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## **Incarnations of Little Red Riding Hood in Board and Video Games**

**Abstract:** Since Charles Perrault put down his fairy tale version of *Little Red Riding Hood* in 1697, scholars have discovered that his was just one of many versions, and that the heroine has been constantly adapted into new media (for a brief overview of the process and strategies, see: Orenstein (2002, pp. 2–26) and Doughty (2006, pp. 36–51)). Susana Tosca has studied the phenomenon of adaptation when the fairy tale is translated into digital media (2013). The purpose of this chapter is to take into account the next step in the evolution of the tale: that is, LRRH in the postdigital period.

**Keywords:** Little Red Riding Hood, video games, board games, postdigital.

### **1. Little Red Riding Hood and board games**

Although there is certainly a postdigital approach to *Little Red Riding Hood's*<sup>1</sup> themes and forms in contemporary films or songs, such as Lady Gaga's *Monster* (2009), the recent remake *Illang* (2018) or the anime adaptation *Beastars* (2019), the focus of this chapter will be on the current ludic field, and will thus consider LRRH as portrayed in board games and video games. I will try to unveil the underlying recycling strategies operating at each step to present LRRH to the players.

There are two main points I will try to convey through this section: firstly, the production market for board games has entered into a postdigital context, in which the lines between producer and consumer blur together. And secondly, more and more board games in the postdigital era tend to remediate video games. Such remediation is most noticeable in their aesthetics, but also in the implementation of certain non-traditional board gaming elements, such as apps, which provide narration; audio-visual clues; hidden information or an AI that acts as the opponent of the players. I will discuss some examples of both cases.

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1 LRRH hereinafter.

## 1.2. Little Red Riding Hood meets crowdfunding

*Crowdfunding* (sometimes also referred to as *kickstarting*) is a practice in which creators ask for funding from individual backers interested in the project, who often contribute to the project with their vision, thus creating a semi-collaborative piece of work. The two most relevant platforms for crowdfunding board games are *Kickstarter*<sup>2</sup> and *GameFound*.<sup>3</sup>

The most successful campaigns aimed at producing board games via crowdfunding now collect millions of dollars from enthusiastic backers.<sup>4</sup> Reaching these impressive figures requires a deep knowledge of the crowdfunding system and platforms: these are spaces of interaction between creators and their public that are constantly open to suggestions. This effectively blurs the lines between authors/producers and clients/consumers, leading unequivocally to the age of the *prosumer* and *prosumption* (mixing production and consumption). This is a phenomenon that, although as old as humanity, has become heavily accentuated in the postdigital entourage, which excels in and promotes this kind of relationship. See, for instance, the claims made by the creators in the game *Legend Academy* (2022) (a game about LRRH that I will examine later) in *GameFound*:


We want to work together as a community to make this game as great as possible! If you want to play the game now or become part of the playtesting community, watch the Playtester video below. [...] *We will also be naming all playtesters (that give feedback) in the rulebook because you helped improve the game!* [italics in the original].<sup>5</sup>

The above paragraph means that the creators are directly inviting their backers into the playtesting phase of production, which is a key part of the development of the game and requires expertise, feedback and creative thinking on the backers' part. A nominal reward is offered in exchange for their effort (crediting their names in the rulebook), but above all, this means producers will be tailoring the product to the immediate needs of the consumers, who are the ones creating the

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2 <https://www.kickstarter.com>.

3 <https://gamefound.com>.

4 See for instance, can ns up to 12 million dollars here: *Most funded gaming projects*, retrieved 15.06.2022, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/283843/crowdfunding-most-funded-gaming-projects/#:~:text=Frosthaven%20was%20the%20highest%20funded,upgrades%20to%20improve%20their%20performance>.

5 Retrieved 15.05.2022, from <https://gamefound.com/projects/el-dorado-games/legend-academy?previewPhase=CrowdfundingEnded>.

final rules with their comments on playtesting. The same trend can be appreciated in the Kickstarter project *Paradise Lost*<sup>6</sup> (2022), another game featuring LRRH:

What other stories would you like to see? Give us a shout and let us know.

To hear more about history embedded in board game design, join us later today for an interview with Gabe Barrett on his show, Board Game Design Lab: <http://www.boardgame-design-lab.com/>

Let's keep it going!

Tom & Team Green Feet Games [...]

Thanks for all your continued inputs and support. We are good listeners :)<sup>7</sup>



Trying to lure the backer into different channels besides the simple webpage in Kickstarter or GameFound, and offering videos or pics in YouTube or Instagram, chats in Discord, etc., is common practice in the postdigital era, where the user is assumed to navigate across different platforms and share the experience, thus contributing to the process of going viral, another characteristic feature of the postdigital recycling strategy.

Although the difference between production and consumption has always been an artificial, purely conceptual one, as Marx (1981 [1884]) or Baudrillard ([1970] 1998) remarked, the fusion between the two reaches its climax with the digital and postdigital paradigm. Ritzer and Jurgenson put the emphasis on the “absolutely crucial technological change that needs to be highlighted separately”, which is “the increasing importance of the computer and the Internet for the process of prosumption” (2010, p. 13). In an article from 2012, Ritzer also remarks:

Prosumption on the Internet has increasingly occurred through user-generated content on what has become known as Web 2.0 (in Web 1.0, such as AOL or Yahoo, content is generated by the producer, leaving little room for prosumption). Web 2.0 includes the social web with sites such as Facebook and Twitter, the blogosphere, Wikipedia, content-sharing sites such as Flickr and You Tube, and much else where users not only consume but also produce content. It is in the immaterial worlds of Web 2.0 that it is hardest to distinguish between producers and consumers, where the hegemony of prosumers is clearest. (Ritzer et al. 2012, p. 385).

It should be quite obvious now that prosumption, or offering the consumer the chance to take part in designing and producing the board game, is used in the

6 See <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/piraterepublic1/paradise-lost-0>, retrieved 15.05.2022.

7 Retrieved 15.05.2022, from <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/piraterepublic1/paradise-lost-0/posts/2476026>.

postdigital era as a marketing strategy. Making the public feel like they belong in the same team as the creators of the board game instills pride, confidence and happiness in the backer, who will gladly fund the project and/to? see their names credited in the box or manual.

I will purposely omit from my study some older incarnations of LRRH in board games, such as *Little Red Riding Hood* (2003); *Werewolf [sic.]: Red Riding Hood* (2012); *Fairy Tale Assassin League: Red Riding Hood Rampage* (2013); *Dark Tales: Little Red Riding Hood* (2015); *Tales & Games: Little Red Riding Hood* (2015) or *Little Red Riding Hood: Full Moon Rising* (2019), either because they present recycling strategies that may be found in a non-postdigital context or because they are too simple to be of any interest to us. I will now examine some recent board games about LRRH and their strategies to recycle the fairy tale (or at least the characters from it).

## 2.2. *Twisted Fables* (2021)

One of the more extremes incarnations of LRRH in board games can be found in the kickstarted game *Twisted Fables*<sup>8</sup> (2021). The game describes itself this way:

Welcome to a universe where fairy tale heroines exist. These aren't the helpless damsels waiting for their prince, though: these are dangerous, relentless warriors, and they will not be denied. Coming not from high towers or grandmothers' cottages, these champions emerge instead from cyberpunk dystopias, interstellar war zones, and strange steampunk cities. The old stories have been shattered. In their place have arisen Twisted Fables.<sup>9</sup>

The description tries to be empowering, but fails to acknowledge that the tradition it is supposedly contesting is nothing but another version (and a relatively modern one) of an earlier version, i.e., Disney's version of the tales, which itself ignores a far more vast oral tradition in which these heroines are indeed empowered: see, for instance, *The Grandmother's Tale* (Orenstein, 2002, pp. 63–84). Nevertheless, the visual presentation of LRRH in *Twisted Fables* draws our attention immediately (and the creators know it, since she is featured as the prominent image for the project in the webpage): in a very similar pose as the figurine from the board game *Unmatched*,<sup>10</sup> LRRH displays a cybernetic

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8 See <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/dimensiongames/twisted-fables>, retrieved 15.05.2022.

9 See <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/dimensiongames/twisted-fables/description>, retrieved 15.05.2022.

10 See <https://restorationgames.com/shop/little-red-beowulf-unmatched>, retrieved 15.05.2022.

arm and is holding a sub-machine gun. The Riding Hood is now also a red hood covering her face, that plays with the similarity of another anti-hero from DC comics: The Hood (thus appealing once again to the crossover and intertextual logic). Next to the description of the game, LRRH's character is detailed as:

RED RIDING HOOD

The Cybernetic Assassin

Her body was ripped apart then reassembled with cybernetic components; her life returned to her but not to her family. Red Riding Hood had so many questions and no answers. Why her? What made her special? Then the wolf's voice spoke from inside her. It taught her how to survive, how to thrive, and how to get her revenge.<sup>11</sup>

Notice that, as in *Paradise Lost*, she's "little" no more. The producers have replaced her body with a cyborg one, and the description hints at the mental process of the victim of a rape (by needing a rational explanation under the question "why her" and in the need for further answers as to why this happened): it is not quite clear who the criminal was, but she empowers herself by shifting her perspective from that of victim to executioner, and the wolf's voice now is her inner self craving for revenge (the reader will want to revisit again the Unmatched figurine and appreciate the detail of the wolf's ears above the riding hood). The underlying logic of this is the heroine's empowerment through violence and the ability to kill as the mark of her superiority and victory over the offender. This is a common strategy in American revenge films and series such as *Hard Candy* (2005), which is another notably contemporary incarnation of LRRH's trope;<sup>12</sup> *The Brave One* (2007), a *Law Abiding Citizen* (2009), *The Foreigner* (2017), *Peppermint* (2018), or the famous *The Punisher* (2004, 2008, series 2017–2019). This focus on violence can also be linked to Duclos' famous essay *The Werewolf Complex: America's Fascination with Violence* (1998), in which he argues that every American is obsessed with and afraid of their inner beast, a potential serial killer hidden under a thin mask of civilization.

Finally, LRRH's mini is displayed as wielding a huge Gatling gun. Her cyborg limbs can be clearly appreciated. As with many pop revisions, the message pretends to be feminist via empowerment, but sadly the poses of the heroines are utterly sexualised for the male gaze.<sup>13</sup> The recycling strategies, mixing the theoretical revision of the postfeminist ideology with presumption via

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11 See <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/dimensiongames/twisted-fables>, retrieved 15.05.2022.

12 For a detailed analysis see: Delvaux (2009, pp. 27–31) and Hayton (2011).

13 As described in Mulvey (1975, pp. 6–18).

Kickstarter (as detailed above) may be a commercial success (the game funded at a respectable 162.330\$) but fails from a hermeneutic perspective, as it doesn't dig properly into the deeper meanings of the fairy tale, nor does it offer a novel revision of the tale.

### 2.3. *Legend Academy* (2022)

The publicity of the GameFound campaign for this board game went straight to the point with a brief and hilarious presentation: "Attend a prestigious institution where characters train to become tomorrow's legends. A competitive, deckbuilding, card crafting, worker placement, adventure game".<sup>14</sup>

The main page notably features two heroes with their action figures: Robin Hood is leaping and drawing his bow in the background, while the foreground is consecrated to LRRH. She is wearing her hood and cape, and stares fiercely at us, but the most shocking part is that she is actually riding the wolf, which is about twice as big as her and seems to howl while looking at us, too. The same previous strategies about empowering the heroine through physical domination are obviously at play here, but there are more details about the characters:

You are a folklore character before their story was told. Legends can be trained completely differently every game depending on which classes you take, how well you do during training sessions, and what kind of attributes you improve.<sup>15</sup>

There are indeed four main characters in the game: Paul Bunyan, Little Red Riding Hood, Alice (from Wonderland) and Robin Hood. Thanks to the presumption approach, encouraging participation in the comments section, the creators were able to detect that some backers (i.e. Europeans) didn't know anything about one of the playable characters, Paul Bunyan: "This morning, you unlocked *The Tales of Paul Bunyan Mini-Expansion!* A few people from Europe mentioned that they didn't know who Paul Bunyan was."<sup>16</sup> An update was then provided in order to explore the lore around this American-centered folklore character, so the presumption approach served its purpose, allowing the creators to reach an audience not fully familiarised with the character. The recycling strategy concerning LRRH is a mix of the crossover episode and the original

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14 Retrieved 15.05.2022 from <https://gamefound.com/projects/el-dorado-games/legend-academy>.

15 See <https://gamefound.com/projects/el-dorado-games/legend-academy>, retrieved 15.05.2022.

16 See: <https://gamefound.com/projects/el-dorado-games/legend-academy/updates/3>, retrieved 15.05.2022.

story, a strategy which is prolific nowadays in the superhero movies and series. More information about LRRH's playstyle is provided and the player will find that there is a fixation with the content of her basket as a defining trait for the character, since the heroine is presented as "Specialized in movement. She can lay traps and lure enemies to them using her basket."<sup>17</sup> Her looks are those of an adult, and she seems to have teamed up with her nemesis, so this incarnation is a mix between the little girl presented in *Paradise Lost* and *Unmatched*, and the cunning cyborg in *Twisted Fables*. The success of Gamefound's recycling strategy is supported by the amazing number of backers and dollars (212.310\$) on their campaign.

Every new incarnation of LRRH so far focuses on the heroine's empowerment through feminism, so ideology is the strategy the creators (or rather prosumers) seem always to have in mind when redesigning the character, be it in a crossover, origin story or dystopian future. Appealing to cross-platforms (Discord, Instagram, Facebook, other websites like BGG) in order to know about, comment, and share the information about the product, and inviting the consumer to participate in the creation process through beta-testing or giving instant feedback throughout the crowdfunding campaign are recurrent strategies in the recycling process.

#### **2.4. *One Night Ultimate Werewolf* (2014)**

The most interesting iteration of LRRH in board games for the purpose of this chapter will now be examined. The chosen example shows perfectly the trend of fusing classical board games with digital technologies, incorporating video game aesthetics or AI features for the gameplay. In *One Night Ultimate Werewolf*, the game tries to convey the horror experience of a hidden traitor game (such as in *The Werewolves of Miller's Hollow* (2014)). Little Red Riding Hood is arguably represented in *The Werewolves of Miller's Hollow* by the character of "the Little Girl" in the village. She possesses the special ability to open her eyes during the night to spy on the werewolves' characters, thus reinforcing the theme of daring transgression and finding pleasure along with fear in her breaking of the rules. This is reinterpreted in *One Night Ultimate Werewolf* as the little girl holding a teddy bear, who receives the name of "Insomniac". However, the most interesting element in the game is not in the werewolves or little red riding hood character, but in the fact that, unlike its predecessor *The Werewolves of Miller's Hollow*,

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17 See <https://gamefound.com/projects/el-dorado-games/legend-academy?previewPhase=CrowdfundingEnded#/section/whats-in-the-box-2960>, retrieved 15.05.2022.

*One Night Ultimate Werewolf* can be played without resorting to one person being the narrator of the story, thanks to the incorporation of an app which does the reading and revealing parts of the game for the players. The creator knows this is a strong selling point, and the game is announced accordingly: “No moderator, no elimination, ten-minute games”. The app is remediating the role of the physical narrator, but this is surprisingly an element that is not always well received in the board gaming community. A thread in the most famous board gaming webpage in the world (*Board Game Geek*, aka *BGG*) illustrates the general distrust.<sup>18</sup> The users debate whether the app is optional or mandatory in order to enjoy the full experience of the game, and the consensus is that, of the two, being optional is the more desirable. This is not an isolated case, and almost identical opinions may be found in every entry for games that require apps (such as *Descent: Journeys in the Dark* (2021), *Lord of the Rings: Journeys in the Middle Earth* (2019), *XCOM: the board game* (2016) or current projects being crowdfunded like *The Dark Quarter* (2023)). The board gaming public constantly perceives that the remediation from the app puts in danger the longevity of the game, as it depends on the software being compatible with future devices and being updated. Another common complaint is that they play board games in order to take a break from the computer (usually pervasive at their jobs), so digital remediation is generally not well received. This is paradoxical, since board games seem to be living a revival as the go-to product when it comes to enjoying leisure because of their social aspect, in contrast to the loneliness of the computer or game console player. In other words, postdigital remediation in an older medium such as the board game is not always well received, and seen more as a danger for enjoying the medium than as the logical next step, namely, a postdigital development. Paradoxically, video games in the postdigital era tend to remediate, in retro style, the mechanics, dynamics and aesthetics of board games.

### 3. Little Red Riding Hood and video games

Video games are obviously by their nature digital. Surprisingly, in the postdigital environment, they are (d)evolving into predigital forms, combining their aesthetics, dynamics and mechanics<sup>19</sup> with traditional board games or the most primitive forms of video games in the 80's and 90's, craving for nostalgia and

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18 See <https://boardgamegeek.com/thread/2847571/requires-app>, retrieved 15.05.2022.

19 For the MDA approach to game design see: Hunnicke / Leblanc / Zubek (2004).

hence resorting to a retro-remediation recycling strategy. Another postdigital aspect of the video games under consideration is the market into which they are being sold: I will take into account mostly video games available on *Steam*, an online platform dedicated to selling games in their exclusively digital form. Their physical version no longer exists in this market (if it ever existed there in the first place), thus negating the opposition between physical and virtual content when it comes to this medium.

The storytelling aspect of these postdigital products will be examined next, but firstly some precision about recycling folklore tales is needed. Folklorist Amie A. Doughty establishes the distinction between *retellings* (which include minor differences, due for instance to nuances in translations or even the iteration of the oral retelling itself which would vary some details) and *revisions*. According to this difference, “[r]evisions of folktales, however, are versions of folktales, usually written, that take traditional tales, often well-known ones, and alter them in a much more elaborate manner than retellings.” (Doughty 2006, p. 14).

This distinction is useful when it comes to examining why LRRH video games often result in utterly failed adaptations, as the gameplay lacks depth (most of them are platform games that can be played with just a D-pad and a couple of buttons, or even more simply, they display static shots and, being puzzles, require only a mousepad). The games also lack innovative storytelling and any meaningful recycling strategy, being merely retells as opposed to far more elaborated revisions. It seems as if the creators fail to find meaningful plots for LRRH (admittedly the fairy tale consists of a too-short plot to make it into something unusual/surprising without altering too much), and when they choose to deviate from the simple formula, they cannot come up with anything remarkable. Alas, the prehistory of video games about LRRH is nothing to write home about: in 1989, for instance, Nintendo produced a video game for the NES system under the name of Little Hood. Red The title has not become famous, and this is for a reason: LRRH has to navigate maps while collecting fruits and avoiding enemies: no wolf is present in the story at all (goblins, however, are present); combat is pointless most of the time; and exploration is almost impossible due to the difficulty of the stages, with no clues to guide gamers. Last but not least, the game is riddled with glitches.<sup>20</sup>

Decades have passed and graphics and sound may have improved, but not necessarily the inventiveness required to recycle the fairy tale: the best Nintendo

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20 See the full mocking of the game at: [https://crappygames.miraheze.org/wiki/Little\\_Red\\_Hood](https://crappygames.miraheze.org/wiki/Little_Red_Hood), retrieved 15.05.2022.

could come up with in 2007 for their Nintendo DS was an action rail shooter game named *Little Red Riding Hood's Zombie BBQ*. Red The game opens with the proverbial introductory narration:

Once upon a time... After saving her grandmother from the clutches of the wolf and its army of evil, everything seemed to have returned to normal... [heavy metal music plays now in the background] but nothing could be further from the truth. The woodcutter has tragically died in battle and now just recently the dead has risen and a zombie invasion once again puts peace on Earth in danger. But Red “Ready to Rock” Riding Hood knows how to deal with zombies. And she’s even got Momo “Kamikaze” Taro with her to fire up the grill.<sup>21</sup>

LRRH plus traditional Japanese folklore character Momotaro, plus zombies, machine guns and the end of the world: if the reader is intrigued about how the story unfolds in stage two, the player is confronted with a boss battle in which LRRH will have to kill her own zombified granny, who is tied to the bed and vomiting zombie dogs (instead of the proverbial wolf). Stage three takes you to the town of Hansel and Gretel, and so on. LRRH is the hero chosen to end the plague because “her legend precedes her”. A ridiculous translation into English makes the game even more bizarre, and the player cannot play this game without a mix of chuckles and compassion for the poor quality that often characterises B-series. On top of the nonsensical plot, a gross Little Red Riding Hood, overtly sexualized for the male gaze and designed in manga style, puts this adaptation on a very inferior level to the board games we have previously examined. The main recycling strategy is a collage mixing video game genres (third person shooter, adventure) with a crossover of folklore characters from diverse cultures (both western and eastern). The game may be of interest because it exploits the characteristics of the Nintendo DSi XL console: a double screen allowing for different shots simultaneously, and the use of the stylus (a responsive digital pencil which allows the player to aim by touching the screen with the instrument).

More considerations about narration, themes and adaptation of LRRH in video games will be examined later on, but before that it is important to study a case of relevance in the video game medium when it comes to recycling the moral of a tale. Only when the user understands the ludic nature of the medium can video games be appreciated by their specific features and not by their storytelling abilities or lack thereof. This is particularly important regarding the next LRRH video game example: *The Path* (2009). The game can be ascribed to the psychological horror genre: it is clear from the art box that the player is

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21 Quoted from the introduction screen of the game.

confronted by this genre. A dark forest in the background serves as the frame for little girl in black and red with a sinister look, breaking the fourth wall as she stares at the spectator. The title is written in black, with a gothic looking font that twists and intertwines with the red color, as if it were bleeding. Without any narrative introduction whatsoever, the game presents the player with a choice among six characters (all of which are girls ranging from 9 to 19 years old): Ginger, Rose, Scarlet, Ruby, Robin, Carmen (the wordplay with Little Red Riding Hood is obvious). Once the player selects their character, they will be assigned the task (under the form of the title over the screen): “Go to Grandmother’s house and stay on the path”. The real talent of the designers lies in the fact that the player is tacitly invited to disobey the instruction deliberately so as to generate meaning while playing. Indeed, if the player follows the instruction and walks directly to the Grandmother’s house without deviating from the path, they will enter the house (the camera will then shift to a first person perspective), visit some rooms in which nothing particularly interesting happens and will finish the game receiving a D rank. They will then realise that they did not collect any special items, did not unlock any special rooms and did not encounter the wolf. A big “FAILURE!” will sanction the playthrough and the player at that point would understand that being obedient to the rules did not provide any significant payoff. The model player is assumed to subvert the given rules. This logic is linked to the psychology of the explorer’s profile among video game players, as famously classified by Bartle in 1996. The second point subverting expectations in the video game is also related to the gameplay, and more specifically to the concept of “player agency”. The concept may be defined as follows:

Player agency is about giving players the interactivity to affect and change the game world. Through agency, players have power to influence and change what is happening in the game. It provides them control (or at least of sense of it) of what will happen next.<sup>22</sup>

Player agency is assumed to be actively pursued through action (although Sarah Stang challenged this notion, as well as the relevance of real control over the game, hence “at least the sense of it” in the previous definition; see Stang (2019)). The Path illustrates perfectly this misalignment when the player is told that, in order to interact with the objects of people they will find in the forest, once they leave the path they have, surprisingly, to let go. Only when the player gives up control will they create meaning through interaction with the relevant game objects. In this way the game conveys the hidden, deep moral of the tale (curiosity pays off, disobeying orders is what makes possible the adventure,

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22 See Eng (2020).

letting go of the rational side and giving up to idleness means embracing the true nature of the adventure and achieving a successful ending) through gameplay actions (and, paradoxically, lack of them) and not through narration. The model player will understand when he has to cooperate with the game and how, and when he has to disobey, but any non-gamer member of the public would be at a loss and would have to undergo a process of what could be defined as postdigital literacy, since, from 2009, video games no longer assumed that the player needed specific instructions. A contemporary gamer should not expect great improvements over their previous experiences of Nintendo in 1987 and 2007. The current adaptations are either aimed at children and have the worst possible adaptation of the fairy tale structure, since they are all cheap productions which would have looked look poor even in the 90s, as very simple *hack and slash* productions (as in RED, 2016). Others are simple conversational adventures with static backgrounds which simply re-enact the elemental plot - maybe with minor, more or less meaningless twists - or create another generic adventure which uses the traditional characters as placeholders for “action heroine” and “villain”, such as in BRG’s *Riding Hood Red* (2019); *1/2 Riding Hood Red* (2021); *Return of Riding Hood Red* (2018); *Dark Parables: The Riding Hood Sisters Red* (2016); *The Hood Red* (2022). – The list could go on without a single remarkable title, or even worse yet, the theme can be just an excuse to justify pasted-on game mechanics which bear no relationship whatsoever with LRRH, such as in: *Fairytales Solitaire: Riding Hood Red* (2019), a digitised version of the traditional solitaire card games; *Picross Fairytale – nonogram: Red Riding Hood secret* (2018), which consists of jigsaw puzzle games with fairy tale themes; and *Night of Full Moon – Little Red Ridding [sic.] Hood’s Diary* (2019), a card game about fighting enemies, a la Pokemon.

Both lists could go on and on, but the reader will notice the lack of any critically acclaimed or famous title in the repertoire, which leads us to another recurrent question: why do video games seem always to adapt narratives so poorly? Maybe the answer is that this is the wrong question. Maybe the answer lies in the obsession of philologists to turn to the medium in search of narrative content, when in fact video games are not essentially a representational medium: they were never intended to convey stories in the first place, but to develop gameplay. Ludologists have traditionally denounced this colonisation (or at least what they perceived as such) of the now consolidated game studies by the seekers after narratives, films, ideology, etc.<sup>23</sup>

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23 For an exposition of the problematic, see: Juul (2001); Eskelinen (2001) or Frasca (2003).

When the video game dares to stride away from the path, it is not the content of the basket (as it was in the board games we have examined), but rather the question of the parenthood of LRRH that is often a focal point for the beginning of the story being told: “My name is Red Riding Hood: I have no father, no mother, no fear”, LRRH states in a defiant voice in *Woolfe: Diaries the Hood Red* (2015), which is a hack and slash adventure in which LRRH is on a mission to avenge her dead parents armed with an axe. The video game is upfront about its content:

Woolfe – The Red Hood Diaries is a cinematic fable featuring a vengeful Red Riding Hood. All grown up, cried out and armed with an axe, our noble heroine embarks on an odyssey to avenge the death of her parents. Buckle up for a surprising take on the traditional Red Riding Hood tale, mixed with some good old-fashioned action platforming, fun combo-based hack ‘n slash combat and rewarding environment puzzles that explore the attractive fantasy universe.<sup>24</sup>

In the same vein, the page on Steam announces, stressing the pun: “THIS IS NOT A FAIRYTALE, THERE’S NOTHING FAIR ABOUT IT”.<sup>25</sup> The same violent twist has been applied previously in critically acclaimed games like *Alice: Madness Returns* (2011), but besides that, there is no inherent quality of originality, particularly in applying the display of violence as the main selling point in order to bring a folklore character into a digital medium.

In *RED* (2016) the mother of the protagonist (named “Green”) falls in love with the wolf (a likeable, humanised character in manga style) and she gives birth to a daughter whose psyche is divided into three different personalities (one of them being a feral werewolf, of course). These revisions do not stand any deeper scrutiny from a symbolic perspective and again miss their opportunity to try something different or interesting with the source material, so the only strategy to be found here will be a marketing one: the need to resort to something familiar to the user to sell the product.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the corpus examined in which the figure of LRRH is being recycled confirms the initial hypothesis: board games funded via crowdfunding platforms always resort to prosumption, which leads to consumers modifying

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24 See the presentation of the game in Steam: [https://store.steampowered.com/app/281940/Woolfe\\_The\\_Red\\_Hood\\_Diaries/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/281940/Woolfe_The_Red_Hood_Diaries/), retrieved 15.05.2022.

25 See second trailer on the website [https://store.steampowered.com/app/281940/Woolfe\\_The\\_Red\\_Hood\\_Diaries/](https://store.steampowered.com/app/281940/Woolfe_The_Red_Hood_Diaries/), retrieved 15.05.2022.



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