

USING PARATEXTUALIZATION TO BUILD A
CULTURAL SCHEME OF BRANDS FOR THE
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Abstract

Media product franchises often play the role of brands based on the elaboration of cultural schemes. They use complementary contents to their products' narratives – called paratexts – to keep a long-lasting relationship with their consumers. Thus, the aim of the current study is to investigate how the paratextualization of franchise products of the entertainment industry generates cultural schemes for their brands. To do so, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis was applied to news reports and information published at the official websites of three emblematic entertainment industry franchises: Game of Thrones, Star Wars and Wizarding World. Results have indicated franchises' focus on maintaining and expanding fans' experience with these sagas, evidencing the existence of a cultural scheme to build experiential brands.

Keywords: brands, cultural scheme, entertainment industry, paratexts, Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

1 Introduction

The entertainment industry has been experiencing continuous global growth, which is associated with its multiple cultural resonance ability and economic impact (Moura and de Souza-Leão, 2020; Toubia et al., 2019). Thus, it is not by chance that consumers often take ownership and resignify marketing contents produced by the entertainment industry (Argo et al., 2008; Hackley et al., 2018). Several products generated by this industry (e.g., books, movies, TV series, sports, music, among others) are often expanded and spread in multiple media (e.g., cinema, television, websites, among others) and forms (e.g., festivals, events) (Feiereisen et al., 2020; Koku, 1995). Such a process promotes symbiosis among entertainment, media and brands associated with this market (Hudson and Hudson, 2006).

Entertainment producers find it productive to expand their media texts' narratives by taking into consideration several marketing agents who actively work in this segment. It is the case of incorporating cocreated contents to their consumers' interactions, when they publicly express their interest in helping to develop products consumed by them (Baker and Schak, 2019; Cronin, 2016). When it comes to entertainment franchises producing in several media, this interest can be accessed by brand managers who have engaged in fan interactions by playing the role of proactive consumers (Costa and Leão, 2017; Sugihartati, 2020).

According to O'Reilly (2005), franchises linked to resonant media products in the entertainment industry play the role of cultural brands, a fact that refers to a symbolic perspective of brand consumption (Klein, 2000; Keller and Lehmann, 2008). Branding, in its turn, has recurrently channeled its strategic efforts by elaborating cultural schemes (Fournier and Alvarez, 2019; Navis and Glynn, 2010) that are historical-nature processes used to signify brands based on the relationship between their products and consumption contexts (Fournier and Alvarez, 2019; Navis and Glynn, 2010). According to these processes, brands acknowledge that consumers tend to feel encouraged to consume products that can be cocreated by them (Cova and Dall'Aglio, 2009; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Thus, brands' communication incorporates a whole variety of meanings produced from their interactions with consumers (Batra, 2019).

According to Hills (2018), entertainment industry brands often produce complementary contents capable of stimulating consumers' reaction and production ability. It happens in the production of audiovisual contents with worldwide audience; these contents transcend material barriers (e.g., linguistic barriers) through adaptive elements capable of meeting the interests of any target audience they might reach (Cruz et al., 2019; Mbou-djeke, 2016). Such an adaptation is part of a broader movement towards expanding contents through complementary texts (Hackley and Hackley, 2020; Hills, 2015) that are treated as paratexts at the entertainment industry scope (Gray, 2010). The production and promotion of this text type is featured as marketing communication strategy used to set a more effective consumption relationship with consumers (Hills, 2015), since these texts tend to enhance the scope of branded products and to enable continuing interaction among its fans (Aronczyk, 2017; Cruz et al., 2019).

In light of the foregoing, the aim of the current study was to investigate how the paratextualization of entertainment industry franchise productions enables a cultural scheme for its brands. In order to do so, three of the most emblematic entertainment industry media franchises were investigated, namely: Game of Thrones (GoT), Star Wars (SW) and Wizarding World (WW). The analyzed paratexts comprised news reports and information about products belonging to these brands (e.g., movies, TV series, books, games, among others), which were published at their official websites.

The current study is justified by three relevant aspects. Firstly, it addresses an emerging branding perspective, which is aligned to the cultural logic of consumption (Aspara et al., 2014; Ng, 2017). In addition, it brings along an innovative marketing research approach to this perspective, which is based on the paratextualization theory (Cruz et al., 2019; Sugihartarti, 2020). Finally, it leans on one of the fastest-growing industries in recent decades (e.g., 2000s, 2010s) (Feiereisen et al., 2020; Hackley and Hackley, 2019).

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Entertainment Industry

The entertainment industry has been significantly investigated in marketing studies (Argo et al., 2008; Feiereisen et al., 2020; Hackley and Hackley, 2019; Toubia et al., 2019). It is featured by management processes focused on the interaction between its economic impact, and cultural and symbolic repercussions (Hackley and Tiwsakul, 2006; Koku, 1995); thus, it is not clearly aligned to strategic approaches mostly typical of the marketing field (Jenkins, 2008; Kozinets, 2001). There is the understanding that its audience can be better understood based on the metaphor that the marketing field offers several elements (e.g., spaces, scenarios, sets, plot devices, dramatic incidents, cinematic technologies, props, story-lines, characters and dramatic narratives) through which consumers can give meaning to their consumption relationship (Argo et al., 2008; Hackley et al., 2018).

According to Toubia et al. (2019), approaches used to expand the range of massively mediated entertainment products are often classified into three types, namely: collaborative approach, which takes into consideration consumers' actions based on their behavior between pairs and towards the media gathering them; content approach, which aims at investigating the direct reception of, and inferences about, what was consumed; and the hybrid approach, which combines the previous two approaches to map consumers' reaction to, and extrapolated consumption of, the media entertaining them. Cinematographic and television productions stand out among entertainment segments at the time to adopt these elements, since they are capable of elaborating, transmediating and popularizing fictional universes among pop culture consumers (Baker and Schak, 2019; Cronin, 2016; Feiereisen et al., 2020). It is the case of GoT, WW and SW, which are three of the most successful franchises of both the entertainment industry and pop culture, since they established several consumption forms through their transmediation processes (Ferrandiz, 2019; Javanshir et al., 2020; Murphy, 2017; Proctor, 2018).

More and more, these productions reflect impacts at global level, rather than just economic impacts (Crane, 2014), since they also encourage political and cultural discussions (Martin Jr., 2019; Press and Liebes, 2016). According to Schatz (2011), this process is a two-way road, since it is influenced by globalization, as well as by the convergence of consumer markets in order to adapt to potential audience expansions.

2.2 Brands' Cultural Scheme

Consumers increasingly avoid what they see as stimulated experiences to prioritize the authentic ones, since they allow them to experience some cocreation level (Cova and Dalli, 2009; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Nevertheless, brands always try to reinvent ways of differentiating their

products (Hemsley-Brown et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2018). Thus, scholars' interest in the cultural logic of consumption has increased in the last two decades and it opened room for a symbolic perspective in studies about brands (Batra, 2019; Fer-nández-Cavia et al., 2018; Fournier and Alvarez, 2019; Price and Coulter, 2019) that focus on investigating how values and meanings attributed to brands can be built from stories, inheritances and social narratives (Centeno and Wang, 2017; Schroeder et al., 2017).

This approach is in line with the Cultural Branding proposal developed by Holt (2004; 2016), according to whom, brands have the potential to become iconic by incorporating, expanding and spreading cultural ideologies and features of societies they belong to. Thus, cultural contexts enable several brand development possibilities (Rossolatos, 2018; Testa et al., 2017). However, it is not a total organization control process, since it requires the co-authorship of multiple audiences that a given brand relates to (Holt, 2004; 2016). Thus, brands are capable of both influencing the cultural context they are inserted in (Schroeder, 2009; 2017) and of being transformed by interpretations and interactions assimilated by them, when they are consumed by different audiences (Ng, 2017; Ramaswamy and Ozcan, 2016).

Meanings are increasingly mixed in the market interaction context (Kelly et al., 2005; Kozinets, 2001), since producers and consumers assume transitory and fluid functions (Cova and Dalli, 2009). According to Humphreys and Latour (2013), interactions between consumers and brand managers are often collaborative, and it enables redefining the cultural value of brands over time, based on the propagation of new consumption experiences associated with them.

By assuming that consumers take on the role of brand-meaning co-creators (Aspara et al., 2014; Healy and McDonagh, 2013), brand managers adopt a cultural scheme resulting from a historical process, according to which, products and consumption contexts give meaning to brands (Fournier and Alvarez, 2019; Navis and Glynn, 2010). Producing a cultural scheme for brands presupposes integrating the signs captured in consumer interactions into marketing communication (Arvidsson, 2006; Cova and Dalli, 2009). This process enables reasoning about different meanings produced in interactions between consumers and brands (Batra, 2019; Laroche et al., 2013). Thus, brands encourage meaning production by consumers, so they – themselves – can promote what they mean (Habibi et al., 2014).

If marketing communication has traditionally relied on mass media (Arnould and Thompson, 2005), most recently, digital media have gained prominent role in this environment (Dua, 2017). Digital platforms exponentially expand the likelihood of interaction between brands and consumers, by enhancing the co-production of meanings associated with different contexts brands are consumed in (Batra, 2019; Laroche et al., 2013) and, simultaneously, by encouraging transformations in the communicative process produce by them (Cronin, 2016; Schembri and Latimer, 2016).

2.3 Paratexts seen as consumer experience expansion

If one takes into consideration that contents produced by marketing communication are, ultimately, texts to be accessed by consumers, complementary marketing content can be understood as paratexts (Hackley and Hackley, 2020) that are capable of influencing both the choice of what to consume and the very way consumption is performed (Hackley and Hackley, 2019; Fathallah, 2016). Thus, paratexts play important role in media products' supplying and consumption by creating expectations, helping individuals to better understand them, contributing to their fruition and by enabling meaning negotiations, among others (Gray, 2010).

The term was initially used to designate contents used to help better understanding literary works, either by presenting them or by contextualizing, or adding meaning to, the main content (Genette, 1997; Genette; Maclean, 1991). Gray (2010) was the one who expanded the application of the concept of paratexts to media products, since the enjoyment of these products is often completed by texts about them (e.g., advertisements, trailers, specialized reviews and fan theories). Such an application classifies paratexts into two different types, namely: input paratexts, which refer to contents consumed even before consumers have contact with the main text (i.e., the product), a fact that prepares them to enjoy it (e.g., information about releases, teasers, trailers); and media res, which are contents accessed during, or after,

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consumption itself and that contribute to the consumption experience itself or to its evaluation (e.g., post-credit scenes in movies, re-percussion in the media, fan comments).

Consumers' relationship with paratexts completes the reception and interpretation of media products, as well as encourages interactions and resonances about them (Hills, 2015). It is done by allowing consumers to take ownership of, and produce new meanings about, them (Hills and Garde-Hansen, 2017), and about paratexts themselves (Cruz et al., 2019, Fuschillo, 2020). Therefore, one can see paratexts as contents capable of helping to better understand and elaborate meanings that enable the cultural scheme of massively marketed media texts. Thus, on the one hand, paratexts are relevant for brands, since they enhance the reach of their products; on the other hand, they allow consumers to have continued and improved experiences with brands they are fans of (Aronczyk, 2017; Cruz et al., 2019).

The paratextualization performed by the entertainment industry provides greater extension and circulation of its products, a fact that reinforces their importance and attributes new meanings to consumption (Gray, 2010; Steiner, 2015). Emblematic pop culture brands both expand their product portfolio (e.g., movies, games, theme parks) and promote them through content production in multiple platforms (e.g., websites, social media, mobile devices). This process is essential to help better understanding how the process to expand individuals' original content-consumption experience became popular (Fathallah, 2016; Hills, 2015). According to this perspective, brands assume their audience's interest in consuming their products and contents through different experiences, by moving among different media platforms (Hackley and Hackley, 2019).

Consumers' interest in being an active part of consumer interactions in multiple platforms and cultural contexts is defined by Jenkins (2013; 2014) as one of the features to experience a media convergence process in the participatory culture context. This phenomenon explains the reason why consumers increasingly look for contents about products and brands in different media (Baker and Schak, 2019; Kim, 2019), in a dynamic and proactive manner (Javanshir et al., 2020). Paratexts' insertion in interactions between consumers and media products makes them act in different meaning construction layers, by assuming discursive functions (Mittel, 2015; Steiner, 2015). Thus, paratexts work as fundamental content to spread and maintain discursive productions capable of expressing different positions about new productions by the entertainment industry (Mittel, 2015; Scott, 2017).

3 Methodology

If one takes into consideration that the cultural scheme produced by brands is associated with the discursive dimension of consumption (Ng, 2017), paratexts play the role of producing or maintaining media products' discourses (Mittel, 2015; Steiner, 2015). Therefore, the current study has analyzed this content based on the Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) method, which focuses on investigating the regularity of discourses produced within a given context.

3.1 Data collect

The dataset of an FDA - called file - is defined by a certain discursive event, which refers to the time interval when a certain event takes place (Foucault, 2014). Table 1 presents information about the construction of the current research file

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Table 1. Research file

Website	Collected posts	Number
Game of Thrones		
Making Game of Thrones is the official HBO website created to publish and promote GoT-related news or contents.	Posts started in July 2010, at the time the first season was being shot, and followed the series until July 2019, when updates were finished after the website reported the repercussions of the series' last season. All news published in that period were collected.	681
Star Wars		
The official website that bears the name of the franchise itself brings together news reports about its several productions, as well as exclusive contents.	We collected all the news reports published from October 2012 to April 2021; this period-of-time comprised the announcement of new productions in the franchise after the acquisition of Lucasfilm by Disney, until the repercussions of the release of the last movie in the new trilogy.	1,694
Wizarding World		
The Pottermore website was launched by author JK Rowling in September 2015 in order to introduce additional contents about the Harry Potter saga. It was renamed and reconfigured, in association with Warner Bros, after the franchise was expanded and rebranded.	The website keeps publishing news reports about several actions associated with the franchise expansion process. All news published since its launching until March 2021, when the data collection stage was completed, were collected.	592

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Game of Thrones (GoT) is the name of the TV adaptation produced by HBO, based on the series of books called “A Song of Ice and Fire” (ASOIAF), by George RR Martin (GRRM), which have been published since 1996 (MacNeill, 2017; Rappas, 2019). The series broke records both in investments and awards granted to TV productions (Maas, 2019). Its cultural impact has even boosted tourist, culinary and

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cultural activities (McElroy and Noonan, 2019; Ramsey, Baker and Porter, 2019), as well as political articulations and reflections (Young, 2014).

Star Wars (SW) is a fictional universe originally created as a movie franchise by filmmaker George Lucas; its first movie was released in 1977 (Taylor, 2014). The franchise has expanded to a diverse product portfolio (e.g., books, games, comics, TV series) and became one of the most profitable franchises in history (Benson, 2020). The saga turned into a cultural icon, whose impact is identifiable in the social and political spheres, as well as in several references in other media products. In addition, its longevity enabled it to attract fans from different generations (Hills, 2003; Wood et al., 2020).

Wizards World (WW) was the name given to the expansion of the fictional universe deriving from the books of the Harry Potter saga. The first book was released in 1997, by British writer J. K. Rowling, and its movie adaptation became one of the biggest hits in recent decades (Costa and Leão, 2017; Waysdorf and Reijnders, 2018). The books in the saga were translated into more than 60 languages and their movies were successfully released over 14 years (Archer, 2015). The high involvement and proactive behavior of their fans - called Potterheads - were the main factor accounting for the franchise expansion (Waysdorf and Reijnders, 2018).

3.2 Data analysis

The Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) method enables identifying discursive formations based on statements found in the analyzed data. These statements, in their turn, take on certain functions associated with rules capable of substantiating discursive formations (Foucault, 2014). Table 2 presents definitions of these analytical categories. The analysis refers to the process to build bundles of relationships among all four categories. Most specifically, the association between enunciative functions and formation rules is based on four analogous criteria (see Table 3).

Table 2. FDA's analytical categories

Analytical category	Description
Statements	Statements correspond to basic discourse units that can be identified in the text and data context. They represent how discursive practices found in the file coexist in a certain space and time.
Enunciative functions	Statements play a certain role in discourse; thus, enunciative functions are related to how statements form the discourse. Therefore, the same statement can perform more than one function, just as the same enunciative function can refer to different statements.
Formation rules	Formation rules reflect how statements' performativity indicate regularities that rule discursive practices; consequently, they highlight the foundations setting the necessary conditions for discursive formations to emerge.
Discursive formations	Discursive formations refer to discourses evidenced in a certain file, which are delimited in a certain time and space, based on the regularities of their statements.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

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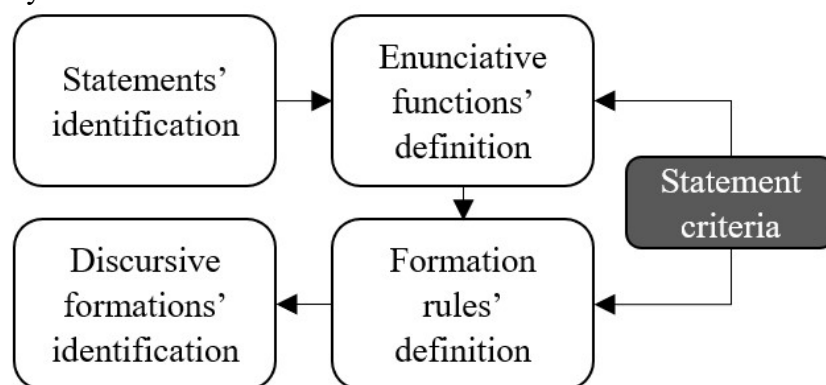
Table 3. Criteria constituting enunciative functions and formation rules

Enunciative functions	Description	Description	Formation rules
Referential	It concerns the subjects and topics established in statements.	They derive from boundaries and specificities observed in references.	Object
Associated Field	It refers to knowledge fields used to substantiate statements.	They concern concepts arising from the associated fields.	Concept
Subject	It identifies the position based on which statements are uttered.	They evoke the ways speeches are delivered by subjects.	Modality
Materiality	It corresponds to the way statements are produced.	They are the purposes set by discourse materialities.	Strategy

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In analytical terms, FDA’s works in a stage scheme (see Fig. 1). Statements are inferred from a given file, based on a typical qualitative research codification process, which assumes a pragmatic perspective that, in its turn, takes discourse as practice, based on the Foucauldian concept of statement (stage 1). These statements can relate to each other, either in a complementary way (syn-chronous relationships) or by depending on one another (incident relationships). Enunciative function criteria are inferred from statements (stage 2). The combination of these criteria defines the enunciative functions themselves and how they relate to statements (stage 3). Within this very same logic, criteria applied to formation rules are inferred by analogy to those of the enunciative functions (stage 3). This process enables defining formation rules, as well as associations between these two categories, through a syntagmatic link between the analogous criteria of enunciative functions and formation rules (stage 4). Finally, the link among these three categories enables identifying discursive formations as resulting from the established bundles (stage 5).

Figure 1. FDA’s analytical scheme



Source: Elaborated by the authors, based in Foucault

4 Results

The current analysis enabled identifying a discursive formation composed of 2 formation rules, 4 enunciative functions and 20 statements. The next subsections focus on the aforementioned formation rules in order to describe the analysis; they use data strata extracted from the research file - one example of each franchise for each rule – to present the analytical procedure, as well as mention analysis categories (in bold) and criteria applied to formation rules and enunciative functions (in

italics). The subsequent section, in its turn, presents the theoretical reflection about the herein identified discursive formation.

It is worth pointing out that, since the herein analyzed texts were produced by the official websites of the investigated franchises, the prevalent position inferred in the analyzed statements (subject) is that of the brand itself. However, publications occasionally evoke the voices of other agents they are related to, and it enables identifying other subjects who – whenever evoked – reinforce multiple articulations established in the paratextualization of the analyzed brands.

4.1 Keeping the saga

The first formation rule identified in the current study reflects how contents produced at analyzed websites aim at maintaining the saga (FR1). On the one hand, it corresponds to the perspective, according to which, the production and promotion of information about the fictional universe can complete the narratives established in the original media. On the other hand, it indicates the growing interest of organizations in associating elements of new productions about the saga with contemporary sociocultural demands.

It is a regiment, according to which, fan culture (concept) forces managers of these brand to fight for their reputation (strategy) by acting focused on expanding the media object and on its resonance in social causes. Thus, there are two syntagmatic relationships that point towards two enunciative functions associated with this rule. On the one hand, the canon (object) established in previous productions is referenced to ensure (modality) the quality of future productions. On the other hand, reality (object) is seen as means to involve (modality) the saga with its audience. These syntagmatic paths explain the articulation between this rule and two enunciative functions.

The first enunciative function addresses the process to canonize novelties in the saga (EF1). It indicates the effort to present details about recent productions, which can be assimilated or aligned to the quality of the previous ones. These details expand the narrative of the fictional universe and take into consideration sociocultural demands of the context they are produced in (i.e., interest in having greater political representativeness in the entertainment industry).

According to the aforementioned action, the brand (subject) expresses pride (materiality) for conveying aspects of, and novelties about, the productions (referential) and social causes (referential) promoted by it. This aspect reinforces how continuity and social life (associated fields), respectively, allow the saga to gain resonance.

The other enunciative function indicates the connection between franchises and social causes (EF2). When franchises' websites post reports from their collaborators and fans, about the importance of the fictional universe they are connected to, they aim at highlighting their positions towards social causes that go beyond the relationship with the saga. Collaborators find the way the franchise supports them and their engagement or participation in political and social movements essential. As for fans, although it is a fictional universe, it is unique that the franchise addresses political and social topics seen as source of conflicts and failures in contemporary society.

Both possibilities reflect how this enunciative action of the brand (subject) focuses, simultaneously, on social causes (referential) that their collaborators support or are part of, and on productions (referential) considered representative for its fans. Both cases evoke the attachment (materiality) among different individuals who associate the saga with social life (associated field).

The analyzed statements enabled seeing that the saga is assumed as consolidated in pop culture (S01), given its resonance in this segment over the years – whether as entertainment product, or because of its emblematic and renowned fandom. No wonder, the next statement deals exactly with its audience, since the saga inspires its fans (S02) to glorify the intense – and often long-term – relationship they nurture with the fictional universe. Therefore, it is synchronous both to the previous statement (S01) and to the two next ones (S03 and S04), which are also synchronous to each other. They indicate that the saga is capable of promoting social causes (S03) and, similarly, that its recent construction was successfully carried out (S04). One refers to brands' engagement in movements aimed at minimizing social issues; the

other acknowledges that the new productions gained recognition from the public (i.e., record audience) or from specialized critics (i.e., awards' nominations and winnings). All four statements were observed in the three analyzed franchises.

This enunciative function – canonizing novelties in the saga (EF1) – has also recorded exclusive statements among the analyzed franchises. With respect to WW and SW, two statements also give substance to the glorification of their novelties: the way spoilers are preserved (S05), despite the demand for continuing the franchise (S06). The first one explains (focuses on) the understanding that the saga has been successfully expanded (S04), by assuming that new productions still manage to surprise their fans, despite the large amount of official promotional content for the movies (i.e., trailers, teasers). The following statement (S06) is influenced by the two previous ones, since it advocates those brands meet fans' desire to successfully expand the franchise (S04) by preserving new productions (S05). From another perspective – exclusively to WW –, the website addresses how the narrative generates identification in its audience (S07), by taking into consideration the resonance of topics addressed in the fictional narratives and their importance for fans' lives (e.g., assuming sexuality, fight against bullying). This factor enables fans to identify themselves with events and difficulties experienced by, or features of, WW characters. This aspect is synchronous with the fictional universe's ability to promote social causes (S03).

On the other hand, statements substantiating another herein observed enunciative function – connecting the franchise to social causes (EF2) – emerge from this synchronous relationship – S03 and S07. In this case, the one addressing the identification generated among its audience (S07) can also be explained by (it is influenced from) another statement, and it indicates that the fictional universe addresses topics belonging to the real world (S08). Such a perspective – which is also exclusive to WW – reveals how a fictional saga – comprising magic and witchcraft – appears to have the social and emotional issues experienced by its characters as the main appeal among its fans and collaborators. It is not by chance that this statement also helps explaining (focuses on) how the saga reflects political topics (S09) – as observed in WW and SW – by bringing up non-fictional political discussions (i.e., racism, misogyny, intolerance, sustainability).

“We're working on something we love,” says Cursed Child set designer Christine Jones

Award-winning set designer Christine Jones talks about some of the fantastic spectacles in store for audiences of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child Parts One and Two. (...)

Today we take a closer look at the imaginative and unique set design of the play, as shaped by Tony Award-winning set designer Christine Jones.

Christine admitted the task of taking on something as huge as the eighth Harry Potter story was very emotional, especially when seeing the vast set coming together.

‘I was overwhelmed,’ Christine told us. ‘I didn't expect to get as emotional as I did. But I think we all have been working on this for over a year and just have so much invested in it.’ ‘There's just this feeling that we're working with people we love, on something we love, for people we love. And there's a lot of emotions that have become buried within the fabric on the making of this.’ (...)

In a new video from the Cursed Child production team, we see more of the imaginative designs bringing the play to life. The details both onstage and off are brimming with Hogwarts history. Take a look: (...)

Although the video only gives us blink-and-you'll-miss-them glimpses, Christine's creations already look exceptionally beautiful. See what other little tidbits you can spot.” (Source: available at <https://www.wizardingworld.com/news/cursed-child-set-design-christine-jones-interview>).

According to the news report published on July 8th, 2016, WW showed details about the – at that time “future” – play The Cursed Child and about the continuation of Harry Potter's adventures. In addition to keeping the saga (FR1), it praises both the franchise's productions (EF1) and the way the brand has social representativeness (EF2). The first enunciative action stands out when the award-winning set designer, Christine Jones, reflects on her responsibility to meet the demand for continuity in the saga (S06), which is so emblematic for pop culture (S01). The second enunciative action is observed in the

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way professionals focus on meeting expectations about inserting in the production the same feeling (i.e., love) that generates identification in the fandom (S07) and that is such a recurrent topic in the real world (S08).

“JOIN THE GOT CAST IN SUPPORT OF THE WORLD’S REFUGEES

When *Game of Thrones* premiered in 2011, the war in Syria was just beginning. Now, according to the International Rescue Committee, nearly 1 million people per month are being forced to flee their homes due to the fallout from the Syrian civil war – not to mention the 60 million refugees displaced throughout the world due to conflict and natural disaster. In the face of these devastating statistics, the cast of *Game of Thrones* is taking a stand – and you can too.

Rescue Has No Boundaries stresses the time is now to aid refugees, no matter where they are in the world. The movement is led by Lena Headey, who plays Cersei Lannister. ‘As a parent, I cannot imagine the fear and sadness of having to leave your home, everything you worked for, the safety and routine that you had set up for your kids, to be separated from your community and end up in a new country with nothing... all because of man’s ill will and greed,’ Headey told HBO.com. ‘I’m so happy to be able to support the IRC and I hope everyone who can will donate and help us to make life a little brighter for those who need it. ‘How can you make a difference?’ ‘Cash always helps,’ Headey notes. ‘Fans can also bid for tickets to the premiere where they will see all of us probably being ridiculous.’

The lucky winner will get a bonus prize: an early screening of the Season 6 premiere episode. Headey predicts the night will be ‘worth some ferocious bidding!’ To learn more about how you can make a difference – and win a trip to the Season 6 *Game of Thrones* Premiere in Los Angeles, visit Rescue.org/GameofThrones. Join the conversation using #RealmToTheRescue”. (Source: available at <https://www.makinggameofthrones.com/production-diary/got-cast-support-refugees>)

On the other hand, according to the news report published on March 17th, 2016, the GoT website showed an example of action focused on keeping the saga (FR1) when it disclosed the names of cast members who were engaged in the cause of Syrian refugees and announced a charity campaign in partnership with the international rescue committee called “Rescue Has No Boundaries”. Thus, the franchise engages in this social cause (EF2) through its collaborators; therefore, by creating a campaign to influence fans to help this movement, the brand also shows its ability to encourage engagement in social causes (S03).

“NEW STAR WARS MOVIES ANNOUNCED AS DISNEY ENTERS AGREEMENT TO ACQUIRE LUCASFILM LTD.

An exciting new future featuring the continuation of the Star Wars movie saga was announced on October 30, as the Walt Disney Company enters an agreement to acquire Lucasfilm Ltd. from George Lucas. Backed by the global reach and brand stewardship strengths of Disney, the future of Star Wars is now under the direction of acclaimed film producer and studio executive Kathleen Kennedy, co-chairman of Lucasfilm. Kennedy and Disney plan a slate of new Star Wars feature films, beginning with the long-awaited *Star Wars: Episode VII*, targeted for release in 2015, followed by Episodes VIII and IX. Additional feature films are expected to continue the saga and grow the franchise well into the future.

‘For the past 35 years, one of my greatest pleasures has been to see Star Wars passed from one generation to the next,’ said George Lucas. ‘It’s now time for me to pass Star Wars on to a new generation of filmmakers. I’ve always believed that Star Wars could live beyond me, and I thought it was important to set up the transition during my lifetime. I’m confident that with Lucasfilm under the leadership of Kathleen Kennedy, and having a new home within the Disney organization, Star Wars will certainly live on and flourish for many generations to come. Disney’s strength gives Lucasfilm the opportunity to blaze new trails in film, television, interactive media, theme parks, live entertainment, and consumer products.’

(...) Kathleen Kennedy, current co-chairman of Lucasfilm, will become president of Lucasfilm, reporting to Walt Disney Studios Chairman Alan Horn. Additionally she will serve as the brand manager for Star Wars, working directly with Disney’s global lines of business to build, further integrate, and

maximize the value of this global franchise. Kennedy will serve as executive producer on new Star Wars feature films, with George Lucas serving as creative consultant.” (Source: available at <http://www.starwars.com/news/new-star-wars-movies-announced-as-disney-enters-agreement-to-acquire-lucasfilm-ltd>)

Finally, SW actions aimed at promoting the maintenance of the saga (FR1) can be exemplified through the news report from October 30th, 2012, which announced its continuation through the release of new movies. The news report highlighted that acclaimed producer and executive Kathleen Kennedy would be at the forefront of new franchise projects following Lucasfilm acquisition by Disney. Thus, it is possible seeing Disney’s concern to ensure that the new features of the saga are representative of its canon (EF1), since the company is interested in keeping it relevant and consolidated in pop culture (S01).

4.2 Saga’s commodification

The second formation rule observed in the current study reflects the saga’s commodification (FR2), which promotes new ways for the public to consume the fictional universe, which are not limited to the original productions. The aim is to establish ways for the audience to be able to relate to, and experience, the fictional universe in different manners, namely: by launching new massively mediated productions (i.e., movies or series), as well as through additional products and production elements associated with the saga.

According to the organization, to ensure (modality) the importance of the saga among its consumers, it is necessary attesting to its marketing reputation (strategy). Therefore, they indicate how the canon (object) and its expansion help building the legacy (concept) of the fictional universe. Likewise, there is diversification (object) of products and services associated with the saga through the interactivity (concept) engaging its consumers. Each object-concept syntagmatic relations points toward the existence of two enunciative functions linked to FR2.

The first enunciative function indicates the act of guaranteeing quality in the franchise expansion process (EF3). It shows the way websites explore advertisements about new productions in order to emphasize how the expansion of the saga lives up to its original quality. In order to do so, these websites evoke the role of renowned professionals – famous actors/actresses and authors – and the likelihood of having new contents reaching a new audience. Their focus lies on productions (referential) substantiated by the marketing (associated field) ability of the fictional universe. Their purpose, then, is to guarantee (materiality) quality in the expansion of the saga. In addition to taking into consideration the role played by the brand (subject) in this effort, they also evoke the favorable position of authors (subject) of the original literary works towards the new contents.

The other enunciative function reflects the promotion of other products associated with the franchise (EF4). It concerns the effort made to enable consumers to discover additional products associated with the fictional universe. In order to do so, the websites post positive reports from different professionals and publicize new markets or ways to consume the franchise.

This function is based on the perspective that the saga is closely related to its marketing (associated field), which allows the commodification (materiality) of several aspects and elements of the fictional universe represented by it. Accordingly, these websites not only show how brands (subject) highlight the resonance of the franchise’s productions (referential), but also that stakeholders (subject) play fundamental role in promoting (referential) new ways of consuming the saga.

The first statement of this rule points out that new productions were successfully built (S04); this statement has incidence on the other five statements. One of them refers to how the franchise has geographically expanded the saga (S10), as it was not limited to previous locations (GoT was also shot in other European countries such as Croatia, Spain and Iceland), or to productions focused on the culture that gave rise to the saga – with respect to WW, it is worth highlighting the play called “The Cursed Child”, which premiered in New York, and the presentation of schools of magic all over the world, rather than just in Europe or in the United Kingdom. Two other statements, which are synchronous with each

other, refer to how renowned artists who joined the saga (S11), and who were able to maintain the quality of previous productions (S12), were highlighted by all three websites. Such aspects reinforce the fact that having a cast acknowledged in the entertainment industry is the type of novelty capable of legitimizing future productions in the segment. The next statement indicates how WW and SW articulated the holding of thematic events (S13), either face-to-face or in virtual environments, to detail contents and to boost the resonance of new productions. In addition, the websites highlighted how the new GoT and WW productions presented abstract details from the books (S14), since they materialized features of the original work with an accuracy worthy of praise from both the fans and professionals involved in it (e.g., developing the fictional language dothraki; introducing the fantastic creatures of the wizarding world). This aspect even indicates (concerns) information that new productions were endorsed by the author(s) of the saga (S15): George Martin himself was the GoT series' producer and indicated how it reflected his ideas for the fictional universe in a different media and approach. As for WW, J.K. Rowling was the screenwriter and producer of new movies belonging to the fictional universe; finally, George Lucas has endorsed Kathleen Kennedy's management and recent expansion of the SW saga. This factor explains (concerns) how understanding that the saga's portfolio can be diversified (S16) provides the public with several ways to consume the saga (e.g., clothing, games, decorative objects, visiting thematic tourist spots), since all websites disclose that the narrative of their respective fictional universes is not limited to the two main media (i.e., books and TV series/movies). On the one hand, this statement is synchronous with the emphasis given to professionals' report on the saga (S17) since, based on their credibility with the public, they can convey theories, experiences and funny stories among the cast, producers and authors. On the other hand, it concerns two other statements addressing WW and SW expansion to new media types: the saga enables ways to consume recent productions (S18) and adapts itself to innovative consumption forms (S19). These efforts were made to respond to contextual changes or market trends, such as by asking fans to stay home and consume their products during the COVID-19 pandemic – between 2020 and 2021 – or by promoting virtual campaigns to engage this audience in social networks. Finally, the last statement explains how recent SW productions attracted a new generation of fans (S20). Emphasis mainly lies on children's productions (e.g., Lego Star Wars) and on the growing interest of an audience that may know the original productions.

“LEECHES, DRAGONS AND A BEAR: BEHIND THE SCENES OF EPISODES 307 AND 308

One of the things that I'm always amazed by when I watch the show is how easy it is to forget the amount of work that goes into creating each set. (...) The scroll Talisa is writing was actually written in the Valyrian language, translated by our wonderful language creator, David J. Peterson. In the same way that so many departments are involved in a short scene, many locations are often used to tell a single storyline. By now you will have seen the spectacular Ice Wall climb in Episode 306 and so much of Iceland's stunning scenery in the wildlings' approach to it. But by the time we see Orell and Ygritte in the woods, we are back in Toome, Northern Ireland. The scene was filmed back in September, six weeks before we went north of the Wall.

Daenerys' journey took the Wolf Crew all over Europe too, with many of her biggest scenes (the Unsullied Army, the Walk of Punishment) taking place across Morocco and Croatia. (...)” (Source: available at <http://www.makinggameofthrones.com/production-diary/2013/5/29/leeches-dragons-and-a-bear-behind-the-scenes-of-episodes-307.html>)

The news report posted at the Making Game of Thrones website, on May 29th, 2013, exemplifies the saga's commodification (FR2), which guaranteed the quality of the franchise expansion process (EF3) by disclosing processes showing production's efforts in each scene. By revealing that the parchment that appeared in the series was actually written in Valyrian – a fictional language created for the GoT universe –, the brand showed care in maintaining and developing details observed in the books (S14). It also indicated how the series has geographically expanded (S10), based on reports about shootings taking place in different places in order to match the ideal ambience of the scenes.

“Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald soundtrack details announced

The album features new music from Grammy & Emmy Award-winning composer James Newton Howard – with two tracks available now!

Details of the original motion picture soundtrack for Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald have been revealed. It is being released by Water-Tower Music (the in-house Warner Bros. music label) and features 25 brand new tracks to whet our appetites for the film’s release on 16 November, 2018.

Grammy and Emmy Award-winner and multiple Oscar nominee James Newton Howard (who composed the soundtrack for the first Fantastic Beasts film as well as for The Hunger Games franchise) has returned as composer and what’s more you can hear two of the tracks early for streaming and purchase: ‘Fantastic Beats: The crimes of Grindelwald and ‘Salamander eyes’.” (Source: available at <https://www.wizardingworld.com/news/fantastic-beasts-the-crimes-of-grindelwald-soundtrack-details-announced>)

On the other hand, the news report published on the WIZARDING WORLD portal in 2018 has indicated the saga’s commodification (FR2) through the announcement of a new product associated with it – the soundtrack of the second movie belonging to the Fantastic Beasts series. In this case, it is about guaranteeing the quality of the franchise expansion process (EF3), when both the specifics of an alternative media regarding the launching of yet another product that diversifies the franchise (S16) and the prestige of the artist – who won a Grammy Award – involved in it were highlighted, since renowned professionals help keeping the quality of the saga (S11).

“STAR WARS: GALACTIC DEFENSE ARRIVES ON MOBILE DEVICES

You can now choose the light or dark side and decide the fate of the galaxy — on the go.

DeNA, in partnership with The Walt Disney Company and Lucasfilm, released today Star Wars: Galactic Defense, a new tower-defense game available for free on the App Store for iPhone, iPad and iPod touch, Google Play for Android devices, and Amazon Appstore for Kindle Fire and Android.

Star Wars: Galactic Defense is the first free-to-play tower defense mobile game to include prequel and classic Star Wars eras. Jedi, Sith, smugglers, bounty hunters, and more iconic characters from across the Star Wars saga come together in a Star Wars game like no other. Players choose their side — light or dark — as they explore and battle across iconic Star Wars locations, employ up to three champions at one time to change the tide of battle, and connect online with their friends in real-time (...)

Star Wars fans and gamers have unlocked a series of powerful in-game content by pre-registering and completing a variety of social activities at [starwarsgalacticdefense.com](http://www.starwars.com/news/star-wars-galactic-defense-arrives-on-mobile-devices)” (Source: available at <http://www.starwars.com/news/star-wars-galactic-defense-arrives-on-mobile-devices>)

As for SW, the news report published in October 2014 referred to the launch of the game Star Wars: Galactic Defense for mobile devices, and highlighted efforts to commodify the saga (FR2). Promoting franchise products (EF4) other than movies through the material shown at the official website has indicated how diversified the brand’s portfolio was (S16).

4.3 Building experiential brands

Results herein presented based on the description of formation rules have indicated that paratexts’ elaboration aims at communicating new ways for consumers to experience the consumption of the investigated sagas and to relate to their favorite brands. Therefore, they appeared to indicate how franchises assimilate the growing interest of their fans in acting as co-creators of their consumer experiences. This factor has shown how brand managers are attentive to their customers’ wishes, since they create paratexts to enable fans to continue their consumer relationships. Thus, the discursive formation identified in the current study was herein called experiential brand.

Bundles leading to formation rules help better understanding this process. On the one hand, keeping the saga (FR1) elicits concepts from both the story and its cultural context to foster consumers' affective memories about the fictional universe. The expansion of the fictional universe through alternative media, products and actions has evidenced franchises' effort to enable consumers to choose whether, or how, they would receive contents capable of deepening and/or intensifying their consumption relationship with the saga. In broad terms, it is an attempt to enable fans to maintain the forms to consume brands. (Burmam and Zeplin, 2005; Iyer et al., 2018). Actions such as canonizing novelties in the saga (EF1) and connecting franchises to social causes (EF2) reflect brands' interest in expanding their resonance by inserting the emerging demands in the market and cultural context they operate in. Such efforts appear to seek in the audience the marketing commitment of fans – productive consumers – with different aspects associated with their consumption practices (e.g., brand elements, media outlets, social relationships) (Fuschillo, 2020; Moura and de Souza-Leão, 2020).

On the other hand, the saga's commodification (FR2) establishes means to diversify the way consumers experience special moments in the fictional universe consumption process. It is an effort to attest to the commitment to meet growing and continuous demands from fans by producing new contents, and this process evidences the attempt to legitimize brands' market credibility and to improve their relationship with consumers (Aaker, 1996; Dash et al., 2021). The way franchises try to guarantee the quality of their expansion (EF3) and to promote other products (EF4) reveals how they are aware of the fact that the marketing performance of their own brands depends on how fans receive such initiatives. Fans' proactive nature enables them to spread the contents they identify themselves with (Na et al., 2020; Seregina and Schouten, 2017), and it allows inferring that these consumers act as brand's stakeholders (von Wallpach et al., 2017).

Thus, the discursive formation identified in the current study reflects the arrangement of actions taken by different market agents to build individuals' experience with a given brand (Ng, 2017; Nysveen et al., 2013). It happens because brand experience is a management effort to establish consumers' loyalty (Habibi et al., 2014; Ramaseshan and Stein, 2014; van der Westhuizen, 2018), which is manageable when aspects of the brand (e.g., design, environment, communication) are associated with each other and acknowledged as capable of encouraging subjective responses from its consumers (e.g., sensations, feelings, cognitions) (Brakus et al., 2009; Laroche et al., 2013; Obiegbu et al., 2020).

Thus, brand experience is a perspective that indicates how managers should provide feedback information to maintain brands' relationship with their customers based on marketing communication strategies (Frow & Payne, 2007; Iglesias et al., 2011). Therefore, paratexts are used as contents capable of enhancing the consumption experience of their audience, although they are not explicit in massively mediated productions (e.g., TV series, movies). In addition, they resonate the brand beyond fictionality in order to be welcomed and resignified by fans. Consequently, paratexts go beyond their role as complementary texts to enable consumers to co-create their experience with a given brand.

Whenever brands encourage consumers to co-create their consumption experiences, they enable them to become part of the process to elaborate their meanings to be spread (Berry, 2000; Roy et al., 2013). Thus, superior brand experiences can establish loyalty relationships (Brakus et al., 2009; Habibi et al., 2014; Obiegbu et al., 2020). Accordingly, brand experience works as an invitation for consumers to engage in the content consumed by them, and it intensifies the engagement between customers and brands (Joshi and Garg, 2020; Kazmi and Khaliq, 2019). Therefore, paratextualization is a unique opportunity for consumers to have stochastic experiences with a given brand by giving new meaning to possibilities of experiencing its consumption.

According to Hills (2015), paratexts produce several possibilities for a brand to relate to its audience; they allow the target audience to commit to the product consumed by it (Burmam and Zeplin, 2005). Thus, producing or transforming brands to be representative for their customers means acknowledging the leadership role played by customers in the credibility achieved by these brands (Rather and Sharma, 2016; Wali et al., 2015).

5 Conclusion and Further Research

The herein identified discursive formation has evidenced the will of the analyzed brands to continue and expand their relationship with consumers through memorable experiences. The way these brands use paratexts reinforces and encourages consumers to stay connected to the sagas they are fans of, by having unique and extraordinary experiences. Therefore, the paratextualization of franchise productions belonging to the entertainment industry produces a cultural branding scheme that enables continuing and expanding fans' experience with these sagas. Thus, it evidences the construction of a cultural scheme to build experiential brands.

This process reflects a strategy, based on which, brand managers intend to align their interests to what they understand as consumers' expectations and desire to expand and deepen the ways their products are consumed. Thus, they appear to encourage these consumers to commit to the brand, based on the likelihood of providing elements for their co-production of meanings. The implementation of this strategy in the entertainment industry appears to benefit from the proactive nature of fans and from their high involvement with the media products they are linked to.

By incorporating the analysis of paratextual productions to the concept of brands' cultural scheme, the current study has opened room for an innovative theoretical perspective in the literature about branding – clearly, it was the first effort in this direction. Although it was limited to the analysis of paratextual productions about three brands, they were representative of the investigated phenomenon. New investigations of this nature can contribute to a broader theorizing process focused on approaching brands operating in other markets.

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