

**Queer Transformations:  
Childhood, Growth, and Bodily Fluidity in *The Legend of Zelda* Series**

*The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time* (1998; 2011) and its direct sequel, *The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask* (2000; 2015), are popular high-fantasy video games with noteworthy corporeal and spatial logics: the games' puzzles and obstacles require different forms of bodily transformation and fluidity to be successfully completed. In *Ocarina of Time*, for instance, entrances to certain central areas are small and tight, only permitting access to persons with smaller body frames. Furthermore, some of the weapons and key items needed to complete quests are either too large and unwieldy for a child, or too small and intricate for larger persons. To successfully advance in the game, players must travel back and forth between the protagonist's childhood and adulthood, allowing players to overcome obstacles by controlling a character that can embody the positionality of both child and adult. *Majora's Mask* takes this mechanic of bodily transformation a step further, requiring players to shapeshift the protagonist into different species to traverse through diverse landscapes. For instance, players must transform the protagonist into a gilled aquatic creature to engage in quests that are staged in underwater locations.

This paper will explore how digital spaces in these video games demand the protagonist's body to become a site of continuously changing, intersecting identities: players must repeatedly alter the protagonist's age, height, gender performance, and genetic makeup to navigate the games' obstacles and digital landscapes. This exploration will highlight the potential of video game spaces to provide players with a visual and experiential manifestation of space that disrupts normative constructions of age, growth, development, and embodiment. It will be argued that video game space in *The Legend of Zelda* series stages queer potentialities that transcend the limits of normative space and time—these games dismantle adulthood as a teleological developmental period, and they blur the divide that exists between species and between temporal constructs such as the past and future. Although queerness is for the most part absent in terms of the games' plot, it is nonetheless a critical component of how childhood, growth, and navigation operate in these games.

Works Cited

Nintendo EAD. *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*. Nintendo, 1998/2011. Nintendo EAD. *The Legend of Zelda: Majora's Mask*. Nintendo, 2000/2015.