SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS

BLUEPOINT GAMES: *Shadow of the Colossus (PlayStation 4 version).* [digital game]. Tokyo : Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2018.

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Whenever the relationship between video games and the art is somehow thematic, contained in the (open) concepts themselves, and when shifting from general considerations to an argument based on a reference which is, however, not a real argument, almost always the video games ICO and SHADOW OF THE COLOSSUS, and sometimes THE LAST GUARDIAN will appear as examples of video games which somehow are or could be, should be art.

Unless they would not appear, which only means that the interlocutors did not play the games, do not know them or that they prefer other platforms and therefore they are bound by other video-game mythology.

ICO, released in 2001 on the Playstation 2 platform, was so different, so itself and at the same time so distinctive and strong that players and reviewers, because ICO was not such a commercially successful game, felt that when describing the game experience with ICO they should expressively reinforce this experience with the natural significance of the word „art". The word, not the concept, but we might get to that later. Reviewers simply considered ICO to be art because the audiovisual component of the video game in conjunction with its game model, i.e. playability, was the holder of other cathartic qualities rather than qualities typical for video games.

What does it mean? Quite simply, ICO appeared to be different because it was more contemplative-meditative rather than hedonistic-orgiastic, it was more silent and slow rather than fast and loud, subtle rather than crude, rather Apollonian than Dionysian, rather introversial than extroversial, and so on. An action adventure that was neither too action-filled nor too adventurous with music, that does not roar but sounds, and with an image that does not flicker but illustrates.

An extraordinary experience, representing minority and on top of that, the name of the creator – Fumito Ueda.

ICO made sure that when Shadow of the Colossus came out on the same platform in 2005 it was no longer just a video game but it was the second video game of Fumito Ueda. The Fumito Ueda, the author of ICO. There was ultimately an arena for comparing and the author poetics could finally achieve respectability. Ueda, of course, was not the first and in no way the only designer of video games who began to be considered as the holder of a specific style but it was finally clear to a layman what was being referred to.

Because Shadow of the Colossus looked similar to ICO, it sounded similar, it was played similar, it gave out similar emotions.

A story trapped by mystery, with its own mythology felt behind it, a non-heroic looking hero, a rather shrugged boy, an ethereal girl to be rescued, disenchanted, rescued, not to take her by the hand but to defeat sixteen monsters. The game takes place in the exceptionally vast open air, in a diverse landscape, with the diversity defined by the same art style. Video games discovered chiaroscuro. The hero rides a horse throughout the coun-

try, the reflection of the sun's rays from the blade of the sword, the colossus must first be found and then it must be figured out how to beat them. It is the same yet different, poetic like ICO, but more accessible. Shadow of the Colossus became a video game representing good taste. Again, the word 'art' was exploited abundantly, as if art was something more than a game, as if art added something to the game, something that is not natural to the game. Art as a higher level of the game, the next thing that video games are aiming for in order to get some rehabilitation. It is not a self-serving pastime, waste of time anymore but it can already bear some true values.

Regardless of the extraordinary amount of naïve ideas of art that have appeared in the rhetoric describing the uniqueness or otherness of the Ueda games, the fact remains that both ICO and Shadow of the Colossus indicate how much video games have changed over the last two decades.

It is the struggle for their own dignity – as an expression of this struggle are discussions about video games and art – but the struggle has turned into open door banging. Overall, video games are treated as copyright works, just like films, novels or operas, and what is most important, video games have identified their own canon, they have been mollycoddling it and taking care that the canon really lives.

Those who are interested in video games more deeply, more essentially, those who do not consider them as an immediate pastime but as something that has its own history, poetics, language, those do not have a problem to return to the old games on new platforms, and that is extremely important. Playing a game for twelve hours, alone, offline, immersing oneself in the story, experiencing it, thinking, feeling, becoming part of it – this experience alone can be new for players two generations younger for whom playing equals a playing online experience that they simply did not expect from a video game. And some may like it, just like some viewers like old black-and-white, silent films. Because of this, the canon makes sense.

That is the reason why ICO and Shadow of the Colossus were released together on Playstation 3 in 2011 and this is also the reason why Shadow of the Colossus has been released for the third time on Playstation 4. Of course, this game looks a bit different, it is renewed but it is exactly the type of renovation that basically does not change anything, it only reaches out to the fact that time is passing. It would be less comfortable to look at the unrenovated battle cruiser Poťomkin, an unrenovated Shadow of the Colossus would be played less comfortably, there are no other significant differences.
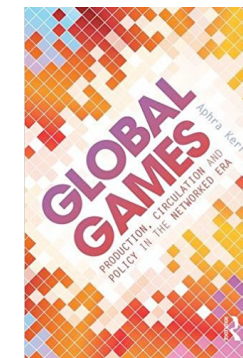
GLOBAL GAMES: PRODUCTION, CIRCULATION AND POLICY IN THE NETWORKED ERA

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