales exists as fragments (princess, frog, slipper, commodity relations in a marriage market) in the nebulous realm that we might most simply identify as cultural knowledge."[7] Elements of fairy tales become "free-floating cultural data"[8] that constitutes "the building [block] of new media texts."[9]

Child of Light's story can be interpreted from various perspectives.[10] However, this article focuses exclusively on the game as an adaptation of selected "fragments" of Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot Gallon de Villeneuve's (1695–1755) novel-length tale

5 Ubisoft, *Child of Light*, https://www.ubisoft.com/en-gb/game/child-of-light (accessed: 17.03.2023).

6 On genre mixing, see C. Bacchilega, J. Rieder, *Mixing It Up: Generic Complexity and Gender Ideology in Early Twenty-first Century Fairy Tale Films* [in:] P. Greenhill, S.E. Matrix (eds.), *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity*, Utah State University Press, Logan 2010, pp. 23–41. On Lemuria, see e.g. L.S. de Camp, *Lost Continents: The Atlantis Theme*, Ballantine Books, New York 1975, pp. 53–78. A multiverse setting, spanning a quasi-historical milieu and fantastic realms, is functional for video games in that it constitutes an original IP for further exploitation.

7 C.L. Preston, *Disrupting the Boundaries of Genre and Gender: Postmodernism and the Fairy Tale* [in:] D. Haase (ed.), *Fairy Tales and Feminism: New Approaches*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 2004, p. 210.

8 Ibidem.

9 J. Jorgensen, *A Wave of the Magic Wand: Fairy Godmothers in Contemporary American Media*, "Marvels and Tales" 2007, vol. 21, no. 2, p. 218.

10 See F.G. Bosman, *"The Bell Tolled Six on Easter Sunday": The Motif of the Harrowing of Hell in the Video Game "Child of Light"* [in:] M. Sarot, A.L.H.M. van Wieringen (eds.), *The Apostles' Creed: 'He Descended Into Hell'*, Brill, Laiden–Boston 2018, pp. 160–184.

Beauty and the Beast (1740), part of *Les Contes marins ou la jeune Américaine*.[11] The *conte* was the basis for Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont's much shorter didactic *Beauty and the Beast* (1756), published in *Le Magasin des Enfants* and often recognized as "the most well-known version of the story."[12] While the game does not feature the Beast, it nonetheless draws from various variants of the tale type.[13] Its connection with Villeneuve's text is visibly manifested, for example, by its persistent stress on class division. It could possibly strike modern players that Aurora is notoriously offended by the antagonists as born of a misalliance, and the theme of "lower classes" reappears throughout the game; however, this parallels Villeneuve's text, where the fairies despise Beauty as "the shameful fruit of […] illegal marriage,"[14] and the Beast's mother refuses to accept a merchant's daughter as a daughter-in-law. I am particularly interested in the game's adaptation of two selected elements: the caste of fairies with their ability to orchestrate events, and the theme of the heroine's abdication of desire.[15] The fairies, the power brokers in French literary *contes de fées* of the late seventeenth century[16] most prominently link the game with Villeneuve's tale and invite us to see the former as an adaptation of the latter.

Frank G. Bosman identifies *Child of Light* as a fairy tale in formal terms.[17] I, however, view it above all as representative of "the multivocality of millennial and early twenty-first-century transformations of fairy tales."[18] Those transformations are texts,

[11] J. Zipes (trans. and ed.), *Beauties, Beasts, and Enchantment: Classic French Fairy Tales*, Crescent Moon, Maidstone 2011, p. 151. While referring to Villeneuve's French text should prove an indispensable effort elsewhere, this article's sole focus is to point to certain themes, usually discussed by other scholars, and above all to how those themes are transferred to the game. Thus, I rely on Jack Zipes' translation in *Beauties…*, op. cit., pp. 153–229. For the French text, see e.g. G-S. de Villeneuve, *La Belle et la Bête*, Gallimard, Paris 1996.

[12] J. Griswold, *The Meanings of "Beauty and the Beast": A Handbook*, Broadview Press, Peterborough 2004, Google Play, p. 9.

[13] For example, the opening cutscene evokes the opening credits of Disney's 1991 *Beauty and the Beast* (A. Mochocka, *Allegation and World-Building in Video Games* [in:] B. Bostan (ed.), *Games and Narrative: Theory and Practice*, Springer, Cham 2022, p. 317), and the game emphasizes the father-daughter bond; roses reappear throughout as a visual theme, and the mirror is transcoded into the game's environment as interactive water basins.

[14] G.-S. de Villeneuve, *The Story of Beauty and the Beast*, trans. J. Zipes [in:] J. Zipes (ed.), *Beauties…*, op. cit., p. 215 (hereinafter *Beauty*). Contrary to Charles Perrault's tales, the impermeability of class divisions characterized Mme d'Aulnoy's ones, for example, and so it characterizes Villeneuve's caste of fairies, with the exception of Beauty's mother and aunt. The relationship is dialogic for the game finally undoes the notion of class altogether as Aurora chooses to become a kind of democratic leader, governing Lemuria together with its peoples.

[15] T. Korneeva, *Desire and Desirability in Villeneuve and Leprince de Beaumont's "Beauty and the Beast"*, "Marvels and Tales" 2014, vol. 28, no. 2, p. 247.

[16] J. Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: The Cultural and Social History of a Genre*, Princeton University Press, Princeton–Oxford 2012, pp. 236, 228.

[17] F.G. Bosman, *"The Bell…*, op. cit., pp. 168–169.

[18] C. Bachhilega, *Fairy Tales Transformed: Twenty First-Century Adaptations and the Politics of Wonder*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 2013, Google Play, p. 34.

or hypertexts – multivocal, multimedial, and transmedial – in which different stories "mingle with, influence, anticipate, interrupt, take over, or support one another" in uncontrolled and unpredictable ways, depending on the teller's and the recipient's background.[19] I also see fairy tales as "intertexts par excellence," assuming intertextuality defines a text which originates in another text and enters into a dialogue with that other text and its context.[20] If we view contemporary fairy tales from this perspective, *Child of Light* indeed can be seen as such a tale, with a variety of possible intertexts.[21]

As to my understanding of adaptation, I acknowledge Cristina Bacchilega's observation on contemporary fairy tales as "a web of production and reception where not only are oral and written texts connected, but translations, retellings, adaptations, critical interpretations, and relocations are entangled with one another."[22] Bacchilega defines activist adaptations,[23] and distinguishes between retellings (narrative reoccurrences) and revisions (interpretations).[24] Arguably, all the above categories could be applied to *Child of Light* to some extent, but I consider it primarily as a fairy-tale adaptation, which means that it "invites a consideration of transformative interpretation as grounded in the materiality, codes, experience, and promotion of a (fairy) story's move across media–and thus into new contexts, audiences, markets, and potential for further adaptation."[25] This concept of adaptation necessarily qualifies Linda Hutcheon's definition to make it applicable to fairy tales. For Hutcheon, adaptation is a product and a process; as a product, it is announced, extensive, and characterized by a specific transcoding to the poetics of a new medium.[26] As a process, it encompasses both production ("appropriation, […] taking possession of another's story, and

[19] Ibidem, pp. 12–34, 39. On multimediality and transmediality, see p. 322, no. 12. Considering the game in terms of Bacchilega's concept of the fairy-tale web should prove worthwhile, yet is beyond the scope of this article; see A. Kliś-Brodowska, *A Fairy-Tale Digital Game and the Potential for Revision: Ubisoft Montreal's* Child of Light, "Marvels and Tales" 2023, vol. 37, no. 1, p. 27.

[20] P. Greenhill, S.E. Matrix, *Introduction: Envisioning Ambiguity* [in:] P. Greenhill, S.E. Matrix (eds.), *Fairy Tale Films…*, op. cit., p. 2.

[21] The game makes references to various individual texts, genres, media and beyond. Literary references encompass e.g. unnamed Eastern fairy tales, Phillip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* (1995–2000), or Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (M. Kobayashi, *Child of Light official Tumblr*, interview with J. Yohalem, Tumblr, https://childoflightgame.tumblr.com/ (accessed: 15.07.2022)); *Little Red Riding Hood* (ATU 333) and *Snow White* (ATU 709) (N. Grayson, *Child of Light Devs on Poetry…*, op. cit.); fragments of *Cinderella* (ATU 510A) are also easily identified (e.g. the blossoming tree). See also A. Kliś-Brodowska, *A Fairy-Tale Digital Game…*, op. cit. for my reading of the game as an adaptation of *Little Red Riding Hood*.

[22] C. Bacchilega, *Fairy-Tale Adaptations and Economies of Desire* [in:] M. Tatar (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Fairy Tales*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2015, p. 80.

[23] See ibidem, and C. Bacchilega, *Fairy Tales Transformed…*, op. cit.

[24] C. Bacchilega, *Adaptation and the Fairy-Tale Web* [in:] L. Bosc, P. Greenhill, N. Hamer, J.T. Rudy (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Media…*, op. cit., p. 147.

[25] Ibidem.

[26] L. Hutcheon, S. O'Flynn, *A Theory of Adaptation*, Routledge, New York–Abington 2013, p. 16.

filtering it […] through one's own sensibility, interests, and talents"[27]), and reception (of an adaptation as "repetition with variation"[28]). The game also represents a case of a fairy tale's move into an *interactive* medium, with the use of methods listed by B. Grantham Aldred.[29] As a video game, *Child of Light* adapts by means of a heterocosm: "complete […] with the stuff of a story–settings, characters, events, and situations [that is] its material, physical dimension, which is transposed and then experienced through multisensorial interactivity"[30] – or, game world and challenges.[31] It also exemplifies procedural adaptation, which entails "the practice of authoring [games'] rules and systems dynamics in such ways that they model the situational logics implied by texts from other media."[32] Apart from the environment and meaningful gameplay, adaptation in the game takes place also through cutscenes and dialogues to a vast extent, and textual elements are used to this purpose too, most importantly in the form of collectible pieces of poetry the player may read in the user interface and ponder, deducing more about Aurora's mother and the story's background. Notably, the story in *Child of Light*, a story-driven game, is not simply a functionally "minimised or truncated" gameplay "wrapper,"[33] but a significant part of the player's experience.

Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon discuss the possibilities for narrative meaning to be manifested in different media, and distinguish between narratological concepts that are transmedially valid to different degrees; those may be transferred to another medium with the resources that the medium has at its disposal.[34] I approach the analysis of *Child of Light* with an assumption that the adapted fairy-tale fragments are transferred to – or remediated[35] in – the video game medium with the use of the resources, or poetics, available. Hence, I look at in what manner those specific fragments manifest themselves in various aspects of the game, be they textual, au-

27 Ibidem, p. 18.

28 Ibidem, p. 8.

29 In particular, we can observe Genre Blending, Fairy-Tale Pastiche (blending "multiple separate tales into a single world," and Morphological Division (breaking "tales into parts, often based on motifs, functions, characters, or objects"). B.G. Aldred, *Games* [in:] H. Callow, A. Duggan, D. Haase (eds.), *Folktales and Fairy Tales: Traditions and Texts from around the World*, Greenwood, Santa Barbara–Denver 2016, p. 392.

30 L. Hutcheon, S. O'Flynn, *A Theory…*, op. cit., p. 14.

31 C. Fernandez-Vara, *The Inescapable Intertextuality of* Blade Runner: The Video Game [in:] C. Duret, C.-M. Pons (eds.), *Contemporary Research on Intertextuality in Video Games*, Information Science Reference, Hershey 2016, p. 23.

32 M. Weise, *Procedural Adaptation in* Clock Tower*,* Resident Evil*, and* Dead Rising [in:] B. Perron (ed.), *Horror Video Games: Essays on the Fusion of Fear and Play*, McFarland and Company, Jefferson 2009, Google Play, p. 237.

33 J. Novitz, *'The Time Is Out of Joint': Interactivity and Player Agency in Videogame Adaptations of Hamlet*, "arts" 2020, vol. 9, no. 4, https://doi.org/10.3390/arts9040122 (accessed: 12.05.2023).

34 M.L. Ryan, J.N. Thon, *Storyworlds across Media: Introduction* [in:] idem (eds.), *Storyworlds across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln 2014, pp. 4–5.

35 G.D. Bolter, R. Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, The MIT Press, Cambridge 2000.

dio-visual, environmental, or mechanical. I am, furthermore, also interested in the specific dialogue between the two texts, divided by the time period of two hundred and seventy-four years. Since the relationships between contemporary fairy-tale texts and their pre-texts, as discussed by Bacchilega, are unpredictable and uncontrolled, I do not expect there will always occur a dialogue, or tension, though. For example, *Child of Light* thrives on allegations, that is a type of textual references often juxtaposed with intertextuality, meant to add credibility to a text by means of evoking an established authority of another text, while not (necessarily) entering into a dialogue with it.[36] Nonetheless, as the designers announced prior to the release that they wished to update their fairy tale material to contemporary realities,[37] I believe the dialogue is established on the whole, regardless of whether it results in reiterating conservative values via an attempt at interpretive transformation, or reveals the game's potential for an activist adaptation, or achieves another result.

The result of the intertextual dialogue is my major focus here, and I approach it from a feminist perspective. As stressed by Bacchilega, the impact of feminism has become a defining feature of contemporary fairy-tale transformations, whatever the outcome is.[38] In the case of the gaming industry of 2010s, the issues of women representation and very presence are additionally aggravated by the persisting alienation and exclusion of women players, and strict policing of boundaries established by certain men player cultures, which feminists, reviewers, players and certain developers themselves have recently begun to vocally question. This makes the adaptive potential of *Child of Light*, an indie-AAA hybrid game[39] particularly worthy of investigation. Especially that that the game manifests an intertextual connection with a mid-eighteenth century French text which juxtaposes the late seventeenth-century French *salonnière* legacy of Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy with the social theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.[40]

This being said, it must be stressed that *Child of Light* is also an immensely interesting socio-cultural artefact from the perspective of postcolonialism and globalization. Made in Montreal, Quebec, by expert developers at a studio owned by the French Ubisoft, it was meant to promote local culture.[41] The developers cooperated with Montreal artist Béatrice Martin, known as Coeur de Pirate, and Cirque du Soleil, also based in Montreal; and the development process was followed by a de-

36 A. Mochocka, *Allegation…*, op. cit., pp. 320–321, 316.

37 N. Grayson, *Child of Light Devs on Poetry…*, op. cit.

38 C. Bacchilega, *Fairy Tales Transformed…*, op. cit., p. 42.

39 The AAA sector of the gaming industry can be seen as representative of the entertainment/cultural industry, and parallel to Hollywood, whereas indie games parallel independent movies. See e.g. A. Cole, J. Zammit, *Cooperative Gaming*: *Diversity in the Games Industry and How to Cultivate Inclusion*, CRC Press, Boca Raton–London–New York 2021, pp. 32–35.

40 V.E. Swain, *Beauty and the Beast* [in:] D. Hasse (ed.), *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales. Vol. 1: A–F*, Greenwood Press, Westport 2008, pp. 104, 105.

41 P. Plourde, *Small Projects in AAA Studios: Making of Child of Light*, 2 "GDC Vault" 2013, https://www.gdcvault.com/play/1019325/Small-Projects-in-AAA-Studios (accessed: 12.05.2023).

veloper blog in French and English.[42] It cannot be accidental that the game manifests a connection with the early literary French women fairy-tale legacy – and it must be meaningful that this connection is never openly acknowledged by the designers. Notably, the game's engagement with Villeneuve's text, which itself has a very specific socio-cultural context, should prove meaningful in different ways to players with different cultural backgrounds and knowledge on fairy tales. However, though definitely worthwhile, an investigation into this aspect of the game is beyond the scope and possibilities of the current research. In what follows, I only wish to establish certain general directions that may be further pursued in future studies of the game.

Villeneuve's *Beauty and the Beast* and the lasting question of women's socio-cultural status

There is a certain socio-political-historical continuum between Villeneuve's *Beauty and the Beast* and Ubisoft Monreal's *Child of Light*, both on the level of story, and on the level of the socio-cultural context. On the one hand, Villeneuve's text, like the fairy tales of the late seventeenth-century generation of *salonnières* before it,[43] reflects and responds, in its own manner, to the ongoing process of gendering the private and the public spheres, and the resulting polarization of gender roles. In the process, those very *conteuses* were later institutionally marginalized by the French male canon makers and literary historians, who masculinized the genre.[44] On the other hand, the present day masculinization of computing, the gaming industry, player cultures, and games themselves, can be traced back to "Victorian-era ideas of separate spheres that placed women squarely outside of public culture."[45] In fact, however, those ideas were not limited to the Victorians and the Anglo-Saxon culture. It is consequently notable that the game's Montreal designers delve into the very question of the woman's proper sphere of action, inherent in the French tale, and try to rework it – especially considering the AAA context of the game.

Investigating the results of their undertaking is significant. First, it contributes to a more in-depth understanding of feminine presence in video games and its development as situated in the context of the industry's history – here, especially with regard

[42] M. Kobayashi, *Child…*, op. cit., interview with P. Plourde.

[43] For historical context to *salonnières*, see A. Duggan, *Salonnières, Furies, and Fairies: The Politics of Gender and Cultural Change in Absolutist France*, University of Delaware Press, Newark 2021, Scribd, pp. 56–61.

[44] Ibidem, pp. 32–35.

[45] J. DeWinter, C.A. Kocurek, *"Aw Fuck, I Got a Bitch on My Team!" Women and the Exclusionary Cultures of the Computer Game Complex* [in:] J. Malkowski, T.M. Russworm (eds.), *Gaming Representation: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Video Games*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 2017, p. 60.

to the substantial criticism of women representation in games in the early 2010s.[46] Creative director Patrick Plourde's talk at the Game Developers Conference Europe 2013, covering the origin of *Child of Light* and the conditions for making a small "feminine" game in a AAA studio, testifies to the fact that the game was meant to be publicized as an attempt by a "big" studio to acknowledge and address women players.[47] Second, the following analysis also emphasizes the need for an in-depth interdisciplinary study into fairy-tale adaptations in video games, especially once such adaptations have been noted to display a rising trend towards revisionism.[48] While *Child of Light* does not introduce a "sexy female badass" protagonist – no longer a child *ingénue*, but still a violent, unrealistic eye candy – Aurora, an example of the Adventurous Alice non-stereotypical character type, quite innovative at the time,[49] nonetheless attracts attention from the perspective of restating specific values. The intricacies of the game's representation of women, in turn, become fully visible only once we analyze *Child of Light* from the joined perspective of fairy-tale studies and game studies, as each highlights different aspects of that representation.

To turn to Villeneuve's *conte*, it belongs to the monster bridegroom family of tales, traced back to the Greco-Roman myth of "Cupid and Psyche," and, specifically, "Beauty and the Beast" tale type (ATU 425C), which characteristically tackles "the ideological underpinnings of marriage practices, female agency, and sexuality within a specific cultural context."[50] Inspired with late-seventeenth century *contes de fees*, it drew from the tradition of the French salon fairy tales as represented by Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy (*Les Contes Des Fées* (1697–1698), who originated the genre's name.[51] Apart from the love story, later adapted by Beaumont, the lengthy, grotesque and hybrid tale contains three other stories, which provide a rich background for the lover's

[46] On women's presence in games, the industry, and player cultures at the time, see e.g. C. Heeter, *Femininity* [in:] B. Perron, M.J.P. Wolf (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Video Game Studies*, Routledge, New York–Abington 2014, pp. 373–379. On academic research at the time, see e.g. C. Rughiniș, R. Rughiniș, E. Toma, *Three Shadowed Dimensions of Feminine Presence in Video Games*, "Proceedings of 1st International Joint Conference of DiGRA and FDG" 2016, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 1–16. For a detailed context, including #GamerGate controversy of anti-feminist backlash by the exclusionary male gamer cultures, see D. Golding, L. Van Deventer, *Game Changers: From Minecraft to Misogyny, the Fight for the Future of Video Games*, Affirm Press, South Melbourne 2016, epub, chap. 8.

[47] P. Plourde, *Small Projects…*, op. cit.

[48] V. Tedeschi, E. Whatman, *Video Games* [in:] L. Bosc, P. Greenhill, N. Hamer, J.T. Rudy (eds.), *The Routledge Companion to Media…*, op. cit., pp. 634–641.

[49] See C. Rughiniș, R. Rughiniș, E. Toma, *Three Shadowed Dimensions…*, op. cit., pp. 2–3. Adventurous Alice is an "inquisitive child heroine, exploring a strange world" (ibidem, p. 10), here combined with the ageing axis (ibidem, p. 7–8), which means Aurora grows from a child to a young woman during the game.

[50] A. Duggan, *Marriage, Female Agency, and Sexuality in Monster Bridegroom Tales: Teaching "Beauty and the Beast"* [in:] N.L. Canepa (ed.), *Teaching Fairy Tales*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 2019, Google Play, p. 91.

[51] The French literary fairy-tale originated in the aristocratic salon tradition established largely by women, not Charles Perrault's tales. See e.g. J. Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale…*, op. cit., pp. 23–37.

plot: the Beast's, the fairy aunt's, and the rebelled fairy mother's. Those are told after the typical climax, as here the love story does not proceed smoothly from transformation to union: instead, the Prince's mother, a warrior Queen, refuses her consent to the marriage due to Beauty's social class; Beauty's virtue is tested yet again; and her aristocratic/fairy descent is finally revealed. The above sections re-contextualize the lovers' agency in the tale as their union proves to be the result of an intricate intrigue by the fairy aunt.

Most significantly, *Beauty and the Beast* reflects the contemporary changing perception of women's relationship to the public sphere, and subordinates the aristocratic women's liberties of the salon and the *mondain* culture to the "bliss" of the bourgeois private home.[52] Villeneuve's protagonist anticipates Beaumont's as she "is being readied for a quintessentially private and familial life," and taught "sober acceptance of her necessary self-sacrifice."[53] To note, both Villeneuve and Beaumont have been read as implicitly vindicating women's rights from within the male discourse of power by representing the arranged marriage as "an economic or moral necessity," and dissociating it from love and desire to "sustain the illusion of the heroines' autonomy and control over their personal experience."[54] Nevertheless, their heroines may be contrasted with, for example, d'Aulnoy's ones, whose relations to various forms of power and the public sphere are systematically resituated to "[open] up their sphere of action"[55] – and who "forsake at once the conjugal house and the domesticated sensuality […] in favor of a body in constant motion."[56]

In fact, to Virginia E. Swain, Villeneuve's fairies represent the seventeenth-century *salonnières* themselves.[57] *Salonnières*' fairy tales served to question the exclusion of women from the public sphere, defend the elite's fashionable, pleasurable, and leisurely lifestyle, and contest Catholicism and Louis XIV's absolutism.[58] They were also meant to promote "new diverse standards of behavior that were intended to transform the relationships between men and women, primarily of the upper classes."[59] In those tales, the fairies, powerful and bold, noble or nasty, are invariably perched at the very top of the social ladder, above mortal kings. In Villeneuve's

[52] V.E. Swain, *Beauty's Chambers…*, op. cit., pp. 197–223. On *mondanité* and its impact on the French fairy tale see e.g. A. Duggan, *Salonnières…*, op. cit., pp. 314–374. For elite seventeenth-century women, salons compensated for the barriers to active and official participation in the political-economic public sphere, opening up a "public sociocultural sphere" (ibidem, p. 64).

[53] V.E. Swain, *Beauty's Chambers…*, op. cit., pp. 199, 208.

[54] T. Korneeva, *Desire…*, op. cit., pp. 246–247. See also V.E. Swain, *Beauty and the Beast*, op. cit., p. 107 on the text's original reception by contemporaries as emphasizing social openness and "individual rights and freedoms."

[55] A. Duggan, *Salonnières…*, op. cit., p. 330.

[56] P. Hannon, *Fabulous Identities: Women's Fairy Tales in Seventeenth-Century France*, Rodopi, Amsterdam–Atlanta 1998, p. 78. See also T. Majkowski, A. Zarzycka, *Romance...*, op. cit., pp. 598–599.

[57] V.E. Swain, *Beauty's Chambers…*, op. cit., p. 209.

[58] J. Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale…*, op. cit., pp. 24–25.

[59] Ibidem, p. 25.

novel, however, they are juxtaposed with the fairy mother who chose her mortal family and staying at home over power and travelling "far and wide" (*Beauty*, p. 214), and with Beauty, who is meant to replicate her mother's model.

In Villeneuve's text, marriage results primarily from the fairies' intrigue, competition, and power. In *Child of Light*, Aurora is predestined to become a queen by her mother, and the royal women's competition for power over Lemuria is the cause of her journey towards adulthood. The theme of orchestrating events is clearly transferred from one text into the other. There are, however, also notable differences, which emphasize a tension between the two texts and their contexts, and their dialogic relationship. Above all, the game intentionally features no "Prince Charming," and was meant to update its fairy-tale material by focusing on the theme of growing up to self-sufficiency and independence, the man no longer seen as necessary for the woman's initiation into adulthood.[60] Effacing the Beast might suggest the game intends to question its pre-texts and resolve the debate over the tale's feminist status by stressing women's empowerment. However, as I intend to show, the game appears to curiously disempower its protagonist, despite all its effort at a revisionist dialogue, and reintroduces conservative values, though in its own way. While it substitutes succession and power for the man and marriage, and significantly reinterprets and transforms the character of the mother, it nonetheless replicates Villeneuve's self-sacrificing and obedient heroine, or docile daughter.[61]

Child of Light's adaptation of Villeneuve's fairies

Villeneuve's fairies are transposed into *Child of Light*'s environment as the characters of Aurora, the Duchess/Queen of Light – her supposedly dead mother, in reality Lemuria's rightful Queen – and the antagonists – Umbra and her daughters. They can be identified by their attributes, skills, and backstories. The antagonists' fairy traits are represented through combat skills, basically magic (Norah/Nox joins the party as a non-optional companion and is playable in combat for a section of the game), or visually shapeshifting in boss fights.[62] Aurora's fairy origin is foreshadowed early in the game by the game's system: she has two combat modes, sword and magic, and is granted fairy wings, which unlocks the mechanic of flying, necessary to traverse the game's environment. Aurora's quest to save Lemuria and, as might seem initially, the father, but above all to act and achieve maturity serves to transpose and transform

[60] N. Grayson, *Child of Light Devs on Poetry…*, op. cit. This may be unique to the game – the tale's numerous present-day adaptations may sometimes omit the Beast, but, more often, they concentrate on him, his identity, and his visualization, and generally retain romance as a vital element. See T. Majkowski, A. Zarzycka, *Romance*…, op. cit., pp. 598–606.

[61] T. Majkowski, A. Zarzycka, *Romance…*, op. cit., p. 598.

[62] On shapeshifting in d'Aulnoy as a means of subverting gender norms, see P. Hannon, *Fabulous Identities…*, op. cit., pp. 78–121.

the themes of the tale. The mother's semblance to both Villeneuve's rebelled fairy mother and orchestrating aunt can be established on the basis of cutscenes and collectible poems she apparently wrote herself, *Confessions*, scattered around the game's environment. Those are ambiguous, leave much to the player's deduction and guesses, and may be read in quite different ways. The women are all royal descendants of the ancient founders of Lemuria, the Explorers, and, as is the case of Villeneuve's fairies, no man can equal them. *Confession #8* tellingly lists lovers rejected by the Queen of Light in the late nineteenth-century real world: "Tzars, kaisers, princes, their charms on me spent, / At dawn my heart returned what was lent."[63] And yet the characters represent more than Bacchilega's retellings, or revisions; they are transmedial, transformative interpretations, grounded in a different socio-cultural context, and they consistently and systematically serve to reject love as a motor for women agency.[64] For instance, Umbra transposes Villeneuve's wicked fairy, who exposed the fairy mother's forbidden union with a mortal, then herself fell in love with him, and tried to murder Beauty to seduce him (*Beauty*, pp. 215–216). However, Umbra's motivation is not infatuation: she fights for power – she poisons the Duchess, the run-away Queen and rival, and marries the Duke only to murder Aurora, the rightful heir.

A significant, if mostly invisible, character in the game is the Dutchess/the Queen of Light. She also represents a transformative interpretation, or repetition with variation, in the case of which there is a visible intertextual tension between the game and the tale. Her plotline transposes and yet reverses, in ideological sense, the fairy mother's story. The Queen of Light rebels against tradition as much as Beauty's mother, however, not so much by marrying a mortal and choosing home and family over the duty to sojourn the world (*Beauty*, p. 214) as, primarily, by abandoning Lemuria in search for answers and knowledge (Confession #6: "The explorers went in search of vision, / Yet with tradition we ourselves imprison new, / Frozen, a reflection of the past. / The Secret lies beyond my gaze, a journey vast"). Both women transgress to follow their desires and both face consequences: one is tried, sentenced, and impris-

[63] For *Confessions*, see *Confessions*, "Child of Light Wiki", https://childoflight.fandom.com/wiki/Confessions (accessed: 14.04.2020). Bosman assumes the Queen was searching for a suitable father to her child and finally fell in love with the Duke (F.G. Bosman, *"The Bell…*, op. cit., p. 175). Since the designers intended to update the tale of forced marriage, women agency and sexuality to present-day realities, this interpretation appears suspiciously conservative. Reading the Queen's story from the perspective of Villeneuve's tale helps to highlight its notable aspects, otherwise possibly overlooked. It is not stated if the Duchess loved the Duke, was only infatuated, used him, or got involuntarily caught up in an unplanned relationship: the verses "One dance banished all light and night caught. / You stood in the way and eclipsed the dawn" (*Confession #8*) suggest an unforeseen obstacle rather than love; and, if we read the latter verse as targeted at Aurora, like in *Confession #9*, the child might be seen as such, too.

[64] Following T. Korneeva's reading of Villeneuve's tale as dissociating marriage from love in *Desire…*, this may also be a transferred, yet transformed motif: love is rejected in favor of public activity, and Queens' marriages are temporary and functional, or motivations behind them are ambiguous and left for the player to ponder.

oned in the fairy realm, separated from her beloved family, the other is responsible for leaving Lemuria unprotected, which leads to Umbra's invasion, and then poisoned by her rival, but never truly separated from Aurora. Both initially fail to secure what they long for, and the daughters of both will undergo tests and trials to become more proficient in following their mother's footsteps. Yet, whereas Beauty's mother is finally reunited with her family, the Queen leaves again, almost unnoticed, and family ties dissolve. Whether this means she is redundant once Aurora succeeds her, or finally free to sojourn as she pleases, we do not know.

Under the rule of the Queen of Light, Lemuria seems calcified like a grave. Its castles are ruined, and yet the Queen sits on the throne by day and walks the palace "alone" by night.[65] Stagnation, incapacitation, and oppression by the past with no future, but also thirst for knowledge and, possibly, bringing livelihood back to the realm[66] appear to motivate the Queen to cross the magic mirror-portal and journey into the unknown. In this, she reverses the rebellion of Beauty's mother: she breaks free from the symbolic patriarchal castle to sojourn, the activity the fairy mother rejected in favor of her husband's chambers.[67] While she marries and settles on her quest, she still predestines Aurora to leave home and family, and become a flying queen-sojourner one day (*Child*, chap. 7). Be it single or married, she is clearly oppressed indoors. Thus, while the game transposes the fairy mother's character, it also radically shifts her values and spheres of action – home is substituted for by the freedom of movement, and the developers appear to nod towards the older generation of *salonnières*, who insisted on women's right to function outdoors and in public, while they update the character of the mother to be more independent, self-sufficient, and liberated.

The Queen of Light is also the transposition of the fairy aunt, Villeneuve's orchestrator of events. In this case, however, there is decidedly less variation in the game's adaptation of the tale, and while the events are revised to match the new context, the character's role does not change. What notably changes is solely the destiny of the daughter – the fairy aunt schemes to secure Beauty's happy marriage, and the Queen of Light orchestrates Aurora's journey to secure a rightful ruler for Lemuria, as a result of which the spheres of action shift again. The aunt secretly protects the girl since her mother's imprisonment; orchestrates the love story by instructing the Beast and guiding Beauty in her dreams; and finally intervenes to secure the marriage. The marriage is, however, inevitable for Beauty was cursed to marry a monster as a part

[65] Ubisoft Montreal, *Child of Light*, standard PC edition, 2014 (hereinafter *Child*).

[66] Compare F.G. Bosman, *"The Bell…*, op. cit., pp. 175–176.

[67] A reference to the dance scene of Disney's 1991 *Beauty and the Beast*, the verse: "One dance banished all light and night caught" (*Confession #8*), could signal the reversal of the happily-ever-after marriage ending of the film, and suggest the reinstatement of confinement and incapacitation of a woman who has just managed to break free. The dance scene is the Beast final test, meant to prove he is a cultured man – or, a tamed one. We might wonder who is whom in the game: the tamed Beast and the taming Beauty.

of the punishment for her mother's transgression (*Beauty*, p. 215); the aunt schemes only to make the curse bearable. The Queen of Light, in turn: casts a protective spell that transports Aurora to Lemuria upon mortal danger, thus secretly protecting her; disguised as the Lady of the Forest, sends Aurora on a quest to reclaim the light, in reality undergo tests and become a queen; and finally, seals Aurora's destiny by intervening to resurrect her daughter, mortally struck by Umbra, and publicly proclaim her as the Princess of Light (which Aurora later rejects). Whatever the reason, the Queen cannot, or will not, save Lemuria herself – and because of her former actions, Aurora is meant to take her place: "Who makes this right? / Not me, you, my Child of Light" (Confession #9). Significantly, while the character of the Queen thus remains in tension with that of the fairy mother, their daughters seem to parallel each other in either replicating their mother, or fulfilling their mother's expectations; there is, however, also some tension resulting from the manner in which Beauty is transposed.

Child of Light's adaptation of the abdication of desire

As Swain notes, "Villeneuve's story makes clear […] that love crowns – and masks – the sacrifices the virtuous maiden must make. Love is not a free choice but a potential reward for personal mastery."[68] This mastery is attained as Beauty matures to follow reason and choose the crude Beast, to whom her family owns financial security, and rejects her desire for an attractive youth she meets in her dreams.[69] Tatiana Korneeva consequently reads the novel as complicit in defining the private sphere as proper to women, while still tacitly critical of the contemporary marriage practices. According to her, the tale suggests a means of certain illusory empowerment for women in the (inevitable) marriage market via "highlighting the constructedness of desire and sexuality" and detaching marriage from "emotional imperative": "The sacrifice of active sexual desire thus becomes a strategy of women's defense against their imprisonment within patriarchal and legal structures, their chance to negotiate the freedom."[70] Girls need to know how to "trade" themselves soberly to secure their gain, choosing reason over attraction, and abdicating desire to avoid disillusionment and pain. That is why Beauty needs to undergo a training in virtuousness, reasonability, and docility.

Even though she is urged by her mother in the opposite direction, that of the public, not the private sphere, Aurora transposes that training. The abdication of desire occurs in the game when, instead of a sober wife, the docile daughter becomes a sober ruler. However, undergoing the trials her mother has exposed her to on the quest, Aurora must learn to sacrifice not her erotic desire, but family bonds and personal interest. Apparently, only in this way can she properly bond with her subjects

[68] V.E. Swain, *Beauty's Chambers…*, op. cit., p. 210.

[69] On the marriage market theme, see T. Korneeva, *Desire…*, op. cit., pp. 237–240.

[70] Ibidem, p. 246.

and concentrate on public duty. In the first critical moment of the game, in chapter six, Aurora chooses to return to Austria to save the Duke, who is sick of grief, and abandons her quest in Lemuria. The player has no control over the protagonist at this point, and cannot choose otherwise. Aurora is then severely punished: lured into Umbra's trap by her step-sister, she learns the truth about her step-family (*Child*, chap. 7). She also learns that the needs of the people must be put before her own and her family's needs, because she has responsibilities. Family thus becomes a curious transposition of Villeneuve's spectacular mirrors (*Beauty*, pp. 175–177).

The three mirrors reflect fashionable *mondain* outdoor activities to entertain Beauty in the Beast's palace while she is alone. The tale ultimately dismisses them as uninteresting and disappointing in comparison to the prospect of marriage. In the game, the family are dismissed – in favor of public obligations – as unreliable. Step-family are enemies. The father is a "masculine whiner,"[71] lingering in his bed while his subjects are mortally endangered by a flood. Depressed after Aurora's apparent death, he dies at the climax of the game, unable to comprehend Aurora's obligations (*Child*, chap. 11). The mother may be seen as similarly unreliable: first, she dies in the child's arms; then she orchestrates Aurora's future with no regard for what the girl might desire herself; finally, after the game ends, she is simply forgotten and leaves in the post-credit cutscene. Perhaps the greatest tension that arises between the two texts at this point lies in the brutality with which ties are cut between Aurora and those she loves. While Beauty loses her interest in the mirrors (and outdoors) when she waits for the Beast after her return to the palace, Aurora is violently urged into her function as a Queen, until she yields to her duty and, apparently, gives it precedence even over a mother-daughter reunion, forgetting to talk to the Queen after she becomes a ruler herself. This may cast a doubt over the meaning of the game's ending – is it a happy one indeed? Will she live happily ever after?

Whereas Beauty's sacrificed desire is finally realized as a reward, Aurora's sacrifice of her family is the end of the game. Her only reward is her egalitarian, democratic rule – leading Lemurians and Austrians to jointly govern the realm in the end cutscene. This, however, annuls her right to be private, locking her in a sort of binary logic, instead of actually undoing the private/public dichotomy. Family is a central theme in monster bridegroom tales, with a special role played by the father in the process of the daughter's transition into a new family and adulthood. The game reiterates this to a certain extent, but with a substantial variation. As the game leaves out marriage, "the heroine's move into a different psycho-sexual and social role"[72] should be understandably different. However, the fact that the game resituates the family as the constraining private sphere, to be sacrificed as a hindrance to public activity, signals the persistence of the conservative private/public division, rather than an attempt to

[71] J. Griswold, *The Meanings…*, op. cit., p. 58.

[72] C. Bacchilega, *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 1997, p. 74.

propose a psycho-sexual and social role for a maturing girl (or boy) that could match present-day realities of the players.

Finally, despite all her aunt's machinations, Beauty is given a choice between two men, knows exactly whom she desires, and decides against him, *not* being forced to do so.[73] Aurora never has that much agency as she is not allowed to actually choose between two options one of which *she* would decide on. She is punished when she chooses Austria over Lemuria. The choice between the father and Lemurians is never an actual choice; she responds to the Duke, begging her to return, by stating her obligation, not refusal: "I cannot let Lemurians die" (*Child*, chap. 11). She is then perfectly able to save Austrians from the flood after she defeats Umbra, and so, technically, she could have saved her father, too, if he had waited for her. The choices she makes in the game are never about *her* wellbeing, but others'. And she could not choose to be guilty of Lemuria's demise – for the player cannot, their limited agency curiously reflecting that of the protagonist. The player has no impact on the game's major plotline, and cannot alter Aurora's story, apart from adding companions to the party, playable in combat, or playing alone.[74] All in all, Aurora's only empowerment is choosing not to be a feudal ruler, and assuming her egalitarian identity – and yet even this is undermined by her mother in the secret cutscene post credits, as she calls Aurora "a queen through and through." In all this, the game is also an adaptation, a repetition with a variation, and there appears a tension, but the nature of the tension is that the game starts by promising to expand and update the most alluring fragment of the tale, female agency,[75] and ends by minimizing it to imposed dutiful public service. Aurora's journey towards adulthood is a poor self-assertive odyssey.[76]

Conclusions

The aim of the above analysis was to investigate in what manner, and with what results, *Child of Light* adapts – that is transformatively interprets and remediates, or transfers with the use of resources the medium has at its disposal – two elements, or fragments, of Villeneuve's *Beauty and the Beast*: the fairies as orchestrators of events, and the theme of the abdication of desire. As the analysis shows, the game not

[73] V.E. Swain, *Beauty and the Beast*, op. cit., p. 107.

[74] The story offers some branching, but no alternative routes and multiple endings. The player may enrich the core plotline by doing companions' side-quests, but the core plotline is fixed; certain characters will even join Aurora automatically to further it. This may result in creating a distance between the player and their character, which will increase at the end of the game, once the player loses agency entirely and learns how the story ends by watching the final cutscene. The player simultaneously loses insight into Aurora's thoughts and emotions; once a ruler, Aurora is inaccessible, and finally – absent. She is missing from the post-credit cutscene, and other characters talk about her.

[75] C. Bacchilega, *Postmodern Fairy Tales…*, op. cit., p. 76.

[76] P. Hannon, *Fabulous Identities…*, op. cit., p. 111. Compare Aurora with D'Aulnoy's Babiole, ibidem, pp. 109–111.

only transfers the selected elements of the tale into the game's environment, visual layer, textual features, and mechanics, but it also enters into a dialogue with the literary text. The Lemurian royal women and their actions, as much as Aurora's maturing to reject her family and self-interest in favor of public duty, can be identified as elements originating in Villeneuve's tale. Those elements are then substantially transformed to match both the situational logic of the game and its modern context of the demand for more women presence in games and less stereotypical feminine representation.

The results, however, are ambiguous. At times, as in the case of the Queen of Light as the transposition of Beauty's mother, there is a visible tension between the source text and the game, as the values shift radically and the game appears to propose a mother-character indeed meant to be attractive to the contemporary women players: free, active, self-sufficient, and dedicated to her own goals, even if parts of her story are unclear and open to interpretation. At other times, however, as in the case of Aurora's training in docility, even though the character is transformed to match the contemporary context of the game, it is striking that the theme of the training persists and even takes a more severe form. Perhaps some intertextual tension arises from the fact that the designers might be stripping Villeneuve's fantasy of its sugar coating by stating that, simply put, "life can be hard." Notably, it was their stated intention to re-contextualize fairy tales and address the present-day common reality of young adults, regardless of gender, who refuse to grow up to independence and overrely on their parents, for fear of responsibility and adult life's hardships.[77] Is that, however, the only message that could be offered to the women player audience of a "feminine" game? Or perhaps the game's adaptation of the abdication of desire theme all in all points to a failed attempt at updating the tale?

While in production, *Child of Light* was announced as a game "about becoming an adult and how that's something you do by yourself," with player choice options resulting in multiple endings.[78] The published game, however, offers a fixed ending and a fixed message. Aurora grows up to make a sacrifice because that is "the right thing" to do; however, her agency is annulled by her mother, the actual power broker. The story thus represents a journey towards predestined succession through a forced training in docility and the abdication of the desire for a family and one's own self-interest. Although this reverses and transforms Beauty's journey towards arranged marriage, the game still reiterates the implicit truth of Villeneuve's *conte*, though from its own perspective – power, as much as love, crowns and masks sacrifices. As a result, the game reproduces the binary logic of the separate spheres of action.

The question to be posed at this point is about what sort of change the game managed to propose when it comes to the representation of women in games. Is this

[77] N. Grayson, *Child of Light Devs on Poetry…*, op. cit.
[78] Ibidem.

a case of of Light Devs on Poetry… *faux* feminism?[79] As Weronika Kostecka proposes, false, fake or *faux* feminism may be conceptualized as postfeminism, that is pretended feminism, limited to individual emancipation and empowerment, part of the consumption culture, and a kind of "media manipulation whereby representations of strong, active women – attractive to themselves but also to men – are created to increase the demand for a particular product."[80] By Kostecka's criteria,[81] *Child of Light* may be seen as a postfeminist text in various respects: from the protagonist who is active but not the agent, to the story's focus on the rivalry between Queens and their daughters. The game was obviously meant to propose a certain representation of active, strong women to increase its own demand and, in general, draw more diverse player audience to the gaming industry (hence more potential buyers). Simultaneously, the transposition of certain elements and strategies of Villeneuve's text such as women's sacrifice, abdication of desire, external orchestration of events, and the dichotomy of the public and the private, resulted in creating a player character who, although strong and active, still appears to be victimized through an imposed, strictly delimited, and constraining social function – even if this function is public, and so traditionally reserved to men. However, a complete and nuanced reading of the game from this angle would require a deepened analysis from the joint perspective of feminist, fairy tale, and game studies.[82]

The question of the impact of the production context on the game's content, definitely an interesting one, remains open to further analysis, too. Perhaps the game was indeed "rushed out of the door"[83] – hence limited agency and no multiple endings. Or perhaps ambiguities in the game's story could be intended and meant for further exploration in a series. *Child of Light* is Ubisoft's original IP[84] and hence could be potentially developed into a franchise, which is a typical development and business strategy for AAA games.[85] Finally, fairly likely, not many players in the global village are familiar with Villeneuve's *conte*, nor its ideological underpinnings. While this does not preclude the possibility to still view the text as an adaptation, it raises the

[79] See L. Gablehouse, L. Pershing, *Disney's Enchanted: Patriarchal Backlash and Nostalgia in a Fairy Tale Film* [in:] P. Greenhill, S.E. Matrix (eds.), *Fairy Tale Films…*, op. cit., pp. 153–154.

[80] W. Kostecka, *Postfeminizm jako perspektywa rozważań nad kulturą popularną – propozycja metody badań literackiej fantastyki dla młodych dorosłych*, "Filoteknos" 2022, vol. 12, p. 223 [my translation].

[81] Ibidem, pp. 225–236.

[82] See A. Kliś-Brodowska, *A Fairy-Tale Digital Game…*, op. cit. where I point to the relationship between the game's potential social revisionism and its industry context as vital for the understanding of the game's content, and touch on the potential strategies the game might be seen to employ to subvert its "postfeminist" message.

[83] Black Orpheus, comment in *Where are the alternate endings?* thread at Steam, 22.05.2014, https://steamcommunity.com/app/256290/discussions/0/558756256590856083/ (accessed: 26.06.2023).

[84] P. Plourde, *Small Projects…*, op. cit.

[85] See e.g. D.B. Nieborg, *Triple-A: The Political Economy of the Blockbuster Video Game*, PhD dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 2011.

question of its actual impact.[86] Perhaps the question to be posed is why the developers would invest their time and visible effort in adapting, updating, and revising elements of a somewhat obscure cultural artefact that the majority of players might not ever recognize. Why would they not acknowledge this? Is this related to the fact that *Child of Light* was released only several months prior to the outbreak of #Gamergate scandal? All of this points to the need for a deeper analysis of the game – again, necessarily in the context of the gaming industry. Perhaps such an analysis could also shed more light on the game's message itself; that is, however, another story.

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[86] Contrary to Hutcheon, Bacchilega does not view awareness as a condition for adaptation; however, she links the degree of awareness with the impact of an adaptation. C. Bacchilega, *Adaptation…*, op. cit., p. 146.

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