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RED RIDING HOOD ACROSS MEDIA

**Transmedia Storytelling in Contemporary Adaptations of
“Little Red Riding Hood”**

PhD Dissertation

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Dissertation declaration

I declare that the present dissertation is the result of my own research carried out under the supervision of Dr. habil. Anna Kérchy and Dr. habil. Réka M. Cristian. The papers previously published by myself are clearly marked and the materials written by other authors are appropriately cited in my dissertation.

Emma Bálint

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Chapter 1. Introduction: Transmedial fairy tales in contemporary popular culture

Classic fairy tales have fascinated and inspired children and adults for a vast time. The stories immortalized by Charles Perrault and the Grimm brothers, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, have always been among the first narratives to be transformed and transposed into experimental shapes and forms, especially in the rapidly evolving cultural landscape of the twenty-first century. Being timelessly relevant and uniquely valuable in terms of their universal popularity and recognizability among people of all ages, backgrounds, and across cultures—primarily among those located in the Anglosphere, which form the subject area of the present dissertation—, they continue to hold a position in most areas of the Western entertainment industry today as well. In the current age of the internet and digitalization, the globalized domain of cultural production appears to be dominated by transmedial universes—although if we take the products produced or shared by the public into consideration, we might even declare that it has been conquered—, which, among numerous other types of narratives, engage fairy tales in never-ending processes of adaptation, resulting in ever more entangled webs of intertextual and often also intermedial relationships. The objective of the present dissertation is to provide a series of comprehensive and media-specific analyses of a sample of contemporary fairy-tale adaptations through the lenses of fairy-tale, adaptation, and media studies, while employing and amplifying the tools of transmedial narratology.

While the present research is predominantly literary in its essence, it does take place in a markedly multidisciplinary plane. The theories of adaptation that form one of the major pillars of this research are derived primarily from the works of Linda Hutcheon, with the addition of citing Jan Baetens's work on the development and cultural impact of the genre of novelizations in an attempt to open up the debate to one of the more neglected forms and directions of adaptation within literary scholarship. The definition of transmedia storytelling itself is borrowed from Henry Jenkins, who famously conceptualized it as the unfolding of a

single shared narrative that spreads out “across multiple media platforms” (2006, 293). Moreover, as there are numerous digital works among the transmedial adaptations chosen to be analyzed for the purpose of this dissertation, the inclusion of certain new media theories has also been necessitated, such as Jay David Bolter’s and Richard Grusin’s conception of the double logic of remediation. In providing detailed analyses of each carefully selected adaptation, the tools of narratology are utilized on the basis of Gerard Genette’s works and are supplemented by the foundational concepts of *transmedial narratology* as developed by Jan-Noël Thon (2016, xviii). In addition to these, the sociohistorical (Alan Dundes, Jack Zipes, Sandra L. Beckett) and psychoanalytical (Bruno Bettelheim, Ildikó Boldizsár) approaches to fairy tales have also proved to be useful and fundamental, especially when linking the subjects of the case studies with their classic literary origins and locating them within their respective *fairy-tale webs*—meaning the very imaginatively and creatively formulated systems of fairy-tale adaptations by Cristina Bacchilega (2013, 27). Reflecting on such a multidisciplinary framework scoping the fields of literary and media theories is what has made it possible to thoroughly analyze the equally multifarious primary sources of the present dissertation.

Due to the specificity of the genre of the primary sources, fairy-tale adaptations are often referred to as rewritings or retellings, as is conventional in the context of fairy-tale studies. The term *adaptation*, however, is also used consistently throughout the dissertation, as a more general and less genre-specific synonym of fairy-tale rewritings and retellings. Along the lines of transmedia storytelling, adaptations are understood to be not mere copies of their source texts but as works of art in their own rights, including not just the transposition of narratives into different media formats but also their prequels, sequels, and spin-offs, regardless of whether they were created in the same media format or transposed into a different one. To be able to fully explore the relations and dynamics at play between sequels, prequels, and originals, it is necessary to acknowledge and respect the direction of the adaptation process; especially since the precedence of the source text is such a crucial principle of the definition of the novelization, which makes up the majority of the list of

adaptations considered in the analytic chapter of the present dissertation. Some *intramedial adaptations*—i.e. adaptations where both the source and target text are created in the same form of medium—are considered, but most case studies rely on separated instances of *intermedial adaptations*—i.e. adaptations created in different media formats—, which are all embedded in a common *transmedial universe*. If a narrative or its diegetic elements are thus transposed onto several various media platforms, the term *transmedial adaptation* is used. Accordingly, each and every one of the primary sources discussed in the present dissertation is understood to be transmedial adaptations of the tale “Little Red Riding Hood.” The phrase *transmedial storyworld* is used to designate the shared characters, story elements, and/or plots of transmedial adaptations, as well as “the spatial, temporal, causal, and ontological relations between these elements,” which contribute to either replicating or extending the narrative known from its source (Thon 2017, 291)—e.g. the specific and unique portrayals of classic fairy-tale characters and the magical realist fairy-tale world setting of the television series *Once Upon a Time* (2011-2018) and its 2015 tie-in novelization *Red’s Untold Tale*—, while *transmedial universe* is used to refer to a more extensive, truly heterarchical corpus of a large number of adaptations that are related to a common source or depart from a shared identifiable narrative skeleton but are not necessarily set in the same storyworld (Thon 2016, 330)—e.g. the above-mentioned television show and its novelization along with the *Fables* comics series (2002-2015) and all other texts and media products that include references to and adapt the narrative of “Little Red Riding Hood” including but not limited to the ones considered in the present dissertation. Furthermore, paralleling the terminology of media studies with that of fairy-tale studies, the aforementioned concept of fairy-tale webs (Bacchilega 2013, 27) can thus also be defined as genre-specific transmedial universes including distinctively and solely the instances of a particular fairy tale’s adaptations.

In the course of this dissertation, I continue braiding together the theories of these fields by asserting that transmedial universes, and even fairy-tale webs, can be broken down into smaller subdivisions connected through their shared usage of the recognizable elements of a specific transmedial storyworld. I call these subgroups *transmedial microcosms* to

emphasize their transmedial aspects while at the same time designating their embeddedness in larger transmedial universes. The key benefit of analyzing transmedial microcosms lies in that their acknowledgment makes it possible to delve deeper into the contents and meanings of specific narratives spread out through multiple media and thus allow for a more thorough understanding of transmedial relations. In the dissertation, following a theoretical overview, a series of case studies of transmedial microcosms are carried out using tools of media-specific and transmedial narratology. Although transmedial microcosms are not exclusively pertinent to fairy tales—we could talk about transmedial microcosms in various mythologies or the Marvel universe, for instance—, they do provide paradigmatic examples, which is why adaptations of “Little Red Riding Hood” were chosen as primary sources for this dissertation.

In addition to the academic and theoretical advantages of exploring multiple transmedial microcosms from a single transmedial universe throughout the dissertation, there are several practical aspects worth noting as well: firstly, discussing different adaptations of the same narrative creates a sense of unity and comprehensibility for the whole of the text; secondly, the commonality of the base narrative facilitates the analyses of the numerous renderings of the same tale by allowing for shifting the focus from the plot in each case study to more obscure elements and aspects of the fairy tale; what is more, it also makes it possible to pinpoint additional points of connection not only within but also among the different interrelated transmedial microcosms as well. As for the motivation behind choosing the tale of “Little Red Riding Hood” in particular, the reasons are manifold, most of which can be considered through a purposefully condensed overview of the tale’s literary history and its most conventional interpretations.

“Little Red Riding Hood” is widely regarded as one of the oldest and most commonly recognized folktales (Zipes 1983a, 2; Beckett 2002, xv; Orenstein 2002, 4), with cognates detected as far back in history as the ancient Chinese and Roman empires (Dundes 1989, x; Ziolkowski 2009, 100). Considering the sheer number of its rewritings available today, it becomes apparent that the cautionary tale of the gullible girl in red garment tricked by the cunning wolf has not merely survived throughout the centuries but has intrigued and inspired

humanity. As a result, numerous forms of the story about Red Riding Hood exist in different parts of the world, and its seemingly simple framework of innocent-versus-evil has proved to be a particularly fertile ground for contemporary revisionist adaptations. Unlike many other classic fairy tales, it has managed to avoid Disneyfication—meaning that it has not been set into a uniform cast by the commercializing conglomerate of fairy tales known as the Walt Disney Studios—and thus remains free to be reinvented in novel and creative ways time and again to this day. Despite the tale’s long and meandering history, however, most of its contemporary adaptations appear to be based on a handful of sources, first and foremost on the didactic forms crafted by its literary fathers, Charles Perrault (France, 1697) and the Grimm brothers (Germany, 1812). The most substantial difference between the two versions is the ending: while Perrault’s heroine remains irreversibly dead in the end, the Grimms’ is miraculously saved by the fatherly huntsman. In addition to these two widely recognized versions, contemporary authors also often appear to be inspired by the symbolism found in “The Story of Grandmother,” recorded by oral storytellers in 1885 and published by Paul Delarue in 1956 (Dundes 1989, 16-17), which is widely believed to be the most authentic transcription of the early modern European oral version of the folktale available today.

Since the plot of the narrative is simple at its heart, it gives itself to be adapted and twisted to the will of its (re)writer and to be used as a vehicle to inform and alert the public about certain societal deviations—as is perfectly demonstrated by the versions formulated by the Western European literary fathers of the tale. While Perrault turned the narrative into a cautionary tale addressed to young female members of the middle and upper classes as a means to warn them against predatory, abusive men of the French court, complemented even by a didactic and unmissable moral explanation in lyric form at the end; the Grimms transformed it into a primer for younger children to demonstrate the dire consequences of not following one’s mother’s or superior’s orders. In contrast, Paul Delarue’s recording offers a palpably different perspective by portraying the main character not as a rueful and irrepressible victim never to be rescued or as a naïve damsel in distress to be recovered by a noble father figure but as a self-reliant heroine in the truest sense of the word, who has the

wits and competence to trick the wolf and escape from his clutches with no outside help at all. Perrault is credited with inventing and giving the young girl her emblematic and evocative red riding hood (Zipes 1983b, 9)—which has received an immense amount of attention from scholars of various backgrounds, most often taken to signify a girl's first menstruation and budding sexual maturation (Bettelheim 1977, 171)—, but Delarue recorded numerous additional meaningful narrative elements—such as the choice between the path of the pins and the path of the needles, the consumption of the grandmother's flesh and blood by the girl, and the notorious striptease scene before joining the wolf in the grandmother's bed—, which have contributed greatly to the continuous (re)interpretation of the tale as the allegorization of a female initiation rite in some cases, and abuse and rape in others.

In addition to the elements and structure of the narrative, the main characters themselves have also been subject to pivotal revisions—the heroine and the villain often switch roles and fluctuate between innocence and evilness—which have led to profound changes in how the narrative is interpreted and remain to be a focal feature of contemporary adaptations as well. In Delarue's tale, it is not just the main character who has a memorable identity as a self-sufficient heroine, but the villain too, as he is described as a *bzou*, in other words, a werewolf, which is meant to justify his ability to walk and talk like a human and even to masquerade as a sickly grandmother. The more recent developments of the two main characters hint at a return to Delarue's version and the assumed roots of the tale, as many contemporary revisions involve a supernatural humanoid villain and most of them portray exactly such a compellingly intelligent and strong female heroine—a notion otherwise highly uncharacteristic of classic fairy tales—, which presents yet another reason why the adaptations of this particular narrative deserve continued scholarly attention.

The texts analyzed in this dissertation were carefully selected from the overflowing inventory of the tale's adaptations on the basis of certain distinctive factors, which are: their intended target audiences, their dates of creation, and the media formats and adaptation processes they had been involved in. As a result, "Little Red Riding Hood" adaptations created for a (young) adult audience in the twenty-first century were selected because these

are most diverse in terms of the novel treatment of their subject as well as their readiness to experiment with various media formats. If possible, multiple adaptations from within specific transmedial microcosms were chosen to highlight the relationship and dialogue between adaptations of the same variation of the children's tale across different media platforms.

The structure of the dissertation was designed to be coherent and easily comprehensible. Framed by the present introduction and the conclusion, the main body consists of two distinctive chapters: one specifying and reflecting on the theoretical resources relevant to the research at hand and one analyzing primary sources based on the theoretical framework laid out in the preceding chapter. As has already been asserted in this introduction, interconnectedness and interdisciplinarity are the chief principles governing the course of the dissertation, as its academic objective and subject materials both operate at intersections—connecting scholarly fields and popular cultural productions in various media formats, respectively.

Accordingly, in Chapter 2, the treatment of the theoretical-methodological framework of the dissertation centers not on a single field of study but on the shared vantage points between disciplines. First, this chapter highlights the increasingly popular and widespread merging of fairy-tale scholarship with adaptation theories that arose in response to the surge in transmedial rewritings of fairy tales for (young) adults in the past nearly fifty years. Throughout the chapter, emphasis is on the theories discussing or applicable to the study of “Little Red Riding Hood,” complemented by an overview of the book-length scholarly examinations of the tale available to date. This studious literature review serves to demonstrate both the multitude of approaches applied in the discourse of the fairy tale as well as the remaining research gaps: the disregard for the new media elements of the transmedial universe of “Little Red Riding Hood” and the lack of scrutiny and recognition of the self-containment of each distinct transmedial microcosm.

Having established the existence of such limitations in research, the second subchapter of Chapter 2 provides a theoretical background and a foundation for the examination of such hitherto disregarded fairy-tale adaptations. This section relies on theories

devised within the fields of narratology and (new) media, with the intent to contribute to the particularization of an applicable methodology at the threshold of the two in the form of transmedial narrative theory. Consistently with the dissertation's aim to bring disregarded cultural products to the foreground in academic discourse, this subchapter is complemented by a thorough examination of the history and theorization of the genre of novelization, a decidedly undervalued and marginalized literary genre that nevertheless occupies a significant place in transmedial universes.

Similarly to the theoretical-methodological chapter, the subject materials of the case studies are also governed by the principle of in-betweenness. Accordingly, the analytical section of the present dissertation is divided into subsections based on the various types of media each group of primary sources includes in order to better understand the processes and products of adaptation in the contemporary era dominated by transmedial entertainment. The first subchapter starts out with textual adaptations of the tale, promptly releasing the discourse from its intramedial constraints with the help of one of the most influential film adaptations of "Little Red Riding Hood," *The Company of Wolves* (1984), created based on Angela Carter's short story of the same title (1979). The second subchapter continues with the analyses of intermedial film adaptations but swiftly shifts the focus to novelizations, an intriguing though generally overlooked segment of contemporary transmedial universes. In this section, the novelization of a film, *Little Red Riding Hood* (2011), and of a television series, *Once Upon a Time* (2011-2018), are considered, which allow for the demonstration of two differing adaptation processes despite the resemblance between the media involved—referring to their audio-visual and textual natures, respectively. Finally, the third subchapter centers around and aims to open up the discussion to what appears to be another considerably under-researched area in fairy-tale scholarship: new media adaptations. Starting out with the general examination of interactive textual adaptations of the tale in various digital e-book formats, the subchapter gradually progresses toward examples of webcomic and video game adaptations of fairy tales through the analyses of Emily Carroll's graphic novel, *Through the Woods* (2014) and its online interactive counterparts, and Telltale Games's narrative video

game, *The Wolf Among Us* (2013-2014) and its comic book adaptations of the same title by Dave Justus and Lilah Sturges (2015-2016).

Since the direction of the adaptation process is a relevant factor in most of the examples discussed in this dissertation, especially in the cases of novelizations, the hierarchical nature of the relationship between source and target text, at least in terms of temporality, is acknowledged in their analyses. What ensures the relevance of the set of primary sources for the present dissertation as well as the originality of the research within the scope of fairy-tale studies, is the fact that they are not mere free-standing adaptations of “Little Red Riding Hood” but are linked to one another as groups of rewritings of the same exact transmedial storyworlds in different media formats. Consequently, the focus on examples of what the present dissertation defines as transmedial microcosms throughout the analytical chapter facilitates the closer inspection of intermedial and transmedial links between adaptations.

The above-specified structure allows for the direct application of the theories and methods emerging from the intersections of the various fields of studies reviewed in Chapter 2. While investigating the roots and origins of fairy tales is beyond the scope of the dissertation, the ways the chosen adaptations deviate from the earliest literary adaptations of “Little Red Riding Hood” are closely observed, along with the ways the structure and elements of these early tales have been repurposed in contemporary adaptations for (young) adult audiences, thus recognizing the long and meandering history and continuing cultural relevance of the story of Red Riding Hood and of the fairy-tale genre in general. In addition, the symbolic elements within and the underlying meanings and messages these contemporary adaptations are used to propagate are also considered, along with the different ways in which the morals of literary fairy tales for children are altered and conveyed to adult target audiences. Analyzing the selected sets of transmedial adaptations in Chapter 3 simultaneously also gives way to the examination of the close-knit relations between the elements involved in and the subtle mechanisms in operation within transmedial microcosms. Since the purpose of this research is to create a transmedial approach to narratives, focus is on the functions and

transformations observable across various media pairings. Above all, the present dissertation aims to prove the need for and pave the way towards the adjustment and modification of existing narrative theories in order to accommodate and enable the further development of the discourse on the webs of contemporary transmedial adaptations.

Chapter 2. Recycling childhood and the persistence of fairy tales

Classic fairy tales are an immensely prolific source for popular cultural rewritings nowadays, and they appear in the most diverse forms, such as homages, pastiches, and parodies, as well as in the most distinct media formats, including films, video games, and young adult novels, to name just a few examples. Their adaptations hold within them a promise for popularity and success, for fairy-tale adaptations can simultaneously evoke in their consumers feelings of comfort—due to their familiarity with the narrative assumedly rooted in the story times of their childhoods—and surprise or rekindled wonder—stemming from the contemporary takes, intertextual references, and unexpected twists in the revamped stories. Accordingly, fairy-tale rewritings often start out with making “viewers comfortable by offering them a recognizable narrative and characters,” and then “go on to shift understandings of roles and storylines” in innovative and unexpected ways (Greenhill and Kohm 2009, 38). The practice of rewriting is not a novel concept, nor is it unique to fairy tales: it has already been established with regard to adaptations in general that the mixing of “repetition with variation, from the comfort of ritual combined with the piquancy of surprise” (Hutcheon 2012, 4) plays a significant role in increasing their popularity. However, it is worth emphasizing that continuous retelling and adaptation have been crucial for the continuation and canonization of what are universally acknowledged as classic fairy tales today (Zipes 2006, 12-13). In the following overview of theoretical approaches to fairy tales, their adaptations, and the transmedial webs pervading these spheres, emphasis is placed first on the development of fairy-tale studies as a scholarly field—along with the links developed with adaptation research necessitated by the persistently emerging textual and audio-visual fairy-tale rewritings—then shifted to novel forms of new media, which are also gradually gaining more ground among fairy-tale adaptations. This tendency is continued and extended with the forthcoming overview of “Little Red Riding Hood” transmedial microcosms in the present dissertation.

The discussion of fairy tales and children's literature in an academic context progressed and developed steadily throughout the twentieth century, with its institutionalization as a discipline being secured only in the 1980s. Initially, the discourse on fairy tales highlighted the tropes and motifs regularly recurring in them, as was the case in Russian formalist Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928)—originally published in Russian and translated into English only three decades later, in 1958—and in Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (1932)—building on the findings of Finnish folklorist Antti Aarne and paving the way for the Aarne-Thompson-Uther (ATU) tale-type index that examines the narrative elements of hundreds of narratives and folkloric sources in a fashion similar to Propp but within the Western fairy-tale tradition. Both of these publications had intended to provide a classification of oral folkloric sources, thus including fairy tales in scholarly discourse and establishing a scientific basis for the study of fairy tales. Nevertheless, the revolutionary works that set the course for fairy-tale research and are still heavily relied on in the study of fairy tales today appeared towards the end of the century in the 1970s and 1980s.

In this era—marked by the publications of esteemed scholars like Jack Zipes, Alan Dundes, Maria Tatar, and Bruno Bettelheim—, a conflict was already perceptible between the psychoanalytic and the sociocultural readings of fairy tales (Swann Jones 1987, 98). The most renowned representative of the former approach, Bettelheim, believed that fairy tales could “offer adults as well as children a blueprint for understanding the feelings and problems of growing up” and insisted on analyzing tales in an interpretative manner similar to the methods relied on in decoding dreams (Warner 2014, 122). However, due to the traceable bias present in his writings—his emphasis on the male child's experience, his disapproval of the didacticism characterizing the Perraultian *contes de fées* and his simultaneous belief that the brutality commonly displayed in the Grimm brothers' tales benefitted children (Warner 2014, 122-124)—he was subject to heavy professional criticism. In spite of this reproach, his research indisputably paved the way for psychoanalytic explorations into the meaning of fairy tales, which is still present in children's literary analysis today. What is more, it is also owing

to his pioneering research that the oeuvre of classic fairy tales today serves as the basis of and inspiration for a subfield of bibliotherapy called fairy-tale therapy, which was developed by Ildikó Boldizsár in Hungary (Boldizsár 2010, 17). As their discussion and interpretation propose to help people shed new light on the problematic events and connections of their lives, their application in this method again proves the timeless and ageless relevance of fairy tales.ⁿ

In contrast with Bettelheim, scholars of anthropology, literature, and culture, like Zipes, Dundes, and Tatar, explored the origins and social significance of fairy tales as a genre and as a socio-historical concept. Although fairy-tale scholarship and the study of children's literature today appear to be revolving around case studies of contemporary rewritings, it is crucial to remember that it could not have progressed so far without the founding efforts of the abovementioned scholars who had set out to establish fairy-tale studies as a discipline through the conception of all-encompassing theories that explore the social relevance and meaning of fairy tales. Ultimately, despite the apparent disparity in their focus on the individual versus on the greater society, the two major scholarly approaches to fairy tales do not necessarily have to be pitted against one another and viewed in opposition. As Catherine Orenstein observes, fairy tales "express our collective truths even as these truths change beneath our noses" (2002, 12), thus acknowledging the link between the individual and society and the simultaneous need for both the psychoanalytical and the socio-historical perspectives to increase our understanding of these long-standing cultural productions.

One of the questions in constant need of justification in fairy-tale studies is why children's literature and the fairy tale in particular occupy such a continuing and often central role in the lives of people and consequently in literary and cultural research as well—a question that will eventually steer the discussion towards the contemporary fascination with fairy-tale rewritings in various media formats. Of course, the primary reason is that fairy tales and children's literature are the gateway to literature, literacy, and the development of interpretative and reading strategies for most young members of Western society. They are a universally understood and acknowledged genre that has become fairly uniform thanks to the

Western literary fathers of the genre and their versions of the traditional classic fairy tales, such as “Snow White” or “Little Red Riding Hood,” which are nowadays renowned in principally unvarying and conventional forms across languages, cultures, and nations.

However, the establishment of the genre, most notably through the works of the Brothers Grimm (Zipes 2006, 158) has simultaneously put an immense amount of constraints on it (Zipes 2006, 130). Charles Perrault and the Grimms, all of whom were professional writers, cultivated the literary fairy tale “as a socially symbolic act within an institutionalized discourse of the Western civilizing process” to express “conservative tendencies with regard to gender, religion, and social class” (Zipes 2006, xi-xii). Their published collections of fairy tales arrested and rendered the dynamic nature of oral folktales invisible, whose storytellers had always modified the stories and referenced their contemporary socio-historical contexts to help their particular sets of audiences “adapt to, know, and transform” the narratives’ environments (Zipes 2006, 130-31). Through their versions of the fairy tales, these storytellers aimed to socialize, civilize (Zipes 2006, xi), and teach their listeners—especially the younger, more influenceable generations—about the meaning of their existence and their positions in society (Bettelheim 1977, 4). Perrault’s and the Grimms’ manipulation of the narratives in this way turned out to be of timeless significance, for their versions of these fairy tales continue to be read to children in many parts of the world even today, hundreds of years later, and still fulfill their abovementioned functions in introducing children to literature and to many a moral lesson and traditional rules—however outdated they may be—about how one should behave in and fit into society.

The evolution of fairy tales progressed quite similarly in the realm of film adaptations as well: following a transitory period of experimentation, which produced the “féeries” of Georges Méliès (Cristian & Dragon 2008, 12) and *Little Red Riding Hood* (dir. Walt Disney, Walt Disney Studios, 1922) among others, Walt Disney invented the film counterpart of this conventional classic literary structure—established with the production of the immensely successful *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (dir. David Hand et al., Walt Disney Productions, 1937), which, beyond accomplishing a sparkling technological innovation and

acclaimed world-wide triumph, also “cast a spell over the fairy-tale genre—both literary and cinematic” (Zipes 2006, 7). What is more, the arrival of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was significant from the perspective of transmedial adaptation as well, for it was accompanied by other popular cultural products—such as the storybook titled *Complete Story of Walt Disney’s Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) or *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1975), a faithful novelization of the animated film written by Guy N. Smith—, thus paving the way to the deliberate creation of transmedial microcosms within the Disney universe.

Despite the canonization of a uniform and sanitized structure in literature in the eighteenth century and on-screen in the first half of the twentieth century, the vivaciousness of the genre managed to survive as more innovative fairy-tale adaptations started to appear soon after and continue to flood the fields of the entertainment industry to this day. The aim of such rewritings—echoing the intentions of their oral and literary counterparts—has always been to present the stories from a different perspective and to alter, adapt, or update the moral lessons that had formerly been formulated to respond to the needs of their original target audiences in their respective cultures and time periods. However, like all types of adaptation, revisionist fairy tales must also maintain a balance as they switch, mix up, or replace some of the elements of the classic and widely known fairy tales to keep the source tales easily recognizable and their adaptations commercially worthwhile.

As Brian McFarlane observes, fairy-tale adaptations often consider the original text to be a narrative resource that they can use as a starting point (Braudy & Cohen 2009, 387) or as organizational blueprints independent of any medium that can be actualized in multifarious ways (Chatman 1992, 403), thus providing a prolific and profitable basis for the most varied types of adaptations. Since most traditional fairy tales have simple storylines—often boiling down to narratives of good versus evil and concluding in happily-ever-afters—, they are easily extended and modified without excessively altering the elements recognizable by and thus associable for viewers and readers across time and space. To provide a more relatable or believable narrative, fairy-tale adaptations for adults are frequently set in unspecific historical

places—often in small medieval villages seated deep inside or on the outskirts of forests—and operate with a range of complex multidimensional characters (Greenhill & Matrix 2010, 9), thus utilizing round characters as opposed to the flat and stereotypical characters of the literary fairy tales usually represented straightforwardly as either innocent or evil to the core for the convenience of their younger audiences (Bettelheim 1976, 8-9). The most unusual revisionist fairy tales may even tamper with the binary oppositions between the hero(ine) and the villain—either by presenting the narrative from the villain’s point of view or by swapping the roles of the main characters, thus transforming the hero into a villain and the villain into a relatable character— and as such may rightly be regarded as “monstrous” in the way Julie Grossman uses the term to discuss the genre of adaptation, referencing “the shocking violation of original and organically pure matter when adapted or reshaped in new contexts” (2015, 2).

What has been a defining characteristic of the genre throughout the various stages of its existence is that fairy tales and their rewritings have always been “intertexts par excellence” (Greenhill & Matrix 2010, 2) that made it possible for and even encouraged their viewers and listeners to keep track of, trace, and explore the resulting intertextual relationships. Especially in the twenty-first century, in the era demarcated by the unstoppable spread of transmedial universes, the multifaceted versions of fairy tales are nestled in fairy-tale webs, wherein all source texts and adaptations are connected hypertextually (Bacchilega 2013, 27), or borrowing Gérard Genette’s term, where they stand in “palimpsestuous” relations with one another, sketching alternative texts and narratives across the silhouettes of the classic literary originals over and over again (qtd. in Sanders 2006, 12). Considering the fairy-tale genre’s histories of alterations and canonizations in various media formats across centuries, however, it is necessary to include aspects beyond these webs into the discourse and incorporate in their theorization their cultural and historical contexts as prominent contributing factors to the creation of the meanings of adaptations. Following Linda Hutcheon’s theorization, according to whom adaptations refer not only to the adaptation as a finished product but also to the dynamic process of their creation to which a multitude of

creators and factors contribute (2012, 18), fairy-tale adaptations are understood to exist at the intersections of their complex intertextual relations, influenced and molded by their socio-historical contexts and the generic expectations of their target audiences.

Since they are extremely malleable and always (re)adapted to comply with contemporary tastes, judging fairy-tale adaptations based on their fidelity to the literary texts would defeat their exact purpose. At the same time, exploring the ways they repurpose previous adaptations and interpretations of the same text has immense benefits, for they have the potential to point to valuable information about contemporary taste as well as the prominent tendencies and methods in adaptation processes in a transmedial setting. Therefore, in the following subsections, as an introduction to and foundation for the case studies of “Little Red Riding Hood” transmedial microcosms, the evolution of this particular fairy tale occupies as important a place as the theoretical examination of transmediality.

2. 1. “Little Red Riding Hood” across media

It is inarguable that fairy tales as we know them today are all adaptations in essence, which complicates the formulation of a clear definition of the genre immensely. Their first literary forms were likewise carefully crafted by their authors, who transformed the narratives collected from oral storytellers or foreign printed sources into classifiable pieces of literature adjusted for the palates of a new, usually more sophisticated, upper-class audience. In this dissertation, the term fairy tale is used to refer to the genre of these fictive narratives in general: both as they appear in their first traceable forms in the collections assembled by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, and as they are repurposed in whole or in parts in contemporary rewritings.

The motivations impelling the continuous production of fairy-tale rewritings are abundant and difficult to map. Most importantly, readers and listeners of fairy tales of all ages have always expected to learn something about the human condition and the timeless challenges life is scattered with based on the contents of these texts. These stories about extraordinary characters dealing with fundamental issues of human existence—such as growing up, finding a partner, or securing one’s future profession and role in society—have the power to enrich imagination and encourage emotional development. They give their readers a chance to view life from a different perspective, to place themselves in the place of others, and even to learn about other cultures in some cases. In other words, through presenting these issues, fairy tales offer examples of problem-solving and ultimately encourage critical thinking. In addition, many fairy tales, fables, and children’s stories have a more direct, often plainly presented objective to guide or warn their readers in specific matters. Such didacticisms include lessons about bravery, honesty, loyalty, and stranger danger, to mention but a few. Thus, classical fairy tales, far from being short stories created solely for the amusement of children, are complex pieces of literature that hold numerous possible routes of interpretation for a dual readership, along with a myriad of aspects left open for exploration through scholarly analyses.

“Little Red Riding Hood” occupies a special place among fairy tales, demonstrated by the amount of multimedial adaptations inspired by it as well as by the volumes of research written about it by scholars such as Jack Zipes (1983a), Alan Dundes (1989), Catherine Orenstein (2002), and Sandra L. Beckett (2002, 2008, 2013), who unanimously assert that it is one of the oldest and most well-known among all fairy tales. Despite it not involving a love interest, anyone member of royalty, or the actual and explicit performance of magic—even if the talking and cross-dressing wolf can undisputedly be considered a thoroughly fantastic character—the term fairy tale is regularly used to refer to the tale of “Little Red Riding Hood,” mainly because, similarly to its counterparts in the tomes of classic fairy tales, it also deals with age-old human problems and characteristics, such as obedience, freedom of choice, or rightful self-protection. Accordingly, the heroine—whose gender and agency exhibit an uncharacteristic combination in folklore—has to actively contend with other female characters in order to gain her place in society, in some cases by literally devouring and thus absorbing her ancestors, while in others through symbolic rebirth aided by the fatherly huntsman.

As a result, Little Red Riding Hood, the main character and heroine of the narrative, “has long ceased to be just a figure in a fairy tale and has become both a myth and a metaphor” (Gosa and Serban 2016, 12). In its retellings, creators often employ innovative narrative techniques, aided by the fact that even seemingly minor references in the forms of textual or visual symbols can be evocative of the literary fairy tale. Since the debate over the origins of fairy tales or of that of “Little Red Riding Hood” in particular exceed the scope of the present dissertation, and since the emphasis is placed on contemporary rewritings instead of on the oral origins of the narrative, the present discussion of the story begins with those written down by Charles Perrault (1697), the Brothers Grimm (1812), and Paul Delarue (1956, based on a record collected in 1885). These stories, each with their unique take on the tale, can provide us with alternatives for the most fundamental elements of the fairy tale, such as the first encounter of the main characters in the woods or the dramatic dialogue between

the wolf masqueraded as grandmother and Red, all of which convey specific symbolic meanings in the story.

The first two famous literary adaptations are usually treated as “originals” and are frequently considered to be the sources of all subsequent retellings of “Little Red Riding Hood.” Charles Perrault’s “Le Petit Chaperon Rouge” (“Little Red Riding Hood”), on the one hand, is a gruesome cautionary tale made complete by a poetically summarized moral at its end, which was published in 1697 accompanied by the iconic and often provocative drawings of Gustave Doré. The Grimm brothers’ “Rotkäppchen” (“Little Red Cap”), on the other hand, is distinguished by the character of the huntsman, who emerges at the end to save the day and ensures a timelessly child-friendly conclusion, and was first published in 1812, then revised several times until 1857 when it reached its final form. Since both of these tales went through considerable alterations to teach something valuable to their particular target audiences—in Perrault’s case, to warn young girls of the French upper class of strange men with ulterior motives, and in the Brothers Grimm’s case, to frighten German children so that they would never dare to defy their mother’s warnings and rules—, it is important to include in this discussion a version that attempts to replicate the authentic oral versions of the tale as faithfully as possible. Thus, in addition to the two most popular editions, we should also consider Paul Delarue’s “The Story of Grandmother,” which was collected in 1885 but published only in 1956 in a collection of oral versions of the Aarne-Thompson-Uther tale types 300-366 from all over the world, including thirty-five versions of “Little Red Riding Hood” alone, entitled *The Borzoi Book of French Folk Tales*.

Perrault wrote and published his edition of the oral tale at a very opportune time, at the turn of the seventeenth century, when children’s literature started to gain some relevance and esteem—at least in the upper layers of society—, ensuring its prolonged existence and popularity. However, instead of faithfully transcribing the narrative, Perrault turned it into a cautionary tale, in which the girl does not rescue herself nor is rescued by any male authority figure but remains dead in the end, an eternal symbol of disobedience. Thus, Perrault’s fairy tale can already be interpreted as a revisionist adaptation, because he redrew the self-reliant

heroine of oral versions as a defiant young girl and thus turned a folk tale that had been open to numerous interpretations into a straightforward cautionary tale to warn girls of sexual harassment. While some may consider the “red threat” to be a traceable guide across various versions of the tale (Ziolkowski 2009, 111), the Perraultian was the first to mention the red hood (Dundes 1989, 14), vividly demonstrating the extent of Perrault’s influence on the evolution of the tale. Possibly as a result of its lasting authority, the tale has received both acclaim and criticism: Perrault has been highly criticized for his clearly didactic and misogynistic treatment of the narrative by Bettelheim (1976, 167-169) and Zipes (1983a, 8-13) and praised for his cunning wordplay (da Silva 2016b, 173) employed to entertain dual audiences as early as the eighteenth century.

Despite his crucial contribution, it is not the tragic Perraultian tale but the Brothers Grimm’s optimistic story of an even more problematically depicted helpless and arguably dim girl that is the most widely known among children today. While she was described as naïve and inexperienced by Perrault, the Grimms’ version presents her as audaciously disobedient and errant, as she consciously defies her mother’s warning against talking to strangers in the forest. The most memorable and significant addition of the Grimms’ is the inclusion of the huntsman, who promptly fixes and wipes away every mistake of both female characters by saving them in the end. This happy conclusion turns the category of the tale—meaning the Brothers Grimms’ version alone—into what Ruth Bottigheimer calls a “restoration tale” (2009, 11). More importantly, it appears that the mere decision to defy her mother’s warning refashions the protagonist previously identified as either clever or naïve as a deliberately disobedient and errant child.

Unlike these two didactic literary tales, Paul Delarue’s collection of several oral versions of “Little Red Riding Hood” contains numerous symbolic objects, phrases, and events, which infer significant clues for the meaning of the narrative that have eroded from subsequent literary editions. As Francisco Vaz da Silva encapsulates,

These motifs are (1) a choice between taking the path of pins or the path of needles to granny's house in the woods, (2) a cannibal meal in which the girl partakes of the dead grandmother's flesh and blood in the forest hut, and (3) allusions to the wolf's hairy parts in the famous dialogue in bed. Delarue suggested that Perrault eliminated these motifs on account of their 'puerility,' 'cruelness,' and 'impropriety,' respectively. (2016a, 170)

The first element refers to the two paths the little girl has to choose from, representing the way to a quick but temporary solution to one's problems and to a difficult but lasting one, while the second one stands to emphasize the role of the grandmother not as a victim but as a sacrifice in the story, as the little girl must literally consume and replace her in order to mature. In this sense, the narrative not only demonstrates the opposition between "women (badly served by a male-dominant culture that stereotypes them)" and "mothers (apparently all too willing to teach their daughters patriarchal law)" (Kertzer 1996, 20) but also emphasizes "the necessity of the female biological transformation by which the young eliminate the old in their own lifetime" (Verdier 1997, 110). In addition, the third element alludes to the fact that the wolf in Delarue's tale is called a "bzou," an archaic French term for a werewolf (Delarue 1989 [1956], 15). This information also reveals that, paradoxically, the tale's seemingly pioneering present-day revisions teeming with supernatural elements are, at least in this sense, even more faithful to oral versions than Perrault's or the Brothers Grimm's highly edited literary rewritings. Although the theorization of adaptation itself is far more complex and layered today than at the dawn of adaptation studies, there are still proponents of fidelity criticism, who claim that the Grimms' version of the narrative is the best one, and as such, it should be repeated endlessly without creatively meddling with the structure or the presentation of the plot (Bárdos 2015, 127-131). The final and most crucial distinction in Delarue's version is the ending: instead of remaining dead forever or being saved by someone else, the girl escapes on her own by tricking the wolf into thinking that she has to go to the bathroom outside, which motif also reverberates with the gruesomely corporeal aspect of the narrative that had been initiated with the girl's ingestion of her grandmother.

Since the nineteenth century, “Little Red Riding Hood” has gone through a myriad of transformations, all of which can be traced back to the abovementioned textual narratives. It is interesting that the rewritings’ frequent return to oral versions of the fairy tale for inspiration—at least in the use of the trope of a werewolf for a villain—might appear as an innovative feature for the audience who had been familiarized mostly with Perrault’s and the Grimms’ versions. In general, however, partly due to the fact that it has not been Disneyfied, in other words, standardized by the Disney machinery, the tale itself, including both its narrative and its characters, continues to be reinvented in creative ways in its retellings, to the extent that many consider it to be the single most popular and versatile fairy tale (Beckett 2002: xv). The rewritings are equally resourceful in terms of their shaped, as they have appeared in countless media formats, including poems, short stories, novels, cartoons, films, TV series, e-books, video games, toys, and tabletop games. The continued possibility for reinvention, however, does not mean that the functions of the narrative have been overwritten as well. Contemporary adaptations of “Little Red Riding Hood,” including the literary/textual and the multi- and hypermedia ones as well, are often used to address social maladies, such as pedophilia or sexual assault, not unlike the way Perrault had exploited it to warn young girls against abusive men at the end of the seventeenth century.

On the path towards the examination of various transmedial microcosms of the tale, “Little Red Riding Hood” is scrutinized from three aspects in the following subchapters: the character of the heroine, the character of the wolf, and the scholarly publications regarding the tale. One of the main reasons why “Little Red Riding Hood” is such a popular tale for revisionist adaptations is the clear opposition between the wicked and the innocent, namely the conflict between the brave or disobedient, yet always victimized girl and the eternally big bad wolf in the narrative. In addition to the focus on the cautionary nature of the tale and the complex portrayal of the main characters, it is also observed how contemporary adaptations refer to or diverge from the first three literary adaptations as source texts for subsequent adaptations, and to how the discourse on “Little Red Riding Hood” has developed in the course of the past fifty years in academic fields. Through these aspects, it is argued that—

mostly due to their diversity and inventiveness in terms of both form and content—this particular fairy tale and its adaptations provide prime examples for the study of transmedial microcosms.

2. 1. 1. The heroine: From victim shaming to *fille fatale*

The following two subchapters explore the ways in which “Little Red Riding Hood” has been used as a readily adaptable narrative framework to approach and present social maladies in popular cultural contexts, such as stranger danger and pedophilia. Surprisingly, the didacticism of the tale has been exercised not only in children’s adaptations but in rewritings addressed to young adults and adults as well. While the expression of timeless morals and lessons is also a significant and recurring concern in the examples analyzed in the analytic chapter of the dissertation, the present subchapters complement them by emphasizing the shifting roles of the two main characters in particular—the girl and the wolf, also readily recognized as the victim/hero and the villain—and by closely examining samples of audio-visual adaptations in isolation instead of focusing on medial representations and transmedial transformations, as is done in Chapter 3. Accordingly, the present subchapter centers around the character of Little Red Riding Hood and is based on the thriller film titled *Hard Candy* (2005), which was written by Brian Nelson and directed by David Slade. This subchapter is an edited, concise version of a paper previously published in the collection *Turning the Page: Gendered Identities in Contemporary Literary and Visual Cultures* (Bálint 2018).

The story categorized under the Aarne-Thompson-Uther tale type 333 (ATU 333) generally goes like this: Girl meets Wolf in the dark and mysterious forest; Wolf tricks Girl into telling him where she is going; Wolf runs ahead, eats Grandma, puts on her clothes, and waits for Girl in Grandma’s bed. After this point, the various versions differ considerably. In the oldest known oral versions of the tale, the heroine usually tricks the wolf and saves herself before he might get a chance to do her harm (Dundes 1989, 3). In Charles Perrault’s literary adaptation (1697), in contrast, instead of using her wits, she lies in bed with the wolf and ends up being eaten by him, never to be rescued. What is more, Gustave Doré’s suggestive illustrations accompanying the text and Perrault’s concluding moral about “attractive, well bred [sic] young ladies” and wolves “who pursue young women” paint this account of the meeting of the girl and the wolf in lustful hues and make it clear that she is

held responsible for not knowing better and allowing herself to be seduced and fatally violated by the wolf (Zipes 1983b, 69-72). Although Bruno Bettelheim criticized Perrault heavily for turning the beastly wolf into an obvious metaphor (1977, 168), using the anthropomorphic animals of literary fairy tales as safe vehicles to warn and teach children about the dangers of the world without traumatizing them is an ancient and standard practice.

In yet another classic version, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's "Little Red Cap" (1812), even though a noble huntsman saves the day by rescuing both women and punishing the wolf, thus ensuring a happy ending, the girl is still blamed for her fall (Zipes 1983b, 123-126). Although the wolf is punished in the end in some versions, the fact that the victim is always held at least as responsible as the perpetrator for their often-sexualized encounter and its outcome makes the development of this tale evocative of contemporary rape culture. Even today, "the most dominant interpretations of the tale are focused on either stranger danger stemming from the Grimms' version or the more adult-themed victim-blaming rape narrative following Perrault" (Bacchilega and Orme 2021, 56). Nevertheless, this sexual message appears to be lost on most people who got acquainted with the tale as children (Johnson and Carroll 1992, 77-78). What really seems to be generating a stark change in this narrative is that some recent adaptations, particularly film adaptations created for young adult or adult audiences, consciously attempt to overwrite and reverse the notion of victim-blaming that is so palpably present in the literary tales.

Partly as a result of the malleability of its ending, "Little Red Riding Hood" has become one of the most popular and most commonly and variedly adapted classic fairy tales (Beckett 2008, 6), ideally demonstrating "the extraordinary cultural elasticity of fairy tales" (Tatar quoted in Kérchy 2016, 14). Interestingly, the choice between the two paths and the cannibalistic meal—which are motifs originating from the oral tradition but completely eradicated from the classic literary versions (Verdier 1997, 102)—are often featured as narratively significant in contemporary revisions. Within the area of film adaptations in particular, Jack Zipes calls attention to those made after the publication of Angela Carter's short story "The Company of Wolves" (1979) and its film adaptation of the same title (dir.

Neil Jordan, Incorporated Television Company, 1984), for they tend to present more forceful young women, who are “intent on following [their] desires and breaking with the male gaze of domination” (Zipes 2011, 135) turning the tale into a narrative of female empowerment and revenge, once again, echoing the versions of the tale from oral tradition. To comply with the expectations of their target audiences, many film adaptations use older, lesser-known versions as their source, as in the short *Little Red Riding Hood* (dir. David Kaplan, Little Red Movie Productions, 1997), while it is also common to relocate the narrative into a contemporary setting to make it closer to their audiences, as in *Freeway* (dir. Matthew Bright, The Kushner-Locke Company, 1996), or to mix the fairy-tale genre with others, primarily with horror, as in one of the tale’s most recent adaptations, *Red Riding Hood* (dir. Catherine Hardwicke, Warner Bros., 2011).

The following live-action film demonstrates the way the fairy tale is used to convey specific messages and warnings not only for children but for adults as well. The analysis of *Hard Candy* (dir. David Slade, Vulcan Productions, 2005), a twisted rape-revenge film with only whispers of references to the actual fairy tale but apparently connected on a deeper narrative level, is used to define and designate a particularly potent exemplary character type of Little Red Riding Hood as a *fille fatale*, a term not well-established in academic discourse. *Hard Candy* is a film that only subtly alludes to elements of “Little Red Riding Hood” but utilizes the techniques of revisionist fairy-tale adaptations to examine the very relevant yet taboo subject of pedophilia. This film, set in contemporary America, presents a main character who defends herself like the protagonists of oral versions of “Little Red Riding Hood” and is narrated in the form of a nerve-racking psychological thriller, bearing visual and structural allusions to the 1940s film noir and 1970s rape-revenge traditions as well. In *Hard Candy*, a “Neither noisy, nor hateful, nor angry, | But tame, obliging and gentle” (Perrault 1989 [1697], 6) wolf, 32-year-old Jeff Kohler (Patrick Wilson), tries to lure the seemingly naïve Hayley Stark (Ellen/Elliot Page)—who claims to be only 14 years old—, from the virtual space of a chat room into his den. After “lensman319” and “thonggrrrl14” meet for the first time in a coffee shop, where the camera forebodingly lingers on the poster

of a missing girl, Hayley soon begins to take control by getting herself invited to his home, teasing him by dancing in her underwear, and finally, spiking his drink with drugs and tying him to a chair, with the aim of taking revenge for the rape and murder of the abovementioned missing girl, culminating in her assisting him to commit suicide at the end of the film.

Hard Candy is a very unique “Little Red Riding Hood” adaptation, primarily because it does not claim to be one at all. It is a so-called “unconscious adaptation” in which, according to the filmmakers, all resemblance to the tale is coincidental (Hayton 2011, 38-54). David W. Higgins, the producer, asserted that any existing similarities to the fairy tale appeared as “accidental poetry” (Slade 2005a), which implies that although unintentional, they are nevertheless admittedly present, and they even add an additional layer of meaning to the film. Brian Nelson, the scriptwriter, clarified that he was inspired by Japanese girls of local tabloid fame, who, feeling neglected and helpless like the heroines of most “Little Red Riding Hood” tales and that of the film *Hard Candy* in particular, decided to take action by seducing older men and cruelly attacking the molesters when they tried to take advantage of them (Slade 2005a). While Nelson’s statement distances the film from the tale, it also makes the story more relevant to contemporary audiences by dealing with a current issue, which is a particularly important aspect of recent fairy-tale adaptations for adults.

Another way that *Hard Candy* can be likened to other contemporary rewritings of “Little Red Riding Hood” is that instead of the traditional topics of “stranger danger” or child abuse, it focuses on the issue of pedophilia specifically (Beckett 2008, 34), making the sexual aspects of the story explicit, which have usually been referred to covertly and through the use of symbols in earlier oral versions. Although it does not detach itself from the strictly patriarchal and heterosexual realm of traditional fairy tales as modern adaptations tend to do, *Hard Candy* does present non-normative sexual identities, such as Jeff as a pedophile, or Hayley as a homosexual, a reference to which can only be found in an early version of the shooting script (Nelson 2003). The film presents quite a unique case when a young woman masquerading as a child and as an innocent Little Red Riding Hood, seeing that the state cannot protect her and other young girls like her, takes matters into her own hands, proving

that the tale type ATU 333 is ideal for being turned into not merely a revenge story but also into a rape-revenge narrative. Little Red, who is usually the prey, becomes the assailant, and the usual female victim of rape and of horror films is replaced with a not-quite-innocent male wolf. Understanding the film in the context of film noirs and rape-revenge films is especially rewarding since none of the main characters of either genre can ever be considered completely innocent or guilty, as is clearly the case in *Hard Candy* as well.

While it is true that the filmmakers avoided using music in the majority of the scenes in order to evade manipulating the experience and sympathies of the spectators, portraiture and point-of-view are designed to prevent them from identifying or sympathizing with either character for a longer period of time, contributing to the film's distinctively tense atmosphere and establishing Hayley's character as an ambiguous *fille fatale*. Certain cinematographic techniques, such as the varied use of camera movement and the conscious manipulations with focus and lighting to reflect the moods of the characters and of the whole scene, help not only in expressing the psychological states of the characters but also attempt to influence, toy with, and even mislead the viewers by urging them to question the righteousness of Hayley's revenge, and to perceive her as "the figure of a certain discursive unease" (Doane 1991, 1), in other words, a typically ambiguous, albeit young, femme fatale. What is more, the quality of the shot changes every time something important happens, and the colors, not only of the setting but of lighting as well, insinuate uneasy or enraged feelings. It is important to emphasize that this kind of intervention completely refutes the filmmakers' claim that they tried to present their story in as objective a manner as possible (Slade 2005a), which might lead one to also question their previously cited claims about the unconscious nature of the film's references to the fairy tale "Little Red Riding Hood."

These visual tricks are used to enhance an otherwise dialogue-dominated film confined mostly to a single setting and help shift the focus to the two main characters' development. *Hard Candy* blurs the line between good and evil, and questions the ethicality and rightfulness of the vigilante character's actions, demonstrating the way revisionist fairy-tale films present their characters "in shades of grey" as opposed to the black-and-white,

good-or-evil representations characteristic of classic literary fairy tales (Greenhill and Matrix 2010, 9). As the two roles “dramatically flip-flop” (Orenstein 2002, 5), the lines between victim and psychopath become ambivalent, and so Hayley becomes “Red/wolf (as victim/aggressor),” and Jeff just the opposite, “wolf/Red (as aggressor/victim)” (Greenhill and Kohm 2009). Hayley, however, no matter how many dimensions each character gets, continues to see others as either good or bad, much like a child (Bettelheim 1977, 8-9), even if it is not equally evident to the viewer whether she herself is the protagonist or the antagonist of the narrative.

Hayley’s initial trick that sets off the thrilling narrative is only the first of many twists and turns in the roles of prey and predator, which shift the spectators’ sympathies so many times that it becomes difficult to tell who is a hero or a victim and who is a villain. Due to such intense dynamism between the two characters, it is necessary to define them in opposition to one another, and it is only after the observation of the contrast between the two that it becomes evident that the most accurate way to describe Hayley’s personality, which is conflicting in itself, is as an adolescent femme fatale-in-training, in other words, a *fille fatale*. Instead of simply following the Perraultian primer, Hayley takes matters into her hands and, through an array of deceiving roles and a series of actions of questionable morality, avenges the wolf. Although the phrase has been used in an academic context before (Hatch 2002, 162), the most detailed definition of the *fille fatale* is available on the website *TV Tropes (Fille Fatale)*, which is quite constrained and set in a misogynistic context.

Throughout her long history, Little Red Riding Hood, who is seen as “a symbol of childhood innocence” in children’s stories (Orenstein 2002, 3-5), has paradoxically taken up the roles of seductive temptress, Lolita-like nymphet (Hatch 2002, 164), helpless virgin, and innocent young girl ready to enter womanhood in various adaptations of her story. Bruno Bettelheim, similarly to most modern rewriters of the tale, is very critical of Perrault because he is responsible for introducing Little Red Riding Hood as a fallen woman who wants to be seduced via the poetic moral at the end of his literary adaptation of the folktale (Bettelheim 1977, 166-167). *Hard Candy* inadvertently challenges this degrading portrayal with a

puzzling rape-revenge narrative and a modern vagina dentata myth (Henry 2014, 68), in which Red Riding Hood perplexes not only the wolf but the audience as well.

If we consider *Hard Candy* a twisted neo-noir, Hayley may be both the detective and the young vamp or *fille fatale*, while Jeff plays the role of the anti-hero or criminal. Originally, the femme fatale had appeared as an empowered woman who could achieve her goals without the help of men, but lately, she has been assigned a more simplistic description as a self-centered woman who uses her body to get her way. The *fille fatale's* TV Tropes definition follows this sexist characterization and describes the femme fatale-in-training as “an adolescent or younger girl who knows how to use her looks to get what she wants,” who mostly appears in rape-revenge films (*Fille Fatale*). The online definition of the *fille fatale* is thus set in the same misogynistic context as that of the femme fatale. Hayley, however, exceeds this simplistic character description, for she noticeably wears “womanliness” as a mask (Doane 1991, 25) to portray the images of the ingénue and the vamp, and uses her wit as well as her looks to avenge the rape and murder of an innocent girl.

At the beginning of the film, she resembles the illustrations of Perrault’s literary tale by Gustave Doré, whose portrayals of a very young fair-haired girl with an angel’s face opposite a ferocious wolf appeared to convey notions of sexuality and violence. In these drawings, a flirtatious Little Red was at once mesmerized and dominated by the phallic gaze of the wolf (Zipes 1983a, 78), similarly to how Hayley appears to be impressed by Jeff at the café in *Hard Candy*. Soon, however, her behavior changes drastically, and, despite the fact that her clothes, particularly her sports bra, emphasize her young age and changing body, she is seen as seductive by Jeff, a pedophilic adult male. It is exactly this element, the general disinclination to apply the most prominent feature of the femme fatale to younger girls, namely the overrepresentation and the exploitation of the feminine body (Doane 1991, 2), which is the reason for the rare use of the term and of the character of the *fille fatale*. Hayley stresses that “[j]ust because a girl knows how to imitate a woman, does not mean she is ready to do what a woman does” (*Hard Candy* 2005) and that is exactly what she acts out: she imitates an ideal of eroticism as imagined by a child and shaped by the gaze of an adult male.

While the trademark color red of Red Riding Hood, as well as of Hayley, is a symbol of “violent emotions, very much including sexual ones” (Bettelheim 1977, 171) Hayley is apparently not yet psychologically ready for these. During her scavenging through Jeff’s house, for example, she finds a gun, but, not knowing what to do with it, she simply tosses it onto the bed. Her treatment of this phallic symbol suggests that she is only performing roles, but is in fact too young or immature to grasp the meaning of sexuality or violence. Furthermore, according to Cristina Bacchilega, fairy-tale rewritings involve a key conflict in terms of gender construction (2013, 41), for “many of the protagonists of fairy tales find themselves on a threshold between childhood and adulthood, between innocence and experience in sexual terms” (Sanders 2006, 86). This was clearly not the focus in the case of *Hard Candy*, as the filmmakers expressed that they had wished that Ellen Page had appeared more feminine and sexual (*Creating Hard Candy*), while she managed to find the balance between girl and woman necessary for her ambiguous role as a young femme fatale, so that the viewer can never decide whether she is truly a teenager or rather a young adult who knows how to act.

Jeff falls into the trap of trusting the initial persona of the clueless young girl, but make no mistakes, Hayley, as a *fille fatale*, “knows what she wants and definitely knows how to reach her aims” (Tóth 2011, 32), and she is not afraid to hurt others in the course of doing so either. Hayley, like any femme fatale, “is generally beautiful, pretty, (often strikingly) clever and intelligent, very deceitful, manipulative, and greatly ambitious” (Tóth 2011, 7). Her family background remains a mystery, which otherwise plays an important role in the formulation of the *fille fatale* (Hatch 2002, 166). Unlike in the fairy tale, there is no mother figure in *Hard Candy* who could have warned the young girl, possibly because Hayley as a self-sufficient *fille fatale* had no need for that, but it is still unsettling that the only two female figures who had the potential to help both Jeff and his victims—Judy Tokuda, a nosy neighbor, and Janelle, Jeff’s ex-girlfriend—, were too ignorant to do anything. In a dramatic and calculated turn of events, after exclaiming “Playtime is over” (*Hard Candy* 2005) she sheds the nymphet persona as if by flipping a switch, and transforms into an avenging angel

or an inhumane sociopath, who identifies with “every little girl [Jeff] ever watched, touched, hurt, screwed, killed” (*Hard Candy* 2005). To make the transformation more apparent, Hayley even puts on Jeff’s jacket and black-rimmed glasses, thus taking on even the role of the wolf for a fleeting moment. The problem is that, as Claire Henry points out, spectatorial identification with the avenger is necessary to approve of the revenge as a righteous act, but by switching the viewpoints so many times it is made nearly impossible for the spectator to truly or lengthily identify with either character (Henry 2014, 71), and, as a result, they begin to question the morality of retorting rape with violence.

During the castration scene, Hayley puts on scrubs and sets out to perform her “little preventative maintenance” to victimize and traumatize Jeff (Henry 2014, 74), without a hint of the previously seen angelic young girl. At this point, Hayley loses the advantage of a rightful and ethical avenger over her victim irrevocably (Henry 2014, 73), and, as many Little Reds have done before her (Orenstein 2002, 5), she also risks crossing over into “the moral wrong.” While she takes Jeff’s life apart piece by piece, not even at the end of the film do we learn anything about Hayley’s background, her motives, or her true identity, just as it would be in the case of a femme fatale (Doane 1991, 1). If she were a legitimate femme fatale, her identity as a woman would be the secret to be unmasked, but, even without that, visibility and the epistemophilic and scopophilic drives of her victim, meaning Jeff’s desire to both see her and know her for who she is, define her and push the narrative into full motion (Doane 1991, 1). Just like the femme fatale, however, Hayley “is dependent upon perceptual ambiguity and ideas about the limits of vision in relation to knowledge” (Doane 1991, 3), in this case due to her performances of different prescribed female identities. The image of her face mirrored in the metal table, in particular, as she leans on it to think about how to begin the surgery, reflects and demonstrates her multiple identity performances or personalities. Claire Henry claims that in this scene, the focal act of the film, not only Jeff, but Hayley also loses her identity through the symbolical castration, for she sheds her nymphet persona, and reveals her true agenda of revenging the death of another young girl (Henry 2014, 76). Instead of her losing her identity, she is actually revealing it in this scene, as her previous differing

behaviors might be interpreted as performances covering up her real identity as a vengeful young adult.

Similarly, the wolf of *Hard Candy*, Jeff, performs a role as he appears as a handsome and sophisticated, middle-aged photographer, who wears a casual striped blazer with a shirt and black-rimmed glasses, deconstructing not only the stereotypical image of the shady and unkempt pedophile (Henry 2014, 70) but the Aristotelian idea prevalent in fairy tales that bad people are always physically repulsive as well. Nevertheless, Jeff's wolfish nature becomes undeniably apparent early on, for in this otherwise digitally not manipulated film, his mouth was stretched out to an impossible extent in the scene when the drugs start to have their effect on him and he screams at Hayley to finish her erotic dance. This single visual modification of Jeff's face, immediately before which he asks her to look at his eyes, not only makes him appear scarier and more surreal but also hints at the renowned dialogue between the cross-dressed Wolf in Grandma's clothes and Little Red. The cinematographic tricks used throughout the film lead spectators to sympathize with Jeff, partly because there is no "balancing rape scene" that would legitimize such a violent act of revenge (Henry 2014, 73-75). In the end, however, he loses all his patience, and at this point, his voice deepens perceptibly, to the extent that it turns into a wolfish growl. The conditions of his assisted suicide, namely that she would destroy all evidence against him if he hung himself, finally prove his culpability, and also erase any possibility of remorse on his side, leaving him in the position of the gnarly and clearly guilty wolf forever.

Jeff thus changes his attitude three times—from smooth seducer to falsely accused victim to enraged murderer—, which coincide with the three times that he escapes from being tied up. According to Bruno Bettelheim, the number three is a significant number in fairy tales and may refer to the three aspects of the mind, the id, the ego, and the superego, or to sexuality, for there are three visible characteristics of sex (Bettelheim 1977, 102, 219), both of which could explain the three different characters and personalities that Jeff demonstrates. As has already been mentioned, Hayley's character is just as malleable, as she also adopts the personalities of three distinct characters throughout the film: she goes from naïve teenager to

self-righteous *fille fatale*, and, finally, to a distressed teenager leaving the scene, with a very troubled look on her face and possibly even a glimpse of regret in her eyes.

It is cleverly timed that it is only during the very last scene of the film that Hayley puts on the iconic red hood, which, if the reference had not been obvious before, connects the film to the fairy tale in retrospect. *Hard Candy* was not originally meant to be a revisionist adaptation of “Little Red Riding Hood,” although there are many faint yet undeniable clues connecting the film to the centuries-old folktale. Nevertheless, if viewed with the narrative of the tale in mind, one can gain meaningful insight into the characteristics and motives of the tale’s main characters’ alter-egos. By changing the general setting and complicating the personalities of the two main characters, the film moves past Charles Perrault’s age-old moral and demonstrates an alternative ending where the cunning wolf is defeated by an even shrewder Little Red Riding Hood after an act of violence, similar to the grandmother’s sacrifice, had already occurred.

Greenhill and Kohm argue in their analysis that Hayley and Jeff are closely connected, because, similarly to that of Perrault, the Red Riding Hood of *Hard Candy* is “ingested by the wolf, and thus the distinction between them blurs radically” (Greenhill and Kohm 2009) making it even more difficult to tell the victim and the aggressor apart. Furthermore, Bacchilega also points out that Red Riding Hood always ends up somewhere inside, whether she survives or not: she is either devoured by the Wolf, left inside the Grandmother’s home, or domesticated by the Huntsman: in all cases subject to a man (Bacchilega 1997, 58). Hayley in *Hard Candy*, however, escapes the stereotypical role of the shallow teenager, and, once again, she is the one showing the wolf what big teeth she has. As a *fille fatale*, she gains agency and even succeeds in taking revenge, though at quite a high cost. Although the femme fatale is often seen as evil and is traditionally doomed to fail (Doane 1991, 2; Tóth 2011, 7), it is Jeff who gets punished and killed, while Hayley survives.

The two main characters of *Hard Candy* show a unique dynamism that, with the help of certain cinematographic tools, such as portraiture and lighting, makes it difficult not only to tell the good apart from the bad but also to define one character in the absence of the other.

It always depends on the relative position of Jeff whether the viewer sees Hayley as a villain or a vigilante, as a Wolf or as a timid girl in a red hood. Wolf and Little Red exist in such an ambiguous and co-dependent relationship throughout the film that the ending leaves most viewers perplexed, which was apparently a conscious goal of the filmmakers. Identifying Hayley as a *fille fatale*, a younger, less mature, and, most importantly, less sexually experienced version of the femme fatale, helps bring together and understand her varying and changing performances and personality traits, including her inclination to change roles according to the situation and to use her body to reach her goals. This heroine is no longer an errant child, but neither is she a victim, as has been in previous versions of "Little Red Riding Hood." She becomes an agent and a teller of her own tale, and, as an ideal femme fatale-in-training, avenges Jeff, the Wolf who refuses to take responsibility for his actions with the help of both her wits and looks.

Hard Candy (2005), although not indicated as a "Little Red Riding Hood" adaptation, nevertheless can readily be interpreted as one, as the above discussion has demonstrated. In the present analysis, along with the film itself, the interviews with the creators that have been included on the official DVD titled *Creating Hard Candy* (2005) and the shooting script of the film made freely available on the website of the *Horror Lair* were also cited extensively, and have contributed to reaching a better understanding of the production process and interpretation of the film at hand. With the film taking the center position, these elements together constitute a unique and fascinating example of a transmedial microcosm in the "Little Red Riding Hood" transmedial universe.

2. 1. 2. The villain: Man, wolf, and everything in-between

“Little Red Riding Hood” can best be described as a warning tale according to Ruth Bottigheimer’s classification (2009, 8), and as such, its rewritings have repeatedly and for a long time been used as vehicles to convey a specific warning to or guide their readers more or less subtly in how to stay safe in a dangerous world full of dangerous people. The fascination with the tale’s didacticism might in part come from the fact that narratives can and have often fulfilled a “function as cognitive ‘play’” to teach children about the danger of predators through anthropomorphic animals without traumatizing them, which is an element common in most versions of the tale (Scalise Sugiyama 2004, 119-120). As such, it is important to emphasize the equally paramount roles that the two most renowned literary versions—Charles Perrault’s tale published in 1697 and the brothers Grimm’s first version of the tale published in 1812, both of which were significantly altered in order to better suit their target readerships—have had in the tale’s evolution.

Perrault’s publication was not only the very first version of the narrative to be published in print, but Perrault is also credited with formulating the symbolic red riding hood, which was not found in records of the tale’s earlier oral versions, and it is largely thanks to his inclusion of the didactic moral verse at the end of the tale that the sexual interpretation and reading of the tale were acknowledged and popularized. According to Bettelheim, the story’s “fascination with sex” became apparent when Perrault’s fairy tales were accompanied by the illustrations of Gustave Doré (1977, 176), at once also demonstrating that even in storybook format, images and text work very closely together and even influence one another to create meaning. While Perrault turned his version of the tale into a cautionary tale without a happy ending with the concluding moral verse, the brothers Grimm emphasized the didactic nature of their story in a different way, by including a direct warning from the mother at the beginning of the tale. The Grimms wanted to protect the innocence of their readers altogether, so they removed any hint of sexuality and invented a huntsman to save the women and punish the wolf in the end. Ultimately, the morals of each tale are quite different: Perrault warns his

readers against being gullible, while the Grimms warn them to be obedient and follow the orders of their elders.

The third oldest version of the tale published by Delarue in 1956 but transcribed based on a version of the tale told by oral storytellers many decades earlier, in 1885, has also contributed greatly to the evolution of the tale's meaning. In addition to the many cases in which "Little Red Riding Hood" has been used to take revenge on pedophiles or to allegorize rape based on Perrault's and the Grimms' versions of the narrative, the cannibalistic consumption of the grandmother's flesh and blood by the girl described in Paul Delarue's recording, for example—for which the grandmother's cat deems the girl a "slut"—, has been interpreted as Little Red's metaphorical "yearning for wholeness" on the one hand (Daniel 2006, 143), or as her temptation by evil, connecting her with the sinister world of witchcraft on the other (Chase and Teasle 1995, 773; Zipes 1983b, 90), ultimately shifting the focus back towards the main female character. Surprisingly, the girl, who is portrayed as an innocent and inherently good character in all of the early literary versions, is the one seen to commit the act of cannibalism (Daniel 2006, 153), and it is this gruesome action that ultimately equips her with the power to trick the wolf and save herself in the end.

Delarue's transcript of the fairy tale was ingeniously adapted by David Kaplan in his black-and-white short version titled *Little Red Riding Hood* (1997). The monotone images and silent characters evoke the ancient tale. The short film's narration is also reminiscent of oral storytelling traditions, while the narrator's raspy voice contributes to the eeriness of the milieu. Since the mother is completely absent in this version, and since the wolf appears to be fully mesmerized by and in love with the little girl, Peter Anrds's interpretation of the wolf as representing both the good and bad sides of the mother is brought to the forefront (2017, 176). Jennifer Orme even argues that the wolf's "androgyny and shifting sexual desires mark him as a queer subject" (2015, 92), challenging the traditional binary readings of the tale. As a result, just like in Delarue's tale, it is he, and not the girl, who is the more complex and intriguing character of the narrative. What is more, the DVD version of the short includes commentary by Jack Zipes, confirming once and for all the value of this classic adaptation.

The fairy tale's main female character has often been the focus of scholarly research, even if she is generally either dismissed as a scapegoat, a disobedient and errant child, or, as Bettelheim articulates it, as a simple girl who is either "stupid" or "wants to be seduced" (1977, 169), or, alternatively, celebrated as an empowered and independent feminist icon—as is the tendency in more recent adaptations—, who may shoot the wolf with a gun and wear his fur as a coat or marry him, to mention only the most extreme cases (Zipes 1983b, 17). At the same time, despite the fact that he has been involved in an even more turbulent process of evolution both in terms of his visual appearance and his personality from the earliest versions of the text to its twenty-first century multimedial adaptations, the other main character of the story, the wolf, has received hardly any attention in such analytic texts. Zipes, for example, highlights that the publication of Angela Carter's short story "The Company of Wolves" (1979) forms a breaking point in the representation of Little Red Riding Hood (2011, 135), leaving the various shifts in the wolf's figure untouched and unexplored. It is due to such lack of focus on him in scholarly research that this section aims to introduce the historical image of the wolf and continue to discuss the disciplinary functions of the tale through the scrutiny of the wolf in short animated adaptations.

Many depictions of the story, especially multimedial ones, have focused on the way the girl and the wolf look at each other. According to Catherine Orenstein, it was exactly "the wolf's ravenous appetite that originally led to [the tale's] association with sexual hunger" (2002, 98), which is often vividly expressed in the way he leers at her voraciously. The gaze of the animal, in general, is controversial, but that of the wolf in particular has received considerable attention, both in primary and secondary literature, as it is made apparent in the mottos chosen to introduce each subchapter of Chapter 3. What is more, Philip Armstrong talks about a "discomfiture" felt by humans when subject to the animals' gazes, which, especially in the case of the wolf, "were thought to emit a physical force, an irradiation with the power to transfix or infect those who encountered it" (2011, 178). Paradoxically, while "subject to the gaze of the wolf, the human becomes a dumb animal; subject to the human gaze, the wolf becomes docile, doglike" (Armstrong 2011, 179), which is perfectly recreated

in Doré's engraving depicting the main characters' first encounter in the woods. Therefore, it is no surprise that the moment when the wolf meets Little Red Riding Hood in the woods is one of the most memorable and iconic scenes of the tale, one which has been reinterpreted and shown in a different light in each of its rewritings.

What is more, "cautionary tales like 'Little Red Riding Hood', which are allegories about perverts—child molesters—have, with their caricatures of wolves, corrupted generations of children's perceptions," which image has had real-life consequences and in turn been used as an "excuse for the systematic extermination of the animals, to extinction or near extinction in some places" (Jordan 2011, 408). Amy Ratelle straightforwardly asserts that "the history of the wolf is also the history of its persecution" (2015, 43), especially in Europe. Wolves have already been depicted as "monstrous devourers of innocents" in Old Norse mythology, which image prevailed and led to the virtual extinction of the species in Europe by the 16th century (Ratelle 2015, 43). In contrast, in North American mythology, the wolf was a trickster figure, whose stories presented cautionary tales for children, but the invasion of the settlers changed the Native Americans' approach to wolves, who were then transformed into "the signifier of the foreign or unknown invader" (Ratelle 2015, 44). Eventually, the invasion of the settlers changed, among others, the Native Americans' approach to wolves as well. The wolf became "the signifier of the foreign or unknown invader," in other words the stranger everyone, especially children, should be wary of (Ratelle 2015, 44), as it is expressed in many versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" as well.

The presence of animals in fairy tales and their use as the representations of certain character traits is an age-old tradition, even if animals, especially wolves, are often interpreted as mere tropes. Since "children do not differentiate between human and animal" (Jaques 2014, 13), they become internal elements of a story, and can be used as vehicles for certain traditional characteristics: the fox is clever, the rabbit is timid, and the wolf is the inhuman and inhumane antagonist of didactic children's tales (Bettelheim 1977, 168). Furthermore, as Zoe Jaques further explains, one of the most substantial topics of posthuman discourse is "the ontological instability of separating human and animal" (2014, 11). To make

matters more complicated, fairy-tale characters are most often anthropomorphic animals, meaning that they inhabit a border between humans and animals, which locates them at a boundary, an in-between, neither fully human nor fully animal. The wolf of fairy tales is at once civilized—he can talk and manipulate, and, in book illustrations and cartoons, he almost always wears clothes—but also wild—in the sense that he can never resist his urges and instincts. For these reasons, in order to fully comprehend the role of the wolf in “Little Red Riding Hood,” it is not enough to investigate humans or animals in isolation nor to explore the relationship between humans and animals, but also to outline this being of the in-between, the human-animal or humanimal.

The wolf of “Little Red Riding Hood” is more than a regular animal, in more than one ways. In seventeenth-century oral versions of the tale circulating in France, the villain of “Little Red Riding Hood” was known as a “bzou” (Orenstein 2002, 5), which may designate a number of diverse kinds of demons, including werewolves. In the classic literary versions of the tale, this supernatural enemy has been replaced by a regular wolf, which, incidentally, has amassed almost as many negative connotations as the werewolf itself. “Traditionally, the wolf represents Evil” (Orenstein 2002, 5). In a general sense as well, the animal of the wolf “represents all the asocial, animalistic tendencies within ourselves” (Bettelheim 1977, 80), while in a more metaphorical way, it might be understood to refer to “a seducer of women or a lady killer” (Beckett 2008, 13). The antagonist of the tale was markedly called dangerous in Perrault’s moral, but even without the didactic illumination, the wolf is generally understood to be much more than a furry animal. Accordingly, even in the Perraultian version, “the twofold dimension of the wolf-man’s transgression—alimentary and sexual—meets the reputation of werewolves” (Vaz de Silva 2016, 177). These definitions support both Perrault’s didactic moral and the shift towards using the tale as a warning against sexual predators and pedophiles in its more recent adaptations.

While the agent and object of looking have been important elements of the illustrations, the gaze gains a completely new and more relevant position in cinema. “The look is radically different from the gaze. The look is by definition connected to the viewing

organ of the spectator, to his or her eye, whereas the gaze is an impossible look, always on the side of the object in the field of vision” (Cristian & Dragon 2008, 43). In feminist film criticism, even more so, as “woman appears as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man” (Mulvey qtd. in Cristian & Dragon 90). “Little Red Riding Hood” challenges this concept of “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey qtd. in Cristian & Dragon 2008, 90), as although the wolf might be the first and original possessor of the gaze, Little Red Riding Hood bravely reflects and returns it.

In the three short cartoons analyzed here, the depiction of the wolf changes and ranges from hungry wolf to older man and unwanted suitor. Since the early era of the animated film was dominated by shorts, three animated short films retelling the story of Little Red Riding Hood created in the first half of the twentieth century in the American Hollywood context were chosen for the purpose of introducing short versions of the tale, during which time a very conservative set of rules known as *The Motion Picture Production Code* or *Hays Code* was enforced in all types of filmmaking, including cartoons. The aim of this code was to enforce a moral guideline on all motion picture productions, primarily focusing on vulgarity, obscenity, and the expression of religious and national feelings. Keeping in mind that the original, oral folk tales had addressed a mixed-age audience of children and adults, the short films to be discussed in this section were also selected in part on the basis that they be created for a dual audience. Although all of the three short films below illustrate the same most commonly advocated underlying message of the folktale—warning young girls of falling victim to sexual predators (Bettelheim 1976, Zipes 1983, Dundes 1989, Beckett 2002)—, each of them also offers a unique, then fashionable and culturally relevant take on the narrative.

Little Red Riding Hood (1922), written and directed by Walt Disney himself, is the first of his fairy-tale adaptation series under the studio name Laugh-O-Gram Films. At the time, the primary aim of such cartoons was to perfect the technical know-how of cartoon-making, essentially giving up the narratives for chains of gags with a lot of looped and repeated sequences, which might appear monotonous to contemporary viewers. Walt Disney

was fond of placing his fairy-tale adaptations into contemporary settings and scattering signs of industrial capitalist society, such as modern vehicles in them, as is apparent in this cartoon.

The story opens with Little Red's mother preparing donuts for the grandmother. On the way to her grandmother's house driving her car, Little Red Riding Hood meets a wolf driving a much bigger car. Red's tiny car appears like a toy besides the wolf's, whose ride even behaves animalistically, rearing like a horse before he sets off. Little Red and the wolf have a quick chat, he glints a sinister smile, and both of them go on their way. When the two meet again, we don't see the fight between them, just that grandmother's house jumps around and blurts out the word "help" every now and then. Disney leaves it completely to the viewer's imagination to picture what is happening inside this house-shattering incident, whether it is an animalistic wolf gobbling up the girl or a perverted wolf forcing himself on the girl. Little Red Riding Hood's dog runs for help and finds a pilot, who quickly comes to the rescue. He picks Little Red up with a rope, goes back for the wolf, picks him up, and drops him into a lake, fulfilling his traditional death by drowning.

The wolf that inevitably meets its sad end is not a wolf at all but a middle-aged gentleman in a fancy suit and a top hat. He looks affable yet suspicious, someone too charming to be trusted. He is a trickster, who shrinks his car and slides it in his pocket when he arrives at the grandmother's house as a magician. In such straightforward representation of the wolf, the short follows Perrault, while the ending is inspired by the more popular Grimms' version, which is more in line with Disney's happily-ever-after story endings.

The next cartoon is *Dizzy Red Riding-Hood* (1931) by Max Fleischer, starring the studio's renowned animated starlet not devoid of erotic allusions, Betty Boop, her boyfriend, Bimbo, and Willy the Wolf. It is one of the earliest Fleischer cartoons, created long before the launch of the official Betty Boop series, and as such it is even more provocative than the later cartoons. In this short animation, Bimbo has a bigger and more important role than the wolf, to the extent that the wolf ends up being a mere tool, literally a costume, in Bimbo's attempt to seduce Betty Boop, the sex symbol of the animated screen, who wears her own short Little Red Riding Hood costume with visible garters and her typical enticing demeanor.

Fleischer's cartoon is narrated by a man in rhymes, and the songs suit each scene and character very well. Betty Boop, as an obedient Little Red Riding Hood, sets off in the woods but does not want to be accompanied by Bimbo, her black cat/boyfriend. In the woods, the trees forebodingly warn her not to dawdle in the forest on her own. Betty meets the big bad wolf, who sings a song about wanting to "eat her," which might suggest a double entendre, were he not sharpening actual utensils in his hands. Many of the lines of the animated short, like the one above or "Tell her not to wait for you, for you're not coming home" add an eerier and scarier atmosphere than one to be expected in a children's cartoon, and thus remind one of Delarue's "The Story of Grandmother." Bimbo catches the wolf and beats him up in a tree trunk, and, after the wolf's skeleton runs away without its hide, Bimbo puts on the skin saying "if she loves wolves, she will get a wolf." Without any control of the events, Bimbo is swallowed up by the house and hidden in the absent grandmother's bed. When Betty arrives, she sings Red Riding Hood's questions, including "Where'd you get those big ears granny, they make you look so big and manly." As the cat says all the better to eat you with my dear, the hide falls off his back, and he starts kissing her, concluding in a happy ending once again.

The wolf's behavior is in and of itself quite grotesque, but when Bimbo kills him and puts on his skin, the tale turns truly topsy-turvy. Instead of the grandmother being eaten by the wolf, Bimbo, this clumsy and jealous villain is engulfed first by the wolf's skin, then by the grandmother's house. Surprisingly, the only moral this version of the tale might endorse is to be yourself, which is not related to other "Little Red Riding Hood" tales in any way, as, although Betty had been initially impressed by the wolf's looks, it is only after she recognizes Bimbo that she joins him happily.

The third animation, *Red Riding Hood* (1931) was directed by Harry Bailey and John Foster and features mice reminiscent of Disney's trademark characters, Mickey and Minnie. Furthermore, it is also similar to the Walt Disney adaptation in the sense that it also uses contemporary elements, such as the jazz tonic that not only revives the sick grandmother but also makes her change her outfit into a racier and more modern one paired with high heels and a cigar. Nevertheless, this cartoon is still an experiment, which relies heavily on loops.

Without a mother in sight, the cartoon starts off with Little Red Riding Hood skipping happily in a forest with a basket in her hands. In a few cuts, we learn that the grandmother is ill, but the doctor cures her hardly beating heart with something called a jazz tonic. The wolf notices the girl in the woods and starts following her to find out where she is going. He is sitting in a car, but the car is moving its wheels as though they were feet, sneaking and hiding behind trees. When the wolf reaches the grandmother's house and sees the new and improved grandma, he starts playing some tunes for her and letting her dance. When Little Red arrives, the wolf and the grandmother try to hide, and the wolf ends up jumping into her bed, pretending to be the grandmother. They elope, but Little Red calls in the wolf's wife and children, who march into the church as an army to chase the wolf out, leaving not only the grandmother, but Little Red, and the doctor, who was going to officiate the wedding bawling as well. The short, although it had little to do with the original tale, and even pushed the title character into a side role, concludes with these three characters exclaiming that what was presented to the audience was indeed "the story of Little Red Riding Hood."

All three of the wolves from the three shorts are unique: two of them are anthropomorphic, one completely human; one is totally irrelevant, one is a sly trickster, and one is just clumsy. What is common among these three cartoons is the fact that they all include some sort of a love story, and their morals are related to these romantic narratives as well. These cartoons expressed little connection to the original tales, unlike more recent adaptations, which often echo elements of Perrault's and Delarue's tales. It appears that the wolves of the early short cartoons rarely have control over the events and are all driven by their sexuality, despite the *Motion Picture Production Code* being in effect at the time. These wolves are the kinds of caricature wolves and villains that children could laugh at and not be afraid of, demonstrating how film adaptations echoed literary authors' tendency to play with the story of "Little Red Riding Hood" with humor and irony at the beginning of the twentieth century (Zipes 1983a, 32). In many moments, the adaptations are close to losing sight of the original tale for the sake of experimentation with the technology of animation, as well as for the gags and jokes mostly directed at the adult audiences.

Thus, the wolf's character is seen to have changed and transformed a lot through time: starting with Perrault, he was dismissed as a beast-like sexual predator evil to its core, but towards the turn of the twentieth century, some revisions began to turn the dichotomy between the two main characters topsy-turvy and present him as a misunderstood victim. In contrast with the literary versions of "Little Red Riding Hood," however, the tale's modern adaptations often explicitly explain what has long been considered the underlying meaning and purpose of the folktale: to warn young girls of the dangers of sexual predators (Bettelheim 1976, Zipes 1983, Dundes 1989, Beckett 2002). This subchapter examined how the wolves of cartoons have developed since the earliest short animated adaptations, from a plain hungry wolf to an older man and dishonest suitor, in order to demonstrate how their representation and role contributed to the didacticism associated with the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood."

2. 1. 3. “Little Red Riding Hood” in academic discussion: A literature review

Since the focus of the present dissertation is on contemporary adaptations of a single fairy tale, “Little Red Riding Hood,” and since this tale, in particular, has, for a remarkably long time, interested not only readers and fans but scholars in exceptionally high numbers as well, it is essential to include a thorough and comprehensive literature review of the collections and monographs published solely on the topic of the history of “Little Red Riding Hood” and its recent rewritings as part of this theoretical section. The chain of these books—which started to appear simultaneously with the establishment of fairy-tale studies as a dedicated branch within the study of children’s literature in the 1980s (Zipes 2006, xi) and unrelentingly span the past half century—approach the topic from varying perspectives, and thus can also provide an overview of the changing of the prevalent trends within the whole of the field. More importantly, the ways in which the present dissertation extends and supplements the existing extensive range of literature can only be properly explained and delineated against the background of this catalog of previous research.

Several classic fairy tales have received distinctive scholarly attention, including “Snow White” and “Cinderella.” However, “Little Red Riding Hood,” which is often dismissed as a morality tale and was rarely adapted into any multimedia formats before the last decades of the twentieth century, stands out among them due to the exceptionally high number of scholarly anthologies, monographs, and edited volumes dedicated to its analysis. The following subsection provides a thorough literature review of scholarly books published in English on the tale of “Little Red Riding Hood,” in order to demonstrate not just the tale’s popularity but also its richness in terms of the multitude of literary interpretations and scientific approaches utilized to analyze and interpret it. Several of the books that are discussed in chronological order below have been written or edited by some of the most distinguished representatives of the field, but they also include a publication from Eastern Europe and are supplemented by the overview of an unpublished doctoral dissertation also focusing on the tale and the mention of several research articles taking the most unusual

approaches to discuss the tale and its rewritings. What is more, such an overview of “Little Red Riding Hood” scholarship has not yet been published anywhere and allows for a glimpse into the development of fairy-tale studies as well by exhibiting the varying aspects focused on in its discussions in the past fifty years. Accordingly, the first two publications from the 1980s take a historiographic and at times psychoanalytic approach, while the later ones tend to shift the focus to contemporary, often multimedial adaptations.

The first academic collection focusing on this tale alone was published under the title *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* (1983) by Jack Zipes. The aim of the publication is to offer a genealogy of the tale that could be used as a starting point by any scholar interested in the tale of “Little Red Riding Hood” in particular or as a wider framework for the thorough historical and socio-cultural investigation of any given fairy tale. After a systematic examination of the history and evolution of the tale including a recount of Paul Delarue’s “The Story of Grandmother” along with Perrault’s and the Grimms’ versions and a scrutiny of the various illustrations accompanying the texts, Zipes compiled and incorporated in whole the texts of thirty-one literary versions of the tale in a chronological order originally published over the span of almost three centuries, between 1697 and 1979. Most of these texts are associated with identifiable authors, and, besides the catalog of multiple versions of the tale written for children, they also include short stories addressed to more mature audiences, several poems, and even a theatrical play. In the second edition of this collection published a decade later in 1993, Zipes also included an extended and updated introductory chapter, as well as three additional older tales and five more contemporary ones, resulting in a bulkier and more comprehensive outline of the tale’s history.

The Trials and Tribulations of Red Riding Hood, which remains his only book-length publication focusing on a single fairy tale, was published early on in Zipes’s career, who has since become one of the most distinguished representatives of fairy-tale scholarship. His fascination with the tale did not end there, however, as Zipes later published three more essays on the tale, two of which echo the original book-length publication in their titles. The first one of these, an article originally published under the title “A Second Gaze at Little Red

Riding Hood's Trials and Tribulations" in *The Lion and the Unicorn* (1983) and later included in his collection *Don't Bet on the Prince* (1993), focuses primarily on what one can perceive with their eyes when looking at a Red Riding Hood tale, to which the title cleverly alludes, meaning its illustrations. The second paper, which is a subchapter called "The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood Revisited and Reviewed" in his own monograph titled *The Enchanted Screen* (2010), discusses film adaptations of specific fairy tales in each of its chapters, focuses on the film adaptations of the tale, overviewing audio-visual sources spanning more than a century, from 1901-2009. In addition, Zipes also returned to the tale once more in a short essay titled "Dangerous Wolves and Naive Girls: ATU 333—Little Red Riding Hood, also categorized as The Glutton" in *The Golden Age of Folk and Fairy Tales: From the Brothers Grimm to Andrew Lang* (2013).

Another influential publication that was completed around the same time as Jack Zipes's is a book edited by Alan Dundes titled *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook* (1989). This collection also sets off from the three most renowned literary versions of the tale—meaning the timeless triumvirate of Perrault, the Grimms, and Delarue—, followed by nine intriguing papers, all of which are reprints. The papers authored by Wolfram Eberhard, Georg Hüsing, P. Saintyves, Hans-Wolf Jäger, Jack Zipes, Zohar Shavit, Géza Róheim, Bruno Bettelheim, and Dundes himself provide very diverse and far-reaching multidisciplinary approaches to the tale, perusing it from mythological, historical, psychoanalytic, political, and gendered perspectives. Each article, many of which were translated into English for the first time for the purpose of this collection in particular, is also preceded by a brief summary and introduction by Dundes. The lasting effects and implications of the book are twofold: the collected articles display a wide range of approaches that can be taken when discussing fairy tales in an accessible manner, while also demonstrating how the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" had inspired not only writers and artists but scholars too, including researchers from all over the world—as the thoroughly international list of authors demonstrates—and as early as the 1980s when the academic investigation of fairy tales was still considered a novelty.

Catherine Orenstein's *Little Red Riding Hood Uncloaked: Sex, Morality, And The Evolution Of A Fairy Tale* (2002), which was published more than a decade after Dundes's edited volume, has taken a completely different and much more modern approach to the tale. It also starts out from Perrault's version but goes on to provide an overview of various contemporary versions of the tale, meaning late-twentieth-century literary adaptations created for an adult audience. Orenstein disassembles the tale to its core elements and looks at its adaptations in the forms of poems, advertisements, films, pornography, and even a pop song to discuss the complicated sexual and moral politics at play in them. Besides including original primary sources, she also shifts the attention to various relevant aspects, such as the development of the concept of childhood throughout the ages, a close inspection of wolves in fairy tales and their meanings, rape, or fashion. Although the book is thorough in its choice of topics and perspectives, is rooted in in-depth scholarly research—it being the result of the author's doctoral project—, and does not shy away from discussing rather difficult societal issues, it has few literary or cultural theoretical references and even fewer citations in the endnotes. Albeit an intriguing read, Orenstein's publication—which boasts an eclectic amalgam of reviews and recommendations on its jacket from Jack Zipes, RuPaul, and Maria Tatar—was clearly intended to popularize fairy-tale theory and the story of “Little Red Riding Hood” in particular by making it accessible and enjoyable to a general audience.

Jack Zipes and Alan Dundes may have paved the way, but the most prolific fairy-tale scholar on “Little Red Riding Hood” is Sandra L. Beckett, who has published an abundance of journal articles and three books concerning the history and variations of the tale so far: *Recycling Red Riding Hood* (2002), *Red Riding Hood for All Ages: A Fairy-Tale Icon in Cross-Cultural Contexts* (2008), and *Revisioning Red Riding Hood around the World: An Anthology of International Retellings* (2013). All three of these have similar goals and structures: they aim to popularize the tale by drawing attention to the numerous versions available in different media, in different parts of the world, and for different age groups, respectively. *Recycling Red Riding Hood* primarily focuses on literary adaptations of the tale created for children, and organizes them according to the creative ways they tend to

transform the narrative. In *Red Riding Hood for All Ages*, Beckett has, once again, compiled over one hundred versions of the tale, but this time in a variety of languages and in various textual and audio-visual media ranging from poems and short stories to comics and films. In this book, the focus is on the coming of age of both main characters, with a generous amount of attention reserved for the highly adaptable versions of the wolf. Finally, *Revisioning Red Riding Hood around the World*, similarly to Jack Zipes's 1983 book, brings together lyric and prosaic versions of the tale from all over the world compiled, translated into English, and accompanied by particularized interpretations by the author. Each book boasts not only extensive lists of contemporary primary sources but widespread bibliographies of secondary sources as well, rendering Beckett's monographs exceptionally valuable resources for conducting scholarly analyses of the tale from a number of diverse perspectives.

The above books are all rather widely known and referenced, with authors famous for their numerous contributions to children's and fairy-tale studies. However, one can stumble upon shorter and less popular publications on the tale as well, such as *A Postmodern Analysis of the Little Red Riding Hood Tale* (2002) by Barbara Smith Chalou, which was published as part of a series on children's literature by The Edward Mellen Press and argues for the dissemination of alternative fairy-tale rewritings for the purpose of allowing children to keep an open mind about gender roles. Smith Chalou's monograph contains references to the origins as well as philosophical meanings of the narrative, while the main focus is on the treatment of gender issues and the depiction of women in adaptations of the tale from the second half of the twentieth century. The three aspects of the female protagonist that are examined closely are her utterances, her actions, and her looks. Unfortunately, the text's shallow and often repetitive treatment of its subject and the outdatedness of the primary materials make it a less practical and beneficial resource than the previous examples.

All of the above publications are from Western authors, published in the United States, and have similar goals: to explore and closely examine the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood." However, much in the same way as the story has been used as a vehicle to communicate societal problems throughout the ages, it can easily be applied to demonstrate

the differences between literary approaches as well. *Is Little Red Still Innocent and the Wolf Still Bad? Multiple Readings of the Story of Little Red Riding Hood* is a co-authored monograph published by JATEPress at the University of Szeged in 2016. Goşa, Codruţa and Andreea Şerban, two Romanian scholars took the tale as an example and used it to discuss the basics of generic, cognitive-linguistic, narratological, stylistic, pragmatic, and intertextual theories. The first part of the book overviews these approaches and might even be used as an introductory textbook for undergraduate students of literary theory, with the second part providing a more hands-on approach relying on various textual input from students, while the third part aims to open up the discussion to the intermedial treatment of the tale. Although it proposes a clever structure, the book is a very short and light read, and can hardly offer any appeal or usefulness above the undergraduate levels of universities. Nevertheless, what Codruţa's and Şerban's book properly accomplishes is that it demonstrates the adaptability and truly wide-reaching benefits of discussing "Little Red Riding Hood" in various academic fields.

As has been mentioned, "Little Red Riding Hood" is one of the most widely and variedly adapted fairy tales today, and so, with plenty of novel approaches yet unexplored, it is often revisited in academic theses as well. A noteworthy example of these is a doctoral dissertation defended in 2013 at De Montfort University in Leicester in the United Kingdom: Natalie Hayton's doctoral thesis titled "'Little Red Riding Hood' in the Twenty-first Century: adaptation, archetypes, and the appropriation of a fairy tale" was written under the co-supervision of Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan, two esteemed scholars who have published influential research on film adaptation. Hayton's thesis deals with adaptations from various domains of contemporary popular culture, including the generally unobserved yet widely prevalent genre of advertisements, and focuses on the problematics of heroine quest narratives and the depiction of female maturation in Western culture, within a novel feminist-Jungian framework. Another intriguing concept proposed by the author, which was already referenced in the previous subchapter, was published in a 2011 journal article: "unconscious adaptations" refer to popular cultural texts which appear to have been insentiently inspired by

children's literary tales, as their authors refuse to acknowledge conscious allusion to these sources (2011, 39). This theory supports and perfectly demonstrates the pervasive position of fairy tales in contemporary processes of producing original as well as adapted works.

Beyond these book-length considerations of the narrative, it is worth noting the ways in which shorter and fresher pieces of research, in the forms of journal articles primarily, have attempted to open up the discourse to pioneering approaches and to apply the most unique and distinctive methods to the study of not just children's literature in general but to Little Red's tale in particular. Francisco Vaz da Silva, for one, emphasizes the fruitfulness and illuminating quality of researching and searching for meaning in the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" in particular in an academic setting (2016b, 186). Earlier research tended to focus on textual comparisons, such as Perry Nodelman's 1978 article titled "Little Red Riding Hood Rides Again—and Again and Again and Again," which focus solely on literary versions, and judges them primarily based on their fidelity to the classic versions and their perceived literary value, or Cynthia DeMarcus's 1995 essay titled "Wolves Within and Without: Dickens's Transformation of 'Little Red Riding Hood' in *Our Mutual Friend*," which interprets Dickens's novel as a loose rewriting of "Little Red Riding Hood." More recent publications, however, include, for example, virtual reality adaptations, as in Elif Ayiter and Heidi Dahlsveen's 2014 paper titled "Little Red Riding Hood: The other side of the story," which examines Little Red Riding Hood in the setting of the massively multiplayer online role-playing game, *Second Life*, or Cari Keebaugh's 2013 paper on the game *Little Red Riding Hood's Zombie BBQ*, and even musical interpretations of the tale, as in Amanda Digioia's 2016 essay titled "Lechery, lycanthropy and Little Red Riding Hood in Type O Negative's 'Wolf Moon (Including Zoanthropic Paranoia)'." Surprisingly, the examinations of "Little Red Riding Hood" have not only infiltrated all realms of but also exceeded literary studies. Jamshid Tehrani, Quan Nguyen, and Teemu Roos, for example, set out to investigate the origins of fairy tales through the comparison of multiple versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" with the help of network-based analysis, in which they confirmed that Perrault's version of the tale was indeed based on prior oral versions (2016). In addition,

Pauline Greenhill and Steven Kohm extended their previous examinations of crime film adaptations of “Little Red Riding Hood” to observe the representation of the judicial systems and the dynamics of the revenge aspect of the narrative (2014), while Mary Douglas took an anthropological viewpoint to interpret the fairy tale (2012). What these eclectically assorted examples demonstrate is not only the continuing significance of the fairy-tale genre and of “Little Red Riding Hood” in contemporary popular culture but also the innumerable innovative scholarly endeavors already touched upon but not yet fully explored relating to these sources.

Besides academic researchers, the fairy tale and its adaptations are a perpetual source of interest for general audiences as well, as had been established in relation to Orenstein’s publication already. On her blog titled *SurLaLune Fairy Tales*, Heidi Anne Heiner, a librarian from Nashville, Tennessee, has been interpreting fairy tales and their rewritings since 1998, making her findings readily and freely available to everyone and anyone on the Internet. Beyond blog entries discussing the various fairy tales, the blog also includes annotations of the tales, examinations of their illustrations, a searchable database of folklore narratives, and a series of book publications collecting various versions of classic fairy tales. Although this website—a non-profit endeavor “created strictly for educational and entertainment purposes” (*SurLaLune*, “Introduction”)—is not a peer-reviewed resource, the precision and pertinence of the author’s expertise amassed in the span of the past two decades do render it a contribution of comparable significance to the above discussed scholarly books, as it has helped increase the popularity and the general public’s academic understanding of fairy tales, with “Little Red Riding Hood” occupying an especially esteemed place among them.

It appears to be primarily due to the tale’s meandering history and endless popularity that “Little Red Riding Hood” has reappeared numerous times, continuously, and without end in various kinds of scholarly research, as has been demonstrated in this subchapter. This broad literature review admittedly focused mainly on the most substantial scholarly publications—the book-length endeavors—complemented by only a few selected representative examples of theses and essays, as compiling a comprehensive bibliography of

and reviewing each of the hundreds of journal articles mentioning the tale of Red Riding Hood would be beyond the scope of this research. Instead, the aim of this summary and reflection was primarily to demonstrate the widespread interest and the flux of foci in examinations of the fairy-tale genre in general, and of the tale of “Little Red Riding Hood” in particular, ranging from the origins and social relevance of classic fairy tales foregrounded in the earliest publications by Jack Zipes and Alan Dundes to their contemporary significance in adapted forms in more recent books as well as in journal articles and online resources. At the same time, this concise literature review was also presented in order to draw attention to what appears to be missing from these works: while several of the above works discuss unique and singular contemporary fairy-tale adaptations, none of them carry out an extensive examination of new media adaptations or a systematic analysis of the “Little Red Riding Hood” fairy-tale web or the transmedial microcosms embedded within the fairy tale’s transmedial universe. This is the research gap the present dissertation aims to fill.

2. 2. Changing forms of media transition in the contemporary entertainment industry

Fairy tales in general, being a considerably prosperous genre of (children's) literature, are experimented with in novel media formats more and more, for the analysis of which existing theories of adaptation often appear to be insufficient. The core issue is that both within the scope of fairy-tale adaptations and adaptation theory at large, the transposing of narratives from text to film appears to be the standard against which all other types are measured, making those theories inherently inept to examine other paths of adaptation, particularly into more interactive new media formats. The purpose of this dissertation is to contribute to the previously overviewed array of existing research on "Little Red Riding Hood" by analyzing the hitherto overlooked links and connections between transmedial adaptations of the tale.

With the appearance and proliferation of new media formats, the number and magnitude of transmedial universes have also been increasing, especially among Hollywood-based entertainment conglomerates. Transmedial universes are not completely novel commercial schemes, as they already started to sprout at least half a century ago with the *Star Wars* franchise, one that keeps on expanding in innovative ways even today. These "serial storyworlds that span multiple installments and transmedial storyworlds that are deployed simultaneously across multiple media platforms, [result] in a media landscape in which creators and fans alike constantly expand, revise, and even parody them" (Ryan & Thon 2014, 1). Transmedial universes, however, not only provide audiences with stories in new and exciting forms but also offer intriguing arenas for scholars to explore narrativity and media transitions.

As Marie-Laure Ryan has remarked, "the study of narrative across media is consequently beneficial to both media studies and narratology" (2005, 2), as well as adaptation studies, and, in the present case, even children's literature or fairy-tale studies. This list of scholarly fields at once prompts the employment of "*transdisciplinary* approaches needed to finally start studying transmedial narrative systematically and responsibly"

(Gardner 2017, 86). Thus, the second section of the theoretical chapter of the present dissertation discusses approaches to narratives and storytelling across media as it has been considered in the field of adaptation and fairy tales, employing the tools of the emerging field of transmedial narratology. The ultimate aim of the present discussion is to provide a more specified framework in the forms of transmedial microcosm, which can be beneficial for the understanding of transmedial universes, particularly as they appear in the webs of contemporary fairy-tale adaptations.

In order to comprehend the complex systems of entertainment products known as transmedial universes and to explore “how a story spills over from one media platform into another, transgressing the confines of the written text towards visual, acoustic, kinetic, and digital new media regimes of representation” (Kérchy 2016, 1), one must identify and delineate certain fundamental terms, specifically narrativity, mediality, adaptation, and the multiple points of intersection between these. Considering the existing fundamental theories on the mechanisms and definitions of multi-, inter-, and transmedial narratives—devised by literary, cultural, and media theoreticians including Henry Jenkins, Werner Wolf, Marie-Laure Ryan, and Jan-Noël Thon—, this section aims to expand on these pioneering and noncomprehensive theorizations within the field. Finally, it is with the help of these methods and tools, merged with the aforementioned fairy-tale and adaptation theories, that the vast transmedial universe of “Little Red Riding Hood” is explored in the analytic chapter of this dissertation.

Fairy tales have been adapted in various ways and appear to persistently continue to do so, hence it is necessary to adapt our way of discussing them in order to understand them in their present novel forms. The present dissertation does not aim to provide a historical overview of adaptation studies, but there are certain points and concepts in its development that are necessary for the present discussion. Deborah Cartmell’s and Imelda Whelehan’s role with the publication of their *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text* (1999) was of crucial significance both in overthrowing the field’s long-reigning reliance on fidelity criticism and in opening up the discourse to novel routes of adaptations, along with Linda

Hutcheon's further expansion of the notion of adaptation to include the process of creating the adaptation, the resulting product itself, as well as the audience's reception of it (2012, 7-8). However, the theories of these scholars are not conclusive, as, for instance, one must argue against Hutcheon's exclusion of prequels, sequels, and all forms of expansions of the source narrative as adaptation (2012, 9) in order to apply her research in the exploration of transmedial universes.

Jenkins famously defined transmedia storytelling as follows:

Transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story. (Jenkins 2007)

Similarly, Werner Wolf also emphasized the equality among elements of a transmedial storyworld when he conceived of it as "a special form of 'intermediality' which refers to phenomena that occur in different media and are considered without regard to a possible origin in one specific medium" (2004, 82). Both of the above definitions emphasize the ideal impossibility of locating a source text, which both applies and does not apply to fairy-tale transmedial universes: it seems careless to dismiss the renowned literary sources of classic fairy tales, but, at the same time, it is always difficult to discern exactly which one of these written records the creators of an adaptation had relied on, not to mention the impossibility of finding the true single original source of any fairy tale.

Narratology is a useful way to interpret narratives, even across media, though the terms and concepts need to be adjusted in order to account for the multi- and intermediality of the texts. In this respect, Ryan criticizes previous narratological theories and models for excluding the possibility of transmedial narratology on the grounds of media relativism and its reliance on the role of a narrator (2005, 2-3), and, at the same time, designates the purpose of transmedial narratology in providing the study of narratives with media-neutral tools and methods. In a general way, Lars Elleström defined narration first and foremost as "the

communication of narratives" (2019, 37), while Werner Wolf designated the narrative as “an abstract narrative content that is relatively independent of a particular medium or other form of transmission” (Wolf 2004, 83), a “cognitive frame or schema” (2004, 84), emphasizing the role of the reader/viewer/player in their creation. Ryan defined narrativity as the possibility of a text to elicit the sense of a narrative in the reader/viewer, with this “narrative potential” being spread across media (2004, 7) and has proposed a cognitive approach to defining narratives:

1. Narrative involves the construction of the mental image of a world populated with individuated agents (characters) and objects (spatial dimension).
2. This world must undergo not fully predictable changes of state that are caused by non-habitual physical events: either accidents (happenings) or deliberate actions by intelligent agents (temporal dimension).
3. In addition to being linked to physical states by causal relations, the physical events must be associated with mental states and events (goals, plans, emotions). This network of connections gives events coherence, motivation, closure, and intelligibility and turns them into a plot (logical, mental and formal dimension). (2005, 4)

These media-neutral aspects, following the spatial, temporal, and logical dimensions of texts, grasp the elements of a narrative that can be realized in any form of medium. In a similar vein, Furthermore, Wolf differentiates between “content narratemes” and “syntactic narratemes” as fundamental elements of narrative (Wolf 2004, 88)—called “narremes” in a later publication (Wolf 2017, 260-262)—, the former of which corresponds with Ryan’s spatial dimension, as characters, and the latter with her temporal and logical dimensions, as the order of the narrative.

Thus, the narrative's "scaffolding core story" is crucial to understanding transmedial narration (Elleström 2019, 38), and perhaps nowhere more crucial than in the cases of classic fairy tales. As a fairy tale, “Little Red Riding Hood” should be defined as “plot-dominated” but its adaptations show that it is rather a “world-dominated narrative” (Ryan 2015, 5), meaning that its recognizable elements are freely transposed to a different era or place while

maintaining the consistency of the characters and the magical realism of the story. In Hutcheon's term, "what gets adapted here is a heterocosm, literally an 'other world' or cosmos, complete, of course, with the stuff of a story—settings, characters, events, and situations" (2012, 14). The characters of "Little Red Riding Hood" are often made to switch roles in new adaptations, and the world is often transported either to a bustling city or a medieval village in the middle of the woods, yet the source of the adaptation is always recognizable by certain characteristic elements, which might be as seemingly small and peripheral as a girl wearing a red sweater.

Intertextuality is also important since the pleasure of recognizing elements borrowed from a source text is a fundamental feature of fairy-tale adaptations (Hutcheon 2012, 4). As fidelity is no longer the ruling principle in adaptation studies, creative revisions of the tale, including innovative ways of repurposing the widely recognized elements of its storyworld (Ryan and Thon 2014, 21) in the forms of prequels, sequels, and everything in-between, are each and all considered adaptations in their own rights. Three possible ways in which new products can complement existing transmedial storyworlds are redundancy, expansion, and modification (Thon 2015, 33), which correspond with what has already been established within the scope of adaptation studies (Hutcheon 2012, 171). Thus, adaptations embedded within transmedial franchises offer "a story that provides instant immersion, because the recipient is spared the cognitive effort of building a world and its inhabitants from a largely blank state" (Ryan & Thon 2014, 1). This also means that "while the author creates the storyworld through the production of signs, it is the reader, spectator, listener, or player who uses the blueprint of a finished text to construct a mental image of this world" (2014, 3), thus emphasizing the role of the audience not only in the cases of interactive media but in the cases of literary and audio-visual adaptations as well.

Interestingly, "the film adaptation of a picture book/picturebook retelling tends to be more direct, whereas the passage from film to picturebook often involves a higher degree of reinvention" (Beckett 2014, 22). While picturebook adaptations turn their readers into guided narrators, young adult adaptations offer the excitement of figuring out sometimes veiled

references to the tale, as well as intertextual links to other narratives, creating in the process a crucial need for the audience's active participation. While, as it has already been established, Charles Perrault turned "Little Red Riding Hood" into a cautionary tale for young girls, contemporary adaptations seem to reclaim it and overwrite the victim-blaming tendencies by providing an empowering narrative for young/adult women. Combined with the tale's early interpretation as a warning against sexual predators, the purpose of these modern texts is generally to help teenagers cope with their feelings of sexual and/or romantic awakening. In line with this, the character of Little Red is more and more frequently given agency so that she can protect herself, and may even be put in the skin of the wolf (Orenstein 2002, 153), merging the two opposing main characters of the tale in the body of one stereotypically self-contradictory teenager. What is more, unlike earlier versions of the tale, which were crossover texts written for a mixed-age audience (Beckett 2008, 1), modern literary adaptations generally exhibit more complex narrative structures and techniques in addressing their generally more mature readers.

The formal aspects of transmedial universes, meaning the media they are realized in, can be differentiated based on technology and cultural use (Ryan 2005, 16). In this regard, Ryan and Thon delineate medium-free, not medium-free, and medium-specific concepts of narrativity (2014, 4). Furthermore, while "a core of meaning may travel across media, but its narrative potential will be filled out, actualized differently when it reaches a new medium. When it comes to narrative abilities, media are not equally gifted" (Ryan 2005, 1). For this reason, adaptations in different media all have different strengths, which has been at the forefront of adaptation and transmedial studies. As Robert Stam has argued,

The shift from a single-track, uniquely verbal medium such as the novel, which 'has only words to play with,' to a multitrack medium such as film, which can play not only with words (written and spoken), but also with theatrical performance, music, sound effects, and moving photographic images, explains the unlikelihood—and I would suggest even the undesirability—of literal fidelity. (2000, 56)

As is noticeable in the following case studies, however, textual adaptations are as important and as integral and significant parts of transmedial storyworlds as any other, even in the contemporary digital era. The following theoretical subchapter focuses on the emergence and contemporary popularity of a generally dismissed textual product, the novelization, examples of which can be found in several of the case studies discussed in this dissertation.

2. 2. 1. Films into books: Novelizations as common textual elements of transmedial universes

According to Henry Jenkins, the function and status of old media have shifted (2006, 14), with less emphasis being placed on textual and purely audio-visual formats. A global reason why they might be fading out of focus might be found in the reasons and motivations behind the visual and digital turns. Similarly, Linda Hutcheon also appears to notice a shift towards digital new media adaptations (2012, xxv). This makes perfect sense, given that the aim of transmedia storytelling is to increase visibility and popularity by encouraging fan participation (Jenkins 2006, 169). Nevertheless, there are certain textual formats, such as the renowned novelization, which persist. The systematic discussion of the genre of novelization in the following subchapter is developed on the basis of a previously published article in *Americana E-journal of American Studies in Hungary* (Bálint 2014).

The novelization, the translation of films (and other audio-visual media) into novels, is a tie-in product which—although it includes such classics as the *Star Wars* saga—has never truly been recognized as a conventional literary work of art and as a significant area of research (Baetens 2010, 51). While the adaptation of written texts into films pervades scholarly discourse, theories and discussions of novelizations, despite the success and profitability of the genre, are still few and far between in the academic context. Much of the existing research—especially the earliest pioneering publications, including Randall D. Larson’s *Films into Books* (1995), “the first in-depth comprehensive examination of” novelization in the English language and cultural context (Larson 1995, xii)—approach the subject primarily from a historical perspective, and ultimately trivialize the process and once again diminish the novelization’s literary value. Furthermore, the fact that for some scholars “novelisation encompasses any [film-related] text that is novelistic or in book format” (Van Parys 2011, ¶ 12) demonstrates the difficulty of establishing a firm definition for the genre. It is altogether possible that the problem lies exactly in the multitude of diverse practices involved in the creation of novelizations that make their definition so challenging (Baetens 2018, 42). While adaptation scholars admit that “the flourishing ‘novelization’ industry today

cannot be ignored” (Hutcheon 2012, 38), their critical and academic receptions have been “noticeably cool” (Allison 2007, ¶ 2), and “the genre continues to be either completely ignored or despised by literary scholars and film theoreticians, not only by those who never read this type of literature but also by those who produce it and who often refuse to sign it with their own name” (Baetens 2007, 227). Jonathan Coe’s oft-quoted description of the novelization as “that bastard, misshapen offspring of the cinema and the written word” (Coe qtd. in Mahlke 2012, 139) is particularly telling in this regard.

In contrast, a more recent and more serious theoretical examination of the genre titled *Novelization: From Film to Novel* (2018)—the translation of the author, Jan Baetens’s monograph, which had originally been published in French a decade earlier in 2008, also inadvertently demonstrating that the genre’s cultural and scholarly roots still rest in Francophone sources—does point to the growing practice and “more ambitious” nature of contemporary novelizations (Baetens 2018, 4-5), suggesting that novelization holds within it the possibility to be considered a standalone literary genre. The aim of the present discussion of novelization set within an adaptation studies framework is to contribute to the realization of this possibility and demonstrate that the changes made to narratives in the process of their transformation from audio-visual (or from scripts created to be interpreted visually) into written texts render the novelization a notable and valuable subgenre of adaptation.

Despite the difficulties of defining it, it is nevertheless inarguable that novelization in its current form is a greatly and inherently constrained piece of literature: it fulfills its role as a commercial product by advertising the big-budget film it is based on and scheduled to be published alongside in an additional and distinctly dissimilar cultural space with possible new audiences: the bookstore. Due to its commercial nature, the novelization is often likened to genres of lowbrow literature, ignoring the process of artistic transformation from the dynamic medium of the motion picture into the static, analog representation of the novel that is involved in their making. At the same time, its ability to provide background information and extend the story through it might rather make it comparable to extras or special features on DVDs. Hence, they provide a major source of information for both scholars and consumers:

As historical documents, they can be of use when considering a film's developmental process. They also provide alternative readings of the film script and may, by extension, help to enrich a viewer's retrospective relationship with the film itself. Thirdly, they offer an avenue for exploring the differing narrational forms and capabilities of the two media. (Van Parys 2011, ¶ 8)

From the readers' perspectives, novelizations thus offer the possibility to reexperience and even expand on their knowledge of a film's narrative and the characters within it; but from a cultural theoretical point of view, they do much more by demonstrating "the shift from independent media to media environments" (Baetens 2007, 234). This dynamic relationship between the aesthetic and the commercial, the cultural and the material domains of popular culture alone make the novelization an interesting and valuable source.

Thomas Van Parys claims that since "cinema has replaced literature as the centre of the cultural system, literature [in general] has increasingly needed to define and position itself in relation to cinema" (2011, ¶ 15). In the case of novelizations, too, where the relationship between the two media involved is of crucial importance, "power is now on the side of the image" (Baetens 2005, 56). Nevertheless, "there are certain types of statements that seem totally beyond their [images'] reach." (Ryan 2005, 9), hence the need to create adaptations in textual formats. What is more, the pictorial turn is not merely a movement towards a focus on visuality, but also "a postlinguistic, postsemiotic rediscovery of the picture as a complex interplay between visuality, apparatus, institutions, discourse, bodies, and figurality," with ample emphasis on authorship, spectatorship, and interpretation (Baetens 2005, 43)—and as such, prompts further examination of the interplaying dynamics at play throughout the history and genre of novelization.

Novelizations, similarly to films, should be studied together with their "national and linguistic contexts" (Baetens 2007, 231), for their uses, models, and even their writing quality vary in each cultural context and time period. Furthermore, according to Kate Newell,

The relationship between novelizations and their film counterparts is complex and rendered even more so by the manner and order in which readers approach both, their personal histories with the work or the medium, and the more general personal and cultural lexicons from which they draw comparisons. (2017, 33)

In this respect, what Dudley Andrew maintains in relation to film adaptations of literature is true for novelizations as well: they all developed in a certain way so that they would fulfill different functions throughout their history, at the same time conforming to or commenting on the style symptomatic of each time period (Braudy & Cohen 2009, 378). As a result, by looking at the history of novelization, not only can we learn more about the development of novelization as a genre, but also discover that “the early novelization also sheds light on the relations between literature and film in the early twentieth century” (Van Parys 2009, 307), thus contributing to the historical approach to the evolution of media discourse.

Although there is no consensus on when and where exactly the novelization’s history begins (Baetens 2010, 52), the transformation of George Wilkins’s and William Shakespeare’s 1608 play, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* into a novel is considered its earliest known forerunner (Van Parys 2009, 309). It should be noted that Shakespeare purportedly “didn’t see it as his job to make up stories, but to tell stories better than they had been told” (A. C. H. Smith qtd. in Larson 1995, 40), which not only posits Shakespeare’s plays as loose adaptations but also demonstrates the perpetuity and significance of cultural adaptation. Even later, throughout the nineteenth century, play novelizations persisted, and as such, can be considered the earliest predecessors of film novelizations. They reached their heyday between 1900 and 1915—at which time they often included photographs—and lived a brief revival in the 1960s (Van Parys 2009, 309). Sadly, these play novelizations received the same scorn as other contemporary forms of novelization do today.

Film novelizations, similarly to film adaptations of literature, appeared simultaneously alongside motion pictures themselves at the turn of the twentieth century (Allison 2007, ¶ 2; Mahlke 2012, 138; Van Parys 2011, 305), and have been a constant though varying addendum to films ever since. The origins and roots of film novelizations can

thus be located within the concise catalog descriptions of the films of Lumière and Edison (Baetens 2007, 227), which were used solely to describe, distinguish, and promote their films (Mahlknecht 2012, 144). These “protonovelizations,” without aspiring to literary goals, were “purely functional and not yet fictional texts” (Baetens 2010, 53), which explained the contents and visual attractions of films in an ekphrastic way, similarly to contemporary film reviews and synopses, appearing as intermedial translations rather than adaptations of their source texts (Leitch 2012, ¶ 29). Comparably to one of its literary predecessors, the nineteenth-century melodrama, novelization also “emphasizes narrative at the expense of description, psychological analysis, and all material [...] not directly relevant to the story” (Baetens 2010, 54). As the successful replacement of the cinema of attractions with narrative cinema also demonstrates, new cultural objects at the beginning of the twentieth century had “to obey the triple law of novelty, seriality, and adaptation” in order to be successful (Baetens 2005, 52), all of which have been persisting features of novelizations ever since.

The first film novelizations appeared in newspapers and magazines, but in the 1920s and 1930s, they started to gain popularity and, after being compiled into book format, were moved from newsstands into bookstores (Baetens 2010, 53-54). What is more, the genre reached such popularity that between the 1920s and 1950s, almost every film had some kind of written retelling to accompany and advertise it (Van Parys 2009, 307). It was also starting in the 1920s that avant-garde writers and writers of novelizations began an ongoing struggle to develop a unique and universal style for the genre, culminating in the early 1950s’ film-as-writing movement, when shooting scripts and book-long interviews with directors were published as standalone literary works of art, and cinematographic authors were urged to write creative and insightful novelizations of their own films known as *cinéromans* (Baetens 2007, 228-29). As Adrienne L. McLean points out, the years of the Hollywood studio system were also the heyday of the movie story magazine (2003, 4), which, however popular with audiences and readers, still maintained a low cultural status (Baetens 2007, 228). The “matter-of-fact rendering[s] of ‘this happened, then that happened, then this happened’” (McLean 2003, 14) published in magazines provided “preview fictionizations of movies” to

summarize the contents of the film, which stands in contrast with the function of contemporary novelizations “to prolong or extend the time-bound experience of the film or television text” (2003, 6). The elimination of the Production Code Administration and the consequent change of the novelizations’ source materials (2003, 19), as well as the impracticability and unprofitability of giving away story narratives in advance, lead to the demise of the story magazines during the 1950s (Van Parys 2009, 311), and their role was taken over by the junior or young adult novelizations, official movie magazines, genre-specific magazines, and story books.

Most scholars agree that “the boom years of novelisations” (Allison 2007, ¶ 2) were the 1960s and 1970s, with the new possibility of cheaply mass-produced paperbacks allowing eager moviegoers to re-live and even expand on the stories they had liked seeing on the silver screen, thus filling a market gap before the invention and availability of VHS cassettes and DVDs (Larson 1995, 3-4; Baetens 2007, 227; Van Parys 2009, 314). As has been mentioned, book-long novelizations became more common during the 1950s and developed a uniform, more regulated, and organized paperback format, ultimately leading to the proliferation and institutionalization of the genre in the 1970s (Van Parys 2009, 314-15). In the words of André Gaudreault and Philippe Marion, novelization reached its “second birth” in the form of institutional recognition, which, paradoxically, stunted its growth by eliminating heterogeneity and malleability from it (Baetens 2005, 58-60). In opposition to the predecessors of the contemporary Hollywood novelization, which also follow “the shooting script in a rather docile way” (Baetens 2007, 229-30), and in which the “narrative play or variation is often kept to a minimum, and the film story is rendered as a third-person narrative that aims to be as dry as possible” (Van Parys 2009, 313), the 1960s also saw the rise of continuative novelizations, in which the authors color the characters’ perceptions and add motives to their actions (Allison 2007, ¶ 18-19). During this time, telenovelization or TV novelizations, often in the form of original novels loosely based on the storyworld of a film, series, or episode, were extremely widespread, but were soon on the decline in the 1980s (Van Parys 2009, 314). Although a few writers specialized in this genre, they usually created

them out of economic necessity, since they, being based on the text of the script, were more of a mechanical rather than a creative nature (Larson 1995, 26), and, thus were generally considered “entertainment” and “not literature” (Angelica Aimes qtd. in Larson 1995, 29).

This historical overview of the emergence of novelization is necessary because the more recent forms of novelization inherited their purpose from earlier forms, and function as “promotional material before the film release as well as prolongation of the movie experience to capitalize on its potential success” (Van Parys 2009, 312). The commercial novelization “has fallen into a deadlock state under influence of the contemporary Hollywood system, which exerts considerable control on the content of film novelizations” (2009, 315), but is thriving and has contributed greatly to the empowerment and involvement of viewers in the subcultural form of amateur fan-fictions, the latest addition to this genealogical overview (Baetens 2007, 230), which have, incidentally, also partly contributed to the downfall of novelizations (Allison 2007, ¶ 2). Although contemporary novelization may appear to be “a historical anomaly, a regressive movement” that transforms a story in a newer, digital medium into an older, analog format (Baetens 2005, 53), the survey of its history shows its continual links to the development of cinema. Since films encourage the production of and are virtually “incomplete without accompanying texts” (Van Parys 2009, 308), it has become a general practice to adapt original films into novelizations (2009, 315). As a result, even despite the stagnated state of commercial novelizations, there are plenty of alternatives within the genre, not only on the internet but on bookshelves as well.

The novelizations available on the contemporary American book market are more diverse both in terms of genre and format than the also prominent French market (Van Parys 2009, 308). As a result, Hollywood novelizations and film tie-ins can be discerned on the basis of three specific aspects. First, they can be differentiated based on the type of audio-visual composition they use as their source. “From a literal viewpoint at least, novelisation is in many cases not at all an intersemiotic process of translation or transmedialisation,” but one of intramedial adaptation, as, due to practical and commercial reasons, novelizations are usually based on an early, unedited version of the textual screenplays (Van Parys 2011, ¶ 3).

In this process, the job of the novelizer is to “assimilate what are more traditionally cinematic devices into their writing” (Allison 2007, ¶ 17), as the contents of scripts are always originally intended to be interpreted visually, that is, in film terms. The second type of distinction is made on the basis of the literary style and quality of the novelizations, which depends in equal parts on the genre of the novelization, the expertise of the author, and the intended target audience. The last distinction can be made based on how closely they follow the contents of the source text. The value and popularity of the novelization depend on these aspects, and as such, the variations within each of the three aspects are of great significance.

Firstly, while it is true that films and television shows are the most common sources of novelizations, “the very word ‘novelisation’ implies that it can be derived from anything” (Van Parys 2011, ¶ 5). In addition to films and screenplays, other post-literary sources, such as comic books, video games, or radio programs, can also be and are indeed regularly novelized, and the resulting books are called comic book novelizations, video game novelizations, or radio novelizations, respectively. In addition, there are further subgenres of book-based tie-in products, such as official magazines, behind the scenes-, as well as making of-books, coloring books, and so on (2011, ¶ 4), which are not directly related to the narratives of the films. Even in the case of motion picture novelizations, finer distinctions are not only possible but also desirable to be made. A novelization can be based on a film, a short film, an animated film, a series of films, an episode of a television show, a number of episodes, a whole season of a TV show, a film genre in general, a previously published novelization, or an orphaned novelization based on a discarded script. Film adaptations are usually only novelized if the source text for the film was not a novel already, although even in these cases, the film is often accompanied by the original book with a new, film-related cover design, or by a new novel that incorporates the changes made to the narrative in the film (2011, ¶ 6). What is more, there can also be great variability in terms of the length and form of the novel, ranging from poems to short stories to novels, but also including comic books and graphic novels.

Secondly, in terms of the literary style of the novelization, there are alternatives such as “non-fiction film books and novels that skirt around the genre of novelisation, in particular novelistic film essays, reflections, or autobiographical diaries or accounts of the viewing or making of a particular film” (Van Parys 2011, ¶ 14). The literary style of the novelization greatly depends not only on the producers’ desires but on (the age of) its target audience as well: for example, storybooks for children are essentially shorter and more naïve, commercial (junior) novelization use simplified and unsophisticated language, and it is only the literary or highbrow novelization that yearns for literary value. In addition, the latter two, namely novelization as “a mere ‘thing’ with no cultural superego, so to speak, which does not differ from other types of merchandizing” and at once benefits and suffers from mutual exploitation with the source film, and the rare high-art types, which are based on older classical movies or genres, written by authors as homages or artistic revisitations of their sources, utilize different literary styles due to the “sociocultural tensions within the field” (Baetens 2007, 231-32). Lowbrow and highbrow novelizations can thus be differentiated on the basis of “their degree of self-consciousness” (2007, 232), or in terms of their thematical (e.g. the Hollywood novel) or formal (e.g. the cinéroman) orientations (Van Parys 2011, ¶ 16). Although judging the quality of a novel is rather subjective, the negative preconceptions surrounding the genre deem it necessary to express evaluation—in as objective a manner as possible—on the basis of stylistic choices and conformity to the rules of the genre of the narrative.

Thirdly, regarding the connection between film and novelization, Randall D. Larson’s typology demonstrates a noticeable continuum between adaptations conforming to their source texts and other, more creative types of tie-in novels. In his book, he differentiates between three kinds of movie tie-ins: the “reissue of a previous novel that was adapted into a film,” supplemented by the visual markers of the film; the adaptation of a screenplay into prose; and original novels inspired by “a movie’s or TV series’ characters, concept, and setting” (1995, 3). According to Dudley Andrew, novels “claiming fidelity bear the original as a signified,” while novelizations of the latter category merely “stand in a relation of referring to the original” (Braudy & Cohen 2009, 372). Furthermore, moving beyond the

question of fidelity, Van Parys distinguishes between four forms of continuation: “‘crossover’ novelisation, which is a spin-off from two or more different series,” “the ‘interactive’ book, which leaves it to the reader what path the protagonist takes,” “the ‘meta-representational’ novelisation, which concretises a certain object from the TV series,” and the “‘mise-en-abyme’ spin-off, [...] essentially a play on media, [which] involves a mediatic representation – within the reality of the reader – of a fictional text or object,” even “credited to the fictitious author” (2011, ¶ 9), giving “the illusion that the diegesis extends into reality” (2011, ¶ 16) ultimately blurring, or even erasing, the borderline between fiction and reality. The “‘unofficial’ fan-produced discourse, such as zines and ‘slash’ fiction, in which fans reconfigure and recast commercial products in new and often nonnormative ways” (McLean 2003, 9), can further complicate the questions of authorship, ownership, and originality in relation to novelizations, but as novelizations focus on published works and do not extend to the online field of fan fiction, they do not form a part of this discussion.

Novelizations “avoid marking the semiotic rupture that the change from film to book entails” (Baetens 2005, 49-50), mainly because there is no semiotic gap between the source and the output (Baetens 2007, 233). Despite the technical transformations involved, the novelization and the film are often interpretations of the same linguistic source in different media, ultimately transforming novelizations into “antiremedial” works (Baetens 2010, 65), “antiadaptation” (Baetens 2018, 46), or even “antiliterature” (Baetens 2005, 57). According to Judit Karácsonyi, they embody an “aesthetic of the in-between” (2020). Such a binary approach to novelizations, however, offers a very limited viewpoint, and cannot account for the social and cultural transformations involved in the process (Baetens 2005, 50), which is what the following case studies of transmedially and intertextually adapted fairy tales are to redress.

According to Henry Jenkins, “there are strong economic motives behind transmedia storytelling” (Jenkins 2006, 104). To borrow the corporate terminology from Hollywood, novelizations can clearly be identified as elements contributing greatly to the ensuring of “cross-platform strategic synergy” (Gardner 2017, 85). As a genre both burdened and

persisting due to the commercial motivation behind it, novelizations fit perfectly into this realistic image of transmedial universes, but at the same time, they also demonstrate the enduring relevance and significance of the textual in contemporary entertainment franchises. In the following analyses, textual adaptations are markedly in the focus, with two of the five examples—*Red Riding Hood* (2011), *Red's Untold Tale* (2015)—being commercial novelizations and one—the comics version of *The Wolf Among Us* (2015-2016)—allowing for the possibility to be interpreted as a “graphic novelization” of the video game. Despite the obvious purpose of novelizations, they, along with other textual adaptations, are essential and deep-rooted elements of many transmedial microcosms.

2. 2. 2. Transmedial microcosms through the lens of transmedial narratology

The contemporary entertainment landscape, especially the ones created in the Hollywood context, “suggest that transmedia storytelling is the most important narrative mode of our time” (Ryan 2015, 1). As such, it is important to determine whether transmedia storytelling is a form of storytelling or just a marketing strategy employed by media conglomerates, as narratives today converge as they “migrate from medium to medium in any imaginable order” (Ryan & Thon 2014, 3). In this process, they need to engage in world-making, meaning the “process of designing a fictional universe that will sustain franchise development, one that is sufficiently detailed to enable many different stories to emerge but coherent enough so that each story feels like it fits with the others” (Jenkins 2006, 294). The legitimacy of and need for transmedial narratology has been backed by Thon, Ryan, and Wolf, among others. What the present discussion aims to do, is to complement, rather than redraft existing research.

The need for a transdisciplinary approach to transmedia storytelling has been mentioned already. As Gardner explains,

Transmedial narrative is not a microscopic category describing a small range of massive texts—*Star Wars*, *Matrix*—but is more properly understood as an umbrella term that enfolds and includes that much older category of adaptation (which has traditionally been bracketed from the study of transmedial narrative as an embarrassing ancestor). (2017, 84)

In the present dissertation, it is not only adaptation studies but also fairy-tale studies and the links between the two that are cited when discussing transmediality.

The transmedial universes of fairy tales fit in well with the concept of transmedia storytelling. They both mark “a return trip to a favorite world. It satisfies the encyclopedist’s passion for acquiring more and more knowledge about a world, or the collector’s passion for acquiring more and more souvenirs” (Ryan 2015, 4). Similarly, Jenkins deemed fairy tales age-old, integral parts of transmedial universes that can be communicated through transmedia

storytelling (Jenkins 2008, 95-96). They work as examples of what Jason Mitchell calls “unbalanced transmedia ” (qtd. in Thon 2015, 22), referring to transmedia franchises, where there is a discernible core text, as opposed to Jenkins’s ideal model of transmedia storytelling.

Amending Jenkins’s theory, it is perceived that in transmedial universes “different media converge around this [core] [story]world by presenting different aspects of it” (Ryan & Thon 2014, 3). There are certain elements that might be regarded as medium-free components of narrativity: “character, events, setting, time, space, and causality” (Ryan & Thon 2014, 4). Continuing this research, Jan-Noël Thon, in his seminal work *Transmedial Narratology and Contemporary Media Culture* (2018), discusses in detail three aspects of narratives he considers to be medium-free: storyworlds, narrators, and subjective representations. In addition, especially in the cases of fairy-tale adaptations, which have been continually reimagined in the most creative manners for centuries, the socio-cultural context of the works must be considered as an additional influence, a constant though varying element of narratives.

With specific regard to fairy tales, Cristina Bacchilega claims that the intertextual hyperlinked stories she calls “the fairy-tale web is not only an inter/hypertextual, but also an intermedial and multimedial, symptomatic, and possible transformative reading practice” (2013, 35). In a similar vein, Thon refers to “work-specific and/or transmedial storyworlds” (2015, 32). In the present dissertation, similarly, compact bubbles or smaller entities resembling seeds within a dandelion puff are named transmedial microcosms. The purpose of this new designation is to differentiate among the smaller groups of transmedia adaptations existing within transmedial universes, such as the different conceptions and discernible yet connected storyworlds of the tale “Little Red Riding Hood” in “The Company of Wolves” (1979) by Angela Carter, as opposed to the film *Red Riding Hood* (2011), or the series *Once Upon a Time* (2011-2018), all of which exist within the greater transmedial universe of the tale “Little Red Riding Hood” also known as the ATU tale type 333.

Ryan refers to the “snowball effect” (2015, 2) to designate when one story gets disseminated across many platforms because it is so widely known among people across the

world, as, for example, Greek myths. However, while Ryan deems these adaptations to be beyond the definition of transmedia storytelling, the present dissertation discusses a transmedial universe very similar to them as valid and relevant. The reason why the many adaptations of fairy tales are considered transmedial universe here is that they too transform the core narratives in meaningful ways, sharing and emphasizing different aspects in each element or product of each transmedial microcosm. While the usage and benefits of transmedial microcosms might appear superfluous or redundant, especially if we consider Bacchilega's theory of the fairy-tale web, I believe that it is necessary to transfer the idea of this microelement into the fields of transmedia and adaptations studies, as transmedial microcosms can shed new light on adaptation and transmedial processes and universes.

Some of the oldest and most persisting media formats in adaptation and in transmedial storyworlds as well are textual. In the following case studies, the focus is placed on the texts and textual adaptations in each transmedial microcosm. In the process of analyzing them, it is necessary to look at narrative elements that are medium-specific as well as the ones that are transmedial. Following Wolf's contemplation of the narrativity of sculpture (2011, 147), one might feel the urge to expand to consider all tie-in products in transmedial universes as narrative or as contributing to the unfolding of the storyworld. Although, according to Ryan, products that generate hype and advertise another product are not transmedia storytelling (2015, 3), the previously discussed novelizations stand in contrast with this. Novelizations both add new aspects or elements to the storyworld and at the same time are created to advertise and are markedly and paratextually linked to the film or series that they are based on.

Chapter 3. Relentless transformations: Literary-textual analyses

The second chapter of the main part of the dissertation includes case studies and analyses of several adaptations of “Little Red Riding Hood” realized in a range of various media formats and combinations. The overwhelming majority of the examples were published or created in the twenty-first century for a (young) adult audience within an English-speaking context—by creators from the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada—and their assemblage is representative of the most popular recurring trends and tendencies in fairy-tale rewritings. The most important principle in their selection, however, was to choose groups of fairy-tale adaptations that can be identified as transmedial microcosms: in other words, ones that have classifiable tie-ins or intermedial connections within their distinct storyworlds in dissimilar media formats. The following analytical chapter is divided into three larger subchapters based on the types of media involved, which are further divided into subsections discussing specific interpretations of the age-old narrative via each unique transmedial microcosm.

In the first subchapter, the discussion commences with intratextual adaptations of the narrative, which were inspired by the first literary versions and reimagined primarily in prosaic forms. The brief overview of poetic and other inventive textual references to the tale—which do not necessarily exist within their own transmedial microcosms but are nevertheless significant components of the “Little Red Riding Hood” transmedial universe—is followed by the more meticulous analysis of a short story, which is widely known as the source text of a paradigmatic creation in the long line of “Little Red Riding Hood” films and transmedial microcosms: “The Company of Wolves” (1979) by Angela Carter and its filmic illustration also titled *The Company of Wolves* (1984), directed by Neil Jordan. Although this subchapter consists of the analysis of a single example, textual adaptations in various printed and electronic formats appear and are analyzed at length in every one of the following subsections. In this way, considering that textual adaptations are central and frequent elements of transmedial microcosms, they form the pillars of this dissertation. It must be noted that one immensely abundant textual fairy-tale adaptation is absent from the

dissertation: fan-fiction and all fan-produced materials online. While rewritings and continuations invented by fans and published on specialized online fan-fiction websites—either based on the archetypal fairy tale or a contemporary popular cultural rendering of it—are valuable adaptations in their own right, the complications they raise regarding authorship and forms of publication, not to mention their sheer amount, make them both unfit for and beyond the scope of the present research.

The second subchapter expands on the previous subchapter by including textual-novelistic adaptations related to and based on on-screen adaptations of the tale. The two subsections deal with two unique examples of novelizations—the theoretical and historical contexts of which were discussed at length in the theoretical section of this dissertation—, one based on a feature film, and one related to a television series. The two examples, *Red Riding Hood* (2011) by Sarah Blakley-Cartwright based on *Red Riding Hood* (2011) and *Red's Untold Tale* (2015) by Wendy Toliver based on *Once Upon a Time* (2011-2018), though unrelated and derived from different audio-visual genres, do demonstrate similarities in their use of fairy-tale tropes and the structures of the narratives themselves, which may be vindicated by both the shared textual genres and common groups of target audiences.

The third subchapter shifts the focus away from plain audio-visual links and opens up the discourse to interactive digital adaptations—to be consumed strictly on-screen and requiring the active participation and choice-making of the user—in the forms of electronic books and video games. The introductory section of this subchapter overviews e-books, a genre surrounded by an air of novelty and curiosity comparable to novelizations, and includes examples that can be localized along a continuum ranging from enhanced e-books to interactive storybooks and web-based digital books. The entertainment industry's apparent lack of interest in interactive e-books—undoubtedly resulting from their general unprofitability, especially in comparison with the market value and wider visibility of printed novelizations and video games—has made it difficult to uncover applications related to existing transmedial microcosms. The reason why a few unconnected examples are nevertheless included here is that their discussion is a necessary step on the road to more

complex digital adaptations. The following two sections of the subchapter discuss two hybrid interactive adaptations: one that exhibits a link between a collection of comics compiled into a graphic novel, *Through the Woods* (2014), and several web-comic or interactive digital storybook versions created by the same artist, Emily Carroll; and one that has transformed a spin-off of Bill Willingham's epic comics saga, *Fables* (2002-), titled *The Wolf Among Us* (2013), an episodic narrative video game, into a series of comic books of the same title. Although the story of "Little Red Riding Hood" is not the focus of either of these primary sources—it appears as a frame narrative in the former and as a memory of the main character, the wolf, in the latter—the fascinating routes of adaptation demonstrated in them make them invaluable sources for the present dissertation. Furthermore, as both of these primary sources might even be considered a comic book or video game novelization considering the media involved, they help complete the web of transmedial ties within the dissertation.

This large segment of the dissertation, which is just as lengthy and equally as crucial as the preceding theoretical chapter, thus includes textual, audio-visual, as well as interactive adaptations of "Little Red Riding Hood" and the fairy-tale tropes most closely related to it, charting all of the major media formats that are included and involved in the fairy tale's transmedial universe. The primary aim of this comprehensive analytical section is to illustrate the conclusions drawn in the previous theoretical section in relation to transmedial microcosms while focusing on the most diverse forms of intermedial connections. Besides the assessment of their transmedial involvement, however, in order to provide truly thorough analyses of each example, it also considers how the adaptations comply with and how they depart from the earliest known literary versions and which trends are most popular and most common in adapting "Little Red Riding Hood" for a contemporary (young) adult audience. In the process of achieving these dual aims, it is inevitable to rely on the methods and concepts of fairy-tale theories and transmedial narratology simultaneously.

3. 1. Text-to-text: intratextual adaptations from oral storytelling to printed texts

The earliest adaptations of fairy tales were purely verbal-textual, both in the cases of the stories that were circulated orally in their innumerable versions known and shared across continents and cultures throughout the ages—likely often supplemented and enhanced by the dramatic gestures of the storyteller and maybe sometimes even by props depicting the main characters or other recognizable elements of the stories—and the ones that were eventually written down by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm with their distinctive modifications that were consciously devised to satisfy and appeal to their respective target audiences' palates. The first section of the tripartite analytical part of the present dissertation focuses on more recent textual adaptations of "Little Red Riding Hood," which are loosely based on the aforementioned early literary adaptations and repurpose the recognizable bundle of tropes and narrative elements that make up the fairy tale, often in very creative ways.

Although fairy-tale adaptations do not only appear in prosaic form, lyric adaptations of fairy tales are an elusive genre that has received little consideration in the past. Their universal symbolism has inspired renowned poets of the past, including in such classics as "How Little Red Riding Hood Came to Be Eaten" published in *Grimm Tales Made Gay* (1902) by Guy Wetmore Carryl and Roald Dahl's "Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf" from *Revolting Rhymes* (1982). While Carryl's poem is clearly based on the Perraultian cautionary tale, lamenting over the death of a young girl who could have been a feminist activist carrying out "fights | for her feminine rights," Dahl's poem, almost a century later, presents a boastfully triumphant heroine who defeats the wolf. This shift in focus is noticeable in and representative of all "Little Red Riding Hood" adaptations across media in the twentieth century.

More recent poetic rewritings include: "Little Red Cap" (1999) by Carol Ann Duffy, "What I Want You to See is She when Not Here as in Now" (2004) by Rachel Zucker, "Red Riding Hood's Dilemma" (2009) by Órflaith Foyle, "Bluster" (2015) by Francis Vievee, and "Little Red" (2018) by Sally Rosen Kindred. A noteworthy attribute shared by all of these

poems is that they were all written by female authors, confirming that “full female agency within *Little Red Riding Hood* can only be achieved by a female author and the progression of societal perspectives” (2021, 11). The concept of fairy-tale poetry usually brings about ideas of clever and amusing retellings of classic stories for children but the abovementioned poems demonstrate distinctly the seriousness with which such widely recognized stories can be treated and made both enjoyable and meaningful for an adult audience as well.

The primary reason why poetic fairy-tale rewritings fall outside the scope of the present dissertation is that they almost never belong to any other adapted work, in other words, are not part of any transmedial microcosm. However, if we consider the lyrics of popular songs as inherently textual works of art, some might be of interest when discussing transmediality, such as Amanda Seyfried’s adaptation of “Little Red Riding Hood,” a 1966 song by the band Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs, which was marketed alongside the film *Little Red Riding Hood* (2011) in which the actress plays the lead character, Valerie.

The subsequent section discusses a single yet immensely prominent publication from the twentieth century, Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979), with a focus on the short story “The Company of Wolves”—one of the two recognizable “Little Red Riding Hood” rewritings and one of the three “wolf stories” of the volume—and its film adaptation directed by Neil Jordan in 1984, which mark a significant break from the way the fairy tale and its heroine have been adapted before, especially on screen.

3. 1. 1. Red Riding Hood breaks free: from Angela Carter's *The Company of Wolves* (1979) to Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves* (1984)

Both those eyes are all you will be able to glimpse of the forest
assassins as they cluster invisibly round your smell of meat as
you go through the wood unwisely late.
(Carter 2015a, 141)

The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories (1979), which established a new paradigm in the realm of contemporary fairy-tale rewritings, contains ten classic fairy tales reimagined in the spirit of feminist empowerment and magical realism, the last three of which—"The Werewolf," "The Company of Wolves," and "Wolf Alice"—can be clustered together as the Wolf-tales due to their evident focus on the trope of the werewolf and metamorphosis. The first two of these short stories are straightforward adaptations of "Little Red Riding Hood"—with the former of the two offering an interpretation in which "salvation comes through the dethronement of the old mother and the enthronement of the new" in the formulation of the character Little Red (Atashi & Bakhshandeh 2018, 305)—, also connected by the nameless Gothic pastoral village and its superstitious population they share as a setting, which provides a great foundation for the myths and legends about supernatural creatures recounted in each story and simultaneously allows for the opening up of critical dialogue with the long list of previous oral and literary versions of the tale. The film adaptation, *The Company of Wolves* (1984) directed by Neil Jordan and co-written by Carter and Jordan, which is itself a creative and paradigmatic reinterpretation of the short story, engages in this dialogue by framing and enclosing the narrative within the dream of the protagonist—the single most significant point of departure from the novella—, thus also maintaining the mythic and mystical milieu of fairy tales.

The Company of Wolves was released at a time when commercial werewolf films were very popular (Martin 2001, 20), which might have also contributed to its rise to iconicity. At the same time, it is rather thanks to Carter's imaginative source text that it has brought about a shift and a breaking point in the depictions of the main character and in the

adaptations of the tale (Zipes 2011, 135). In Carter's tale, "old and apparently forgotten themes come to the surface again" (Antonelli 2015, 114). The film thus offers a unique take on the fairy tale that "depends paradoxically on the incoherence of its artistic and ideological (i.e. gender) discourse" (Martin 2001, 22). In contrast with the inventive and experimental nature of the film adaptation, all three of Carter's Wolf-tales use simple, short sentences and plenty of dialog, thus following the format of classic fairy tales. What is more, the 75th-anniversary edition of the collection (2015) further enhances the experience of reading an age-old manuscript by making the book appear antiquated with its yellowed pages and deckle edge.

"The Company of Wolves" echoes the storyline of "The Story of Grandmother" (1965) as recorded by Paul Delarue. The first half of the short story is devoted to the introduction of the aforementioned scenery, primarily with the help of colors and sounds, and the character of the wolf, about whom it is ultimately revealed through the myths and legends circulating in the village—in line with the principle of the oral fairy-tale tradition—that he is, in fact, a werewolf. It is only after the reader is acquainted with the supernatural backdrop of the story that the female protagonist, a spoiled and naïve but brave girl who has just bled for the first time, is introduced. In the forest, she meets a hunter, with whom she bets in a kiss that he can reach her grandmother's house faster if he strays from the path. While the girl dawdles in order to let the man whom she perceives to be very handsome win, he has plenty of time to kill the grandmother and clean up all evidence. When the girl arrives at the cottage, however, instead of allowing herself to become a victim, she decides to let her desire for the man take over, and after giving him the kiss she owed him, she saves herself by lying in bed with him.

Besides the utilization of a werewolf as an antagonist and the reiteration of the meticulous conversation between the wolf and the girl about his appearance, "The Company of Wolves" also follows the fairy-tale tradition in that it participates actively in myth-making. Although the narrator remains hidden behind the objective third person throughout the story, the account of the tale as the mythology of a superstitious community makes it seem almost

as compelling as if it was narrated in the first person as was the norm in the oral tradition of fairy tales. The short story introduces several legends about the origins and the character of werewolves before finally describing Little Red Riding Hood's account with him, thus shifting the focus, as the title also suggests, towards the villain of the story and also attempting to provide authenticity for the narrative.

Revisionist adaptations often omit or alter some of the occurrences from their sources, but the characters and the most significant symbolic objects must remain present and recognizable. In the case of "The Company of Wolves," it appears to be especially important for the reader to be aware of the meaning of the symbolism of these objects. "Sometimes it also happens that old and apparently forgotten themes come to the surface again, maybe unnoticed" (Antonelly 2015, 114), as was the case with *The Company of Wolves* (1984). In "Little Red Riding Hood," the most important object is, of course, the red hood. While Bettelheim argues for the symbolic meaning of the color red to be a coexisting mixture of violence and sexuality (1977, 173), Zipes defies its significance altogether (1983b, 54). In the case of "The Company of Wolves," nevertheless, the symbolism of the girl's red shawl as puberty or sexual awakening is made explicit by its comparison to "the colour of her menses" (Carter 2015a, 150). In addition, in Carter's short story, colors are given explicit meaning when they are used to describe the eyes of the wolf:

At night, the eyes of wolves shine like candle flames, yellowish, reddish, but that is because the pupils of their eyes fatten on darkness and catch the light from your lantern to flash it back to you – red for danger; if a wolf's eyes reflect only moonlight, then they gleam a cold and unnatural green, a mineral, a piercing colour. (Carter 2015a, 141)

Carter describes the dangerousness of wolves in didactic terms reminiscent of Perrault, though her warnings are more sinister than Perrault's straightforward moral. Red thus symbolizes both sexuality, via the red shawl, and foreshadows imminent danger, in the wolf's yellow and green eyes (see figure 2). Eyes and looking are also highlighted in Zipes's analysis of the tale's accompanying illustrations, with a focus on Gustave Doré's suggestive

drawings (1983a, 88-94). Accordingly, the two most crucial points of the narrative have long been considered the instances when the gaze of the wolf and the girl meet: when they encounter one another in the forest for the first time, and when the girl lies in bed with the wolf.

“The main gimmick of any werewolf film is, of course, the metamorphosis from man to wolf” (Martin 2001, 20), and this is especially true in the case of Neil Jordan’s film adaptations of the short story also titled *The Company of Wolves* (1984; see figure 1). The gaze, along with the color red, is equally emphasized in the film version as its visuals are distinguished by the contrast between bland earth-toned colors and the recurrent glimmer of the wolf’s sparkling eyes and the red hood (see figures 1 and 2). Sex and violence repeatedly intermingle in Carter’s short story, for example when the reader is led to believe that the grandmother is also violated by the wolf when, after she admires his genitals, he attacks her naked in her bed. The bloody chamber of the title, although referring to a different story in the collection, thus gains meaning and relevance as the grandmother’s cottage as well.

Far from being merely an invigorating read and Angela Carter’s best-known work, however, *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* also marks a threshold in the long history of “Little Red Riding Hood” adaptations. “The Company of Wolves” displays a pioneering portrayal of the main character (Zipes 2011, 134). Although the girl carries a knife with her in the woods, she does not know what to do with it at the time and even surrenders it to the hunter. In the end, however, “Red Riding Hood navigates through this world and develops agency” (Gilbert 2015, 8) by choosing to use her feminine sexuality as her weapon instead of the phallic knife:

The girl burst out laughing; she knew she was nobody’s meat. She laughed at him full in the face, she ripped off his shirt for him and flung it into the fire, in the fiery wake of her own discarded clothing. (Carter 2015a, 151)

The girl decides to seduce the wolf, and instead of allowing herself to be eaten, she offers herself to him as flesh. Carter frees the protagonist from the “gendered and constricting

chamber” she had been cast into by the earliest literary versions (Bacchilega 1997, 58), and revives and reinvents the legacy of the oral version by turning Little Red Riding Hood into a generally free and sexually liberated agent and simultaneously taking away her stigma as a victim. This tendency is present and easily noticeable in more recent adaptations of the tale as well, including in the subsequently analyzed *Red Riding Hood* (2011) and *Once Upon a Time* (2011-2018).

3. 2. Back to the text: Novelizations and the commodification of fairy tales

Films are one of the most popular and widely appreciated genres of adaptation, closely connected to what can probably be considered both the least popular and least respected one: novelizations. The beginning of the twenty-first century has seen a noticeable surge in filmic fairy-tale adaptations for (young) adults—which seems to have dwindled and been replaced with comics-inspired superhero films and the growing Marvel universe more recently—, accompanied by numerous marketable tie-in products, including novelizations. This flood of rewritings has in turn inspired a rise in scholarly publications in the field of fairy-tale studies discussing the history of and present trends in transposing fairy tales onto the silver screen. The following brief introduction and the discussion of the novelizations in the upcoming subchapters rely in parts on the research done for a paper published in *Americana E-Journal of American Studies in Hungary* (Bálint 2014).

The genre of novelization is demonstrated through the examination and comparison of a fairy-tale film and a television series—*Red Riding Hood* (dir. Catherine Hardwicke, Warner Bros. Entertainment, 2011) and *Once Upon a Time* (created by Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz, American Broadcasting Company, 2011-2018)—, along with their novelizations in printed book form—*Red Riding Hood* (2011) by Sarah Blakley-Cartwright and *Red's Untold Tale* (2015) by Wendy Toliver—, as well as the fairy tales that served as their sources in their oldest written versions—by Perrault, the Grimms, and Delarue. Although both films, and subsequently their novelizations as well, have been influenced by other adaptations, both of these narratives can be traced back to the early literary versions, especially since their imageries are evocative of a world associated with fairy tales, set in a bare medieval milieu.

Nevertheless, these live-action fairy-tale films demonstrate that Disney's spell can be broken. The following analyses of the classical fairy tales' adaptations into film and commercial junior novelization rely on notions of narratology regarding time management, focalization, and visual and audial composition—aspects that have not played significant roles in previous analyses of novelizations. In addition, developmental and intertextual

aspects are also considered in order to demonstrate the different potentials of the media involved in terms of narration and storytelling and to estimate the extent to which generic viewer expectations and cultural translation are part of the process of these transmedial adaptations. In line with the conceptual framework of the present dissertation, instead of providing case studies that merely describe the two media involved (Murray 2008, 4), the focus is on their interaction, as well as their contextualization and connection to previous conceptualizations of the same narratives within their respective transmedial microcosms.

3. 2. 1. Film to novel: Catherine Hardwicke's *Red Riding Hood* (2011) and Sarah Blakley-Cartwright's *Red Riding Hood* (2011)

The Wolf came closer. Valerie studied those gorgeous yellow eyes.
‘What...big...eyes...you...have...’ she said.
‘The better to see you with, my dear.’
(Blakley-Cartwright 2011, 220)

Filmic fairy-tale adaptations often involve genre mixing (Bacchilega 2013, 28), which frequently return them to the darker roots of folklore and allow for “the resurrection of the sexual, violent, and supernatural elements of folktale that existed in oral tradition but were censored for children’s literature” (Greenhill & Matrix 2010, 9). According to Pauline Greenhill and Sidney Eve Matrix, women directors tend to provide actively feminist readings in their cinematic fairy tales (2010, 4), Perrault’s message of victim blaming remains prevalent (Zipes 2006, 39), and this seems to be the case for *Red Riding Hood* (dir. Catherine Hardwicke, Warner Bros. Entertainment, 2011) and its novelization of the same title written by Sarah Blakley-Cartwright, up until their complex and secreted ends.

The mystery of this thriller drama is based on the identity of the werewolf, which suggests a return to the medieval “legend” mentioned on the cover of the novel, while the dramatic conflicts are caused by two love triangles centering around Valerie—a. k. a. Red Riding Hood—and around her mother, Suzette. The narrative, whose noticeable omission in the title already suggests that it was not created for little children, is furthermore characterized by the flexibility of morals and the blurring between heroes and villains, which are common denominators of contemporary fairy-tale films.

The commercial junior novelization that accompanies the film was created within the American, more particularly within the Hollywood, context, and is characterized by film-related peritextual elements, a simplified literary style, conciseness, large typefaces, and spacious and decorative chapter pages (Mahlknecht 2012, 146). The cover of *Red Riding Hood* makes its connection to the film obvious through its close resemblance to the film’s poster, the listing of the script’s and the novel’s writers side by side, and the emphasis on the

movie's billing block on the back cover. In addition, the unmissable bright red sticker boasting "Now a major motion picture from the director of *Twilight*" not only links the book conclusively to the film but also identifies the target audience of the novel and the film in young adolescents attracted to supernatural love stories (see figures 3 and 4). Interestingly enough, the script of *Red Riding Hood* available on the website of *The Internet Movie Script Database* (Johnson 2009), a mere "pre-transcript" (Jahn 2021a, 2), contains many more references to older versions of Little Red Riding Hood tales than either the film or the book. As Glaude Benoît explains in his book on the novelization of comics,

Adaptation is not part of a linear continuity but rather of a constellation of products and works that extend a fictional universe across media and that are generated and organized by multiple actors. This is obvious in the case of the tie-ins that accompany the release of a Hollywood film. (2023, 6)

Based on Gérard Genette's classification of transtextual modes, *Red Riding Hood* still falls under the category of "intertextuality," for it offers several quotations from and allusions to the literary fairy tale while remaining a novel variation on its hypotext (Leitch 2012, ¶ 24). The brief preface to the novelization written by the director, Catherine Hardwicke, contextualizes the birth of this tie-in product by describing the early stages of the film's development, in which she claims that she asked an old friend to write the novel, for she felt that "the characters and their backstories were too complex to fit into the film" (Blakley-Cartwright, no page number). The "backstories" mentioned by Hardwicke are described in the novelization's first chapter, filling a quarter of the book's length. This choice is in accordance with Dudley Andrew's theory that, as opposed to films, literary fictions develop from signification and inner motivation towards external facts and visibility (Braudy & Cohen 2009, 376). The special bond between the book and the novel was further strengthened by the inclusion of the deleted scenes that were still shot and included in the DVD into the novel's narrative, and by the online publication of the last chapter of the book only after the movie's premiere so as to avoid spoiling the movie's ending. This tactic, while keeping up the

suspense in the narrative, also confirmed the fundamentally commercial function of the novel once and for all.

Both *Red Riding Hood* and *Red's Untold Tale* present coming-of-age stories about 16-year-old girls complete with utterances of clichéd and stereotypical adolescent experiences, such as “surrounded by everyone she knew, Valerie felt completely alone” (Blakley-Cartwright 2011, 182), but also of Red’s desire to break out of her age-old role as victim: “[Valerie] couldn’t help bristling at this division of the sexes. Her fingers itched to hold a weapon, too” (2011, 121). The former short novel, however, is also a thrilling story of a supernatural mystery, in which, besides the ambiguity surrounding the identity of the werewolf and the secret of the mother’s adulterous love affair, a love triangle between Valerie, a.k.a. Little Red Riding Hood, Peter, a woodcutter, and Henry, the blacksmith’s son, has also been added to the dramatic conflicts of the narrative. Although the novel uses third-person narration, it is far from neutral: it presents either Valerie’s or Peter’s point of view, slightly changing the narrative style each time. The story is set in a Gothic village similar to that of Carter’s story. The purpose of using far-away medieval settings is to grant authenticity to the narratives, making them comparable to the classic fairy tales originally spread by word of mouth.

The book-object itself also looks somewhat like a children’s book: it uses a large font that makes reading easier and has pages of illustrative patterns separating each chapter. The story starts with the phrase “Once upon a time, there was a Girl, and there was a Wolf...” spread out over three pages, with Girl written on white and Wolf on black background, demonstrating a clear opposition between good and bad. What is more, it is made evident that the novel is to be a mere accompanying product of the film. Its paratextual denotations, such as the cover image portraying Valerie in the dark and eerie forest from the film and the red tag that connects it to the film’s director and her previous young-adult film, *Twilight* (2008), not only tie the text to the movie but also set a strict hierarchy between them. This hierarchy is further strengthened by the fact that the printed text, published earlier in 2011, ends with a

cliffhanger, and the ending, which reveals all secrets, is only available in a “Bonus chapter” online that was released after the film’s premiere.

In comparison with the film, the book provides more detailed character descriptions and a long introductory section on Valerie’s childhood. The film version of *Red Riding Hood* begins with the gruesome murder of Valerie’s sister evidently committed by a wolf, which sends the village into a wolf-hunting frenzy. The reader/viewer is kept guessing the identity of the wolf throughout the story, and her task is complicated by utterances like Peter’s “I’ve been hungry for you for so long” (2011: 196) or Valerie’s wary scrutiny of the eyes of several characters. Besides frequent references to the literary tales, there are allusions to other versions as well, such as the way Valerie uncovers the werewolf’s identity—by cutting off his paw, which subsequently turns into a human hand—, an obvious homage to Carter’s “The Company of Wolves.”

Both the book and the film are presented in chronological narrative order except for the completing analepsis at the end, “the retrospective sections that fill in, after the event, an earlier gap in the narrative” (Genette 1983, 51), recapping the story from the werewolf’s perspective. It is following this revelation that the most important difference between the film and the novel occurs: After realizing that Valerie’s father is the wolf, in the former, Peter kills him without hesitation, but in the novel, Valerie takes matters into her own hands. Thus, *Red Riding Hood* fits well among the modern adaptations that portray an increasingly self-sufficient main character. What is more, thanks to the open and alternative endings provided on the DVD, the popular tropes of merging Red with the wolf—provided that she turns into a werewolf—or having her start a family with the wolf—in case Peter turns into a werewolf—are both made possible at the same time.

In films, written texts, as well as in the process of adaptation between the two, the narrative occupies a key role as “the logic around which a story gets organized” (Cristian & Dragon 2008, 21). Accordingly, it is narratology, the field of study that “examines the ways that narrative structures our perception of both cultural artifacts and the world around us” (Felluga “General Introduction to Narratology” 2011, ¶ 1) that can provide the broadest

background to their comparative study. Many theories of narration rely on the notion of time. Vladimir Propp maintains that the basis of any narrative is temporal sequencing (Stam et. al. 2005, 81), more particularly, double time structuring, which makes it possible for any narrative to be translated into any other medium: the story-time or *histoire* entails the time sequences within the narrative, and the discourse-time is the length of time required for their presentation, which need not follow a chronological order (Genette 1983, 33). Even though this is not particularly relevant in the case of the brief junior novelizations, the notion of discourse-time points to an essential difference between films and novels.

On a formal level, narratives can be divided into *fabula* and *syuzhet*, translated as story and plot, the former of which is a chronologically ordered imaginary construct, and the latter is its presentation. These are linked through narrative logic, time, and space (Bordwell 1985, 49-51), of which causality is the most important organizing principle (1985, 157). The plot or discourse serves to elaborate on the story and includes stylistic features in literature and manipulations of the screen in film (Felluga “Terms Used by Narratology and Film Theory” 2011, ¶ 6). The verbal, descriptive voice-overs resembling written texts can add a sense of literary assertion to the film narrative, while unadulterated block descriptions, and their film equivalents, cinematography can stop the story-time while continuing the discourse-time (Chatman 1992, 405-408), thus making the viewer aware of the temporality of the narrative (Verstraten 2009, 14).

In the case of *Red Riding Hood*, both the novel and the film follow a mainly chronological narrative order, with an illustrative case of anachrony, as the father retrospectively explains how he had been hiding his monstrous Wolf identity (Genette 1983, 48). The past, including the story of Suzette’s affair as well, thus functions as a subfabula (Verstraten 2009, 32). *Red Riding Hood* operates by what Roland Barthes calls the hermeneutic code (Felluga “Modules on Barthes: On the Five Codes” 2011, ¶ 2), and what Genette terms “completing analepsis” (1983, 51), which moves the story forward by withholding information that is filled in by the narrator towards the end. *Red Riding Hood* thus also fits the requirements of what David Bordwell calls investigative narrative mode

(1985, 150). In sum, the time analysis of this narrative can be defined on the basis of three principles (Jahn 2021b, 63): completive anachrony (order), mostly isochronous presentation (duration), and singular retelling (frequency).

There can be no narrative without a narrator (Verstraten 2009, 12), as it is the narrator who endows the narrative with mood and point-of-view (Genette 1983, 162), always in a specific expressive style. While literary narrators only communicate in words, cinematic narrators use both images and sounds (Verstraten 2009, 47). Thus, in films, the narrator “speaks,” while the focalizer “sees” (Cristian & Dragon 2010, 22). According to Seymour Chatman’s concept of “interest point of view,” the camera does not simply identify with the character but adopts his or her emotional perspective (1992, 412-13). Zero focalization is the most common type. According to Chatman, cameras must always have a point of view, unlike solely verbal narratives, which may be all-perceiving and indifferent (1992, 412). Conversely, while the film *Red Riding Hood* is only narrated by Valerie at the beginning and the end, so as to frame the story, its novelistic counterpart is the one that is narrated from either Valerie’s or Peter’s perspective, always as third-person narration. Although a few times Valerie is looked at from a strange, blurred perspective in the film marked by out-of-focus and masking effects that suggest the monstrous Wolf’s presence—primary internal ocularization (François Jost in Stam & Raengo, 76)—, the film usually uses a neutral camera eye viewpoint. The focalizer limits what we can see, and even if there are no point-of-view shots, it is obvious that we perceive the world through Valerie’s eyes and thoughts as a means to increase dramatic tension, and also because stories of initiation usually require first-person narration (Jahn 2021b, 52). The narrative of *Red Riding Hood* uses heterodiegetic limited omniscient third-person narration (Felluga, “Terms Used by Narratology and Film Theory” 2011, ¶ 32), developing from overt homodiegetic narrations into an objective, covert perspective (Jahn 2021b, 3).

Cinema is expository: it implicitly reveals, not describes, and illustrates its message through cinematography (Verstraten 2009, 53-56). “It has often been said that big Hollywood productions sacrifice consistent plotlines in favour of spectacle” (Verstraten 2009, 3), which

applies to the case of *Red Riding Hood*, best exemplified in the vague dream sequences forming the conclusion of the film. Catherine Hardwicke's stunning visual innuendoes demonstrate that a film's expressive power lies in the depiction of certain moods and atmospheres. These landscapes stop the story-time and hinder the narrative, as they pose what Peter Verstraten calls "temps morts" (2009, 18). Such aerial long shots, among others, prove that "no film is unproblematically narrative in its entirety" (2009, 24). These cinematographic narratives, however, are difficult to translate into verbal form, for as opposed to the films' overspecification of visible details, novels rather specify significant things through thought (Leitch 2003, 160). Novels thus focus on the mental beings of characters, and this is why novelizations can translate and emphasize cultural notions by shifting the focus to the representation of the eternal cultural notions of love, freedom, and justice, conveyed through the choices and thoughts of the main characters.

3. 2. 2. TV show to novel: Adam Horowitz's and Edward Kitsis's *Once Upon a Time* (2011-2018) and Wendy Toliver's *Red's Untold Tale* (2015)

As I sat on the foot of my bed in my nightgown, brushing the tangles and a few small leaves out of my hair, I examined my reflection in the looking glass. My cheeks and lips had taken on a lovely shade of pink. Despite the tears I'd cried—or maybe because of them—my eyes were the brightest green. And, to answer my own question, I smiled at the glowing girl in my mirror and said, 'Yes, you most definitely look different.'
(Toliver 2015, 382)

Unlike "The Company of Wolves," the plots of *Red Riding Hood* (2011) and *Red's Untold Tale* (2015) contain rather superficial tales of love as they were self-evidently written to make commercial profit and target a teenage audience with specific readerly expectations. Both of these short novels are tie-in products related to a film and a television show, respectively, and both of them are meant to supplement and help promote, popularize, and sell the multimedia products they accompany. While *Red's Untold Tale*, as the title already suggests, presents an extension of the original story in the form of a prequel about one of the series' characters, *Red Riding Hood*, published with a title identical to that of the film's, follows its source's—to be more exact, its source's source's, meaning the shooting script's—storyline rather closely. Since the easiest "way of diminishing prejudices against the genre of novelization [...] lies in increasing the distance between the book and the film it adapts" (Mahlknecht 2012, 151), for example, by giving it a different title or a cover design not associable with the film (2012, 160), *Red's Untold Tale* appears to yearn for more artistic fulfillment. Unsurprisingly, the ideal scenario that produces truly literary novelizations occurs when the writer has time and freedom to explore and extend the narrative, and when the writer and the director maintain a co-operative relationship during the projects. Since the novel was published four years after the beginning of the series, it seems that the author, Wendy Toliver, had much more time to construct and write this novelization than, for example, *Red Riding Hood*, which was published to coincide with the release of the film it was based on. For the same reason, the television series *Once Upon a Time* and *Red's Untold Tale* give space for the exploration of

what Jan Baetens deems the biggest challenge of novelization studies, “the mutual influence of text and context” (2018, 168). Nevertheless, all such retelling of an audio-visual narrative in textual form is called novelization, which also already carries within it the stigma of being a commercial tie-in and, consequently, has an economic duty to fulfill. As such, it has a poor reputation and is condemned even by adaptation studies scholars (Hutcheon 2012, 38-39), despite the possibilities it holds for providing a deeper understanding of the connection between film and literature, as well as about the processes of the production and reception of adaptations.

Similarly to other novelizations, *Red's Untold Tale* is also meant to fill in plot holes not explored in the series. This time, however, instead of being already familiar the narrative itself, the reader only knows what will happen in the future, when Ruby/Red grows up. The series includes very little detail about the past of this character, and it is curious why the series' creators even chose Ruby, a supporting character, to be the second one to receive a novelized prequel after the Evil Queen, the main villain, especially since she rarely appeared in the show after the second season. It is possible that the fact that Ruby's story is so unique in that it differs immensely from the tale we know from Perrault and the Brothers Grimm appears to have made it necessary to reintroduce it in the form of a novel. As a result of the serial and malleable nature of the genre of television series, although her character eventually reentered the storyworld of the series, she developed in a markedly different direction to what the novel had indicated.

The premise of the series is that the most renowned Disneyfied storybook characters are transferred to a contemporary New England town called Storybrook by the Evil Queen's curse. The entirety of the novel, however, takes place in the world of the fairy tales, and spans a mere two weeks of narrative time. It presents the typical story of a confused teenage girl trying to fit in and understand her first sensation of love for a boy, once again, called Peter. The names in the narrative are telling: Peter's name, borrowed from Sergei Prokofiev's symphonic fairy tale titled “Peter and the Wolf,” suggests that he is capable of defeating a wolf; while the fact that the female protagonist is simply called Red—Ruby in the series—,

makes her seem more like an everygirl, and presents the narrative more like a legend, similarly to the unnamed characters in “The Company of Wolves.” The story takes place in the Enchanted Forest when Red is 16 years old and covers one week spanning the course of a Wolfstime, a monthly occurrence around full moon when wolves roam the village at night, which is similar to the dreaded wolves’ night in *Red Riding Hood*. Red lives with her grandmother, Widow Lucas, who is strict and overprotective, doing her best to raise Red to be modest, ladylike, and in accordance with the moral expectations women were faced with at the time. The novel includes two focal conflicts: one regarding Widow Lucas’s money problems, and the other regarding the protection of the village’s young by postponing the Forget-Me-Not ball to a date after Wolfstime has passed. Although both problems are solved in the course of the novel, the solutions come so easily and suddenly that the reader is unlikely to experience any glimpses of catharsis.

The book is designed so that it would appeal to its target audience with a black book jacket and black edges. On the cover, above the title, one can spot the show’s logo in twice as big a font size as the title itself, while at the bottom it even says “Based on the television series created by Edward Kitsis and Adam Horowitz” supplemented by the ABC Television logo (see figure 6). Throughout the narrative, however, there is little reference to the series, other than the phrase “Magic always comes with a price” (2015, 103). Like *Red Riding Hood*, the *Once Upon a Time* tie-in also uses a large font size on the pages and is illustrated with a repetitive brocade pattern, echoing the design of Red’s riding hood (see and compare figures 5 and 6). In addition, the format of the book is square, which is more typical of a children’s book than of a serious literary work. The genre of the book is a very personal diary, which has brief sections recounting Red’s Wolfsnight dreams set in italics, similarly to the way Valerie’s conversations with the wolf were set in italics in *Red Riding Hood*. What is more, *Red’s Untold Tale* is also full of analepses, jumping back and forth in time, as Red is remembering people and events that happened in her childhood or when she was 13 years old.

On her 13th birthday, Red's grandmother gifted her the iconic hood that had been enchanted to protect her from wolves with the words "you're practically a woman" (2015, 49), meaning that a girl who has experienced her first menstruation necessarily needs to be protected from wolves. However, it is revealed in the series that the true purpose of the hood is to protect others from her, for she is the one who involuntarily turns into a werewolf when there is a full moon.

I turned just a hair and spotted a pair of huge amber-colored eyes. They had to belong to a wolf, and suddenly, my blood ran cold. The eyes gleamed at me from the hollow between a towering spruce and a tangle of scrubs. Though I didn't dare move a muscle, I closed my eyes and focused on my red riding hood. It will protect me always, I recited in my mind. Granny promised it would. (Toliver 2015, 116-117)

Red, of course, received her nickname because of the color of the hood, but not before she was teased for being a "lady in red" (2015, 155), denoted more explicitly as a "harlot's robe" in Blakley-Cartwright's novel (2011, 290). Another important object by which we can recognize her is the basket Red carries with her as she helps her grandmother keep up a baking business, which might be a reference to the animated film *Hoodwinked!* (2005). There are numerous references to other classic tales too, for example when Peter "whistled while he worked" (2015: 64) or when Red refused to believe in the reality of the tales her grandmother had read for her as a child—despite being part of one herself. Peter's "grin" and his beautiful dark eyes are also often mentioned, as is Red's grandmother's perfect hearing, so that the reader might assume that one of them is the wolf. Regarding the identity of the werewolf, however, there is no solution offered within the novel. When Red finally meets the wolf face to face she is mesmerized by its eyes, reproducing and enhancing the moment when the girl and the wolf meet in the forest for the first time in earlier versions of the text: "For the first time, the wolf's amber eyes met mine. It was as if they were lit from inside by torches. Spellbound, I couldn't look away" (2015, 391).

The novel ends with a cliffhanger, as the celebration of Red's murdering the wolf is interrupted by the sound of a lone wolf's howling coming from the deep dark forest, thus

taking away her brief triumph in terms of self-reliance. In addition, there are numerous questions left unanswered, such as the mystery surrounding the deaths of most of Red's family members, the scar on her grandmother's arm, or the true purpose of Red's hood and the identity of the werewolf itself. In the case of *Red's Untold Tale*, there is a more urgent need for the reader to be familiar with the source text than it had been in the cases of "The Company of Wolves" and *Red Riding Hood*. What the novel achieves is introduce a character that was set aside in the series in more detail, but the liberation of the renowned fairy-tale character only occurs later on screen, in the fifth season, when the series steps out of the boundaries of heteronormativity and couples Ruby—by now designated as a guest star—with Dorothy from Frank L. Baum's American fairy tale, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900). Arguably, right from the beginning, we could employ a "queer reading of Red's lycanthropy" (Warman 2016), but primarily based on the TV show's interpretation of it, not the book's.

"The Company of Wolves," *Red Riding Hood*, as well as *Red's Untold Tale* focus on the mental processes of the characters, which were not present in the oral tale, thus shifting the focus from the gruesome events to the representation of the cultural notions of female independence or first love. There are numerous similarities between the way the tales are adapted and the original story elements are altered in the short story and the two novels. The flat characters of the original fairy tales are always rounded out and given more of a background story, the roles of the original main characters are mixed up or blended, and, at least in the cases of the two longer texts, analepsis is used extensively to keep the reader entertained. It appears that the character of Red really is generally more self-sufficient and independent, and the wolf's threat is downplayed by turning him either a part of Red herself or into Red's love interest.

Since all of these adapted texts are highly intertextual, it is not enough to have previous knowledge of the tale, but a familiarity with the source texts and with the symbolic meaning behind the iconic elements of the tale can enhance one's interpretation. It is, of course, not necessary to watch the films or the series as well, nor is it important in what order one reads and watches the narrative, but it certainly improves one's understanding, especially

in the case of *Red's Untold Tale*, which is a prequel telling a story not included in the source text. In this sense, the reader must be active, not just during the reading process but in doing some background research as well, which is a significant component of being involved in a transmedial microcosm.

3. 3. Text-on-screen: From narrative play to video games

New media products are crucial elements of transmedial universes and are increasingly recurrent in transmedial microcosms. They have been theorized and approached by scholars from markedly different perspectives. Lev Manovich points to digitalization as the most crucial element of new media products (2002, 35), while J. David Bolter and Richard A. Grusin emphasize the importance of the “twin logic” of hypermediacy and immediacy (2000, 5). For Henry Jenkins, the most crucial element is the active participation of the consumers (2006, 3). New media are a collection of interactive storytelling techniques that possess numerous possibilities for the unfolding of narratives. For the purpose of the present dissertation, the most important aspects of new media to be explored are the variability of the various elements within the story and focalization, or rather the ways the reader/viewer/player is addressed and is invited to interact with the product.

The array of adaptations can be seen as part of what Jenkins calls transmedia storytelling, in which a story “unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole” (2006, 95-96). The numerous adaptations of Red Riding Hood undoubtedly not only expand on the stories but also participate in “the art of world-making” (Jenkins 2006, 21). Either due to the malleability of its ending or maybe because of its seemingly simple and often didactically presented narrative format, the tale is acknowledged as one of the most popular and most frequently and diversely adapted of all classic literary fairy tales (Beckett 2002, 6), which is readily recognized by certain narrative elements, such as the setting of a forest with a house in its middle, the character of a sinister wolf, or the object of a red coat. Below, I am going to exemplify the way the narrative of an e-book can integrate the reader through the examples of four adaptations of “Little Red Riding Hood.”

The e-books included here all follow the three basic characteristics of new media outlined by Lev Manovich: they are numerically represented (2002, 49), modular (2002, 51), and automated (2002, 53). However, not all of them operate with the same level of variability

(2002, 57) and transcoding (2002, 63), which is what allows their location on a continuum ranging from digitalized texts to gamified e-books. Starting from plain e-texts—which recreate the visuality of a printed book on-screen, most usually in PDF or epub formats, and offer no interaction beyond the access to note-taking and in-built dictionaries—, through new media products that provide texts with the inclusion of moving or even interactive illustrations, we eventually reach new media products that require the active and directed participation of the reader. In the list of e-books that follows, there is ample focus on the paratextual elements, primarily the illustrations.

There are many types of e-books and storybook applications. The first category delineated here is the enhanced e-book, also known as interactive e-book, smart e-book, or iBook, and they are an inherently hybrid though not particularly variable type of e-book. They usually contain both text and image, but offer very limited interaction, which is usually also optional. The reader can thus interact with the pages, making them akin to pop-up books and movable books. They thus form a bridge between paper-based pop-up books and computer games, however, they are limited to a single path of linearity and usually only have one possible ending. They also retain the page-turning experience of a book, but they usually do not allow a reader to turn more than one pages at once, and in that sense, are actually even more limiting than printed books. Each page provides a mixture of static and dynamic elements.

Most examples of enhanced e-books are digitalized versions of classic fairy tales intended for children, in which the illustrations are movable. The pages of these e-books look a lot like print books, often with added characteristics of an old and classic fairy-tale book, such as yellowed pages and folded corners. They usually involve an unidentified omniscient third-person narrator, if they involve any at all, and are characterized by objective external focalization. Enhanced e-books always include the text of the fairy tale as well, usually with the option of read-aloud narration, virtually making the parent or tutor unnecessary and replaceable. The child can listen to the story and while doing so, or after the page is finished she can interact with the objects on the screen, move the objects around or hear the

represented characters repeat their lines in a dialogue. It is similar to voice-over narration in films, for the reader can observe the illustrations and interact with them. They are multimedial in the sense that they involve visual and audial aspects. These have little suspense, because everyone knows the story, but there are a few twists or turns that make them stand out. They apply a seemingly objective stance, and may only display some subjective views via the illustrations.

“Little Red Riding Hood” (2014) by Fairytale Studios is a clear-cut example of this category. The first choice of the reader is to decide if she wants to hear the story narrated or read it by herself. Then, on each page, there are some objects to interact with: one can sway Red’s basket, make birds sing, or have Little Red and the wolf recite their famous dialogue. The pages follow a linear narrative with no possibility to play with the order. Most of the time, interacting with the objects is optional, but in the case of the renowned dialogue between the wolf and Little Red, the reader must touch the faces of each in the correct order in order to be able to turn the page.

The second category is the e-book application, which offer more interaction for the reader in the forms of games. They may or may not include the text of the tale, but if they do, it will be in a condensed manner, much like in pop-up books. The applications use sound, movement, and all kinds of special features besides the text itself. First and foremost, the format is different from enhanced e-books, but they also have a different use and a different function. They, just like enhanced e-books, are device-specific, more so than regular e-books or the following HTML e-books.

“Lil’ Red – An Interactive Story” (2013) by Brian Main is a pictorial narrative that consists only of minimalist pictures of red, black, and white, without the option of a text being presented visually or audially. According to Marie-Laure Ryan, only stories that are already known can be narrated this way (Ryan 2014, 272). It is advertised as an educational aid that should be narrated by a child to develop their literacy and verbal skills for children who are 2 years old or older. As such, the application’s emphasis is on the visuals, most

importantly, the colors included. In terms of interaction, the application offers a temporary return to traditional oral folktales, which were also based on communication and communal.

Another intriguing example of an e-book application is “American McGee Presents Akaneiro” (2010) by Spicy Horse. It was obviously created for an older audience, as is more common in the cases of e-book application. The title associates the application with the creator’s other famous, more complex platform game, *American McGee’s Alice* (2000), and also includes gory imagery and an eerie narrative. In fact, the e-book was created as a demo and a tie-in for *Akaneiro: Demon Hunters* (2013). The story is presented in several chapters, with each ending with an interactive game. The tasks include food collection and the attack of the wolf, and must be completed in order to reach the next page. In this sense, they resemble computer games, where checkpoints must be reached in order to advance. Unfortunately, the user still has no control over the linearity and order of the narrative, nor can they reach different endings.

Finally, the last category to be explored here is the web-based e-book. In these cases, the book is embedded in an HTML webpage or a Flash animation, and is accessible only through one’s web browser online, with active internet access. These are types of internet-based digital narratives, in which the user may be given more freedom than in the previous two cases. HTML e-books, which include webcomics and usually rely on scrolling—an example of which is briefly discussed in the upcoming subchapter—, while Flash-based e-books are usually hypertextual.

An example of a Flash piece is “RedRidingHood” (2001) created by an artist and a scholar, Donna Leishman, which was published online on a website called *I Love E-Poetry* within a digital volume titled *The Electronic Literature Collection*. There are a few digressions during the story that the reader may choose to take or not to take, but other than that the story is as linear as in the other cases, and does not involve different possible endings.

It may seem that in a sense, enhanced e-books are more limiting than actual print books, but in others, they are more interactive, because they always produce sound and

always have something on the screen that a child or an adult can interact with. If one is reading an e-book to a child, she may be simply distracted by the movable elements, but for a young adult, they are definite additions to the story. The interactive games keep the reader active and give the reader the feeling of being a narrator. In the e-books without a narrator, the reader is also required to narrate the story if she wants to participate in it at all.

3. 3. 1. Interactive comics: Emily Carroll's *Through the Woods* (2014) and their web adaptations

[It] came from the woods (most strange things do).
(Carroll 2014, 63)

Besides being age-old representations of the archetype, the forests of fairy tales are also one of the most influential, as they are among the first narrative portrayals of forests that many people—in the Western hemisphere, at least—encounter in their lives as children. The dark or enchanted forest is a constant element of fairy tales, crossing which always holds some kind of reward for the hero. From stories like “Little Red Cap” and “Little Snow White”—at least in the most widely renowned interpretations of the Brothers Grimm (Zipes 2014, 85-88)—, children quickly learn that as scary as the dense and seemingly impenetrable woods might be, the hidden adversities and adversaries also hold within them the promise of proving and improving oneself—if only one can defeat them. Happiness awaits those who either fight or persevere. While the definition of a happy ending is subjective even in fairy tales—Snow White enters the forest as a child and comes out in possession of the skills of a dutiful housewife and the promise of marriage to a prince, while Little Red Riding Hood gains the power and knowledge to take care of unwanted suitors with the help of her grandmother—, forests in fairy tales usually turn out to be the sites of initiation rituals that are essential to one's growth and evolution. The following discussion contains parts of a paper published in the journal *Detinjstvo* (Bálint 2022).

Through the example of the enticing transmedial microcosm of Emily Carroll's fairy-tale rewritings and the centrality of the folkloric woods in it, this subsection explores the relationship between a printed comics collection—a highly acclaimed contemporary graphic novel contains a collection of five macabre gothic narratives, which take place in the same unidentified, limitless, dynamic, dystopic, and often hypertextual arboreal setting through the span of several centuries—and the two web-comics associated with it—which are either faithful adaptations or prequels of the ones in the graphic short story collection. Although

neither of the web-comics includes any direct reference to the story of “Little Red Riding Hood,” Little Red’s frightening journey through the forest takes a central role in the book as it not only introduces the setting and thus the core concept of the book announced in the title *Through the Woods*, the enchanted yet frightening fairy-tale forest but also provides a discernible frame for the short narratives included in the collection, making these printed and digital works of art worthy of being included in the present dissertation.

Although it is inarguable that the supernatural creatures protecting the magical forests against the evils of humanity play significant roles in their narratives (Łaszkiewicz 2017, 48), the powers of nature itself—such as getting lost in the maze-like magical forest—also often serve as the villainous obstacles of fairy tales (Boldizsár 2010, 186). These, however, are significantly harder to triumph over than a dragon or a witch with known points of weakness. Jack Zipes refers to this unfathomable and unconquerable quality of the forest when he states:

Inevitably [the heroes] find their way into the forest. It is there that they lose and find themselves. It is there that they gain a sense of what is to be done. The forest is always large, immense, great, and mysterious. No one ever gains power over the forest but the forest possesses power to change lives and alter destinies. In many ways it is the supreme authority on earth and often the great provider. (1987, 66)

One might say that the hero does not stand a chance against such evil, and this is suitably demonstrated in Emily Carroll’s collection of graphic narratives titled *Through the Woods* (2014), which can unmistakably be viewed as a contemporary adaptation of some of the most renowned fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm.

The title of Carroll’s anthology does not only foreshadow the importance of the role of the arboreal setting but also explicitly places itself within the fairy-tale tradition and invites readers on an expectedly life-changing journey through the woods. *Through the Woods* thus contradicts the assumption that “the forest in which the hero loses his way is always just named, never described” (Messerli 2005, 278) by focusing on the setting, which is exactly such a forest brimming with evil supernatural inhabitants. It appears that the uncertainty and fragmentation of both space and self that are characteristic of postmodern fairy-tale

rewritings apparent in both the narrative and visual elements of Emily Carroll's adaptation distinguish it from other adaptations as well as from its source texts.

Folk- and fairy tales are deeply meaningful narratives of far-reaching significance. Having evolved through centuries by being reinterpreted again and again by various authors, they retain symbolic connotations that continue to be decipherable and relevant to contemporary readers even today while also maintaining their familiarity as classic fairy tales. It is through the inclusion of textual features such as intertextuality and the building of storyworlds that comics, such as the one discussed in this paper, become unarguably relevant to literary theories (Kukkonen 2013, 14). At the same time, updating the text is an inherent feature of fairy-tale adaptations. The purpose of fairy-tale "retellings have always been an attempt to rejuvenate the tale for a contemporary audience" (Beckett 2008: xvi), and this is the ultimate goal of young adult fairy-tale adaptations as well. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the tale is transported into a contemporary or even relatable setting, as Carroll's *Through the Woods* demonstrates with its labyrinthine and dark arboreal setting.

The sites of folktales are usually liminal locations, which are passed through and eventually left behind by the heroes. As such, "the fairy-tale forest is generally a dark, wild, impenetrable place, and, at least in the popular folktale, is evoked in just as few, and absolute, words" (Canepa 1999, 106). Due to rarely being described in detail, it is left up to the reader or listener to imagine the setting and this way tame or solve its secrets (Boldizsár 2010, 107). Besides providing paths for children along which they can come to comprehend their innermost feelings and assume their meaningful roles in society—as it is argued by Bruno Bettelheim (1977, 15) and Jack Zipes (2006, 130), among others—, fairy tales can also provide guidance for readers of any age and at any point of uncertainty or instability in their lives, including not just teenagers but adults as well (Boldizsár 2010, 10-11). Drawing on Vladimir Propp's structuralist fairy-tale interpretations and the currently popular trend of bibliotherapy, Boldizsár comes to the understanding that the locations of folktales, the dark or magical forest in particular, are universal sites of problems and complications that need to be solved and resolved (2010, 107). These mythical spaces are thus at once "a place of testing,

survival, and sacrifice” as well as “a place of growth and transformation” (Łaszkiewicz 2017, 40-41). Simply put, the wondrous woods of a fairy tale hold within them the possibility to become a safe haven as much as a labyrinthine and sinister abyss.

As Sandra L. Beckett evocatively asserts, “[w]hen you wander into the woods with Little Red Riding Hood, there is no telling when, or if, you will come back out again!” (2009, xviii). Fictive forests indubitably offer more than mere pleasant walks in nature: they present their protagonists and their readers with “a landscape of trial” (Parker 2020, 47). In psychological readings of fairy tales, forests hold a particularly significant place as the realizations of remote and primordial sites where the young can withdraw to find themselves or to defeat a foe. They are often understood to be more than mere geographical locations one must navigate through in order to survive and evolve: as enigmatic and wildly dense maps of the human psyche, in other words, as imprints of “the dark, hidden, near-impenetrable world of our unconscious” (Bettelheim 1977, 94) or as “a symbolic representation of a journey into one’s self, which can uncover the secrets and desires locked in a person’s mind” (Łaszkiewicz 2017, 41). Feeding on the mental landscapes of the heroes, forests are often depicted as unknown and mysterious yet at the same time familiar and uncanny. What is more, having understood what they are standing in the place of, it is not surprising that the most haunting element of such dark forests is “the threat of their [hidden monsters’] revelation,” as Elizabeth Parker unfolds (Hackett & Harrington 2019, 26), which might well be the embodiments of psychological dilemmas and traumas.

According to Bettelheim, if we “have entered this wilderness with an as yet undeveloped personality, when we succeed in finding our way out we shall emerge with a much more highly developed humanity” (1977, 94), in other words as more balanced and more purposeful members of society. Already in Medieval times, they were understood to be (trans)formative places, where “one could only rise or sink below the human level” (Harrison 1992, 61), and the Grimm brothers themselves as well saw the woods as crucial yet mysterious settings, which would guide one towards finding a solution to their problems (Harrison 1992, 169; Zipes 1987, 67). In line with this hypothesis, upon exiting the forest,

Snow White, who was supposed to learn to control her vanity and childish naivety when her stepmother offered to sell her beautifying products in disguise, does regain control of her kingdom from her evil stepmother, and, Little Red, who was meant to learn to follow safety instructions given by her superior when confronted with a sleazy wolf, either figures out a way to trick the wolf by herself—as in Paul Delarue’s record of the oldest known oral version of the tale titled “The Story of Grandmother” from 1951 (Dundes 1989, 15-16)—or is taught to defeat and chase away the angry wolf by her grandmother—as in the Grimm Brother’s tale (Zipes 2014, 85-88).

The five chapters of this graphic novel take the reader on a journey through not just time but fairy tales as well, expanding on what is described as “the twenty-first-century fairy-tale web” by Cristina Bacchilega (2013, 18). However, while Bacchilega’s focus had been on the level of the plot and the narrative, Carroll shows that a complex fairy-tale web can be created within the scope of a single collection, centered around a single universal trope. The forest, as clearly denoted in the title, forms an extensive link throughout the stories of the book. While the temporal location of each narrative can mainly be identified by its visual portrayal, and the short stories follow one another in chronological order—starting from the eighteenth or nineteenth century and arriving at the middle of the twentieth century, simultaneously showing progress in time from winter through spring and summer to fall—, their physical location is vague, supporting Emily Carroll’s representation of the forest as an emblematic and universal space where the unimaginable is manifested, and where bodies become fragmented and evil spirits roam disembodied.

The book—which is dedicated to the author’s parents, who, one can only assume, introduced her to the world of fairy tales in the first place—manifests a close connection to the realm of the magical yet frightening, and, most importantly, always vividly visualized fantasies of a child. By way of its multimedial nature, *Through the Woods* goes over and beyond as it does not just verbally describe, but also visually depicts the eerie places and horrific creatures of its storyworld. In Carroll’s interpretation, the forest is not an enchanting and attractive place of rejuvenation or rebirth but of menace, fragmentation, and increasing

uncertainty with none of the happily ever afters known from classic fairy tales. The images appear frightening, with their dark and often two-toned black and red images, and fragmented, with the erratic placement of the panels as well as the textual elements all over the pages.

Although the images seem to dominate the narratives with the inclusion of whole pages without text and several full-page panels throughout the book, it is impossible to separate the image from the text or vice versa in this work of art, just as WJT Mitchell proposes in his theory of the imagetext: they are “composite, synthetic works (or concepts) that combine image and text” (Mitchell 2012, 89). According to Kukkonen as well, the visual and textual elements of the comics work closely together, intertwined to form and convey meaning as a result of the reading process (2013, 37-38). This unity is further enhanced by the fact that the narrator’s and the characters’ thoughts and utterances are rarely separated by the borders of speech bubbles but are incorporated in the panels and tend to pop up haphazardly all over the page, thus depicting a truly “erratic” arboreal context (Messerli 2005, 277).

Carroll works hard and consciously from the beginning to submerge the reader into the book and into the limitless woodlands that is her book. The book sets off on a rather personal note, in the bedroom of a child, grabbing the reader from the twenty-first century and dragging her down a dark and mysterious rabbit hole. In this three-page story that functions as an epilogue, the images fill the whole of the page with the gutters either simply left black or the panels being placed upon dark background images. The darkness of the bedroom is contrasted with the intrusive yet protective, harsh glare of the overhead light, which gives the child a false sense of safety but at the same time accentuates the unknown dark parts of the room. The narrator’s thoughts reflect the visual contrast vividly as they are preoccupied with the darkness in the room and the monsters that may lurk within it. The short-haired child without a name, a background story, or even a discernible gender but with an undeniable love for reading and a very vivid imagination is unspecific enough to make it easy for the reader to identify with him or her. Just like in fairy tales, the reader is faced with

the limited first-person perspective of the protagonist right from the beginning. Although having discernible and reliable narrators is not a characteristic feature of comics (Kukkonen 2013, 36), here it is relevant. Speaking in the first person, the child takes up the role of narrator and guide into the unknown, never to be seen reemerging from it in the course of the book. Through the omission of contrasting white gutters between the panels and rarely providing straight-edged borders for the panels themselves, the attention of the reader is further encaptivated as they become more and more immersed in the story. What is more, with each story getting longer and longer, the reader also gets the impression of delving further and further into the forest, and this makes it less and less likely that even the reader can make it out of there.

With the progression of the stories the reader gets to repeatedly zoom in and out of the vast forest, getting the feeling that “space in the fairy tale is simultaneously contractive and expansive” (Messerli 2005, 278). Although the forest itself appears to be limitless, Carroll does try to give the reader some handholds in the forms of identifying symbols placed at the beginning of each story, which are minor but recognizable elements from the imagery of each graphic narrative. These icons reappear in the table of contents as well, strengthening the hypothesis that this book is a vast hypertext with multiple points of intertextual as well as intratextual connections. These reference points also evoke the “hypermedial replays” discussed by Vladislava Gordić-Petković in her monograph, in which she asserts that the translation of traditional texts into hyperreal digital contexts leads to experimentation and plagiarism (2004, 134)—which are clearly apparent in this collection of short stories as well as its digital adaptations, which will be discussed later on. What is more, Carroll also appears to try to control this vast arboreal space by setting off with an open-ended story right after the immersive introduction and picking up the same line of narrative in a different dimension in the conclusion with a different setting but a heroine eerily reminiscent of that of the first story, essentially providing a visual frame story for the book.

“Our Neighbor’s House” tells a sorrowful tale about three orphaned sisters set in a time long gone, possibly in the eighteenth century. The exposition of the story is clearly

inspired by the Grimms' "Three Little Men in the Forest" (Zipes 2014, 40-42), but in Carroll's interpretation the events unfolding inside the stranger's house remain a gruesome mystery. The story is narrated from the perspective of the middle sister with an emblematic and unmistakably recognizable red hood, who expresses both the dejected feelings of abandonment known from "Hansel and Gretel" as well as the bravery of the heroine of "Little Red Riding Hood". Carroll conforms with the tradition of postmodern fairy-tale retellings by presenting female protagonists in most of the stories included in the collection and by giving them power and agency (Kukkonen 2013, 62). Lured to the house of an always smiling man with a wide-brimmed hat by her hunger, despair, and concern for her two sisters, the story concludes with an open ending—as is common practice in horrors and psychological thrillers—, at the threshold of this presumably evil, certainly mysterious man's house.

The forest in this story is the dense one known from "Hansel and Gretel," "Little Red Riding Hood," and "Little Snow White," however, it does not provide any kind of evolution for the main character but is an end in itself. The journey through the forest leads to the probable death of each character, which is obvious before they even set out. Cliffhangers are a part of each text in the collection and stand to demonstrate the endlessness of both the dark enchanted forest and the possibilities of reimagining classic fairy tales. Another technique used to evoke unease and awaken a feeling of uncanniness in the reader is the portrayal of fragmented close-ups of various body parts, except for the eyes, the significance of which will be discussed in reference to one of the later stories in the collection.

The final story cleverly titled "In conclusion" is the most obvious retelling of a fairy tale, "Little Red Riding Hood," with a different, more-or-less happy ending. The heroine—who wears a red cape just like the main character of "Our Neighbor's House"—has to go not from her home to that of her elder, but from one parent's home to the other's, revealing that hers is a broken yet functional family not uncommon to be seen nowadays but certainly unheard of when classic fairy tales were written down by the Brothers Grimm. The path thus serves to connect and separate the two homes. In addition, Carroll shatters fairy-tale expectations by having the father warn the girl of the dangerous wolves lurking in the woods.

Although the heroine makes it to the safety of her bedroom in the end—reminiscent of the safety of the dream frame of Neil Jordan’s *The Company of Wolves* (1984)—, the wolf in the darkness—of whom only the eyes and the grin are visible in the fashion of Lewis Carroll’s Cheshire Cat from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)—forebodingly explains how her chances of escaping will diminish each time she enters the forest.

And once she was in bed, she said:
“What a fine night! What a good walk! I knew the wolf
wouldn’t find me!”
“Oh, but you must travel through those woods again &
again...” said a shadow at the window. “...and you must be
lucky to avoid the wolf every time...”
“but the WOLF... ..the WOLF only needs enough luck to find
you ONCE.” (Carroll 2015, 201-203)

By depicting a large map of the area along with the path that the heroine takes through the forest in this concluding story on the final pages of the book, the reader might get the false impression that this vast arboreal land is actually navigable. The birds-eye view, however, only gives false hope, as it is, in fact, full of dark and mysterious sections covered by mountains and other natural landmarks, in effect providing not a demystifying clarification but an image that adds more to the mystery.

In vivid contrast with the preceding story set in a more modest place and depicted in earth tones, the second story, “A Lady’s Hands are Cold”, takes place in a lavish eighteenth-century palace and emits vivid colors. While the color red—with all its sexual, sinful, and violent connotations—appears to be the most dominant color throughout the book, this story has a lot of blue in it, perhaps to evoke memories of the fairy tale it is based on not just narratively but visually as well. In this retelling of “Bluebeard”, it is not the husband, though he is certainly far from innocent himself, but the dead wife seeping in through the walls of the palace that turns out to be the true evil to be feared. This story is the one most brimming with literary allusions in the collection, including allusions not just to the fairy tales of “Maiden without Hands” and “Bluebeard” (Zipes 2014, 99-103, 202-205), but also to the French literary fairy tale, “Beauty and the Beast”, to Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “Yellow Wallpaper”

(1892)—as the heroine tears off the wallpaper along with the wall to find the previously deceased wife—, and even to Tim Burton’s 2005 animated film, *The Corpse Bride*—when said former wife grabs the hand of the current wife, hence the title of the short story. What is more, the hands from the story reappear on the cover of the book emerging almost unnoticeably from the erratic branches of the gnarly branches of a forest to captivate the reader, further complicating the web of intratextual references within the book as well.

The forest of this story is the mysterious place where the apparently evil husband of the story goes off to hunt. Although we are led to believe that the husband hides gruesome secrets, these are never actually confirmed, and we never learn whether he actually committed the murder of the true villain of the story: the lady in the walls. Nevertheless, as if trying to trick the reader into directing their attention towards the wrong villain, the husband’s evilness is accentuated in the scene where they eat, as the focus is shifted to the details of his pointy teeth, his sharp utensils, and the bloody meat on his plate and in his mouth. In these images, with several of them presented as full-page panels, Carroll appears to attempt to insert some dramatic pauses and some space for the reader to comprehend the narratives. The corporeal aspect is momentous in this tale as the monstrous previous wife is found in pieces all over the castle and is put together in good faith by the heroine piece by piece, tied with blood-red ribbons.

Although looking and the depiction of the gaze are focal elements of tales such as “Little Red Riding Hood” (Beckett 2008, 19), in *Through the Woods*, it is their omission that reveals significant meaning. The degree of monstrosity and evilness of the characters is once again emphasized by the author apparently not daring or wanting to depict eyes, hiding them beyond the edges of the panels and the pages. The book is thus full of faceless and eyeless monsters. Since the eye is often understood to be a mirror into the soul, the reader is spared the most gruesome innermost characteristics of the evil characters. What is more, at the end of this particular story, the heroine herself also loses her eyes, or rather they become as dark and blank as those of a ghost or a monster. In the end, the reader can see the protagonist

running towards the dense woods in her fright, either to be consumed by or to become part of the forest itself.

The fourth story of the collection titled “My Friend Janna” focuses on the relationship between two women: an unattractively simple girl who literally stays behind the curtains and a more attractive girl who is up on the stage pretending to be a medium who can communicate with the dead, only to end up truly possessed by one in the end. The imagery of this tale is reminiscent of an early nineteenth-century setting though greyer and duller, and so the narrative keeps moving forward further in time compared with the previous stories. Similarly to the previous story, the characters’ eyes are rarely shown, usually cut off and hidden by the gutters and the edges of the pages. However, they appear white when the main character pretends to be in a trance and are a central motif in the erratic diary pages of the possessed main character, both in their visual and textual elements. Once again, evil appears to reside within the forest, where it attaches itself to one of the two female protagonists from the gnarly boughs of the trees while they walk in the woods.

“His Face All Red” is located in the very middle and at the deepest point of the book and of the forest. At the outset, the two brothers with opposing personalities and lives remind the reader of the tale titled “The Sesame Mountain” (Zipes 2014, 454-456), which concludes with a similarly gruesome ending. As in the previous story about Janna, jealousy is once again the source of the main conflict, this time leading to fratricide that can also serve as an analogy of the Biblical story of Cain and Abel. According to Boldizsár, meeting with death leaves the character in control of death, sometimes even immortal (2010: 205), and the nameless brother of “His Face All Red” is seen to thrive in a similar fashion, although we never find out whether it was the murdered brother, or his possibly evil doppelganger, who reemerged from the depths of the pit and of the forest safe and sound. It is in this very text that it is recognized by the characters and thus made didactically clear for the readers as well that evil always “came from the woods ([as] most strange things do)” (Carroll 2014, 63).

In the same manner as doppelgangers in classic German literary fairy tales represent the uncanny Other and the evil within the character (Schwabe 2019, 80), the revived brother

appears to be a grim version of himself. What is more, the text also contains references to other stories within the book, such as when the brothers pass a tree “with leaves that looked like a lady’s hands,” (Carroll 2014, 65) hinting back at the previously discussed “Bluebeard” adaptation. What is more, there are not only textual but visual intertextual references as well: the style and coloring of the story are reminiscent of recent film fairy-tale revisions, such as *Red Riding Hood* (2011), which are usually set in medieval villages and depicted in dull colors with added accents of vivid colors. Red is once again a color of significance as the scene of the murder is indicated symbolically and mysteriously by the same motionless image depicted in a red hue. As if murder was not just impossible to picture but also unnarratable, these panels are wordless and the narrative remains mute for several pages. Although Carroll apparently follows the view that fairy-tale forests “eventually become an arena of bloodshed and terror” (Canepa 1999, 211), the horrifying images are usually cleverly omitted in her comics.

While it is true that the process of reading is always interactive and the turning of pages can result in a playful interaction between text and reader, the author, Emily Carroll has created a hypertextual, truly interactive and somewhat ludic version of these particular comics in the form of an HTML website. A form of “His Face All Red”—which was published in 2010, meaning that it was originally intended to be read on an interactive platform—can be found on her site, which offers creative alternatives to the retelling of the story that were not possible to be recreated on paper. The structure of the web page allows for the story to be sectioned differently, and it appears that the more arbitrary breaking points within the story on the screen work better for the narrative than the pre-determined limiting page sizes of the book, as is apparent in the case of the murder scene, for example, where the reader can assist in committing the murder and turning the color of the image blood-red with the click of a mouse. Due to the need for haptic or tactile interaction, the reader is forced to move the page along in the direction of the story, sideways or downwards, if they want the story to unfold in front of them. Although the course of the narrative is chronological both in the book and on the web, the varied modes of interaction necessitated by the web page create

the illusion of choice. Nevertheless, the webcomic uses the exact same images and ends in exactly the same way as the one included in the book, with only the modes of interaction required from the side of the reader making a difference.

The one but last story of the book preceding only the conclusion, “The Nesting Place”, also has a web company that might accompany it, this time not simply transferring the narrative onto the screen, but providing a backstory: “All Along the Wall” (2014) tells the origin story of not the monster itself but of how the brother’s wife, at a similarly impressionable age, was acquainted with and got possessed by the monster in what at first seemed like a friendly approach. The concept of motherhood is of crucial importance for both “The Nesting Place” and “All Along the Wall”, which is well-known from and oft-visited in fairy tales. As we learn, this evil menace has not just emerged from the forest but also spread from person to person via its offspring. Partly through the webcomic, the narrative follows the trend in postmodern fairy-tale reinterpretations by portraying the supernatural villain as a sympathetic, round character (Schwabe 2019, 80). The evil is hidden in the maternal figure of the brother’s wife, and even the monster inside her as well appears to be a maternal figure of some sort, who only wants to take responsibility for her little ones.

“The Nesting Place” is set the closest to contemporary times in the volume, possibly sometime in the first half of the twentieth century. The story is centered around a teenager, who is lost after the loss of her mother and is visiting with her brother and his wife, whose home happens to be on the brink of a vast forest. As Bettelheim explains, “being lost in an ancient symbol for the need to find oneself” (1977, 217), which is exactly what the heroine tries to do despite her lack of motivation. She is a typical angsty teenager, who literally falls to pieces when she tumbles down a rabbit hole in the forest. Much like a teenager, she is also increasingly difficult to understand as when she gets lost in her own thoughts, the speech bubbles containing her thoughts are cut off by the frames.

“The Nesting Place” seems to be an allegory for the silent monster that moves into one’s body and eats them up from the inside out leaving them lonely and as an empty shell: depression. Coincidentally, it is also what the evil monster from the woods dominating the

story does to its victims: it cleans out all the insides and the humanity from their bodies in order to be able to wear their skins. While the monsters and the most heinous acts in each story are discussed verbally and are not shown in images—with gory details making their way into each story, nonetheless—, in this story, the reader comes face to face with a full-page monster. By including this page towards the end of the book the reader can experience shock similar to the way the heroine might be experiencing it. Thus, with the progression of the stories and the passing of time along with them, it is not only us, the readers, who get deeper and more and more entangled in the dark woods, but the monsters appear to come closer to us as well.

The purpose of this section was to demonstrate the way the forest and the monsters within it are represented in a contemporary graphic narrative that is based on the settings and the narratives of classic fairy tales. Searching for the intertextual references within the short stories as well as the overarching themes and points of connection within the whole of the book feels like being lured into this dark forest without a means to reemerge, just like the various characters of the book. *Through the Woods*, through the spellbinding combination of gruesome images and the accompanying words work together as imagetexts to instill feelings of discomfort and uncanniness in its readers. Carroll's forest, in trying to conform to the expectations of the contemporary young adult genre, appears to have left behind traditions of the classic fairy tales.

The meaning of folktales and contemporary fairy-tale adaptations have long been a focus of researchers from various fields. Examining the representation and the meaning of space in general and of a specific mythical location in these stories, the evil folkloric forests, however, are of new interest and, as such, are not fully mapped yet. Combining this fresh perspective with the example of the multimedial representation of a graphic novel with a couple of added intermedial adaptations is where the true novelty and value of this paper lies with regard to fairy-tale studies. Exploring the intra- and intertextual references throughout this graphic novel to their fullest has proven to be way beyond the scope of this paper, although it would be well worth continuing this research. In addition, the functions of the

narrative, including their focalizations and unreliable narrators would also be worth giving more attention to. In summary, contemporary reimaginings of fairy-tale forests serve a different, less guiding and more reflexive purpose than their origins as reflections of the more fragmented world of their readers.

Only one of Carroll's recent graphic novels, *Baba Yaga's Assistant* (2015) deals with fairy-tale tropes as openly as *Through the Woods* (2014). What all of her publications have in common, however, is that they continue to tackle similarly horrible topics and further entangle the webs of transmedial adaptations. *Speak* (2018) is a graphic novel adaptation of the young adult book of the same title (1999), written by Laurie Halse Anderson. Her online comic, *Some Other Animal's Meat* (2016), inspired one of the most successful episodes of *Guillermo del Toro's Cabinet of Curiosities* (2022-). *The Worthington* (2018) and *A Pretty Place* (2023) are true hypertextual works with each providing a map for the reader to explore in the order they wish. Carroll's newest graphic novel titled *A Guest in the House* is due to be published in August 2023, and appears to mark a revisitation of Bluebeard's story in a contemporary setting, giving her fans hope that she might return to drawing and writing innovative works based on classic fairy-tale sources yet again.

3. 3. 2. Video game to comics: From Telltale Games's *The Wolf Among Us* (2013-2014) to Matthew Sturges' and Dave Justus's *The Wolf Among Us* (2015-2016)

When things go south, like they did tonight, sometimes it reminds me of back home, you know? [...] And I've heard it said that you maybe...kind of enjoy it when that happens. [...] Because it means that for just a little while you can...stop pretending. I think maybe I saw that in your eyes tonight.
(Sturges et al. 28, 2016)

The Wolf Among Us (2015-2016) unfolds a hard-boiled whodunit prequel to the renowned *Fables* (2002-) comics series, which counts more than 150 issues published so far by Vertigo, an imprint of DC Comics, with its numerous spin-offs centering around various fairy-tale characters nearly doubling that sum. After a seven-year hiatus, *Fables* has recently been recontinued, in celebration of the 20th anniversary of its birth. In the universe of the *Fables*, fairy-tale characters try to survive in our mundane world after having been exiled from their fairy Homelands to a fictitious district of New York called Fabletown, where they live as quietly as possible alongside the humans they call “mundys” while following the rules enforced by their local government representative, Sheriff Bigby Wolf. The premise of the narrative, meaning the heroes' fight against the evil villain who had cursed the community of classic fairy-tale and children's story characters, eerily parallels that of *Once Upon a Time* (2011-2018), which has been discussed in a previous section, but with a major difference: the tales of *Fables*, including *The Wolf Among Us*, are not at all safe for children.

The Wolf Among Us first saw light as a choice-based role-playing narrative adventure game, released in five episodic installments in 2013 and 2014. The game was created by *Telltale Games* alone, with the writers of the studio taking credit for the narrative while openly acknowledging Bill Willingham's intellectual ownership of the *Fables* characters and storyworld. Since the resulting narrative forms the backbone of the game and since its quality far outweighs that of the gameplay, it might also be perceived as a seven-hour-long interactive graphic novel or film. The value of the video game has been established not only through the considerable critical acclaim it has received but also through its having been

accepted as the prequel to the canon of *Fables*, which was demonstrated and confirmed by the subsequent publication of the comic book adaptation of the video game through 2015 and 2016, written by Lilah Sturges—published under Matthew Sturges—and Dave Justus, two long-time collaborators to the *Fables* universe.

Since the sixteen issues of the comics adaptation follow the plot of the video game very closely, without altering the main storyline—other than bluntly making and even canonizing the choices that had been freely available to players of the video game—but at the same time detailing and contextualizing the narrative by including original background information about the characters’ pasts, *The Wolf Among Us* (2015-2016) can, in essence, be considered the graphic novelization of the video game (2013-2014). Thus, issues 1-4 were written based on the first episode of the video game, issues 5-7 are based on episode two, issues 8-11 retell the events of episode three, issues 12-14 are based on episode four, and issues 15-16 conclude the story based on the events of the final episode five. *The Wolf Among Us* (2015-2016), being such a straightforward transcription of the narrative elaborated in the video game, can also be interpreted as a graphic novelization. Since both comics and novelizations have received comparable scrutiny in scholarly research (Baetens 2005), *The Wolf Among Us*, a particularly hybridized work in this sense, offers a prolific and interesting source for analysis and allows for the expansion of “the corpus in order to include forms of writing that have been excluded [...] from the field of novelization” (Baetens 2018, 170).

At the same time, the narratives of both versions of *The Wolf Among Us* offer prequels to the *Fables* series, into which they fit on a synergistic level, thus offering an expansion of the original narrative. According to Karin Kukkonen, “comics are a key instance of the cooperation between different modes in narrative, and this makes the medium highly relevant for the project of transmedial narratology” (2011, 36). This notion is perfectly demonstrated in the interplay between the two versions of *The Wolf Among Us*, especially as the medium of comics had a distinctly heavy influence on the conception of the video game’s narrative and visual styles, and the style and contents of the video game were, in turn, reproduced in the comic book adaptations.

For the same reasons, the relationship between the video game and the comics is also an ambiguous one, positing the comics as at once superior to and as a copy of the video game. On the one hand, the comics are clearly identified on the cover of both volumes as adaptations of “the hit Telltale Games video game,” thrusting them in a subordinate position in relation to the original. On the other hand, the comics, more than just being plain transcriptions of the game, also include additional information about the narrative, are more consistent with the original *Fables* series in terms of character depiction and visual style, and are aimed at the long-time fans of the well-established comics series. The latter argument is supported by the fact that the video game not only begins with a short textual introduction to the *Fables* universe but also often includes didactic and detailed descriptions of the rules of the storyworld, suggesting that its function is to draw in new and fresh audiences to the *Fables* series through what can thus be perceived as an interactive transmedial advert. In opposition, most of these contextualizing elements are missing from the comics adaptation, possibly because they are redundant for their particular target audience, the hard-boiled fans of the franchise. It is for their sake that, since the comic book and graphic novel are the original formats of the *Fables* series, adapting *The Wolf Among Us* video game into a graphic novelization appears to be not just a profitable enterprise but a necessary step on the road to accepting it into the canon by returning the narrative to its original medial turf.

The Wolf Among Us takes place in New York City, which is made apparent already in the opening shot of the game, showing a moonlit image of Central Park’s Gothic Bridge—also foreshadowing the final location of the villain’s constantly moving secret lair—, followed and complemented by the panning shot of an endless army of skyscrapers in the night with their windows lit up in neon hues, thus also immediately unveiling the striking neo-noir graphics of the game. The game plays out in various districts of the metropolis, including the Bronx, Queens, and the fictitious Fabletown. Another peculiar place known from the *Fables* saga, the Farm—a dreaded place reminiscent of George Orwell’s dystopic *Animal Farm* (1945), where animalistic fairy-tale characters are banished if they cannot pass

as humans—is not pictured but emphatically alluded to in the storyline of Bigby’s friend and confidant, Colin, a speaking, smoking, alcoholic pig from the “Three Little Pigs.”

In the video game version, some of the most critical decisions that the player needs to make are related to these locations. The choices of the player of this classic point-and-click adventure game are naturally pre-determined and rather limited, but when choosing a path, the consequences can be dire, with the unchosen characters possibly dying while the user is exploring another place. The game stores and builds upon one’s choices, but these mostly only influence the unfolding of the events minimally, primarily in terms of how other characters think of and treat Bigby based on and in reaction to his previous behavior towards them in earlier scenes. The biggest decisions of all, however, are when Bigby has to decide whether a character should be killed or shown mercy, placing the futures of three particular characters—Lawrence, Tweedledum, and the Crooked Man—solely in the hands of the players.

Although “there is a rich tradition of comics and videogames ‘borrowing’ formal elements conventionally attributed to the ‘other’ medium” (Rauscher 2022, 5), in this particular case, the comics do not recreate the dynamism of the videogame. The pressure of these major choices is altogether imperceptible in the comics as it effortlessly canonizes the options that are most consistent with the Bigby of *Fables*—arguably also based on the analytics of players’ choices, which are displayed at the end of each episode, though there is no way to prove or disprove this, as the statistics are in constant flux as more and more players join the game. Appropriately, for instance, Bigby ruthlessly rips off Grendel’s right arm in a bar fight and disinterestedly sends Colin off to the Farm in the comics, while the game leaves it up to the player to show these characters mercy. Bigby also appears cleverer in the comics than in the game, possibly because some of the steps of sleuthing are omitted from the comics, thus making the crime-solving process significantly quicker. The characters of the comics are not only more similar to their original *Fables* versions, but are also more dynamic, less explicit and more articulate, funnier and more sarcastic, and often more risqué. Thus, as opposed to fairy-tale characters, who “tend to be flattened, stylized, stripped of all

but the most essential references to the sensual and the psychic,” the characters of *Fables*, including *The Wolf Among Us* spin-offs, “are emotionally complex, sexually explicit, and physically present” (Zolkover 2008, 41), which is reflected in both their utterances and the dynamic depiction of their facial expressions.

Hence, the text of the comics, including both Bigby’s internal monologues and the dialogues between characters, is generally more inspired and eloquent. For example, the story of “Donkeyskin” is told in iambic pentameter in the comics, but is summarized in six simple sentences in the video game. Although Bloody Mary’s subtitles—who is an unhinged echo of Harley Quinn and says poetic things like “I guess I gotta relax the axe instead of handin’ out whacks” (Sturges et al. 120, 2016)—are cleverly and suggestively tinted red in the video game, the description of her voice as “a singular sound, like every word is underlined with glass being ground under stiletto heels” (Sturges et al. 105, 2016) offers a more evocative account in the text of the comics than in the video game’s audio. Therefore, much like the origin series, which “makes conscious and careful use of the unique comics medium in order to achieve particular narrative effects” (Kukkonen 2011, 35), *The Wolf Among Us* also relies on the assets and powers of the media involved: the comics and the video game alike. Accordingly, while the video game’s strength lies in the novelty of the choice-based interactive gameplay, the comics are text-centered, and as such, focused on the dialogues and the hero’s character development.

There are notable differences between the video game and the comics in terms of their visual depiction as well. The neo-noir graphics of the video game, with their harsh edgings and their contrasting duotone coloring often including neon hues, are consistent throughout the five episodes of the game, except for the visual anomaly of the colorful illustrations in the storybook found in the business office, which the player might miss and never even glimpse. The design of the Telltale designers, which is entirely inconsistent with previous *Fables* issues, was only partially reproduced in the comics adaptation by the drawers of DC Comics, often recolored in duller tones. What is more, the side stories and recollections, which offer background details about the most important characters and take up almost as much space in

the comics as the core story itself, are told in starkly different visual styles and hues, boldly distinguishing them from the images of the main storyline. Beyond the images, “the use of different fonts, enlarged, presented in bold or in a different color, gives the written text a visual and emotional quality” (Kukkonen 2011, 37). Each flashback comes with distinct coloring and linework that is associated with the era it is set in. For example, Bigby’s memories set in Salem during the witch trials of the seventeenth century are presented in brownish-yellow sepia colors, while Bloody Mary’s origin story from nineteenth-century Victorian England is painted in more yet still faded and earth-toned colors, and the illustration of the imaginary land of the back of mirrors called the Silvering is highly oversaturated and dominated by vivid yellow. In addition, each setting of the core narrative is also distinctly associated with a certain color, such as the bar colored in orange hues and the club fluctuating between neon pink and teal.

Thanks to these jumps in time, as opposed to the linearity and limited viewpoint of the video game, the comics offer a non-linear narrative with interludes from the past retold from Bigby’s or Bloody Mary’s viewpoints. The movement from one time period to another is always smooth, often placing panels of the close-ups of a character next to another in the two different settings or allowing Bigby’s narration of the past events to overflow from one panel to another. The illustration and methods of these temporal movements provide a very film-like experience for the reader. What is more, panels are sometimes placed side-by-side or on top of one another to express the simultaneous unfolding of events, especially at the end of both volumes of the comics, where they work very well in dramatizing and escalating towards the cliffhangers concluding each collection.

The comics thus simultaneously rely on textual, visual, and spatial-temporal elements through the arrangement of the panels to express meaning. Because of the additional background stories, the comics offer many more characters than the video game, essentially creating a more complex narrative, which also simultaneously helps embed the tale in the *Fables* universe. The narrative of the comics is also more coherent as an isolated work, for example in its unvarying use of the symbolism of the white doe to represent witchcraft in

general and the witch Aunty Greenleaf in particular, and raises additional social issues not present in the video game, such as necrophilia and sexual deviation in Crane's storyline or relationship abuse and infanticide in Bloody Mary's origin story. The only possible area where the comics might be lacking is the audio track of the video game, but it makes up for it in other ways, for instance in its emphasis on the sense of smell, an essential and characteristic feature of the Big Bad Wolf. It is through the internal monologues of Bigby, which are also unique to the comics adaptation of *The Wolf Among Us*, that the reader learns about his keen sense of smell when he reflects on his past by saying "It's a different kind of hunting I do now, of course. But the smell affects me just the same" (Sturges et al. 38, 2015).

Fables, and, being its latest official multimedial spin-off, *The Wolf Among Us* as well thus present a mixed-genre "fairy-tale pastiche—a postmodernist blending of elements from a variety of loci within fairy-tale discourse that serves at once as commentary, play, and a fairy tale in its own right" (Zolkover 2008, 41). There are few direct references to the fairy-tale backgrounds of the characters, and even those few are turned topsy-turvy, as when the Woodsman provokes Bigby saying "What big mouth he has. All the better for it to get him into trouble, my dear" (Sturges et al. 9, 2015). While Grendel, who was mentioned earlier, is a character in both the comics and the video game, it is only in the comics that the plot of *Beowulf* is briefly summarized, with Grendel's mother also making a brief appearance later on, turning the Old English epic into an essential part of the narrative. In addition, in the comics, as opposed to the simpler and more succinct text of the video game, there are numerous intertextual references to literary works outside the *Fables* universe, such as the classic horrors of Stephen King (Sturges et al. 217, 2015), or the stereotypical Victorian characters of Charles Dickens (Sturges et al. 56, 2016), with Bigby quoting from Robert Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (Sturges et al. 100, 2016) in one particular instance and comparing his sleuthing methods to those of literary detectives, like Hercule Poirot and Sherlock Holmes (Sturges et al. 80, 2015).

Linda Hutcheon asserted that "what videogames, like virtual reality experiments, cannot easily adapt is what novels can portray so well: the "res cogitans," the space of the

mind” (2012, 14), but both versions of *The Wolf Among Us* disprove this idea as they present noir detective stories centering around the development of the main character in their respective interactive and visual-textual formats. The most important difference between the video game and the comics, therefore, lies in the possibilities for the character development of Bigby, which can range from immoral through unsympathetic to a proper hero in the video game depending on the gameplay, and has more depth thanks to the internal monologues and background events portrayed in the comics adaptation.

The Wolf Among Us, in both versions, is presented from and focuses solely on Wolf’s perspective, thus allowing for the profound journey into his character, as opposed to the series of *Fables*, which is not focused on a single fairy-tale character and employs frequent and quick changes in focalization (Kukkonen 2011, 48). In line with this, the main character of the spin-off, Bigby Wolf—a. k. a. Big B. Wolf, the Big Bad Wolf—, who stands in for the wolf of all classic fairy tales (Harris 2016), is a criminal turned law enforcement officer haunted by his past misdeeds committed against Little Red Riding Hood and the three little pigs and torn between serving his community and allowing his violent and destructive instincts to roam free. Bigby Wolf works hard not only to redeem himself in the eyes of the other characters but also to clear his own conscience. A recurring sentence in both the video games and the comics attests to this: “You’re not as bad as everyone says you are” (Sturges et al. 26, 49, 2015; Sturges et al. 283, 2016). At the same time, the emphasis of this idea foreshadows the canonical conclusion of the comics, which is that Bigby ultimately learns to control his anger—he turns into a Wolf in the final boss fight of the game, but can easily turn back—and practices just judgment as sheriff. Finally, the unambiguous ending of the comics, according to which the villain found a way to escape his prison cell directly prepares for the sequel of the narrative, *Wolf Among Us 2*, which has been in production at Telltale Games since 2017.

Chapter 4. Conclusion: Where to next, Little Red Riding Hood?

Fairy tales are among the earliest and oldest forms of entertainment. Far from being just the lore of the past, they ceaselessly resurface again and again in the most diverse corners of contemporary commercial and popular culture. The stories popularized by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm hundreds of years ago are recognized by and told to children all over the world even today, but so are their rewritings in various formats, including novels, films, and video games, among teenagers, young adults, and adults. In an academic, literary theoretical context, too, they continue to be popular as they provide a seemingly inexhaustible array of texts to be interpreted and dissected, and it is primarily due to their cultural influence that their scrutiny is crucial and necessary.

The purpose of this dissertation has been to analyze contemporary fairy-tale rewritings and the transmedial universes they are embedded in within a multi- and interdisciplinary context by integrating the theories and methods of three scholarly fields--transmedial narratology, adaptation studies, and fairy-tale studies--, and thus shed new light on the mechanisms at work within what is the most popular and most prevalent model in the sphere of Anglophone popular cultural productions today: transmedia storytelling. More than just a buzzword, narratives told across various media platforms are currently the unquestionable norm in entertainment industries, which fulfill their purpose by extending their transmedial universes across a more diverse and engaging variety of media and narratively simultaneously. As such, they must be explored from various academic angles in order to fully grasp how such narratives travel across media and what makes them so appealing to their audiences. Both the ways in which they are produced and the ways in which they fulfill their roles as entertainment products are of interest.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of adaptation processes and the frameworks and intertextual relations within transmedial universes, a new concept was introduced in this dissertation: the transmedial microcosm. Inspired by Henry Jenkins's theorization of transmedia storytelling and Christina Bacchilega's visualization of fairy-tale webs,

transmedial microcosms refer to smaller groups of adaptations within transmedial universes, which, beyond being connected through a shared narrative basis, are also linked through their similar treatment of their source text. Accordingly, it is primarily in the cases of renowned sources that one can consider transmedial microcosms as, for example, in the strikingly prevalent cases of fairy-tale adaptations, which are the sources discussed in the analytical chapter of the present dissertation.

The context and the process of adaptation have an immense influence on how transmedial storyworlds develop and are aspects of key importance when discussing transmediality. Thus, besides the genre of fairy tales, the practice of adaptation, a similarly timeless research topic, forms another major part of the backbone of this dissertation. Adaptations, in general, are intriguing because they have occupied a significant place in the sphere of popular cultural production for hundreds of years. However, as fairy tales survive primarily in the forms of rewritings today, and since the analysis of fairy tales within the context of adaptation studies has long been a profitable practice, these two are ever-so closely intertwined.

The constantly expanding and growingly dominant transmedial universes of the current popular cultural landscape offer limitless grazing plains for producers, audiences, and researchers as well, with plenty of yet unexplored and uncharted narratives, storytelling mechanisms, and adaptation techniques. Much of what makes transmedial universes appear so full of potential for analysis is that they involve and employ a diverse array of media leading to the constant enhancement of narratives through specification and expansion on the one hand and an immense diversity of multimedial modes of representation on the other hand. Among these, transmedial universes increasingly include new media formats, and it has been necessary and almost unavoidable to also include a few examples of such new media adaptation in this dissertation.

Nevertheless, popular cultural adaptations still rely on old media formats, including textual ones, to be present in as many areas of everyday life as possible and thus reach wider groups of audiences while also expanding the narrative universes of each storyworld in

creative ways. In this dissertation, I have argued that textual and other printed genres, such as short stories, novelizations, and graphic novels, are widely used to increase both audience participation and access. In other words, they are meant to generate new fans as well as to engage existing ones simultaneously, and so printed texts continue to fulfill significant and unique roles in their respective transmedial universes. Besides increasing their visibility, the simultaneous use of old and new media formats also strengthens the webs connecting transmedial universes and their microcosms. Therefore, the aims of this research have been not only to examine the way a narrative text works or the ways in which a text needs to be altered in order to operate in different media environments but also to locate each text in its respective transmedial microcosm and to observe how they are connected to their most closely related adaptations.

Chapter 1 of the dissertation served as the introduction, in which the above summarized theoretical and conceptual framework was outlined and discussed in more detail. The introduction also explained the reasons for selecting the particular theoretical and cultural texts discussed and used throughout the dissertation. Most importantly, the idea of transmedial microcosm was introduced as a concept to help understand relationships and connections at work within greater transmedial universes.

The primary sources discussed in the dissertation are all located in the transmedial universe of “Little Red Riding Hood,” so the fairy tale appeared in both the theoretical and analytical chapters of this dissertation. The primary reason why this tale was used as an example is that it has been researched in significantly diverse ways in scholarly writings and has simultaneously occupied the cultural landscape of popular cultural products for centuries in a multitude of innovative rewritings and often pioneering media formats.

The second chapter of the dissertation focused on the theoretical background of the research, first within fairy-tale studies and then in adaptation studies. Starting with the emergence and main approaches of fairy-tale studies, the first subchapter discussed two aspects of the tale “Little Red Riding Hood”: the way the narrative has been used to address social maladies and the way the role of the wolf has fluctuated in some of its most innovative

rewritings. This subchapter concluded with a discussion of the extensive research that had already been carried out on “Little Red Riding Hood” in an academic context, aimed to shed light on the ways in which the present dissertation contributes to the existing research.

In this section, the research of Jack Zipes, Alan Dundes, Bruno Bettelheim, Christina Bacchilega, and Sandra L. Beckett was relied on, both in their sociographic and psychoanalytic approaches. Zipes, Dundes, and Beckett, who have published multiple books on the tale of “Little Red Riding Hood” in particular, are cited extensively when discussing the history and symbolic meanings of the fairy tale. In addition to her conception of the fairy-tale web, Christina Bacchilega’s writings are also relied on when discussing the connotations and significance of the fairy tale. In these discussions, to facilitate the deeper analysis of the tale, certain film and animated adaptations not set in transmedial microcosms are mentioned.

The second part of Chapter 2 discussed theories on adaptation and transmedia storytelling. Besides the foundational texts of Henry Jenkins, the concept of transmediality was approached through the writings of Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon. A large segment of this subchapter was dedicated to the genre of novelizations, as this remains to be a generally overlooked textual genre in scholarly discussions.

Chapter 3 was retained for the analytical part of the research. In this chapter, each subchapter focused on different medial relations: first, on textual adaptations of the literary fairy tale, then on textual adaptations of the fairy tale based on film sources, and finally, on visual-textual adaptations of the tale based on interactive digital sources. The primary sources were carefully chosen along the principles clarified in the introduction, according to which contemporary fairy-tale rewritings of “Little Red Riding Hood” or its characters created within the twenty-first century for young adult or adult audiences were considered as long as they had immediate adaptations within their respective transmedial microcosms.

The first subchapter of Chapter 3 discussed “The Company of Wolves” (1979) by Angela Carter, which stands out among the group of adaptations discussed in the dissertation for two reasons: on the one hand, it was not created in the twenty-first century, and on the other hand, it marked a turning point in “Little Red Riding Hood” adaptations, relying on

Delarue's "The Story of Grandmother" (1956) as its source and presenting a newly independent and self-sufficient heroine. In addition, the film adaptation directed by Neil Jordan, *The Company of Wolves* (1984), is also mentioned, especially with regard to the representation of the wolf.

The second subchapter discussed two cases of novelizations, both of which were written based on audio-visual sources. *Red Riding Hood* (2011) by Sarah Blakley-Cartwright was written based on the film of the same title directed by Catherine Hardwick in 2011, while *Red's Untold Tale* (2015) was written by Wendy Toliver based on a character of the television series *Once Upon a Time* (2011-2018). More than just comparing the audio-visual sources and their textual adaptations, their identification as novelizations based on two distinct audio-visual sources and their relations to the literary "Little Red Riding Hood" texts have also been discussed.

The third subchapter was meant to open up the discourse to digitalized new media products. In this section, the desire to include interactive sources overpowered the wish to focus on sole adaptations of "Little Red Riding Hood." The two transmedial microcosms discussed are Emily Carroll's graphic novel *Through the Woods* (2015) and their webcomics versions self-published on the author's personal website, and *The Wolf Among Us* (2013-2014) video game and its comics adaptation of the same title (2015-2016). In both cases, the emphasis was on the interactive quality of the source texts and the heavily textual nature of the adaptations.

The subchapters of Chapter 3 are not only connected by the tale but also by their shared focus on textual elements. The textual is an important element of transmedial universes, and appear to be unavoidable in the cases of transmedial microcosms, as the examples demonstrate. In each subchapter of the analytical chapter, thus, textual sources are discussed in opposition and in relation to their oral, film, and digital sources, with the order of their creation closely observed in each case.

Finally, the dissertation is concluded by the present conclusion, which is followed by the bibliography and a short list of illustrations in the appendix. Nevertheless, as with any

research, there are certain aspects which could not be included here but deserve to be explored in future endeavors. Naturally, the dissertation, although it strives for precision, is not all-encompassing. There are questions and issues relating to both the theoretical and cultural aspects of the topic that were left unexplored due to the literal and conceptual limits of this text. Regarding the discussion of fairy tales and “Little Red Riding Hood” in particular, such are the closer examination of the humanimal disposition of the wolf and the human-animal relationship between the girl and the wolf within a posthumanist discourse, the observation of the fluctuating relationship between the roles of the main characters, between villain and hero, across various texts and media formats—both of which were briefly touched upon in the thesis—, and the focus on solely new medial adaptations of the fairy tale, through examples such as the narrative horror art video game *The Path* (Tale of Tales, 2009) or the equally gruesome platform game *Woolfe: The Red Hood Diaries* (GriN Gamestudio, 2015).

The discussion of transmedial microcosms in this dissertation is not exhaustive but rather fulfills an introductory and representative role, primarily as it is limited to the transmedial universe of a single fairy tale. Admittedly, discussing the presence of transmedial microcosms in other narrative contexts could contribute immensely to ascertaining their relevance in transmedial studies. Further examples of transmedial microcosms could be demonstrated in similarly renowned and deep-rooted transmedial universes, such as the mythologies of any given culture, or in the rapid expansion of more recent transmedial franchises, such as the DC Comics universe or the storyworld of Harry Potter. An additional element of transmedial microcosms, which was omitted by choice due to the vast amount of texts related to it, is the world of fan-produced materials, including fanfiction and fanart, but also memes, excerpts, and even redubbed scenes shared across various online social platforms. In the contemporary digital era, the role of social media and the influence of individuals’ sharing practices fulfill an immense function in transmedia world-creation and spreadability, which reaches beyond and could valuably complement the approach taken in this dissertation.

Ultimately, with this dissertation, I wish to have contributed to the field of fairy-tale studies by discussing “Little Red Riding Hood,” which is one of the most frequently and diversely adapted of the classic literary fairy tales, from a novel perspective, meaning the transmedial relations connecting its contemporary rewritings, as well as to transmedial studies through the introduction of the concept of transmedial microcosms to make sense of the otherwise too extensive and as such incomprehensible transmedial universes.

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Appendix 1: Illustrations

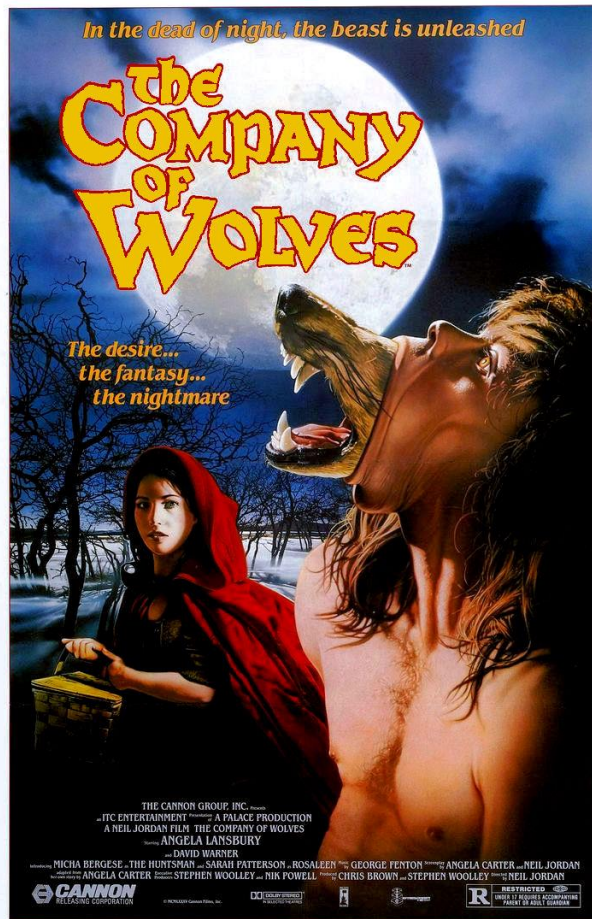


Figure 1. The cinematic poster of *The Company of Wolves* (dir. Neil Jordan, 1984)



Figure 2. Actor Micha Bergese as Wolf in *The Company of Wolves* (dir. Neil Jordan, 1984)



Figure 3. The cinematic poster of *Red Riding Hood* (dir. Catherine Hardwicke, 2011)

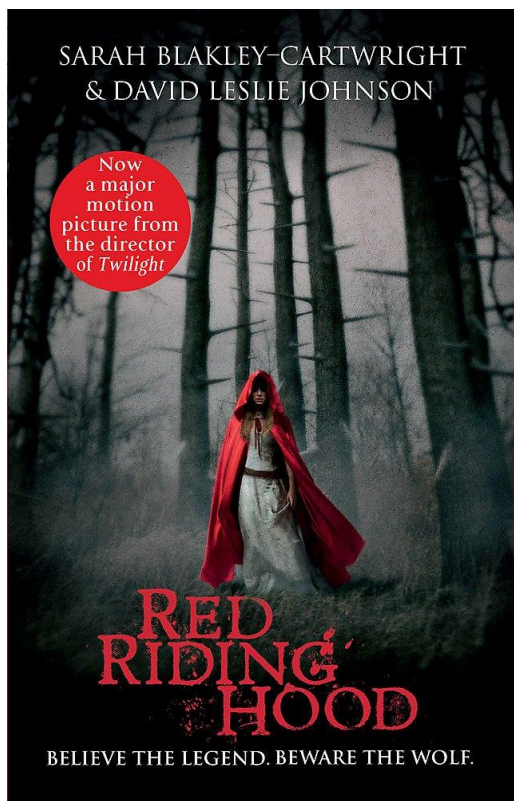


Figure 4. The cover of the novelization *Red Riding Hood* (2011) by Sarah Blakley-Cartwright



Figure 5. Actress Meghan Ory as Ruby Lucas in Season 5, Episode 18 of the television series *Once Upon a Time* (2016)

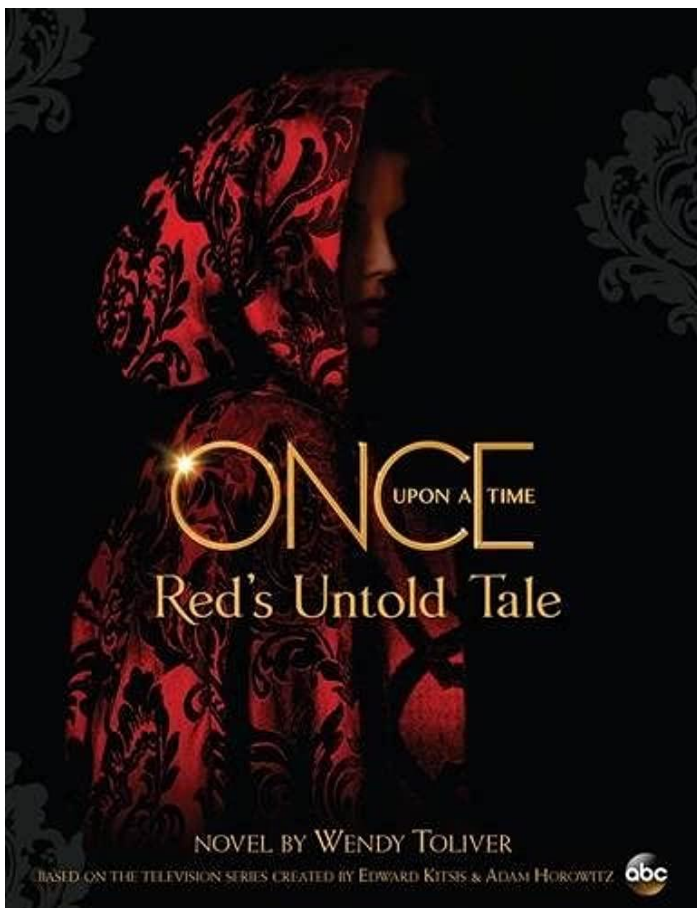


Figure 6. Cover of *Red's Untold Tale* (2015) by Wendy Toliver

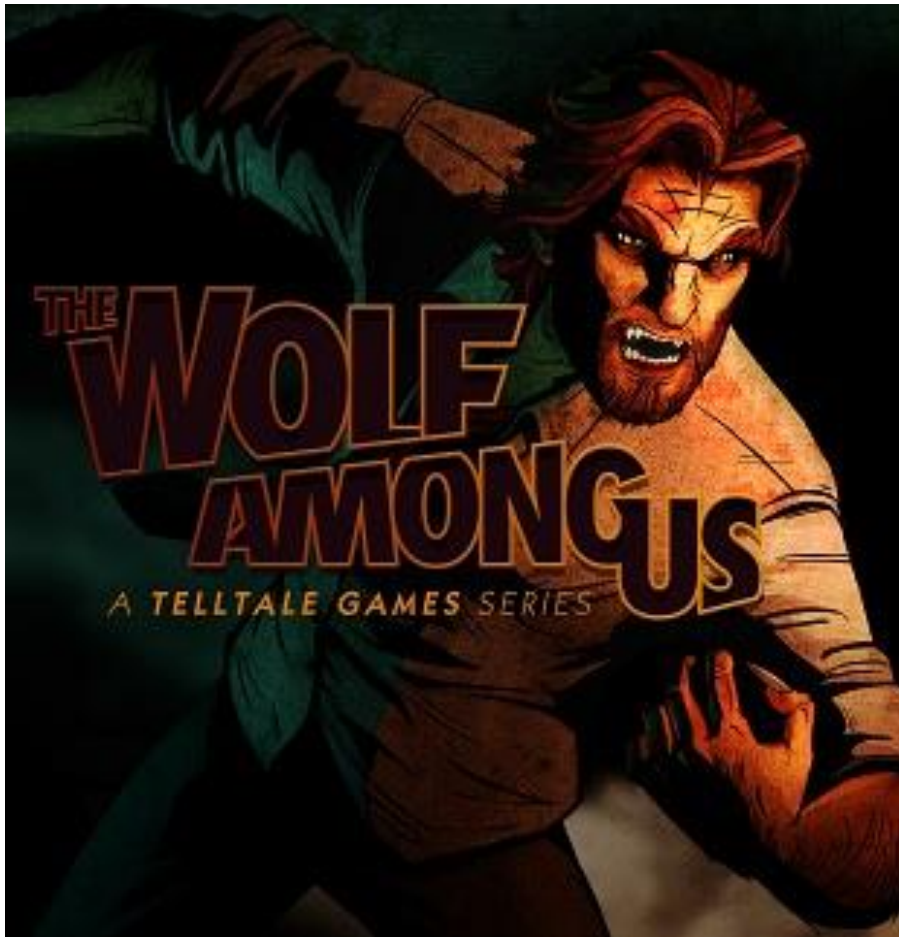


Figure 7. Cover image of the video game *The Wolf Among Us* (2013-2014)



Figure 8. Example of a game choice in the video game *The Wolf Among Us* (2013-2014)

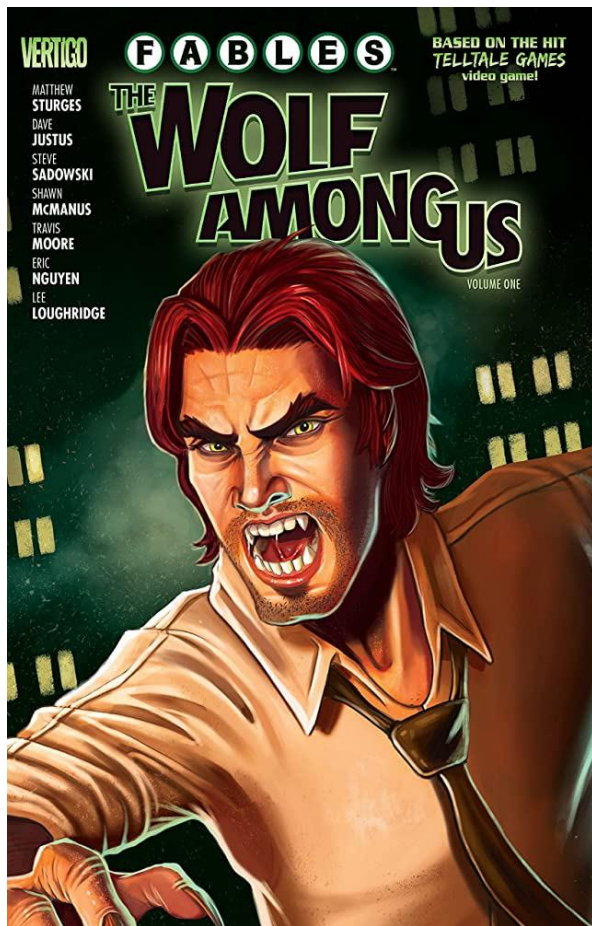


Figure 9. Cover of *Wolf Among Us*, volume 1 (2015)



Figure 10. Example of a dissimilar design in the comics *Wolf Among Us*, volume 1 (2015)