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"And (Don't) Stay on the Path…" – Transformation of the Fairy Tale into the Psychological Thriller in the Game *The Path*

„(Nie) trzymaj się ścieżki…" – przekształcenie baśni w thriller psychologiczny w grze komputerowej *The Path*

The Path, an adventure game developed by the studio Tale of Tales in 2009, re-tells the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood* in a special way: it reverses the main properties of the genre distinguished by the Russian structuralist Vladimir Propp. The aim of this paper is to prove that such a reversal results in the transformation of the game's genre into that of psychological thriller. The basic structure for the analysis in the paper is Vladimir Propp's morphological theory of the folk tale. The choice of this theory is motivated by the fact that the Russian scholar's set of ideas emphasises the role of characters of the narrative and their actions, both of which are crucial elements of computer games.

"ONCE UPON A TIME…" – VLADIMIR PROPP'S INSIGHT INTO THE FAIRY TALE

Having examined many traditional folk tales, Propp concluded that the narratives consist of some components which are typical for almost every representative of the genre. He thus "dismantled" the fairy tale into "morphemes", obtaining a pattern called "morphology" (Propp, 1968:19). Those "basic components of the tale", are, above all, functions (1968:19). Describing the function as an "act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of

the action" (1968:21), Propp offers the set of functions that represents "the mor-phological foundation of fairy tales in general" (1968:25). Usually, one function facilitates another; for instance, in order to defeat the villain, the hero has to fight with him first.

The scholar asserts that all stories begin with "some sort of initial situation" (Propp, 1968:25), which is not yet a function in a strict sense; this can be, for in-stance, enumeration of the characters from the story or introduction of the main protagonist. After that initial situation there comes the first function:an "absenta-tion", where the character "absents himself from home" (1968:26). Then there is an "interdiction", which can be, for instance, "do not skip the path" (1968:26).

Apart from functions, Propp distinguishes the roles of *dramatis personae*, who are the performers of functions. *Dramatis personae* perform functions, which are grouped into spheres – each belonging to a certain type of character. Propp dif-ferentiates several types of characters, such as a hero, villain, false hero or helper.

After interdiction there comes the function "the interdiction is violated" (Propp, 1968:27) – and the villain, to whom there are assigned several successive functions, such as receiving information about the victim or doing harm to others, comes into sight (1968:28–35). Some subsequent functions concern the personage of the hero, whose sphere of actions embraces, for example, defeating the villain (1968:53) and liquidating the misfortune (1968:53). Then the hero comes back (1968:55), the villain is punished (1968:63) and the narrative ends happily.

The Russian structuralist offers a fixed model of storytelling, in which events come in a particular order, for fairy tales generally follow a fixed, linear path of narrative. By contrast, many video games tell stories in a non-linear way. In other words, thanks to its interactive ability, the game enables the player to explore var-ious paths of a narrative. This can be achieved, for instance, by allowing the player to make some decisions or, in a more general sense, leaving him in an open world to interact with its elements in various possible ways. Such a game is *The Path*.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE FAIRY TALE IN *THE PATH* AS THE RESULT OF THE REVERSAL OF THE GENRE'S PRINCIPLES

As Propp points out, in the fairy tale there are functions and roles of *dramatis personae*. A faithful adaptation of a fairy tale from one medium to another demands transferring functions, as those morphemes of the narrative are indispensable for the development of the story. It would be impossible, for instance, to imagine a film adaptation of *Little Red Riding Hood* without the girl's leaving home or entering the forest. The same goes for characters: they play significant roles in the narrative,

so they are not to be ignored in the process of adaptation. This rule seems to be a starting point for the transmedial studies of fairy tales (as, for example, shown in the article "Fitting the Glass Slipper: A Comparative Study of the Princess's Role in the Harry Potter Novels and Films" [Lin, 2010]).

At first glance the story told in *The Path* seems to be parallel with a traditional fairy tale: there are the forest, path and girl who goes to her grandmother. And although at the beginning of the game there are six girls in red clothes to choose from, one supposes that it actually does not matter whom he chooses because this choice does not affect the story in any way. One thus chooses whichever character he likes and the game begins: the girl finds herself on the path within the forest. At this point one assumes that the set of functions and roles offered by Propp has been smoothly transferred to the game.

However, the game's story is something different than a fairy tale: it is a psychological thriller. The latter is defined as "a novel, film, etc., in the thriller genre which focuses on the psychology of its characters, or which psychologically manipulates its audience or readership" (*Psychological thriller*). The main characteristics of the psychological thriller are, according to Sally Munt, "a dissolving sense of reality; reticence in moral pronouncements; obsessive, pathological characters; the narrative privileging of complex, tortured relationships" (qtd. in Pittard, 2016). All of those features are present in the game.

The metaphorical way of understanding the story of the Little Red Riding Hood in *The Path* brings to mind symbolical interpretations of the narrative. Jack Zipes, for instance, says that *Little Red Riding Hood* is "a tale about rape and the survival or non-survival of a rape victim. It is a tale about predators and how to deal with them" (2006:28). According to the scholar, Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm changed "an oral folk tale about the social initiation of a young woman into a narrative about rape in which the heroine is obliged to bear the responsibility for sexual violation" (Zipes, 2006:28).

Jack Zipes also discusses one of the oral versions of the fairy tale, in which a young peasant girl participates in a social ritual associated with the sewing communities: she "proves she can handle needles, replace an older woman, and contend with the opposite sex" (2006:35). Yvonne Verdier goes even further in that interpretation, saying that "as for the needles, threaded through its eye, in the folklore of seamstresses it refers to an emphatically sexual symbolism. Prostitutes once wore needles on their sleeves to advertise their profession" (qtd. in Hayton, 2013:4).

The story told in *The Path* seems to be similar to those symbolic interpretations of the tale; yet the narrative in the game contains functions and *dramatis personae* distinguished by Propp. The point is that the game uses those morphological elements, but it reverses them, as if going off from the "path" of the fairy tale. What is thus going

to be proved is that *The Path* transforms the tale about the girl in the red hood into the psychological thriller by means of skipping the "safe" pattern of the fairy tale's structure. The game reverses the logic of the fairy tale by rejecting that pattern. That rejection creates a kind of lack in the framework of the game's genre – the lack that is to be filled in with another genre, which is the psychological thriller.

Functions

At the beginning of the game the character finds herself on the path in the forest and the player sees a large inscription on the screen, saying "stay on the path". That command signifies a prohibition to enter the forest, which occurs in the original version of the fairy tale as well. This function is called by Propp the "interdiction". As for the literary version of the story, if the interdiction were respected by the main character, she would never meet the wolf and her grandmother would welcome her in one piece.

In the game the player can stay on the path, but he can also skip it and go into the forest to explore it. However, if one decides to choose the first option, seemingly more rational and safe, it quickly turns out that this choice is the worst possible: the character arrives at the grandmother's house, enters the room in which she meets the wolf with the dead grandma and the game ends in failure.

To make a progress in the game, the player should thus skip the path and explore the forest. That is what Propp calls the "violation of interdiction", which is another function distinguished by the scholar, coming right after the interdiction. In traditional fairy tales, the violation of interdiction normally leads to trouble. So does it in the original version of *Little Red Riding Hood*, where the order's violation caused by skipping the path results in facing the danger. In the game, the violation of interdiction poses the only chance for the six characters to face their traumas and recover from devastating events.

At this point, the transformation of one genre into another begins; the fairy tale is no longer a fairy tale – now it becomes a psychological thriller. The examination of the interdiction and its violation in both literary and computer versions of the story proves that the change of one genre into another takes place at a particular moment of the game's narrative, namely when the story "skips" the path – not only in its literal, but also metaphorical sense, in which the "path" is regarded as the logic of the fairy tale established by the Russian scholar.

Rejecting the pattern of interdiction and reversing the consequences of its violation, the story in *The Path* creates the lack in the framework of its genre, which is quickly filled in by elements of thriller that one experiences exploring the forest; those elements are violence, dead bodies and mystery. All that one needs to do to

face up to the thriller in the game is to skip the "path" of the fairy tale. If the player does so, he becomes a participant of the generic transformation, turning abruptly from an innocent central character of a fairy tale into the main protagonist of the dark, ambiguous story.

Further evidence of the point that reversing structural patterns of the fairy tale in *The Path* transforms that genre into the thriller is not far from the example discussed above. According to Propp, the violation of interdiction is the point of the narrative at which a new personage, the villain, enters the story (1968:27). Several subsequent functions relate to this persona, such as: "the villain receives information about his victim", "the victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy" and "the villain causes harm or injury to a member of a family" (Propp, 1968:28–35). The villain is present in the literary *Little Red Riding Hood* as the wolf, who, having received knowledge about the girl and her grandma (information about the victim), arrives at the grandmother's house before the child does so, and finally devours the elderly woman (the deception and injury). In the game, again, these functions are reversed.

The "wolf" from *The Path* – or rather one of six "wolves", since each character meets "her own" manifestation of fear in the forest – gathers no information about the victims at all. Conversely: if a player wants to know the story of any of the girls, he has to initiate the confrontation of the character with her "wolf", who can be, for instance, the drowned body, dangerous animal or demanding teacher. In addition, the confrontation with the wolf enables the character to visit the grandmother's house, but this time the visit does not end in failure; instead, the character obtains there more information about herself and her past fears. Actually, this is the aim of the game, which cannot be finished in any particular – or typical of games – way, such as by displaying the classical "the end" on the screen. And if the character's self-knowledge is the aim of the game, one may risk the statement that the confrontation with the wolf is the only way to finish the game.

None of the "wolves" in *The Path* is thus keen on getting information about either a girl or her grandmother, because the villains do not want to cause any "harm or injury to a member of a family". If there is no such an aim, there is no situation where "the victim submits to deception and thereby unwittingly helps his enemy" either. The elimination of one function offered by Propp may thus cause the unavoidable rejection of several other functions if those other actions are somehow connected with the one that is eliminated. In the case of the three functions under discussion, the element that combines them is the persona of the villain – they belong to the sphere of his actions.

At this point it is crucial to come back to the statement that the reversal of morphological functions of the fairy tale in the game leads to the transformation

of its story's genre from the fairy tale into the psychological thriller. According to some programmes of trauma treatment, one can heal his traumatic experiences by the "confrontation of feared stimuli either through imagination or in person" (Fitzgibbons, Foa and Zoellner, 2001:160). Each of the six characters from *The Path* is somehow "exposed" to her fear, embodied by a particular manifestation of the wolf. The only way to "win" the game is to meet that wolf, as the only way to recover from the traumatic experience is through the exposition to the stressor. Exploring the forest is thus like exploring the character's mind; making the girl face her trauma means helping her recover from a harsh experience.

This tangible presence of psychoanalysis in the game proves the shift of its narrative's genre to the thriller. The point in the narrative of *The Path* is simply to face the danger, which makes the girl stronger so that she is finally able to visit her grandma's house, where she receives more information about herself. In order to let the character undergo such a therapy, a player must act in the opposite way to the pattern of functions established by Propp: not only does the character have to violate the interdiction and skip the path of the fairy tale, but also she has to gather information about herself from the wolf, instead of informing him, as it takes place in the traditional version of the tale.

If there is a villain, says Propp, there is also a hero who defeats him, whereby "the initial misfortune or lack is liquidated" (1968:53). In the original version of the fairy tale, the hero is the lumberjack who rescues grandma. After the lumberjack's intervention, the initial order is restored: all the characters are alive and nothing poses a threat for them – the "misfortune is liquidated". In the game, the situation looks, again, different: there is no hero who would restore the initial order. There, in truth, appears the lumberjack; however, his role is entirely different than of the hero from the original version of the tale: the lumberjack from the game is one of the wolves or, as Propp would prefer, villains. The villain cannot behave like a hero – he cannot defeat the villain, for no character can defeat himself. And the one who creates misfortune cannot at the same time liquidate it. Such a situation would be, perhaps, possible in more complex genres, but not in the fairy tale, where characters are generally either good or bad and there is no room for ambiguity.

In the case of those two hero-related functions – "the villain is defeated" and "the initial misfortune is liquidated" – there thus takes place the same mechanism as in the group of functions from the villain's sphere: the rejection of the first function prevents the development of the next; and, again, that happens only because these functions are logically connected. There that connection is based on the role of the hero.

The option to defeat a villain who does harm to characters does not take place in *The Path*, as there is no way to defeat anyone in the game (unless facing one's trauma is a kind of self-defeat). The story from the game implies that it is

not villains who are guilty of the misfortune of the girls but the girls themselves are to blame for that. The girls enter the forest despite the yellow writing on the screen with advice to stay on the path. They are the ones who break the rules. The game, in fact, almost makes the character skip the path, otherwise the story ends in failure; however, it is the character's – or the player's – choice to break the rule, so they are responsible for the consequences, not the wolf himself. There is thus no reason to punish or defeat him.

If the player does not want to lose the game, he has to skip the path. The girl is thus made to skip the path and face the danger. She is doomed to take the responsibility for the danger that she encounters – and this responsibility is unavoidable because she has not obeyed the prohibition that says not to enter the forest. In fairy tales a character who is eventually defeated or punished is the one who deserves that, because he or she is bad. The villain, either a person or creature, is literally punished by, for instance, being banished or killed. In *The Path* the situation is different: the girl is punished, although at the same time she has been made to do the thing for which she is punished, and no one blames the wolf, although he represents a harmful experience. Nothing is as clear and simple in that game as it is in fairy tales – the characters are complex and ambiguous, which shifts the genre of the game's narrative towards the thriller.

The pattern discussed by Propp is, again, distorted: the one that is responsible for evil is not the villain, but the girl herself. That is a kind of tragedy, which as a genre "treats in a serious and dignified style the sorrowful or terrible events encountered or caused by a heroic individual" (Conversi and Sewall). Usually the tragedy ends with the disaster, disorder or the hero's downfall (Baldick, 2001:260), which makes this genre distinct from the fairy tale, characterised by a happy ending, the restoration of the initial order and the punishment of bad characters.

In *The Path* evil comes from the inside (the girl herself), not the outside, which again proves that not everything is black and white, as shown in fairy tales. The shift of Propp's function of defeat leads to the shift of the responsibility for the evil in the game, turning the black and white world of the fairy tale into the thrilling reality of the tragic, ambiguous characters with a complex inner world.

According to Propp, when "the villain is defeated", "the initial misfortune is liquidated" (1968:53). In the case of the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood*, the misfortune is the death of the grandmother devoured by the wolf. This misfortune is liquidated after the wolf is defeated: the grandma comes back alive. If there is no function called "the villain is defeated" in the game, one may assume that, by analogy with the cases discussed above, where the absence of one function blocks the presence of another, in *The Path* there is no function "the initial misfortune is liquidated".

The very issue of "misfortune" in the game is shown in quite a different way than in the original version of the story. The grandma in *The Path* is dead, but this is not the main problem in the game. A greater misfortune lies behind the fact that the girls face the lack, abuse, or even death and murder in the forest. Each girl has her own misfortune (for instance, rape or addiction) represented by the wolf. The misfortunes from the game relate to the characters themselves, not the grandmother. The forest becomes thus an even more tragic place than the house of the grandmother, despite the fact that she is lying dead there.

The misfortune in *The Path* cannot be liquidated, because the story in the game is not a fairy tale. In the case of fairy tales, such bad events as the murdering or devouring a character by a dangerous animal must be withdrawn because there has to occur a happy ending. In *The Path* there is no happy ending; moreover, there is no clear ending at all: when the end is expected, the player is just taken to the opening screen, which suggests that the traumas which the characters have to encounter never end, being experienced on and on.

Such an open, fearsome ending, implying that evil will return and haunt the characters forever, is a feature of the psychological thriller. In the case of the function "misfortune is liquidated" there takes place the reversal of Propp's function as well: misfortune is not removed from the story – conversely: it lasts forever. And that reversal of the story's function results in, as in the case of the previously discussed functions, the transformation of the genre: the fairy tale evolves into the thriller.

To conclude the exploration of the functions in *The Path*, one may distinguish several functions offered by Propp in the game, but those functions are not transferred one-to-one to the virtual reality; instead, they are first reversed and then applied to the interactive narrative. Such a reversal of the fairy tale's structure in the game results in the transformation of the genre of the fairy tale into that of the psychological thriller, with ambiguous characters, dramatic or even tragic events and the unclear ending, suggesting that evil one experiences will be endless.

Dramatis personae

Apart from functions, which are characters' actions, Propp distinguishes also several roles of the characters, such as the villain, helper or hero. Those characters, called *dramatis personae*, perform functions in the narrative. Functions can be grouped into spheres of characters' actions. The aim of this section is to support the statement made in the preceding part of the essay, which says that the game reverses structural elements discussed by the Russian scholar to transform the genre of the story about the Little Red Riding Hood from the fairy tale into the thriller.

In the traditional version of the story, the villain is the wolf that devours the grandmother, whereas in the game the personage of wolf is presented in a metaphorical way. There are six types of wolves, each symbolising an individual character's trauma or fear. One of them is a young blond man dragging a pack which looks like a corpse in a rug. The girl meets him on a creepy, abandoned playground. They sit together; the man offers her a cigarette and they smoke. The abandoned playground may suggest that the girl's trauma concerns her childhood; the man with a corpse can be associated with a destructive impact that smoking has on a person's health. The playground is abandoned, which means that instead of playing there, the girl spent her childhood somewhere else, for instance, in hospital, as smoking led to her – or someone else's from her environment, her parents', for instance – health's ruin.

Equally mysterious is another character's wolf, a music teacher. The teacher may stand for the trauma caused by the fact that the girl was not talented enough to become a musician; or she might have abandoned her artistic projects because she had so many other duties concerning her family or school that she had no time to do what she wanted to (after meeting the wolf the girl is allowed to enter her grandma's house, in which there are piles of books – that suggestion makes the latter interpretation more plausible).

But not every wolf has to be ambiguous – for example, the youngest character meets a wolf which is similar to the animal from the traditional fairy tale. Though less mysterious than others, this wolf also provides a metaphorical message: the girl has not yet encountered the dangers of the world to the extent the older ones have; she knows the evil solely from stories she reads, so her only trauma is an animal from the fairy tale. She jumps at his back and rides him.

That image justifies the purpose of the wolves' presence in the game: they are fears, memories and traumas which are there to be subjugated by the girls. In the traditional story the wolf uses the naivety of the child to gather information about her and her grandmother. He then uses the information, which makes him stronger, because now he is able to achieve his goal: to devour grandmother and then, perhaps, do the same with the girl. In the game the girl has to face her trauma, and when she finally does so, she is the one who becomes stronger.

Each of the six girls therefore meets the wolf to confront and subjugate her fears. Taming one's fear or trauma is the element of the game's story that makes its genre closer to the psychological thriller. Gaining the control over the wolf is one of the moments in *The Path* where the structure offered by the Russian scholar is reversed. It seems, thus, that functions are not the only elements of fairy tale's morphology that skip the path of Propp's pattern of the fairy tale, transforming that genre into the psychological thriller: the roles of *dramatis personae* work in the same way.

Further evidence of the statement that fixed models of characters functioning in the fairy tale are reversed in the game is the role of the game's helper. The helper's spheres of actions generally relate to helping other characters, mainly the hero, to remove the misfortune from the story. There appears a kind of helper in the game, too: the girl in the white dress that runs to and fro in the forest. She runs around the main character, so it is very hard to lose the sight of her. She is a sort of a guide, because, if the character interacts with her, the guide is able to take her back to the path from the forest.

However, as proved in the previous analyses in the paper, it is not advisable to come back to the path. The moment in which the helper's role starts transforming the genre of the fairy tale into the thriller is when the girl trusts the only character that she meets inside the dark forest and lets her guide her. The role of the helper is reversed: by taking the girl out from the forest, the guide disturbs her from the possibility to face her fear on her own, which is the only chance to get over the trauma.

In the fairy tale, the function of the helper is simply to help. Yet, the reality of the game is so complex that even a simple act of helping turns out to be something opposite. Later in the game, however, when all six stories are completed, it is possible to play that guide. She combines all the six stories in one experience and gathers the remaining information about the girls – so, at the end of the day, she is helpful to the player. But her main function within the narrative, based on helping, which is in fact not helping, disqualifies her from the role of the helper in a fairy tale – at least in Propp's understanding, in which this personage's aim is to help to remove the misfortune from the story.

The role of the lumberjack in the original version of the fairy tale is to rescue the grandmother from dying inside the wolf's stomach. It is the task for the hero – another crucial persona in the fairy tale. He restores the initial order by defeating the evil power, usually represented by the villain. Strangely enough, in *The Path* the lumberjack is one of the wolves – so he is a villain. And there is no hero in the game at all; the girls are not heroes, for their actions do not provide the restoration of the initial order – and they do not defeat the villain.

One of the most radical ways to reverse the role of the *dramatis personae* is by removing them from the narrative. The hero's sphere of actions is to defend the good and defeat the evil; his actions result in the liquidation of the misfortune. And, since the hero plays such an important role in the fairy tale, one can risk the statement that with no hero there is no fairy tale. In the game there is no hero, and the helper is a person who in fact does not help; the girl is thus left in the forest on her own to face her fear by herself, which happens in thrillers.

HAPPILY EVER AFTER? CONCLUSIONS

The transformation of the genre of the fairy tale into the thriller in *The Path* starts from the reversal of the basic morphological elements of the fairy tale distinguished by Vladimir Propp, such as functions (actions of characters) and *dramatis personae* (roles of characters). Skipping the path of the Russian structuralist's pattern of morphology, the game's narrative ceases to be a fairy tale. What is more, the features typical of this genre are becoming less visible with every step taken further into the forest. The distortion of the functions and characters' roles in the game creates the framework for the psychological thriller, with complex characters, traumatic events and the threads open to interpretation.

The rejection of the structural elements of the fairy tale in *The Path* results in the rejection of the whole genre. It shows that as a result of breaking the main principles of the fairy tale there can emerge another genre, which in this case is a psychedelic thriller. Moreover, the fact that the fairy tale shifts to the psychological thriller so smoothly proves that those two genres are different, but at the same time they are complementary – the latter reveals the hidden, suppressed and unspoken aspects of the former.

The only possible ending in the fairy tale is a happy ending, where the evil is defeated and the order of the world is restored; this shows one of the functions of the genre, namely its "naïve morality". According to the critic André Jolles, the aim of the fairy tale is to answer the question "how should things be in the world?" (qtd. in Menninghaus, 1999:195). The genre implies that there should be justice in the world – and it presents the world in which the evil is defeated, giving the readers the sense of justice and the moral compensation. In the psychological thriller the world is full of injustice, suffering and violence; so is the world of *The Path*. Instead of looking for a compensation, the player of this psychological thriller looks for the excitement and sensation, learning by the way that, indeed, there are more than two paths to choose – life is neither black nor white; and, no matter which path the player takes, he is the one who has to take the full responsibility for his choices.

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ABSTRAKT

Celem artykułu jest próba analizy procesu transformacji baśni w thriller psychologiczny w grze komputerowej *The Path*. Punkt wyjścia do rozważań stanowi teoria strukturalna Vladimira Proppa, który poddał badaniom tradycyjne baśni, wyodrębniając ich elementy wspólne, takie jak funkcje i role postaci. Rosyjski strukturalista w swojej teorii jako kluczowe elementy opowieści uwypukla bohaterów i ich działania, istotne nie tylko z punktu widzenia teoretyków literatury, ale również badaczy podejmujących refleksję nad grami komputerowymi. Studium wykazuje, że funkcje i role bohaterów tradycyjnych baśni wyróżnione przez Proppa zostają w *The Path* zdeformowane: gra „schodzi" z wyznaczonej przez strukturę baśni ścieżki, tworząc lukę w gatunkowej przestrzeni, która zostaje wypełniona elementami właściwymi dla thrillera psychologicznego. Odwrócenie i deformacja funkcji oraz roli postaci baśniowych skutkuje przeobrażeniem opowiedzianej w grze historii w thriller. Owo przeobrażenie wydaje się niezwykle płynne dlatego, że baśń i thriller psychologiczny nie są całkowicie odmiennymi, wykluczającymi się gatunkami; przeciwnie – uzupełniają się wzajemnie. Drugi pokazuje i dopowiada to, co pierwszy przemilcza lub zataja.

Słowa klucze: gra komputerowa, Vladimir Propp, gatunek, baśń, thriller psychologiczny

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to prove that the narrative of the game *The Path* reverses the main properties of the fairy tale distinguished by the Russian structuralist Vladimir Propp. This results in the transformation of the game story's genre from the fairy tale into that of the psychological thriller. The Russian scholar's theory emphasises the role of characters of the narrative and their actions, which are significant components of the literary story, as well as the one that is told in the computer game. The study proves that the reversal of the functions and roles of *dramatis personae* in the game's narrative results in the development of the elements characteristic for the psychological thriller in the game. The fact that this shift is fluent is an evidence that those two genres, although dissonant, have many common elements. The fairy tale and thriller are complementary – the latter reveals the hidden and suppressed aspects of the former.

Keywords: computer game, Vladimir Propp, genre, fairy tale, psychological thriller