

GIANTS IN TRANSMEDIA

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to discuss transmedia narratives based on giant lore, which is described by means of examples from folkloristics and transmedia dissemination. Giant lore, particularly the epic *Kalevipoeg*, a core text of Estonian culture, has generated numerous transmedially circulating texts and various contemporary forms. Through their connections with media, texts about giants continue to participate in the national cultural space; in previous eras, they have been carriers of Estonian identity or, alternatively, have held an important place in the creation of local identities. The latter can be observed today in printed matter, advertisements, and products marketed to the homeland public. However, texts about giants can also be used as a self-characterising image directed beyond national space. The article provides a closer look at ways in which stories connected with *Kalevipoeg* and *Suur Tõll* are engaged in different levels of media, as well as necessary contextual cultural knowledge for understanding contemporary media clips.

Keywords: cross-media, giant lore, transmedia narrative

Media narratives scholar Marie Laure Ryan emphasises that some transmedia narratives are culturally representative or valuable stories which, when they acquire sudden or accelerated popularity, spontaneously attract new stories in a kind of snowball effect. Such stories spawn the creativity of fans and generate transmedia adaptations. In any event, such a media bundle has a central or core text that acts as a common reference for the remainder of the texts (Ryan 2008).

Without a doubt, one of the core texts of Estonian cultural space is the national epic *Kalevipoeg* (Kalev's Son), which over the past few centuries has performed a range of different functions for Estonians, including impelling them to argue about serious philosophical topics. Nevertheless, *Kalevipoeg* has preserved the outlines of a simple, explanatory folkloric text, which at different periods of time has been denounced and criticised, adapted or parodied, or reduced into prose retellings. It has inspired speeches in traditional verse form (*regivärss*) performed on festive occasions; likewise, it has generated amateur theatrical productions and professional elite performances. To put it another way, *Kalevipoeg* has provided an impulse for a myriad of different texts, corpuses of texts, adaptations, parodies, and rearticulations in different art forms which

have extended beyond the various media into the social space. Such flexible traffic between and among media is the outcome of a longer period during which the support of the Estonian community and the state in its different forms has played important roles.

How can we describe the spontaneous circulation of *Kalevipoeg* among various media and today's new emergent forms (computer games, memes, *Kalevipoeg* comics, videoclips, advertisement clips, etc.), a dynamic that is also manifested in hiking paths, dolls, and other products? Is it possible to treat the text of a canonical epic in terms of a structure of franchises? What was the nature of the connection between giant lore (on which the creation of the epic is based) and the power of text collections to circulate among various media forms, actualising themselves in society as phenomena similar to franchises?

In our brief characterisation of these phenomena, we have also made use of the term *transmedia narrative*, which was adopted by new media scholar Henry Jenkins. Using such a term in the present context is debatable, because up till now it has primarily been used to describe the most recent of contemporary texts, those with blockbuster potential. Yet at the moment we do not have a better alternative for characterising extramedial cultural and commercial phenomena.

Jenkins' approach was based on the observation that popular stories such as the Harry Potter series, *Matrix*, *Lord of the Rings*, and the like are able to cross the boundaries of a medium and assume new forms in other media. According to Jenkins' definition, this phenomenon entails storytelling on multiple platforms and in multiple formats, in other words, the flow of content through different platforms (Jenkins 2006: 2). In each channel of communication, a transmedia product develops a unique content, though the stories are linked among themselves and synchronised through their characters. Besides the creation of official versions by professionals, there are independently created variations, reworkings, adaptations, parodies, and other elaborations spread in social media environments. Jenkins was also one of the first to call attention to the ability of characters in a narrative to move beyond the boundaries of media, circulating transmedially in entertainment and commerce, for example, as franchises (branded products); as such these characters can play a variety of different roles in cultural space. The term *franchise* refers to theme parks, restaurants, airplanes (as well as other modes of transportation), clothing, and food brands – an innumerable wealth of products and services.

In his subsequent publications Jenkins has specified the main outlines of transmedia narratives. In his blog post "Transmedia Storytelling 101" (Jenkins 2007), he notes that what counts is the entertainment experience, adding that in the ideal case, the presentation in each medium makes a unique contribution. For example, the key aspects of information concerning the roles of the

characters of *Matrix* have been represented in three action films, short animated film series, two collections of comics, and several video games. No source – not even the original text – can represent or contain all the information required to understand the *Matrix* universe. Thus these are examples of transmedia projects in the contemporary market economy; alongside and in addition to these, volunteers, fans, and others create stories with the same characters and motifs (Ryan 2008; Jenkins 2004, 2007).

The terms transmedia and cross-media have been defined in, and distinctions made between them by new media theorists are often relative and labile. For example, for Moloney (2011, 2011–2014) the primary difference is that the term *cross-media* designates the distribution and creation of content (e.g. music, text, pictures, video, etc.) among different media, as well as an orientation toward economic success. Practitioner and visionary Günther Sonnenfeld (2009) regards reciprocal movements and influences as important facets of transmedia; while transmedia reflects activities and exchanges, cross-media tends to be more linear.

Assuming that transmedia is more connected with spontaneous cultural processes (the natural dissemination of a motif, character, etc. in culture), the term *transmedia* has seemed most appropriate to the purposes of the current study.

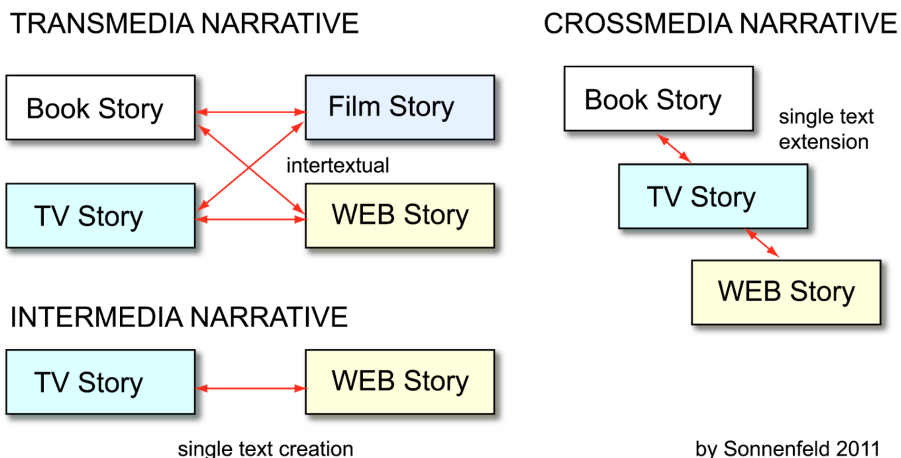


Figure 1. Media narratives by G. Sonnenfeld 2011.

FOLKLORE AND MEDIA

The basis of the storyworld of giant tales and the universe of giants consists of oral folkloric tales, in which heterogeneous folkloric characters perform various deeds and actions. Though the text aggregates around Kalevipoeg, Tõll, and other giants probably originated in or around the same time, there can be no comparison with respect to the number of texts, the abundance of motifs, or the geographical scope of the lore concerned. Kalevipoeg is primarily aligned with eastern Estonia; the Pagan (Old Nick) is known throughout Estonia; Tõll is known mostly in Saaremaa, and Leiger in Hiiumaa. The smaller the geographical area associated with the lore of a particular giant, the fewer themes about them have been preserved in the text aggregates.

The folklore collections are rich, but they do not cohere on the basis of content. Rather, old mythological motifs can be found in the collections, such as dualistic creation myths, in which the world is shaped as the outcome of a competition between the god and the devil (*pagan*). The origins of specific landscape formations are also linked to similar competitions, or regarded as traces of the activities of giants.

Giants have some features in common with primal beings of nature: they turn to stone at sunrise; they are huge in size; sometimes they are cannibals; they can be one-footed or one-eyed, like the Cyclops. They also have motifs in common with traditions about saints and other discourses of folk tradition. The majority of giant traditions focus on the giants' social organisation, and explanatory tales justify the origin of specific land forms and noteworthy natural objects. For example, in Estonia, which is full of stones, it is important to explain how the stones originated and how they came to be located where they are in the landscape.

Models for explaining this phenomenon often include Kalevipoeg's joy in throwing rocks and legends of the Old Pagans (*vanapaganad*) as carriers of stones. However, in western Estonia and the islands, rocks are carried by the wife of the giant (*vanapagan* or Tõll).

Folklore about giants made its way into print beginning in the 18th century by means of overview accounts of local life and customs written by historically-minded Baltic Germans. For example, the first lengthy account of Tõll, the giant of Saaremaa, was written by the Baltic-German linguist, pastor and intellectual August Wilhelm Hupel (1737–1819) in part III of his most important work, *Topographische Nachrichten von Lief- und Ehstland*. This work, published in 1782, continues to be cited frequently in scholarly publications. By contrast, the first reports concerning Leiger appear at the beginning of the 19th century (Luce 1827).

At the beginning of the 20th century, folklore texts, tales of origin, and explanatory tales began to appear in the Estonian language through the mediation of folklorists, such as the books of Matthias Johann Eisen and his series titled *Estonian Mythology* (Eisen 1901, 1910, 1913, 1920, 1924, 1926a, 1926b, 1926c, 1927, 1930, etc.). The two decades following the Second World War saw the publication of academic editions documenting the areas of dissemination of giant tales and describing the richness of their thematic range (Kalevipoeg stories by Laugaste & Normann 1959; about Töll, Leiger, and others by Laugaste & Liiv & Normann 1963; about Vanapagan by Laugaste & Liiv 1970). Despite the fact that in some of these works, there is a tendency on the part of the compiler to connect smaller themes into a larger whole, these occurrences can be regarded as exceptions, as contaminations of the corpus by narratively unelaborated stories joined together mechanically.

One area of application of giant folktales relates to natural and archaeological monuments, where the exemplary folktale was incorporated into the legend of the monument. Thanks to monuments, folktales about giants came to have their place in nonfictional works on local history and thematic photographic albums, such as Helmut Joonuks' *Kalevipoeg's Places* (Joonuks 1982). Among printed texts intended for a smaller, interested readership, there are texts that pursue historical explanations for folktales and natural objects. One noteworthy author in this category is the Estonian language teacher Eduard Leppik, who uses drawings and comparisons with local history as an explanatory model, arriving at the conclusion that the landscape form spoken of as Kalevipoeg's horse actually refers to trenches dating back to the Russian-Swedish war (e.g. Leppik 2001). The value of such publications is the recreation of cultural history for mass consumption, and the creation of multiple meaningful connections between local landscape, folklore, and cultural history. Later on, creation stories have found their way into collections of local folktales; such volumes began to be composed at the end of the 20th century, and have continued to expand in the 21st century. Tales of giants' deeds can also be found in these works, as, for example, in the Mulgi Cultural Institute collection compiled by Kalle Gaston (1999) and authorised amplifications authored by Henno Käo (2001).

THE TRANSFER OF TÖLL INTO MEDIA

The 19th and 20th centuries in Estonia were significantly shaped by epic discourse. Bruce Lincoln (2000), a philosopher and researcher of myths, has called attention to a long-term cultural process during which the epic mode and the existence of epics became the measure of dignity for history and culture, along-

side the dichotomy of high and low. Besides the biblical lands and the cultural space of Greece and Rome, the 18th century translation of the *Poetic (Old Norse) Edda* valorised the culture of Germanic Scandinavia, creating a place for it in the ‘circulatory system’ of ancient high cultures. For Estonia, the core text – also a hit text – was the epic published by Fr. R. Kreutzwald in the years 1857–1861, based on narratives about giants and articulated in the form of alliterative folk poetry (*regivärss*). This epic was *Kalevipoeg*, extended and supplemented by themes of the author’s own creation. To date, this is the most frequently translated work of Estonian literature into foreign languages,¹ resulting in the inclusion of Estonians among ‘peoples of the epic’. At the time of its publication, *Kalevipoeg* was the longest original secular work of literature in the Estonian language. Thus the epic had an influence on general processes of self-consciousness and self-perception. It is reported to have been read out loud in the taverns, just like newspapers (Tedre 2003). One should not underestimate the significance of the fact that in the 19th century, excerpts from the epic were included in readers and Estonian-language textbooks; this was a crucial facet of the epic’s transformation into a core text. In later periods, the epic has continued to be included in the school curriculum and it has become a focal point of texts generated by cultural professionals.

It must be remembered that a core text is also a canonical text. This means that it is possible to set oneself into opposition with it or become accustomed to it; one can elaborate on it and research it. For example, the folklore bibliography points out that the epic has been one of the most productive topics of research in the humanities (cf. Ribenis 2002).

Almost a century after the publication of the first Tõll stories, the poet, musicologist, and amateur scholar Martin Körber (1817–1893) wrote a German-language overview of them. Körber was known as a proponent of the theory of sung epics, which had been a major topic for discussion for almost a century. Tõll fulfilled Körber’s expectations regarding the requirements for a national hero: he was a leader and elder for his people, a man of formidable strength, a hero and a warlord. Körber asserts as much in the second volume of his work, *Oesel Einst und jetzt* (Saaremaa Before and Now) (Körber 1887: 150ff.). Tõll’s activities as a leader of his people are foreign to the folktale form, belonging rather to the writer’s world of fantasy. The wish to confirm the lasting impact of the Tõll epic impelled Martin Körber to send Jakob Hurt repeated enthusiastic reports about the singers of the *Kalevipoeg* cycle and singers representing other longer epic cycles (cf. Laugaste & Liiv 1970).

Tõll’s features as a leader of the people are foregrounded in the book, *A Little Box of Old Treasure, or Saaremaa’s Hero, the Great Tõll*, written by Peeter Süda (1830–1893), a man of letters from Saaremaa. Süda was enthusiastic about the

opportunity to bring the heroic saga about the giant and defender of the people of Saaremaa to a broader public, using folkloric texts to do so. His ambition was to provide an appropriate local alternative to *Kalevipoeg*. This book was very popular among readers both on the islands and on the mainland, since the author had arranged the individual stories into a coherent whole; the book was easy to read, and it was important locally for constructing an image of ‘our own hero’. Thus, albeit as a prose narrative, and almost thirty years after the publication of *Kalevipoeg*, the Töll epic was born.

One of the cultural highlights of the 1980s was the screening of Rein Raamat’s animated cartoon film *Suur Töll* (Töll the Giant). The scenario is based on Peeter Süda’s Töll book (Süda 1883) with additional ideas drawn from folklore collections. The images of Töll and other characters were drawn for the film by the artist Jüri Arrak. A particularly psychedelic nuance was added by Lepo Sumera’s soundtrack, the slow, epic quality of the action, and a very laconic script. A book based on the film, titled *Suur Töll*, was published two years later with illustrations by Jüri Arrak (Raamat 1982). The two- or three-eyed devil and the clumsy Töll provoked both enthusiasm and criticism, as well as a great deal of discussion. *Suur Töll* was popular among the artistic elite, but the artist’s representation of the *Suur Töll* story was mesmerising as well as emancipatory, awakening young people’s interest in folklore.

A critic holding the viewpoint of teachers and parents raised the question of whether it was right to frighten children, and whether it was ethical to show principal characters as nauseatingly revolting creatures (Niineste 2010). Arrak’s pictures were dominated by blue-violet colour tones and the enemies were depicted as an anonymous mass wearing hats that belonged either to the Ku Klux Klan or lepers. As a whole, the visual representation successfully distanced itself from the romantic style of depicting ancient history, thus making room for new paths of interpretation.

While Peeter Süda cut a path for the folkloric giant to enter print media, Arrak’s book had a major influence on its later versions. In 2014 popular writer Andrus Kivirähk published another Töll book consisting of free-form texts narrated in a conversational tone. The author used imagery similarly to oral texts, with frequent allusions to the present day, telling the old stories in a contemporary style, with a generous helping of humour.

Kivirähk’s book drew upon Jüri Arrak’s cult illustrations. Arrak himself regards Kivirähk’s text as having restored the power of nature to Suur Töll: “At first he was a large horrible creature, but this text is more mystical, more powerful with regard to nature” (Ringvaade 22.10.2014). The writer ventured the modest claim that his was a book neither for children nor for grownups, best situated in the same category as Greek myths (ibid.).

GIANTS IN CONTEMPORARY MEDIA

Next, let us look more closely at a music clip and two advertising clips characterised by a plentiful use of cultural quotations. The first is an advertisement for consumer protection; the second for a series of Kalev² chocolates (the Epic series).

In her analysis of visuality as a part of phraseology and advertisements, Anneli Baran has emphasised the importance of multiple meanings in the perception of the text. These meanings are deployed on three levels: a) the level of quasi-visual imagination located in the individual; b) the level of knowledge (frames, scenarios, scripts); and c) the conceptual-metaphorical level (Baran 2008). In the present case, allusions are created by the pictures, though the level of knowledge, that is, cultural and semantic literacy, is also important. Anneli Baran points out that when interpreting an unknown expression, the viewer relies on associations, and the resultant explanation is more or less aligned with the most contemporary meaning (ibid.).

A singer in the Estonian ethno-rock band Metsatöll has confessed to a deep fondness for Arrak and Raamat's animated cartoon film, which influenced him in his youth.

Metsatöll's music clip *Only Bravery* (2010)³ is built up around cultural quotations: one text is used to amplify the message of another. In the background of the musical piece we see the musicians performing in alternation with excerpts from Rein Raamat and Jüri Arrak's animated cartoon film. The visual background supports the band's rugged music; two well-known symbols are interwoven, resulting in a synthesis.

By contrast, in an advertising clip sometimes many verbal and visual styles can be mixed together. This can be seen in the consumer protection advertisement, *Kalevipoeg Performing for the Metsatöll band*⁴. In the text, imitations and improvisations of folk poetry (*regivärss*) alternate with ordinary language, while the visuals narrate the meeting between the epic character Kalevipoeg and the cult band – Kalevipoeg's failed trial performance for the rock musicians.

The blond, long-haired Kalevipoeg, dressed in a stylised ancient robe, plays an electric *kannel* (zither). Suddenly, the strings break, accompanied by abundant puffs of smoke, and just as in the epic, the slight hero receives advice from a hedgehog. Instead of striking the enemy edgewise with boards, the viewer hears a reminder that Consumer Protection Board can help in a bad situation.

The frames of the slight Kalevipoeg, the electric *kannel* and the hedgehog alternate with the Metsatöll singers, depicted as serious-faced giants dressed in black. They are all listening to and evaluating Kalevipoeg's musical performance. On the visual level, self-referential and self-generative characters

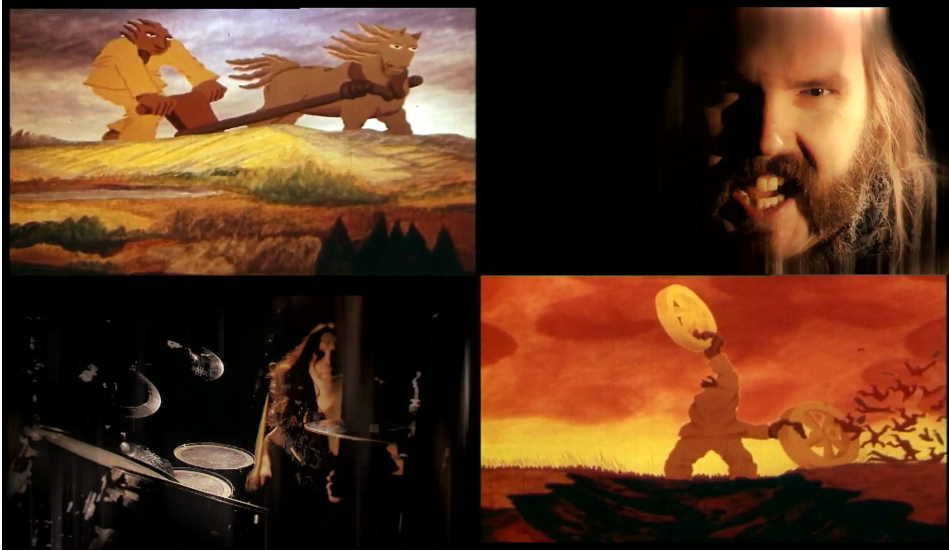


Figure 3. Metsatöll, Vaid Vaprust (*Only Bravery*) on Youtube, using images from Suur Töll.



Figure 4. Images of Kalevipoeg. 1–2. Kalevipoeg is doing audition for the Metsatöll band. Advertisement for Consumer Protection Board. 3–4. Tastes to remember (Kalev chocolate advertisement).

are placed side by side: the cult band, the weak Kalevipoeg, the practical, matter-of-fact hedgehog. The fact that all the components and characters are generally known supports the multiplication of allusions, comic elements, and shared interpretations.

The text of the advertising clip is composed of four segments, and begins with Kalevipoeg complaining about his new musical instrument falling apart just after the end of the warranty period:

Kalevipoeg: *Look at this kannel, it's almost new and the one-year warranty just ended yesterday.*

This is followed by the hedgehog's advice in the style of improvisation, in the style of folk poetry, and a neutral style sentence offering information about consumer protection.

Hedgehog: *Kalevipoeg, don't cast your music into the corner, take your tune to the toilet!
Your right to submit a complaint to a merchant lasts for two years. Stand up for your rights, see tarbijakaitseamet.ee.*

The fourth phrase is self-referential once again, and returns to Kalevipoeg's failed audition, while the verbal text generalises the message of the advertisement:

Metsatöll: *One can see that the boy wants; come back as soon as your instrument is in good working order!*

Kalev's chocolate advertisement, *Tastes to Remember...* (2012)⁵ also relies on allusions. The uploader of the series of Kalev chocolates (the Epic series) made the following comments on February 14, 2012:

*In an epic bow to our proud stock, Kalev's three traditional chocolates, Kalevipoeg, Linda, and Kalev have been brought together in the Epic series. The new packaging concept was developed by the advertising agency Identity.*⁶

In the clip, the viewer, who is in the position of the primary narrator, is leafing through an old book. In the illustrations, scenes from Kalevipoeg's agrarian life slip by: the eagle flying over the land; Kalevipoeg ploughing; the giant pulling a boat up on the shore; the giant on a ship, pulling shipwrecked people up on the deck; Kalevipoeg lying on the grass chewing on a straw. These pictures emphasise characteristic epic motifs.

In the background, one can hear the epic voiceover, built around folk proverbs and parodies of old proverbs recited in verse; the soundtrack is in the background, played on a traditional instrument, the *kannel*.

A man works and then he manages, when he manages, then he rows, softly, that must have been a mistake; if you see a mistake to deplore, come and help, when the man helps, he speaks; when he speaks, he thinks, when he thinks, he thinks for a long time, if it's for long time, then it's with wood; with wood, striking, flat, of course. What can you do, that's how it is, and what it was, is in his mind, and what's in his mind is on his tongue, and it is good. A taste to remember.

One of the proverbs used in the text is *Tasa sõuad, kaugele jõuad* (If you row softly, you will get far) – a popular new proverb or aphorism; also, some traditional proverbs are used, such as *Kus viga näed laita, seal tule ja aita!* (If you see a mistake to chide, come and help!) (EV 14006) and *Enne mõtle, siis ütle!* (Think before you speak!) (EV 7041).

When he thinks, then he thinks for a long time could be an allusion to the slowness of the stereotypical giant (or of Estonians in general). An analogue can be seen in the anecdote of the ‘three slow ones’ (three trolls, three Finns, or three Estonians). They ponder something silently for what seems to be an eternity, before making the briefest of comments. Thereupon the third one, disgusted, leaves the company of these ‘chatterboxes’.

In the next part of the text, a transfer of content occurs through allusions to the epic, where the hedgehog suggests to the hero that he hit the enemies with the boards of lumber – edgewise, rather than flat.

The text continues with a pair of new proverbs: *Mis meelel, see keelel; mis keelel, on hää* (‘What’s in the mind, is on the tongue’, and, ‘What is on the tongue is good’), followed by a generalising advertising slogan from a completely different register. The level of knowledge allows the viewer to enjoy the analogies to well-known sayings by using similar scripts, but these also serve to alter the boundaries of understanding.

FROM CORE TEXTS AND MEDIA BACK TO FOLKLORE AND SOCIAL SPACE

The texts of the preceding advertisement clips are part of the living process of folklore, which includes creating parodies of proverbs, making links between the parodic forms and the original proverbs, generating imitations of alliterative folk poetry (*regivärss*) in an ethnically marked fashion, and using devices derived from folk narrative that inflate or exchange the attributes of characters (for example, replacing the gigantic Kalevipoeg with a delicate young man and representing the folk rock singers as tall as giants). The richness of devices and forms is used to create a cohesive whole point strongly to the existence of

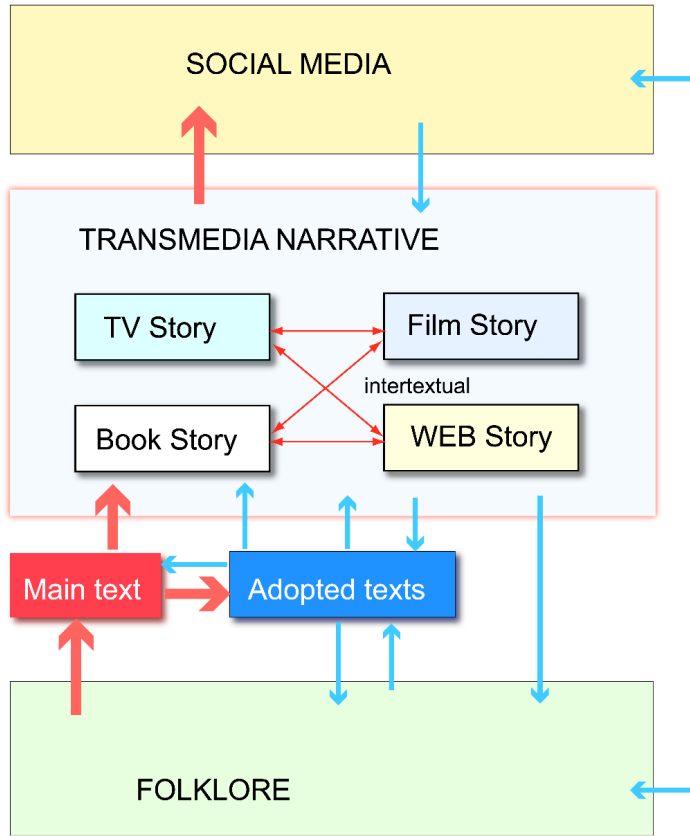


Figure 2. Folklore and transmedia narrative.

knowledge, characters, poetics, textual devices, and scripts that are shared in the cultural space; one can draw upon any of these, or parody any one of them. This is also an ideal example of the way that today's media texts amalgamate things, and the wealth of devices that they have at their disposal.

Here it is appropriate to mention another general tendency: the prominence and media success that are achieved when a work or a character causes a flow of various sayings, jokes, and aphorisms back into folklore (on Estonian sayings see, e.g., Peebo 1997).

An excerpt from the 16th tale of the epic *Kalevipoeg* was recirculated into 20th century imagery, the culture of verse albums, photos, and memory albums, thereby acquiring an aphoristic quality:

*Ülemaks kui hõbevara,
kallimaks kui kullakoormad,
tuleb tarkus tunnistada.*⁷
Wisdom should be deemed
Greater than silver
Dearer than loads of gold.

In figurative speech, *kalev* / *Kalevipoeg* (originally a signifier of physical size and strength, cf. Annist 2005: 307ff.) has come to be a marker of the Estonian, either as an ethnonym or as a basis of comparison; also *Töll* was used in figurative speech (Justkui 1998–2005). The same semantic field was evoked in a recent television series with comic overtones, *The Kalevipoegs in Finland*, depicting the lives of construction workers. The expression *Kalevite kange rahvas* (Kalevs' strong nation) is a stock phrase that has spread as a quotation from scholarly texts (cf., e.g., Lang 2012) into everyday speech. Whereas the poet Johannes Semper used this phrase in the national anthem of the Estonian SSR, a present-day NGO that specialises in organising fantasy games has chosen *Kalevite kange rahvas* as its official name.

Expressions from the epic, such as “When all the pine splints burst into flame at both ends”, and “Kalev will come home one day, bringing happiness to all his children”, have been culturally quoted slogans and sources of allusions both for literary writers and ordinary users. These quotations have also been central in identity-creating documents (the 1918 document, *Manifesto to All the Peoples of Estonia*).

These are only a few examples of the wider circle of dissemination for such expressions in social space, and they can direct our attention to the particular value of mythology and epic at historical junctures critical to establish definition as a nation. Indeed, they were foregrounded during the national movement at the end of the 19th century (cf. Viires 1990), and have continued to be emphasised during the 20th century, holding an important place both during the creation of the Estonian republic and in the years of Soviet annexation.

During both of the abovementioned periods (the interwar republic and the postwar Soviet period), the marking of streets and institutions with signifiers from the national epic was one possible means of national self-assertion. (After the Second World War, the name of the Estonian confectionary company was changed to Kalev, and brands of sweets were designated with names derived from the epic; similarly, the name *Töll* was given to an icebreaker ship).

Kalev, Sulev, Olev, and Linda became prominent choices for children's first names; emigrés named their new buildings and associations with ethnonyms and the signifiers of national figures (e.g. Tuisk 2001). Kalevipoeg was used in the rhetoric of speeches on festive occasions and in nationally-oriented consumer texts, both in the homeland and in communities abroad.⁸

One crucial marker of transmedia narratives is the extremely swift crossing of cultural borders by fantasy characters and their transfer from the media into material consumer culture. This is equivalent to the creation of a franchise. According to Jenkins, it is a well-known characteristic of cultural texts that they extend themselves into other cultural forms and into society. For Estonians and experts on Estonian culture, the epic and its protagonist, Kalevipoeg, are matters one must know about and cannot ignore. From the preceding examples it is clear that elements of an epic character or epic text have taken root in different segments of social space. During waves of migration and emigration from Estonia before and after the interwar Estonian republic, the national epic was taken along to faraway places and transplanted in the form of toponyms and group names.

We can assume that in some cases both market uses and the success of franchises are inscribed into certain epics. Examples of this include Kalevipoeg souvenir dolls and various other marketable products. In contemporary culture Kalevipoeg participates very broadly in the entertainment world, from computer games to souvenirs. There are hiking trails, travel programmes, museums, and theme parks connected with Kalevipoeg and Tõll, and the pub-hotel Tõll is a good example of transmedial extensions into the community.

However, in core (and mass media) texts and in their social uses there are implicit aspects pertaining to mentality. Having received a generative impulse from the same basic texts, they reveal their deep connection to group identity and complex social processes.

A setting or filming site may become a cult location, a destination for pilgrimages as designated by new tourism and religiosity. A work may be the starting point for religious groups or movements (cf. *Star Wars*, see also Dawson 2003, Lucas & Robbins 2004), indicating that its problematics are much broader than issues of sales success, the shaping of childhood landscapes, nostalgia, or cultural knowledge shared by multiple generations.

SUMMARY

Taken as an umbrella term under which one can situate folkloric characters, spontaneous dissemination of media texts, and relations between cultural space and social processes, transmediality is indeed an appropriate term for complicated dialogical processes.

Transmedia [---] implies a source-oriented process whereby a prototext is diverged into different individual metatexts in cultural space. Examples of transmediality would also include cinematic adaptations of a preexisting novel or the spontaneous ways certain motifs move from literature to music to painting, etc., in culture over time. (Ojamaa 2015)

As an intergenerational core text, the phenomenon of the epic has furnished a wealth of dense material to fill cultural space; in the 20th century elements of the epic have spread from one medium to another. The success of different subtypes and forms has been variable, and they have had recourse to a range of stylistic and formal resources. In the wake of the first printings of these texts, adaptations quickly emerged, facilitating the broadly-based, educational appropriation of the epic material. The creators of retellings and adaptations⁹ have included well-known literary figures such as Juhan Kunder (1885), Villem Ridala (1921), Eduard Laugaste (1960), Eno Raud (1961), and others.

In fact, Eno Raud's prose narratives about Kalevipoeg and Töll were so popular that they went through many reprints, and they were translated into Latvian, Ukrainian, Russian, Finnish, and German. According to the data of the National Library, in the years 1857–2002 there have been 17 reprints of the epic.

Nevertheless, adaptations weaken the canon, and it gradually becomes easier to transgress its boundaries emotionally and intellectually, resulting in parodies. In Estonian media space, parodies began to circulate later than they had in the realm of folklore. It was not until the 1970s (e.g. Vetemaa 1971; Rakke 2000; Kirsfeldt 2010; cf. Laitila 2003) that the professional media began to substitute antiheroes or ordinary people for heroes, thus arriving at the form of caricature.

The examples of Kalevipoeg and Töll indicate that in order to enter the media, a folkloric corpus requires an author who creates and gives shape to a specific tale – or, using the modern term, a storyworld.

There are far more thematically promising (perhaps even better?) motifs and elaborations in folklore than an author could possibly actualise, and these await their time in a state of latency. Media transfers from a work and the success thereof depend on a certain intracultural expectation. Indeed, there was already a certain preliminary social and cultural subscription to the figures of Kalevipoeg and Töll.

The dissemination of Kalevipoeg and Tõll in transmedia and culture has been multifaceted. In today's media space it is complicated to differentiate the epic *Kalevipoeg* from the folkloric Kalevipoeg, as well as variants of the character that have been spread through other texts in the cultural space. As such, the character is an amalgam of different sources constituting new generalisations. The same conclusion applies to Tõll, whose range of social impact has been more local from the beginning and its spread more limited than that of Kalevipoeg; in today's terms, the character of Tõll is a fusion of professional art and folklore.

Unelaborated (raw) folkloric texts about giants appeared in print relatively late and after longer intervals; they have entered the cultural circulation, often as mediators of other material. However, there is certainly a firm and enduring place for new media texts and consumer texts such as advertising clips, as the folkloric process embraces their multiplicity.

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NOTES

- ¹ The most recent of these translations have been published in the last five years: the translation into English in 2011, into Hindi in 2012.
- ² The biggest and oldest confectionary company in Estonia.
- ³ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-i3pwGGabE>.
- ⁴ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOenRu7mqTQ>.
- ⁵ It is worth mentioning that today there is a similar commercial for Suur Tõll chocolate (2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9xw52kGKNU>), "chocolate full of large peanuts".
- ⁶ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roFKVzvGdy4>.
- ⁷ Arvo Krikmann (1999) regards this expression as a biblical influence, though he acknowledges that it "has acquired oral circulation, later supported by school textbooks and other printed sources". The use of folklore in verse albums and aphorisms written on the backs of photographs was widespread in the 20th century.

- ⁸ This is a topic for a longer, independent investigation.
- ⁹ The National Library's list indicates that there are 21 works as of 1998.

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