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

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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 have 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 surroundings (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 article 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 a form that is radically different from print media. 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, how does the authority attributable to paratexts may change now that anyone – not only authors or editors – can create paratexts?

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?

1.1. *Methodology*

This article 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. Paratexts were split in three main categories. A typification has been made to identify 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. From YouTube, examples included video pages in which paratexts significantly influence textual reception, creation and spectatorship behavior, namely *Controversial 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 (Territory Studios 2012).

The main theoretical framework is based on Gerard Genette's work as explained 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).

2. 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 performance 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). The three main categories are:

- *Authorial peritexts* show the information written by the author. A simple example is the title and description of a video on YouTube.
- *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* 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).

2.1. Authorial peritexts

In Web 2.0, the possibility of publishing content without an editor represents a significant change in paratextual culture and conventions. Authorial peritexts – like the book cover, typeset, or title – used 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:
• 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.

2.1.1. Credits and 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).

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.

2.1.2. *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.

2.1.3. 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 alltime, 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.

2.1.4. 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 meta-data, 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.

2.1.5. 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. Authorial 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 para-
texts: 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 illus-
trates 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), *chan-
nels*, *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 cate-
gorization is sophisticated, in opposition to YouTube's broad categories like
"People & Blogs" or "How-to & Style." (YouTube Channels).

2.2. *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:

- 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?

2.2.1. 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 article: 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?

2.2.2. Excerpts

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 film-makers 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 inter-ference or evaluations, so that users can form their own opinions before seeing what other users think.

2.2.3. 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 contextual 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* (Scot-tyBoiTV 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. In Vimeo, the technical compliments to the special effects show expertise from the commentators, familiarity with the motion graphics industry and are overtly complimentary (Territory Studios 2012). On YouTube, most comments refer to building expectations to watch the feature film. The contrast is clear: the audience in Vimeo has a prominently centripetal behavior (focusing on what is on the screen), and the one in YouTube is centripetal, looking forward to see the feature film (Prometheus YouTube Channel 2011).

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 [1987] 1997, 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.

2.2.4. Attributed filiation: series and collections

It is important to distinguish authorial filiation from attributed filiation. The first case, debated earlier in this article, 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.

2.2.5. 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 introductory 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.

2.3. *Network peritexts: from interface to the user's log*

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:

- 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.

2.3.1. 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.

2.3.2. 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 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.

2.3.3. 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.

2.3.4. 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.

2.3.5. 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 keywords. When videos are displayed on video pages as "related videos," the intertextual paratexts are used to display material that share metadata and other affiliations with the video being watched. These include the same author (uploader) 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 others. Therefore, on YouTube, Vimeo and similar websites that display "related content," any text is the paratext of another. Concurrently, texts are also paratexts, 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 suggestions 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" recommendation system of YouTube, which only points to videos inside YouTube.

YouTube seems more concerned with the *centrifugal* peritext than the *centripetal* one – it seems more important to engage the user in watching the second, third and fourth video (like television), rather than have the user profoundly 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 absorption 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." Similarly, 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).

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