

TATJANA MENISE

Fairy Tales in Transmedia Communication:  
Fanfiction





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To my little daughter Eva.  
We wrote this thesis together,  
and I hope that we will always be allies  
in adventures that life has prepared.



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## LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

1. Pilipoveca, Tatjana 2017. Interpreting “The Snow Queen”: A comparison of two semantic universes. *Sign Systems Studies* vol 45, No ½: 181–193.
2. Pilipoveca, Tatjana 2017. “The Snow Queen” in the Anthology of Russian Alien Fairy Tales: An old story in a new world. *Skandinavskaja Filologija* Tom 1, Вып. 15. [Скандинавская Филология Том 1, Вып. 15. *Scandinavian Philology* Vol. 1, Issue 15]: 123–132.
3. Menise, Tatjana 2019. “The Snow Queen” in Russian fan fiction: Voices of readers and viewers. *Marvels & Tales* 33.2. (*Upcoming*).
4. Menise, Tatjana [Менисе, Татьяна] 2019. Klassičeskij tekst detskoj literatury v recepcii sovremennoj massovoj kul'tury: Krossovery po skazke H.-K. Andersena «Snezhnaja koroleva» [Классический текст детской литературы в рецепции современной массовой культуры: Кроссоверы по сказке Х.-К. Андерсена «Снежная королева». The classic text of children's literature in the reception of modern popular culture: Crossovers of the H.-K. Andersen's tale “The Snow Queen”]. *Detskie Chtenija* [Детские Чтения. *Children's Literature*] 15 (1): 75–92.
5. Menise, Tatjana 2019. Fairy tales between transformation and repetition: How audiences rethink the big romantic myth through Disney princess stories. *Sign Systems Studies*. (*Upcoming*).

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Just as a face that is wholly reflected in a mirror is also reflected in each one of the mirror's fragments, which thus are both a part of and the likeness of the intact mirror, in an integral semiotic mechanism a particular text is isomorphous in certain respects with the entire textual world, and a distinct parallelism exists among individual consciousness, the text, and the culture as a whole. The vertical isomorphism existing between structures situated at different hierarchical levels gives rise to a quantitative increase in messages. Just as an object reflected in a mirror generates hundreds of reflections in the fragments of the mirror, a message introduced into an integral semiotic structure is multiplied in many copies at lower levels. The system is capable of transforming a text into an avalanche of texts.

(Lotman 2005 [1984]: 215–2016)

## 1.1. The research question and its actuality

The metaphor of the broken mirror that was used by Juri Lotman to describe the multiplications and transformations of messages and texts in culture is perfectly suitable for the conceptualization of our work. Firstly, it leads to the main research question that is devoted to the investigation of the nature of cultural retelling: *How are stories transformed in the general cultural dynamics?* Secondly, it corresponds poetically to one of the most remarkable images of our main research material, namely, the broken magic mirror from Hans Christian Andersen's tale "The Snow Queen" written in 1844. In the text of the Danish writer, the mirror was created by the Devil to mock the purity and kindness of the world, but shattered into a billion small pieces in an attempt to distort the faces of God and his angels, the splinters scattered around the globe getting into human eyes and hearts. In a similar way, some stories are shattered into multiple variations and scattered throughout the culture, getting into humans' hearts affecting worldviews and minds. Every splinter-variation reflects the recognizable plot, but being in contact with a concrete person adds particular perspective or, in other words, the creative distortion.

Culture constantly reworks well-known stories (such as, for instance, classical fairy tales, narratives about (super)heroes who are saving the world or outstanding detectives who are solving tangled crime cases). This process of retelling is akin to a sophisticated game in which different authors scrutinize texts for new potentials and hidden messages, try on new means of expression, or simply test the actuality of texts' messages that are already familiar and "digested" by the broad audiences.

At our disposal are retellings from the past and, to varying degrees, contemporary retellings. The old interpretations are represented mainly by canonized texts and only in rare cases do receivers also interact with texts that don't exist in the collective cultural memory, but are preserved in dusty archives of libraries. Contemporary retelling is represented by much more diverse and

easily accessible material. Today “professional” authors replenish the web of interpretations together with “amateur” authors (i.e. *fans* (Jenkins 1992) or *transformative authors* (TWC Editor 2008); there are retellings that are made as commercial productions and retellings that are created in *participatory culture* (Jenkins 1992). While fanart, fanfics and fanvids tend to dissolve in the abundance of different fandoms, may be deleted upon the request of a programme-text copyright holder, or may simply sink into oblivion due to web platforms’ malfunctions, they still can hold out on the internet for the amount of time necessary to reach at least some audiences (see Versaphile 2011).

This complex, encompassing view on the retelling process highlights tendencies in which the roles of an author and a receiver (reader, viewer, listener or gamer) converge and intertwine. An artistic text that openly appeals to another already existing work of art reveals a receiver who is hidden in every author; simply put, if an author uses a story, it means that s/he has read, listened, watched it once. Of no less importance, the process of contemporary retelling may also reveal an author who is hidden in every receiver. The ideas of the transferable text’s boundaries and the ontological incompleteness of a story in the cultural flow (Rappoport 1988: 20) in combination with opportunities created by the contemporary internet environment invite everyone regardless of gender, age and profession to express his/her own opinion, be creative, and make a statement with the help of the story and/or about it.

It sounds paradoxical, but the flourishing of a contemporary web culture that preserves creative utterances from different kinds of authors made it possible to observe different kinds of reader’s reactions. The audience’s creativity makes culture more heterogeneous and enriches it by further catalyzing artistic practices and dialogues. Consequently, it provides a researcher with rich material that may be used to build a more complete picture of a story’s existence in the changing cultural context. We consider transformative works as a special type of retelling that, firstly, preserves the traces of how a receiver turns into an author, and secondly, emphasizes the role of reception as an inevitable and important part of the retelling process. This allows for a closer look at the creative and analytical processes that happen in the receiver’s mind and form different interpretations.

## **1.2. The material of the research: transformative works in the context of general retelling of fairy tales**

Pauline Greenhill and Sidney Eve Matrix have called the fairy tale “a shape shifter and medium breaker” (2010: 3). Indeed, fairy tales have been retold in almost all possible artistic and cultural languages that developed over time. At first, the retellings in so called old media such as oral stories, books, paintings, theatrical performances, movies, cartoons and comic books kept the selected wonder stories in the collective cultural memory. Proliferation of “new media” breathed into the tales new life, and today we may find fairy tales’ reworkings

in blogs, vlogs, social media, wikis, web-journals and platforms for fans' practices (see Schwabe 2016).

Receivers'/ authors' demand for classical tales in the past and present makes this a promising material to investigate the life of an artistic text in the changing world. In fact, we are living in a time period when fairy tales are passing through a new wave of attention in the popular culture. In the last ten to twenty years, commercially successful, innovative and often debatable texts emerged, such as, for instance, ABC tv-series *Once Upon a Time* (2011–2018) (see Warman 2016), the NBC tv-series *Grimm* (2011–2012) (see Lindsay 2016), or the comic book series *Fables* (2002–2015), created by Bill Willingham and adapted into the interactive narrative video game *The Wolf Among Us* (2013) by Telltale Games (see Harris 2016). Being one of the most famous fairy tale tellers, Disney also does not stand outside of this new retelling movement. Firstly, the company makes attempts to reactualize its world-known hits for new generations; and among them are tales of “Cinderella” (*Cinderella 1950* to *Cinderella 2015*), “Beauty and The Beast” (*Beauty and the Beast 1995* to *Beauty and the Beast 2017*), and “One Thousand and One Nights” (*Aladdin 1992* to *Aladdin 2019*). In these adaptations, classical cartoons are remade with minor changes in plots, but with the help of more modern and dynamic filmic language. Secondly, the company tries to continue and develop the fairy-tale tradition by making new adaptations that would meet the needs of modernity. For instance, the sensational among global audiences project *Frozen* (2013) is based on Hans Christian Andersen's “The Snow Queen”, and *Maleficent* (2014) is the new interpretation of “Sleeping Beauty” (*Sleeping Beauty 1959*). However, they are not simply made in actual artistic language, but also with significant revision of the story. It might be said that both projects are based mainly on the transformation of the image of a wicked witch and are devoted to the rethinking of the fairy tale tradition from the point of view of post-feminism (see Craven 2018). Both were designed as serial films that could hold viewers' attention for a long time, extend and complicate the classical plots, and turn them into something new. The appearances of *Frozen 2* and *Maleficent 2* are expected in the fall 2019.

The re-actualization of fairy tale material in popular culture by the nature of case affects the cultures of participation. From the one side, new adaptations on their own attract the attention of transformative authors and become objects of fan's practices (see Macaluso 2016; Maier 2017); from the other side, they also fuel the unquenchable interest toward classical versions and the fairy tale phenomenon in general. Internet is full of amateur remakes, sequels and pre-quels, illustrations, memes of fairy tales and their adaptations, analyses of texts and the comparisons of different versions. Being involved in the general retelling process, fans take part in creative games and critical rethinking of tales.

In this thesis, we concentrate mainly on the research of one classical fairy tale plot “The Snow Queen” in the interpretations of contemporary Russian fanfiction writers. However, being interested in the processes that stand behind interpretations of transformative authors, it is impossible to ignore the diverse

surrounding textual backgrounds that appear when asking questions relevant for our research.

### 1.3. The main case-study: “The Snow Queen” in Russian participatory culture

On the biggest platform for Russian fanfiction *ficbook.net*, “The Snow Queen” is the most popular story among different classical European fairy tales that are used for transformative rewriting. There are around 700 fanfics that refer to the tale of Andersen, which is not a lot in comparison to tens of thousands of texts devoted to the *Harry Potter* franchise, yet more than is written about “Little Red Riding Hood” (Grimm’s version — 164; Perrault’s version — 157), “The Little Mermaid” (Andersen’s version — 215; Disney’s version — 385), “Cinderella” (Grimm’s version — 63; Perrault’s version — 133; Disney’s version from 1950 — 238, Disney’s version from 2015 — 48), or “The Snow White” (Grimm’s version — 138; Basile’s version — 3; Disney’s version — 206). Whereas together with “The Snow Queen” these are the five most used classical tales in the platform, it is significant and surprising that “The Snow Queen” is ahead of even those fairy tale plots that have world-famous Disney adaptations.<sup>1</sup>

The popularity of Andersen’s tale among Russian transformative authors might be connected simultaneously to the context of the age old transcultural communication, to the context of Russian canonical and contemporary commercial culture, to the context of the fairy tale boom in general and to the context of the tendencies in the participatory culture in particular.

As it is shown in the collection *The Fairy Tale World* edited by Andrew Teverson (2019), general age-old fairy tale retelling and the contemporary retelling wave are the processes that get creative responses from all over the planet. Consequently, the definition by Greenhill and Matrix, widely used in fairy tale studies, might be complemented with such an addition as “a border crosser”. Traditional western tales penetrated different cultures before the cartoons of Walt Disney Company conquered the world market, and when they finally did, the adaptation of fairy tale plots played a crucial role. Fairy tales are centuries-old participants of transcultural communication. The concept of transcultural communication challenges the idea “that cultures are internally cohesive, homogenous, self-contained, or hermetically sealed against external influences” (A. Fluchter, J. Schottli 2015: 2) and stresses the ontological interconnectedness of different cultures, as well as the possibility of some texts to cross the boundaries of epoques and languages, entering into dialogues with the local contexts. Thus, specific cultural backgrounds affected the reception of fairy-tale plots in different hosting cultures, and fairy tales also affected the cultural backgrounds and spawned new local interpretations.

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<sup>1</sup> The information is checked on 20.08.2019.

Hans Christian Andersen's text was initially translated into the Russian language in 1863 and has ever since remained one of the most cherished fairy tales that is constantly re-interpreted in different cultural languages. The text has been retold as a whole and turned into recognizable motifs that dissolved in the culture and now constitute the poetical structure of different artistic works. Thus, for instance, in 1938, famous Soviet storyteller Evgeniy Schwartz wrote the play based on Andersen's tale that was repeatedly staged in different children's theaters across the Soviet Union, and in 1966, Gennadi Kazansky made the movie based on Schwartz's play. In 1957, Lev Atamanov created the world-famous full length feature cartoon *The Snow Queen* that was shown at the International Exhibition of Cinematographic Art 1969 in Venice and won the prize as The Best Adaptation for Children from 8 to 13 Years Old. In today's Russian culture, this work is often honored as one of the classics of Soviet animation<sup>2</sup>. There are at least four more filmic adaptations of the story that reflect the dialogue among the classical tale and the interpretations mentioned above, and hence demonstrate different degrees of fidelity to Andersen's text. These are the fairy tale *The Mystery of The Snow Queen* (1986) directed by Nikolay Alexandrovich, the romantic comedy *The Snow Queen* (2006) by Elena Rajskaya, the New Year's television musical *The Snow Queen* (2003) by Maxim Papernik, and *The Snow Queen* (2012–2016), the series of full length feature 3D cartoons created and promoted by Wizard Animation Company. The motifs of Andersen's fairy tale were used by canonized poet Marina Cvetaeva in the text "*Today, around eight o'clock...*" («*Сегодня, часу в восьмом...*») (1914), echoed in the novel *Doctor Zhivago* first published in 1957 by the Nobel Prize Laureate Boris Pasternak (see Jensen 1997), appeared in the movie *Tears were Falling* (1982) directed by another classic of Soviet cinematography Georgiy Daneliya, and inspired the performance *Mice, the Boy Kai and the Snow Queen* (2005) by contemporary avant-garde musician and actor Petr Mamonov.

According to Marie-Laure Ryan, "multimedia treatment is typically reserved for those narratives that are considered foundational for the identity of a group" (2013: 362). Andersen's tale has taken roots in the Russian culture to the extent that its images are also highly recognizable in the flow of everyday life and might be used as signs that appeal to the collective cultural memory. For instance, in the most general way the story is remembered as a classic winter tale. While there are many examples that might be provided to support this point, we will limit ourselves to a couple of them. *The Snow Queen* is the title and "the face" of a quite successful and popular Russian fur coat shop and the tale is also used to illustrate the section "5 important things to do this winter" in the smashbook *Once Upon a Time* (2017) designed by Galina Zin'ko.

The enigmatic love towards the story and its pervasiveness specifically in the Russian culture is not the only thing that may affect the interests of transformative authors. In general, the phenomenon of contemporary fans' practices

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<sup>2</sup> See, for instance [https://www.1tv.ru/news/2007-12-26/200548-otmechaet\\_yubiley\\_multifilm\\_snezhnaya\\_koroleva](https://www.1tv.ru/news/2007-12-26/200548-otmechaet_yubiley_multifilm_snezhnaya_koroleva)

that multiply in the web is also transcultural by its very nature. *Harry Potter*, *Lord of The Rings*, and *Star Wars* are texts significant for transformative authors of different nationalities living in a variety of places and writing in a variety of languages, and often there is something common and something culture-specific in the ways that these franchises are interpreted in different communities based on different languages (see Kustritz 2015). On ficbook.net, the fandom of “The Snow Queen” by Hans Christian Andersen has existed since 2011, while the biggest number of texts in it were written in the period from 2013 to 2016. The explosion of fans’ activity could have been caused by the release of Wizard Animation’s *The Snow Queen* at the end of 2012 and by the release of Disney’s *Frozen* at the end of 2013. From the one side, both projects significantly deviate from the basic storyline of the classic tale and rather create new artistic universes on the basis of the source text, then interpret it. From the other, in both advertising companies the connection to Andersen’s story was widely announced, and therefore, the cartoons could have served as the catalysts of fanfiction writers’ increased attention. It is also important to notice, however, that generally *Frozen* is much more popular on ficbook.net than the Russian adaptation is. There are around 5400 fanfics that refer directly to Disney’s cartoon and only 108 texts that refer to *The Snow Queen* by Wizard Animation<sup>3</sup>. It is hard to underestimate the transcultural influence of the Disney production, and there is no surprise that for the Russian audience brought up with “The Snow Queen”, the adaptation of Andersen’s tale must have been very notable.

Moreover, we should step even further and acknowledge that it is not only Russian adaptations of “The Snow Queen” and adaptations of this tale made in other languages that matter for the dynamics in Russian participatory culture. We may also speak about the rhymes with the whole multifaceted contemporary discourse around fairy tales that touches upon different world-cultures and especially about the overlaps with critical dialogue on fairy tales as romances (see Stone 1975; Zipes 1986; Bacchilega 1997; Hasse 2004). Firstly, there are a lot of fanfics where “The Snow Queen” is combined with romantic princess-stories (literary and Disney versions) such as “Cinderella”, “Beauty and The Beast”, and “Snow White”. In the vast majority of cases, authors on ficbook.net interpret Andersen’s tale as a text about a love-triangle, reflecting on the stereotypical images of an abandoned, self-sacrificial good girl, evil other women and a blindly desirable man. Secondly, in its most widespread ideas, the fandom of “The Snow Queen” corresponds significantly to inquiries of professional English-based feminist critics and brings to mind ironic and passionate discussions about the role of romantic fairy tales in formation of many generations’ world views that are held on the internet with the help of popular articles, posts in social media and memes.

In this work, we do not aim to determine what affects what concretely in cultural communication and what simply develops in parallel. Does the history of Russian interpretations affect contemporary Russian creative audiences or is

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<sup>3</sup> The information is checked on 20.08.2019.

it a completely new and independent interest? Is it the English discourse about fairy tales that have an influence on Russian culture, or is it the spirit of time that manifests itself in different cultures? It is barely possible to find accurate answers to these questions. What is significant, however, is that the history of communication between “The Snow Queen” tale and Russian audiences was transcultural from the very beginning, and it is crucial that today, different texts created in different cultural languages and by people with different cultural backgrounds belong to one all encompassing retelling process, while the fandom of “The Snow Queen” may be seen as a part of it.

#### 1.4. Theoretical frame

The thesis balances between several research fields. Interest towards the nature of retelling in different cultural languages inevitably leads to the studies held under the auspices of *transmedia storytelling* by narrative and media scholars. While a variety of researchers understand the concept of transmedia storytelling differently, our ideas echo mainly with the works that support the following assumptions. Firstly, it is the recognition of two different ways in which texts are expanded as interrelated manifestations of one cultural process. In this case we speak about the multiplication of texts that develop one story-world — these are, for instance, prequels and sequels; and the multiplication of story-worlds on the basis of one text — namely, all kinds of remakes and adaptations. (Ryan 2017, see also Saldre, Torop 2012; Scolari 2012) Secondly, it is the consideration of works by professional and amateur authors simultaneously, taking the point of view that allows viewing transmedia storytelling as a network of texts without making differences between “bottom up (fans)” and “top down (media industry) originated” texts (Bertetti, Freeman, Scolari 2014: 3, see also Scolari 2013; Kustritz 2018). And, finally, it is seeing transmedia storytelling not only as a product of the modern culture, but also from a historical perspective, as a time-honored phenomenon (see Saldre and Torop 2012; Ryan 2013; Bertetti, Freeman, Scolari 2014).

This scientific discourse also determines our approach to the topic of fans’ practices. Whereas for several decades participatory cultures were researched from different angles such as the question of authorial rights (see Tushnet 2007; Aufderheide, Jaszi 2011; Schwabach 2011), feminism, gender and queer studies (see Kustritz 2003; Tosenberger 2008; Russ 2014), or the communities’ formation and functioning (see Abercrombie, Longhurst 2014; Bacon-Smith 2014), we are interested in fanfiction as the literary (in the broader senses *artistic*) phenomenon. This area of participatory cultures’ studies has been developed by Cornel Sandvoss (2014) who reconsidered the understanding of a text in the context of popular culture in general and participatory culture in particular, Kristina Busse and Louisa Stein (2009) who think about fan’s practices from the point of view of its complex intertextual relations with surrounding textual backgrounds, Natalia Samutina (2013, 2016) who re-



searched the fanfiction as an act of artistic world building and new contemporary writing-reading practice, Abigail Derecho (2006) who sees fanfiction as a part of a centuries-long tradition of “archontic literature”, Francesca Coppa (2017) who considered fanfiction as the continuation of the storytelling tradition concentrated on specific archetypal characters, and Anne Jameson (2013) who connected fanfiction to the acknowledged artistic works that have the status of official interpretations (such as Tom Stoppard’s *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1966) in connection to *Hamlet*, for instance).

Our own perspective on the matter, however, is deeply rooted in the field of the semiotics of culture. We are following the tradition of the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic school, attempting to develop the ideas of the school’s founder, Juri Lotman (1922–93), who studied culture as the semiotic space woven from interconnected and multidimensional sign systems, stressing relational and interactional cultural aspects. Lotman’s ideas about repetition of texts and their transformations due to the specificities of different cultural languages, as well as his extended understanding of complex multidirectional communication among texts, readers/authors and cultures were ahead of his time, are still not widely known in the English-speaking scientific world (Ibrus, Torop 2015) and may bring new promising thoughts and arguments into the research of the retelling process with special attention to cultures of participation.

Thus, we consider retelling as a semiotic problem and model it as a chain of *communications* (i.e chain of receptions and reactions) and *mediations* in the broad understanding of this word. In retelling, any story is mediated by different texts. A story/text as an inseparable unit mediates an appeal of an author to a receiver, and, in the context of participatory culture, a story/text may also mediate a response of a receiver to an author (see Jenkins 2004; Andrejevic 2008). A receiver/author mediates communication of a story/text with culture that consist of other texts, and a story/text in its turn mediates communication of a receiver/author with culture. The retelling process manifests itself in new interpretations that appear in a mysterious moment when a receiver turns into an author, as through a receiver/author every story may reinvent itself and respond to new cultural backgrounds and actual discourses. It is important to notice, that by speaking about *equality* of all interpretations in the retelling process, we do not imply the *sameness* of all interpretations from the point of view of cultural communications. We consider all interpretations made by “professional” and “amateur” authors as creative utterances equal in their significance, however, different in the function, complexity of artistic game and influentiality in the culture.

By studying the dialogue of interpretations, we appeal not simply to concrete texts, but to what stands behind them — to the complex interplay of texts in different cultural languages that happens on the mental level of culture, is activated in the mind of a receiver/author, and may be denoted as *transmedia communication*. The semiotic understanding of transmediality as texts’ combinations and recombinations on the mental level of culture is proposed by current Tartu Semiotics School members Peeter Torop (2008) and Maarja Ojamaa

(2015). Although we work with the repetitions and transformations of the same story, the understanding of the retelling process is broadened by considering transmedia interconnections not only of successively related texts, but also of texts that have no genetic links but are juxtaposed almost “accidentally” under the influence of a constantly moving and changing culture, which operates with the diverse materials different by the time of creation, origins, contextual backgrounds and topics. We attempt to show how juxtaposition, combination and recombination operate as the engine of cultural retelling, and while it is based on texts’ similarities, it conceals its creative potential in texts’ dissimilarities.

Finally, due to the chosen research material, our thesis touches upon the immense area of fairy tale studies. To a significant extent we narrow our interest to the transformations of classical fairy tales in contemporary participatory culture; however, as we demonstrated in the section devoted to the main case-study, it would be artificial to try to avoid and completely exclude any inter-relations between the modern interpretations and the centuries-old history of the fairy tale phenomenon. Regarding proliferations of contemporary fairy tale adaptations, it should be noted that considerable efforts have been made to cover this topic. Thus, several important collective works have been published recently, such as the collection of articles *Postmodern Reinterpretations of Fairy Tales: How Applying New Methods Generates New Meanings* edited by Kérchy Anna (2011), the special issue of the journal *Humanities* 5 (3): *Fairy Tale and its Uses in Contemporary New Media and Popular Culture* edited by Claudia Schwabe (2016), the collection *Fairy tale films beyond Disney: International Perspectives* edited by Jack Zipes, Pauline Greenhill, and Kendra Magnus-Johnston (2016), *The Routledge Companion to Media and Fairy Tale Cultures* edited by Pauline Greenhill, Terry Rudy, Naomi Hamer, Lauren Bosc (2018). In this context we should also point out the collection of articles *The Fairy Tale World* edited by Andrew Teverson (2019), already mentioned in our introduction, as it stands out from the other works as an attempt to broaden the previously Eurocentric focus of fairy tale studies by taking a global perspective. Moreover, the monographs written by Jack Zipes, namely, *Don’t bet on the prince: contemporary feminist fairy tales in North America and England* (1986) and Cristina Bacchilega, namely, *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies* (1997) and *Fairy tales Transformed? Twenty-First-Century Adaptations and Politics of Wonder* (2013) have been crucial for the field.

The last book by Cristina Bacchilega has been especially important for our research, as the author coined the concept of *fairy tale web* that denotes the synchronous, de-hierarchizing and all-encompassing point of view on the variety of fairy tales’ versions available in the contemporary culture, which corresponds significantly to the ideas about the retelling process that we support and develop. Our thesis complements the studies of fairy tales, firstly, by inclusion of transformative works devoted to classical tales in the diverse landscape of interpretations, and, secondly, by adding a semiotics perspective to the research of the nature of fairy tale transformations under the influence of contemporary culture. Considering a transmedia communication that stands be-

hind the process of retelling, we may notice how fairy tales collide, intertwine and merge with all possible texts at the disposal of contemporary authors/receivers and how fairy tales become the material for new texts. We see the contemporary fairy tale boom as a dialogue among different authors/receivers and cultures, and in this dialogue the classical plots may be seen not only as objects of discussions, but also as means of communication.

## **1.5. Research problems, methods and structure of the work**

Following the main research question *How are stories transformed in the general cultural dynamics?*, we face several research problems that appear to impede the sought-for answers. We investigate the artistic text's potential to generate new meaning through interaction with other texts and under the influence of different cultural mechanisms; try to develop an extended understanding of the retelling process while paying special attention to the complex multidirectional transmedia communication that stands behind it; and, finally, attempt to distinguish the crucial ways of texts' transformations in fanfiction as part of the general retelling process.

The methodology of the research is based primarily on the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School studies of culture that imply, firstly, a holistic approach to the culture and conception of it as a semiotically multilingual phenomenon; secondly, considering culture as an active agent capable of communication and self-reflection; and thirdly, an extended understanding of the text and its use as the main unit of analysis.

We model the cultural processes that are relevant for our research through semiotic oppositions proposed by Juri Lotman (2005 [1984], 2013 [1973], and Lotman and Uspenskij 1992) such as, for instance, homogenization and diversification, historical and mythological thinking, and preservation and transformation. We complement the analysis with the ideas of other scholars whose works in one way or another contributed to the field of semiotics, and at least to a certain extent, correspond to Lotman's general line of thought. Among them are Michael Riffaterre, Anton Popovič, Algirdas Greimas, Roland Barthes, Mikhail Bahtin, Boris Gasparov and Umberto Eco.

The main research material — that is, Russian fanfiction devoted to “The Snow Queen” fairy tale from ficbook.net — contains the optimal number of texts (around 700), that allows us to combine qualitative and quantitative methods, close and distant reading.

The work consists of an introductory section and five original articles published during five years of our PhD studies. In the introductory section, we attempt to develop the frame based on the concept of multiple overcoding of artistic text as a transmedia process. Thereby, we aim to connect all articles into one research project and emphasize the main ideas about the nature of retelling that we were able to propose.

## **2. THE NATURE OF RETELLING: TRANSMEDIA COMMUNICATION**

### **2.1. The potential of an artistic text to generate new meaning through multiple overcoding**

In different works, Juri Lotman developed the idea of the creative potential of an artistic text to generate new meaning due to its inner heterogeneity caused by multiple overcoding and the interaction with new contexts. (1994, 1998, 2014 [1981]) Similar thoughts might be found also in the reflections of other scholars who were interested in the field of semiotics. Roman Jakobson (2011: 76–77), predecessor of Lotman’s ideas and semiotics of culture in general, modelled an artistic text as an interlacement of different textual elements that may acquire the hierarchical structure in the mind of a receiver under the influence of one chosen element, or the *dominant*. Roland Barthes (1990: 18–20) considered the question from the side of the receiver and proposed five codes that s/he can use to comprehend a work of art – the hermeneutical code (to analyse a story), actantial code (to analyse a fabula), semic code (to analyse general content), symbolic and cultural codes (to analyse content on deeper levels). Umberto Eco (1984: 5–7) suggested that an author produces an artistic text by relying on a whole “ensemble of codes” that includes but is not limited to a linguistic code, ideological and stylistic overcoding, common and intertextual frames, whereas a receiver may approach the same text through an application of mismatching or even contradicting codes.

Although the different scholars mentioned above had their own specific, and in some aspects, different standpoints on the matter, all of them shared the idea that multiple overcoding of an artistic work turns reading/watching/listening into a complicated analytic and creative process. From the one side, a receiver should be able to understand a work of art through the recognition of codes that constitute it, or in other words, should be capable to decipher what an author meant to say. From the other, s/he should be able to interpret an artistic text and actualize it for personal needs through the application of codes relevant personally for her/him.

The idea that an artistic text might be seen as bearing certain characteristics of its author is quite pervasive in literary studies. In order to understand a text we often appeal to the author’s culture and times, his/her tastes, social position, and ideological views. However, the interest towards reception as a significant part of the retelling process turns the attention of a researcher to possible origins of the receiver’s codes — namely, his/her preferences, knowledge and general background. The receiver’s reaction to a work of art might be considered as a complex combination of his/her own characteristics and the characteristics of a text. If the interpretations of a professional reader/listener/viewer is usually directed more to a recognition of the author’s codes and understanding of a text through them, then interpretations of a non-professional reader/listener/viewer

would lead more to him/herself. Juri Lotman (2000b) considered these two types of reception as *communicative* and *auto-communicative* modes of interaction with a work of art.

It is important to emphasize here that the inappropriate application of codes in regard to the author's position does not necessarily presuppose misunderstanding, as it is possible to communicate with an artistic text in both directions, both modes, simultaneously. However, it is exactly the juxtaposition of texts with unexpected codes that catalyzes the strongest explosion of creativity from the receiver's side, leads to the significant transformation of the text in his/her mind, and might be valuable for the general cultural dynamics if a receiver will make a decision to express his/her ideas and vision. The motivation to communicate with a text also often depends on personal involvement (at least in those cases when reading/watching/listening is not a school task or some kind of professional obligation). The possibility to relate to a text privately guarantees lively interest of the audience and, what more, makes possible the reappearance of the text in the dynamic cultural landscape.

## **2.2. Mental space and formation of codes**

In this connection, the concept of code as a tool simultaneously for text creation and understanding acquires the broadest meaning and includes a variety of different things. As it has been shown by the aforementioned semioticians, it might be an artistic genre or a style, a social discourse, a cultural myth, a historical event. As a code may function as a specific taken separately text, however, most often it will entail something more general; and vice versa, different and more general codes usually lead to some concrete texts. For instance, "The Snow Queen" by H. C. Andersen is a literary tale that has no obvious predecessors in the folk culture, however, the famous Danish writer used the classical code for traditional tales with the opposition of a beautiful, kind heroine and a wicked witch/queen that associates with concrete stories such as "The Snow White" or "Sleeping Beauty". If a transformative author juxtaposes "The Snow Queen" tale with the TV-show "Game of Thrones", s/he from the nature of case touches upon the whole artistic tradition of the fantasy genre. If an artistic text is created or received in the context of a particular historical event, multiple representations of this event in culture will inevitably affect the creative communication. As a special case of an overcoding, we should also mention an intimate real-life experience. An author may rethink his/her life in the work of art, and a receiver in his/her turn may read/watch/listen to it through the lense of his/her own story. In both cases the real-life experience will be textualized by the concrete act of author-text-receiver communication and under the influence of other texts that correspond to it thematically. For example, countless romantic movies and songs in the culture become overly common by functioning as a general code of the big romantic myth, and may comprehensively affect the

reception of a love-story that a human experiences and the creation/reception of a concrete artistic work.

In the seminal work for the semiotics of culture *The Pleasure of The Text*, Roland Barthes (1975) stated that we exist inside of some neverending all-encompassing text that consists not only of artistic works, but also of radio programmes, commercials, articles in newspapers and journals that fill our daily lives. This text is formed in the mind of a human. As Marie-Laure Ryan noted, stories in their nature are much more mental than verbal/visual/audial, since they “remain inscribed in our mind long after signifiers have vanished from memory” (2017:32). Similar to Ryan’s idea of mental or internal stories is an idea expressed by the narrative scholar Manfred Jahn (2003), who proposed to think about the special condition of a text in a retelling process when a future author keeps it in his/her mind after the reception. The idea that stories may be complexly interrelated in some mental space of culture was developed and modelled as transmedia communication by Peeter Torop (2008) and Maarja Ojamaa (2015).

Following the path of these ideas, we consider the mental space of culture as a moving plasm of different stories<sup>4</sup> that is, firstly, based on the collective memory as one more or less stable set of texts known to the majority of people who belong to a specific cultural background and, secondly, is approached through an intimate receivers’ repertoire and individual memory that may include the most unexpected textual units from collective consciousness’ point of view. According to Juri Lotman (1992), it would be a mistake to see memory as a kind of a chest for storing texts, whereas it rather functions as a creative mechanism where texts are processed in a variety of ways. To a certain extent this applies to both the collective and private memory, yet characterizes the second one much more. If the collective memory usually gets structured by the diverse processes of canonization (Lotman, Uspenskij 1978: 211–232) and supports the mental space as a whole, then the more transformative and fluid inner memory of a concrete receiver activates movements and changes within it. We don’t mean to say that collective memory is absolutely not subjected to inner permutations and personal memory is absolutely chaotic, however, in general, the private repertoire of a receiver might get transformed simpler and faster, while changes in the shared memory body of texts requires much more complicated catalysts and processes.

The movements and changes in the mental space of culture are fraught with creative and analytical potential. For instance, Maarja Ojamaa (2015) has developed the concept of *transmedia whole*, which is formed in the memory of a receiver by different versions of one story, texts that belong to one storyworld, or texts that exploit the same characters. Similarly, in a gradual and almost imperceptible way, the memory may conduct other creative processes, it may split texts into parts, combine texts by a variety of features into the discourses

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<sup>4</sup> By analogy with how Boris Gasparov was understanding a text as a moving plasm of motifs (1966).

(such as a genre, a time of creation, main problems that are discussed) or even merge them into the most unexpected hardly understandable combinations.

Being processed in communication acts, the syntheses of different texts<sup>5</sup> and textual parts may gain different cultural significance. A synthesis may function as a bright flash that will shortly vanish in the memory of a receiver or it may gain a foothold in the collective memory. If the textual synthesis gets memorized on the level of culture and becomes pervasive among authors/receivers, it may turn into a code. In fact, it is important to emphasize once again that the code as a cultural phenomenon itself presupposes combination and recombination of texts in different cultural languages. And, hence, on the one hand, multiple overcoding in the creation and reception of a text might be considered as a transmedia process which implies juxtaposition and conversion of a variety of texts that are distinguished from memory and are involved in the communication through codes used by actors. On the other hand, a code itself may be a result of transmedia communication that has already happened in the mental space of culture.

### 2.3. A repeatable story as a *text-code*

Stories that are constantly retold in different cultural languages more than others have the potential to turn into the codes, since the role of cultural mediation in communication with them increases significantly. If a repeatable text has been already processed in the mental space of culture — that is, was synthesized with other texts (as, for instance, other versions of the same story) into something bigger than it was in the initial condition, became a part of the collective memory, and settled in the minds of many receivers/authors — then it may be considered as a special type of code or a *text-code*. Juri Lotman used the notion of *text-code* to analyze the similar repeatable narratives about St. Petersburg that are persistent in the Russian context and form the image of the city in culture. (2014 [1981]) Interaction with stories that have potential to become codes is an even more complex process than usual communication with a work of art, since text-codes reflect cultural myths, easily acquire some additional meanings in different contexts, may be used as lenses to look through at changing cultural realities, and are often divided into the recognizable images-motifs that turn into the signs of the story and “bricks” for the creation of new texts.

Classical fairy tale plots may be seen as good examples of text-codes that reappear in culture in different hypostases. In the book *The Irresistible Fairy Tale* (2012), Jack Zipes has distinguished two general types of retelling techniques that are often applied by contemporary authors who use the fairy tale material in their works. Using examples from contemporary visual art, the scholar analyzed and illustrated the technique of *remaking* or deconstruction of the well-known

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<sup>5</sup> The notion of textual synthesis is inspired by the work *Literary Synthesis* by Anton Popovič and Francis M. Macri (1977).

story with the intention to question its main ideas, and the technique of *creation of conflicted mosaic* or a usage of some recognizable images of traditional tales in new texts with the intention “to evoke a sense of wonder, if not bafflement”. (Zipes, 2012: 137) From the semiotic perspective, these two techniques may indicate, firstly, two main stages of a text’s assimilation in culture, and, secondly, two interrelated types of communication in which two different aspects of an artistic work are accentuated and exploited.

Reflecting on the nature of cultural retelling, Juri Lotman noted (2000a: 272) that when culture absorbs a new text and selects it for preservation in the collective memory, it first deals with a story as a whole, then later, when a story becomes well known and easily recognisable by receivers/authors, turns to the reuse of specific separate images. Although the second stage may only come after the first one, it doesn’t mean that the retelling of a story as a whole stops; on the contrary, a text may further be approached by carriers of culture in both ways. Thereby, the mental space of culture operates with creative communication centered around a story — which corresponds to the technique of remaking; and with communication centered around an artistic image — which corresponds to the technique of conflicted mosaics.

The encompassing goal of all remakes most often comes down to the rethinking, supporting or challenging of the main message of a story. For instance, according to Francesca Coppa (2017), the majority of fanfics are written in *What If?* mode and are concentrated around figures of characters. Indeed, our main research material to a significant extent supports this opinion. By remaking “The Snow Queen” many transformative writers ostensibly ask: what if Gerda would not be devoted to Kai? What if Kai voluntarily and in his right mind would decide to stay with the Snow Queen? What if the Snow Queen and Gerda would fall in love with each other? Behind these questions that, at first glance bring to mind some creative exercises, stand much bigger issues, such as rethinking of patriarchal ideas about the image and role of a woman, questioning the idealized and unrealistic image of love relationships, revision of the representation of homosexual people and their feelings in culture. “The Snow Queen” functions not simply as Andersen’s wonder story but, firstly, as a text-code that reflects the cultural myth about a beloved man who has changed dramatically and was stolen by an insidious other woman from an innocent and kind heroine, and, secondly, as a mirror that reflects ongoing changes in culture.

“The Snow Queen” encounters other codes significant for contemporary receivers/authors and provokes the many-sided discussion that may be modelled as one compounded web of different retellings (see Bacchilega 2013). Through the creative transformation of a story, authors/receivers express different opinions on the chosen matter and, hence, every concrete interpretation in the web functions as an utterance. The web of remakes-utterances highlights the auto-communicative nature of a whole retelling process (Lotman 2000b; Ojamaa, Torop 2015). Through the voices of different receivers/authors and using well known plots, culture as a whole communicates with itself, and questions what seems to be unchanging, normal and habitual.



The creation of conflicted mosaics is less ideological by its nature and closer to a creative game than to a discussion. In fact, a conflicted mosaic may be considered not one, but several techniques that reuse an artistic image in different ways. In this connection we may speak, firstly, about the intertextual game, in which a receiver/author may add to his/her text the additional dimension exploring the possibilities of an artistic image to be an organic part of one story and a hint that leads to another story at the same time (Torop 1995: 119–163); and, secondly, about some particular cases of the creation of fanfiction in the subgenre of a crossover, in which authors may use an image of one story to transform the other one.

In remaking, a receiver/author appeals to a text-code as a main object of creative transformation and through it often deals with something more general than a text itself — namely, a way of thinking. In a conflicted mosaic, a text-code is used more as a tool for new text creation among other different codes. It is important to heed, however, that both techniques and both types of communication are more interrelated than they are opposite from each other. On the one hand, in the process of remaking, a story is rarely (almost never) used in the complete original form. It preserves some relative integrity, but also undergoes transformation, reduction, and accentuation of the most crucial and powerful motifs and images that are often recombined freely in accordance with the intention of a reteller. On the other hand, specific images used for the creation of the conflicted mosaic being integrated in new texts most often still preserve a memory, or an echo, of a story to which they originally belonged.

## **2.4. Codes of a receiver in transformative works**

As Francesca Coppa noted, the phenomenon of fanfiction is a good reminder that storytelling is “not a professional activity, but a human one in which originality and publishability is rarely the point” (2017: 4). This also applies to retelling as the inevitable storytelling component. Firstly, every story to some extent repeats other preceding stories and, hence, may be seen as a retelling in the most general sense; and, secondly, rethinking of already known plots and even their transformation into new ones are not the prerogatives of some specially gifted or specially privileged caste of people, but rather the common aspects of complex communication among humans, an artistic text and culture.

Whereas any reception presupposes interpretation and is just steps away from the actual retelling process, the creation of a text and becoming an author demand additional efforts from a receiver: inspiration and skills. In order to turn into an author, a receiver should be motivated to express his/her interpretation, manifest it through certain media and cultural languages, elaborate it into a coherent text, and orient this text to particular audiences (Jahn 2003). Although retelling may be considered to be a fusion of the codes of an author and the receiver who turns into an author-reteller, in most cases, a final version of a secondary text rarely preserves the receiver’s codes. An interpretation

elaborated into a textual form usually contains some codes of the original author and submits to the author-reteller's idea embodied through thoughtful creative work, so that if it doesn't eliminate significance of first impressions and thoughts, then it disguises it.

Being a special type of retelling, fanfiction balances between the receiver's reaction to a programme-text and an artistic interpretation that may function as an independent work of art, and therefore it often retains the voice of an author as that of a receiver. In fanfics more so than in other retellings, it is possible to notice codes that were used during reading/watching/listening and "seams" that connect different texts which participated in the transmedia communication that preceded the creation of a transformative work. It is seen not only in texts themselves, but in meta-information that is usually attached to fanfics or in the comments under texts. Fans may clarify here what inspired them, accidentally lead to a creative communication, or affected their reception. In the context of fandom, the attention to the process of creation, interpretation and hence to all the possible codes that were used is justified and supported. Fans participate in the creative communications of each other, give advice, and explain their choices contemporaneously by artistic goals and highly personal reasons.

Transformative authors create their works also in dialogue with each other, which leads to two notable consequences. From the one side, it might be said that constant exchange of opinions results in the abundance of very similar fanfics. Repeatable interpretations may demonstrate what kind of a programme-text's vision is popular in the fandom, moreover, they may also indicate how a programme-text is represented in the cultural memory, which of its motifs and images are commonly remembered and most often provoke audiences for creative responses. From the other side, the unusual and unconventional perspectives gain a special value, interest and respect in the community, and may say something about the private repertoire and memory of a concrete receiver.

### 3. IN CONCLUSION

In the work *Innovation and Repetition: Between Modern and Post-Modern Aesthetics* published in 1985, Umberto Eco predicted the appearance of a receiver who would be ready for creative, active and analytical interaction with texts that exist in the culture in many variations. This kind of interaction presupposes the attention simultaneously to contents of stories and to the ways in which different texts may transmit those contents, the appreciation of “the dialectics between innovation and repetition” (173–174) and creative dialogues of texts, humans and cultures. Transformative authors more than other participants of contemporary cultural processes proved the correctness of the famous scholar’s insights. They not only often appeal to a variety of stories that don’t fit into the borders of one text, but they also broaden the web of interpretations through a polyphony of a fandom.

Fanfiction is both a special type of reaction and a special type of retelling. The lack of professional artistic polishing in many transformative works allows us to make assumptions about how a programme-text was received and why an interpretation was made, or in other words, what codes were applied for understanding the programme-text. In this way, the phenomenon of participatory culture highlights complex multi-directional transmedia communication that stands behind the retelling process. In transmedia communication, the main text is juxtaposed with a variety of other texts that are involved in the action by chosen codes, and this juxtaposition conceals in itself the potential of contextual explanation or/and artistic explosion.

In this process, the *mental space of culture* serves not only as the reservoir of potential codes and texts that might be applied in creative communication, but also as the space where texts and codes may be recombined into something new. Thus, stories that are constantly retold in different variations may function as text-codes that reflect cultural myths. Texts-codes are the results of previous transmedia communications, and the interaction with them acquires additional levels. Transformative authors may use recognizable images of text-codes for the creation of new texts or appeal to them as a way of thinking that is pervasive in a certain culture.

In this work we have touched upon the question about the role of interrelations of cultural and private memories in the retelling process, however, for now our ideas and conclusions are mainly based on the analysis of texts and, consequently, are also limited by it. The method of participatory observation and interviewing real transformative authors, i.e. field work that is widely used in participatory culture studies, would significantly broaden our perspective. The possibility to ask authors about their personal relations with a text, preferences and backgrounds, reading/watching/listening habits and creative processes would clarify many mysterious moments that are still present in the research of the nature of retelling. It might also help to clarify the difference between personal and cultural re-reading of a text, cultural and private memory, and canon and intimate repertoire.

## 4. OVERVIEW OF THE ARTICLES INCLUDED IN THE THESIS

**Pilipoveca, Tatjana 2017. Interpreting “The Snow Queen”: A comparison of two semantic universes. *Sign Systems Studies* vol 45, No ½: 181–193.**

The article may be seen as one of the first steps in our research of “The Snow Queen” story retelling in the context of the Russian culture and was written in the very beginning of our doctoral studies. We compare the Danish tale to the canonical Russian soviet interpretation — namely, the play written by Evgenij Schwartz (1896–1958), an author famous for his fairy tales and fairy tales’ adaptations for children and adults. Schwartz’s interpretation became very popular in the Soviet Union and was repeatedly staged in different children’s theaters across the country. Contemporaries of the playwright described the text as “the Danish tale adapted to the Soviet reality” and as “our Snow Queen” (Binevich 2008: 325). The play emerges as a cultural equivalent to Andersen’s tale, having similarities with the latter, yet not being the same.

In order to distinguish the discursive transformations of Andersen’s tale in the process of interpretation, we created the semantic universes of two texts with the help of A. J. Greimas’ (1983) actantial model and semiotic square. This method allowed us to make the complex analysis that included the comparison of narrative structures and crucial conflicts of the texts, what led us to the following conclusions. Schwartz deleted all the religious motives from Andersen’s tale and accentuated the adventurous component of the narrative. In his interpretation, the Snow Queen does not represent mysterious pagan powers, but her image corresponds to clear-cut and understandable destructive human features, such as arrogance, lust for power and riches. The main conflict of his fairy tale concerns love, friendship and miracles as opposed to pragmatism, whereas the conflict of the original tale mainly concerns the power of belief in a world full of temptations and dangers for the human soul.

**Pilipoveca, Tatjana 2017. The Snow Queen in the Anthology of Russian Alien Fairy Tales: An Old Story in a New World. *Skandinavskaja filologija* Tom 1, Vyp. 15. [*Скандинавская филология* Том 1, Вып. 15. *Scandinavian philology* Vol. 1, Issue 15]: 123–132.**

Classical Western tales in different canonical and modern variations are significant for the history and development of the Russian culture. The value and importance of stories such as “Cinderella”, “Sleeping Beauty” or “The Little Mermaid” is evident for today’s Russian receivers/authors, and the general spirit of contemporary postmodern fairy tale retelling is reflected in the anthology *Russian Alien Fairy Tales* («Русские инородные сказки») (2003–2010) created by the literary project Max Frei in cooperation with the publishing house *Amfora*. In this anthology are texts collected by modern Russian-writing authors of different backgrounds, levels of popularity, professionalism, success

and talents, who reused and reworked commonly known fairy tale plots in ironic, critical and sometimes tragic ways.

“The Snow Queen” is one of the most popular plots used in the anthology for the creative retelling. In order to analyze the interpretations, we used the distinction of two retelling techniques — namely, the creation of conflicted mosaics and remaking — that were proposed by Jack Zipes in the book *The Irresistible Fairy Tale* (2012: 137). In the introductory chapter of the thesis, we developed a deeper understanding of these techniques from the perspective of semiotics.

In all the texts that were examined, the fairy tale is juxtaposed to reality. In the case of the conflicted mosaics, the tale, on the one hand, is contrasted with the mundane life and, on the other, complements it. The reference to “The Snow Queen” implies a reference to the fairy tale as the phenomenon. In the case of remakes, “The Snow Queen” is opposed to real life more as a concrete text. An important aspect of the contemporary remaking of the Danish tale is the subversion of traditional morals and values that H.C.Andersen’s text transmits.

In order to be retold, any text should have something that is necessary to preserve and something that is necessary to challenge. Creation of remakes and conflicted mosaics provides the authors with the possibility to do both. On the one hand, every new text changes the fairy tale; on the other hand, it strengthens the position of the canonical versions in the culture.

**Menise, Tatjana 2019. “The Snow Queen” in Russian Fan Fiction: Voices of Readers and Viewers. *Marvels and Tales*. (Upcoming).**

In the article, Russian fanfiction of “The Snow Queen” published on the platform ficbook.net is analyzed through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in order to reflect on more general questions about the process of retelling. Firstly, we attempt to determine the special status of fanfiction in general cultural metacommunication (see Popovič 1976). Secondly, following the ideas of Manfred Jahn (2003) we divide the retelling process into three consecutive steps — the reception of a source-text, the creation of an internal story, and the manifestation of a secondary text. Thus, we consider all sources of the tale (such as, translation of Andersen’s text, or significant Russian and American adaptations) that are used by transformative authors on ficbook.net, then distinguish main motifs of the tale that appear in retellings and may indicate how the story is remembered by contemporary receivers, and finally, analyze the interpretations of fanfiction writers as critical utterances.

Communication with a work of art might be affected simultaneously by many varying factors: different artistic traditions, social discourses, and personal experiences as well as different metatexts and reading/watching/listening purposes. If the work of fanfiction authors might be determined by their personal reader’s response to a text, it is also determined by the memory of the story and the desire to say something new, or propose a new interpretation that will become a valuable contribution in the common discussion of the text.

“The Snow Queen” fairy tale stimulates fanfiction authors to rethink the topic of the love triangle — that is, a human problem that has been and will be relevant for many generations. These contemporary authors propose their own visions of the conflict by concentrating on gender roles and unrealistic representations of human relationships. Some of them still need the traditional story; however, most of them subvert it one way or another.

**Menise, Tatjana [Менисе, Татьяна] 2019. Klassičeskij tekst detskoj literatury v recepcii sovremennoj massovoj kul'tury: Krossovery po skazke H.-K. Andersena «Snežnaja koroleva» [Классический текст детской литературы в рецепции современной массовой культуры: Кроссоверы по сказке Х.-К. Андерсена «Снежная королева». The classic text of children's literature in the reception of modern popular culture: Crossovers of the H.-K. Andersen's tale “The Snow Queen”]. *Detskie čtenija* Том 15, Выр. 1 [Детские чтения Том 15, Выпуск 1. *Children readings* Vol. 15, Issue 1]: 75–92.**

The article is devoted to Russian fanfiction in the special subgenre of crossover, where the “The Snow Queen” tale is used as one of the baselines. If in regular fanfics transformative authors usually concentrate on one programme-text, then in crossovers at least two texts are used and often more. In crossovers represented on ficbook.net, the plot and characters of “The Snow Queen” are juxtaposed and unified with plots and characters of other literary and cinematic works, cartoons and popular television programs. Readers rethink the beloved fairy tale, placing it in the context of their own individual intertextual fields which are formed by the combination of a literary canon and various contemporary cultural production.

In order to understand what stands behind the creation of crossovers, we propose the concept of creative juxtaposition that is based on Michael Riffaterre’s (1994) distinction of intertextuality and hypertextuality, Juri Lotman’s (2014 [1981]) thoughts about the artistic text’s potential to generate new meaning, Roland Barthes’ (1975) idea about the eternal text that encompasses a human’s life, and Mihail Bahtin’s (1986) theory of distant contexts. We come to the conclusion that crossovers might be seen as sophisticated textual collages and the results of complicated creative games that are preceded by analytic and creative reading of texts created by different cultures and in different artistic languages. In a more general sense, crossovers might be seen as interpretations that appear on the border between different texts, media, and discourses.

**Menise, Tatjana 2019. Fairy tales between transformation and repetition: How audiences rethink the big romantic myth through Disney princess stories. *Sign Systems Studies*. (Upcoming).**

The final article of the thesis is devoted to the versatile discussion around Disney romances that happens on different levels of culture. If in the previous works we repeatedly stated that “The Snow Queen” tale is often considered by Russian transformative authors in the context of stories about princesses, then in this text we decided to clarify what happens with such tales in the contemporary world. Through this material we reach the more general problem of a special poetics that includes in itself transformation and repetition contemporaneously, and keeps classical tales alive in the changing cultural dynamics.

Through Lotman’s concept of text-code (2014 [1981]) and opposition of mythological and non-mythological consciousness (Lotman, Minc, Meletinskij 1980; Lotman, Uspenskij 1992) we analyze the dialogue among classical and modern princess stories, the debates that they cause in English-written professional critics, and the debates that they provoke in English-based participatory culture.

In this connection, transformative works may be considered as the key to a possible explanation of why fairy tales exist in culture as a complex constantly growing web, not as a limited number of selected final versions. Amateur readers demonstrate their interest in the *mythopoetics* (Toporov 1995: 5) of traditional fairy tale plots. At the same time, they are attracted by the old romantic myth that stands behind princess stories; participate in the creation of the romantic anti-myth that is supported by the professional critics, and expect the appearance of new modern myths that might be generated by a new production of Disney. New fairy tales appear, but it does not result in the disappearance of the old ones. Discussions and conflict around traditional stories keep them actual for the contemporary heterogeneous audiences.

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## SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

### Muinasjutud transmeedialises kommunikatsioonis: fännikirjandus

Doktoritöö peamine uurimisküsimus on: *Kuidas lood üldises kultuuri dünaamikas muutuvad?* Kultuur töötab pidevalt ümber hästi tuntud lugusid, kordab ja taaskasutab neid viisil, mis meenutab keerulist mängu, milles erinevad autorid otsivad tekstidest varjatud tähendusi, katsetavad uusi väljendusviise või lihtsalt testivad juba tuttavate ja laiema publiku poolt "läbiseeditud" tekstisõnumite aktuaalsust uutes kontekstides.

Ümberjutustamise protsess avaldub uutes tõlgendustes, mis ilmuvad sel müstilisel hetkel, kui teksti vastuvõtjast saab autor, sest vastuvõtja/autori kaudu võib iga lugu end taasluua, et olla kooskõlas uue kultuurilise taustsüsteemi ja seda lugu ümbritsevate aktuaalsete diskursustega. Sel põhjusel pöörame erilist tähelepanu fännipraktikatele, sest fännikirjandus säilitab võrreldes teiste tõlgendustüüpidega rohkem vastuvõtjate emotsionaalseid reaktsioone alliktekstile ja seega säilitab ka lugeja autoriks muutumise jälgi. Kõik "professionaalsete" ja "amatööridest" autorite tõlgendused on loominguks lausungid, mis on oma tähenduselt võrreldavad aga erinevad oma funktsioonilt, kunstilise mängu kompleksuselt ja mõju poolest kultuurile tervikuna.

Me vaatleme ümberjutustust semiootika kontekstis ja modelleerime seda inimeste, tekstide ja kultuuride vahelise *kommunikatsiooni* ahelas. Tähelepanu keskpunktis ei ole mitte konkreetsete tekstid kui niisugused, vaid nende osutused, käivitajad – erinevate kultuurikeelte tekstide kompleksne koosmõju, mis toimib kultuuri mentaalsel tasandil, aktiveeritakse vastuvõtja/autori peas ja mida saab käsitleda *transmeedialise* kommunikatsioonina. Kuigi põhiliseks uurimisobjektiks on ühe loo kordused ja transformatsioonid, laiendatakse ümberjutustamise protsessi mõistmist, kaasates transmeedialised ühendused mitte ainult järgnevusahelas sidustatud tekstide, vaid ka geneetiliselt seostamatute, pidevalt liikuva ja muutuva kultuuri mõjutusel üksteisega vaid sattumuslikult suhestatud erisugustega materjalidega, mis erinevad nii loomeaja, päritolu, taustsüsteemide kui teemade poolest. Püüame näidata, kuidas kultuurilise ümberjutustamise käivitajaks olev kõrvutamine, kombineerimine ja taasühendamine, mis tugineb tekstide vahelistele sarnasustele, varjab oma loominguks potentsiaali tekstide erisuses.

Käesoleva uurimuse põhiliseks allikmaterjaliks on vene fännikirjandus, mis on valinud oma objektiks Hans Christian Anderseni klassikalise muinasjutu "Lumekuninganna" (1884). Vene suurimal fännikirjanduse veebiplatvormil ficbook.net on "Lumekuninganna" kõige populaarsem erinevate klassikaliste euroopa muinasjuttude seas, mida kasutatakse ümberjutustuste allikmaterjalina. Kokku on sel platvormil 700 erinevat lugu, mis viitavad Anderseni loole. Võrreldes Harry Potteri frantsiisiga, kus on kümneid tuhandeid tekste, ei ole see just suur arv, aga klassikaliste muinasjuttude hulgas siiski kindlalt esikohal.

Huvituses fännikirjanduse autorite tõlgendusi juhtivatest protsessidest, on võimatu eirata neid tõlgendusi piiritlevaid tekstilisi taustüsteeme, mis eristuvad uuringute käigus. Anderseni loo populaarsus vene fännikirjanduse autorite seas võib olla seotud nii ammuse kultuurideülese suhtlusega, vene kanoonilise ja kaasaegse kommertskultuuriga, muinasjuttude buumiga üldiselt ja eelkõige osaluskultuuris toimivate erinevate suundumuste kontekstiga.

Doktoritöö täiendab muinasjuttude uuringuid mitmes aspektis. Esiteks klassikalistest lugudest lähtuvate tekstide kaasamisega mitmekesisesse tõlgendusmaastikku ning, teiseks, lisades semiootilise perspektiivi kaasaegse kultuuri mõjuväljas olevate muinaslugude transformatsiooni olemuse uurimisse. Võttes arvesse ümberjutustamise protsesside taga toimuvat transmeedialist suhtlust võime märgata kuidas muinaslood põrkuvad, põimuvad ja liituvad kõigi kaasaegsete autorite/vastuvõtjate käsutuses olevate võimalike tekstidega ja kuidas muinaslood saavad uute tekstide materjaliks. Me näeme kaasaegset muinasjutubuumi kui dialoogi erinevate autorite/vastuvõtjate ja kultuuride vahel ning selles dialoogis võib klassikalisi süžeesid käsitleda mitte ainult arutelude objektide, vaid ka suhtlemisvahendina.

Doktoritöö on interdistsiplinaarne uurimus, mis ühendab mitut teadusvaldkonda. Huvi erinevates kultuurikeeltes toimuva ümberjutustamise olemuse vastu viib paratamatult transmeedialise loojutustamise egiidi all läbiviidavate uuringute valda, samas kui uurimuse materjal on konkreetsemalt seotud osavõtluskultuuri ja muinasjuttude uuringutega. Meie enda uurimisperspektiiv aga juurdub kultuurisemiootikas, järgime Tartu-Moskva koolkonna traditsiooni, kaasates ja edasi arendades koolkonna asutaja Juri Lotmani ideid, kes vaatles kultuuri kui semiootilist ruumi (semiosfääri), kus põimuvad erinevad mitmemõõtelised märgisüsteemid ja rõhutas eriti kultuuris toimivaid koostoimelisi aspekte.

Otsides vastust oma peamisele uurimisküsimusele tegeleme me mitmete kitsamate uurimisprobleemidega. Uurime kunstiteksti potentsiaali tekitada uut tähendust läbi suhtluse teiste tekstidega ja erinevate kultuurimehhanismide mõjul; püüame arendada laiahaardelist arusaama ümberjutustamise protsessi olemusest, pöörates erilist tähelepanu selle taga seisvale keerukale ja mitmesuunalisele transmeedialisele kommunikatsioonile; püüame eristada tekstide ümberkujundamise olulisi võtteid fännikirjanduses osana üldisest ümberjutustamisprotsessist.

Uuringu metodoloogiliseks aluseks on eelkõige Tartu–Moskva semiootika-koolkonna arusaam kultuurist kui terviklikust ja semiootiliselt mitmekeelsest nähtusest ja teksti mõiste laiendatud kasutus analüüsi põhiüksusena.

Uurimistöö jaoks olulisi kultuuriprotsesse modelleerime Juri Lotmani poolt välja pakutud semiootiliste opositsioonide toel (nt homogeensus ja mitmekesistamine, ajalooline ja mütoloogiline mõtlemine, säilitamine ja ümberkujundamine) ning täiendame analüüsi teiste teadlaste ideedega, kes ühel või teisel moel on semiootika valdkonda panustanud ja suhestuvad Juri Lotmani mõtteviisiga. Nende seas on Michael Riffaterre, Anton Popovič, Algirdas Greimas, Roland Barthes, Mihhail Bakhtin, Boriss Gasparov ja Umberto Eco.

Peamine valitud uurimismaterjal – “Lumekuninganna” muinasjutule pühendatud vene fännikirjandus platvormil ficbook.net – sisaldab optimaalset tekstide arvu (umbes 700), mis võimaldab kombineerida kvalitatiivseid ja kvantitatiivseid meetodeid, lähi- ja kauglugemist.

Väitekiri koosneb sissejuhatavast osast ja viiest artiklist, mis on avaldatud viimase viie aasta jooksul minu doktoriõpingute käigus. Sissejuhatav osa pakub välja artikleid ühendava raamistiku, mille aluseks on kunstiteksti mitmekordse ülekodeerimise kontseptsioon transmeedialise protsessina ja mis rõhutab meie poolt välja pakutud olulisemaid ideid ümberjutustamise protsessi kohta.

Artiklis (I) **Interpreting “The Snow Queen”: A comparison of two semantic universes** (“Lumekuninganna” tõlgendades: kahe semantilise universumi võrdlus) tuleks näha esimese sammuna meie uurimusteevõrgul “Lumekuninganna” loo ümberjutustuste jälgimisel vene kultuuri kontekstis. Artiklis võrreldakse Taani kirjaniku kuulsat muinasjuttu Nõukogude kirjaniku Jevgeni Švartsi samanimelise näidendiga, millest sai üks selle muinasjutu kanoonilisemaid tõlgendusi vene kultuuriruumis. Švarts muutis Anderseni keeruka ning religioosse taustaga teksti algseid ideid ja narratiivset struktuuri, et teha see nõukogude publikule kõitvamaks ja vaatamängulisemaks ning hõlbustada sellega suhestumist. Eristamiseks lähteteksti diskursiivseid teisenemisi adaptiooni käigus luuakse kahe teksti semantilised universumid, kasutades A. J. Greimase aktantide mudelit ja semiootilist ruutu. See meetod võimaldab võrrelda nii kahe teksti narratiivseid struktuure kui ka tuua välja tekstide konfliktseid vastuolud.

Artikkel (II) **“The Snow Queen” in the Anthology of Russian Alien Fairy Tales: an Old Story in a New World** (“Lumekuninganna” vene võõrmuinasjuttude antoloogias: vana lugu uues maailmas) vaatleb Andersoni muinasjutu tõlgendusi Max Frei kunstiprojekti raames loodud kirjandusantoloogias (koostöös kirjastusega Amfora). Analüüsi põhimeetodina kasutatakse Jack Zipe poolt raamatus *The Irresistible Fairy Tale* (2012) välja pakutud eristust kahe ümberjutustava tehnika – konfliktsete mosaiikide loomine ja ümbertegemine (*re-making*) – vahel.

Artikkel (III) **“The Snow Queen” in Russian Fanfiction: Voices of Readers and Viewers** (“Lumekuninganna” vene fännikirjanduses: lugejate ja vaatajate hääled), uurib Lumekuninganna loo ümber kujunenud fännikirjandust platvormil ficbook.net. Analüüsis kombineeritakse kvantitatiivset ja kvalitatiivset meetodit eesmärgiga leida vastuseid ümberjutustamise protsessiga seotud üldisematele küsimustele. Esmalt määratletakse fännikirjanduse eristaatus kultuurilises metakommunikatsioonis. Teiseks, järgides Manfred Jahni ideid, jagatakse ümberjutustamise protsess kolmeks üksteisele järgneva osaks: lähteteksti retseptsioon, süvaloo (*internal story*) loomine ja sekundaarteksti manifestatsioon.

Artikkel (IV) **Классический текст детской литературы в рецепции современной массовой культуры: кроссоверы по сказке Х.-К. Андерсена «Снежная королева»** (Lastekirjanduse klassika tänapäeva populaarkultuuris: H.-K. Anderseni muinasjutu “Lumekuninganna” risttekstid) vaatleb

venekeelset fänniloomingut allžanris risttekst, kus “Lumekuningannat” on kasutatud ühe baastekstina. Selgitamaks ristteksti loomisprotsessi olemust pakutakse välja loomingulise kõrvutuse mõiste, mis põhineb Michael Riffaterre’i intertekstuaalsuse ja hüpertekstuaalsuse eristusel, Juri Lotmani ideedel kunstiteksti potentsiaalset uute ideede genereerimisel, Roland Barthes’i mõtetel inimelu juhtivast igavesest tekstist ja Mihhail Bahtini teoorial eemalseisvatest kontekstidest.

Viimane artikkel (V) **Fairy tales between transformation and repetition: how audiences rethink the big romantic myth through Disney princess stories** (Muinasjutud transformatsiooni ja korduse vahel: romantiliste müütide ja Disney printsessilugude ümbermõtestamine) käsitleb mitmesuunalist diskussiooni Disney romantiliste lugude ümber, mis toimuvad kultuuri erinevatel tasanditel. Kui eelmistes artiklites on korduvalt rõhutatud, et “Lumekuninganna” muinasjutt on vene fännikirjanduses tihtipeale paigutatud printsessilugude konteksti, siis siin püütakse selgitada, mis ikkagi juhtub printsessilugudega tänapäeva maailmas. Selle materjali kaudu jõuame nende lugude poeetika üldisema probleemini, mis hõlmab endas ühekorraga nii muutmist (transformatsiooni) kui kordust ning hoiab traditsioonilist muinasjuttu elavana muutlikes kultuurikontekstides. Analüüsitakse klassikaliste ja modernsete printsessilugude vahelist dialoogi, debatte, mida need põhjustavad ingliskeelses kirjanduskriitikas ja ingliskeelses osalus kultuuris, kasutades Juri Lotmani kood-teksti mõistet ja mütoloogilise ja mittemütoloogilise (ajaloolise) teadvuse mehhanismide eristust.



## **PUBLICATIONS**

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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### Education:

01.09.2014–(01.01.2020) PhD in Semiotics and Culture Studies.  
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*University of Utrecht, Netherlands*

01.09.2012–01.09.2014 Master of Humanities in Semiotics  
*University of Tartu, Estonia*

01.09.2011–01.09.2013 Master of Humanities in Russian Philology  
*University of Latvia, Latvia*

01.09.2008–01.09.2011 Bachelor of Humanities in Russian Philology  
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### Work experience:

01.01.2016–present Creator of digital courses and educational platforms for high school students, researcher  
*Education on Screen*, the project by The University of Tartu, Estonia  
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01.06.2015–01.07.2018 Field researcher  
*SEFER*, Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization, Moscow

### List of selected publications

- 2019 Ojamaa, Maarja; Torop, Peeter; Fadeev, Aleksandr; Milyakina, Alexandra; Pilipoveca, Tatjana; Rickberg, Merit (2019). Culture as education: From transmediality to transdisciplinary pedagogy. *Sign Systems Studies*, 47 (1/2), 152–176.
- 2019 Menise, Tatjana [Менисе, Татьяна].Классический текст детской литературы в рецепции современной массовой культуры: кроссоверы по сказке Х.-К. Андерсена «Снежная королева» *Детские чтения* 15 (1), 75–92.
- 2017 Pilipoveca, Tatjana. Interpreting “The Snow Queen”: A comparison of two semantic universes. *Sign Systems Studies*, 45 (1/2), 181–193.

- 2017 Pilipoveca, Tatjana. The Snow Queen in The Anthology of Russian Allien Fairy Tales: An Old Story In a New World. *Scandinavian Philology*, 14 (1), 123–132.
- 2017 Kanatova, Maria; Milyakina, Alexandra; Pilipovec, Tatyana; Shelya, Artjom; Sobchuk, Oleg; Tinitis, Peeter. Broken Time, Continued Evolution: Anachronies in Contemporary Films. *Stanford Literary Lab* 14, 1–22.
- 2016 Pilipoveca, Tatjana. Auto-communication: Rethinking its relation to the artistic text. *Tartu Semiotics Library*, 16, 66–75.
- 2016 Ojamaa, Maarja; Milyakina, Alexandra; Rickberg, Merit; Sieberk, Liina; Pilipoveca, Tatjana. Digital literature as means of integration: building an open educational platform on the basis of A. Kivirähk’s novel. XII Annual Estonian Philosophy Conference Science, Technology and Society: Philosophical Perspectives. Tallinn: Tallinna Tehnikaülikool, 17–17.
- 2015 Pilipoveca, Tatjana. [Пилиповец Татьяна] Русские экранизации сказки «Снежная королева»: диалог интерпретаций. *РУССКАЯ ФИЛОЛОГИЯ.*, 26, 221–232.

**Research interests** semiotics of culture, education, literary studies

## ELULOOKIRJELDUS

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### Haridustee:

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*Tartu Ülikool*

01.10.2017–20.12.2017 DORA vahetusprogramm  
*Utrechti Ülikool, Holland*

01.09.2012–01.09.2014 MA semiootika  
*Tartu Ülikool*

01.09.2011–01.09.2013 MA vene filoloogia  
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01.09.2008–01.09.2011 BA vene filoloogia  
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01.01.2016– Creator of digital courses and educational platforms for high school students, teadur projektis *Haridus ekraanil*, Tartu Ülikool (<http://kirjandusekraanil.ee/>)

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### Olulisemad publikatsioonid

- 2019 Menise, Tatjana. Fairy-tales between transformation and repetition: rethinking the big romantic myth through Disney princesses stories. *Sign Systems Studies*. (Ilmumas).
- 2019 Menise, Tatjana. “The Snow Queen” in Russian Fan Fiction: Voices of Readers and Viewers. *Marvels & Tales* 33.2. (Ilmumas).
- Ojamaa, Maarja; Torop, Peeter; Fadeev, Aleksandr; Milyakina, Alexandra; Pilipoveca, Tatjana; Rickberg, Merit 2019. Culture as education: From transmediality to transdisciplinary pedagogy. *Sign Systems Studies* 47 (1/2): 152–176.
- Menise, Tatjana [Менисе, Татьяна] 2019. Классический текст детской литературы в рецепции современной массовой культуры: кроссоверы по сказке Х.-К. Андерсена «Снежная королева». *Детские чтения* 15 (1): 75–92.

- Pilipoveca, Tatjana 2017. Interpreting “The Snow Queen”: A comparison of two semantic universes. *Sign Systems Studies* 45 (1/2): 181–193.
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- Kanatova, Maria; Milyakina, Alexandra; Pilipovec, Tatyana; Shelya, Artjom; Sobchuk, Oleg; Tinitis, Peeter 2017. Broken Time, Continued Evolution: Anachronies in Contemporary Films. *Stanford Literary Lab* 14: 1–22.
- Pilipoveca, Tatjana 2016. Auto-communication: Rethinking its relation to the artistic text. *Tartu Semiotics Library* 16: 66–75.
- Pilipoveca, Tatjana [Пилиповец Татьяна] 2015. Русские экранизации сказки «Снежная королева»: диалог интерпретаций. *Русская филология* 26: 221–232.

**Research interests:**

kultuurisemiootika, haridus, kirjandus, osaluskultuur, muinasjutud

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