Time to DTR: Fan Paratextualization About Game of Thrones Last Season

Autoria
BRUNO MELO MOURA - brunomtop@gmail.com
Prog de Pós-Grad em Admin/Dep de Ciênc Administrativas/Cent de Ciênc Soc Aplíc - PROPAD/DCA/CCSA/UFPE -
Universidade Federal de Pernambuco

André Luiz Maranhão de Souza-Leão - andre.sleao@ufpe.br
Prog de Pós-Grad em Admin/Dep de Ciênc Administrativas/Cent de Ciênc Soc Aplíc - PROPAD/DCA/CCSA/UFPE -
Universidade Federal de Pernambuco

Agradecimentos
National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) supported the research.
Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) supports the graduate program to which the researchers are affiliated.

Resumo
Media products meaning lies on the interpretation of its content. Fans re-signify them as productive receivers. In this process they produce new texts about such products known as paratexts. Game of Thrones (GoT) have become a cultural phenomenon with a huge repercussion on social media. The research aims to analyze how the audience paratextualized the series final season. For such, we conducted a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) on the comments posted by fans based on the promotional material published on the series' channel on YouTube. The paratextual production of GoT fans presented their final positions on the series, through a public tribute highlighting its cultural legacy and feelings of nostalgia and frustration with its closure. We conclude these paratexts worked as a fan reckoning with the series. Theoretical contribution lies on the articulation of the paratext concept and the understanding of the consumer as a discursive productive agent.
Time to DTR: Fan Paratextualization About Game of Thrones Last Season

Abstract
Media products meaning lies on the interpretation of its content. Fans re-signify them as productive receivers. In this process they produce new texts about such products known as paratexts. Game of Thrones (GoT) have become a cultural phenomenon with a huge repercussion on social media. The research aims to analyze how the audience paratextualized the series final season. For such, we conducted a Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) on the comments posted by fans based on the promotional material published on the series' channel on YouTube. The paratextual production of GoT fans presented their final positions on the series, through a public tribute highlighting its cultural legacy and feelings of nostalgia and frustration with its closure. We conclude these paratexts worked as a fan reckoning with the series. Theoretical contribution lies on the articulation of the paratext concept and the understanding of the consumer as a discursive productive agent.

Keywords: Game of Thrones, Paratext, Fans, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis.

Introduction
Consumers are more and more becoming active participants in the consumption process (GUSCHWAN, 2012). Due to the intensive use of information and communication technologies (ICT) and the media ubiquity, new modes of sociability and cultural and economic exchanges are developed (FRANCO; LEÃO, 2016). Thus, Internet has become one of the major social arenas for consumer practices, especially in the context of Web 2.0 (KOZINETS; HEMETSBERGER; SCHAU, 2008).

Increasingly, people are relating to consumption as a shared experience (BARDHI; ECKHARDT, 2017). Regarding pop culture, consumer interactions have an economic and cultural impact, since they collaborate to the value of entertainment products, in a process that is contributing to a new configuration of the capitalism (HACKLEY; HACKLEY, 2018; JENKINS, 2008). Thus, entertainment businesses are tracking the digital interactions echoing its productions and encouraging consumers to voice their opinions about them (HACKLEY; HACKLEY, 2018).

In this context, the relevance of fans looms large. They are specialized consumers of the entertainment industry who make use of available technologies to participate in the pop culture production (DE SOUZA-LEÃO; MOURA, 2018; JENKINS, 2008). Fans relate to media products by appropriating and re-signifying its content, becoming productive receivers (JENKINS, 2006; SANDVOSS, 2005).

Prosumption has gained new relevance in the context of Web 2.0, which has democratized consumer access to spaces propitious for interaction and productivity (RITZER; JURGENSON, 2010). With respect to pop culture fans, Web 2.0 technologies have fostered community building and spreading of ideas and opinions. Discussions about media products are performed as value discourses (HILLS, 2010) and can be characterized as fan practices (CRUZ; SEO; BINAY, 2019; DUFFETT, 2013; JENKINS, 1992). In virtual spaces, such practices have become more fluid, spontaneous, and accessible (CHEN, 2018).
(GRAY, 2010), as fundamental as the media texts they are related (HILLS, 2010; MITTEL, 2015). Thus, they are characterized as paratexts, which refer to texts that add layers of meaning to an original text they relate to (GRAY, 2010; GRAY; MURRAY, 2016).

Game of Thrones (GoT), an HBO TV series created by David Benioff e D. B. Weiss (D&D) based on the literary saga A Song of Ice and Fire (ASoIaF), written by George R. R. Martin (GRRM). Because the literary saga is still in the process of being published – four out of seven planned books had been released at the premiere of the series and since then only the fifth volume has hit bookshelves – the last seasons of the show have relied solely on the author information about the directions the story would take.

With rapid and booming worldwide repercussion, GoT have become an economic and cultural phenomenon and reached remarkable numbers, becoming the most watched pay TV series in history (CLARK, 2019), with the record of nineteen million viewers for its final episode only in the United States (BURTON, 2019). The show is also the largest TV award winner (Maas, 2019) and even the most pirated television show in history (MACNEILL, 2017). In addition, it has become a successful franchise, with licensed products (e.g., comic books, action figures, clothing) and spin-off series in pre-production. The series caused huge commotion during its nine years of broadcasting, especially for the last season, generating widespread manifestations on the Internet (ELLIS, 2019).

The research aims to analyze how the audience paratextualize GoT' final season. This choice is justified by the huge anticipation for the end of the series after a hiatus of two years since the previous season. It focuses on a cultural text of great impact, already noted on academic works on several fronts, namely: political (MILKOREIT, 2019) and social (CLATON; SHEPHERD, 2017) issues; authorship on adaptation of content for television (STEINER, 2015); pirating (MACNEILL, 2017) and resonance on social media (GEORGE, 2018) of the show; and the production of fan content (FATHALLAH, 2016). On the other hand, the research proposes an original problem to the fan studies field in addressing discursive fan production as a productive consumption of paratexts. Such an approach meets the understanding that consumers play an active role in brand meaning (SCHAU; MUÑIZ; ARNOULD, 2009) and can transform market trajectories (MARTIN; SCHOUTEN, 2014).

Fan Productivity

The media ubiquity has established an intimate relationship with contemporary society, as far as it has configured new modes of sociability and economic and cultural relations (FRANCO; LEÃO, 2016). In the context of consumption, this has characterized the very way cultural practices are formulated and performed (SCHAU; MUÑIZ; ARNOULD, 2009), mainly due to the possibility of greater consumer participation in this process (BARDHI; ECKHARDT, 2017) strongly related to the appropriation of Web 2.0 technologies (KOZINETS; HEMETSBERGER; SCHAU, 2008).

According to Jenkins (2006), Web 2.0 naturalized technological appropriation as a way of establishing interactions in virtual social spaces. This phenomenon is inserted in a context of media convergence, in which different media are connected, providing new possibilities for enjoyment and content production. It guides to a participatory culture, which concerns how individuals produce collectively through technologically mediated interactions (GUSCHWAN, 2012; JENKINS, 2006). In addition to digital technologies, consumers also develop expertise in designing and adopting marketing practices and tools, making consumerism a typical participatory culture activity (HENN; MACHADO; GONZATTI, 2019; JENKINS, 2008).

Fan culture become the most iconic participatory culture, because fans are experts about media products, appropriating their content and participating in their spreading, what is done through proactive and spontaneous practices (JENKINS, 2008). Fan practices express identities manifested from hedonic relationships with pop culture (DUFFETT, 2013) and often occur
through collaborations in coordinated actions organized in social spaces called fandoms (COSTA; LEÃO, 2017; GUSCHWAN, 2012).

Fandoms are more and more taking up virtual spaces where fans come together to interact and share opinions about media products (GUSCHWAN, 2012; HILLS, 2013) through a process of collective intelligence (HENN; MACHADO; GONZATTI, 2019; JENKINS; FORD; GREEN, 2013). Such process enables the resignification of such products, as well as the relationships between fans and them and among fans (GRAY; SANDVOSS; HARRINGTON 2007; LANIER JR.; RADER; FOWLER III, 2015).

Fans play a key role in the diffusion of media products, a phenomenon designated by Jenkins, Ford and Green (2013) as spreadability. In doing so, however, fans represent their subjectivity toward such products, including through resistance and activism, which has led the entertainment industry to rethink how to relate to consumer market.

In taking upon themselves functions that originally belonged to the producers, fans become prosumers (CHEN, 2018; DE SOUZA-LEÃO; COSTA, 2018). According to Ritzer (2014), prosumption represents the end of the production-consumption dichotomy and can be presented as a continuum of different possibilities between these points. Thus, prosumers take on tasks related to the conception and production of the products they consume (COVA; DALLI; ZWICK, 2011), often spontaneously and through the expression of their subjectively, especially through Web 2.0 technologies (JURGENSON, 2012; RITZER; JURGENSON, 2010).

In the context of a participatory culture empowered by the Web 2.0 technologies, fans expand their ability to prosume (CHEN, 2018). Their practices go beyond the ordinary notion of consumption and become political actions (CRUZ; SEO; BINAY, 2019) since they appropriate and re-signify media texts as a form of self-expression and engagement (JENKINS, 2006; GUSCHWAN, 2012), regardless of whether they diverge or align with producers objectives (CHEN, 2018; DE SOUZA-LEÃO; COSTA, 2018).

Thus, fan productions always go beyond the original content on which they are based or inspired on (HACKLEY; HACKLEY, 2018). The differences between the original media texts and those produced by the fans, (i.e., any fan production) (GRAY; SANDVOSS; HARRINGTON, 2007; MITTEL, 2015), reveal their autonomy from producers (CHEN, 2018).

Although fan texts are not part of the original content of media products, they end up influencing their interpretation, what makes them paratexts (GRAY; MURRAY, 2016).

**Media Paratextuality**

Media products often take on meanings that shape fan enjoyment experience (LANIER JR.; RADER; FOWLER III, 2015; SANDVOSS, 2005). In this process, derived, complementary or ancillary texts about such products are as important as themselves (LANIER JR.; RADER; FOWLER III, 2015). These texts are called paratext.

The concept of paratext was originally proposed by Genette (1997) in the literary context. It concerns texts that are complementary to an original text to which those refer, adding information and meaning (e.g., title, preface, cover illustration) (FERREIRA, 2016; HACKLEY; HACKLEY, 2018). Gray (2010) reinterpreted the concept by inserting it in the context of media texts and argued that paratexts directs the reading of an original text and broadens its horizons. Thus, the materiality of media texts relates to the complementary possibilities of their consumption through other texts (i.e., paratexts), which may be produced through other media and formats (e.g., advertisements, websites, bonus materials) (FATHALLAH, 2016; STEINER, 2015).

Genette (2010) pointed out that paratexts can be of two types. The first is the peritext, which are complementary texts, produced in conjunction with the original and accessible in its reading. This type corresponds to what the author had originally proposed. The second type is
the epitext, also produced in addition to an original text, but at a later time and outside it, such as posters, trailers, interviews or critiques about a particular product, hypertexts, parodies, imitations, and so on.

Paratexts play a fundamental role in the reading that fans make of media products (MITTEL, 2015; SCOTT, 2017). Fans reading of a media text is affectively channeled from the paratexts that gravitate around it (HILL, 2015). Thus, any paratextual production presents a fruitful synergy to the entertainment industry, as it enables an intensification in the relationship between its consumers and the received texts (GRAY, 2010).

Assuming paratexts enrich the enjoyment of media texts, another typology, based on the function the paratexts perform, may be enlightening. The entryway paratexts have the function of generating expectation and preparing the audience for consumption, while the in media paratexts complement a consumer experience (GRAINGE; JOHNSON, 2015; GRAY, 2010; JANES, 2015).

Paratextual production may be performed by producers and consumers, since it refers both to marketing content to promote products and to consumer reactions and resignifications (GRAY; SANDVOSS; HARRINGTON, 2007; SCOTT, 2017). For producers, paratexts work as part of a marketing strategy (SCOTT, 2017), while for consumers it means a way of expressing their interpretations and helping others understand an original media text; their purpose is to establish bonds and expand their repertoire about cultural texts that, in the original content, seem to them to be disparate or incoherent, enriching the context available to new readers (CRUZ; SEO; BINAY, 2019). Thus, in the last instance, paratexts are a shared creation between the entertainment industry and the fans.

In fan culture, the production of fan paratexts (e.g., fanfictions, fanvideos, fanarts, fan theories) is a common practice. This manifest the appropriation of technologies necessary for a complex intermedia relationship (GRAY; MURRAY, 2016). The fact that this practice is based on texts over which fans do not own copyright points to its growing role in the appropriation of global cultural meanings (CRUZ; SEO; BINAY, 2019). Fan paratextual productions are able to shape meanings of media products, primarily through the use of social media and their ability to create networks not limited to physical barriers (i.e., national boundaries) (HUAT; JUNG, 2014). Thus, these productions can also legitimize the role of fans (FATHALLAH, 2016; HILLS; GARDE-HANSEN, 2017).

Methodological Procedures

The research was conducted through Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA), since the method aims to produce an understanding of the episteme of certain phenomena in the ways in which certain discourses are established, what aligns to the research problem. Although there is an overlap between theory and method on the Foucauldian philosophy, FDA does not produce a social theory, but an epistemological basis research (DE SOUZA-LEÃO; COSTA, 2018; DE SOUZA-LEÃO; MOURA, 2018). This is the way this research adopts such a perspective.

The data set of an FDA is called an Archive. It is delimited starting from an event, which concerns a moment of rupture of a certain social phenomenon (FOUCAULT, 2008). The research archive covered the comments posted by fans about 25 videos produced by HBO to promote the final season of GoT (i.e., discursive event). They featured exclusive content published on the series’ channel on YouTube, the world’s most widely used platform for web video sharing and discussion, which has become the main means of popularizing pop culture content in recent years (KIM, 2012).

The period covered was from the publication of the first video on December 6, 2018 – about 18 weeks before the series’ last season release – until July 1, 2019 – 6 weeks after the season finale, when comments became in short supply and reached saturation point. The elapsed time of data collection can be understood in three moments: 1) expectation creation for the
release (T1) of the new episodes, whose comments were based on the release of teasers and trailers that preceded the beginning of the final season; 2) reception during the last season's airing (T2), whose comments echoed the episodes broadcasted and the previews of the subsequent episodes, as well as additional material released in the weeks between each episode; and 3) repercussion of the series conclusion (T3), referring to comments posted after the end of the last season broadcast.

Initially, we collected all comments, which totaled over half a million. Due to this large volume, we proceed to debug the search archive in order to obtain data consistency. First, we disregarded non-textual comments (e.g., emojis, words meaning laughter) and only comments published in English were considered. Then, we eliminated comments irrelevant to the research purpose (e.g., disconnected from the GoT subject, spams). Subsequently, we selected the comments about the content of the videos and the circumstances regarding their releases, as well as the resonance of the series. Finally, only the most detailed comments made up the final research archive in a total of 1,401.

The data analysis follows the operationalization systematized by de Souza-Leão (DE SOUZA-LEÃO; COSTA, 2018; DE SOUZA-LEÃO; MOURA, 2018) based on the logic and analytical categories developed by Foucault (2008), as described below.

- **Illation of statements and their relationships.** The first analytical category of the FDA refers to concrete themes inherent to discourses that are identifiable from historicity and rupture of knowledges. They are identified by language signs, despite they are not reduced to them, as the analysis incorporates their pragmatic context and production conditions. A statement is singular, however, can be linked with others, so as to weave discursive relationships transverse to the archive. These relationships are characterized by synchronicity, when the conditions of existence of statements are simultaneous, or by incidence, when there is dependence between statements in their conditions of existence.

- **Recognition of enunciative functions.** The Foucauldian conception of statements describes them as representations of discursive practices. Thus, they fulfill functions on the discourses. A statement can assume more than one function, as well as a function may concern the effect of different statements. The recognition of enunciative functions is based on matching and completing criteria, here called phrases. Objects dealt by statements and the relationships and truths that are spoken or contested through them, are referred to as references. Knowledges that enables the production of statements and their relationships is called the associated field. There is the enunciator subject, which concerns the position or place of speech for producing statements. Finally, the statements present characteristics of production and repetition, understood as their materiality.

- **Recognition of formation rules.** Discursive formations are governed by rules that point out principles of organization present in the statements and their functions. They are based on criteria and logic analogous to those of enunciative functions. The delimitations defined by the statements' references result in objects. The forms of intervention, coexistence and succession of knowledge that allow the formation of statements are designated as concepts. The style used by the subjects, considering the space and the situation from which they speak, refer to modalities. Finally, the articulated conceptions in the materiality of statements reveal discursive strategies.

- **Definition of discursive formations.** The set of relationships established between statements, their functions and formation rules generate convergences that represent the regularities of the discourses constituting an archive. Therefore, it is through these set of relationships that the discursive formations become evident.
The following sections are organized around the discursive formations identified. In each of them their formation rules and the enunciative functions to which they relate are presented through their constitutive criteria. In parallel, the statements are presented, which is done through their empirical contexts evidenced in the research archive. In the end, the results are discussed in light of the theory.

The Throne of TV Series

The first discursive formation (DF1) concerns the confidence that the last season of GoT will be consistent with its cultural impact. Fans and regular viewers of the series recognize and value its legacy for pop culture and are excited about its denouement. This discourse is forged between the period before last season’s release and the repercussion of the broadcasted episodes. Fig. 1 shows DF1 constituent elements, which we describe as follows.

**Figure 1** – First discursive formation's set of relationships

Source: Author’s own elaboration.

This discursive formation is based on two formation rules, which **foreshadow an epic conclusion of the series** (FR1) and **praise the series legacy for pop culture** (FR2). Both regard the effect of GoT (object) on pop culture, recognizing (modality) the series as emblematic for the segment. On the one hand (FR1), there is a **euphoria** (modality) associated with an exercise of **omen** (strategy) about its conclusion, through the **engagement** (concept) of their admirers. On the other hand (FR2), there is a **tribute** (modality) they pay to the series legacy (strategy), that is understood as **revolutionary** (concept) in terms of television production.

Four enunciative functions link to the formation rules. They share the same reference, that is the **importance of the series for pop culture**. Regarding only the confidence about the end of the series (FR1), the **fans yearn for a remarkable closure** (EF1), what is expressed through acknowledgments and longing testimonials, identified in comments based on the final season promotional teasers and trailers (T1). The function is characterized by the expectation (materiality) of the fans (subject) through an enormous buzz (associated field).

Four statements link to this function (EF1). Three of them relate synchronously to each other. Fans propagate that **GoT is the most epic television series ever produced** (S01), so they believe it will take years for another production to reach the same largeness. In line with this line, **the fandom expects the last season to be epic** (S02), both due to the unpredictability of the narrative of the series and the smaller number of episodes and longer production time compared to previous seasons. On the other hand, **there is a feeling of nostalgia around the**
conclusion of GoT (S03), evidenced by the commotion of fans who report they are already missing the series even before its end. These statements are incident on the understanding that the end of GoT is the most anticipated event of the year (S04). Fans echo that the Internet hype about the series last season was the largest ever achieved by a TV series, becoming a milestone for both media.

Thus, this remarkable event (S04) relate with the understanding that GoT is responsible for congest the internet (S05). They discuss how the volume of commenting, viewing and sharing of the episodes and promotional material was staggering. These two statements (S04-S05) are incident on the argument that the final season of GoT integrate the most iconic month in pop culture history (S06), as the period also marks the release of Avengers Endgame, the last movie of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) Infinity Saga.

These statements (S04-S06) have the function of resonating the end of GoT (EF2), which relates to the two formation rules of DF1. This enunciative function represents how the echo of the series’ concluding season caused a commotion that surpassed the limits of its fandom, being discussed by netizens who were impressed with the commotion caused by a television content release. Just like the craving for an extraordinary closure (EF1), this enunciative function is also based on a buzz (associated field) about the end of the series, focusing, however, on its repercussion (materiality), promoted not only by fans, but also by regular viewers (subjects). It happened prior the release of the final season (T1), as well as (S05 and S06 only), during its episodes broadcast (T2).

Resonating the importance of GoT (EF3) is also related to the two formation rules of DF1 and recurrent in T1 and T2. It differentiates from the resonance of the series conclusion (EF2) by treating GoT from a pop culture (associated field) point of view. The understanding that the last season of GoT takes part in pop culture history (S06) is also related to present enunciative function (EF3) and link to the conception that GoT changed pop culture (S07). GoT admirers argue that the series marked an epoch, both for its market performance and its cultural impact, feeding social networks discussions and contributing to an anti-spoiler conduct. The perception that GoT changed the TV (S08) derives from these two statements (S06-S07).

It is understood that the series contributed to this media to have more relevance in pop culture and created the habits of watching the series episodes in real-time airing in order to avoid spoilers, what also lead HBO to release them simultaneously worldwide.

GoT's contribution to TV (S08) and to pop culture (S07) falls on the rejoicing for the notability of GoT (S09). Fans delighted with the success and impact of the series, as well as felt rewarded by the news about HBO's plan to release GoT-derived series. Such statements (S07-S09) point to the function of acclaming the magnitude of GoT (EF4), which relates only to the series legacy (FR2). This enunciative function is characterized by the prestige (materiality) of the series in pop culture (associated field) according to its fans (subject).

By assigning an iconic value to GoT's legacy, the fandom engaged in a paratextual production capable of complementing, broadening, or even modifying the interpretation (MITTEL, 2015; SCOTT, 2017) of the series. This process reveals a strong affective bond. Paratexts with this feature become very influential in the way their readers interpret them (HILL, 2015). In this case, this is visible when this activity is shared between fans and regular viewers.

In expressing expectation for the series conclusion, the fandom produced entryway paratexts (GRAINGE; JOHNSON, 2015; JANES, 2015). In doing so, they ended up engaging in the last season promotional campaign, practicing a prosumption aligned to the producer role according to traditional view (RITZER; JURGENSON, 2010). Evidently, such behavior was encouraged by HBO. Indeed, stimulate the consumer participation in media product repercussion has been a strategy widely adopted by the entertainment industry (KOZINETS et al., 2004; SEREGINA; WEIJO, 2016). However, the buzz made by the fandom can be
understood as user-generated content rather than word-of-mouth communication (LABRECQUE ET AL., 2013). We can say, therefore, that the fans performed market productivity by taking on typical marketing tasks (CHEN, 2011).

**Burned Throne?**

The second discursive formation (DF2) concerns how the last season of GoT have impacted its relationship with the fans. Part of them make a point of attesting to the series' predicates, although they recognize problems with its conduction. Another part criticizes its closure, revealing a disappointment peculiar of aficionados. Such impressions were built primarily during the broadcast of the final season and especially after its final episode. Follow, we describe the constitutive elements of DF2, showed in Fig. 2.

**Figure 2** – Second discursive formation's set of relationships

This discursive formation is supported by two formation rules, regarding the end of the series as both a resounding conclusion (FR3) and a controversial denouement (FR4). They refer to the fans' relationship with GoT (object) and their evaluation (modality) of both what the series represented in their lives and the course of its plot. This evidences conflicts (concept), be it due to the recognition of problems despite the series qualities, either because of discrepant perceptions about how its conclusion was conducted. In particular, the reverberation of GoT final season (FR3) attests (strategy) affectivity (concept), while its controversial end (FR4) criticizes (strategy) its decline (concept).

Three enunciative functions underlie these rules, sharing the validity of the series (referential) for fans (subject). Related only to FR3, fans celebrate the end of an era (EF5) by highlighting the quality (materiality) of the series through nostalgic commentary (associated field). Four statements link exclusively to this function. Linking to all the others, the fans compliment how talented GoT cast is (S12), reflected during (T2) and after (T3) last season. Actors and actresses are praised for playing their characters with strength and charisma, despite
some plot lines left a lot to be desired over the last seasons. Also, the last season disclosure was praised (S10) since before its release (T1-T2). Fans highlighted the quality, undeliverable spoiler promo videos that would have further fueled their anxiety. Linked to this statement (S10), during last season's broadcast (T2) some fans praised how the series was directed with mastery (S11). They highlighted the plot twists, epic battles, and thriller scenes that made the series famous over the years, what would have been resulted from the directing of the episodes and not necessarily from the work of D&D or GRRM. In the same period, testimonials told how GoT became part of some of its fans biography (S13). They pointed out how the longevity of the series has made special moments of their lives to be marked by the show. They also highlighted the significance of the female empowerment of some of the main characters in the series and the fact that the cast grew or aged along with them over the years, especially those that became teens or adults on screen.

In another direction, related only to the strife about the conclusion of GoT (FR4), an assertion on the ruin of GoT (EF7) is posited, expressed through frustration (materiality) with its distance from the literary canon (associated field). Five statements link exclusively to this enunciative function. For part of the fans, the producers screwed up the end of GoT (S19). They condemn D&D for not having planned better on how to adapt a literary saga still in development and for hastening or changing the course of the story and the fate of some characters in adaptations that were considered libertine and made to please segments of viewers. On the other hand, part of the fans pointed out that the fault of GoT's downfall lies with the saga author (S20). They accuse GRRM of being negligent for not completing the planned books and thus leaving the series without a north. These statements (S19-S20) are linked and incident on the understanding about a decline of GoT (S23), all built during (T2) and after (T3) last season's broadcast. It points out how the tone and the plot of the series failed to stay at the level that made it so famous, due to an original script that did not live up to the quality of ASoIaF.

Passed on after the series finale (T3), two other statements complete this function (EF7). Fans consider that the end of GoT has been hurried (S22), what is linked to the previous three statements in the same way they relate to each other. It posits that the plot was finished without due care and with geographical and temporal inconsistencies. This would have caused the GoT end to ruin ASoIaF (S21) by revealing the end of the saga in a carelessly and distorted way. Fans expressed indignation that the adaptation questionably revealed the outcome they were looking forward to seeing in the books. Such sentiment is also linked to GRRM's blame for not having released the final books before GoT's conclusion (E20).

Finally, linking to the two formation rules of DF2, fans have polemicized the end of GoT (EF6). It happened through divergences (associated field) that attested both prestige and frustration (materiality) about GoT completion. This enunciative function is linked to five statements, all produced since the broadcast of last season (T2) to the repercussion that occurred after it (T3). One of these is linked to all the others. The fandom featured several schisms that became even more evident at the final of the series, guiding to intra-fandomic conflicts about the end of GoT (S16). These disagreements have ranged from rivalries stablished based on preferences for characters to clashes between those that liked and hated the plot's outcome. Along the same line, strives were also evidenced in extra-fandomic feuds (S17). GoT fans demonstrated rivalry with fans of other television productions (e.g., Lost, Breaking Bad) and film franchises (e.g., Avengers) in comparing the series in relation to them, as well as criticizing the choice of certain artists (i.e., SZA, The Weeknd, Travis Scott ) casted for participating on the final season soundtrack.

On the other hand, part of the fans highlighted female power at the end of GoT (S14). They extolled the crucial role of female characters in the plot's ending, noting that it was one of them who defeated the biggest antagonist of the series. Such a position also served as the basis
for a critique of pop culture productions, which typically feature male heroes, while women are sexualized or submissive. This was also one of the aspects that made the series mark the life-story of fans (E13), making this statement also participate in the exaltation for the end of the series (EF5). This positioning is also used as a response to fans who show dissatisfaction with female protagonism (S15). Part of the fans blamed the popularization of the feminist cause in the 21st century for changes in the plot, which would have been one of the determinants of its decay (S20). Closely linked to this, critics of GoT's end have suffered prejudice (S18). Part of the audience was outraged by the dissatisfaction of fans who did not accept the way the series was finished - mainly by D&D (E19) and GRRM (E20) - accusing them of preciousness and pejoratively calling them nerds, making this statement also participate in the collapse declaration of the series (F7).

The repercussion of the series last season can be characterized as a production of in media paratextual content (GRAINGE; JOHNSON, 2015; JANES, 2015). Even with conflicts and falters regarding the series closing, GoT fans ended up doing this critically. Just as the interpretation of media texts is open to potentially ambiguous interpretations (LANIER JR.; RADER; FOWLER III, 2015), we can conclude that also paratexts are.

Contrary to what happened in the first discursive formation, we can say that in this one the fans played a more consumer-oriented approach in a consecrated sense (RITZER; JURGENSON, 2010). They took clearly misaligned positions on HBO's interests, what is a possible outcome when organizations adopt the strategy of inviting consumers to reverberate its products (CRUZ; SEO; BINAY, 2019).

Generally speaking, we cannot say it was the case of consensually attesting to the extinction of the series' legacy, but of putting it in a different place, much less emblematic and certainly not untouchable. Thus, fans produced paratexts capable of changing the prevailing view of the cultural product (HUAT; JUNG, 2014). As an unfolding, it is even possible to conjecture GoT-derived series to be met with less anticipated, as paratexts also impact the reception of new texts (GRAINGE; JOHNSON, 2015; GRAY, 2010).

Concluding Remarks

The paratextual production of GoT fans over its last season is concerned with presenting final positions on the series. This fits in with the very notion of paratext; a text derived from another, albeit with a life of its own. Therefore, if the original text at hand was the closing of a narrative, it is to be expected that the paratext produced about it would also have this purpose. However, in its autonomous way of proceeding, this production can be understood as a closure of the fans, which we understand as their reckoning with the series.

The first discursive formation is a public tribute that assumes the form of a love declaration. The series is defined as cultural legacy; a heritage for pop culture. This fan recognition is for GoT as for themselves. After all, they state how the series played a relevant role in their lives, so we can say that the series' legacy is also the legacy of their fandom. The second discursive formation, in turn, broaden the range of feelings of the fans. Though these feelings extend from those who praise to those who criticize the series ending, the tone is never apologetic. At the extremes, a less sweet farewell than it could be and a sense of betrayal by the detachment of the literary canon. This, however, mirrors two sides of a same emotional bond (i.e., nostalgia and frustration). We can conclude, therefore, that the paratexts that worked as a fan reckoning with the series have in common a foundation of affection; a definition of the relationship (i.e., DTR).

Whether playing in line with HBO expectations or not, fans have produced paratexts that reinterpret GoT. From the point of view of a textual production, we argue that fans, therefore, can ultimately be considered co-authors of the series in terms of its representation. Foucault (2011) argues that a reader is capable of uttering a discourse on the read text that is as
important as it, since such reader both mindset the creator's process of production and insert his own creative process in his interpretation. Thus, the text and its interpretation have the very same value.

Foucault (2011) explains this in terms of his concept of author-function. For the philosopher, the authorship of a text is not limited to its creator; It is established in subjective positions that enable individuals to signify a text. It is, therefore, a function that characterizes a mode of existence, circulation and functioning of discursive production within social spheres. In the case of media products, this becomes diffuse and complex. In an audiovisual production, the participation of studios, creators, directors, screenwriters, actors, among others, works into different layers of meaning-make (MITTEL, 2015; STEINER, 2015), completed only after the transmedia appropriation of fans (HILLS; GARDE-HANSEN, 2017).

In the path of conceptions that assume the consumer as a productive agent (COVA; COVA, 2012), present study inserts the concept of paratext as a means of articulating this domain. We can argue that all spontaneous consumer productivity is textual, in the sense that they are ultimately symbolic, since they add layers of meaning to products and brands. Specifically, the theory of paratextuality can fit into the fan studies agenda of investigations that focus on market cultures and consumer ideologies.

As a limitation of the study, we recognize that as we look at paratextual production in relation to the final season of the series only, we overlook the possibility of registering an evolution of the product meaning process by fans. It is noteworthy, however, that the data collected, and the analytical method adopted allowed the historicity of the discourse to be apprehended.

As a possible unfolding of the research, analysis of paratextual fan production of other pop culture franchises (e.g., MCU, Star Wars, Wizarding World) could contribute to theorizing about paratextual consumer productivity. On the other hand, the concept of paratext could also be applied to the analysis of promotional actions of these franchises, extending its application to the field of marketing communication.

**Acknowledgement**
National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) supported the research.
Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) supports the graduate program to which the researchers are affiliated.

**References**


