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ABSTRACT

This work is an adaptation of Gerard Genette's theory of paratexts to social media. Paratexts are information surrounding texts, and usually helping the user to decide whether or not to consume a text.

In social media, a plurality of new information surrounds texts we read every day. They are dynamic by nature and have different authors: the social platforms, like Facebook or YouTube; the authors of texts, and the users who comment and share them.

This collection of four articles will debate the ethos in social media, what is an author in social media, what are the identified paratexts in selected social media websites and the limits of interpretation of paratexts in contemporary Brazilian literature cases.

The relation between text and paratext is more complex than it seems, as paratexts can be charged with information that sparks controversy, such as debates on race, gender, social class, territorialism and others.

The work opens the discussion on *how* paratextual elements can influence what we write and consume in social media, by analyzing how this surrounding information can be attached to texts by authors, by other users, by algorithms and other actors.

In addition to the analysis, the work proposes a framework that breaks down paratexts into three main categories: the author's paratexts, the audience's paratexts and the network's paratexts. Those unfold in numerous subcategories, based on the interfaces of numerous user-generated content websites.

Lastly, the research analyzes the main differences between the original paratext concept by Gerard Genette, conceived with print media in mind, and the new landscape of digital media. By careful comparison and contrast, the work proposes a new term, *paramedia*, to define the information that surrounds user-generated texts in social media.

One of the conclusions, as well, is that readers now have a new role in creating text affiliations. Social media users are logs of "watched videos" or "liked posts", and those influence which paratexts will be shown when they navigate these networks. Paramedia is heavily based on user data and textual data, and this new way of reading, writing and existing in media must be observed closely.

Keywords: paratexts, peritexts, social media, digital content, content strategy, data-driven decision-making, intertextuality, literary theory

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FOREWORD

A great part of the academic production in digital humanities needs a reinvention: a renovation, a *disruption*. When it comes to researching events of large scale – millions of Facebook users, millions of Instagram profiles -- a new form of partnership with technology academy, a new dialog with the private sector, a broader use of technology in researching humans, machines and their interactions.

I have noticed this with my work, which could simply not encompass everything I wanted. In order to make the most out of my resources, what I proposed is a general framework that can be seen, right up front, whenever someone is faced with a text published in a social media website which makes use of user-generated content. I felt this was more important than say that I've looked into a hundred blogs and concluded a few things.

I have also noticed that when taking a full-time job as a research consultant in the communication business. While the consumer technology research is evolving at extremely rapid speed, academics researching user-generated content are still promoting their disconnected impressions based on small slices of an ocean of information. That is a waste of time. The disconnection between academics, innovation, private sector and large amounts of user data is harming the potential for critical thinking that the Humanities – and only the Humanities – have.

I am fortunate of having had an awesome guidance from Prof. Raine Koskimaa, pioneer of hypertext research, and the experience of working in the largest communication group of the Nordic countries, the Nordic Morning Group. I have also a 1-year-old boy and work out every day to keep a six-pack. At times, fighting the weather, the competition, academic bullies and sleepless nights -- it hasn't been easy. But the reward has been much more than I have ever expected. Thank you, Raine.

I dedicate this work to my family in Brazil, my wife Noora and my son Amos.

Jyväskylä, 1.10.2017
Sérgio Luiz Tavares Filho

FIGURES

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

I   Tavares Filho, S. L. (2012). Writing in social media: Ethos. In *Why do we write as we write?* (Tavares Filho, S. L., Ed.) Oxfordshire: Inter-Disciplinary Press.

II   Tavares Filho, S. L. (2013) What Yoko Ono had for breakfast: what is an author in Twitter? In *Media in Transition 8 Online Proceedings.* Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology

III   Tavares Filho, S. L. (2015) Paratextual Prometheus. Digital Paratexts on YouTube, Vimeo and Prometheus Transmedia Campaign. In *International Journal of Transmedia Literacy* 1 (1)

IV   Tavares Filho, S. L. (2016) Operação Lísias. In *Peixe-Elétrico #5: Silviano,* (5)

CONTENTS

1   PROLOGUE

I'm a Millennial.

I actually belong to the only hybrid generation between X generation and Millennials: analogically-born and digitally-raised.

It's fair to claim that I am also an exemplary son of postmodernity (that is, if we can say that postmodernity actually ever took place). Being the elder of two brothers and with both parents with careers in Law, we have been taken care by television in the mornings, teachers in the afternoon, and parents in the evening.

We have been through many of the turmoil of those times. Parents with careers, television for kids, commodification of childhood. Divorce, litigation, VCR players. Suburbia house to urban apartment, women's struggle in the marketplace, economic recession, globalization of workfare, hyperinflation, television violence, sexualized popstars, MTV, televangelists.

In such a shifting scenario, there was one entity which was always there. It never failed us, it never judged us, it never let us alone -- the media.

Along came the internet. We were the first explorers of this exciting, un-explored new world. We were the first kids to use in mass, cultural scale communication devices such as IRC or ICQ, to surf Yahoo! or to build our own pages on Geocities and play World of Warcraft or Counter Strike in networks.

There we were, anonymously exploring never-before-reached distances, saying "hi" to people on the other side of the world, claiming our free Hotmail addresses, downloading the first Mp3 files with Napster (and following their battle in real-time at the news) and listening to them in Winamp; our Nokias could even send pictures.

Understanding what blogs were, in 1999, and finally seduced by their new interface in 2000, when the platform released their "amphetamines for your website" -- a funky layout that promised "Push-button publishing for the people", while Macromedia Flash was bringing a whole entire plasticity to the visuals on the web. Even cinema adopted low budget cameras and high-impact social talk around *The Blair Witch Project*.

In the mid-2000s we could slowly upload photos to our Fotolog, and watch (and upload) videos on YouTube, and were a bit freaked out with how Google could find what we wanted or what we meant, and so fast. It may be around that same time that we have started to connect to people we *actually knew*, and to create our own log of who we are, what we like, in what we believe, who we know (and, in Second Life, an entirely fictional world, if one was not enough).

The first social media websites started an explosion of narratives of the self, interconnected, and so much information became more valuable than ever to companies -- and governments, especially after 9/11.

If we were slowly getting back to the initial, couch-potato position, leaving connectivity to our moments at the computer, innovation soon reacted to that. Keeping the division between real life and "virtual" life seemed outdated after the first iPhone took the internet closer to us, and not the way around.

And here we are. My story happened in a southern city of Brazil. It also did happen, to greater or smaller extent, in most countries of the free world. Colors may change, titles may be different, and "Settings and preferences" be adjusted -- but media kept being there, evolving, much faster than ourselves.

1.1   Mediation

It is not a mystery the fact that I have a deep relationship with media. By the age of ten, I already knew I would be an advertiser. Having an essentially scientific and inquisitive mind, and being a little more "nerdy" than usual advertisers -- in the early 2000s, an Ok!Cupid online personality test once defined me as "a cool, modern nerd, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* type", and I stuck to its strikingly precise definition ever since -- I soon enough switched to market planning and strategy departments, conducting market research in various forms since the mid 2000s while I was an intern.

Media itself and its processes -- emission, reception, communication -- became a source of interest for me, and from Bachelor's Degree at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, my research has evaluated online communities of knowledge, especially IRC and philosophy.

Later on, one of the articles of my Master's Degree thesis at the University of Jyväskylä has investigated the process of media reception, and how channels acted as "limiting vessels" to an abstract message -- say, a crime transcribed in a police station, then on a trial, then published as a book and finally formatted for TV. While all messages about the event share a common soul, there is a variety of irreconcilable differences between the different modes of narration. The article ended up named *Mediation: foregrounding to merge down*, and its content is still valid to debate the nature, importance and functions of paratexts in digital contexts.

Paratexts are considered to be "liminal texts", or texts that constitute the thresholds that leads the reader to the text. Paratexts are considered as the sum

of epitext (texts placed far from the text) and peritext (texts placed near, or around the text)[1].

In user-generated content websites and other networks with social aspects, the paratexts gain a different characteristic, they are transient. At every share, embedding activity or reblog, the text may be the same, but its paratexts change.

Since early studies of paratext in print form, it has been debated if paratexts represent "a means of lending the text authority, originally the very attribute of the author"[2]. The question shifts to a different angle when paratexts in digital media start being produced on mass scale by virtually anyone, not only the author: how does this affect the text?

As paratexts are some of the most important aspects that help us to decide whether we will or not consume a text, it is important to identify, understand and research them in detail, because they entice a series of ideological statements. For example, I may see that a book has five hundred pages and decide I don't want to dedicate such amount of time to read it. The paratext and the medium's limit meet, giving out information about the content it mediates, even before reading.

In my Master's Degree article *Foregrouding to merge down*, the mediation process was divided into a series of conceptual boundaries that, together, would act managing the message flow.

While researching sources, I came across a number of articles dwelling with the medium appearance/disappearance. During the Master's studies, an acute text was Bolter and Grusin's idea of *Remediation*[3]. Two opposing ideas were keys: the *immediation* and the *hypermediation.* An immediate experience would be the one which provides, ideally, direct access between receiver and content. A virtual reality game played with Oculus Rift, for instance, is a good example. Hypermediation, on the other hand, is a message that underlines the controls of its content -- think of a game with complex menus, progress bars, scoreboards and so on, visible on its screen. The experience of the medium becomes part of the experience of the content. What does that have to do with the aforementioned game studies? Or with paratexts?

While paratexts were the breakdown of what surrounds the text, in *Mediation: foregrounding to merge down* I have looked into constituent parts of the text in order to understand how messages are composed, how each element influences its meaning and how (or if) they can be "distilled" in order to understand what is the core or essence of the message. The article looked into agents that form content as mediating agents, and named them as part of the mediating process as much as part of the content creation process,

> as interface mediation (TV screen, theatre screen, computer screen, paper); format mediation (feature film, TV series, book, magazine, blog etc.); perspective mediation

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[1]   Genette, 1987.
[2]   Maclean, 1991.
[3]   Bolter and Grusin, 1999.

(extra-diegetic: author, screenwriter, film director, intra-diegetic: narrator, point-of-view) and genre mediation (comedy, drama, horror, soap-opera, news etc).[4]

Even though the elements listed are mostly conceptual or abstract (such as "genre" or "format"), the synergy with the theory of paratexts, at this point, is evident. Consider, for instance, "format": what makes a certain text belong to a format is the concrete, physical format that it is delivered to the audience: "a book", "a TV series".

The format is entirely extradiegetic, outside the text, belonging even to a different ontological world (it does not belong at all to the diegetic universe of the text, but to the real world where the viewer lives in). Thus it is unequivocally a paratext. The influence over the text, however, is enormous: a TV series would expand the story to several hours of text, a short film would recreate it in a few minutes.

Surely, the question may be to what point it is the "same" text, and when it begins to be a different story, or version, or an adaptation of the original to a different format. The intertextuality between the texts, however, is the liminal point where this theory lives.

Theoretical tools in *Mediation: foregrounding to merge down* were presented to help with the analysis of texts by their abstract or concrete textual elements (the atmosphere of a scene or the cover of a book), and by their diegetic or extra-diegetic elements (the point of view of a character or the genre in which the text subscribes to). That's the coinciding and differing point with the approach of Gerard Genette and paratexts: as he defines them in the very first page of his book *Paratexts: thresholds of interpretation*, paratexts are "those liminal devices and conventions, both within and outside the book, that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher, and reader"[5], such as a book cover, the name of the author inscribed in the cover, or even the author's public statements about the text.

While paratextual theory was an extensive, thorough study of the *abstract influence of concrete elements* over texts, from the outside to the text's core, my (humble) article was a general, lean overview of what *abstract elements were concretely influencing* the text, from the core to the outside.

But I did not know of that interplay of theories just yet.

1.2   Interfaces

In those times, around 2009, one researcher at New York University was gaining relative visibility on his studies on internet protocol, surveillance and privacy. That was Alex Galloway, with whom I had established contact prior to my Master's Studies, while still evaluating what to study further into digital culture.

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[4]   Tavares Filho, 2010.
[5]   Genette, 1987.

At that time, Galloway had started a shift in his career that later on became quite evident: from hardcore digital media studies to more "classical" approaches to textuality. That was, to me, a bit of a downer, since he was a rising name when discussing these new paradigms created by the ubiquity of internet, and offered an applied, data-ridden "American view" of the studies of power, as an interesting and refreshing update to foucaultian or deleuzian approaches to the society of surveillance.

Back then, his research projects were still in transition from one scope to another, and I stumbled upon his "The unworkable interface" article, published in *The New Literary History*, and later on republished as the first chapter of the book "The interface effect"[6].

In the beginning of his article, he discloses an idea initially developed as a seminar on "the interface", at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, in 2007, and stats that "frames, windows, doors, and other thresholds are those transparent devices that achieve more the less they do"[7].

That evidently related to the ideas of Bolter and Grusin on hypermediation and immediation. But interestingly, Galloway proposes to take a look into interfaces as elements that, altogether, exert a political, social, interpretational power over the content they present. Galloway was calling to a more subjective approach to interface, as it seemed "rather common to understand interfaces less as surface but as doorway or window (...) Following this position, an interface is not something that appears before you but rather is a gateway that opens up and allows passage to some place beyond". Later on, I would cross this ideas with Genette's theory of paratexts, which had an uncannily similar definition to what paratexts are -- thresholds, liminal texts.

Galloway goes further on, evoking Marshall McLuhan's classical approach to "the medium is the message" and going further into the topic of interface and message, stating that

> "this definition is well-established today, and it is a very short leap from there to the idea of the interface, for the interface becomes point of transition between different formats. In computer science, this happens very literally; an "interface" is the name given to the way in which one glob of code can interact with another. Since any given format finds its identity merely in the fact that it is a container for another format, the concept of interface and medium quickly collapse into one and the same thing."[8]

At the time, that was extremely exciting, because Galloway was looking into similar abstract concepts, such as formats, containers and even challenging the idea that the medium is, simply, the message. All those ideas seemed in consonance with my perspective presented in *Mediation: foregrounding to merge down*. "All media evoke similar liminal transition moments in which the outside is evoked in order that the inside may take place"[9]. Again, later on, I could

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[6]   Galloway, 2012.
[7]   (ibid.)
[8]   (ibid.)
[9]   (ibid.)

draw the connection points between the perspectives of Galloway and Genette, when debating liminal spaces in textuality.

Galloway's work seemed to corroborate to the idea that more theoreticians were thinking about the topic, and that could be my object of research for the PhD. The missing link was still missing, though: the idea of purely discuss "mediation" seemed too broad, too abstract, and most likely, if feasible, would take several years of research until something objective would come out of the study. How to study, pure and simply, the mediation of messages? It was a topic which seemed entirely wrapped around abstractions, and that was not the type of study I was looking forward to conducting.

Containers and formats are also meaningfully examined from the perspective of the database. Lev Manovich stated that the database is the "new symbolic form of the computer age", exactly because of the way databases can be layered, selected and displayed in interfaces[10]. Paramedia has databases at its core. For instance, think of the essential structure of metadata and tags that organise the immense database of YouTube: it is what makes it readable, defining the way videos are displayed, interrelated, recommended and classified on YouTube. Furthermore, the commentary section is at the core of the interface (would YouTube be YouTube without the interface feature of the commentary?). The interface introduced such praxis of commenting the video content, and its algorithmic judgement defines how these audience responses are aggregated, displayed and ordered in the commentary section.

The praxis of content production within a certain interface creates new meanings, being a live manifestation of how culture evolves, creates new byproducts and entirely new forms of expression. In her essay about interface epistemology, Caitlin Fisher reminds us that "a struggle with interface is a struggle with meaning and knowledge production", and "working mindfully at the interface gives us new tools to build knowledge"[11].

We can see immediately the comparison to other theoretical approaches, such as Nielsen and Norman, who argue that interfaces should be "quiet, invisible, unobtrusive", whose work has been widely used by practicitioners (such as myself, at the private sector) in order to make *more efficient* interfaces[12]. This view essentially clashes with other approaches, such as Jay David Bolter and Diane Gromala, who argue that when "we will look through the interface, we cannot appreciate the ways in which the interface shapes our experience"[13]. Again, it's a problem of invisibility, frame and standardisation of an experience and a frame of thought.

The interface is, to a great extent, the facilitator of new discoveries and modes of existence through praxis, but also the authority that limits and formats these ways of meaning production. Interestingly, Nicole Starosielski builds on the concept of interface as skin, considering "the actual skin of the

10   Salah, Scharnhorst, Bosch, Doorn, Manovich & Chow, 2012.
11   Fisher, 2008.
12   Norman, 1999.
13   Bolter & Gromala, 2005.

interface is only significant to the user experience as means to extend their own reach: both the interface and skin of the subject is transcended". Similarly to Michelle White, who conceptualised screens as "porous"[14] and permeable in her study of webcams, Starosielski claims that the "permeability" of the interface skin is also a selective one, as the interface is much of "a perceived boundary which, at points, we cannot trespass"[15].

The interface also borders the idea of archival — it is by paratextual information that texts are classified and archived, and that is one new aspect of paramedia, as well, when it comes to the publicity, transparency and navigability of the archive. For example, it is quite easy to find YouTube videos based on video descriptions, or tweets using hashtags. But it becomes quite difficult to browse YouTube videos searching for the commentary of users, or Facebook public posts based on user-generated content. As G. Thomas Tanselle warns us about historical studies, "historians recognize that archives must be used with caution and that attempting to reconstruct the past from archival documents requires incessant acts of judgement". Historians may have the task to understand that even what is public, is not readily available, and the reasons vary from simply making content manageable and "findable", to privacy issues concerning users, or simply commercial interests from the few giants of user-generated content[16].

Considering the archival aspect, metadata is the pillar of the interface. I believe that relates more to the concept of paramedia — since it is external to what the user/reader *sees* — than the elements of design in the interface, which are an integral part of the text. It's an ambivalent matter. On the surface, in addition, is the interaction and the sense of agency users have towards the interface and, ultimately, towards the text. I will stick to the idea of interface even when it comes to interaction. I do not ambition to cover graphic design and interaction design in this work, despite the fact of conducing a number of experiments in the private sector for click-through optimization and lifting conversion rates with design and interaction choices. The interface has, embodied in its own conception, the function of contextualizing experiences — Google's Material Design[17] guidelines, for example, seek for the creation of laws of physics that exist only inside their interfaces, such as gravity, elasticity, temperature. Apple, on the other hand, as Michelle Whites puts it quite critically, seems to be designed to match the identity of "white, middle-upper class" who works in offices (and, may I say, apart from the engineer number crunchers and closer to designers and creative professionals)[18]. However interesting the interaction between text and reader is, I considered it to be more on the fascinating field of audience studies or spectatorship rather than in the conceptualization of paramedia and its manifestations in social texts.

[14] White, 2006.
[15] Starosielski, 2007.
[16] Tanselle, 2002.
[17] Google Material Design, 2015.
[18] White, 2007.

Beyond interface, in order to deepen the understanding of the subject-matter, I started to look into it from the perspective of genre studies, critical discourse analysis and such, but a more textual, literary perspective, focusing on the materiality of the text (and it's shifting, impalpable, even *liquid* characteristics). I went on looking deeper into the rabbit hole of medium and message, interface and content, without much empowerment.

"The unworkable interface" kept sparking ideas, but would not give me a real, objective perspective to work with. During the first semester of the PhD, I had presented an ambitious research plan to look deeper into the mediation process, renewing my commitment to media studies. However, it was stall. I had dug up a number of interesting authors that I would still use later on in my research, but no path was cleared up yet. I had spoken only with media and mediation authors, professors and researchers -- thus the perspectives were all coming from similar backgrounds and, pardon the pun, performing the same "convergence", as in "Convergence culture", from Henry Jenkins, the keynote speaker at the MIT in the conference where I first presented my PhD research findings.

I then traveled back to Brazil for holidays, with my then wife-to-be, and met a friend in São Paulo -- someone was about to talk about interfaces in a way that was less about very immaterial internet perspective and more about textual conventions and interfaces that were already culturally assimilated.

That's when Genette's theory of the paratext came into play.

1.3 Paratexts?

It was in São Paulo, in the busy Avenida Paulista, and its different scenarios, from financial towers to shopping malls, to art museums. We were leaving an electronic art exhibition and still reflecting about what we had seen -- the interactive works uncannily resembled a futuristic amusement park that would tap more into insightful reflections than fun per se.

But sure, it was a great deal of fun to be there and check, for instance, the eye of the Styrofoam bead storm in Nemo Observatorium, an installation created by Belgian artist Lawrence Malstaf.

Even more catchy was to see ADA (Analog Interactive Kinetic Sculpture), by Berlin-based artist Karina Smigla-Bobinski: a gigantic inflatable ball, fully spiked with chalk pencils, which create drawings on the tight room walls as visitors push it up into the air. To pose a classical, rhetorical question from the pioneers of net.art, "where does art happen"? Who was authoring the work? Where does the work start, and where does it end? What kind of framing is it subjected to, and what kind of frame does it break? It was clear that "the space of the book is not a neutral one[19]", and the possibilities of similar analyses towards the screen seemed promising and exciting.

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[19]   Fisher, 2011.

Back to São Paulo, at the Paulista Avenue, my wife-to-be and my best friend, a local artist, went on to buy chocolate in a small gallery, before we could find a cafe to sit down and discuss. I was left momentarily with my friend's brother, a literature professor from Unicamp/University of California Santa Barbara. I talked to him about my ambition of writing a doctoral thesis about mediation, and explore how the medium shapes only *part* of the message, and how reception, genre and audience studies could tell more about it.

How to describe the phenomenon that media messages would actually be shaped continuously, through some sort of mediating tunnel, subjected to a number of influences and interpretations. My ambition was to distill these processes, considering a variety of abstract concepts: what is, for instance, "a fact"? And what happens to it until the audience receives the TV news message?

At this point, one can remember classical literary theory, which stresses that it is impossible for any writer to describe the entirety of one story, since everything is perception and framing[20].

I posed to my friend the question of the limits of the text. All he could say, in a quick yet insightful indication, was that it did resemble the theory of the paratext, by Gerard Genette.

Soon after, my wife came back with my old friend, holding a box of chocolates. They had found all sorts of *doce de leite* toffee and other goods to sweeten our passage through São Paulo. That was 2011, and paratexts became my heart-shaped box ever since.

When comparing Genette's approach to Galloway's, the synergy is uncanny: according to Galloway,

> the interface is this state of 'being on the boundary.' It is that moment where one significant material is understood as distinct from another significant material. In other words, an interface is not a thing, an interface is always an effect. It is always a process or a translation.[21]

That was closely, very closely related to Genette's idea of boundaries and liminal texts, the "reading before reading", but still an integral, constituent part of the text. I had a match, and needed to scope further the idea so that it would become, finally, a faster track to develop the doctoral thesis.

In the contemporary web, the user-generated content and the sharing culture are driving forces of textual production -- and a main force in paratextual production, as well. According to Genette, "(T)he function of recommending usually remains implicit because the mere presence of this type of preface is in itself a recommendation"[22]. This relates immediately to the culture of shared content with commentary on Facebook or Twitter, for example.

There have been also observations on how paratexts, when analyzed over diachronic perspective, working even as transformations in textual perception,

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[20]   Eagleton, 1983.
[21]   Galloway, 2009.
[22]   Genette, 1997, p. 268.

such as a non-canonic text being, along the years, perceived as a canonic one, as in Aimé Césaire's book "Cahier d'un retour au pays natal"[23].

Conversely, the idea of framing is not at all new, especially when it comes to turning texts into a more palatable version of their originals. A classic example is the first English translation of Boccaccio's Decameron[24]. While translation had played a part in altering the original meaning, title-pages, rubrics, illustrations and dedications made the text more ease on the reception for English readerships[25].

The same with modern media, as "paratexts have also been known to offer orientation to the reader in modern media, such as film or television"[26].

Objectively, paratexts are the rhetorics of space -- and when it comes to *paramedia*, the concept introduced and advocated by the present work, networked space comes into play, since besides the paratextual frame of the webpage, texts are usually a few clicks away from their respective paratexts. In many cases, texts are already embedded in the page the user is reading, such as videos in autoplay at Facebook[27].

It is, however, on the subjective aspects of paratextual interpretation that the paratextual meanings open up. The political function of paratexts is a powerful one. On one hand, it may give texts a manageable identity, but also flatten the subjective aspects of films in separating them inside predefined "genre boxes"[28] or "power plays that subsided in gender issues"[29].

More authors, such as historian Elizabeth Eisenstein, looked into the matter of motivation and surrounding texts, addressing
"what title pages, prefaces, and other liminal devices can reveal about what we imagine we are doing when we pick up and make our way into a printed book"[30].

Thus "the seemingly minor spaces and places federated by Gérard Genette under the term paratext take on a major role" when it comes to specific minority textual production, such as African American freedom struggle. In the process of introduction, prefatorial introduction and legitimation, "white-written prefaces to fugitive slave narratives are vivid examples"[31].

Subversion was also a way of slipping in "politically or morally loaded ideas"[32]. Such as in late eighteenth century repertoire theatre, where notes and production details and context could influence meaning, and "a connection can be traced between the literary and the historical tools of analysis through these paratextual elements of repertoire"[33].

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[23]   Watts, 2000.
[24]   Boccaccio, G., Aldington, R., & Boschère, J. D., 1930).
[25]   Armstrong, 2007.
[26]   Mittel, 2015.
[27]   Claes, 2010.
[28]   Flanagan, 2010.
[29]   Nixon, 2002.
[30]   Sherman, 2007.
[31]   McCoy, 2006.
[32]   Váásquez, 2011.
[33]   (ibid).

Genette's ideas on paratexts are by no means immune to criticism. Many have claimed the theory is not waterproof, and I bring one summarized comment to the main problem with it, which is also the cornerstone of my proposition to the term *paramedia:* the idea that in paramedia "there is no there" (to use a renowned quote from Gertrude Stein[34]) and thus there is no near or far. As Chris Koenig-Woodyard states,

> Genette is interested in the relationship between books and readers—and, at times, in how other discourses by authors and publishers stand between books and readers. This, however, is a tricky terrain to map. And if there is a difficulty in following Genette's conception of the paratextual, it is located in this cartographically blurry critical space (or, "threshold") which, for Genette, has no fixed location[35].

Thus, not only paratext vary from text to text, the "location" of epitext and peritext also find no clear definition.

Yet on another level, the discussion of paratexts as thresholds of fictional and real worlds is a wide one, and those have been expanded in the prefatorial analysis of Nabokov's *Lolita*, which addresses to the type of inspiration that generated the story in the first place, stirring the never-ending controversy between author, character, fact and fiction[36]. The Mexican writer Sara Sefchovich, for instance, attributes a strong narratological function to her paratexts -- they are inscribed to the text as notes taken in the studio where she writes the novel, bringing her physical authorial presence to the text by use of those paratextual spaces[37].

The paratextual space has also been of counteraction, subversion and resistance, as in "clandestine editions printed in Brussels in the 1860s, the Parnasse satyrique du dix-neuvième sièècle and Gautier's Les Jeunes-France", where exiled publishers introduced texts anonymously in secret literary circles[38].

Paratexts were, as well, historically understood as "familiar presentational devices and conventions such as the acknowledgments, notes, contest rules, and preface", in which their subverted use were presented as "to seem anxious, extravagant, curiously stylized"[39]. An early subversive use of the paratextual information is on the third book of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship Years*) in which readers are faced, before the text, a fold-out page, a musical score that provides a setting for the poem[40].

Classical literary examples of subversion and transtextual experiments through paratexts are present, for instance, in Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, where "the devices normally resorted to in narrative texts are carried beyond their usual limits through the inordinate and fanciful dimensions taken on by Kinbote's

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[34]   Stein, 1937.
[35]   Koenig-Woodyard, 1999.
[36]   Richardson, 2008.
[37]   Bermúdez, 2009.
[38]   Valazza, 2011.
[39]   Zuba, 2016.
[40]   Cave, 2011.

critical apparatus to a poem entitled "Pale Fire". The resulting intricate and subtle interdependence of these texts on one another produces a complex system of narrative levels in which each level must be qualified in a number of ways (e.g., the poem functions both as an embedding and an embedded discourse of the "Commentary" while, narratologically speaking, the poem and the "Commentary" taken together are subordinated to the "Foreword"). (...) Nabokov's text is radically fragmented, both syntactically and semantically, so that its reordering ultimately depends on the "paratext" supplied by the reader."[41]

Paratexts, in summary, are this potentially "magic" portal between worlds, and also what defines the text – in the literal sense of telling where it starts and where it ends. This "binding effect" may be seen on the ever-expanding "text" produced by a Twitter hashtag (a collective text written by users activating the tag and adding their "tweet" to the body of text). The "binding" relates to ancient writings, as well. It can be seen as an ambiguous liminal space, like the case of Psalm 1, from the Judeo-Christian Bible, "which was traditionally described as a preface to the whole book of Psalms". In late antiquity, St. Jerome has understood the Psalms as "a large house with many rooms: each individual room has a door and a key (its title), and the house as a whole has one door (Psalm 1) and one key."[42]

It's increasingly interesting to combine the ideas behind these possibilities with the digital text. The relationship between paratexts and hypertexts have also been discussed, and it is at the core of the concept of paramedia. Basically, "with the Web, hypertext has become the paradigmatic rhetorical structure of a global and distributed archive", in the words of Rune Dalgaard[43]. It may be even fair to claim that the concrete objects of paramedia are *hypertextual paratexts*. But the gravity center of the concept is not "the paratext" or "the hypertext", but the readership created by the interplay of these elements. As Dalgaard claims, as early as 2001 (although by no means this is an early study of hypertext), it seems necessary to "a rejection of the reductionist opposition of hypertext and the fixed linear text, in favor of a study of the intertexts, paratexts and metatexts that work at the interface between texts and archive"[44].

In detective fiction books, paratexts had been to guide the reader through text and footnotes in order to solve crimes. The paratexts had the very essential function as the ones observed in the social text examined by this book, such as "extratextual authority" -- that is, an external view, unbiased -- in order to help the reader to solve the mystery[45]. The mix between real and fictional paratexts become a further mystery to be solved by the reader, much like in the case of Operation Lísias, the last article of this work[46].

To a great extent, social media has reorganized how we communicate, how we produce texts and even how we live. Thus, when it comes to analyzing

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[41]   Pier, 1997.
[42]   Pelttari, 2014.
[43]   Dalgaard, 2001.
[44]   (ibid.)
[45]   Effron, 2010.
[46]   (Ibid.)

textual production, these external elements play a prominent role in the final text. Paratexts are particularly relevant for this environment, because of the complex network of forces that influence what is written, shared and read. As Berger states, "the study of paratexts therefore deals with the sociology of literature, the intellectual background of authors, texts and their environment"[47].

1.4   The author's name: the tip of the iceberg

Paratexts are conceptual tools developed by literary theorist Gerard Genette in 1987 in his book *Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation*. He had already coined the text earlier, in his book *Palimpsests,* but in here he extensively defines and explores the concept.

An important function of paratexts is the interpretation of what it makes visible. Take, for instance, the identity of an author -- for instance, turning visible the skin color, nationality, gender, age or religious preference of the author of a text. "Paratexts are also political tools, and they may entice or deepen notions of prejudice, as they give texts an "easy to handle" identity". Not only on the author side, but as well "When paratextual information states, for example, that a book belongs to "world literature" or "ethnic literature" may be marketing tools that highlight exoticism, but end up downplaying cultural differences between different types of literature"[48]. Settings and spatial positions may work to reinforce the influence of one specific paratext, in many layers of meaning. Beyond the giant typography stating the name of a known author in the cover of a pulpy novel, paratextual production can also be coordinated in the way to bring elements from *inside* the text to the *outside*. For instance, the same mannerisms and style of a Wes Anderson film (the symmetry, colors, quirky facial expressions) comes upfront to the film posters and trailers – which ultimately bring the paratext of the "author's persona" to the mix. Instead of simply introducing the reader to a text, the paratexts *remind* the reader that "the author is present" in each of the films[49].

Another way of the visibility enabled by paratexts is the very graphic entry of the name of the author. Fagan writes about this importance, for instance, in the anthology of essays published in 1981, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, by Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga. The book is considered "one of the foundational texts of U.S. third world feminism"[50]. The importance of the identification of authors as Latin-American women (and other non-white ethnicities) was essential in achieving the project's target, white middle-class American feminists. A similar paratextual practice has been studied by McHugh, who analyzed feminist genre communication

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47   Berger, 2004.
48   Alvstad, 2012.
49   Dorey, 2012.
50   Fagan, 2016.

with the paratexts in the opening credits of *Orange is the New Black*[51] (the series' opening credits present close-ups of body art, haircuts and other appearance details of stereotypical women under prison custody, and the author debates the validity of this representation).

Before arriving at the topic of authors and authorship, many other topics may be of interest to this complex discussion. For example: taking the goffmanean self-presentation theory for social contexts, used in my first article, where Goffman discussed how people tend to calculate the way they present themselves in public, and tailor their own image according to their goals and to the present audience[52], we can understand that the author is an entity whose presentation will define a lot on the perception of the text.

Gerard Genette defines paratexts in print books, being the name of the author one of the first presented. Here I dedicate a bit of time discussing the transposition of Genette's theory to the social web. This investigation helped me to shape and narrow down the topic discussed in the article *Authorship in Twitter -- What Yoko Ono had for breakfast*. Furthermore, having the debate around the name of the author right here, at the introduction, can be an essential example of how the paratext theory is broad, in-depth and relevant for the studies of textual surroundings.

Genette describes and exemplifies where, spatially, the name of the author may be inscribed (covers, back covers, introductory pages) and the different aspects that it may carry in anonymity, pseudonymity, onymity. The name of the author carries characteristics that will shape the perception of the author: is it a man or a woman? Is he a member of royalty? Is he a foreigner? The name of the author, to Genette, is part of the paratextual information (by his own definition, paratexts are thresholds to texts).

In social media, authors are presented (or better, present themselves) by basically three paratexts: the author's name (a real name, a pseudonym, or a user name that can be either a real name or a pseudonym), the author's image (a picture that represents the author, that may or not coincide with their real face), and the author's short biography (also known as the "about me" section, that freely describes the author, his/her blog, profile or activity in the network). Practices vary from social network to social network: a personal profile may matter more than the author's work, and a blog title may take the place of the author. Another important reference is the popularity of the author, related to the number of friends, followers or readers he/she has.

For a preliminary assessment of the name of the author paratext, the present work assessed the author's name position in Tumblr's main templates offered to users. 74% of the 50 main templates offered by this social network site did not display the name of the author. That comes, somewhat, as a reflection of what Michel Foucault idealized[53]: it matters more what is being said, not who is

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[51]   McHugh, 2015.
[52]   Goffman, 1959.
[53]   Foucault, 1967.

saying it. In order to create a hypothesis around the representation of the name of the author in blogs, in the initial phase of the present research, 50 Tumblr blogs were selected (the first 50 entries retrieved when searching popular tags like "design" and "personal blog"), 52% of the blogs will not display the author's name. Among users that displayed their names, 24% place it in the "About" section – signaling for the fact that it is secondary information. Furthermore, among users that displayed their names, 80% will only display their first names. Other practices also appeared: 8% of the users display their names as the Tumblr title (all of them displaying their full names): in these cases, the author *is* the blog Finally, 8% displayed it in the left sidebar (half of them displaying full name, and half displaying only the first name).
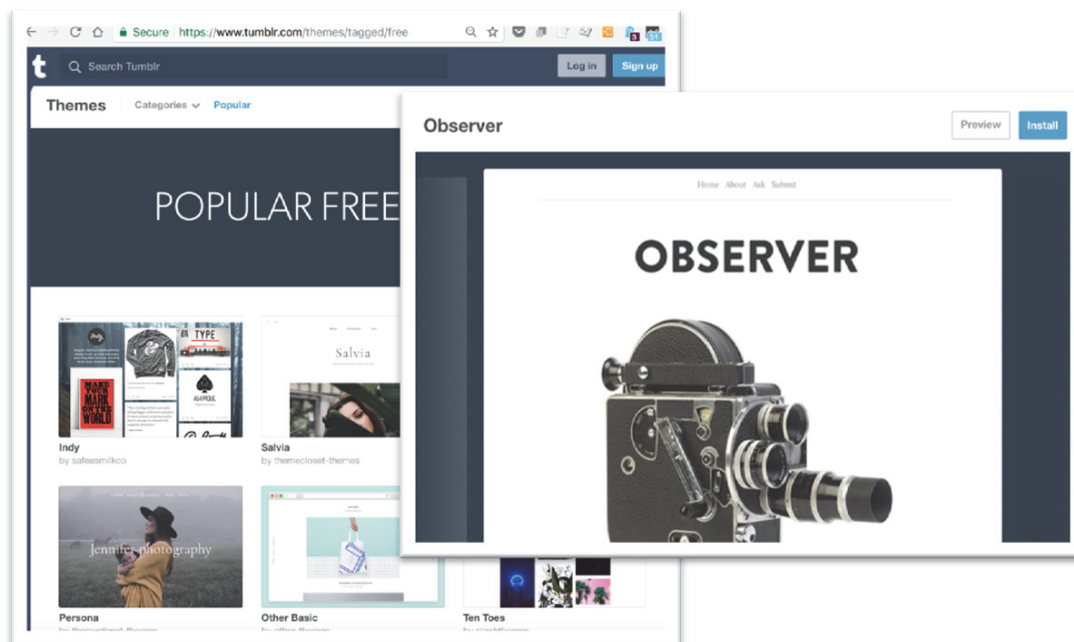
FIGURE 1   Popular free themes from Tumblr, and highlight from theme "Observer": "Home", "About", "Ask" and "Submit" are the suggested sections.

The number of followers of the blog was generally not displayed. Although not a representative statistical number, this preliminary sample and analysis rendered indications that the name of the author, by far, was not an upfront information such as in the authorship of books, for example. That raises interesting questions, such as: if we understand authorship of blogs in a similar manner as books or journals, why are many of them unsigned? When is the content more important than the author? Do blogs need an authorial signature, always? And so on.

In Twitter, the "full name" or "real name" of the user is highlighted, and in the next line the username is displayed. On the left of the textual information,

there is the picture/avatar of the user. Followed by that, a short biography written by the user is displayed. It generally displays the professional activity or personal interests of the author, age and location. Twitter's default suggestion to a biography / "about me" is "Rocket ship builder, pizza expert, loves the Giants, parent."[54].

The number of followers is highly regarded as credentials for an author. Not so much in absolute values, but rather in the relation between followers/followed by. Different profiles are defined by the following/follower behavior: few followers, lots of "following" is often perceived as attempts to gain popularity by force, and such practices are repressed by Twitter's regulations. A user that has more followers than users he/she follows is more likely to be seen as an accredited/interesting source of information.

A peculiar example would be the "formerly official" Karl Lagerfeld Twitter account. The author used even the paratexts the machine offers the user to make a statement: followed by thousands of users listed in the field "Followers", in the field "Following" nobody is displayed – The action "follow" here may have a variety of meanings and undertones beyond its function. Through the following /follower mechanic of Twitter, Lagerfeld is sending out the message that, as a designer, he is not following anybody – perhaps even in Twitter and in real life.

The account would display quotes, quips and aphorisms about fashion, life, business and work. Utterly inspired, they were collections of his appearances on media, condensed in a Twitter timeline. In here, the authorial content covers the entirety of the text (and the paratext, as well). Interestingly enough, after a few years online, the account has been deactivated and the real Lagerfeld started using Twitter: it turns out the author of the "original" account was an impostor (better said, an impersonator). When Lagerfeld himself started to Tweet, the text became a newsfeed of commercial releases of Chanel and his brands.

In the aforementioned case, it is not realistic to say the audience felt deceived, for the reaction was quite the opposite: when Lagerfeld himself uncovered the farce, shut down the Twitter account and opened his own, the purpose of the new account was mostly advertising, and what the audience seemed to feel was the loss of a humorous source of witty remarks. The farce made extensive use of the main mechanisms of attribution, as the tweets had the same qualities of Lagerfeld's public statements. The official account, however, does not seem to be updated by the mogul, but rather by an office of public relations. Two anonymities: a transparent anonymity by the fake Lagerfeld; a misleading authorship attributed to Lagerfeld himself, authored by the marketing team. Which one is the most truthful?

While Genette is more concerned in mapping the current praxis, and providing a brief yet insightful historical overview of the practices of publishing – Genette himself was not interested in the "mechanics of narrative", but helped to systematize the literary field and "helped to define and design a sup-

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[54]   Leonhard, 2012.

ple and sparkling structuralism"[55]. It was Foucault who more questioned and explored the function of the name of the author[56], although Genette has evaluated how the *actual manifestation* of this name – the inscription, the signature – has taken place. He says that in the future, perhaps this function will not matter as it historically did, since the 18th Century. That is beautifully aligned with the digital media scenario: replicating texts -- those shared on Facebook by thousands of people, with the indication of these thousands of likes, shares and comments -- stress content itself, not the author. Similarly, famous personalities may tweet and share Facebook updates that won't get nearly as much traction and popularity as the ones by regular users that sparkled something of relevance in users and "went viral". Still concerning the author name -- or the lack of need for an author name -- there is MemeBase, RageBuilder, Motivationals and other websites which publish content collaboratively without having the attribution to authors as a core function or distinctive paratextual element. The characters are "public", the stories are created individually, but are not usually bearing the author's signature. Similarly, viral movements like sharing or creating versions of the music video Gangnam Style or the Harlem shake may possibly be curious examples of what Foucault meant as *founders of discursivity*, that is, new and open ways of expression; a reinvention of the discourse itself.

1.5   Paramedia

This thesis advocates for the creating of a new term, *paramedia*. Thus, my task during this investigation has also been of evaluating if there would be a real need for a neologism, and, if so, to attribute it the proper meaning.

It seems that there is a tension that at times becomes too great when opposing writing in print to writing in digital media, or reading in print while reading (and writing, activities ties together) in digital media. I tend to believe that there are strong correlations between the two activities, and that Genette's framework provides a useful *literary* framework for describing these elements.

While paratexts are analogical, delimiting, definitive, authoritative (created by the negotiation between an author, an editor, a sponsor) and static, *paramedia* is fluid, plural (it may come from the readership towards the authorship), posthuman (it may come from the interaction between authors, readers and algorithms) and, ultimately, it's delimiting but dynamic (aggregating to a same container new texts produced with the same paratexts).

In a similar manner that paratexts surround texts, Genette explores a number of other concepts that unfold and surround the idea of paratexts. For instance, *hypotexts*, which are original texts that later on are developed into new texts, named *hypertexts. Hypertextuality* would be the study of the relationship

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[55]   Prince, 2010.
[56]   Foucault, 1984.

between texts. These concepts are broadly explored by other scholars with different definitions, namely the studies on intertextuality.

Genette has also published *The Architext*, where he contextualizes the text in a similar matter as he does with *Paratexts*, but stretching out for classifying the text according to the abstract, conceptual surroundings, such as genre and discourse. Literary theorists were not always keen on Genette's style, which is more of a dissection of a textual object into smaller parts, which, together, constitute a genre, or a praxis. For instance, Gorman attributes that *The Architexts* "does for genre-theory (…) what *Narrative Discourse*[57] does for narratology", but, according to the reviewer, is focused on genre practices, and offers a series of "extensive but disconnected series of theoretical reflections attempting to systematize and justify this practice, without much success"[58]. *Paratexts*, on the other hand, takes the dissection deep into the very materiality of each of the "practices" of publishing, consisting in, perhaps, a more usable framework than the one introduced in *The Architext*.

Much more than naming and identifying an author or a book genre, paratexts usually offer more information than meets the eye. Take, for instance, the name of the author. Genette makes his point very clear on how paratexts work with this specific one. When a book reads it was written by, for instance, "the Duke of Burgundy", the reader immediately accesses a wide number of hints about the authorship of the book and, ultimately, the book itself[59].

In my research, I have restricted the study to the field of paratexts in what I have called the "social text" -- texts that were not necessarily conceived in or for social media, but evaluated in social media contexts. The theoretical frameworks I have provided reach further than text read in social media websites, but it does find its most complex form in them.

One strong characteristic of digital textuality is its disembodied nature, or it's "abstract" materiality. When digitizing texts, the impossibility of reproducing the same presentational effect of paratexts come into light. Consider, for instance, how texts "acquire meaning through an intricate interplay between physical form and abstract information", then "the reduction of texts to abstract information alone evinces a misunderstanding of the artifacts in our care and an inadequate theory on which to base preservation decisions"[60].

Paramedia -- this dynamic interplay of paratexts -- further than introducing texts and encouraging readers to consume texts, are as well "reforming" or "redeploying" media, in consonance with Bolter and Grusin's remediation perspective[61]. The experience of paramedia -- paratextual information placed only a click away from the original text -- is radically different from non-networked media. Take, for instance, the process of renting a film or paying for it before watching it.

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[57]   Genette, Lewin, & Culler, 1980.
[58]   Gorman, 1994.
[59]   Genette, 1987.
[60]   Bee, 2008.
[61]   Thoss, 2014.

In a paratextual world, the consumer must go to the video store, evaluate the paratext carefully, pay for it, and only then access the text. In the paramedia world, the user can quickly access paratexts and simply extend its experience until it becomes the experience of the text. The transition is diffused, the funnel is increasingly simpler -- take, for instance, the user interface that Netflix provides at the film page: the film or series episode starts while the reader examines the paratext. The default is to "start watching and make the decision as you go", instead of the model where payment precedes textual access[62]. Probably not a coincidence, Netflix's original series do not have trailers -- users are stimulated to simply start watching until they drop out or get hooked.

One may claim that books were somehow different, as the experience of browsing a book's content has usually been "free". However, textual consumption of a Netflix film -- where the user starts watching and then, if enjoying it, simply *continues to watch* the film -- is still different from browsing a book for a limited about of time, at the bookstore (or accessing Amazon's "Look inside!" limited feature), then purchasing the book, and finally getting to the real "reading" of the text.

Even if the old print book -- the most resilient medium there is? -- had already been the precursor of the model of "paratextual browsing paired with textual access", Netflix and other digital media may have perfected the experience to stimulate textual consumption. Take, for instance, the time restraint. Only a few seconds of paratextual examination trigger the film/episode to be automatically played. The same happens with YouTube videos suggested after a watched video ends, or the autoplay feature on Facebook. Is digital media mirroring the old behavior of media and television? Perhaps. The fluidity of television combined with its intrinsical one-way communication has been the way TV made users "keep tuned": always on, always on the verge of a new attraction. When the internet removed this momentum, and gave viewers a choice -- any choice --, the question of "what do I do now?" may have created a gap in decision-making. Time restraints while examining paratexts may be a way to keep, in the least, a window of choice that, if not triggered, results in an algorithmic, automatic choice towards "what's next".

Some paratexts which take place *after* the reader's decision of consuming the text -- say, for instance, the opening credits of a film, presented after the viewer has already purchased the ticket -- highlight the function of paratexts of establishing the grounds of the text consumption experience. Paratexts like that are essentially *authorial*, yet i*llocutionary* (that is, they are not "spoken" or "signed" by "someone", nor by a specific speaker, but presented along the runtime of the film)[63]. But prefatorial paratexts are *not* illocutionary. They are presented by *someone; someone* who guides the reader further than the cover, until the text. Those are the basic mechanism of the explosion of social media texts, and its dynamic, transient textuality: the sharing economy, recommendation and audience paratexts identified in this work.

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[62]   Tryon, 2013.
[63]   Picarelli, 2013.

Finally, and interestingly, there is the matter of commercial paratexts, which happen in paramedia in a different manner. While on television, for instance, audience ratings, producers and sponsors work together, the system of bid and networks for advertising turns advertising in a more independent process of placement. The influence, thus, is weakened in paramedia, while in traditional advertising, the symbiotic relationship between sponsors and content is actively influential, as states Mittel:

> Throughout the history of American commercial television (…) the medium's commercial strategies for advertiser-supported programming, success was judged by the ability to attract, retain, and grow a viewership, which could then be converted into the currency of Nielsen ratings and sold to advertisers. The programming strategies that supported this system of popular appeal have been termed "least objectionable content" or, more dismissively, "lowest common denominator." In short, a television storyteller's first job is to avoid alienating potential viewers.[64]

That is, amassing viewers was a primary work, in an interconnected production system that simply is not shaped in the same manner on social media. One can argue that click-baiting, sensationalism or even the rise of "fake news" may create other forms of influence between text and paratext, but the original model has been, undoubtedly, depleted.

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[64]   Mittell, 2015.

2 GETTING STARTED WITH PARATEXTS

When I first started researching the concept of paratexts, the previous studies conducted in the topic were quite segregated. There were numerous works about paratexts in the literary field, applying Genette's theory to the study of literary works. A simple search in well-known databases, like EBSCO or Jstor, crossing terms as "digital", "internet" or "social media" resulted in very few entries, with little to none doing the job of applying, adapting or refreshing Genette's theory to the new textual landscape of contemporary culture.

Some more recent applications of the term were from the mid-2000s, and stalled debating the 20th century media from the perspective of transmediality. Jonathan Grey, for instance, in his book *Show sold separately* considered film trailers as paratexts, and started the debate about action figures, animations, TV commercials, games and so on as paratexts that could influence text consumption quite heavily. The debate went to Henry Jenkins' blog, where both authors discussed paratextual information, franchise and other media stunts.

The paratexts in transmediality may evidence "a desire to present alternatives to the narrative or to fill in perceived gaps"[65]. Although, technically, these are paratexts, their function seems closed to the one of a text -- a filiated text -- rather than a paratext. The difference between text and paratext should be defined by its function, not by its author. If a famous J.K. Rowling wrote Harry Potter and a non-famous fan writes a story with the same characters, there are two authors, and two texts -- although filiated, and "*In their stories, fanfic authors in subtle or profound ways change conditions, plotlines, or characterizations, and in these ways, they contribute new associations and interpretations to the extended story-world*", the function of paratext (or threshold) is hardly present in the equation[66]. It may be unfair to qualify fanfic as paratexts, since they *are* texts on their own, despite having different authorship. The sequel of a film is not primarily a paratext, nor a fanfic book. When put *in relation* to the original text, they can *act* as paratexts, but they are not paratexts, primarily.

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[65]   Grey, 2010.
[66]   Leavenworth, 2014.

A very early example of paratexts and digital "new media" form was an article debating the paratexts of the art game *Inanimate Alice* -- a traditional application of the theory into a digital text. But mostly, at the time, the searches retrieved a high number of 20th century media for paratexts. It was a good prospect that from print books (the original theory), it has transcended to film and television. But the leap to digital text did not seem to be taken yet.

Similarly, in games, for instance, extra content may be published in a way of offering "downloadable content that extended the gameplay" of the original game. Hence, is it a text (an intertext, a filiated text) or a paratext?[67] My view is that it should depend on the relation it holds to the original text. If it is somehow a more limited, circumspect version of the text, that cannot be found elsewhere or won't make much sense outside the videogame, it may be that its primary function is to be support to the original text – hence, it's a paratext.

The idea of bringing Genette to the digital field sparked ideas and excitement among scholars in the network of digital culture across the Nordic countries. Discussions and recruitments took place, in order to develop the topic further. Researchers Daniel Apollon (University of Bergen) and Nadine Desrochers (University of Montreal) released *Examining Paratextual Theory and its Applications in Digital Culture*, a compilation of different uses of paratexts in digital contexts. Although the book does not explore the political and social aspects of paratexts in all of its depth, it is unquestionably an interesting technical tool for librarians in need of producing better archiving for digital literary works. For instance, Desrochers and Patricia Tomaszek analyze a literary work by Rettberg & al. This consolidates the importance of the book in providing bibliographic tools and in-code paratextual information for digital works.[68].

At this point it is interesting to remember how in 2002, Stephen Paling has brought to light the important aspect of bibliography and navigation, since when archiving works, "besides introducing and identifying a text, a major function of paratexts is on classifying texts into certain textual categories"[69].

When it comes to digital culture and paratexts, an interesting take is of Heather L. Hill and Jen Pecoskie, "Iterations and Evolutions: Paratext and Intertext in Fanfiction", when commentary and community become paratexts of the texts authored by fans and, even prior to that, paratexts to the original texts they are based upon. The object of their analysis is the *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy.

Also in the book, Corey Pressman expands the notion of authorship on how the new author is also a *paratextual* author, as "artists of the new scriptoria". Which leads to the difficulty in defining the limits of the text, the audience-author relationship and the silos in different research fields. Pressman somewhat advocates for a new model for the digital publishing, combining the skills of the writer, the coder and the designer[70].

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[67] Ellcessor, 2014.
[68] Desrochers & Apollon, 2014.
[69] Paling, 2002.
[70] Pressman, 2014.

Taking the idea further, Pressman evokes the need for understanding the space between "content" (the medium) and "text" (the story itself), which is filled by different media cultures. Pressman refers to the New York Times' "Snowfall" article, a case studied in the present work as well. Pressman states that "New York Times' *Snowfall* and *Hollow: An interactive Documentary* provide promising examples of the way forward".[71] Pressman's focus is, thus, on what he considers to be the "next book". That, however, goes right in the opposite direction of what he identifies as the conservatism of print media: "fixity, social isolation and authority".

The way I see, these elements are actually *inherited* by the digital form of "Snowfall", Kindles, Kobo's and whatnots – preserving as much as possible the one-way lane of communication, centering authorship in one or two names, presenting the story as chapters and overall *resembling* print media.

The uncanny connection between literary print media may have been part of the case's triumph. Pressman seems to think in another way, stating that "the essential difference between a paper book and its electronic analog is the stripping of the former's paratextual elements".

The way I see, the strength of "Snowfall", The Guardian, and eReaders, has been the necessary familiarity with their original print versions, making a *digitalization* of paratexts.

To my view, it is in the social media text and paratexts that orality, conversation and the interaction becomes mostly present – considering, for example, commentary, likes, counters, dislikes, shares and so on. Curiously, Pressman states that these stories, represented by "Snowfall" are "the development of a 'secondary orality' instigated by radio and television".

That's particularly contradictory, considering that the authority of one-lane communication of TV and radio not only were the ruling model of the pre-digital days, but the very iconic media of the 20th Century. And although "Snowfall", the flagship of Pressman's argument, is a great example of the transcendence between print and digital, it definitely does not stand out for opening conversation or by stripping the paratexts of print media – quite the opposite, it inherits them, embraces them, and wins the reader by the cunning usage of them.

Considering the previous research on the topic, we remain with the question: how can the paratextual framework be objectively identified in the massive amount of daily textual production that takes place in social media, what are the functions inherited from print media, and what are the new functions brought by the new paratexts? As theoretical tools, they help to understand and open discussions with fields like interface studies, platform studies, interactive design, network studies and infrastructures. The integration between the pragmatic studies of web often clash with the analogic thinking of literary theory. There is room for controversy, discussion – and certainly for growth in this type of integrated study.

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[71]   Pressman, 2014.

2.1   Social media, transmedia and the hype

Meanwhile, and for a few years already, the market was blooming with the hype around social media. A lot of journalists and bloggers were being recruited by agencies around the world to this new branch of communication services. New roles were on the rise, such as the community manager, the content producer and the content strategist.

By 2011, while I was writing my thesis, my wife was about to finish her Master's degree. Considering her active profiles in social media, that vary from closeness and warmth to furious dissatisfaction. My spouse had thus decided to conduct her master thesis on how Erwin Goffman's classical approach of self-presentation happens in Social Media. After much reflecting on how to take the study forward, she had decided for an extensive literature review on the subject. Soon after the decision, she was recruited by a content strategy agency that became one of the most hyped names in content strategy in the Nordic countries, Vapa Media.

At that point, I could understand more clearly how the market and my Academic writing were talking about similar topics, but with different languages. For instance, I would refer to "text" to whatever production was happening online, and they would refer to it as "content". That was a motivator to pursue the social aspect of text/content, because what was blooming was social media. At one point, Raine, my advisor, said that my topic was "so acute" that there should not be problems in finding traction when looking for publication possibilities.

All sorts of wonderful cultural changes were happening in the social area of internet. In order to understand how social networks and paratexts correlate, at this point, I would like to clarify two main divisions of Genette's concept of paratexts: *epitexts*, a term that refers to the texts *closely* surrounding texts, such as a book's cover, and *peritexts*, referring to texts that are placed *far* from the text, but that still refer (and influence the reading) of the text -- for instance, an author's television interview about a certain book.

To me, understanding those concepts was enough to see that in social media there was such radical transformation of these, that it was even valid to ask if the theory was still valid, or remotely applicable to the digital, social text. It was possible to find on a simple article shared on Facebook, for example, an authentic "prefatory introduction", a paratext listed and described by Genette as the introduction of a book by an editor. There were peculiarities to it, too. While Genette's classical preface was created by the editor in a transacted agreement with the author, on Facebook such relations were built without consent of the author. The possibilities were opening up and conflicting, as I studied the book and the traditional paratexts. How to ignore the importance of the "social media ambassador" in the textual analysis of social media?

The idea of a transacted space between editor and author goes back to the role of the editor, famously scrutinized by Jerome McGann in his theories de-

bating the role of an editor. For McGann, the editor could either be cautious and attentive to contextualize the work in culture and the world, or could simply convey what the author's view in the first place[72]. In the case of social media, where authors are directly publishing to social platforms, one may ask again what is the role of each player in the equation — how liable is YouTube for hate videos? How responsible is Twitter for the publication of racist comments? The perception of user-generated content, in the absence of an acting editor, may also bring back the question of what is an author, and fundamentally, what should be considered a text of literary value.

While my advisor and I were extremely excited by the idea of "digital paratexts", something that by 2010 was not at all explored to any reasonable extent by the scientific community, I did not find, in general, many scholars particularly excited by the *peritext* (texts placed *near*, surrounding the text). They were interested in the *epitext* (texts placed far from the original text), and restricted to transmedia studies. Surely, big franchises were releasing toys and cartoons and web-episodes, such as in *Matrix* and *Star Wars*, but those seemed ever as a by-product of original texts, interacting much less as *frames* or influences over the original text, and more as derivations of it.

In this sense, the perception of transmedia works as paratexts does not function exactly — by Jenkins' definition, a transmedia work will reveal part of the story that cannot be find anywhere else, and they do contribute to the overall universe of the story. As an example, mentioned by Jenkins, the *Matrix* universe cannot be comprehended by watching *only* the films. There is more information about that same universe in the comic books, animations and games. In this sense, transmedia expands the story universe.

When it comes to other transmedia cases, it's easier to say they are paratexts of the original story. They may also be classified as transmedia narratives, but perhaps not so accurately (or not fitting the perfect definition of it). For example, the Lego branch of the *Star Wars* series, with animated films and video games. It's hard to conceive that whichever story narrated in the toys and video games, despite the fact that they are *placed* in the same universe, are going to mount up to the "official saga" of *Star Wars*, like it happens in *Matrix*[73]. That's a controversial issue, because fandom does expand worlds although not attached to the original text.

It is reasonable to say that some of the Lego are *derivative texts* from the original ones, that may introduce or replicate the story by *playing with* its universe, but not always *add* information to the core of the story and expand it. They seem more like a "child-friendly" version of the stories, serving as an introductory version of the narrative. Thus, these elements act more as paratexts than transmedia texts.

On the other hand, *Star Wars* has more live action films and animated series that may fit the definition of transmedia, such as the television movie

72   Finkelstein & McCleery, 2002.
73   Wachowski & Wachowski, 1999.

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Ewoks[74] or the animated series *Rebels*[75], which are more elaborate plots exploring the universe of the story. Along with the flagship motion pictures, these seem to be "retainers" of the story, expanding different threads of the *Star Wars* universe. It's an oversimplification to say that the stories belong to the same universe, *therefore* they flow freely inside the same universe. There may be the need of a theoretical line that separates these items. If it is difficult to establish the disconnection between diegetic happenings in different media that belong to the same universe, it may be easier to prove a point by approaching the matter with the characters.

It may be likely that Obi-Wan Kenobi meets a character first introduced in the *Rebels* series (a genuinely "transmedial encounter"), but less likely that the "big screen" Obi-Wan Kenobi has any memory from the battle against the Droids that took place in the 2005 short animated film *Lego Star Wars: Revenge of the Brick*[76]. Back to *Matrix*, however, it is very likely that Trinity has the memory of watching over the "Kid" featured in *Animatrix*[77], which happened six months between the action in *Matrix* and *Matrix: Reloaded.* Again, it's a fine and blurred theoretical line between the paratextual and transmedial modes of narrative, but they do seem to differ.

I was, however, interested in the fact that "no text has ever a truly paratext-free moment"[78], and with new forms of textual production in mass scale with social media, new ways of writing – thus of building, writing and using paratexts for readership – were on the rise.

The debate on paratext and transmediality may suffer of an ontological problem, leaving the essentially paratextual approach overlooked. That's because transmedia storytelling often analyzes subject-matters that gain their own independence from the original text. In that sense, while transmedia storytelling has the same objects of analysis, it is the perfect opposite of the paratextual approach.

While paratexts see derived works as "ancillary" to the original, and study them as essentially *subjected* to the original text, it is an effort of transmediality to see derived works as texts on their own or as part of the overall shared universe where derived text and original texts exist. It's indeed interesting that paratexts in transmediality exert a different function, such as aiming at a replication of the reception experience of the original text. These transmedial texts seem to "operate mimetically on desiring consumers"[79]. While paratexts originally *introduce* a text, transmedial texts are often *experiences in themselves*[80] The distance between text, derived text (paratext) and transtext gets quickly blurred. Take, for instance, the idea that military videogames are "pre-experiences" of

[74]   Wheat & Wheat, 1985.
[75]   Kinberg, Beck & Filoni, 2004.
[76]   Byrnes, 2016.
[77]   Watanabe, 2003.
[78]   Stanizek, 2009.
[79]   Hills, 2012.
[80]   (ibid.)

war, much like paratextuality in transmedia can be a pre-experience of the text[81].

Thus, there was the feeling that there was a need of setting a microscopic, focused look on the new textuality blooming on social media. It would start with questions of presentation and spatiality, and end up "passing the baton" to transmedia and intertextuality studies when a derived text gains a life of its own.

By looking closely at text presentation online, the research was shaping up as an adaptation of Genette's theory of the paratext, and focusing on the functions that paratexts have been designed to perform: contextual, ideological, cultural devices that helped the reader to follow the reading path, from the first stages of awareness to the reception of the text's core.

2.2 The matter of reading: an avalanche from New York to California

It would not be fair to bash the term transmedia storytelling without giving a proper finale to it. A heated-up debate about the "hollywoodification" of transmediality happened in the Transmedia Literacy Seminar, in Barcelona, 2014. I was there presenting the core framework of the paratext theory adapted to the digital-social text, and a journalist from the audience wanted definitions of *what is transmedia*. Ignoring the impalpable aspect of the term -- would have been like to ask *what is the being* in a phenomenology summit -- the debate run into the tactical aspects of texts meant to sell toys and texts meant to interact, influence and complement one another, in a real and properly synergetic state of intertextuality.

These debates are good for disambiguation and to shaking up case-specific studies and open the discussion to broader terms. It is in the obvious title of the venue that the answer would be: *literacy.* That was the most accurate cultural point where we stand when it comes to reading and producing new texts and textualities.

Considering this, two texts became North stars to me during the study. One of them, *Innovation*, by the New York Times, a leaked document from 2011 that would tell how the paper has been coping with change, benchmarking competition (BuzzFeed was more cited than the Huffington Post) and understand disruptive innovation. One of their products, the multimedia story "Snowfall"[82], published on December 2012, has been an important finding when it comes to a stable model of a new type of reading, with paratexts overtly framing and influencing the end result: curiously, most paratexts used to format "Snowfall" were digitalised elements from print media. "Snowfall" received the Pulitzer Prize for Featured Writing, for the "evocative narrative

81   Payne, 2016.
82   Branch, 2012.

about skiers killed in an avalanche and the science that explains such disasters" and the integration of multimedia elements"[83].

The story was presented with title, subtitle, author's name, chapter names in similar form, style, typography and page locations as a traditional paper work. That meant to me that the theory of the paratext was there, more digitalized than digital, yet hinting that paratexts were still actual. "Snowfall" was bridging user interface layout with literary and textual studies.

On March 2014, the New York Times produced *Innovation*, an internal report described by Dean Baquet, executive editor of the newspaper, as "an honest investigation of where we are and need to be" (qtd. in Abbruzzese). Although the document was meant to be internal only, it was quickly leaked by Buzzfeed[84], and ended up as a significant contribution to studies of media in the contemporary digital scenario.

Along the 97 pages of analyses, guidelines and case studies, *Innovation* prominently focuses on the challenges of digital age, as well as on assessing competitors and understanding the position of the Times within the news media scope:

> The first section of this report explores in detail the need for the newsroom to take the lead in getting more readers to spend more time reading more of our journalism. It offers specific strategies and tactics to accomplish this goal, often called audience development. (…) The report identifies the difficulties in audience development as a symptom of "the need to become a more nimble, digitally focused newsroom that can thrive in a landscape of constant change" (…). Thus, the report's second part consists of "specific recommendations that we believe will help strengthen our newsroom for the digital era[85].

The Times does not seem concerned with the credibility of their information or the quality of their journalism, but rather with the amount of traffic to the website, the drop in their audience on smartphones and the general audience habits.

According to the report, although the New York Times has a "vast audience of 30 million web readers per month in the USA", the assessment is that competitors such as the Huffington Post or Buzzfeed are growing faster (5).

Distancing from the idea of audience development, a few ideas on what the NYT develops as products is of interest at this point. Among interviews of professionals that departed from the Times, one of them states that "the BuzzFeeds of the world have strong central leadership with clear digital visions not tied down by fiefdoms and legacy products" (88). It is precisely the balance between tradition, legacy and new readership that the Times excelled, releasing "Snowfall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek", a multimedia story that soon gained traction, as perhaps one of the most remarkable innovations in digital journalism of the past years, became the guiding principle of the New York Times' "special feature" journalism, as stated in their *Innovation* report[86], and, as aforementioned, won the Pulitzer award.

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[83]   The Pulitzer Prizes, 2013.
[84]   BuzzFeed, 2014.
[85]   *Innovation*, 2014.
[86]   (ibid.)

The "Snowfall" article had a very successful reproduction of the "paper feel", by making use of various media elements, such as full-screen video background, interactive maps, video interviews. Those were somewhat a blend of text and paratext information.

Take, for instance, the background video. It is footage from the site where the avalanche occurred, but it is not used for information, but as a background element to set the right atmosphere.

At the same time, paratextual elements of traditionally print media were brought in, reorganizing the digital page. There is a bold display of title & subtitle, and despite the dozens of persons involved in the production team, the writer of the story gained the authorship status as the sole name up in the "cover" page, centralized under the title; the organization was set as "chapters", the capitalization of the first letters is classically "press style", and the column division reminds the reader of a glossy magazine. The user-generated commentary – usually presented upfront, as most articles in this work have identified – is hidden behind an icon, activated as a separate area from the original text.

All these elements represented a certain structure that seemed stable as a mode of storytelling for digital press; something that the paper stated, "we wish we were able to do one Snowfall every day"[87]. The role of paratexts in "setting the mood", or being the "threshold" between worlds was unquestionably prominent.

After the success of the story in December 2012, other major papers followed very similar aesthetics, notably *The Guardian* with "Firestorm: The Story of the Bushfire at Dunalley", in May 2013[88].

Some facts may relate to the impact of "Snowfall" in paratextual storytelling and social media, or, in the least, those innovations are part of a same cultural background where text and readership of online news was rapidly evolving.

Soon after the release of the *Innovation* report in 2014, Facebook launched *Paper*, an application to present articles like in a magazine or newspaper for mobile users[89]. It seemed as the first attempt to embody the highly successful storytelling feature from the *New York Times*.

Soon after the release, Facebook hired Liz Heron, a journalist who had previously worked at the *New York Times*, from 2010 to 2012, year of the release of "Snowfall", developing "overall social media strategy for the Times newsroom, looked for opportunities to incorporate the social web into our coverage and reporting, and evaluated possibilities to use new platforms"[90].

At the time Heron was hired by Facebook, she was at the *Wall Street Journal*, "in charge of digital news and innovation for mobile"[91].

Heron's title on Facebook was Head of News Partnerships, with the role of leading "a team at Facebook dedicated to partnerships with media organiza-

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[87]   (ibid.)
[88]   Henley, Topham, team, Khalili, & Panetta, 2013.
[89]   Constine, 2014
[90]   Heron, (n.d.).
[91]   (ibid.)

tions and journalists"[92]. During the period she worked there, Facebook seemed to let *Paper* in the background and brought a much more ambitious and workable solution, offered only by selected partners: *Facebook Instant Articles,* which had striking resemblance to the *New York Times'* "Snowfall".

But perhaps the most interesting examples on the relationship between paratexts (in analogical media) and paramedia (the dynamic, digital version of those, introduced throughout the present work), comes from the idea of *binding texts* and finding fluidity in each of the texts limits. While paratexts work as thresholds of interpretation, paramedia may work as permeable thresholds, where texts can dynamically invade and open a dialog with each other. Think the difference, for instance, of a flattering review placed in the back cover of a text (a classical paratext), in comparison to a heated conversation between two hundred different users below a YouTube video (hence, paramedia).

Gómez-Bravo creates an interesting lifecycle for photocopied texts, where "the copied text would endure an erasure that it resisted by creating a textual imprint of the vanished medium, effectively narrating itself and its (past) situation. Turning a pile of sundry papers into an organic whole created the need for a meaningful paratext"[93]. That is, the reader must create mental compilations in order to attribute meaning to texts captured for reading.

Similar ideas happen on social media, where millions of tweets about feminism may go unnoticed, astray, loose in the debris -- however they are accurately bound together when classified with the hashtag #feminism. The Twitter "book" on #feminism is always growing.

Gómez corroborates with this idea when states that "moving the text to a roll, booklet, or loose paper to a book and creating an organic whole relied on careful threading to open up the text, hold it together, and secure its meaning in the hands of an attentive compiler."[94]

While paratexts had clear functions on delimiting texts (the perfect square binding of a book, or the number of books belonging to a certain collection), paramedia can create bindings that are dynamic and ever-growing, much like it could only happen *inside* the reader's mental archive.

Furthermore, as perhaps the main conclusion of this thesis, the web now generates this same archive that used to exist only inside the reader: the log. That's another *binding* that texts have, nowadays. Each YouTube user, for instance, is a collection of *Watched videos*. This exciting concept unfolds a number of intertextualities, metatextualities and perception of what is a text, a reader and how paratexts influence these entities.

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[92]   (ibid.)
[93]   Gómez-Bravo, 2013.
[94]   (ibid.)

2.3 Centrifugal, centripetal

Another reading, cited along the thesis, was Helen McCracken, who researched the reading of Kindle books and its electronic page -- which, basically, it is yet another instance of a *digitalized* page, and not a digitally born one. However, her theory was spot-on digitally born pages, websites and interfaces. McCracken has herself tailored an expansion of Genette's paratexts theory, adding directions to what once had only *location* attributed: from "far" (epitext) and "near" (peritext), McCracken adds "centripetal" (towards inside the text) and "centrifugal" (towards outside).

The duel between NYT's "Snowfall" and the practices of the "BuzzFeeds of the world" (a derogatory term used often throughout the *Innovation* document to refer to journalism based on lists, cat videos, quizzes and other content popularly shared in social media) becomes clear with the dichotomy between "one-offs" and replicable stories. While the so-called "one-offs" (a single story on focus, such as "Snowfall") versus replicable stories (for instance, templates that can be reused ad infinitum, such as quizzes, personality tests and funny lists). The report states that "driven in part by the success of Snowfall, we have gone to extraordinary lengths in recent years to support huge single-story efforts"[95]. The report continues:

> However innovative or impressive the interactive, multimedia storytelling provided by "Snowfall", the article is seen by the staff as a "sustaining innovation", or a product that sums up "a series of incremental improvements", focusing on improving "the quality of their premium products to sustain their current business model". That goes as an opposition to BuzzFeed's "disruptive innovations", which are cheaper to develop and start below the reader's needs. Later on, disruptive innovations undergo improvements and take the place of sustaining innovations, such as Snowfall[96].

It is not a big surprise that the costs of ambitious enterprises like Snowfall are also mentioned in the report, which states that "graphics, Interactive, Design and Social are spending a disproportionate amount of time on these labor-intensive one-offs".

The report also publishes a statement by an undisclosed BuzzFeed editor, which describes the difference between the NYT and BuzzFeed's approach to the interactive principles of their publications, saying that

> over at BuzzFeed, they were busy perfecting a template so they could pump out quiz after quiz after quiz. "We wanted to have interactive games," explained one BuzzFeed editor, "but not have the developers build them every time, so that we could experiment freely." This contrast helps illustrate one of the biggest obstacles to our digital success.[97]

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[95]   *Innovation*, 2014.
[96]   (ibid.)
[97]   (ibid.)

The dichotomy described by the report can be approached by other angles, too. Ellen McCracken, in her study about paratextual information surrounding texts in Kindle and iPad ebooks, notices that peripheral elements displayed around the text may lead the viewer further into, or outside the text[98]. These two essentially different types of readership may be at the core of the discussion: engaging in "one-offs" or engaging, more superficially and diffusely, in a plethora of different texts: lists, cat videos and so on.

The New York Times report shows a constant struggle with the "BuzzFeed type of article"[99], where numerous related links are displayed, along with abundant paratextual material that the reader "may also like"[100]. Much like one conclusion from this thesis, it seems desirable that the centrifugal viewer can never really find anything (there should always be more to see), and thus should keep searching (Article III). In the same manner, these centrifugal peritexts may be an effort to offer content that the users *didn't know* they wanted in the first place – generating a new type of textuality based on user behavior, algorithms and other texts from the website the user is visiting.

Her ideas may be applied to describe the diverse nature of long form narratives, like Snowfall, in contrast to BuzzFeed stories, like shareable quizzes. While in Snowfall the peripheral information leads the viewer deeper into one single story, BuzzFeed quizzes are likely to have the user engaged with more similar stories. One exemplary parallel may be drawn from YouTube, and serve as illustration to centrifugal content.

Considering the abundant offer of clickable related videos on the side of YouTube's screen, one may infer that it seems desirable that the viewer is never able to really find anything (there should always be more to see), and thus the viewer should keep searching. The centrifugal peritexts may be an effort to offer content that the users didn't know they wanted.

This essential difference between the two modes, centrifugal and centripetal, is important to understand the importance, the function and the influence in the act of reading of paratextual information.

The path to the digital paratext was opening up, but it did not mean the road was cleared. There was still a need to understand *to what extent* the theory was valid, to what extent it was adaptable, or as my advisor put it with his reliable and characteristic Finnish straightforwardness, "if it is valid at all to even pursue it".

2.4 Adapting the paratextual theory: problems

While the perspective on paratexts in digital media was prominently focused on the epitext, debating for examples derived toys, games, made-for-internet epi-

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[98]   Mccracken, 2013.
[99]   *Innovation, 2014.*
[100] Lawlor, 2013.

sodes or fandom and forums. It seemed to me that something that has radically changed -- the two-way, real-time and ubiquitous communication flows, the author's new accessibility in Twitter, the ecosystem of sharing content -- all this was essentially left out, and was at that point untapped when it comes to paratextual theory. Furthermore, there were important points in the application of paratextual theory in social media that required a degree of adaptation to new textual practices, so that these paratexts could continue to create or decode meaning.

Genette's theory of the paratext was formulated as "a preliminary, condensed, and doubtless incomplete way"[101], and paratexts are likely to "change continually, depending on period, culture, genre, author, work, and edition, with varying degrees of pressure[102]. How to compare Genette's perception of an interview with a given author being an example of epitext, to the radically different approach to how authors engages in conversation with its audience in contemporary media (think of a writer's Twitter or Facebook profile)?

For starters, Genette states that external reviews and word-of-mouth is not generally considered to be paratexts, because paratexts are "characterized by an authorial intention and assumption of responsibility". That is, paratexts are only characterized by the consent of the author (or editors) in turning them into paratexts.

That certainly sounds valid for the traditional ways of publishing, where the author is restricted to a specific role and have much more controlled media exposure, and where texts actually *do have*, mostly, editors, and where editors control distribution, and so on. To exclude the role of the "new word-of-mouth" of social media is essential to keep the theory relevant. Nowadays, readers can compose reviews, share bits of texts, share the entire, downloadable text, mobilize entire communities, create fan pages and whatnot.

Nearly ten and twenty years before Genette, respectively, Foucault[103] and Barthes[104] criticize the idea that to an author is given the capacity of "explain" the text, limit its meaning and provide a definitive interpretation to it. That goes in collision to the discrete restriction that Genette does to the paratext scope, considering that the epitext is valid only if the author endorses it. That problem is addressed in a more pragmatic way by Umberto Eco[105], who divides a text in the scope of the author's intentions/meanings (*intentio auctoris*), the reader's intentions/interpretations (*intentio lectoris*) and the text's intentions (*intentio operis)* – all intentions, or meanings, the texts has and that may or not have been covered by the author's intentions or by any reader's intentions. A reading of paratexts as frames authored by original authors or readers, thus, makes social media an open arena where the circulation of the text is in the center -- and authors, readers, curators, multipliers and other intentions all have their vectors of influence represented.

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[101]   Genette, 1987.
[102]   (ibid.)
[103]   Foucault, 1984.
[104]   Barthes, 1968.
[105]   Eco, 1992.

It is crucial to understand the different roles and interplay between authors and audiences: authors have open conversations with readers, and their feedback may influence the creative writing process, or to reckon that we live in times that a private video, a leak or a misfired tweet may turn upside down the whole perception of the author and the work.

It was necessary to recreate the lens by which we were looking into authors, texts and paratexts.

3   THESIS STRUCTURE

The thesis consists of four articles that flow through the mediation process from intention, authorship, text and paratext. In this sense, the thesis' articles progressively spread from focusing *textual intention*, to textual materiality, to *textual surroundings.* The intentions are covered by an investigation of modes of writing and the ethos of writing of the "social text", that is, text written in/for social media. As the first article analyzes the motivation of authorship, the second one flows forward in debating authorship itself. What, or who, is an author in social media? The third one introduces the core theory of paratexts applying it to social media -- in this case, to YouTube and Vimeo, comparatively -- and the last one shows example of paratexts subverting themselves into becoming integral, indissociable part of texts.

3.1   Why are people writing on social media?

In order to write a thesis that would discuss readership and text, it seemed like a viable alternative to investigate the roots and roles of the activity of *writing* to begin with. That's because the activity of writing depends a lot on its medium of publication, the praxis and conventions of each type of publication, and the social, political and legal functions of a certain type of publication, as well as the context around it.

So, in order to understand, ultimately, the *functions* of paratexts in social media, it seemed important to understand the functions operating in the text. Considering that the texts I was about to analyze were essentially social, I chose to investigate the modes and functions of *writing* to begin with. There are several layers to this act, in social media. Firstly, because the production of content takes various media, frequency and purposes. From text to video, from music or audio to drawings or emoji commentary, it's not easy to define writing in social media, much less to analyze the purpose of each of these "writing" modes, which vary from content to content and from medium to medium – one

can write a blog, part of the author's "body of work" (some sort of "opus"), and one can upload a picture on Facebook and yet that is not culturally considered part of the author's "body of work", but rather just a picture uploaded on Facebook. Questioning this dual perception may be important, especially because bound to the act of writing, social media binds together personal life, privacy, publicity and these new modes of content production.

One of the articles, for instance, resulted in an enlightening leap back to ancient Greece, where two modes of writing – or content production -- came to light: *hypomnemata* and correspondence[106]. Writing was an activity related to the care of body and mind, and the discovery of what is to be an individual. It could take the form of the *hypomnemata*, a type of archive or board of ideas, which served as a "crystallised self" for contemplation and meditation. An excellent analogy to *hypomnemata* in social media is Pinterest or Tumblr image blogs.

The correspondence, differently, would narrate small daily events, and take in a reader. By doing that, it would end up influencing both reader and writer. The similar mode in contemporary media scenario is the Facebook status update or the tweet, for example.

Both modes were practiced with a great deal of *anacoresis*, that is, the time in privacy, seclusion, introspection, contemplation to mature the written ideas. That's when both ancient and contemporary modes are radically different: while the Greeks used writing to *disarticulate* current structures of power to have "time off" with the self, the social media writing discourages privacy and it is the inscription of the self in the public sphere.

3.2 What Yoko Ono had for breakfast matters for her art?

There are several aspects to consider before the core topic of the article. Basically, the intersection in the answers for a number of different questions: How do authors are presented as *authors*, for example, in print books? How do people present themselves in social occasions? How do people present themselves in social media? How do *authors* present themselves in social media? And finally, what's the difference between regular users and authors in social media?

After debating what is the *ethos* of the writer -- their motivation, driving force, and general placement within cultural structure -- it seemed essential to reevaluate *what is an author*, since every reader, when in social media, is writing as well.

The result was an analysis of what *authors* are doing in Twitter, and a comparison to what *regular users* are doing. Surprisingly, the content produced tends to be quite similar, being the main difference an immaterial one: the presence of an *opus*.

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106   Bruno, 2007.

While users tend to simply *write*, the artist tends to be perceived as the author of a *work.* A work that can be referred to, consulted, read as a proper work of art. The existence of this distinction from social media is undeniable, but also questionable. Should there be, at all, a distinction of who authors and who writes, apart from the sentience of the authors/writers themselves? A provocative approach came from the classic essay of Foucault "What is an author?", which asks if Nietzsche's laundry list should be considered a part of his work.

The contemporary media analogy comes clearly: what about Yoko Ono's tweet about her breakfast, right after her tweet about some public matter where her wisdom is visible, and which is inherently part of her art work?

The article moves forward in creating a list of preconditions for attributing a text to an author's work: the matter of space (Where was it written?), publicity (Is it a personal, private exercise? Is it public?) and content (What else is written there?).

The interesting blend with social media happens because public and personal, trivial and profound topics are *meant* to blend. That was the result of qualitatively analysing celebrity profiles with high numbers of followers on Twitter, and classifying their content production in themed categories. Within this narrow, but meaningful scope of celebrity tweeting, three categories rise: the author's work, personal and trivial content, and public relations work.

Similarly, to the everyday Twitter personal user, they all manage their public image in the platform for personal gains, career advancement, a witty image perception and so on.

That's how the paratextual theory comes more overtly to the scene: the idea that what an artist writes in social media is a paratext to their art work. The difference to the regular Twitter user is the lack of such opus or work. However, the boundaries between the two types of users blurs when the social media timeline starts to be perceived as a work in itself.

3.3   The complex surroundings of our online video experience

In Genette's theory, only the paratexts created by the author and/or the editor could be considered as paratexts. This seems to be the epic change in textual culture itself -- the *user-generated revolution*, let's say -- and the first thing to reconsider when discussing paratexts.

On one hand, letting the author/editor to choose what is published (near and far from the text) strengthens the authorial (authoritative?) aspect of paratexts. Influence would be then, by logic, often positive and affirmative, and paratexts would perform merely as a marketing tool to endorse the text. On the other hand, having paratexts as texts that keep framing the text, but without consent of the author, makes an important shift: the text is alive, and the reader is in the centre of the equation.

Thus, one of the main adaptations to the paratextual theory proposed by my third article of the Master thesis, "Paratexts in Social Media"[107] is the recognition of this "unauthorised" information related to the text as paratexts. Other connections, analogies and adaptations are made along the way, and a cautious effort has been made to group them into useful classifications that simplify the theory understanding and application.

Paratexts are not only formal thresholds, but political ones. Alex Galloway considers "the edge of the work" to be "the politics of work"[108]. Genette makes this clearer in the first chapter of *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* when describing the various effects on the audience when books display upfront elements that help the reader to identify nationality, gender, ethnicity or age of the author[109] . These effects seemed to gain more complexity along the 20th Century, for instance, according to the book *The BBC and the Development of Anglophone-Caribbean Literature, 1943-1958* by Glyne Griffith.

While there was a filter excluding authors who discussed separatism, the editors would promote books of "Caribbean literature", although it was more specifically *Anglophone* Carribiean literature. The paratext in question was the BBC radio program "Caribbean Voices", aired for fifteen years and which has introduced to a wider audience writers like George Lamming, Louise Bennett, Sam Selvon to its audience, comprised of spectators in the Caribbean islands and England. In his study, Griffith concludes that with its prestigious prime time of radio reviews – a classic paratextual element – the BBC has promoted nearly exclusively Anglophone Caribbean literature during the post-WWII years. The author believes that the interplay between texts and paratexts – that is, the combination of texts, letters from authors to the radio station and the broadcasts – has contributed to the formation of literary identities, nationalism and territorial identities.

Hence the problem of representation – both in hiding or showing, overstating or understating. Similarly, even simpler paratexts such as the name or biography of the author may create other representational effects (or distortions), depending on how this information is made visible (or invisible). This mechanism can be expressed by understating or overstating the gender of an author, an author's ethnicity, nationality, age group, social class background and so on.

Addressing textual comprehension and classification, Stanizek states that "paratexts give the work a manageable identity"[110], that is, something the reader can understand what to expect in terms of form, content and meaning, as reinstated by the author that paratexts structure literary expectations[111]. When it comes to user-generated textuality, we may see it similarly: a blog is a blog because it is presented in reverse chronological order, it is divided by categories, it is likely to have a name and an author, it often displays a list of links and an

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[107] Tavares Filho, 2010.
[108] Galloway, 2012.
[109] Genette, 1987.
[110] Stanizek, 2009.
[111] (ibid.)

archive. In a more subjective way, the YouTube video (i.e. "the cat video" genre) is an YouTube video because it is on YouTube *and* fits the categories and praxis of uploads.

When these paratexts in YouTube were firstly created, transtextual relations were built among texts that used those same paratexts, creating thus a certain sense of convention. The first blogs, to make a quick analogy, shared transtextual relations with new blogs that were being created, making them more of a textual practice than anything else. Jill Rettberg introduces the idea saying that "a blog consists of more than words and images. It cannot be read simply for its writing, but is the sum of writing, layout, connections and links and the pace of publication"[112]. It's also a matter that "the majority are interactive Web 2.0 websites, allowing visitors to leave online comments, and it is this interactivity that distinguishes them from other static websites"[113].

The similarity, thus, has started with the paratexts, and has grown in variety to create a certain praxis -- blogs can be about a wide variety of topics, but they do have a number of paratextual elements in common. The interesting relation with digital paratexts provided by platforms like Blogger is its customizable "stiffness" of structure. The programmer creates a template with forms filled by the author and through a "push-button publishing" process, everything is into place. It is easier to create a blog correctly than to create a book correctly.

In social media, the text's "template" provided by the platform of publication (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Blogger – whichever publisher one can find online with the structure of publishing and discussing content) plays a strong role in defining what paratextual fields are in display. Those, furthermore, determine the users will write and read. In other words, a social media website is not a "blank page". Added to the mix, there is the textual production and distribution made by the platform itself: the machine-generated paratextual information.

The resulting framework for *digital peritexts* is the main core of the third article, *Paratextual Prometheus: Digital Paratexts on YouTube, Vimeo and Prometheus Transmedia Campaign.* I decided to include one seminal example – the Prometheus advertising campaign – because it made the idea easier to grasp. However, had this study been written for the web design field, using one particular example would probably be unnecessary, considering that the object of analysis is what the platforms are providing in terms of authorship and readership.

This work has focused in paratexts identified in two networks, YouTube and Vimeo. But a very simple analysis of virtually any social media website can tell that these paratexts can also be found elsewhere. They are prerequisites for texts to exist; the very frame of existence of a text. In social media, paratexts share similar properties and functions. Think of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, Vine, Wordpress and so many other sites: they basically

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[112]   Rettberg, 2008.
[113]   Mutum & Wang, 2010.

offer spaces for users to generate their own content, and this content is often (if not *always*) attached to a signature (which can be expanded to an author's photo, short biography and more information), a space for the user-generated content, offering multiple media modes (an user's content can be text, audio, video, photo etc.), a field for commentary and reactions produced by other users, a computational count for these commentary from these other users, and more.

The identified paratexts were divided into *authorial peritexts* (created by the author, such as titles and descriptions), *audience peritexts* (created by the reader, such comments and likes), and *network paratexts* (for instance, the related videos displayed near YouTube).

FIGURE 2   Categorized paratexts on YouTube

A random YouTube page (left) and the highlights (right) according to the identified categories. In yellow, *authorial peritexts* (and the original text, the video area), a total of 20% of the page real estate. In green, *audience peritexts*, covering 70% of the pixel count of the page. In magenta, the *network peritexts*, covering 10% of the page.

While *authorial peritexts* are straight-forward at first sight, with fields like credits, identification, tags, technical specifications, excerpts and so on, the result of the author's attributions is what can contextualize the text into a series, a category of content and give a broader overview of what the text is about.

Furthermore, the author will create the basis of a number of intertextualities or *filiation*: by having the text featured among other texts by the same author, or by choosing a tag or a category, the author will be placing their texts among other texts that already exist within the network.

The *audience peritext* is generally identified by the reader's photo and name linked to the user's profile within the network, and at the commentary section the reader becomes, as well, the author of the commentary. There is also the paratextual information that concerns spectatorship computing: the number of views, likes, shares and other indications of popularity, and important feature when influencing audience. The users may also place the text into categories and playlists, creating new filiations for the text. It is possible to see, at this point, the public social text becomes a living entity, gaining several layers of filiation, attribution, belonging, categorization and so on. An important idea is, for example, the prefatorial and introductory function that each reader adds to a texts shared and recommended to their own social network.

It is with the *network peritext* that some of the most engrossing features take place, especially those that were not possible in print media and that, nowadays, open the way for a number of paratextual possibilities. Networks create the *interface* surrounding the text, and open up the *intertextual content*, which is the display of intertextualities defined by the author, users, statistics etc. The intertextual paratexts from the network can be divided into advertising, promoted texts and related texts.

Hence, at this point, it becomes clear that authors, readers and platforms are together creating filiation, new forms of textuality and placing the text in multiple contexts at the same time. The orbit around which the text gravitates, however, is not authorial, nor centered around the platform. Readership is *reader-centric*, customized, and new relationships between text, reader, machine and other texts are created by the very act of *reading.*

3.4   The fatal paratext: the interpretation of thresholds

If someone rips off the page of a pulpy crime novel, in which a death threat is inscribed, how far is that from being a fictional message to become a real threat? Can that be the object of a terrible misunderstanding?

The last article of the thesis is a short one, but tells about a very peculiar case in which social media as paratext ended up influencing the life and work of an author.

I thought this could be a good closure for the thesis after a researcher from Washington University wanted to cite my work on authorship and Twitter in her thesis about Salman Rushdie's literary production on Twitter. What makes Rushdie a special case in contemporary literary studies, in my opinion, is the fact that his literary work *The Satanic Verses* caused him to receive a death threat by the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989 [114]. Thus, when debating Rushdie's literary and paratextual production and the extreme consequences and repercussions of those, made a correlation to what was happening in Brazil's literary scene, more particularly over social media, concerning writer's Ricardo Lísias work *Delegado Tobias*.

This last article, entitled *Operação Lísias* (*Operation Lísias,* published in Portuguese), lists a few examples of authors using paratexts subversively in order to create confusion and awe with the blending borders between fact and fiction. These works, defying the perception of fiction and reality, are especially rich on the internet, a field on which the discussion can unfold unrestrictedly.

The case debated in the article is the one that opened a prosecution against author Ricardo Lísias. The novelist, based in São Paulo, has written a detective story and published it as an eBook. Part of the novel's graphic project was a police report attached to the novel, in which a crime was described. He was then prosecuted by the real federal police department, for forging a document that simply resembles the template of a real document. The article, thus, questions whether an *intradiegetic* – a *fictional* -- object can be validated *extradiegetically*. That relates to other paratextual practices, such as Wolfgang Herrndorf's "Sand", where, epigraphs and various fields like footnotes serve as means of investigation to have the plot solved[115].

The author had flirted before with reality and fiction by publishing an allegedly found diary of his ex-wife, entitled *Divórcio* ("Divorce")[116]. Was it a revenge publication? A hoax? Or simply a fictional book blending reality and fiction? Nobody knows for sure. The dangerous play of Lísias with the paratext was to neither understand if it belonged to the diegetic, nor to the extra-diegetic world.

There are other interesting examples of fictional objects mimicking real-world objects. It is possible to find those in other forms of art, such as in cinema: objects that act in-between diegetic and non-diegetic worlds, and work as a paratexts[117]. Much like the degraded "dusty" footage added to the vintage-looking horror film *Death proof*[118], and the old, scratched paratext of the studio logo presented in its original, aged form, before the film. The degraded footage recreates the atmosphere of old slasher cinema, when the viewer is, actually, experienc-

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[114]   BBC, 1989.
[115]   Albiero, 2013.
[116]   Lísias, 2015.
[117]   Church, 2015.
[118]   Tarantino, 2007.

ing a brand-new studio film. "The application of digital technology as a means of reconstructing an idealized, historically specific viewing experience marked, visually, by the material conditions of distressed celluloid"[119].

What is certain is that in light of Lísias' "personal" paratexts – the reviews concerning the book about his divorce, the controversy about privacy issues -- , and the fact that, truthfully or not, his personal life was embedded with his literary production, and fact and fiction were blurred enough to call the attention of the authorities.

The theoretical debate interestingly plays with the elasticity of the textual concept. As long as the document is attached to the text (as long as it is treated as a *paratext*) the author would not be able to commit any crime, despite the fact that it is an exact forgery of an original document. But only as long as the document is attached to the fictional text. When attached to fiction, its status is also entirely fictional; however, once taken out of context – that is, once the filiation is removed, and document is not taken any longer as a paratext, but as a text of its own – problems may arise.

Interestingly, the story does not end there. As the investigations developed and the prosecution was made public, the author started to aggregate all the paratext generated by the case -- his own social media production, comments from readers, the support from friends, the official statements, the correspondence with publishers, lawyers and the police – and created a new book, entitled *Inquérito* ("Inquest", the usual term used in Brazil for a police investigation)[120].

Hence this seemed to be an exemplary case in which paratexts are created, in which paratexts interact with the original text in full, and in which the paratexts leave to become a text of their own.

The vertiginous, "Sheherazadian" loop in the mediascape revolving the case is an interesting one to observe. The highly active network of the author was at one time promoting, protecting and creating a version of his own story, which was aimed to be the *true* one, and deem the author innocent – only to become the paratext of his previous novel, in a case solved and filed as a text of its own (the book *Inquérito*).

In print media, biographies are considered to be paratexts[121], similarly to TV appearances or public interviews. Those are considered to be pieces that may affect the interpretation of a text or of an author's body of work, thus considered to be paratexts. On the other hand, a collage of social media posts written by and for the author may raise interesting questions when it comes to paratextual information. Par excellence, an author's Facebook production are paratexts, falling in the same "public appearance" category as interviews or biographies. But the nature of social media also leaves us to question the difference (if any) between textual production in social media and life lived. These elements, together, create an entangling structure of life, biography, text and par-

[119]   McRoy, 2010.
[120]   Lísias, 2015.
[121]   O'Ryan, 2014.

atext, as well raises the discussion on how all these paratexts that refer to the author (or spread from) the author should be considered. For instance: in print media, the author's life could not affect the comprehension of the text, but rather the *mediation* of these life facts – the edited version of an interview, a journalist's biased views in a written story etc. That was a way of formulating the question that would leave interesting room for debate on interpretation. When it comes to social media, how can we make a distinction between lived life and the traditional paratextual production if, in social media, lived life also exists as textual production? Thus, we are able to ask: could *Inquérito* – the story and files behind the lawsuit – be a paratext for the author's work or lived life?

The debate over Lísias works expands further, as the author has been focusing, apparently, more on the paratexts than on the texts themselves – actually, more precisely, on the dynamic *paramedia* created around his own texts. It raises the question whether such a media-rich ecosystem that can create instant noise, virality, buzz, hype, truth and post-truth, the borders of the text may be the driving force behind the text's idea.

Another example that corroborates with this idea is Lísias' last novel to date, *Diário de Cadeia* ("Prison Diaries")[122] is signed under the pseudonym Eduardo Cunha, homonymous to an extremely influential Brazilian congressman recently arrested in a political scandal. To avoid (another) lawsuit, Lísias opted to inscribe "Eduardo Cunha (pseudonym)" in the book cover, to avoid ambiguity and more controversy. It's therefore another example that questions, conversely, the role of the novel (or of literature itself) in such a fast-paced river of information that the internet user faces daily. It seems that is the paratextual structure that is now able to defy the status quo, because it is the paratext that inscribes a text into one or another category of texts.

While exciting and entertaining, the case renders a refreshing and multi-dimensional authorship mode, that starts with a text and unfolds indefinitely in its "1001 paratexts".

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[122]   Lísias, 2017.

4   PARAMEDIA ON THE RISE

Paratexts are the texts that one reads before reading the text itself. They are, according to Gérard Genette, who coined the term, liminal texts or *thresholds* that connect the reader to the text. They can be the cover of a book, the title, the name of the author, the back cover of a music record, the poster or trailer of a film and so on. It was classified as an *epitext* the text that is located far from the text, and as *peritext* the one placed near the text[123].

In strict sense, paratexts are the only element that is effectively able to display a text for appreciation, especially when considering a text among other hundreds or thousands of texts. To grasp the role of paratexts in making texts manageable, it is enough to picture a library where all pages of all books can be seen at the same time.

Similarly, it may be controversial to state that one can "own" a text, due to its abstract aspect. But one can own the interfaces that are used to display the text, and those interfaces – record covers, book covers, film covers – are the only way one can see the text summarized, for instance, in one single image.

It seems fruitful to describe here the importance of *display* in paratextual culture. From traditional libraries in private spaces to the iTunes library or Spotify, those libraries are here taken in consideration to make a point about how we used to display and consume paratexts, socially, and how these habits found their place in social media culture.

Among the many functions of paratexts, beyond archiving and information, paratexts are identifiers that perform a social function when publicly displayed. Unquestionably, it adds up to the social perception of the owner of a collection of texts: films, books, music albums. From books as a symbol of intellectuality, or records as a symbol of taste, these composed an important element in the dynamics of social interaction in private spaces, and on the management of self-representation in daily life[124]. What happens, then, in the digital era? What happens, then, when the digital era turns to social media? Finally, what

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123   Genette, 1977.
124   Goffman (1959).

happens when ownership is no longer the most popular possibility and becoming a member of a specific service is the new way of consuming?

When it comes to paratexts and new media, it is important to think of the material aspect. Several enterprises are currently engaging in the effort of transferring the analog interface to the digital one. The reasons may be several, from creating a familiarity effect to an attempt to reproduce the same "reading procedure" that reading print books requires[125].

Within the age of shady downloads, such browsing was made difficult. In a social occasion, a visitor would have to find folders, browse through files, and be satisfied with a collection of icons or filenames. Take, for instance, a widely used software in the late 90s and early 2000s, *Winamp*.

The attempt was to materialize the player, but not the content – the user was able to download "skins" that would customize the player and create the illusion of a physical device. The library was obliterated, and the old habit of display was made difficult.

When it comes to content, the popularization of peer-to-peer download meant a bold increase of copyright infringement. Not entirely a new thing, the grey market for music was a popular habit in flea markets in the 70s and 80s[126], which virtually exploded with Napster. Imprisonment of internet users generated controversy, as in the cases of Belgium police arresting Napster users in 2001[127] or, in the USA, the "261 lawsuits filed against specific individuals randomly chosen from among the millions who have engaged in the unauthorized distribution of copyrighted music online"[128], the late-90s internet user, especially the less savvy one, was not only morally bothered but essentially concerned with the possibility of downloading malware from peer-to-peer software or other sources.

Apple released the iPod in 2001, and the iTunes Store (then named iTunes Music Store) was launched in 2003[129]. Apparently filling the gap between expensive, outdated CD industry, soon the iTunes Store became hugely successful, and a viable alternative to the grey market. It was substantially cheaper than the traditional market option, safe and practical. The 2004 announcement, in California, would state that

> the iTunes Music Store now has over one million songs available for download in the US, becoming the first and only online digital music service to offer consumers a million song catalog. (…) With more than 100 million songs downloaded and more than 70 percent market share of legal downloads for singles and albums, the iTunes Music Store is the world's number one online music service.[130]

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125   In Espen Aarseth idea of the conventional print book being non-ergodic literature, and thus requiring "no extranoematic responsibilities placed on the reader except (for example) eye-movement and the periodic or arbitrary turn of pages (Aarseth 1-2).
126   Landes & Lichtman, 2003.
127   Associate Press, 2001.
128   Landes & Lichtman, 2003.
129   See Apple Press Info for a complete History of iPod and iTunes.
130   (ibid.)

Besides displaying the files as the usual computer file folder, iTunes displays the user's library as a collection of album covers that resembles the physical aspects of a sleek, polished, almost "low-gravity" shelf filled with CD covers.

It is significant the importance that the paratext had in differentiating the grey and the official markets and in offering what is considered to be a "quality" or "standard" experience for purchasing and listening to music. In software purchase versus pirate software download, it was also the paratext (the box, the CDs) that would be *seen* as the difference between one way of consuming and another, despite the fact that the official product purchase would entitle the customer to services and guarantees.

Apple's iTunes and Amazon MP3 Store do not grant ownership rights to music content – those are connected to the user's account. According to the last updates in Amazon's Terms of Use, what is granted is *access*:

> when you purchase Music Content, you are directing us to store that Music Content in your Amazon Cloud Player account (…) Upon payment for Music Content, we grant you a non-exclusive, non-transferable right to use the Music Content only for your personal, non-commercial, entertainment use, subject to the Agreement.[131]

The idea of cloud computing[132] facilitates the idea of an impermanent access to the final product, instead of ownership rights: seller becomes service provider, and the merchandise is the bridge that leads consumer to product. The relation between consumer and provider happens, thus, in every time the product is consumed, instead of being limited to the moment of purchase.

Similarly, iTunes' terms state that "You may not rent, lease, lend, sell, transfer, redistribute, or sublicense the Licensed Application and, if you sell your Mac Computer or iOS Device to a third party"[133].

Apart from facilitating the downloads (safe, all in one place), the role of paratexts in this system seems to relate to an attempt for easy, practical visualization of the collections, but possibly as well to fulfill the role of ownership when consumers were still processing the lack of physicality of objects they used to own. What happens, then, is that the desire for ownership is left unfulfilled, at least until cultural practices stop demanding ownership over that kind of object. Even if ownership appears to be there (because of the materiality of the paratexts), the terms of service state otherwise.

The needs met are the ones of *accessibility* and *display*, for practical and aesthetical purposes. Similar ideas would come with records, and to a certain extent, to VHS tapes and DVDs[134]. The key element of display is still *the shelf.*

In a social environment, say, a private get together, the shelf has (or has had) the capability of instantly (and, importantly, *casually*) display to guests the

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[131] Amazon, 2012.
[132] Services where the end user's data is stored in remote servers and that are accessible from different platforms, becoming ubiquitous. (Mells & Grance, n.d.).
[133] "ITUNES STORE - TERMS AND CONDITIONS," 2017.
[134] DVDs are more commonly relegated to big drawers under the television set, perhaps because they are not particularly a symbol of wealth. Popularized in hypermarkets and made of shiny plastic covers, they seem to constitute a less elegant collection than books.

hosts' taste in the arts, in music or cinema. It may sound unusual to cast so much importance in the social aspect – but at this point, it sounds improper to underestimate the importance of socialization in the digital era, where so much importance is given to social media.

It may be important to start discussing the *site* of display. In America, for instance, the use of the house as a social space gained strength circa 1850, when the domestic architecture was redesigned to reorganize public and private life. For instance, the entrance hall or "front parlor was supposed to be 'accessible to visitors' and to display elegance"[135].

Many studies have been conducted to analyze the drive that the consumer society has to display objects of status, such as art pieces, furniture, jewelry or books. It is the idea of "ostentatious consumption" described by American economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen in early 20th Century, and referred to by Zygmunt Bauman as "that shameless display of one's own opulence and wealth to humiliate others who don't have the resources to respond in kind"[136].

Personal libraries were as well a site of socialization, way before that. Samuel Pepys would use his personal library to shape his network of acquaintances, and, in return, the network would shape the library. According to Lovemann, "Pepys's book collection, initially kept in the intimate space of his closet, was a source of pride and came to serve as an index of his mental and social condition"[137].

Before social networks, the capacity of displaying one's wealth or cultural goods was limited by the range of each *occasion* in which such space was shared: a dinner, a party, a gathering, a meeting. These spaces would give access to a limited amount of people, for a limited amount of time. It is already obvious the difference between the contemporary counterpart, the social network space, where people can socialize with nearly everyone they know on a daily basis. Common sense may tell that social media users are socializing *more often* with *more people* than ever before. The effort, here, is to perceive social media as another social space, like an office or a living room.

What happens in social media is in many senses different from the old bookshelf social scene. Firstly, the convergence of accounts takes Spotify to Facebook, and as custom, it grants the service access to post what the member is listening to. The shared post is then, by custom, seen by all the Facebook friends of the Spotify member. The service has, also, within Spotify[138] window, similar dynamics of friends (generally a list imported from Facebook), where everyone can see each other's activities.

This newsfeed update tells several kinds of information: *User X uses Spotify. User X is, in fact, Member X. Member X is listening to this artist, at this moment.* Inside Spotify, that means two members are, simultaneously, listening to music, although listening to different music. When the relation goes to a member's up-

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[135] Clark, 1986.
[136] Bauman, 2008.
[137] Loveman, 2015.
[138] Spotify, 2017.

dates seen on Facebook, the equation changes: a Facebook user sees another as a Spotify member who is listening to music at that very moment or recently. The dynamics dismiss *the happening*, *the occasion*; nothing is shared but the promulgation of an unshared moment; every time one listens to a song is a time to tell everyone about it. On the other hand, clicking a friend's music update on Facebook will play it instantly – an interactive element able of creating a synchronous, shared moment.

All these facts point out that the moment of appreciation of one's music is widespread, centrifugal, displaced. Users may be throwing a party, jogging or working, and their shelf of music is not exactly in display, but their *experience of music* is public.

There was an important turn on the digital consumption of music with Spotify. With a micro-financing system fueled by low-price subscriptions, the user does not own tracks or albums, but rather he/she owns the *membership*, it owns *access* to a social space that encompasses virtually all the music in the world. The model of pay-per-item has faced a setback. Other models have become popular, like Netflix, Amazon Video, Google Play and others.

Being a member of Spotify is a *title*, and it displaces *ownership over an object* (the album, the track) to *access to the absolute* (music itself; all music). It also displaces ownership over an object to *title over a subject* (the former user, who becomes the *member*). It thus replaces *ownership* with *membership*.

It does not work within the idea of an identity value constituted by collected objects. This kind of membership represents an important shift of centuries of ownership culture, where owning something material meant wealth and, consequently, gave access or the feeling of belonging to a certain class, group, *up-to-dateness* or ideology. Membership, contrarily, is rather a shortcut to this *same* idea of belonging guaranteed formerly (only) by wealth. Spotify has a quite popular free version – the status of being a paid subscriber is nearly negligible, since in social media and within the service there is no information displayed remarking the difference between members. But the main difference between this and the previous modes of collecting cultural goods is the one of being a (literal) member of a service that grants access to *everything*, and the one of operating with concepts of *real time*, *regularity*, *habit*.

Membership overcomes ownership – a badge or passport that can render access to *all objects*. *Access*, not *ownership*. Specific objects like Kindle, perhaps the most material of the new media paratexts, operate also as *passports* for the "world of books" held by Amazon – despite the fact that books have to be purchased and can be stored, it is the object that provides access, and it is the account of Amazon that ultimately grants it. With Apple computers, perhaps the change from ownership to membership was earlier, and mostly under the realm of discourse. The possession of the object constitutes, similarly to any membership, a change in the subject – a "Mac person", thus, an implied sense of belonging to a certain group. The object itself and the title do not stand alone, as an Apple device is also a platform, an interface, a passport (a paratext?) to a world

of texts: the access to the iTunes store, which opens up a world of applications, for instance.

The *reach* of the capability of *display* that the average consumer has, as a networked consumer, is as important as the (public) habit of actually *using* his/her membership. Those are two elements in the same equation, proved to be powerful for the current consumer society. It comes to a scale of how many *impressions* (in the advertising sense of it) are being generated. In other words, the important thing is to *use and show*, not only to buy it – the consumer becomes a multiplier, a recruited agent of his own culture (and consumption).

But an important idea in this relates also to nearly all textual consumption in social media. When Spotify is connected to other social media, a multiplication of peritexts occurs, as the text travels, intact, from network to network. Each network will create their own peritext, as social media is prominently a culture of embedded and shared texts. But these are not the only paratexts created by "third parties", since even inside these networks other paratexts may encapsulate texts, such as the user-generated playlists. If in the print era the peritext was controllable, transacted only between author and editor[139], in new media the creation, situation and contextualization of a text is part of the risk of "unleashing" a text into the world.

It is not entirely fair to classify the experience of listening to music in Spotify as *epitexts*, since one click gives access to the text (the song is played in the same screen). Moreover, Spotify generates a variety of other paratexts, such as the image and biography of the author, related artists, playlists created by members featuring the artist and so on. All this, in extreme proximity to the music player, making those elements *peritexts*, by definition. A user may share the track on Facebook, creating a new player, that can be listened by other members in their Facebook newsfeeds. Paramedia is a fluid way of trafficking texts, and basically eliminates the need of distinction between close and far paratexts, or peritexts and epitexts. Furthermore, membership in Spotify can be free – negotiated in terms of paratextual insertions of advertisement between tracks.

What is possible to infer from the change of ownership towards membership, and the shift from "shelf" to social circles, is the perception of the *moment* or *experience* consumption instead of the iconic feel of owning this or that asset. The moment of consumption could be publicised (say, a photo on Instagram of one at a record store), but in membership, the moment of *fruition* is publicised by the connected APIs from Spotify activity published to the Facebook newsfeed.

As mentioned before, once Spotify and Facebook are connected, by default the newsfeed will publish what the user is listening to the user's Facebook newsfeed. The ownership of a library of music albums is substituted by the experience of the abum, reported in the newsfeed. The social status symbol shifts from *owning records* to *owning access* to all music.

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[139]   Stanizek, 2009.

An important difference from the previous model is the one of temporality: the ownership of a material record is likely to last until the physical vinyl album, book or CD perishes. In a membership model, users need to operate under terms of service, that is, a code of conduct. Thus, violating the conduct will terminate membership. The code of conduct grants access, and it may be revoked at any time.

5 CONCLUSION: PARAMEDIA, FROM NOW AND BEYOND

One great definition of the role of paratexts comes from Genette and Maclean in article published in 1991, a considerably long time after the publication of Genette's original book on paratexts.

> "The paratext thus is empirically composed of an assorted set of practices and discourses of all sorts and of all ages, which I incorporate under this term in the name of a community of interest, or convergence of effects, which seems to me more important than their diversity of aspect."

In a media-rich and culturally and politically charged scenario as YouTube, Twitter or Facebook – terrains that are by definition *flat*, where the entire world may interact – naming the paratexts and breaking them down into manageable parts, can be a valuable contribution for understanding better which "sets of practices and discourses" are at play.

In this work, with all articles gathered in the proposed order, the understanding of the *mediation process of social texts* come to life. That was my goal with this thesis.

Hence, we have a path of *what is the motivation for writing, the modes of writing, what is an author, what is the author's ethos and the text praxis, what are the paratexts inventoried and adapted to social media,* and *practical examples.* As a conclusion, hopefully the work can help us to understand how the theory of paratexts has adapted to the digital, networked, social text, what forces and vectors are influencing authors and text, and gather more theoretical tools useful to analyze text in social media.

Far back in print media, paratexts are surrounding elements that ease interpretation of texts and helps the reader to identify text modes, formats and genre, and decide whether to read it or not.

The peritext (paratexts placed near the text, in its surroundings) displays information such as the author's gender, nationality, the time the work has been published, the type of work (fiction, non-fiction), the genre it belongs to (sci-fi, thriller, romance), what critics and reviewers have said about it, the synopsis,

other books belonging to the same publisher or collection, who wrote the preface and more.

The epitext (paratexts placed far from the text) can be posters, advertising, interviews with the author and other materials that, like the peritext, point to the text.

This is not essentially different in digital, user-generated, social texts -- but there are significant differences, and minding these differences were a driving force when doing this research. Would it make any sense to apply the paratext theory from print books to tweets and Facebook posts? At this point, I can confidently state that yes, it is a valid theory, and different enough to be adapted, not simply applied.

When analyzing print media paratexts, it is easy to see there are untapped correlations to be explored in digital texts shared in social media and user-generated content websites. Paratexts can be found in both analogous and homologous functions in comparison to print media paratexts.

By analogous, I mean paratexts with different origin, and that end up developing a similar function than in print media. By homologous, I refer to paratexts that have similar origin, and end up exerting a different function.

For example, prefaces. Prefaces in print media may be included in the beginning of print books by authors, editors or publishers. It is most likely a transacted area between these three agents, with a common agreement that such preface should belong in the beginning of the book. The agent could even be an imaginary one, anticipating the fictional world: like the role of Virgil taking Dante (the author!) through the dreamscapes of Heaven, Hell and Purgatory[140] or H.G. Wells prefaces introducing the wildest science fiction; the agents "explain the provenance" of a given narrative, bridging impossible worlds: life, death; reality, fiction; frames that "collectively announce and negotiate the end of realism as a narrative norm"[141].

The purpose (function) of the preface is, very much likely, to encourage the reader to read the work, to ease certain interpretations and to help the user to make meaning of the work, bring some context, add some background information. Thus, in summary, the preface of a print book is there mostly to help or encourage the reader to proceed reading the book.

The essential difference, thus, is to notice the "official" character of the preface -- and, by extension, to the whole concept of paratexts brought by Genette. That is, perhaps, the main difference to what this work understands to be the paratext in a digital and social environment.

At the time Genette wrote the book, little attention was paid to the audience as a player in the discussion or promotion of the work. Communication, at that time, was a one-way lane -- very differently from a world where consumers can lift up or debunk brands, celebrities and public persons with Facebook shares of tweets. Hence the original text refers only to "officially" constructed paratexts.

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[140]   Dante, Longfellow, & Doré, 2015.
[141]   Seed, 2013.

It would be unlikely that Genette would consider a personal card given with a book as a paratext of the original text. It would not be *actually* attached to the text. The important question is: why not? If this card with a brief introduction note would be read by a million people within a day, wouldn't that represent a significant introductory note to the text? While this would sound absurd in the 70s or 80s, the role of the reader in digital media – the user who shares and comments texts online – is one of great impact.

That's what has been discussed in the first articles of the thesis, the role of writing and sharing, the *ethos* and nature of the activity of writing and sharing and authoring texts in social media, as well as the publicity and authorship achieved in such platforms.

Thus, I consider such prefaces as homologous, because they have a similar origin, and yet perform a different function. While print books would have prefaces or blurbs telling how great the book is, and working as a one-sided piece of advertising, the social preface may say virtually anything about the work.

The prefatorial information on social media goes beyond flattering introductory notes. Take, for instance, the number of likes, shares or comments a text has. More than keeping the count up-to-date, the balance or discrepancy between the three -- likes, shares, comments -- indicates things like popularity or controversy. Lots of comments in a video with low number of likes is a quick indicator of controversy, for instance. Lots of likes and a low number comments, on the other hand, may indicate that the uploader "bought" fake YouTube likes.

Thus, the social media paratext is a much more accurate and complex indicator of what is a credible, interesting, controversial or likely-to-be-read text. No editor of a print book, we may infer, would publish a bad review on the cover.

The role of the audience – the reader that promotes texts, comments, and produces new texts and textual connections prominent in social media textuality. Readership in social media is an activity connected to other readers and, interestingly, turn texts into connected and ever-changing entities – consider, for instance, how the reception of a text may change as it gets more views and commentary.

The profusion of these new (para)textualities created by the so-called paramedia has turned visible a number of intertextualities that were not visible before. That may be the main role of paramedia: the establishment of interconnections based on metadata and activity logs.

Alexander Galloway has explored this rich field of textual interpretation: the interpretation of code, foregrounding what code "does", and exposing "why it does what it does". In his own words, he attempts "to read the never-ending stream of computer code as we read any text, decoding its structure of control"[142]. From Galloway's analyses on how the internet protocol operates — creating a logic of freedom and control, connectivity and disconnections —, the one that interests the most here is the aspect of collectivity and participation. In this aspect, social networks are also ruled by their own internal protocols of classification and organization. That happens in the level of tagging, popularity, marketing interests and so on. And it happens on the textual level (for instance, a

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[142]   Galloway, 2001.

YouTube video tagged with "design" will appear in the "Arts" category), but also on the user level— a user that has watched a video tagged with the term "design" may be presented with a video from the nearest design shop. All those videos presented as related are aggregated by a number of protocols, affecting the network, the user-generated content, the user behavior and, ultimately, relying on the controversy of the cookie policy (that is, what information is stored at the user's computer and what part of this information may be transacted between companies[143]). In this sense, the user data (cookies, user navigation history) mark texts that can be amounted to the user's "collectanea" of texts.

This group of texts marked by the user's data is then used to expand this collection with "related texts", other users' texts, similar behaviors, targeted sponsored content and so on. Besides the filters and governance of a series of protocols, all these texts have one thing in common: the user. For the network, users are data: a binary chunk of code that aggregates texts and has the capability of generate more texts.

Take, for instance, the metadata attributed by users to videos uploaded to YouTube or Vimeo. Consider, as well, how users have added books, videos or images to certain collections of their own, in Pinterest, YouTube, Vimeo, Goodreads. And how texts automatically start belonging irrevocably to certain lists and collections simply by readership behavior: *users who bought this also bought that*.

Another aspect that turns paramedia into a concept of its own is the perception that media is, by its contemporary nature, networked. As it is hyperlinked and taking place on the web, the aspect of textual proximity and distance between text and paratext should be questioned. Does it make sense to think of "epitexts" as paratextual information "far" from the text, when the hyperlinked structure of the web is always a click away? In paramedia, however, text and paramedia can be on the same page or not, depending entirely on the platform in which the text is shared.

Certain sites display only the main epitexts (cover of a book, poster of a film, product dimensions, length, distributors), more descriptive and in-depth information (synopsis, cast and crew) and so on, but no text. It encompasses, as well, as an integral part, the crystallization of the voice of the reader with ratings, reviews, discussions and, for Amazon, the important matter of shopping behavior from users. It also includes extracts from the texts -- Amazon's Look Inside feature, or complete scenes featured by IMDb. IMDb and Amazon, in this sense, are repository of paratexts, and the text may or not be a click away, inside or outside the website -- for example, when IMDb displays a link to the on-demand video streaming service in IMDb.

The counterpart example comes naturally with Netflix, Vimeo or YouTube, where streaming, review, commentary and all possible paratexts are readily available along with the text. Paramedia does not deal with distance, but rather with ideas of *presence and absence* -- distance is always a few degrees away, and formats and distributors are multiple. Thus, no text has its own official locus of

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143   Vamosi, 2008.

reception and paratextual information -- they can be shared, embedded and gathered together in new places around the web, simultaneously.

Another aspect of paramedia seems to be the stances of proximity between paramedia, text and author. When a writer shares a poem, when the Dalai Lama tweets a drop of wisdom, or when a user uploads a YouTube video, the audience's activity is immediately visible to the author, and the channel is open, to an extent, for immediate feedback.

Lastly, I would like to address the matter of the *outcome* of readership. To me, that was perhaps the most interesting creation of paratexts: the reader itself. In the web, readers are, unequivocally, paratexts.

The reader is a user, and users produce through activity, a log. For the machine -- that is, digital publishing sites, content producers, social platforms -- the log *is* the user. It is all they know about the user, and in the context of textuality, users are *readers*.

Thus, this is an interesting point for the field of textual studies, because it is readerly perception of user activity, and a *textual* perception of user data.
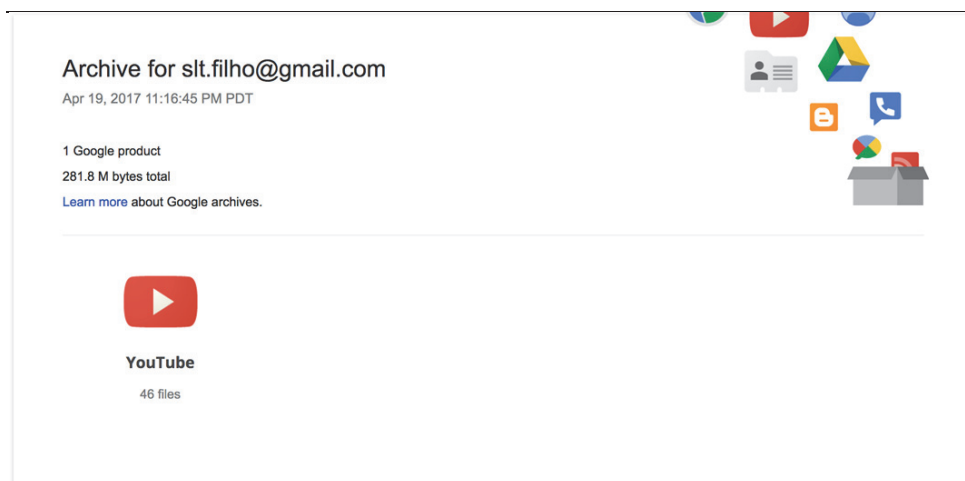
FIGURE 3   My own YouTube user data: how a user exists for YouTube

The user's log -- the reader's text -- is a text that binds together all the texts he/she reads online. The reader creates by reading, commenting, sharing and

engaging into online social activity, the intertextuality between the texts he/she read. When I watch the documentary *Making a Murder* in Netflix, I am placing *Making a Murder* into the list of films that my username has watched. It is placed in a collection, creating a new, user-centric filiation.

In the same manner, if I buy *Fictions* by Jorge Luis Borges in Amazon, I contribute to the list of users "who also bought *The Aleph*". This intertextuality spans from this collective construction of readership, to the private, individual textuality that I produce as an individual user: my log. In the database of Amazon, in my public shelf of "books I'm interested in" on Goodreads, in my "read books" session on Facebook, my user data builds a collection of books and activities that was not there before, and becomes an intertext that binds together different books, films, music and all kinds of texts.

Conversely, on YouTube, whatever I watch is stored as part of my log, and will be used to show me advertising, recommendations and such. It is a similar claim to what Paul Shillingsburg does in his ideation of an effective network of (scholar) texts: "each module in the structure should connect to other components so that in the aggregate they act as a network of related parts"[144].

Henceforth, the intertext created by my user data opens up to more textualities generated by different platforms -- if I have watched a interviews with Borges, Umberto Eco and Deleuze, YouTube can suggest specific videos, prioritize certain promoted videos, and offer tailor-made ads to my interests. Paramedia is also listening, reinventing itself, and exchanging information in an endless underlying fabric of metadata and interconnections.

The cultural shift observed ubiquitously in internet culture can be seen both in in *readership* and *authorship*, and both in texts and paratexts: it is the dawn of a networked, user-centric culture, with texts and paramedia creating new filiations in an exciting, dynamic and endless library of fluid textualities.

In conclusion, it's important to state that the theme of social media content is still acute. However, there are clear silos separating Academia and content producers. While Academia talks about "readers", "text" and "textualities", businesses talk about "customers", "content" and "engagement". Some purposes are definitely incompatible, when it comes to the business of content production and the study of those.

Businesses are mostly looking for conversions, purchase, brand adhesion. Scholars are mostly looking into what individuals and societies are doing, and at times, why they are doing it. Does it sound, despite the different purposes, that there's a lot to be gained if a closer dialogue could be established?

This lack of dialogue creates a number of hindrances. When it comes to researching the web and its current manifestations (website usage, social exchange, new habits and acute topics), we see companies doing more of the same, importing meaningless trends, replicating the competition's actions. They are all desperate to join the loop and surf the wave of the next big thing. Later on, the market laws usually tell they were uninspired and were lacking, if noth-

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144   Shillingsburg, 2009.

ing else, a solid research background that the Academic field could have provided.

On the research side of web trends, the effect is a bit of a perfect opposite. Researchers focusing on what changes quickly, such as styles, or platforms, or best practices, and tend to lose track of the very object they were researching in the first place. My advisor has warned me about that: "don't get lost in your readings". That was a valuable advice, because it is indeed easy to lose track.

To me, the value of research is when we focus on established, definite aspects of the web and its practices, that will not vanish in the next wave of buzzwords. The valuable social researcher focuses on contemporary phenomena, but timeless frameworks. They are able to circumvent universal phenomena into manageable examples, study them in depth, and produce something that can be valuable now or in the upcoming years. I have been fortunate to come across to many of them at the University of Jyväskylä and at the Nordic Digital Network partners.

Interestingly, timelessness is a value that is very rarely achieved in digital businesses. The main value is change, and rapid, agile, ongoing change. That makes a world of instability and confusion. It does sound that, exactly for being in different sides of taming and understanding digital life, Academics and professionals of this area could benefit more of each other.

Currently, creative and communication industries are blooming, but they are in deep need of assimilating knowledge. Information is everywhere and data is leaking from the "oil pits" under our feet. But very few understand and make it manageable, understandable, and fully integrated.

That's when seeing media and paramedia as surfaces of deeper layers of information becomes important. Content and paramedia are nothing but the science of *display*. Once, *display* what good writers and videomakers brought to a sleek surface that, through good search engines or social networks, would reach the viewer. Display, at the contemporary web, is nothing but the algorithmic combination that, with artificial intelligence, is able to read a user's history and display more content based on that. A long time ago, in the Mad Men reminiscent days, we were an industry of "how can we make users like this?". Later, with the web, we have slowly integrated with technology and joined the industry of "how can we make users find this?". Now, we are in the industry of "how can we guess what the users don't know that they want?".

Communication and data management has become so incredibly powerful that humans in business and Academia have difficulty in viewing the user information we can store, compute or buy. We need tools that help us focus, that swipe away the excesses, and that gives a vantage point into what matters. I believe the concept of paramedia is able to isolate part of the decision-making process of users, so that scholars and professionals are able to better understand how these processes happen.

What we have now in every social network, ecommerce site or news site is a mix of media and paramedia designed at the surface. On the back end, we have deep waters of user data, website data, artificial intelligence, marketing

automation tools and so forth. It is not a coincidence that Lev Manovich, so known to our department at the University of Jyväskylä, has stated in his Face-book feed that there is nothing new in researching culture, unless one research-es big streams of computational data[145].

We need to shift our views, from customers and users to *data*. From data to *dataflows*, where we understand behaviors. From studying or producing for a target audience, to studying and producing *datastreams* that light up or migrate, according to the users' responses to our ever-changing, ever-adapting stimuli.

Resistance is futile: everyday, the amount of data we collect increases. Someone needs to start the hard work while it's still manageable, and help the next generation to grow up in a world that can be, in the least, understood.

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[145]   Manovich, 2017.

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PUBLISHED ARTICLES

I

WRITING IN SOCIAL MEDIA: ETHOS IN THE SOCIAL TEXT

by

Sérgio Luiz Tavares Filho, 2013

In *Why do we write as we write?* Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press

Writing in social media: the ethos of the social text

ABSTRACT

Perceiving social media activity as *performance*, the traditional approach to social media studies, explains a series of motives behind such activities: the construction of an online persona, the use of the medium as a stage for this construction and the role of others in the spectacle (both as actors and audience). It does not encompass, however, the textual aspect of it. On the other hand, an *authorship* approach to the topic could help us to understand the actual tools for the construction of goffmanean's character or persona. With Goffman's approach it is possible to answer questions regarding the motivation for writing in social media. Finally, Foucault's ideas on the very act of writing in ancient Greco-Roman society will help to understand the effects of writing in that society. Combining these fields, an interdisciplinary approach hopefully may shed light on the purposes and consequences of writing in social media.

Keywords: Social media – writing ethos – power

1. Goffmanean dramaturgical approach

It is somehow difficult to detach social media activity from Ervin Goffman's approach to social interaction. By his definition,

> an interaction may be defined as all the interaction which occurs throughout any one occasion when a given set of individuals are in one another's continuous presence; the term 'an encounter' would do as well. A 'performance' may, be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants. Taking a particular participant and his performance as a basic point of reference, we may refer to those who contribute to the other's performances as the audience, observers, or coparticipants.[1]

It is clear that the dynamics of social media activity match the author's definition, but it also leaves an output, a resulting textual production than can be analyzed from an authorial perspective. It is easy to perceive such production in blogs, for instance, which are not much different from social status updates – perhaps, in length, but certainly not in content. A blog narrates one's life retrospectively, while social media commonly narrates it in progression; still, both media narrate the same story.

The effort, thus, is not to detach the goffmanean approach to social media, but rather look further into the outcome of the performances and interactions,

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[1] Goffman, Ervin. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1959), 24-75.

which remain in the 'eternal return' of the Internet: it is recorded, available, and always there, certainly constituting a core of texts (visual, cinematic or textual) that should be carefully analyzed. In this article, text is put in relation to the very act of writing or producing text in light of Foucault's research on the role of writing in Ancient Greek society.

Social media popularized the online version of self-presentation, but to an extent, it also eroded the idea of writing, as self-presentation increasingly took to itself the activity of writing: writing was the medium in social media, and social media became the medium of writing.

The constant encouragement (or pressure) of social media to make it 'sociable' converges the identity of the writer to his own, real, official identity. That creates a movement of audience migration from medium to medium, and the text is then, constantly, shaped according this specific audience.

This migration (for example, friends from Facebook being connected to a new Pinterest account, or an invitation from Instagram to all Gmail contacts) is likely to happen as it provides the user an initial audience 'capital'. The audience is related, thus, to the author, not the text: the author invites his/her audience to populate the new network and orbit his production.

2. The social media audience

Thinking in the ideal audience of each social media there is a standard that easily rises: if a new social media is formed, it usually suggests that the user imports his contacts from Gmail or Facebook, for instance. Even YouTube, recently, has suggested that all users start using their full name, connected to the user's Google account. It is likely that this is the stepping-stone that makes social networks a civilized, contained, systemic network: it is based on official, public personas and connections.

The user has the right, obviously, of declining such connections, but practice shows differently. In complying to the mainstream usage of the networks, the user, by transference, turns every new social media into a similar, familiar ground. The user has the opportunity to deal, invest and enhance his *audience capital*: a new network is formed, so he/she brings his friends over so that they can interact with his/her newly produced content. Text to an audience implies in the possibility of popularity: Goffman already noticed how people emulated different behaviors to please others:

> Thus, when an individual appears in the presence of others, there will usually be some reason for him to mobilize his activity so that it will convey an impression to others which it is in his interests to convey.[2]

The perspective, in here, is the audience. In social media, this presentation (or text) is as well submitted to the underlying pressure from the audience. Gener-

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[2]   Goffman, Ervin. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, 25.

ally, text starts to be shaped from the moment of the audience constitution, or acknowledge of such constitution. In an environment that replicates audiences, there is likely some kind of *pasteurization* of each network, in consequence to what Boyd calls the 'collapsed contexts'[3], that is, the tossing of all kinds of acquaintances, friends and family relations into one same network (in theory, there are mechanisms to separate them; in practice, it is hard to asses if they are exactly functional, for a number of reasons). As Boyd states, 'without information about audience, it is often difficult to determine how to behave'[4]. The user is, thus, conformed to the audience and will behave according to it: in this sentence, it is already possible to understand how little is the autonomy of writing in social media; if we consider that the activity of writing has migrated, in practice, to social media, there are a few issues to be considered as well.

All that would configure, then, the idea of what is a social network site, and how text production takes place within such sites. However, the reach of these logics seems to stretch further, as the activity of writing increasingly migrates from personal places to social networks.

The environment of social media, with its own economy and ecology, and the classical idea of writing seems to be somehow incompatible. If not entirely, the intertwining of such practices certainly erodes the original idea or function of writing. Why write privately if I can receive social rewards from my peers if I do it publicly?

3. Writing: function and ethos

In an economy that finds it more profitable the public social text than the private one, what kind of influence over our ethos this new mode of writing may be acting upon us?

What is important to consider in an authorial approach to social media activity is that social media is an activity of writing, and ideally, an actualization of the practices of writing. The consequence of this equivalence, that is mostly ubiquitous, is what should be discussed and, at times, questioned.

In Ancient Greece, traditional values in decline reoriented Greco-Roman culture: more individualism and a asceticism, where the care of body and mind was also related to the activity of writing, perceived as an activity of the constitution of the self, in relation, as well, to the others[5]. The similarities with Internet's social text are striking: social text is, after all, the updated (and actualized) activity of writing. The role of this contemporary social activity of writing, where new tools, practices and parataxis take the site of the activity of the constitution of the self, however, is not so clear, as important aspects of 'writing' are being systematically left behind.

[3] Boyd, Danah and Marwick, Alice. 'Teens' Attitudes, Practices, and Strategies,' A Decade in Internet Time: Symposium on the Dynamics of the Internet and Society (SSRN, 2011).
[4] Ibid.
[5] Foucault, Michel. 'A escrita de si,' in *O que é um autor?* (Lisboa: Passagens. 1992), 3-23.

Writing had an activity, according to Foucault, of ethopoiein, that is, related to the ethos and modes of being of an individual. And writing was, as well, a role of ethopoios, that is, the one who can transform the mode of being of an individual6. According to the ascetic ideals, the ascetic individual would take the act of writing as a time for meditation (meditatio), in a private practice that would relate to the interiorization of the care of the self; an activity of structuring of the balance of the self.

The ethopoiein had, as well, and still according to Foucault, two forms: *hypomnemata* and correspondence [7]. The hypomnemata consist in a personal, material archive, where the individual could register things he would read and hear, and where he could fortify his ethos. It is a matter of memorizing the precepts inscribed in the archive. Seneca would consider it an interior writing[8].

In social media, immediate examples are the social networks that encourage the user to store content from the internet, instead of creating it -- a major tendency of SNSs, like Pinterest with its boards or Tumblr with the reblog function, both websites that function more as collections of images, videos and music rather than 'notebooks for the people' like the traditional idea of a blog. The *hypomnemata* were practices of societies that would praise the care of the self, a practice that today can be taken for the practice of the numerous attempts to crystallize an identity -- with boards, pins, blogs and reblogs.

According to Bruno, the *hypomnemata* would establish a relation of the self to the self in a finished and adequate way[9]. Interestingly, these 'archives' such as Tumblr blogs or Pinterest boards are public, and often connected to Facebook, but somehow, they seem to work more separately from the individual as an author-institution and his efforts to construct an identity, as it happens in Facebook. Perhaps the openness of Tumblr and Pinterest, where posts receive feedback without the *need* of 'inviting friends', thus without the scrutiny of an audience composed mostly or solely by preexisting relations in the real world, is a factor for them to work more likely the *hypomnemata* mode of writing.

The other type of practice, of the correspondence, was close to the hypomnemata perhaps in the same measure that the Facebook status update is close to the Pinterest board or the Tumblr blog. While *hypomnemata* was considered a text with filiation to the soul, the correspondence would ideally objectify the soul[10]. It was an action that would influence the writer and the reader[11]. Diary blogs, like letters, were in great part narrations about small facts of the day, and to a point (especially when blogs are detached enough from the real identity of the writer), they are Seneca's consciousness exam, that Foucault also mentions as a moment when the writer acts as 'an inspector of the self'[12].

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6   Ibid, 77.
7   Bruno, Mário. 'A função Etopoética Da Escrita,' in *Foucault Hoje?,* ed. André Queiroz and Nina Velasco E Cruz (Rio De Janeiro: 7 Letras, 2007), 42-45.
8   Ibid.
9   Ibid.
10   Ibid.
11   Ibid.
12   Ibid.

In social media text, the encouraged activity is public, or for all effects, *only* the one of *epistle*: the evaluation of one's ethos in light of one's narration of a day may now arrive though immediate feedback from peers. The question is if these practices will transport the private reflection to the public arena or if these self-evaluation practices are obliterated by the practice of social, public text. There is no perceived reward if one's text is not seen, commented or liked. The ascetic individual would spend time on his own (*anacoresis*), and away from the public view. This idea is quite scarce in the common practice of social text, where individuals are nearly all the time accessible, especially in their activity of writing. Again, according to Bruno, 'the Greeks detached activities of self-governance from power as an articulation of forces (derived from the relationship with other individuals)'[13], and this clearly is not present in social media text, a text which increasingly became networked (with converging identities connected to the real world) and took the lead in self-presentation, ethos construction, self-construction.

These matters interestingly relate to another concept that Foucault brought to light: the Panopticon, which described the society of control. What may be, alone, a phenomenon of early XXI Century -- the Orwellian big brother model -- soon (and gradually) was transformed in another form of control. When Google showed the world the power of Google Earth, and the ubiquity of its services, like Gmail, the Owellian model seemed to be the biggest preoccupation of the individual: borders, protocols, forbidden topics that could not circulate the internet, in a post 9/11 world.

However, the Panopticon model and the Orwellian Big Brother were fused with a vulgar form of television, which was Endemol's version of the Big Brother. This model seemed more accurate to describe the overall media scenario of the early XXI Century. As Tucherman stated in the early phase of YouTube and Endemol shows, 'we may think (…) that if there was a dispositive of surveillance where one could have been observed without knowing this dispositive was creating a norm, today we live a dispositive of intimacy exposure, in a combination of this new protocol of 'social interaction', that is the protocol of showing oneself, of making oneself visible'[14].

Not only were we surveilled by legal authorities in (inter)national contexts, but we were also invited for a reversed logic that would result in the same idea in the supranational realm of the internet: as 'real' intimacy was shown in television as never before, and YouTube videos displayed a variety of home-made videos, bedrooms and 'real' characters under the spotlight, gradually, the *aesthetics of intimacy* was part of mainstream media and internet culture, and with social networks, the individual was invited to disclosure much more information than he was used to. Combined with the new ways of the networked society where work and personal blend in an ongoing 'activity' in social networks, the scenario is complete. The Panopticon is a technological logic that

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[13]   Ibid.

[14]   Tucherman, Ieda. 'Michel Foucault, hoje, ou ainda: do dispositivo de vigilância ao dispositivo de exposição da intimidade', Revista FAMECOS 27 (2005), 40-48.

distributes spaces and gazes, generating a system of incorporation of rules and originating 'docile bodies'[15]. Surveillance -- now, publicity -- is desirable, it is the eye of the social media user who is his own tower of surveillance: capturing images of everyday life, the user gazes upon himself and brings his own imagery to the public eye.

It's an effect epitomized by the 'Facebook ticker', a window on the right side of the website that displays in real time every public activity performed by the user's friends. The eye of the power makes everyone a tower: everyone is watched, everyone is being watched. Differently from the Orwellian Big Brother (that exerts its power out of discipline and fear), the social network Panopticon is a power of indulgence; a mirror whose reflection is groomed and which entertains, amuses, amazes – in Facebook, Huxley and Endemol rewrite Orwell.

Writing is, since Ancient Greece, a tool of constitution of what is the self: the technology and practices of writing has changed, and so as the self, adapting directly to what they propose: the individual is always online, always sharing, always producing content and merging, increasingly, work and personal life[16]. In Facebook, particularly, a new vocabulary, that escapes the aims of this essay and pervades to the field of language: a new symbol that oversimplifies reactions and relationships, and no other possible reaction available in Facebook's vocabulary: a network where the only possible reaction is happiness or silence (considering that silence is absence, and thus, inexistence in a system that encourages users to exist) -- one can use words, of course, but it is entangling that it is much easier to be happy and Like things in Facebook than to dislike them.

The question that remains is, certainly, the one that inquires de needs, reasons, motivations, interests and losses in this radical shift from alternating public and private writing to a push towards public, and all the time *more public.* It seems to be a society of the care of the self, as a Panopticon-like structure where everyone surveils everyone is on: meditation is substituted by peer-to-peer constant evaluation and feedback.

4. A new ethos

The ethos of writing in social media obeys a few guidelines. Ideally, people will write for whom they know in real life, mirroring the social relations that exist in the real world. There is a reduced, discouraged space for anonymity.

The audience is a capital that will, ideally, be transported from one network to another. The two important references in the audience are the ones who will be offended by the content and who will positively respond. Popularity (or acceptance) becomes an important issue, as it accounts for acknowledge-

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[15]   Ibid.
[16]   Horning, Rob. 'Facebook in the Age of Facebook.' Proc. of Theorizing the Web 2012 (Washington: University of Maryland, 2012), 1-3.

ment. Facebook, for instance, has only the 'Like' button, creating this overall positive, optimistic, happy environment: there is a button for positive response, but not one for negative ones. As Goffman reminds us, this is not an entirely conscious posture, since 'sometimes the individual will be calculating in his activity but be relatively unaware that this is the case'[17].

The various goals, exercises and uses of different social networks seem to be prolific and constituting an interesting counterpart or extension of the ancient ways of writing: be it for self-governance, memory or self-to-self exercise. Even correspondence, for instance, can receive instant feedback, and even multiple feedback (when public or accessible to a number of friends). The parts engaging conversation will interact with each other, generating more complex and rich messages and discussions, and even creating new relations and connections.

However, the economy of friends and popularity may be turning against these possibilities, eroding the original sense and the contemporary adaptation to a mutant output where the capitalization of one's persona plays a bigger part than originally.

It was very clear that, for the Ancient Greeks, writing was a way to de-articulate Power, with various exercises for the mind, soul and self. The chilling conclusion is that in social media Power is articulated by the very updated activity of writing. This is reflected, especially, in the manner that users capitalize their own images through the publication of their social productivity. However, it is naïve to state that social media is merely 'giving profit to corporations'. Power should be addressed in the foucaultian way, as an entity that does not punish all the time, but also, also to a point, liberates, protects and entertains.

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[17]   Goffman, Ervin. The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, 75.

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II

WHAT YOKO ONO HAD FOR BREAKFAST: WHAT IS AN AUTHOR IN SOCIAL MEDIA?

by

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Media in Transition 8 Online Proceedings

What Yoko Ono had for breakfast: what is an author on social media?

ABSTRACT

This article discusses what is an author in social media. It questions the distinction between "average user" and "famous author", and analyzes the content of Twitter accounts of such authors, classifying them between personal, public and authorial. Furthermore, this division generates a possible way of classifying authorial text, considering space, publicity and content itself. The debate also considers if we, the social media users, are all authors and, if so, what are we authoring.

Keywords: Social media – Authorship – Paratext – Author – Social networks – Public – Private

1.   Authors and social media

In order to evaluate authorship elements in Twitter, a few accounts were taken in consideration, from known authors, media personalities and average users. Aspects and patterns found in those accounts were considered in relation to the traditional idea of what is an author and what is authorship, in light of theories of Gerard Genette, Ervin Goffman, Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. Twitter usernames of average users were suppressed for privacy purposes.

Michel Foucault points out that the presence of the author entitles a different type of discourse rather than the trivial speech: "it is not ordinary everyday speech that merely comes and goes (…) On the contrary; it is a speech that must be received in a certain mode and that, in a given culture, must receive a certain status." (Foucault, 1984, pp. 102-120). What is an author in a culture where no speech (in the sense that Foucault addresses to: a speech that is by nature remarkable, or worth listening, or keeping) "comes and goes" since everything is written, stored and archived? Or even better saying, what is an author in a culture where *everything* comes and goes in an everyday feed of the various social network sites of everyday life?

By a conservative definition of what is the author's work and what is not, social media activity would not result, necessarily, in the expansion of an author's work. Practice tells differently, as every production attributed to an author gains the status of cult, the magic that happens when a fan meets, talks to or interacts with an idol. The young novelist Amanda Hocking, considered to be the "star of self-publishing" (Saroyan, 2011), feeds a blog described by her as "Where Amanda Hocking says things about Amanda Hocking" (Hocking).

Amanda Hocking (the author) is authoring about a specific topic, which is herself.

2. Nietzsche's laundry list

More than relying in content, discourses may be firstly defined by its paratexts, then from practices, and finally by content. Foucault questions the beginning and end of an author's work in *What is an author?*. Can Nietzsche's laundry list be considered as part of his work? (Foucault, 1984) After all, he did write it. A laundry list, however, has no authorial function – it is not even signed, unless if it should differentiate from someone else's list or by any other trivial reason. To define if a text in new media should or not be part of an author's work may be trickier than in traditional media. Initially, three aspects arise: **space, publicity and content**.

The problem with space is that in the same space that a user (a potential author) posts a poem, he/se may talk about the weather, recommend a new album of a friend, invite friends for a party or complain about the plumbing system or start a dialogue of any sort (as contacting a company about a recently purchased product or invite someone to the movie theater, as it happens in common Twitter use).

One could say that Nietzsche could use a sheet of paper to write an aphorism, in the very same way as he used one to write a laundry note. Here is the matter of content, as two texts are entirely different, one of them displaying an essential part of an author's work, and another being text with practical or trivial everyday life purpose.

One could even complicate the situation, saying that Nietzsche could have written an aphorism and his laundry note in the same notebook, one page after another. That is certainly possible, but those were stages before the text was made public, and even they had a similar (or same) material interface, the texts were not *meant to* share the same space, and then the matter steps into the problem with publicity. They could appear together as some kind of curiosity in a biographical publication, but they do not belong *together* to the public sphere, and would be very unlikely that the author would make such text public.

In new media the trivial and the personal blends with authorial content, and it is *meant* to be that way: a blog may or may not display personal information among its other contents; a Facebook or Twitter account may be permeated with dialogs, trivial observations, general questions, casual remarks. They may as well include poems, aphorisms and other types of, essentially, authorial content (that is, content that will continue the author's work). Content in such sites are always framed by the paratexts that, technically, endow content with the authorial function. Moreover, even phatic/trivial remarks of everyday life may be managed by its author (that is, by virtually any user) in a way of building a persona – the persona that authored, ultimately, the feed of the Twitter account, of the Facebook profile or the blog.

Alice E.Marwick and danah boyd observe that the "micro-celebrity" behavior is seen not only in Twitter users with a large number of followers, but that "many users consciously use Twitter as a platform to obtain and maintain attention" (Marwick & boyd, 2011).

It may be relevant to bring the example of Amanda Hocking: language and text, tools of the author, are operating in the creation of personal, yet authorial content. Amanda Hocking's laundry list could be published in her blog, and that would still be (the author) Amanda Hocking blogging about herself. Social media for traditional authors, in this sense, are in great extent a site for an author's *metatext*, or to use Gerard Genette's framework of paratexts, it is the place where the author writes his own public epitext, a radically diverse phenomena if compared to traditional publishing[1].

Asides from self-referring texts, Twitter shows several authors whose work is produced, extended or continued inside the social network. Deepak Chopra, the Dalai Lama or Yoko Ono post many of such texts on Twitter, some of them undoubtly regarded as a continuity of their works:

@Deepak Chopra
Pursue excellence, ignore success.

@Dalai Lama
In today's deeply interdependent world, war is outdated and illogical.

@Yoko Ono
Total communication equals peace.

3. Ambassador mode

Other uses of Twitter also add up to the author's persona, like sharing or promoting links. These give a glimpse of personal taste, interests or causes engaged in by the author. These updates work somewhat differently from original content created by the author (texts, status updates, pictures, videos etc) and more on the direction of an "ambassador" or "curator" mode of sharing content from the web. With the overwhelming production of information that circles on the Internet, some users are referred to when users are looking for content of interest. The ambassador searches, embeds, republishes content; he/she points content to somewhere else, and his/her audience looks for his/her selections/collections. Good examples are Pinterest, where users "pin" pictures or videos to a personal board and other users "repin" the previously published

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[1]   In Gerard Genette's book *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, the concept of paratext is defined: a paratext is text placed *around*, and not *within* the text. Paratext can be *epitext* (texts that are placed far from the text, such as a critic's review or an interview with the author) and *peritext* (texts placed near the text, like the title of the work or the name of the author inscribed in the book cover). Paratexts are a sum of epitexts and peritexts. What is relevant here is the idea that whe authorship of the epitext is no longer by third parties, but by the authors themselves.

content. In 2012, up to 80% of Pinterest activity was constituted of republishing content from inside the social network (Moore, 2012). Tumblr is another social network whose curatorship aspect has bloomed, with a solid track of art curation and its own art symposium held in March 2013, in New York (Hyperallergic.com).

A few examples from popular Twitter accounts:

@Yoko Ono
I love this new album by my friend Roberta - Let It Be Roberta Flack Sings The Beatles http://t.co/Ast77KQR

@Neil Gaiman
Sitting in a Florida kitchen, listening to Art Spiegelman talking about Bernie Krigstein's MASTER RACE on BBC Radio 4. I love the future.

@Stephen Fry
Samsung thinking out of the box. Some seriously cool new ideas for packaging and manuals: http://t.co/N1PSRgB2 (via @pettore)

Another subset of Twitter messages would be the ones that show the user simply opening up to his personal ideas, remarks and views of the world. Even though this content does not relate, ultimately, to the author's "work", it is as well part of the growing *epitext*, and will influence to his/her image as an author. The key difference from these remarks to the "continuation of the author's work" may be the personal aspect of the content – it is accountable as a work from the author, but as a specific subtype of it, and the borders between what is part of the author's wrok and part of the author's personal remarks are difficult to draw.

@Stephen Fry
Another day's filming. The location should at least be more internet friendly this time. Getting so behind in my emails.

@Kevin Spacey
We lost a great man in Vaclav Havel. A playwright, a leader and a man who will be remembered

@Moby
I don't miss snow.

Finally, there are examples that operate as a "public relations feed" to a certain work and/or to the author him/herself. In traditional publishing, that would have been written by the publisher: the usual work of public relations, or advertising the author's work, constituting the public epitext. In Twitter, it is the author who writes paratexts, and this distinction ends up blending texts and paratexts. The author becomes, him/herself, the public relation agent of him/herself and his/her own work. If the text is written the author or by agents, it does not matter: the *author* signs the text which previously was signed by an editor or by an institution.

> @Kevin Spacey
> So far we've performed Richard III in London, Hong Kong, Aviles (Spain), Istanbul, and Naples.
>
> @Eminem
> Australia, I'm on the way. Tickets still available for Sydney Dec. 4th show: http://t.co/JvS5frnn

In some cases, the account is institutionalized: the author signs it, uses it from time to time, but texts signed by agents or crew members refer to the author in the 3rd person:

> @Bjork
> due to health issues, tonight's björk show at the new york hall of science is cancelled. refunds will be available at point of purchase.

It is a similar case in Mashable, for instance, where the profile @Mashable has the founder's name and picture, Peter Cashmore, and automatically outputs the tweets from several journalists and collaborators.

Celebrities and media personalities doing PR work for themselves show a degree of transparency that was not usual in traditional media. These concerns with organization, box-office, commercial and sales expose the author to a level of frailty that used to be, traditionally, shielded by the previous systems.

4.   Classifying content

Considering social media accounts by public persons, text in these media could be basically categorized in three different genres, described in the table.

TABLE 1. Content classification

Author's work	The text has the function of being the "author's text". It is elaborated, formatted, created and edited so that it can be considered as part of the user's "work", or as the extension his/her work finds in new media. A clear example can be an aphorism published by the Dalai Lama.
Personal/Phatic/Trivial	These texts are similar to the previous category, but belong to a specific a genre of text that relates to his personal taste or life. Text refers mostly to the user's personal taste or everyday life (the author's metatext), or to serve a practical purpose (scheduling a meeting, confirming a date, asking the audience about a particular topic). Content may often be pointing to third parties, in the work of the "ambassador": interesting websites, a friend's work, a beautiful photograph etc. Quite often, a careful management of such observation takes place: as if the user was,

himself, laboring the text so that it meets a certain standard of wit, humor, sophistication (and thus benefitting the epitext).

Public relations.   Text is specifically propagating the user's work. This type of text may be displayed through automatic/ghost-written updates from PR employees or newsfeed from websites. It can be regarded a specific genre of metatext. Curiously, text and metatext may be written by the same person, using the same tools, making it hard to distinguish them entirely. The author simply shifts from mode A to mode B, resulting in an insertion of the "author's voice" in both modes, text and metatext.

All these texts mount up for the author's epitext, that is, the whole idea that the reader can make of the author according to text that is published and related to the author and the original text. The epitext is, therefore, the sum of the author's work, the personal and trivial text and the public relations performed by the author, and the types of metatexts, either a subset of personal text or of public relations. The author's epitext is part of the management process of the author's image, which mostly dwells with the author's work (text itself), the author's work adjacent text (public relations) and the author's personal life. What used to be text managed by editors and produced by news articles, now can be also managed and produced by the author himself. In this perspective, epitext merges partially with the author's text. So the end product is a meltdown of concepts, borders and authorial functions that may constitute of a new idea of what is an author.

Social media not only enables the author to publicize this material, but also rather creates the proper space to do so, and rewards him/her with popularity and media buzz. It is likely that the personal facts and remarks published along PR text and authorial text (all of those endowed with the authorial mark) are – intentionally or not – working as some kind of exchange currency: the author reveals himself to the audience in exchange or popularity and resonance of his works in social media. The buzz, who used to be measured by press exposure can now be measured by user interaction, reblogs, shares, retweets.

As the degrees of separation between personal and authorial content decreases, and authors are creating some kind of byproduct of their work; a parallel authorial work that consists in making their very selves more transparent, vulnerable, public. Transmediality, more than intertextuality, takes place. According to Jenkins, transmediality is the coordinated use of storytelling across media platforms (Jenkins, 2003). In Twitter (or in any social network), an actor may produce text, a writer may produce photography, a musician may produce aphorisms and so on.

Output in all these media is the trinomial of personal, work and public relations intertwining, creating mixed content that, as said before, mount up to the elaborate construction of the author's epitext – an epitext created and moderated by the author, available to the spectatorship (and scrutiny) of the audience.

5. Conclusion

When it comes to the average user, it becomes clear that social media users – with Twitter accounts, Facebook accounts or blogs – are used to the idea of a constant image management in those networks. Stating or not stating, liking or not liking one's friends' updates, or showing wit or humor in a status update is part of the social media game; it is, in many cases, the core of it.

Writing is conscious, but authoring is not an entirely conscious activity. This management may be the touchstone that turns the user into a *conscious author* of these feeds. By analogy, it is "immediate, but not reflected", as Foucault classifies how the proletariat carries a "universal" aspect in itself (Foucault, 1979). One may be consciously writing a certain kind of image, but when it comes to the effect of the entirety of this textual production, most certainly the result product is unknown: one has written a status update everyday and ended up authoring an autobiography.

Considering the feeds themselves as works, the user is to be considered the active writer/author of this new textual genre: the blog entry, but also the Twitter feed, the Facebook timeline; the personal-social text feed. And the users connected to this writer are readers of this specific genre, authored by average users, celebrities and famous writers.

It is relevant to create a temporary, controversial distinction between "average users" and "famous authors" at this point. There is no such distinction, *strictu sensu*. The main distinction comes from the preexisting knowledge of what this person does, writes, produces and that will motivate the user to connect.

In the case of connecting to famous writers, the audience may expect to read *more from the author* (think of Dalai Lama's aphorisms written in Twitter in the same manner that they were written in books) but also *more about the author* (think of a Neil Gaiman's fan willing to know what he had for breakfast). It is hard to say that users connecting with each other are driven by radically different motivations. Relevant examples for the topic may include an user who wants to connect to another *to know more about the author*, to know more *from* the author (receiving the newsfeed of what this person produces, writes, creates or brings to the feed). It might be the case that everyone is famous in 15 seconds: one is famous whenever someone else gazes upon one's online production – a production that usually results in a compilation of things that we like to see, read and know, in addition to our opinions and impressions, in addition to personal events of our lives.

The discussion becomes relevant when addressing to the difference between the famous author and the average user in Twitter: both are likely to be publishing phatic content, both may be exploring public relations for their personal gains. But a famous author has an authorial work: the Dalai Lama has aphorisms published in print, Yoko Ono has her own artworks, Kevin Spacey has his acting career and so on. All the production of Twitter (the new epitext)

is adding up to these artistic careers. The difference between the common man may be in perceiving *what is* the Twitter feeed: it may be the authorial work, the *oevre*, the artistic and literary work in itself of every user.

Whenever posting in Twitter, blogs or Facebook, the user is producing a log file that, ultimately, is his own *oeuvre*, written by the user, its author. In one manner or another, often complimentary, these media are telling biographies, perceptions and worldviews: the author's epitext becomes the text, for famous or average Twitter users.

The social media writer is mostly a conscious *writer*, but often an unconscious *author*. These feeds will influence and/or construct the image of who is writing. That is true for most social networks that display a "personal profile" as an account (Facebook, Twitter), and not a self-contained "work" (as a blog). Every social media user is an author with a work, and to some extent social media is the site where users construct and narrate their experience of the world.

There is a lack of a conceptualization for such authors – novelists write novels, philosophical books are written by philosophers, blogs are written by bloggers. All these terms refer to a specific idea of authorship. Importantly, the significant changes in culture signal to the direction of a networked system that intertwines personal life with work activity. In social media, with text intertwined between personal, trivial and authorial, authors and regular users make use of the tools as one's own *voice*: the same vocal cords to proliferate different kinds of discourse, without the traditional discretion or separation between informal and formal work. Furthermore, to a great extent, users are authoring their biographies online, complying to the social practice and corporate terms of each network.

The traditional image of an author in social media is peculiar: it is a personal experience of disclosure; and text has changed in, at least, three aspects: space, publicity and content – space is the same for a personal observation or an authorial "work"; every kind of text is public and generates publicity; content varies in scale from personal, authorial and public relations work, in a complex and organic epitext. An author can moderate comments in the epitext, but cannot avoid the scrutiny of the internet audience. He/she may open up, complain about the weather or ask the audience to buy his book – there is a degree of frailty in there that was not there before, as the author steps down from the *star system* to interact and disclose himself/herself in social media, even about commercial matters. Importantly, the borders between authorial work and personal work are blending, and the transmediality of works is also increasing. Acting indiscriminately as artists or simply social media users, we are authors of our own oevre (the feed), of our own epitext (what adds up to our persona as an author), of our own biographies (to an extent), and curating and creating content exploring transmedia storytelling in a plurality of media.

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III

PARATEXTUAL PROMETHEUS: DIGITAL PARATEXTS ON YOUTUBE, VIMEO AND PROMETHEUS TRANSMEDIA CAMPAIGN

by

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Paratextual Prometheus: Digital Paratexts on YouTube, Vimeo and Prometheus Transmedia Campaign

ABSTRACT

The object of this article is to map correspondences between the literacy of books and the literacy of online video platforms, in order to create common ground between both media and assist transmedia storytellers in the task of exploring video platforms with in-depth knowledge of each textual element surrounding video content. The article proposes a comprehensive categorization and typification of surrounding information in the standard video pages of YouTube and Vimeo, using Gerard Genette's theory of paratexts as a basic framework. The analysis found that the interplay between paratextual elements, the audience feedback and the absence of endorsement from authors to paratexts created by third parties constitutes a scenario of intense paratextual relevance in a culture radically different from print media. Furthermore, in the given scenario, the reader has an interesting new role: his/her activity log produces a new intertextuality, making the social media user himself/herself a new text that binds other texts together.

Keywords:
transmedia literacy – transmedia storytelling – YouTube – Vimeo – paratexts – peritexts – Prometheus

1. Introduction

We have once learned how to read books. Reading books, nowadays, is a trivial method of textual consumption – literature, poetry, crime fiction, theoretical works or cooking books. Internet and its plethora of possibilities has opened up the opportunity for authors to explore new ways of writing. For both writer and reader, transcending one medium to another requires new literacies: authors are invited to write on different platforms, and most of them are not simply "a blank page", as they have their own vocabulary, textual practices and social practices as well.

The object of this work is to map the correlations that the literacy of books shares with the literacy of online video platforms by analyzing textual surroudings (or "paratexts"). Paratexts are considered to be "liminal texts" or texts that constitute the thresholds that lead the reader to the text. They are the sum of *epitexts* (texts placed far from the text, such as newspaper reviews or interviews with the text's author) and *peritexts* (texts placed near or around the text, such

as a book cover or the text's title) (Genette, [1987] 1997, 1). The main focus of this chapter will be on the digital *peritexts* displayed in on YouTube and Vimeo.

It is, hopefully, a relevant contribution for the production of transmedia textualities, as it tackles how the surroundings of texts in video platforms operate in relation to the author, the text and the reader. After a rather detailed analysis of the information surrounding YouTube and Vimeo video pages, the article brings us to the role of the reader in the web 2.0: creating a history log of activity (videos watched, texts consumed), the reader becomes, to the machine, a third text: a transcendent, intertextual text that binds together other texts (affecting, for instance, what videos the machine will suggest to the user, or displaying users that share a connection with each other because of their similar activity in the network).

Digital texts are fluid: they may be replicated, shared, embedded and re-embedded around the Internet, from platform to platform, by a multitude of Internet users. When the users and their audiences are networked, the flow of texts and the way content is consumed adopts form a form that is radically different from the print media form. Sharing and adding information to content produces different sets of paratexts. These paratexts gain relevance as they operate within each user's social reach, without the consent or endorsement of the original publisher or author.

Since the early studies of paratexts in printed form, it has been debated whether paratexts represent "a means of lending the text authority, originally the very attribute of the author" (Maclean, 1991, 276). However, does that change now that anyone can create paratexts (not only authors or editors)?

Since paratexts are some of the most important aspects that help us to decide whether we will consume a text or not (Gray and Jenkins, 2010), beyond textual analysis, it is important to identify, understand and research them in detail. Paratexts are at the very center of the discussion about new forms of participation and collaboration enabled by the "converging culture" (Jenkins, 2006, 245). Thus, how do these digital, user-generated paratexts written by multiple authors, and seemingly changing at every "share" or "Like" under the scrutiny of commentators, influence our decisions regarding which texts to consume?

2. Methodology: categorizing paratexts

This chapter categorizes and typifies paratextual elements found on YouTube and Vimeo video pages. Both networks provide their users with a well-defined template; that is, textual and paratextuals "gaps" that are expected to be filled by the content author.

Using Gerard Genette's approach to paratext theory as a framework, a structural analysis of this basic template — made available by YouTube and Vimeo to content creators and common to all their video pages — led to the identification of the main types of paratexts found in both these networks. Par-

atexts were split in three main categories. A typification has been made to iden-
tify subcategories of paratexts common to all YouTube and Vimeo video pages.

In addition to examining how paratexts are inscribed by authors in
YouTube and Vimeo standard video pages, examples from published videos
were found to illustrate how paratexts operate within each network. In Vimeo,
the video page of Shinkansen v.2, an experimental video by artist Daihei Shi-
bata, was used. This is a significant example of artistic work receiving feedback,
commentary and Vimeo's staff recognition through paratextual information.
From YouTube, examples included video pages in which paratexts significantly
influence textual reception, creation and spectatorship behavior, namely *Con-
troversial Baby Dynamics Yoga* (BarcroftTV, 2012), *The Evolution of Dance* (Laipply,
2006), *Michael Jackson's Ghost Caught on tape at neverland!! HQ* (ScottyBoiTV,
2009) and *Ghost caught on tape* (Stevezur, 2006).

For specifically transmedia cases, official posts to YouTube for the release
campaign for Prometheus feature film (Prometheus YouTube Channel, 2011)
were taken in consideration, as well as videos posted to Vimeo from the studios
that created some of the film's special effects (Ignite Creative, Territory Studio).

The main theoretical framework is based on Gerard Genette's work as ex-
plained in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* ([1987] 1997). Additional ideas
are adopted from scholars who debate the reception of digital information, such
as Henry Jenkins, N. Katherine Hayles and Jonathan Gray. Ellen McCracken's
framework was also used to look at centripetal and centrifugal paratexts: the
former bring the reader into the text and the latter take the reader away from it
(McCracken, 2013, 105).

3. Digital peritexts

Paratexts are divided into three main categories, which are then again divided
into subtypes, based on the information they contain. The three main categories
help us understand how paratextual information is organized online, while the
subtypes identify the most common types in YouTube and Vimeo, although the
same types can be found in a number of social media websites. It is interesting,
at this point, to observe how the reception of electronic texts differs from that of
traditional media. As Hayles states, "reading (…) becomes a complex perfor-
mance in which agency is distributed between the user, the interface, and the
active cognitions of the networked and programmable machine" (Hayles, 2008,
153). Similarly, Vimeo staff debates videos as *video pages*, holistically, and not
just as the video itself, as if the experience of a Vimeo site went further than
simply streaming the video (Vimeo Staff, 2012).

TABLE 2. Peritext categories found in YouTube and Vimeo

Authorial peritexts	*Authorial peritexts* show the information written by the author. A simple example is the title and description of a video on YouTube.
Audience peritexts	*Audience peritexts* are generated by other users of the network. They are mostly view counts, comments, reviews, discussions or lists which include the original text.
Network peritexts	*Network peritexts* refer to the information displayed around the text. Network paratexts do *not* necessarily relate to the text, or to any other texts inside the network. This category also includes paratexts generated by the network's algorithm (related videos, promoted content, intelligent advertising).

3.1. Authorial peritexts

In Web 2.0, the possibility of publishing content without an editor also represents a significant change in paratextual culture and conventions. Authorial peritexts – like the book cover, typeset, or title – to be "written" by the publisher, editor and/or author, negotiating the content of these appendages (Genette, [1987] 1997, 16). In user-generated content, the absence of an editor bestows the ownership of the peritext to the author, making most of the peritexts authorial paratexts. However, in order to compose the peritext on most Web 2.0 platforms, the author is restricted to "filling in the gaps" defined by the network. Still, the transaction between the author and the publisher differs radically from that in traditional publishing. In YouTube and Vimeo, authors are asked to attribute a title to their videos, to sign their work with their names and a picture, to write a description of the work, and to describe it with keywords, among other features.

Alternatively, a common practice among the Web 2.0 users is to upload content through a third-party: in such cases unauthorized publishers create their own peritexts without the endorsement or a transaction with the authors or editors of the original text. A user may, for example, include a music video from The Beatles as a part of a playlist entitled *The Best Songs Ever Made* and add his own personal textual notes on the video. These editors can therefore write prefaces, synopses, playlists or selections, and their audience will create their own commentary surrounding the text. The peritext is multiplied and pluralized, and not necessarily connected to the original text, author or editor.

The most common authorial paratexts that can be found on YouTube and Vimeo video pages include:

TABLE 3. Authorial peritexts found on YouTube and Vimeo

Credits	Names of the author(s), contributors, cast and crew.
Identification	Titles, subtitles and description text.
Categories and tags	Attributed by the author, matching preexisting categories determined by the network or popular tags by other authors.
Release	Details related to time and place, for instance.
Technical specifications	Runtime, resolution and video definition, filming equipment used etc.
Excerpts	Taken from the text: previews, fragments, excerpts, scenes, quotes and other partial accesses to the text.
Authorial filiation	The series and collections the text is a part of, depending on the input of the author.
Authorial paraphrases	Prefaces, descriptions, summaries and reviews written by the author or editors.
Intertextuality	Related texts based on tags and genre classification, texts cited within the text, texts that cite the text, soundtracks, related news, etc.

A few of these concepts are analyzed in more detail below.

3.1.1. Credits & Identification

The position of the video title on a YouTube page has repeatedly changed (and will likely change yet again, since most social networks seem to constantly be adapting to the internet user culture). In the initial layout in 2005, the title was placed above the video window and later moved to beneath it, resembling the way Vimeo presents videos: the content is considered to be more important than the title, possibly because the user is likely to have already identified the content in links retrieved using search engines before landing on the page, an essential aspect of networked media.

The name of the author is a concept that Gerard Genette discusses thoroughly. As Genette notes, onymity (the use of the author's real name), anonymity or pseudonymity provide information about the author, such as nationality

and gender, or identify a known author with whom the reader may relate ([1987] 1997, 37-54). The same phenomenon can be observed in Web 2.0; users initially had to create separate usernames for each network. In 2006, YouTube did not display the full names of either authors or commenters. Usernames could only contain a limited amount of characters and were displayed on the sidebar giving little (or condensed) information about the author (and commenter).

Users have increasingly been encouraged to use their real names, linking the accounts with more easily identified accounts such as Facebook or Google accounts. The territory of anonymity and pseudonymity has been significantly eroded in YouTube and Vimeo. With YouTube encouraging users to use their Google account information for identification and displaying their names on YouTube channels (Google), the interesting undertones that pseudonymity and anonymity enabled has been significantly flattened. In the history of books, anonymity also prevented authors from being accountable for their work (Genette, [1987] 1997, 43). In addition, the convergence most likely inspires users of one service to try another.

In the case of Prometheus campaign, several authors post both on Vimeo and YouTube. From YouTube, the "disguised" original posters is simply "Prometheus". Original content produced for web is intertwined with trailers from the film (Prometheus YouTube Channel 2012). On Vimeo, Ignition Studios released the videos compiled in one portfolio showcase, offering a review of the campaign for marketing and transmedia professionals (Ignition Creative 2013). Also on Vimeo, Territory Studios released clips revealing the intradiegetic user interfaces from the computers used by the characters of Prometheus, as well as scanner screens, medical tables and other content in far more detail, and thus revealing "unseen footage" and pieces that contribute to the story experience (Territory Vimeo Channel, 2013). The three different authors released information for different purposes and audiences. The alias of Ignition on YouTube (the YouTube channel named "Prometheus") kept content intradiegetic – a character making a speech in TED 2023, or the advertisement of a new android called David (which happens to be a character in the movie). Ignition studios on Vimeo released the campaign as a portfolio piece, enabling viewers to watch all marketing efforts, that were released in a decentralized manner (Ignition 2013). And Territory bordered extra and intradiegetic content: posting as part of a portfolio, the video clips were signed by an extra diegetic author (the Territory Studios), but presenting expanded and yet "untouched" content from the diegetic world of the film (the user interfaces from the film's computers). This incidental transmedia case reveals that the territory of transmediality can be yet expanded: even after campaigns are over, and even after the "curtains are pulled down", there is room for unfolding the story.

3.1.2. Categories and tags

When authors choose which network to upload their content to, they make a conscious choice about presentation, distribution and, ultimately, the paratexts

displayed around the content. When authors assign a category to their video, or add a keyword to their text, they allocate the content to specific communities of texts, which resemble the function of genres in traditional publishing (Genette, [1987] 1997, 94). A classificatory need ends up influencing, defining or attributing a certain value to the text.

On both Vimeo and YouTube, authors may choose preexisting categories to classify their texts. There is a potential tension between the user's will to classify his or her text and the categories and collections available in a given network. This means that at times new genres or formats may fall inside certain known, preexisting categories. Likewise, the evolution of video culture and user-generated content is subjected to the networks' will of identifying and creating new categories that will better describe the produced content.

In a similar manner keywords, called "tags" on YouTube and Vimeo, are often an author-community transaction. According to Kessler and Schäfer, tags on YouTube are "a number of keywords one can select freely according to what one assumes to be appropriate labels for these images" (2009, 281). In addition, the authors conclude that tags and view counts influence search results in the network, and that "the success of searching moving-image files thus relies upon the different types of metadata provided by the person who uploads a clip as well as by other users" (Kessler and Schäfer, 2009, 281).

Authors may also consider which tags are popular and easily recognizable by users who search the web. For example, Territory tagged their video *Prometheus UI reel* with the keyterms "Prometheus", "On-set", "Screen graphics", "Hologram", "Ridley Scott" and "Territory". In addition to the author's tags, collections curated by users may provide more precise classifications for content – another difference between the YouTube and Vimeo approaches to video content.

3.1.3. Release and publication information

The need to situate a text in history is common to both new and traditional publishing. Genette observes that the date of publication is often inserted in the cover of the book ([1987] 1997, 24). On YouTube, however, the upload date is not the most relevant factor in determining the position of a video within the search results. The default algorithmic filter for a YouTube search tries to define the video's "relevance." If the user is looking for a specific video – a specific film trailer, a music video, a specific viral video, for instance – the upload date is most likely irrelevant. The view count, in a case like this, is an indication of credibility: millions of views mean, most probably, that the uploaded video corresponds to the search term. This is an initial sign that the relevant paratext is mostly produced by the community, rather than consisting of information provided by the author or publisher: it is the interplay of agents (community, author, publisher) and (various) paratexts that generates the paratextual relevance.

If the user is searching for Barack Obama's *latest* appearance on David Letterman's show, the upload date is relevant when differentiating the video from

those uploaded five years ago, when Obama was first interviewed. The amount of views combined with the upload date and positive ratings may help the viewer choose among the search results.

Vimeo pages have a button that, when clicked, displays statistics on the video over time. The Stats button displays a relatively detailed graph with all-time, weekly and daily information of plays, Likes and even the URLs of the sites from which viewers have been directed to the video page. The complexity of *reception over time* is partially decrypted by Vimeo with the display of the video's statistics. While YouTube shows the total amount of views, on Vimeo the views are shown in the form of a graph depicting the amount of views *over time*, thus giving the viewer a glimpse of the historical relevance and acuteness of the video.

3.1.4. Excerpts

"Indexed information" is a term used by Genette to refer to information taken from the text and displayed as paratexts. In traditional print publishing they were excerpts used in synopses, on back covers, in reviews, and in newspapers. A classical example of an excerpt in digital text is the first lines of a blog post followed by the indication "read more."

In the context of Web 2.0, "indexed information" may refer to the metadata, which is why the term "Excerpts" is a better choice when referring to the video material extracted from the original video and displayed as paratext.

On the video websites in question, a typical example of an excerpt is the "thumbnail" – a still image displayed on the screen before the video is played. The thumbnail is first generated randomly from a still image captured from the video – thus, an excerpt from the video. However, both YouTube and Vimeo users have the option of uploading an *external* image to be used as thumbnail (in which case, the external image is no longer an excerpt taken from the video).

The previews displayed when the cursor is moved over a point on the timeline of a YouTube video is another use of thumbnails. When the cursor slides over the timeline, thumbnails appear showing a picture of the content at a given point in the video, facilitating the identification of content. In the 2013 mobile version of YouTube, users can minimize the video window and search for more videos (Lardinois, 2013). This kind of navigation certainly indicates the nature of YouTube: providing users with the possibility to refine their searches while a video is played certainly means that the reception of videos in YouTube is not a passive experience, and the interference of paratexts over the text does not seem to be bothersome; on the contrary, it enhances the video experience proposed by the website. This "centrifugal" movement of YouTube will be explored later on.

3.1.5. Authorial filiation

When discussing filiation (that is, texts derived from the same source), it is important to make a distinction between authorial and attributed filiation. Autho-

rial filiation should have a simple definition: texts produced by the same author. On YouTube and Vimeo, those can be videos, video channels, playlists or commentary. According to Genette, filiations can attribute value and context to a book ([1987] 1997, 22), and this idea is explored extensively in Web 2.0. In the right sidebar of a YouTube video page other videos uploaded by the author are displayed as "Related Videos." Authorial filiation, however, is only one criterion and other videos are presented on the same sidebar: videos may have common metadata, similar titles or be chosen according to the user's activity history. As Gourney notes about the YouTube's Related Videos feature, "this box can be an entry point onto a body of work that is ever-changing, and as such, can be a significant paratextual portal into a matrix of textuality" (Gurney, 2011, 38).

Authorial filiation in Vimeo stands out as privileging and emphasizing the author figure and the authorial production: the page displays links to other uploads from the author, to videos the author liked inside Vimeo, to other channels updated by the author, to groups the author belongs to and to other Vimeo users the author follows. The author is a central figure, and all activity performed by the author ends up creating relations, connections and paratexts: people the author follows, videos the authors Liked and, on the most basic level, the videos the author has created and the collections in which the author has placed his or her video(s).

When a user activates a keyword in a search engine, or a tag in the network (say, browsing YouTube videos categorized as 'humor'), the filiation comes from a collaborative structure between the author (who tagged the texts) and the network (which displays the results within the given category). When tagging their own content, users are conscious that their videos will appear among other videos with similar tags. The videos featured in these categories may vary in quality and the influence of filiation may run thinner. With regard to Vimeo's collections, however, the users' videos may be featured among those of artists with similar interests, and being part of such community may lead to beneficial interaction and positively influence the reception of the videos.

Vimeo also contains a list of "Related collections," where links to certain categories of videos are displayed. The Related collections feature also illustrates how Vimeo is built around authorial content. The term "collection" relates more closely to the vocabulary of editors and publishers than social media (Playlists, User lists, for instance). In Vimeo, *Collections* are divided into four different types of text arrangements, all of which attribute filiation to the text: a text may belong to different *categories* (created by the network), *channels*, *groups* or *albums* (the last three are created by users). Vimeo's collections end up aggregating videos through refined concepts made up by users, such as "User Interface Motion Graphics" or "Visual Stimuli" – related collections attributed to the video *Prometheus UI reel* (Territory 2013). The detailed categorization is sophisticated, in opposition to YouTube's broad categories like "People & Blogs" or "How-to & Style." (YouTube Channels).

3.2. Audience peritexts: from public epitext to public peritext

Genette calls "public epitext" the commentary about the text or author that belongs to the public sphere, such as interviews, news stories or reviews ([1987] 1997, 344). The Web 2.0 user can create either public epitexts (writing a blog post or creating a Facebook update about a certain text) or *public peritexts* (for instance by commenting on a YouTube video).

It is important to note that the public peritext is not solely the comment area. Audience statistics and ratings, for instance, are placed closer to the video window on YouTube than on Vimeo. In print media data, such as the number of copies of a book sold or the total box office revenue of a film, were part of an *epitext* published in newspapers. It is interesting to note that epitexts were often spread out in the media ecosystem – advertising, interviews, reviews, spectator statistics. Bad reviews could be contradicted with stronger media presence, for example. On YouTube, for instance, the total number of ratings ("Likes" or "Dislikes") is displayed right next to the video screen. The total number of views (View count) is also displayed immediately next to it. It is essential to see these practices as part of "a number of crucial displacements in our modes of writing and reading" that "ultimately alters literary and social practices" (James, 2011, 37). When all the statistics are displayed right there at the moment of consumption, reception is most certainly affected. Similarly, when an Internet user embeds a YouTube video into his or her Facebook profile and writes an introductory note for it, the text is recreated with new, user-generated *peritext* – since the video can also be consumed on the site, on the very same screen.

Some of the public epitexts and peritexts related to the audience, found on YouTube and Vimeo video pages, are listed below:

TABLE 4. Public peritexts related to audience on YouTube and Vimeo:

Audience name and identification	Display name, picture, activity history, channel views, video uploads etc.
Spectatorship computing	Page counters, number of views, number of shares, indications of popularity and virality over the Internet.
Commentary and responses	Comments, responses, reviews, summaries, general feedback etc.
Attributed Filiation	Attributed to the text as playlists created by users, not authors.
Attributed Paraphrases	Introductions and prefaces created by Internet users while embedding or sharing a text.

Interesting questions are raised by the public epitext and peritext: Is the peritext just a matter of location? Or should it require endorsement from the official author or publisher of the original text? If I share someone's video on my Facebook profile and write a prefatory introduction to it (thus enabling my friends to watch it on their Facebook newsfeeds), can my note be considered "as much of a peritext" as the preface written by the author on the original YouTube page? This discussion brings forth the question: Is the concept of a *peritext* still a matter of a geographical placement or, on the contrary, a matter of a connection to the text itself – or, can the peritext and the epitext coexist in Web 2.0?

3.2.1. Audience: name and identification

As mentioned above, with regard to names, the rules are the same for authors and users on both Vimeo and YouTube. Here, the analysis focuses on the Web 2.0 user *as* a *commentator* or *the audience* of content.

YouTube would attribute images to a user's channel, differentiating viewers from content producers by their behavior. Vimeo, however, displayed avatars for the commentary long before YouTube. On Vimeo, the viewer can therefore have a visual glimpse of *who is commenting*, a feature that could stimulate identification between the author and the audience, and thus strengthen the sense of community within the network. Both networks display the user's activity history, and enables users to assess each other by seeing what previous comments or discussions have taken place. A user's YouTube list of "Liked" videos may indicate certain information regarding musical taste, artistic interests, religious and political views, etc. At this point, the Web 2.0 culture and practices already hint at what should be discussed in the final part of this chapter: users are not only authors – their uploads, comments and activity history certainly generate texts, intertextuality, filiation and a strong sense of authorship. As discussed earlier, these texts are used by users as a means of identifying each other within the network. However, in a quite complex web of texts and paratexts often shifting roles, would there be a point where the user is no longer the author, but *a text* itself?

3.2.2. Spectatorship computing

One difference between Vimeo and YouTube is the Like system. If users want to comment on or Like a video, they are required to log in to the networks. While YouTube displays the total amount of Likes (or Dislikes) next to the video, Vimeo displays the avatars of the users who hit the Like button.

YouTube therefore seems to be more concerned with a general evaluation of popularity, as videos with a high number of Dislikes tend to have misleading titles or consist of offensive or uninteresting material. However, it is not the absolute amount of "Dislikes" that provides accurate information about the content. Popular videos tend to have a lot of both Likes and Dislikes. It is rather the balance between Likes and Dislikes that is meaningful. Bringing an example of popular YouTube videos, *The evolution of dance*, so far, has 226 million views

(Laipply, 2006). It has over 800 thousand Likes, and 78 thousand Dislikes, despite the fact that it is a highly popular video, and is even featured in *Time* magazine as one of the best 50 videos ever featured on YouTube (Friedman, 2010). On the other hand, *Controversial Baby Dynamics Yoga* (BarcroftTV, 2012) has over 2 million views, 2.2 thousand Likes and nearly 45 thousand Dislikes. The controversy is thus quite transparent.

On Vimeo, the network displays the profile pictures of users who Like a video in a window on a sidebar on the right side of the page, below their sponsored ads. Unlike on YouTube, the Likes computation is not displayed right next to the video: that is the main difference between the two networks. Vimeo seems more concerned with the individual credibility of assessment whereas YouTube emphasizes the "collective voice" signified by the sum of all responses. Enhancing the transparency between the author and the responses seem to increase the sense of authorial community and the craft of authorial video-making, which is, as stated by network, "founded by a group of filmmakers who wanted to share their creative work and personal moments from their lives. As time went on, likeminded people discovered Vimeo" (Vimeo). The facilitated recognition of who are the "like-minded" people certainly strengthens the perception of Vimeo as an "arthouse," "auteur" community, and so does the absence of a Dislike button – creativity may be rewarded but not punished by a push-button feedback.

Vimeo also offers statistics on the videos (view count and number of Likes, for instance), which are displayed to the audience only once the statistics tab is expanded by clicking the "Stats" button. By hiding the numbers behind a button, Vimeo stops the instant evaluation mechanism that takes place on YouTube. While the YouTube audience quickly reviews the content through paratextual information ("lots of people saw this, it might be interesting," "lots of people dislike this, it might be bad"), the audience at Vimeo cannot see the view count nor the number of Likes around the video unless *proactively* expanding the Stats tab.

The influence of positive feedback on the audience has been widely studied, and in 2013 a thorough research has been conducted on a social news aggregation website, showing evidence that positive social influence increased the likelihood of positive ratings by 32% (Aral, Muchnik and Taylor, 2013). Vimeo seems to propose a reception mode without immediate external interference or evaluations, so that users can form their own opinions before seeing what other users think.

3.2.3. Commentary and responses

Ellen McCracken considers peritexts in Kindles to have either a centripetal or centrifugal effect on the reader, taking them further into or outside the text (McCracken, 2013, 105). The Web 2.0 commentary area is certainly capable of performing both functions. Commentary on YouTube or Vimeo seems to have an intrinsic role in the contentual meaning-making – comments may instruct

the viewer on how to react, how to feel, which "side" of a discussion to pick or what to expect from the video.

Already in cinema and television, paratexts "can amplify and/or clarify many of a text's meanings" (Grey, 2010, 38). In the case of audience-made paratexts in cinema and television, such as fan fiction or forum debates, this paratextual production may influence how the text and its meaning end up shaped (Grey and Jenkins, 2010). As happens with a YouTube display of view count, Likes and Dislikes, which provide the possibility of instant evaluation of a video by the interplay of these three coefficients, the commentary may take the dynamics of instant evaluation a step further.

It might be beneficial to start by describing a situation in which commentary influences interpretation *before* a video is viewed in its entirety. In this case, the viewer uses commentary and ratings to know *what to expect* from the video. A simple example is the "scare pop up" video: the user is presented with a video that builds up suspense and ends with a pop up image of a ghost-like figure accompanied by a loud sound. Common examples are *Ghost caught on tape* (Stevezur, 2006) and *Michael Jackson's Ghost Caught on Tape* (ScottyBoiTV, 2009), the latter displaying decontextualized footage from CNN's news coverage "Inside Neverland." The comments, right upfront, "spoil" the surprise by exposing the prank before the viewer has a chance to experience it.

As is the case in print media, when the composition of the peritext was the editor's privilege and, as such, an area of contracts and relationships between the author, editor and publisher (Stanizek, 2005, 34), in Web 2.0, the author may moderate the commentary (but not the ratings) thus making the commentary in the peritext a transaction between the authors and the audience. YouTube users may disable the commentary function, remove comments or ban users from the discussion thread. *Management* might be a better word for what occurs as comments in the peritext are not exactly *moderated*, although they used to be (they do not *pend for approval*, they are not preselected but rather managed *after* publication).

If the video owner overrules a comment, the comment will be substituted with the "Removed by the user" label. Likewise, since users may vote comments up or down, comments may gain more visibility (being featured among the "Top comments" section) or removed from the conversation, being replaced by the label "This comment received too many negative votes."

Thus, the YouTube conversation in the peritext gives viewers clues about the video content, even when the comments are "not quite" there: even erased, the commentary management leaves traces and "footprints" of controversy behind.

The frequency of removed comments may indicate the presence of controversy, a communal reaction to hateful comments or an autocratic video owner banning unflattering comments.

The area dedicated to "Top comments" is generally representative of the most common reactions to the video, written down in a particularly precise, witty, funny or inspired way.

The archiving process will display the latest comments first. Gurney argues against that: "while one might choose to look back through the archived comments, the very nature of the truncated text comment window means that only the most current will impact most users'/viewers' experiences of a clip" (Gurney, 2011, 40). The "latest first" logics of archiving the commentary certainly defies the logic of print media. The peritexts in books were bound in a strict sense to physical finitude, and often selected to merely complement the author or the work – in the limited space for commentary on the back cover, for instance (Genette, 25) – but also tied to a specific time (the release date, the collection volume, the yearly collection). On Web 2.0 videos, dates are less relevant and content, if not always fresh, at least *refreshed* by the latest displayed comment.

3.2.4. Attributed filiation: series and collections

It is important to distinguish authorial filiation from attributed filiation. The first case, debated earlier in this chapter, refers to works created by the same author. It also refers to the lists and collections in which the video has been placed according to the author's will. In this second case, filiation is attributed to the text by a third party, non-related to the author or editor. On YouTube, any user can include any YouTube video in new playlists, regardless of their social reach or influence, and without the knowledge or endorsement of the content owners.

On the Internet, it is important to remember the idea of text as a movable, portable object, with paratexts that are reconfigured every time a text is replicated. The Web 2.0 user who presents someone else's text may add different paratexts to the text, such as notes of introduction or paratexts that create filiation: playlists, collections, or series, without the consent of authors, publishers or copyright owners.

3.2.5. Attributed paraphrases

Describing prefaces, forewords and notes, Genette refers to them as paraphrases. He identifies three main kinds of prefaces, namely autographic (attributed to the author), actorial (attributed, fictionally, to a character of the book) and allographic (attributed to a third person) ([1987] 1997, 178-179).

In social media, it is reasonable to consider that every time a text is shared, embedded or uploaded, a new combination of paratexts is created by a third party who is not necessarily related to the original work or author. The text may remain the same, but the paratext changes, since new attributes of its surroundings are displayed. A YouTube or a Vimeo video displaying a certain amount of paratexts in its original video page will be displayed on Facebook, for example, with a few of its original paratexts and with a set of new ones generated by the Facebook user sharing the video. The Facebook update might contain a few excerpts from the original video (the thumbnail image, as a preview), the title of the video and the description written by the video author. However, new intro-

ductory notes are likely to appear, accompanied by the Facebook user's profile picture, name and feedback from his audience – Facebook Likes, shares and comments. Thus, the total number of counters – views, Likes or comments – is subjected to a new set of similar counters, this time from Facebook: a new layer of paratexts over the original paratexts. It seems relevant to evoke an aspect of the print media at this point. Genette has an interesting way of describing the transient role of a book's dust jacket, referring to them as "paratextual messages that (…) are meant to be transitory, to be forgotten after making their impression" (Genette, [1987] 1997, 27-28). In Web 2.0, when sharing or embedding a text on Facebook, users also write their own transitory peritext, impacting their audiences within their social reach and leading them to the text (the YouTube video, or the YouTube video page). The question is how multiple, dynamic and transitory the digital media peritexts can be.

3.3. Network peritexts

It is part of the very nature of networked media to have linked texts influence one another. The controls and buttons of the video players became an intrinsic part of the experience soon after it became possible to embed videos on digital pages. As Gurney observes, "while similar control has been widely possible with VCRs and DVD players in the recent past, these specific controls are novel in that they actually are a part of the image" (2011, 38). The question turns, thus, to the dialectic relation identified by Bolter and Grusin on immediacy, with surroundings made as "invisible" as possible, and hypermediacy, with surroundings being embraced and considered not as breakage of the experience of the text but as a part of it (Bolter and Grusin, 1999). In addition, N. Katherine Hayles notes that new textualities "create an enriched sense of embodied play that complicates and extends the phenomenology of reading" (2008, 152). The question of networked peritext starts at this point, observing the influence of the interface over the experience of reception.

The digital peritext does not only act on user interface elements on Web 2.0 video sites. Rather, they function on the rich intertextuality generated by the centrifugal vectors ignited by the surrounding texts, the "related videos," "popular videos" or "suggested videos" on YouTube or Vimeo.

Some of the paratexts identified with respect to the interface include:

TABLE 5. Network peritexts found in YouTube and Vimeo

User interface	Displays general layout visuality, fonts, color schemes, logos, buttons, entry forms, player panels, video resolution, among others.
Technical and legal information	Includes the terms of use, legal disclaimers, language settings, links to help pages, etc.
Intertextual content	Divided into three main subcategories: Advertising related to text through the network's algorithm, Promoted texts sharing tags with the text, Related texts also displayed by the network's algorithm.

3.3.1. User Interface

On Vimeo and YouTube, the user interface is what creates the overall atmosphere of the video to be watched. While YouTube follows Google's perspective of cleanness, neutrality and lightness (an interface to be applied to virtually any kind of video, and loaded by any kind of computer or connection), Vimeo seems to be its opposite: big and bold typography, wide thumbnails, high-resolution videos are the norm. John Cayley states that the experience of digital text, since it is spatially organized, has a "special organization and navigation (…) to be read as paraphrase, gloss, elaboration, annotation, and so on, all coded into operations that produce a successively revealed interface text" (Cayley, 2006, 316). The idea of the interface creating the "coating," the "material" of a "book cover" in digital text is accurate, as the look and feel of each interface determines, to an extent, the type of content that the viewer is about to consume.

3.3.2. Technical and legal information

Although placed within the peritext, these paratexts occupy a more peripheral space around the text. YouTube displays language settings, their own service description (About), content production (Press & Blogs), credits (Creators & Partners, Advertising Developers), legal disclaimers (Terms, Privacy, Policy & Safety, Copyright) (YouTube) and a link to beta versions of new services still under development (Discover Something New!). On Vimeo, information is categorized into four groups: information about Vimeo, help guides, special features and premium services. A short note, at the very bottom of the page, says "Made with (heart) in New York," a paratext of origin, procedence or location.

Technical information forms centrifugal vectors that guide the viewer away from the text (McCracken, 2013, 106). The centrifugal effect is, however,

minimized when these elements are placed in more peripheral areas (on page footers, for example).

Those practices are common in user interface design. John Maeda claims that unimportant information should be made small or hidden from the viewer in order to create clarity and simplicity (2006, 11-22). Although peripheral, this type of information is always close, in the peritext – if not for practical reasons, for legal ones, such as copyright disclaimers.

3.3.3. Intertextuality

On user-generated websites, intertextuality occurs in a wide range of forms; for example, when an author creates a video response to another video, when a category or collection of videos is browsed, when a user's favorite videos are viewed by another user, or when the machine's algorithm suggests videos based on metadata retrieved from the viewer's activity. Some other consistent examples include advertising, promoted material and sponsored content. These are components of a sophisticated network of peripheral information generating new forms of intertextuality, convergence and collaborative culture that are at the very core of Web 2.0.

3.3.4. Advertising and promoted texts

YouTube currently offers a wide variety of advertising. On YouTube, the advertisement surrounds the text on multiple layers: it may appear around the video window in the sidebar; it may be displayed in a pop-up box over the window (allowing the viewer to close it at will), or it can be displayed before the video (allowing the viewer to skip it after a few seconds).

There is no premium user account on YouTube with which to remove the ads – all of them must be tolerated by the user. In services like Spotify, tension is created by pushing the "noise" a free user can tolerate to the maximum, in order to allow the generation of a new premium subscription that removes the ads (Spotify).

YouTube ads, essentially centrifugal vectors, generate an interesting paradox: despite efforts to effectively deliver a video to the user, the network most likely *wants* the user to be distracted from the text and access the sponsored content.

From a textual point of view, YouTube ads can also be considered as intertextual in a rather complex web of textuality. Textual filiation of the advertisements appears according to the relation between the video metadata and YouTube's algorithm: videos about cars are likely to bring to the peritext ads about cars, for example. However, the user history is also taken into consideration by the machine's algorithm. Thus, any given cat video may be surrounded by car ads if the user has previously watched car videos. But to constitute intertextuality, what does the cat video share with the car video? They both have the same *viewer*.

The shift in the way of perceiving such intertextuality and relationship of filiation is clear: the central *text* is the *user*; and the user, for the network, *is* text; for the algorithm, the user is (among other sources of data) the collection of texts compiled in his or her browsing history. The user's activity log is, thus, a collection of texts and advertisements. All videos (and the ads that come with them) belong to the same list: the user history, the user preferences, his or her Likes, age, spatial location and so on. This shift in perception may signal the shift from authorial and textual culture to user and log culture.

3.3.5. Related texts

When the authors of videos upload their content to YouTube or Vimeo, they are asked to classify it using certain categories and to tag their videos with key-words. When videos are displayed on video pages as "related videos," the in-tertextual paratexts are used to display material that share metadata and other affiliations with the video being watched. These include the same author (up-loader) and titles and descriptions with similar words or information based on the viewer's browsing history. To an extent, the user (and the sum of his or her activity) is the central text in the intertextual play.

The algorithm will therefore display an author's text in connection to oth-ers. Therefore, on YouTube, Vimeo and similar websites that display "related content," any text is the paratext of another. Concurrently, texts are also par-atexts, and the roles shift whenever the user clicks the suggested video content on the sidebar, as happens on YouTube.

This basic structure – the text being viewed triggering other texts as sug-gestions to the viewer – matches Genette's description of book suggestions as a paratext ([1987] 1997, 25). Genette also states that these suggestions are always limited to the publisher's catalogue, for no publisher would recommend a book published by a rival company. This is repeated by the "inbred" recommenda-tion system of YouTube, which only points to videos inside YouTube.

YouTube seems more concerned with the *centrifugal* peritext than the *cen-tripetal* one – it seems more important to engage the user in watching the sec-ond, third and fourth video (like television), rather than have the user pro-foundly engaged with a single video.

This element already points out that the YouTube seems to be the ideal for transmedia cases – not only because of its wide audience, but rather because content posted in order to *relate* to other contents, not for a passive, calm absor-tion of it, but rather to an exploration of all content that possibly exists in the campaign. In the case of *Prometheus* campaign by Ignite studios for 20th Century Fox (Ignition Creative, 2012), the multiplicity of promotional videos of YouTube aimed at getting users to perform a centrifugal movement of consuming more material, from content designed only for web to official trailers.

The current layout of Vimeo attempts to minimize the intrusion of related content. Cast as a sliding menu that can be closed with a click, it is placed with a different background color than the video page. It is therefore possible to see

the distinction between Vimeo and YouTube. While Vimeo performs a careful management of centrifugal Vectors, YouTube stimulates them.

YouTube features their recommendations much more abundantly, perhaps considering the nature of a YouTube video: it seems desirable that the viewer can never really *find* anything (there should always be more to see), and thus the viewer should keep *searching for it*. In the same manner, these centrifugal peritexts may be an effort to offer content that the users didn't know they wanted. All this relates to Google's notorious quest to optimize search experiences and "save time" (McCracken, 2013).

YouTube displays playlists of related content or featured videos, usually on top of the right sidebar, where the related videos are also located. Its algorithm rotates between playlists and featured content, both related to the video being currently watched. Featured content may come from commercial partners of YouTube or popular videos that the algorithm considers relevant to the viewer. If the algorithm is right, the user will hop from one video to another selecting either featured or related videos or activates the playlist and, ideally, never just "sits back." Siimilarly, paratexts on YouTube create a television-like effect for a radically different viewer: the television stimulates a perpetual state of sitting-and-watching, of non-choosing, placing paratexts in between shows (the usual "coming up," "watch next" insertions between television shows); YouTube, on the other hand, stimulates the always-choosing, always-switching user. For the transmedia reader, it is the centrifugal structure that stimulates the user to keep exploring the content, which, as in the Prometheus case, started with the *Official Prometheus Trainer* and ended a year later with *Prometheus Weyland Corp Archive* (Prometheus YouTube Channel, 2011).

4. Conclusions

It is clear that Gerard Genette's approach to the text's surroundings is useful for the reading of digital texts and that the complexity of the digital text brings a foreseeable expansion of his theory. Furthermore, the writing practices of user-generated content culture (social media, Web 2.0) add to that complexity, demanding new ways of perceiving and classifying paratexts.

When users are networked, the practice of reading and writing texts (and paratexts) changes considerably. Paratexts surrounding the text may be transitory in that they dismiss the consent of the author, editor or publisher and act upon the social reach of whoever is sharing the text and (re)writing the paratext.

In user-generated context, the role that belonged to the editor now belongs to the author who may negotiate the peritextual space of commentary directly with the reader, but not retain total ownership – ratings and popularity cannot be, as far as we know, manipulated or hidden from the audience. In Web 2.0 the public peritext is a common practice, and the flow of commentary constantly influences the text, keeping it "as fresh as possible" (as the last comment is al-

ways the first one displayed) and serving as a strong support for the interpretation of the text. The peritextual commentary offers new ways of interpreting texts: users instantly have new parameters based on other users' reactions to the text. YouTube stimulates full integration between text, commentary and other texts, whereas Vimeo prioritizes the viewer's individual interpretation. Both networks, however, end up in the same boiling pot of content, making transmedia readership a essentially centrifugal experience of exploration, cross-referencing and of defying the borders of real and diegetic worlds.

The culture of sharing and embedding texts also creates transitory paratexts that are, at the same time, epitexts and peritexts: a video shared on Facebook has the Facebook user's paratexts instead of the original ones from YouTube. In a networked culture where one user influences another, multiple peritexts coexist symbiotically. With texts retrieved from original sources and displayed in their entirety virtually anywhere, epitext and peritext, at this point, seem like relative concepts. The question is whether it is possible to assess how distant paratexts have to be from the actual text before they become epitexts.

User-generated content networks like YouTube and Vimeo essentially show different directions when it comes to centrifugal or centripetal vectors created by paratexts. It shows that paratextual information may make a whole network centripetal or centrifugal when it comes to textual reception. These vectors may either facilitate textual consumption (the in-depth reading of a text, as in Vimeo), or stimulate the user to consume the next text, as in YouTube. Finally, the interface opens up a few questions. What would happen if the paratextual devices of YouTube and Vimeo were switched overnight? Would their communities gradually switch networks? How about the uploaders and commenters? Do the communities follow authors or user interfaces? In other words, are the communities following texts or paratexts?

When this creative user is seen as a text itself – the user as a collection of texts, as the sum of their own textual production and consumption – Web 2.0 can be seen as an ecosystem that keeps dynamically shifting between text/paratext, production/reception and writing/reading around the three main agents: the individual, the collective and the machine, all pivotal elements in defining the thresholds of the digital text.

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IV

OPERAÇÃO LÍSIAS

by

Sérgio Luiz Tavares Filho, 2016

Peixe-Elétrico, 5 (1)

Operação Lísias

Há alguns meses a Polícia Federal indiciou o escritor Ricardo Lísias por falsificação de documentos. O autor havia criado documentos fictícios para sua série de livros "Delegado Tobias". Considero que, na História da literatura brasileira, este seja um marco interessante — pois é um momento em que a literatura se relaciona pragmaticamente com a cena política, a arena social da internet, a tecnologia em rede e com a burocracia brasileira.

Estamos num tempo em que os *plot twists* do noticiário revelam que a burocracia é a camuflagem essencial dos criminosos deflagrados pelo nosso FBI. No caso de Lísias, contudo, a burocracia é o inimigo íntimo da própria Polícia. A miopia ao contexto desconcertantemente simples — os documentos são apenas parte integrante de uma obra de ficção — não apenas embaraça a instituição federal, como abre ensejo para discutir o caso no âmbito textual por um ângulo menos comum.

A repercussão online, como é de costume, levou a discussão para o lado pessoal. No Brasil, gostamos de novelas, da exposição dramática dos sentimentos. Quando um caso fresco de Davi e Golias bate à porta da pacata vida online da literatura brasileira, ergueram-se punhos em riste na luta pela liberdade de expressão — esquecendo-se da essência genial da história. O Caso Lísias é um primor de originalidade no que diz respeito ao poder da própria literatura, em estado puro, porque estamos todos ocupados demais com clicktivismo e em vender livros.

É especialmente divertido abrir o arquivo do caso e debater os limites da ficção. Esse debate foi miseravelmente empobrecido em meados dos anos 2000, quando *transmedia* e *cross-device narratives* tornaram-se apenas uma outra oportunidade para vender franquias. Quem capitaneou essas conversas foram Henry Jenkins (em *Convergence Culture*, primeiramente) e apesar do viés interessante — a fluidez entre mídias, a complementação entre mídias — a sua aplicação foi sempre muito enfadonha, com o debate entre a biblioteca da crítica literária (uns exemplos formais antigos, e inevitavelmente lineares, como Borges ou Ítalo Calvino) e escritórios como os da ABC ou Time Warner (vendendo franquias de Lost e Matrix).

Essa cena ficou um pouco mais interessante com o surgimento dos "Alternate Reality Games" nos anos 2000. O texto perdeu o corpo; virou uma espécie de atmosfera permeável, onde o leitor não sabe onde começa ou termina texto e realidade. Mais importante: o leitor não sabe onde começa e termina *a atividade de leitura*. É aí que se perde a *fricção* do paratexto; a diegese é líquida. Assim como é líquida a fronteira entre literatura, jogo, e autoria.

Por exemplo, o crédito de Janine Salla como "sentient machine therapist" no elenco de "Inteligência Artificial", o filme de Steven Spielberg lançado em 2001. Espectadores começaram a procurar por Salla no Google e encontraram notícias sobre um crime ocorrido. Essas e outras dicas fazem o efeito "rabbit hole" (intraduzível; é o processo de sucção de Alice para dentro da toca do

coelho). Começava, assim, um caso de investigação colaborativa — patrocinado pela Microsoft, e chamado apenas *posteriormente* de *The Beast*; um "jogo" narrativo que construía uma realidade alternativa entremeada pela realidade. Sem corpo, o texto narrativo ganha múltiplas autorias — escritores, participantes, programadores, designers.

No Brasil, a extinta MTV lançou anúncios para o Instituto Purifica no fim dos anos 2000 — a publicidade mostrava uma seita procurando seguidores, e anunciantes começaram a se posicionar contra o tal instituto. Foi o estopim para a mobilização na internet, nerds buscando o IP de páginas da instituição, religiosos dizendo que era coisa do diabo, e por aí vai. O arquivo da história está espalhado pela internet, como perguntas e respostas no Yahoo, entradas na Wikipédia, Desciclopédia, blogs relembrando o evento. Texto, leitura, vida, autor, leitor, espaço, realidade — ressignificados, reposicionados, e entremeados para uma atividade de leitura radicalmente nova.

Nos anos 2010s, outro elemento foi assimilado pela cultura da internet: as variações de temporalidade. Enquanto as investigações desses jogos se davam em forums estáticos ao longo de meses, o tipo de narrativa composta na internet (e pela internet) nos últimos anos é temporal, síncrono e de consequências imprevisíveis. Basta ver como funcionam os linchamentos no Twitter e no Facebook, ou os incontáveis mistérios que povoam o Reddit — de lendas urbanas sobre receitas de explosivos disfarçadas de experimentos para criança até a discussão em que um usuário posta um número que, decifrado, revela onde há o corpo de uma mulher morta. O caso símbolo, contudo, é a velocidade com que se propagaram no site teorias da conspiração sobre os atentados de Boston em abril de 2013 — em poucos dias, pessoas inocentes haviam sido acusadas do crime, num jogo em que a imprensa não sabia mais o que era verdade, suposição ou factoide. Descorporificado, o texto torna-se volátil; inflamável, o flerte entre ficção e realidade é perigoso — e chegamos, finalmente, ao *que teria acontecido com Ricardo Lísias*.

1.1   A construção da defesa

Atestando o óbvio: Ricardo não produziu *documentos*, mas *imitações* de documentos para seu livro que, tão realistas foram, chamaram a atenção da polícia. Então surge a questão literária: onde mora a *anima* do texto? Estou me referindo a esse tônus que faz do texto o que ele é: aquilo que não dá forma ao texto, mas aquilo que dá *função* a ele.

Mesmo no lado filosófico do Direito, a questão é mais filosófica do que parece: quando em 2004 o Banksy produziu notas de libra com o rosto de Diana ao invés da rainha, estava cometendo crime de falsificação? É senso comum entender que não, porque a intenção essencial da obra era que as notas fossem *claramente distintas* da original. Contudo, se o artista comprasse um café na lojinha modesta da Oxford Street e pagasse a velhinha cegueta com a libra do Banksy, estaria cometendo um crime — a percepção do original iguala-se à

cópia, como no caso dos documentos do Delegado Tobias, idênticos a documentos originais. Mas esse não é o ponto. O ponto é que nenhum crime seria cometido se a nota permanecesse na gaveta. É na compra do café que a função da nota fictícia entra na história, e é essa a chave da defesa. Um texto não existe por sua forma, mas quando sua função é trazida ao exercício.

Minha última série de pesquisas acadêmicas trata da ideia de texto e superfície, numa atualização da teoria do paratexto, de Gerard Genette, para o texto digital e, sobretudo, social. Paratexto são "pré-textos" que nos conduzem ao texto: por exemplo, título, nome do autor, selo da editora etc. É assim que sabemos que determinado livro é um romance (e decidimos se queremos lê-lo ou não). No caso de *The Beast*, o paratexto é reverso: aparece depois da consciência da leitura do texto. No caso de Lísias, o paratexto é sua absolvição.

Textos não são, portanto, letras, palavras ou interfaces; textos não são ideias concatenadas, nem intenções nem outras abstrações. Textos são estruturas ideológicas articuladas politicamente, que operam em toda as esferas do poder, da cultura e da sociedade. Chegamos na equação foucaultiana sobre o poder -- que só existe quando em exercício. É o mesmo com o poder do texto, sua tônica, sua função no mundo.

E o ponto deste texto é este: a desconexão inevitável entre o texto e o mundo, e a tentativa dos aparelhos legais em provar essa conexão imaginária. Não é a forma do documento (como no caso dos documentos que Ricardo Lísias criou) que provam A ou B, mas sim a credibilidade atestada por cartorários e outras instituições. Sem credibilidade, o documento é conhecidamente *frio*. Mas ele só *esfria* quando se tenta esquentá-lo. É a lei da termodinâmica desses textos. A função de um documento só existe quando se efetiva no mundo: se eu tiver um documento que ateste que sou dono do Empire State Building, ele precisa ser legítimo — do contrário, é ficção. Legítimo ou frio, se eu nunca tirá-lo da gaveta, de quem é o prédio?

1.2   Veredito

Contudo, esperemos, no escritório arruinado, entre as pilhas de arquivos. Entra o advogado da Monsanto, de cabelo engomado, cara de gentio, terno italiano, satchel hipster. Sussurra nervoso para a acusação: "os documentos são intradiegéticos". Quando transcendem de um mundo a outro (ficcional para o real), acrescentamos um adjetivo que clarifica a questão para um tedioso final feliz: sendo intradiegéticos, e, dentro da natureza para a qual nasceram, são completamente verdadeiros — mas como tudo em literatura, tornam-se inertes quando cruzam o paratexto. O veredito é insosso: Ricardo Lísias é inocente. A conspiração falhou. A única coisa que resta, agora, é escandalizar novamente. Continuar escrevendo, expandindo o texto, confundindo a leitura. É essa a autoficção que mais interessa, pois desenrola-se em tempo real.

Quando li "Divórcio", a intimidade fictícia com o autor, súbita, me pegou desprevenido. No decorrer dos capítulos, a interação com o dia-a-dia do autor

no Facebook fazia da experiência do livro uma espécie de teste comparativo. Pesquisar sobre Lísias tornou-se suporte para compreender a obra, por comparação e contraste. Enquanto "Divórcio" confunde o leitor, "Delegado Tobias" enganou a polícia. É preciso reconhecer que Ricardo capitaneou essa modalidade antes da mesma ser mercantilizada, tendo uma fluência interessante entre as interfaces disponíveis. Com o processo contra "Delegado Tobias", abre-se a chance de evoluir a forma e a função com que se insere na obra, e como transita entre a realidade e ficção. É própria dor-de-cabeça sobre a ordem dos discursos. E, sendo essa uma situação meio maluca, como somos todos francófilos, sabemos que, na loucura, a ordem do discurso é a primeira a ser interditada.

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