

ALL ABOUT PARATEXTS

LIT 501: INTRODUCTION TO FAN STUDIES:
FANDOM, FAN FICTION, AND PARATEXTS

A Zine by Melina, Björn, Lukas, Yafes and Berkay



FILM STUDIOS VS YOUTUBERS

*Are YouTube film critics
changing the entertainment
landscape forever?*

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INTO THE WORLD OF PARATEXTS

ANATOTINNSTARK

In today's media landscape, finding footing in all channels, apps, streaming platforms, and social media is tricky. Users can choose where to watch, what to stream, and when to enjoy their favorite content. Everything is always available everywhere, as long as it happens online. *YouTube*, *Instagram*, and *X*, among others, allow consumers to create content they want to share with the world. The "new" media, AKA social media, is a playground for liking, sharing, and, foremost, commenting on what the consumer wants to see. This part makes the "new" media unique and outstanding, even though many of these concepts were already in place when newspapers and magazines ruled the media landscape.

Most of these "old" media also evolved and adapted to the new method of content consumption. Newspapers have their websites where they spread the news, radio stations are available online, and all sorts of magazines share their knowledge on the screens of every user. All these allow for personal input, leave room for debate, and usually want the users to be on board with columns, comment sections, and surveys on who to vote for, as just one of many examples.

However, one type of media has difficulty adapting to this new world: where are the comment sections on *Netflix*? Where is the call for participation on *Amazon Prime*? How does one interact with *Disney Plus*? And most of all, how does one give input in the cinema?



INTO THE WORLD OF PARATEXTS

It is a complicated matter.

This circumstance, however, does not hinder the people trying to do so. They must stick to the known ways of doing so: social media. There, it is possible to go on *X* and post on the newest episode of any show, stating opinions. There, it is possible to post suggestions on what to watch on Instagram. There, it is possible to post a video on *YouTube*, reacting to and criticizing the newest content from any channel, network, platform, or studio.

These videos are worth exploring to discover people's thoughts and feelings about movies and series. With these videos, it is also possible to see how the studios, directors, showrunners, etc., react to what

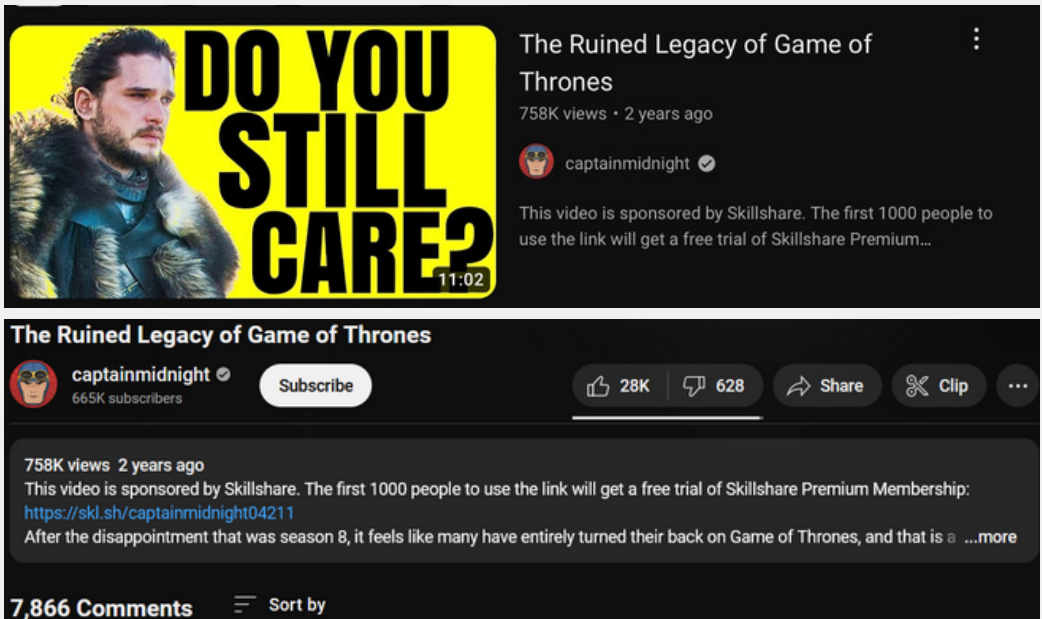
social media thinks about their content. This is something this Zine will look into. In this Zine, there are five different cases of interactions between YouTubers and the makers of movies and TV shows. These cases illustrate how different showrunners and studios dealt with the criticism and feedback they received from social media. Some of these interactions were successful negotiations between the parties involved, while others had differing results. All these interchanges are fascinating instances of interest conflicts. These conflicts and how showrunners reacted to the opinions of media consumers show where the “old” media is right now but also gives it soon may be.

A global phenomenon goes up in flames of wildfire – How does that affect our perception of the series and most importantly - what happens now?

Introduction: Fan-created paratexts

The conclusion of the renowned Game of Thrones TV series, based on George R. R. Martin's fantasy novel A Song of Ice and Fire, has unequivocally left fans wanting. Concerned fans of both the TV series and the source material took to social media platforms to express their displeasure and disappointment in the conclusion of the series. A common occurrence after the release of the controversial finale was the creation of video essays by many content creators and fans of the series alike, which engaged in discourse about the failings and specifically about its fall from grace.

These videos were uploaded to the social media platform YouTube, where some managed to attract a sizeable audience. In addition to expressing the creators' opinions on the TV series, they often sparked further discourse about the series as well as the video essay itself in the forum-like comments section, where anyone with a registered account on the platform could contribute and share their own thoughts. The overall aim of this zine article is to explore the role of YouTube video essays as fan-created paratexts in shaping our perception of the original text as well as to examine, through a specific example of a fan-created paratext, the aftermath of the Game of Thrones finale-failure.



The Ruined Legacy of Game of Thrones

758K views · 2 years ago

captainmidnight ✓

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DO YOU STILL CARE? 11:02

The Ruined Legacy of Game of Thrones

captainmidnight ✓
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28K 628 Share Clip

758K views 2 years ago

This video is sponsored by Skillshare. The first 1000 people to use the link will get a free trial of Skillshare Premium Membership:
<https://skl.sh/captainmidnight04211>

After the disappointment that was season 8, it feels like many have entirely turned their back on Game of Thrones, and that is a ...more

7,866 Comments Sort by

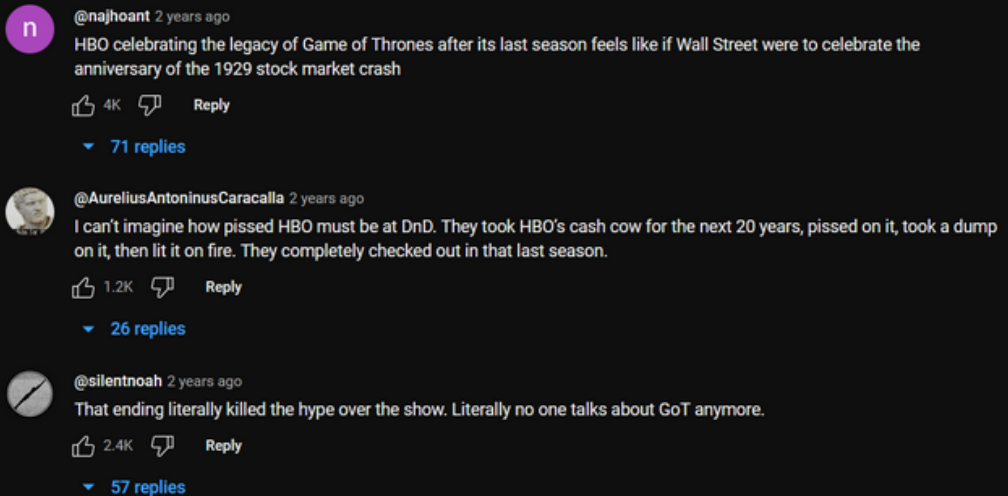
The Devastated Legacy

The example video essay showcased in the previous page contains a discussion surrounding the legacy of Game of Thrones, taking into consideration all its failures leading up to and after publication of the final season. Usually, when observing fan-created paratexts, it would be interesting to direct our gaze towards the effect that they might have on the original text and in cases such as this one, the leverage they might hold over the creators of the original text. If the fandom is generally unhappy, would a clear expression of said displeasure cause the creators of the text to shift gears and steer towards satisfying its audience? With the example of Game of Thrones, it seems that the time for this conversation has already passed, given that the hasty conclusion of the series has already been aired. Consequently, the only remaining question is: What happens now?



The Devastated Legacy

While the production of the series can no longer be affected, its legacy most-certainly can, which is showing in many video essays discussing this very topic. One of these essays, titled “The Ruined Legacy of Game of Thrones” discusses the aftermath of its finale-failure and speculates about future television endeavours pertaining to the original series. Generally, the creator of the video essay, going by the alias captainmidnight, claims that the disappointment of the Game of Thrones TV series stretches beyond its actual content and ill-suited conclusion. Instead, he encourages fellow fans to consider the ramifications of this failure of production on future content pertaining to the Game of Thrones fictional universe, specifically referencing the now aired prequel series titled House of the Dragon among other spin-off shows that were planned following the initial success of the original series. According to the creator, the marketing strategy behind the spin-off shows was to ride off the massive popularity wave of the original series, which was supposed to generate high levels of anticipation. With the horrible mismanagement of everything pertaining to the show however, the creator of the video essay claims that the future of Game of Thrones television looks bleak and generally protrudes a vastly pessimistic outlook towards its legacy.

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- The image shows a screenshot of three tweets from Twitter, all discussing the legacy of Game of Thrones. The background is black, and the text is white. Each tweet includes a profile picture, a username, a timestamp, the text of the tweet, and engagement metrics (likes, replies, retweets).
- First tweet:** User @majhoant, 2 years ago. Text: "HBO celebrating the legacy of Game of Thrones after its last season feels like if Wall Street were to celebrate the anniversary of the 1929 stock market crash". 4K likes, 71 replies.
 - Second tweet:** User @AureliusAntoninusCaracalla, 2 years ago. Text: "I can't imagine how pissed HBO must be at DnD. They took HBO's cash cow for the next 20 years, pissed on it, took a dump on it, then lit it on fire. They completely checked out in that last season." 1.2K likes, 26 replies.
 - Third tweet:** User @silentnoah, 2 years ago. Text: "That ending literally killed the hype over the show. Literally no one talks about GoT anymore." 2.4K likes, 57 replies.

The Devastated Legacy

The significance of a fan-created paratext such as this video essay clearly goes beyond anything contained in the video itself. A brief scrolling down of the mouse wheel on the very same webpage reveals a comments section linked to the video essay, filled with fans eager to share their own opinions pertaining to the legacy of the series. Generally, the comments below the video are in agreement with the creator, in that the failure of the showrunners pertaining to the conclusion of the series cannot be contained to the original text and will also negatively affect its legacy. The consensus is, that while fans still show excitement towards future television endeavours set in the Game of Thrones universe, the stain that the finale-devastation created will remain and plague the series for a long time to come.



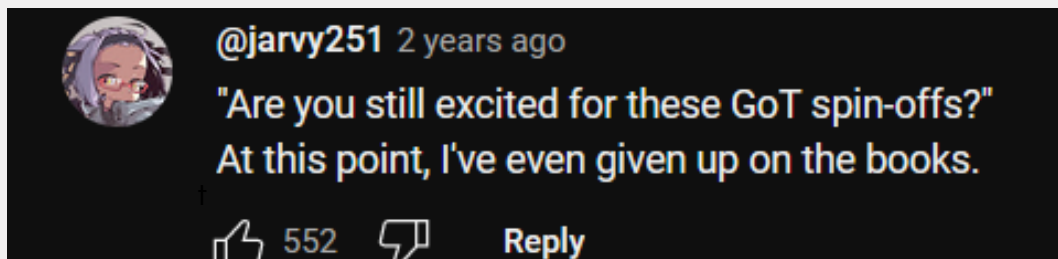
Paratextuality of YouTube video essays

An interesting aspect to consider when observing the premise of the aforementioned video essays as paratexts is their relation to the original text, which in this specific case, would be the Game of Thrones TV series. A core aspect to consider here is the potential of the YouTube social media platform as a paratextual landscape. In his theorization about paratextuality and specifically about fan-created paratexts, Gray initially compares them to industry-created paratexts which have an established infrastructure and a steady flow of capital supporting their release and circulation (143). While this statement is generally applicable to the case YouTube video essays as well, such as the one referred to in the previous pages, it is also important to mention that content creators on YouTube have an opportunity to be compensated for their efforts, given that the contents of the video are transformative and fall under the regulations of fair use. Furthermore, if the content catches the eyes of sponsors, an opportunity arises to earn additional revenue through sponsorships and advertisement reads. Generally, while it is certainly not the case for every single fan-created paratext in the form of a YouTube video, some who manage to attract a sizeable audience also have a chance to be financially compensated.

In his theorization about paratextuality, Gray claims that paratexts help “frame our consumption” of the original text (24). Naturally, the same concept is applicable in the scenario of YouTube video essays acting as paratexts in relation to the Game of Thrones TV series. The question worth asking here is how exactly these paratexts shape our perceptions of the original series, which is interconnected with how one perceives the paratext itself.

Paratextuality of YouTube video essays

If we turn our gaze back towards the example of the Game of Thrones TV series and its devastating reception at the hands of the fandom, a massive topic of discussion regarding the fall from grace of the series was surrounding guilt and blame. A general consensus in the fandom, as perpetuated in the example video referenced in this article, is that the showrunners David Benioff and D.B. Weiss are responsible for the downfall of the series. Whether this is exactly true or not can be a topic of speculation. Factually however, the ratings of the show did start to decline after it had covered the entire source material, namely Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*. In the video essay, the creator claims that at a point in time after having depicted the source material, the showrunners seemed to lose interest in the project and wanted to move on.



Continuing along this specific example, the perpetuation of information through paratexts knowingly or unknowingly affects our attitude and perception of the original text. If we look at a paratext through the lens of a peritext, or a paratext that serves as an “entryway” to the original text (Gray 23), consuming it causes us to acquire information which in turn, influences our focus throughout consumption of the original material. Gray refers to this notion as “speculative consumption” (24) and in this instance, it might affect our lens of perception through the amplification of negativity. By way of illustration, if a person would acquire the information, that the showrunners of Game of Thrones had been responsible for its downfall before watching the show itself, it would certainly affect the way they perceive the series.

Paratextual Influence on our Perception of the Series: Conclusion



Generally, this paratextual concept of speculative consumption, as per Gray, is an enormous factor when observing the Game of Thrones televised universe. The information we acquired through countless paratextual sources caused us to essentially have our guard up when hearing about a new spin-off show set in the original Game of Thrones universe. The paratextual influence unequivocally extends itself beyond the show as well, especially when considering the ruined reputation of the showrunners. Just as fans of the original series may never look at a Game of Thrones spin-off through the same lens of excitement as the first season of the show, any project ran by the showrunners of Game of Thrones may meet the same fate. As portrayed in countless video essays and criticising comments, the conclusion of the series has cast a massive shadow over the entire fandom and the entire fictional universe, which extends far beyond the series itself. Naturally, as the showrunners of the original series have departed the project, hope springs eternal again for fans of the universe to receive a product of high quality, which the showrunners truly care and are passionate about. However, whether fate repeats itself, remains to be seen.

TOSS A *LIFELINE* TO THE WITCHER

Synopsis of a failure.

Written by Melina Weber



Fuck. [It. I'm outta here.]

The Witcher should have become Netflix's *Game of Thrones*, complete with a built in fandom and plenty source material from a complete book series and successful games to adapt to screen. But instead its viewership steadily declined, culminating in titular star Henry Cavill leaving after season 3, and fans wondering, how a franchise served on a silver platter could result in the greatest blunder in Netflix's history?

“WE COULD’VE BEEN
CHEERING FOR FUTURE
WITCHER SEASONS BUT
INSTEAD WE’VE GATHERED
FOR A FUNERAL.”

– Youtuber ENDYMIONtv

One only needs to read the comments under Youtube videos discussing and criticising TV shows like *The Witcher* to see, that the focal point of entertainment has shifted. Nowadays some find more entertainment in private film critiques instead of the film itself. Reading between the lines, more fans appear to have become disappointed with the recent quality of film entertainment and thus turn towards Youtuber critics as replacement entertainment. If the media itself becomes unbearable for fans to watch, the fans might as well laugh at it with vidders and fellow fans, sharing their disappointment and crushed hopes.



Despite the show having a better starting point than *Games of Thrones* due to its source material, penned by Andrzej Sapkowski being complete, *The Witcher* also failed to keep its hype going, much to the bafflement of the fans. As Youtube critics have pointed out, “all Netflix had to do was translate what was already there into live action form.”

Next up, are insights into popular Youtuber’s assessments into what went wrong, allowing a peak into fandom’s collective mind and influence and a platform’s stunning misjudgement in capitalising on long running fandoms. Did Netflix take the built in fandom for granted?

06.12.2019 HENRY CAVILL DEFENDS FANS WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT TOXIC FANDOM by *ThatStarWarsGirl*
(228k views)

“When it comes to fans, it is a fan’s right to have whatever opinion they want to have. I don’t necessarily consider that toxic, I just considered that passionate.” - Henry Cavill

22.01.2020 How to Fail At Adaptation - The Witcher by The Closer Look (1,3 Mio views)

Adapting books to screen always poses challenges, yet a source material provides the essential basis to build a show upon. Youtuber *The Closer Look*, specialising in analysing adaptations, concludes that *The Witcher’s* struggle of putting a coherent story to screen lies in the show cutting out all the plot points crucial for context, thus it fails to tell the story to its fullest entertainment value. Condensing the plot is necessary due to time constraints, but it should never forget what the story is originally about.



31.10.2022 It’s Time to Stop Defending Netflix’s Witcher by Neon Knight (1,8 Mio views)

Cavill is absolutely committed to *The Witcher’s* 7-season plan, *on one condition*, “as long as we can keep telling great stories which honor Sapkowski’s work.”

But as fans observe, the writer’s team completely failed to adhere to Cavill’s one condition, which echoes the expectation fans of the IP (intellectual property) have, and thus the show blows all its potential it had.

Neon Knight claims, “with the proper writing Henry Cavill as Geralt of Rivia could have been a casting for the ages.”

05.04.2023 [Netflix Witcher Chaos! 300,000+ Boycott, Season 3 Lies, Author Speaks Out, Writers Hate Henry Cavill by LegacyKillaHD \(1,5 Mio views\)](#)

Showrunner Lauren Hissrich found Cavill “really annoying” due to his over-enthusiasm to play Geralt. Fans are upset that Netflix still promotes the show as a “faithful adaptation” when it is anything but.

“I wanted to make sure that Geralt was represented as accurately as possible.”

- Henry Cavill

“For me, it is all about the books,” said Henry Cavill, who plays Geralt of Rivia. “The books are so nuanced, and there is so much complexity to the characters in there that it is ultimately that. As far as the show goes, I just want to make sure that the character and the books are done justice in live action, because I’m always of the mind that if it’s not broken, don’t try and fix it. And I don’t think they’re broken, and I absolutely love those books. For me, that’s my focus.”

28.06.2023 [Why Netflix REALLY Killed The Witcher by KiraTV \(1,2 Mio views\)](#)

“I’m effusive about being loyal to the source material, let’s put it that way.” - Henry Cavill

The casting of Cavill was first met with criticism by fans due to his too good looks for the rugged character Geralt. However, Cavill’s passion for the source material eventually won fandom over. In season 2, fans became disillusioned with the direction of the show, a frustration the lead shared with the fans.

“The Witcher Season 2 changed a major character’s fate, and fans aren’t happy.”

Now the writers perceive the “walking Witcher encyclopedia” star as a problem. Cavill is then framed as a “misogynist toxic gamer.”

“Fandom as a litmus test checks egos.”

- Beau DeMayo, former *The Witcher* writer and producer, who revealed that some on the writers team have actively mocked the source material.

10.07.2023 The Witcher is DEAD Netflix PANICS!

by *Nerdrotic* (1,8 Mio views)

Dough Cockle, voice actor of Geralt in the video games, shares his sympathy with Cavill leaving, “because Henry is such a huge fan of the games and the books and the writers on the Netflix show have chosen [...] to deviate quite severely [...]“ Show runner Lauren Hissrich completely ignored the fan complaints of there not being enough Witcher in *The Witcher*. She appeased fans that season 3 is going to be more book accurate only for the fans to find out that has been a lie.

31.07.2023 How The Witcher Destroyed Itself by *The Critical Drinker* (1,9 Mio views)

“Netflix’s *The Witcher* Audience Scores Have Dropped 67% From Season 1 To 3” Fans saw it coming as they got the impression that the showrunners actively resent the titular character. “Cavill who could have been their biggest ally, ended up being their biggest detractor,” the *Critical Drinker* comments, all due to the writer’s ego, who seemed to think they could reshape a decade old IP in their own image with the fan’s automatic approval.

05.08.2023 The Witcher ATTACKS Fans Too STUPID To Praise It

by *Disparu* (450k views)

Disparu observes that the *Witcher* producers try to blame the show’s simplified plot on Americans’ supposed inability to follow complex storylines. The youtuber identifies the show focusing on emotions instead of a plot, as the main reason for alienating the audience because ultimately feelings are fleeting and highly subjective, whereas logic is universal regardless of one’s own worldviews. He contrasts the “people who want to reflect the books” to the people who “just want to rewrite it to turn it into their little mouthpiece to change opinions.”

01.08.2023 Netflix’s *The Witcher* is CANCELLED?! + Producers Blame The Fans For Series Dying by *ENDYMIONtv* (450k views)

ENDYMIONtv takes a closer look at how *The Witcher* became Netflix greatest failure. He asserts that Netflix could have had the greatest fantasy show ever put to television, surpassing *Games of Thrones*, if it weren’t for the ego in the writer’s and showrunner’s room. Regrettably, Netflix did the reverse of *Game of Thrones*: instead of adapting the source material, Netflix decided to throw it out the window entirely and turn it into expensive fanfiction.



A FANDOM ON THE EDGE OF THE SWORD


The Witcher is a remarkable synopsis of a show aiming for the likeness of *Game of Thrones* but failing not only in delivering but also in keeping its fans, and even in keeping its main star. Henry Cavill, playing the witcher Geralt of Rivia provides a unique situation of where a cast member bridges the gap between production set and the audience, as Cavill himself is a fan of the source material. As *ThatStarWarsGirl* points out in her Youtube channel dedicated to all things fandom, having an actor within Hollywood standing up for the right of fans to voice their opinions — complimentary *and* critical — has been received by fans as a breath of fresh air in an environment of big studios increasingly accusing fandom of toxicity and bigotry as cheap means to deflect from valid criticism of studios's takes on beloved IPs and franchises.

Book to screen adaptations always have to compromise somewhere, yet efforts in respecting the source material still remain the best approach, notably shown in the main *Witcher*'s star's one condition. Fail to adhere, and the show loses its appeal — and its lead.

“You had everything you needed: you had the money, you had the source material, you had the freaking Geralt of Rivia willing and ready to deliver what fans wanted.”

--Youtuber ENDYMIONtv, addressing Netflix

As it turns out insulting the audience is no winning strategy and taking an established fantasy franchise only to insert your own message into it, adjusted to modern sensibilities as subjective as they may be, will not necessarily keep the core fanbase loyal, nor win you new viewers.

A night cityscape with a person on a balcony and a meteor shower. The scene is set at night, with a dark blue sky filled with clouds and a vibrant meteor shower streaking across it. The city below is illuminated with various lights, including the warm yellow lights of apartment windows and the bright, colorful lights of skyscrapers. In the foreground, a person is seen from behind, standing on a balcony with a metal railing. A bicycle is parked on the balcony to the left. The overall atmosphere is one of quiet contemplation amidst a dynamic, futuristic urban environment.

ANIME INDUSTRY VS YOUTUBE

Japanese animation studio copyright strikes 150
YouTube videos in one day

Written by: Yafes Corbaci

What Happened?

In late 2021 the Anime/Manga reviewer TotallyNotMark had received over 150 copyright strikes and approximately 80 videos had been taken down. The copyright strikes came from the distributors of One Piece and Dragon Ball Toei Animation.

TotallyNotMark, who primarily focused on Shounen Anime/Manga series, posted his first videos eight years ago and has garnered roughly 900k subscribers as of February 2024. One of his most popular works came with his Dragon Ball reviews. His Dragon Ball and One Piece content were the videos Toei Animation targeted and took down. A mass copyright strike of this magnitude was very rarely seen before on YouTube, hence the community outrage and the publicity this event has gathered.

TOTALLYNOTMARK VS TOEI ANIMATION

According to Mark's update video, Toei Animation before sending Mark E-mails about their copyright strike on his channel, they contacted YouTube directly with 150 takedown notices ("We Won sort of"). These kinds of notices are demands to YouTube that the reported videos in question should be deleted from the platform completely whilst also giving the channel that uploaded them strikes on their channel ("We Won sort of"). Too many strikes lead to the termination of the YouTube channel. However, in a surprising turn, YouTube supported Mark's case and demanded Toei Animation to view Mark's content as fair use. However, Toei Animation did not decide to do that and instead manually claimed and blocked 150 videos ("We Won sort of"). Thus breaking YouTube's copyright laws. This led to YouTube and Toei Animation getting in contact once again and YouTube demanding a list of videos that are not fair use according to Japanese Law ("We Won sort of"). The list according to Mark consisted of randomly thrown-together videos and had no consistency ("We Won sort of"). One video, for example, was a video about his drawings which was included in the list ("We Won sort of"). Yet, part two of this video was not included ("We Won sort of"). One must ask why Toei Animation is doing this. Since Mark was using clips from the Anime in his reviews, he believes that Toei Animation sees him as re-uploading their shows on YouTube ("We Won sort of"). This back-and-forth ultimately led to this conclusion.

TOTALLYNOTMARK VS TOEI ANIMATION



TOEI ANIMATION

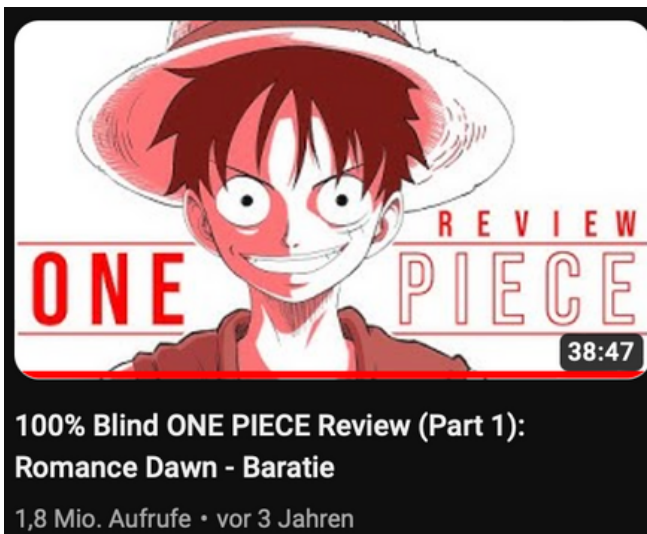
A Happy Ending?

Mark ultimately had his One Piece and Dragon Ball videos back uploaded on his channel, but not entirely. Again referencing Mark's video, YouTube came up with the solution that Mark's One Piece and Dragon Ball shall be blocked in Japan and Japan only. To copyright strike a video a company must consider fair use under a country's copyright law. Meaning if Toei Animation wants to take down Mark's videos in another country, they have to do so under that country's copyright law. Since Mark's videos are fair use in that country the videos can stay on his channel. In conclusion, one could say there is a happy ending to this story... "sort of".

TOTALLYNOTMARK VS TOEI ANIMATION

Editors Note

The relationship between fan-created Paratext and the Anime industry has been rocky for a long time. According to the article “What Can We Learn from Japanese Anime Industries?” the author points out instances when Anime studios pick and choose what they want to copyright strike when it comes to fan-created text (1014). He points out that if a fan-created work is beneficial for the companies themselves, then they would not file a copyright claim (1014). However, companies like to abuse that power, as seen in Mark’s example. The author uses the term “tacit tolerance” for companies who choose what fan-created work to tolerate and what not (1017). This is a rather sad reality but Mark’s story is a reminder that there is hope for fan-created Anime content.



HOW PARATEXTS INFLUENCE REPUTATION OF COMPANIES

In order to gauge the influence Mark's videos had on Toei Animation, the question of whether Mark's videos are paratexts and if so in what way, must be answered first. Gray argues that paratexts, whether made by fans or the industry, help the audience choose what text to consume (26). Furthermore, they categorize paratext into two groups: entryway paratext and media res paratext (Gray 40). Mark's videos about One Piece and Dragon Ball can be put in either of these groups. For fans of the two given franchises, his videos served as a media res paratext, since they "establish themselves around the interpretive perimeter" (Gray 36). His reviews and first impressions on the material covered in the manga give fans, familiar with the source material, new insights and perspectives on characters and their relationships and traits. Mark goes one level deeper with his analysis of the plot and tries to find information about the writers and how they felt during the scenes covered in his review. He often gives background information about the production process behind the arcs of the Anime and Manga, giving fans of the franchise new insights. This process is also covered by Gray who says that paratexts can draw attention to specific characters and relationships (154).

However, Mark's videos can also act as entryway paratext due to Mark, not spoiling the entire happenings of the arcs and does not go into detail on how they happen. As Gray mentioned in the chapter "Spoiled and Mashed Up", spoilers can function to entice an audience into consuming the original text (147). Mark utilizes this in his videos and encourages the audience to also consume the original text. These reviews of popular Anime and Manga led to Mark creating a supportive fan base and getting strong support from other content creators. This support could be seen during the day Mark's videos got taken down. Big-name content creators like penguinz0, PewDiePie, and Joey Bizinger, who are part of one of the most popular Anime podcasts on social media, just to name a few. This support combined with his always supportive fan base led to the reputation of Toei Animation to take a nosedive. In the comments on either the aforementioned videos or the comments under Mark's update video, fans of the series and Mark show displeasure with Toei Animation, which affected the consumption of the original text. Below comments under Mark's update video and PewDiePie's video on this topic can be found, underlining the aforementioned displeasure with Toei Animation. All in all, paratexts can have a significant impact on not just the original text themselves but also on the entities who published the original text.



@Bluedragon-sr2wz vor 2 Jahren

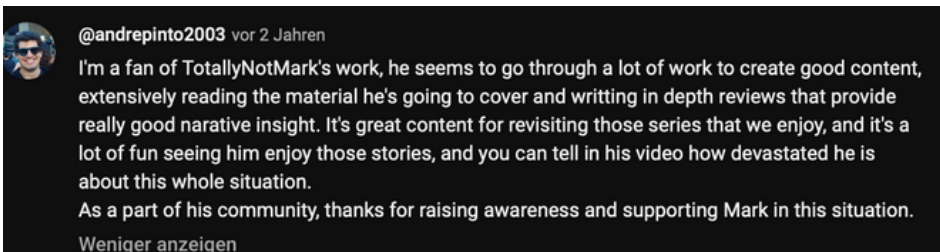
Anime/ distributor seems they don't want anyone to be happy, not the artists, not the writers and definitely not the fan base



11



Antworten



Editors Note:

In my opinion, the mass strikes on TotallyNotMark's videos came as a huge surprise. As a long-time fan of his content, his content seemed of fair use in the eyes of the consumer due to his reviewing style. What might have been an even bigger surprise, is YouTube acting the way they did and protecting Mark in this case. Covering Anime content on YouTube can be very difficult due to the legal hassle. Many Anime reaction/review channels find loopholes to show some clips of the show. All in all, I think the biggest losers here are Toei Animation, whose reputation took a major hit.

HARRY POTTER

Unveiling the Wizarding World



Dive into the enchanting world of Harry Potter like never before! Explore fan reactions on YouTube as we unravel the hidden layers beyond the pages of the beloved series. Hogwarts awaits beyond the books, into the paratextual realm!

Written by: Berkay Kenc



In the enchanting realm of literature, certain narratives transcend the boundaries of printed pages, extending into the collective consciousness of a global audience. One such magical tale that has captivated the hearts and minds of millions is the epic saga of Harry Potter.

Penned by the imaginative quill of J.K. Rowling, the Harry Potter series introduces readers to a world brimming with wonder, wizardry, and a cast of characters that have become cultural icons. From the halls of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry to the perilous quests against dark forces, the journey of the Boy Who Lived has left an indelible mark on generations.

As we embark on this exploration of paratext, the fringe elements that surround and enhance the core narrative, let us delve into the very fabric of Harry Potter's universe. Paratext, in essence, encompasses the peripherals those elements that exist alongside the primary text, offering readers an expanded experience. From cover art and authorial statements to fan fiction and media adaptations, paratext invites us to view literature not as a static entity but as a dynamic, evolving tapestry.

The magic of Harry Potter doesn't merely unfold within the pages of the books; it extends into the vast realm of paratext, where fans and creators alike contribute to the ongoing narrative. Join us on this journey as we navigate the wizarding world, unraveling the threads of paratext that have woven themselves into the very fabric of this beloved tale.

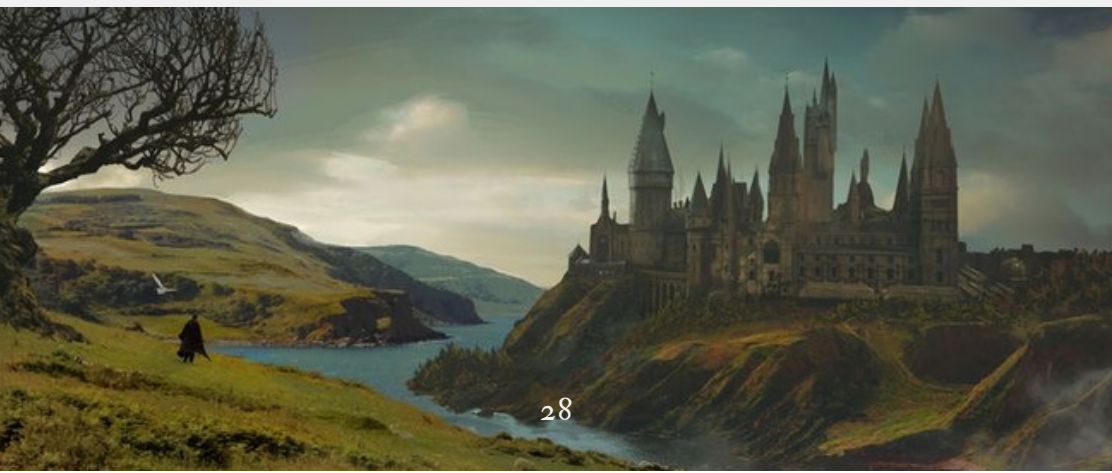
Beyond the parchment and ink, the magical journey of Harry Potter continues to unfold in the digital age. Enter the enchanted realm of YouTube, where fans from every corner of the globe transform their excitement, critiques, and passion into a captivating symphony of reactions. In the virtual corridors of YouTube, three passionate watchers unbox the magic of new editions, navigating through both the spellbinding and the challenging aspects of the narrative. From gasps of surprise to expressions of disappointment, these reactions form a mosaic reflecting the diverse emotional landscape that the Wizarding World evokes for its audience. Whether joyous or critical, these responses collectively contribute to the rich tapestry of fan experiences, showcasing the varied hues of emotions woven into the fabric of the Harry Potter universe. The following opinions are presented in the series of reactions to 8 films made by the Badd Medicine YouTube channel.

Sorcerer's Stone:

The inaugural encounter with the wizarding world was a family affair, hailed as a movie for all ages. The consensus leans toward it being a high-quality children's film, albeit one not destined for repeat viewings by adults. With a rating of 3.75/5, the trio notes the film's valuable lessons for children and the iconic portrayals of beloved characters.

Chamber of Secrets:

As the series progresses, the tone darkens in "Chamber of Secrets." While the quidditch and improved special effects earn praise, a pivotal moment with a young girl's demise adds an eerie touch. Trust in teachers wavers, and the overall rating settles at 3.75/5, maintaining consistency with its predecessor.



Prisoner of Azkaban:

The third installment brings praise, marking it as the best so far with a glowing 4.5/5. The introduction of time manipulation and unexpected plot twists garners acclaim, making it stand out among its predecessors. Excitement for the next installment reverberates among the viewers.

Goblet of Fire:

With Voldemort's resurgence, "Goblet of Fire" earns outstanding ratings of 4.7/5, lauded for its dark and intense narrative. The film's departure from its initial kid-friendly tone is acknowledged, and anticipation builds for the unfolding events in the subsequent chapters.

Order of the Phoenix:

The series evolves into a young adult narrative, kicking everything into high gear with a remarkable 4.85/5. The growth of characters, a massive fight at the end, and the realization that this is no longer a kid's movie contribute to its high praise. The unexpected depth exceeds initial expectations, leaving the viewer eager for more.

Half-Blood Prince:

Intrigue deepens in "Half-Blood Prince," as revelations and losses shape the narrative. Draco's alliance and Dumbledore's demise stir emotions, earning the movie a solid 4.5/5. Despite being slightly overshadowed by its predecessor, the film leaves viewers contemplating the enigma that is Snape.

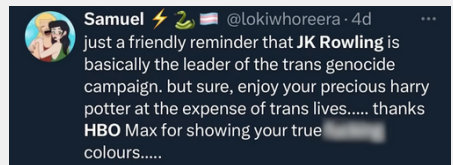
Deathly Hallows - Parts 1 and 2:

The epic conclusion unfolds with intensity and seriousness. Part 1 receives a 4.75/5, setting the stage for a non-happy ending. Part 2, hailed as the best in the series by all three, achieves a perfect 5/5. Themes, storytelling, and Neville's heroic actions culminate in a phenomenal conclusion, leaving viewers in awe of the entire Harry Potter saga.

As the credits roll on the final installment, the cinematic voyage through the Wizarding World remains etched in the hearts of these fans. The reflections on YouTube capture not only the nuances of each film but also the collective emotional journey that binds fans across the globe.

Yet, as we navigate the realms of fan reactions, it's crucial to acknowledge the storm stirring within the Wizarding World's enchanted corridors. The upcoming HBO Max series has ignited not only excitement but also controversy, casting a shadow over the beloved narrative woven by J.K. Rowling. The once-unified fan community now grapples with the divisive opinions surrounding Rowling's controversial stance on transgender issues, a matter that has sparked heated debates and, for some, tarnished the enchantment of the Wizarding World.

As we scrutinize the diverse reactions to the upcoming HBO Max series within the Wizarding World, a multifaceted narrative emerges from the digital discourse. The tweets reflect a spectrum of sentiments, encapsulating both anticipation for fresh narratives and fervent disappointment fueled by J.K. Rowling's controversial statements. The call for new stories is prominent, with a plea to move beyond the familiar tales. This echoes a desire for innovation and originality in storytelling, suggesting a fatigue with the repetition of the same narratives. It unveils an audience eager for expansion and evolution within the Wizarding World rather than a rehashing of the familiar plotlines. However, a stark contrast arises as the tweets unflinchingly address J.K. Rowling's controversial statements. The accusations of homophobia, transphobia, racism, and antisemitism cast a shadow over the excitement for the HBO Max series. The decision to engage with the Wizarding World becomes entangled with the ethical dilemma of supporting content tied to a creator whose beliefs are deemed harmful and exclusionary. The cancellation of subscriptions signifies not just a rejection of a series but a decisive stance against perpetuating an environment that seemingly tolerates bigotry. These actions underscore a growing trend of viewers leveraging their consumption choices to align with values that prioritize inclusivity and respect for marginalized communities. One tweet starkly accuses J.K. Rowling of leading a "trans genocide campaign," drawing a connection between entertainment choices and the potential real-world impact on marginalized lives. This sentiment underscores the power dynamics at play when supporting content associated with creators whose ideologies perpetuate harm. In navigating these nuanced reactions, it becomes evident that the Wizarding World, once a haven of escapism, is now intricately entwined with socio-cultural debates. As fans grapple with their relationship with the series, the tweets highlight the evolving nature of fandom engagement, where the moral compass increasingly guides viewership decisions.



As we conclude this exploration into the paratextual realms of Harry Potter, it's clear that the magic extends beyond the fantastical elements of the narrative. It resides in the hearts of fans who, in their reactions and reflections, shape the evolving narrative of the Wizarding World. The journey, much like the tales of Harry Potter, continues to unfold, not just within the confines of fiction but also in the very real and sometimes turbulent corridors of our socio-cultural landscape.

In closing, let us remember that the Wizarding World is not just a collection of stories; it's a tapestry woven with threads of passion, controversy, and the unwavering spirit of a global community. As we move forward, may the magic endure, transcending the challenges and controversies, and may the Wizarding World continue to be a place where imagination thrives, and the power of storytelling unites us all.

EDITOR'S NOTE

In my opinion, no matter how much controversy it creates on YouTube and Twitter, the magical world of Harry Potter has always been watched a lot and I think it will continue to be watched. Especially the reactions to the series are very harsh, we cannot know if it will not be good. Time will tell us and stay with the magic in the meantime.



SONIC: THE HEDGEHOG

Written by Björn Scholl

The Power of Social Media



A phenomenon from social media, especially YouTube: fans influencing creators decisions.

Nowadays, this also reaches over to the film industry. But what is going on? What led to this change?

A video game character could be the answer.

Sonic the Hedgehog. Who does not know this little blue guy collecting golden rings while he "gotta go fast"? The global hit video game character from the nineties will stick in many millennials' heads as the cult figure of the Sega company. Throughout time, Sonic stood his ground as one of the most influential gaming characters of all time, according to Cork in 2009. This global success led Sega to publish over 100 games, comic books, short films, and over 300 episodes of various animated series featuring Sonic, Tails, Dr. Robotnik, and other characters from the Sonic universe. This led to the next step for Sega and the Hedgehog in red running shoes: movies.



good morning twitter



1:33 PM · Dec 13, 2018

1K Reply Share

Twitter's Response on Sonic's Design

This idea should be realized as a live-action animated film with Jeff Fowler as the director. The official development of the movie started in 2017, according to Bui. However, it was not until the movie's first posters dropped at the end of 2018 that Sonic sparked discussion around the media world. Many fans took their reactions to this poster to social media. The problem many fans had with the well-loved speed runner was his design, especially his legs. Later, as different and contrary designs and posters emerged on the internet, people did not know how to react.

On the one hand, some of the things they saw were met with praise; others were met with even more frustration and confusion. This all culminated when the first trailer aired in April 2019. Here, it was also that the true power of social media was coming into view as many reactions from various social media platforms openly displayed what the fans and the world felt about Paramount Pictures' version of the little speedster.

Several people took their reactions to REACT. Furthermore, they did not hesitate to give their opinions as well. In the video "YouTubers React To Sonic The Hedgehog Trailer And Memes" from May 07, 2019, ten YouTubers display their opinion on what Paramount Pictures has done to Sega's superstar. Interviews and reactions on different social media posts encompass the reactions. What were the reactions, and what show about the influence of mass media consumers?

During the reaction video, many different topics were touched upon and discussed; Sonic's trailer allowed the YouTubers to state their opinions freely. Most comments were obviously made on the design choices and the decisions on shooting, directing, and the storyline. Additionally, the YouTubers had the chance to state their opinion on comparisons to other live-action movies and, most importantly, the power of social media.



The REACT-YouTube channel, formerly known as FBE, is one of the most successful reaction channels with over 20 million subscribers.

1. Design Choices

All the YouTubers definitely had to give their opinions on Sonic's design. Primarily, the design was met with disgust and disappointment. One of the main arguments was that Sonic looks too much human-like. Lauren Riihimaki found the human-like aspect of the hands off-putting. At the same time, Joey Graceffa thought that Sonic's legs were too much for him. Kelsey Impicicche summarized these opinions perfectly: humanizing Sonic makes him look creepy. Another "humanesque" aspect was Sonic's teeth and eyes, as Jirard Khalil and Matt Smith said. The teeth being described as "veneers" by FaZe Rug or commented with "Why is he wearing melted dentures?" by Anthony Padilla shows that nearly everybody seems to dislike his teeth, especially when nobody thinks about teeth when playing a video game like Sonic, as Stevie Levine points out.

Graceffa describes the overall design of Sonic as a furry costume; Chris Klemens says he is "a blue animated creep." For Rogers, it felt as if

"everyone at Paramount went to a ranch and did a bunch of Ayahuasca and came back going, "Eh, that's good enough."

Khalil found a perfect way of describing what everybody seems to feel: Sonic does not need to look realistic, and Sonic, as he was in the cartoons, would be way better, even though Levine disagrees, arguing that Sonic did not look good in the cartoons either. She also thinks the design is not that bad, which Rug agreed upon, so there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

As mentioned before, the design is the reason for the considerable debate on what Sonic should look like and continues what was started with the first movie posters from 2018. While nearly everybody sees the design as creepy, they also do not only voice their opinions on what Sonic looks like but also on what the trailer shows them story-wise.

2. Decisions on Shooting, Directing, and the Storyline

Here is one point everybody seems to agree upon: they love Jim Carrey, and who would disagree? Padilla was also happy about the decision to make references to 90s kids with the song "Gangsta's Paradise" as the soundtrack to the trailer or the lines referencing the Sonic games. The praises, however, end here.



Jim Carrey as Doctor Ivo Robotnik, also known as Dr. Eggman, seems to be the only highlight to the movie for some of the YouTubers

While Padilla was happy with the song, Impicliche questioned why it was used. Even Padilla had some points of critique: he said that some lines of Carrey came off as cringy. In contrast, other lines in the trailer are ethically wrong, e.g., the child abuse joke. Smith and Graceffa were disappointed that the trailer did not show whether the side character Tails is in the movie or not; Graceffa also pointed out that "I don't remember anyone asking for [a Sonic movie]," an argument being shared by Klemens who questions why everything needs a live-action remake as he would rather watch a cartoon movie.

Khalil describes the actions of the trailer as odd and weird; Riihimaki seems to agree with him as she compares the trailer to the Transformers movies. Impicciche and Padilla agree on one other thing: They feel this movie was made for younger children and not for the thought-to-be audience of ninety's kids growing up with Sonic and especially not for Sonic fans. Padilla describes that

"the Sonic trailer makes it very apparent that they're only trying to appeal to children, and it's kind of insulting to anyone's intelligence who actually is a fan of it and wanted to see it. And then they're like, 'Oh, they thought Sonic fans were ten years old.'"

Rug agrees with arguing that the studio did not do what "OG fans would want."

Overall, the decisions made in casting are acceptable to the YouTubers. However, the general direction this trailer leads to is unfitting. The script feels off, and the musical decision is questionable. Lacking side characters from the Sonic universe and the decision to make a live-action movie make the YouTuber doubtful. All these concerns and the questionable design choices are reflected in the comments on the power of social media.

3. The Power of Social Media

As the YouTubers did not only react to the trailer itself but also to the controversies this trailer sparked, it seems also fitting to point out what all these opinions on the trailer can cause. When the video was shot, director Jeff Fowler pointed out that the character would be redesigned.

Fowler's tweet after the outrage on Sonic's design supporting the claims of fans and promising a refurbishment of the title character.



This decision was met with mixed feelings by the YouTubers. Klemens does not understand the choice to redesign as he would have claimed it as the artist's choice and left it the way it was. Rug is afraid that the forced redesign could have felt like a letdown for everybody working on the project; Levine feels terrible that the studio has to redesign in general.

Conversely, Rogers was happy with this decision but also maliciously hoped that Paramount would have to pay much money. Khalil thinks that the redesign gives the studio a chance to redeem itself but fears there is no guarantee that the fans will like the new product. Smith especially liked the decision to remodel the character as this shows that social media's influence is significant considering what happened.

Social media made a change here, and the YouTubers also have different reactions to that. While Khalil sees the danger of the audience becoming the new creator, Rogers and Levine argue the benefits of social media's power. For them, the community on YouTube helped them become the people they are now. Levine said:

"On YouTube, obviously, the comments shape the content, and we always pay attention to what people want and people don't like about the content that we make. And we adapt. So, it's interesting that that's kind of creeping into traditional media in the same way."

Rogers supports this, claiming that the distance between studios and the audience is unknown for YouTubers as they can only grow with the help of the fans.


In general, the YouTubers saw patterns known to them in what was happening to the Sonic movie. For them, it is the interaction with and the criticism by the fans shaping the content and the YouTubers themselves. For them, any form of external influence gives them the power they like about social media. In today's media landscape, it is essential to bring together all components that make the product what it is.

Closing Remarks

The trailer was an industry-created paratext (Gray 143). It was created to allow potential consumers to see whether they liked the product and would watch the movie. However, the interaction of the fans commenting, creating memes, discussing and analyzing, reacting, reproducing, and improving made this paratext more than just an industrially created hook to get in customers; it turned out to be a mash-up of what the industry suggested and the community improved, showing how essential interactions with these communities are. And it worked: the third movie will hit theaters this year. Even though six of the ten YouTubers would not watch the first movie, as they mentioned during the reaction video, they still helped understand what made it possible to shoot the third movie: the power of social media.

Or: to sum it up in the words of Matt Smith:





A PARATEXT'S FINAL WORDS

The age of Social Media has broken down the barrier between the entertainment industry and the audience and fans. Particularly the platform Youtube allows for various paratexts of source materials in video format, such as elaborate story analysis, film critiques and fandom discourse in form of video essays, which allows the critic to go into great detail, contrast scenes, show film clips relevant to the discussion and highlight stylistic choices. Additionally, the comment section beneath a video essay allows for lively discussion and subscribers to add to the discourse. As such Youtube offers a glimpse into the collective mind of fandom in a way only perhaps fan forums can compare, and even those may miss the currentness of hot topics within Social Media platforms with algorithm. Given the reactionary nature of Youtube, channels with big reach can even influence the media landscape. Some video essays may even

more views than the original text ever achieved, or even revive viewership. In this light, the niche of fans criticizing recent adaptations of IPs and franchises, and voicing disappointment in the creative directions film studios are going has gained traction. Some fans have even given up entirely on watching TV show adaptations of beloved franchises, due to the lack of honouring the source material, so for them YouTube critiques have replaced film entertainment.

An extreme illustration of initial hype turning to cathartic rants and fault analysis would be Game of Thrones' fall from grace. In this context, fan created paratexts offer solace for the official letdown felt by so many, and even find sense in the nonsensical.



A PARATEXT'S FINAL WORDS

A similar decline in fannish excitement has befallen Netflix's *The Witcher* show with the difference that vocal disappointment is happening to a currently still on-going show. Thus, well known Youtubers voicing their discontent with the seasons have a real time effect on the show. And the showrunners have reacted, albeit in no acknowledging way, but instead put the blame on the audience instead, and some even on their man star Henry Cavill, who advocated for giving fans benefit of the doubt in their worries, worries he shared. This implies that some studios adapting established IPs have come to take the fans coming with the IP for granted, which explains the lackluster efforts Netflix put into honouring the source material, even risking losing Henry Cavill.

Such aggressive corporate stance towards fans' engagement is no stranger in the anime community as the case totally not mark vs TOEI Animation shows. In this instance a Japanese anime studio was not amused about Youtubers using anime snippets for recreational use, a timely reminder that much of paratextuality operates in legal grey zones. Yet legal complications also highlight that paratext content creators have their own supportive fanbase, who, in their support of independent creators, may even turn against big corporations, thus resulting in tarnished social reputations for the Big players in the industry. It shows that the odds of private opinions vs corporate positions may not be as unbalanced as it seems.



A PARATEXT'S FINAL WORDS

Uneven are also the reactions to the announced Harry Potter TV show. Harry Potter remains a cultural phenomenon, yet one that is still new to some, as some Youtubers specialising in film reaction videos prove, reacting to the Harry Potter films for the first time. Despite the controversy surrounding J.K. Rowling, Warners Brothers speculates on Harry Potter continuing to garner interest, to the point that a reboot in TV show format is deemed profitable. Youtubers show mixed reactions to the news, making it a political case in some, a hopeful one in others, once again illustrating that paratexts may have decisive sway in public opinion.

Last but not least, the newest Sonic the Hedgehog Live action emphasizes the influence of paratexts on the discussed text. Fans were none too impressed by the character's first design published by the

studio, culminating in wild reactions resulting in the studio in retracing their first design, and coming back with a better one. In taking fans' opinions into account, the studio very well may have avoided investing in a box office flop.

Paratextuality then clearly is an emotionally charged medium, one that blurs the line between the industry and the fans. It can be argued that some of the Youtube channels essentially monetize outrage, however, it also becomes obvious that film studios bet on financial losses if they underestimate fannish opinions and the reach popular Youtuber critics have. At the end of the day, what fans value most are quality entertainment to its fullest potential. It is up to Hollywood to deliver. And Youtube critics will remain to give voices to fannish judgement.

LINK TO SOURCES USED AND WORKS CITED:





ALL
ABOUT
PARATEXTS

A Zine created for the LIT501 Fan Studies course by:

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