

# The fan's work in the transmedia text: an approach based on television<sup>a</sup>

## *O trabalho do fã no texto transmídia: uma abordagem a partir da televisão*

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### ABSTRACT

*Transmedia Television* designates a type of production model which incorporates other media and platforms, especially digital social networks, within the creative chain of the television industry. Public participation is an indispensable condition for the materialization of the transmedia strategies, even when the actions are, in a way, directed by the producers' intelligence. Due to the engagement required for such actions, the recipient of a transmedia action is, ideally, a fan. The challenge imposed for the researchers is to better understand the role of fans in the constitution of a type of text – the transmedia text – whose manifestation depends on their work, that is, their willingness to take over roles and act as proposed by the communication sender.

**Keywords:** Transmedia television, fan, digital social networks, transtextuality

### RESUMO

A expressão *TV Transmídia* designa um modelo de produção que se caracteriza pela incorporação de outras mídias e plataformas, sobretudo as redes sociais digitais, na cadeia criativa do meio televisivo. A participação do público é uma condição indispensável para concretizar as estratégias transmídias, mesmo quando as ações são, de certo modo, *dirigidas* pela *inteligência* dos produtores. Em função do engajamento exigido nesse caso, o destinatário é idealmente um fã. O desafio deste artigo é entender melhor o papel desse fã na constituição de um tipo particular de texto – o texto transmídia – cuja manifestação depende de seu *trabalho*, ou seja, de sua disposição para assumir posições e atuações propostas pelo destinador da comunicação.

**Palavras-chave:** TV Transmídia, fã, redes sociais digitais, transtextualidade

<sup>a</sup>This text was originally presented in the Work Group Interactional and Language Practices at the XXVII Compós Annual Meeting, in Belo Horizonte, 2018, and was reviewed and amplified after the discussions held in that occasion. Translated by Renato Delgado.

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## INTRODUCTION

**I**N PREVIOUS STUDIES (Fechine, 2012; Fechine, Gouveia, Almeida, Costa, & Estevão, 2013; Fechine et al., 2015), transmediation was defined as a production model driven by the distribution, in different media and technological platforms, of varied content associated with each other. Its articulation is anchored in strategies and interactional practices provided by the participatory culture, which is stimulated by the process of media digitization and convergence. In this approach, there are two fundamental assumptions. The first one is that transmedia strategies are proposed by a communication sender (a media corporation, usually) without which it would not be possible to think transmediation as a production model. The second one is that these transmedia strategies necessarily involve the participation of this communication recipients (viewers, social network users, and media consumers in general), even if only to actively search and interrelate the content offered on various media/platforms.

Transmedia actions have some kind of intervention from the media consumer<sup>1</sup> on what they consume. That is, they have the recipients' assemblage *regarding* or *from* the offered contents. Therefore, public participation is a necessary condition for the realization of transmedia strategies, even when their actions are, directed or guided by a producers' intention – a “corporate authorship”, as proposed by Evans (2011). In other words, we consider that the realization of a transmedia action demands from its recipients a type of *work*. If the media consumers are fundamental creative agents in the constitution of the transmedia universe, a challenge for researchers on this subject is to better understand their role, not only as agents acting in the context of the participatory culture but also in the materialization of the transmedia text in itself.

Can we suppose that for the effort required, the recipient of a transmedia action is necessarily a fan? If so, what features or what makes this recipient a fan? Without disregarding the importance of empirical research with this focus, in this article we address these issues at a theoretical level, with the focus on the so-called Transmedia Television, an expression that designates the television model of production, whose creative chain includes digital platforms and the Internet, basing on examples of Brazilian *teledramaturgia*<sup>2</sup>. The argumentative path assumed here requires, on the one hand, to show the very notion of fan and, on the other hand, to better understand the kind of manifestation to which transmedia give up space, the transmedia text. Let's start by discussing what a fan is.

<sup>1</sup>The term *consumer* has been used in our studies to designate the historical communication recipient subject. In the transmedia phenomena, they continually shift from one medium to the other and receive, in every medium, a different designations (reader, viewer, cybernaut, user). To avoid these different names and to highlight the status of this subject who can now *consume* any of them in the transmedia project, we prefer to use the word *consumer*.

<sup>2</sup>*Teledramaturgia* is a concept in the Brazilian television, which comprehends the production of short time stories, comparing with soap operas, that can last decades.

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A *FAN*?

With the increasing appeal of the transmedia production model appears a subject who invests time and energy interacting affectively with an existing media object (Booth, 2010, p. 11), although not necessarily inserted in an organized community. The strong emotional investment of this recipient type results in (and is formed by) an attention to details and continuity (coherence) of the text (Hills, 2002).

This available, willing, and emotionally involved subject is placed at the center of the transmedia production model and marketing strategies of the media conglomerate, since “their activities do not divert from principles of capitalist exchange and recognize industries’ legal ownership of the object of fandom” (Gray, Sandvoss, & Harrington, 2007, p. 4).

They can be considered ideal consumers, because, according to Hills (2002), their consumption habits are highly predictable and they have great potential to remain stable. How to name this subject – a fan? – and how to think their activity before the text in a production model that requires, in any case, their performance?

#### Possible definitions and categorizations

The intensity of the recipient’s involvement with the text shapes different practices from which distinctions can be drawn. Thinking about television, Jenkins (2008, p. 109) admits the existence of three groups of television content consumers: 1) zappers; 2) casuals and 3) loyals. Zappers are the consumers who frequently switch between TV channels, watching fragments of TV programs without getting involved with the content. Loyals, however, *indulge* in the programs they choose, they spread the word on what they consume, and they often seek more related content in other media. They watch specific programs regularly, paying special attention, frequently observe the details, managing their emotional proximity with some critical detachment – this group would be closer to the fan notion assumed by the author in his work. Casuals find themselves in the middle ground between zappers and loyals: they watch the programs without the inconsistency of the former but also without the commitment of the latter. Despite recognizing the distinction, Jenkins (2008) indicates that

No spectator is exclusively loyal, casual or zapper; most of them watch television in different ways on different occasions. Even the most thorough viewer will switch between TV channels in a hotel room, or at the end of a hard day. And sometimes



the zapper is hooked by a TV series and starts to watch it weekly. No one knows for sure yet whether the new media environment has produced more zappers, casuals or loyals. (p. 110)

Cornel Sandvoss (2013), in his postulations on media fans, also established distinctions between consumer behaviors: 1) fans; 2) cultists and 3) enthusiasts. The first group intensely follows a particular text or cultural icon, almost exclusively by mass media. They are part of a fragmented audience and are not bound to each other in an organized level. The cultists' use of the media, is more specialized and segmented, as well as its fandom<sup>3</sup> object. Moreover, they tend to develop bonds, even if largely disorganized, with others who share the affection for the same object. In the case of enthusiasts, what constitutes the heart of fandom is not so much the original mass-mediated object of fandom (such as, a particular pop star, a television program or soccer team), as their own activity and textual productivity. Enthusiasts consume highly specialized texts produced by other enthusiasts, such as fanzines, which are exchanged by organizational structures such as fan conventions, fan clubs or online communities (Sandvoss, 2013, p. 26). At the bottom of the pyramid, the mere consumers of a program did not develop the forms of expertise nor come close to the level of knowledge that fans, enthusiasts and cultists have (Hills, 2002).

Sandvoss (2013) admits that the first group, which he calls *fans*, constitutes the vast majority of media consumers actively involved with the texts. Although there are, he says, a “substantially smaller amount of cultists and even fewer enthusiasts” (p. 27), the practices of these consumers are the ones that define what are known as fans subculture. That is, while fans' consumption and their practices are much broader, the existing literature on the subject tends to focus on only a portion of the phenomenon – the most productive, most organized, and potentially creative one. In this regard, even assuming the risks of a simplification, we now recover some of the major theoretical contributions by researchers dedicated to the study of fans.

### **Subversive or cooperative subjects?**

For a few decades now, several scholars have been leaning over the task of properly defining the subjects and the affections involved in what we call fan culture. At first, these researchers had the explicit objective of confront and deconstruct the common-sense speech that associated the word *fan* with the scope of madness, foolishness, and social disability.

<sup>3</sup>Fandom is a portmanteau word made by combining fan and kingdom, i.e. the kingdom of fans.

Jenkins (1992) explains that this association comes from the very origin of the word – from Latin *fanaticus*, which meant belonging to the temple, temple servant or devout. Quickly, according to the author, the word has taken a negative connotation to refer to people inspired by orgiastic rites or frenzies. Over time, the term fanatical lost the religious connotation and embraced any excessive enthusiasm. The word fan was used to refer to an obsessive subject, disconnected with reality, able to commit insanities for the object of their affection, willing to pursue their idols, dress such them or play characters.

Supported by Michel de Certeau's (1998) notions of strategy (of the powerful) and tactics (of the oppressed), a generation of researchers came out in defense of the practices and performances of fan's communities. In these perspectives, some founding works are highlighted, such as John Fiske's *Understanding Popular Culture* (1989) and *The Cultural Economy of Fandom* (1992), and, especially, Henry Jenkins's *Textual Poachers* (1992). In these works, fandoms were treated as *subversive* interpretive communities, capable of adopting certain tactics that allowed them to escape the meanings imposed by the mass media and establish consumption patterns distinct from those intended by the production strategies (Fiske, 1989). Fandoms are now considered spaces for collective identity construction, and each fan is viewed as a textual poacher, an expression that names Jenkins's book (1992).

The expression adopted by the author is inspired by the works of Michel de Certeau (1998, p. 259), for whom reading is a poaching operation potentially creative in itself. With this, the author drew attention to the activity and creativity at the reception pole. He argued that even though they are far from being writers themselves, "readers are travelers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write" (pp. 269-270). When the first edition of *The Practice of Everyday Life* was published in 1980 – the work in which the author presents these concepts – there were, any means for direct feedback from media consumers and particularly from television viewers. Speaking about the television experience, Michel de Certeau (1998) pointed out that the viewer is "dislodged" from the text, as he/she cannot write anything on the screen – while in books they can write in the margins, underline excerpts, putting in practice their poacher potential. Thus, to Certeau (1998), the television viewer would apparently be transformed into a pure receiver, since they would play no role in the appearance of the objects on screen.

Authors such as Fiske (1989) already believed in the interpretive freedom of the public, considering that cultural theories often overestimated the power



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<sup>4</sup>Printed materials produced exclusively by fans.

of the *mass media* and underestimated the viewer's power. Jenkins' (1992) first observations follow in the same direction, contrary to the notion of an alleged passivity in television consumption because the author came across extremely organized practices, such as fanzines<sup>4</sup> creation and fans' conventions of science fiction TV series, prior to Internet popularization.

Drawing on the work of Michel de Certeau, it proposes an alternative conception of fans as readers who appropriate popular texts and reread them in a fashion that serves different interests, as spectators who transform the experience of watching television into a rich and complex participatory culture. Viewed in this fashion, fans become a model of the type of textual 'poaching' de Certeau associates with popular reading. (p. 23)

Jenkins (1992, p. 46) describes fans' practices, emphasizing the writing of fan fictions (fictional narratives written by fans, appropriating the reference text), and the production of videos and music. He also indicates the recurring interpretive deviations and considers that they can be seen as demonstrations of the fans' resistance to industry wishes. It is based on these fans and fandoms practices that he proposes the idea of participatory culture:

The expression *participatory culture* contrasts with older perceptions about the passivity of media viewers. Instead of talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we can now consider them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully understands. Not all participants are created equal. Corporations – and even individuals within corporate media – still exerting greater power than any individual consumer or even the aggregate of consumers. And some consumers have greater abilities to participate in this emerging culture than others.<sup>5</sup> (Jenkins, 2008, p. 28)

Fandoms introduction as one of the most significant manifestations of this participatory culture inverts the look that was initially cast on fans: if they were previously inadequate, they are now subversive consumers; instead of ridiculous and weird, they are now considered productive and creative. However, the inversion does not escape the binarism that underlies the debate over their condition.

Supported by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) theories, researchers such as Harris (1992), MacDonald (1998) and Jancovich (2002) take different paths when they highlight the role of fans subcultures as reproducers of pre-existing social and cultural hierarchies. Studies affiliated with Bourdieu's ideas

<sup>5</sup>In the original: "A expressão cultura participativa contrasta com noções mais antigas sobre a passividade dos espectadores dos meios de comunicação. Em vez de falar sobre produtores e consumidores de mídia como ocupantes de papéis separados, podemos agora considerá-los como participantes interagindo de acordo com um novo conjunto de regras, que nenhum de nós entende por completo. Nem todos os participantes são criados iguais. Corporações – e mesmo indivíduos dentro das corporações da mídia – ainda exercem maior poder do que qualquer consumidor individual, ou mesmo um conjunto de consumidores. E alguns consumidores têm mais habilidades para participar dessa cultura emergente do que outros."

tend to see fan communities not as environments of emancipation, rupture, or resistance, but as places in which relationships reflect other internalized social experiences, eventually shaped by inequalities and asymmetries.

Fandom, just like the legitimate culture Bourdieu (1984) describes, is hierarchized. . . Fans do not explicitly recognize hierarchies, and academics also fail to recognize hierarchies in fandom. Jenkins (1991, 1992), although never specifically denying the existence of hierarchies in fandom, does not address them, and implies that they do not exist by focusing on the grassroots production of fan culture. (MacDonald, 1998, p. 136)

For researchers who consider *fandoms* as hierarchical social environments, fan communities are also places of dispute in which fan groups compete among them, using elements of distinction, such as knowledge or access to the production. Although they react to large communication and entertainment conglomerates, *fandoms* could not be truly considered experiences of resistance because the media itself is the central element in their formation and maintenance (Thornton, 1995). Finally, these studies aim to show that fans operate, to a large extent, as maintainer agents of the pre-existing economic, social and cultural status quo (Gray, Sandvoss, & Harrington, 2007).

Thus, understanding the behavior of fans, based only on the opposition between domination and resistance, does not seem sufficient to deal with the wide range of behaviors and practices of media consumers, especially after the emergence of digital platforms, which provide plenty of content. Recent studies are interested in understand the impact of digital technologies on fan cultures (Booth, 2010), as well as affective motivations, and the process of fans' identity construction as members of a collective experience (Hills, 2002). However, they note that fan-producer relationships are marked by contradictions and sometimes conflicts of interest – especially because they are a more demanding and specialized audience (Hills, 2002).

Digital tools did not only impact the way people relate to each other, but also interfered with the flow of content from media corporations – what was once television exclusivity is now available on other platforms. This greater flexibility in the circulation among media ends up requiring a change of attitude from the cultural industry: since it cannot avoid digital media, it had to incorporate them into its production model on a purposeful way. The television production began to include digital platforms connected to the Internet as environments of acting and content production that complement the experience of watching television, in what we call the transmedia production



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model. As it is allied to a culture based on the network structure, this model assumes an active consumer, willing to seek, share and cooperate with the complementary texts offered.

The notion of fan is associated with a type of “active consumption” (Jenkins, 1992, p. 284), crossed by a powerful affective relationship, very common in contemporary media experience (Gray, Sandvoss, & Harrington, 2007). If the requirement for active consumption is also at the basis of transmediation, we can now assume that the recipient of a transmedia action is, in principle, the fan. In the transmedia production model, this active consumption involves an appeal to a textual cooperation, i.e. a willingness to *work* with the text proposed by the communication sender.

The fan can be thought as a kind of consumer who is willing to do this *work*, without which the transmedia text does not exist, since its own manifestation depends on relationships, connections, and associations delegated to its recipient. However, to understand the kind of *work* that makes this recipient a fan, we need to better understand what we are calling *transmedia textuality*, which is the theme of the next section.

### TRANSMEDIA TEXTUALITY

Transmediation requires the production and distribution of content that is distinguished and associated with each other across multiple media platforms and it has the purpose of complementing or enhancing the consumer's experience of a given text. It also assumes, as we have seen, an active consumption, anchored in the notion of participatory culture and the networks logic. In most experiments, these articulation strategies between media are developed around a reference media from which content propagates and expands by the incorporation of other platforms into its creative chain.

We will call the set of manifestations resulted from this kind of action as *transmedia text*, presenting its properties and the role assigned to the fan. Our reference media will be the television since our view on the phenomenon is guided by the television transmedia production model, as we have previously discussed. Consequently, television programs (*telenovelas*, television news, reality shows, etc.) will also be the product, or the reference text, around which the transmedia strategies are defined.

Conceived in this way, the transmedia text must necessarily be thought of as a particular kind of manifestation whose realization depends on a part-whole relationship. In other words, it corresponds to the *whole* that results from the articulation of a reference text with other texts. Each of these texts,



including the reference text itself, must be regarded as one of its *parts*, although each of them is an autonomous object of meaning. Therefore, the transmedia text cannot be identified either to the reference text or to any of the other texts that are articulated with it, because it only exists as a manifestation that results from the planned and effectively realized articulations between them. Thus it functions as an encompassing instance presupposed by a set of encompassed units existence. Empirically, they correspond to each of the texts/content available to recipient's assemblage in the different media/platforms<sup>6</sup>. This correlation among texts is presupposed by the communication sender, since their strategies necessarily require some modality of textual work, reply or cooperation from the recipients, without which the transmedia text is not updated.

To address this nature of transmedia text in more concrete terms, let us take the *telenovela* as an example, one of the first formats on Brazilian television to adopt the transmedia production model<sup>7</sup>. In this case, what we can consider a transmedia text does not correspond to the daily chapters of the *telenovela* shown on television, nor to the complementary content available on the Internet. The transmedia *telenovela* consists in the articulated manifestation of each other, which only occurs when the viewers are ready to establish the proposed associations, complementarities and correlations.

For having its existence conditioned to the very moment of reception, the transmedia text can also be thought as a text that does not exist outside the very act that makes it exist: it is, as many other contemporary manifestations, a modality of text *in act*<sup>8</sup>. Regardless of the medium in which they materialize and how they are organized, every in act text is a manifestation established in the realization of the communicative situation that institutes it as such. In this case, we are no longer facing a finished text, but rather a type of statement that incorporates the act of enunciation and the interaction between the subjects of enunciation and communication as a constitutive part of their own manifestation.

### **Transtextual relations in transmedia textuality**

The modality of text *in act* that interests us here – the transmedia text – depends on the media consumer's intervention on what they consume. That is, it demands the communication recipient's agency about the content to be *executed*. This mode of existence allows us to consider it as a kind of manifestation endowed with hypertextuality, a fundamental property of the new forms of communication (Scolari, 2008, pp. 92-93). In digital media, hypertextuality

<sup>6</sup>In semiotic terms, the encompassing/encompassed categories have a long-range. In the more general process of textualization, an encompassing enunciate can be thought of as a manifestation that results from the articulation in act of a set of encompassed enunciates and whose mode of existence is virtualized. The encompassed enunciate, on the other hand, can be thought of as each of the units that make up the encompassing enunciate, having a realized mode of existence (cf. Fechine, 2008).

<sup>7</sup>The studies carried out by the working groups of the Ibero-American Observatory of Television Fiction (Obitel Brazil) followed Brazilian *telenovelas* transmediation and serve as a reference here. Cf. Lopes (2013, 2015, 2017).

<sup>8</sup>For a deeper look at the notion of *in act* text, see Fechine (2008).



is understood, in a broad sense, as a structure of interconnected documents in a network, and hypertext, more specifically, is described as an electronic document that references other electronic documents establishing links between blocks of meaning. Hypertextuality corresponds, in our own terms, to an array of potential texts within which some of them are realized (materialized) by the interaction with a user.

In the convergence environment from which transmediation emerges, hypertextuality can be thought of as a more general procedure, whereby texts can be related to each other from the connection points proposed by the producers, but activated by the correlations established by their readers (recipients)<sup>9</sup>. In this perspective, the transmedia text is an encompassing and hypertextual manifestation which, as such, has a potential mode of existence, presupposing, at the very moment of enunciation, the *work of finalizing* the textualization. Therefore, it operates as a *constellation* of texts. In this, there is a text around which (the aforementioned reference text) interdependence relations are organized. To understand the nature of these relationships between the reference text (for example, a *telenovela*, as we discussed earlier) and those around it, it is necessary to retrieve Genette's (1989) pioneering ideas about transtextuality, everything that puts a text in an explicit or implicit relationship to other texts or textual elements.

Genette (1989) describes five types of transtextual relations. Two of them are important to us because they explain how transmedia text *functions*: hypertextuality and paratextuality. Let us start with the first one. Although his ideas have also influenced pioneering hypertext studies in the convergence environment, such as Landow's (1992), Genette's (1989) description of this type of relation between texts opens new perspectives in understanding transmedia textuality. For him, there is hypertextuality when a text A (the hypotext) derives from a text B (the hypertext) and, although B speaks nothing about A, B could not exist as it is without A, because B unfolds from A. In the transmedia manifestations, we can consider the relation of certain contents with the reference text as hypertext, as they derive from it, triggering a complementarity of meaning.

From this perspective, we can consider that a transmedia content – a secondary text, when considered in relation to the main one – establishes a hypertextual relation with the reference text whenever it functions as its complement or unfolding, which often occurs in expansion strategies – i.e., those endowed with a narrative function itself and whose purpose is to enrich/deepen the meaning of the reference text with new information. Considering Brazilian *telenovela*, programs such as *Total Dreamer* (Vincent, 2015-2016) are

<sup>9</sup> Postulation based on Genette (1989) and on hypertext definitions compiled by Gosciola (2003).

recognized for having used a series of exclusive content aimed at expanding the narrative begun on television.

The same type of resource was used in the *telenovela* *The Good Side of Life!* (Velloso, 2016), whose plot was set in the 1940s, with the production of content derived from the radionovela *Herança de ódio* (TN: *Inheritance of Hate*). In the *telenovela*, the character Eponina used to appear on the scene listening to the radionovela, which is inspired by Oduvaldo Vianna's work. On Rede Globo's digital platforms, fans could consume extra content, such as the full chapters of the radionovela, in addition to a web series that showed the backstage of the fictional production. *God Save the King* (Monteiro, 2018), on the other hand, set in the Middle Ages, offered unique content such as the map of the fictional kingdoms of Montemor and Artena, where the story was set. These developments would be examples of "diegetic extensions" (Askwith, 2007), which are resources that depart from the production of diegetic artifacts in order to weaken the boundaries between objective reality and fiction.

By analyzing hypertextuality in transmedia actions in these terms, we are dealing with one of the possible types of relationships between the reference text and other texts that unfold from it. However, it is possible to think of hypertextuality even as a existence path or organization of certain encompassing and in-act manifestations, which include, transmediation. Whether as a *property* of the new forms of communication or as a specific type of transtextual *relation*, hypertextuality is intrinsically linked to the modes of transmedia text organization. We can also think of paratextuality both as a property and as a type of textual relation that characterizes transmedia manifestations.

According to Genette (1989), paratexts are elements that *guide* the reading of a given text. In literature, titles, subtitles, intertitles, prefaces, epilogues, prologues, etc. may be considered paratexts, for example. When dealing with transmedia manifestations, we may broaden the concept a little and consider that paratextuality is associated, in this case, with the *instructions* and information contained in the texts themselves about their relationships with each other. In this case, paratextuality is used to mark the remissivity between the texts that compose the transmedia manifestation.

In television formats, such as television news, reality shows, variety shows or sports programs, it is frequent the use of elements that, when cross-referencing the texts (on-screen texts, notes, a direct invitation from the presenters, etc.), guide the articulation, fulfilling, thus, a paratextual function. These cross-reference elements contribute to the recognition and intelligibility of the transmedia text by establishing connections of the parts with the whole and guiding the

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recipient's *work of completion*. This is also the case of tutorials for submitting collaborations or help using apps. The use of paratextual elements can also be observed in *telenovelas*, a format in which there is no direct contact with the viewer, as mentioned above. The *telenovela Sparkling Girls* (Rede Globo, 2012), one of the most emblematic transmedia *telenovelas* on Brazilian television, is an example. In the plot, the three maids who star in the story filmed a music video as a fun satire of their employers. The video *leaks* on the Internet and the three maids become celebrities as the musical group *Empreguetes*. At the end of the chapter that showed the music video *leakage*, Globo informed with an on-screen text the website where viewers could watch it. In the following chapters, several scenes featured the characters watching and commenting on the music video, which, as soon as it was made available online by Globo, became viral, as well as in the plot.

Just as it can be thought of as a property of transmedia text, paratextuality can be treated as a specific type of transtextual relationship. We can consider that, in relation to the reference text, certain transmedia content can act as paratext when helping the viewer *put the pieces together* of complex narratives (Mittel, 2015), by contextualizing or giving important information for a better understanding of the reference text (*telenovela*, TV shows, television news, etc.). Some examples are summaries, retrospectives, columns like *what's coming* or *who's who*, behind the scenes and making of, videos, photos, pieces of news and information related to creation and production processes or the professionals involved in the project, among other things. The establishment of these constitutive transtextual relations of the transmedia text – especially hypertextuality and paratextuality, but, eventually, relationships of other natures – impose a type of *work* on its recipient, and this is where the fan comes into play again.

### THE TEXTUAL *WORK* OF THE FAN AND ITS RELATION WITH OTHER ACTORS

Transtextual relations are not an exclusivity of transmedia texts. As proposed by Genette (1989), they are an inherent feature of texts. However, in the case of transmedia text this *work* or this textual *cooperation* required of the recipient in the very act of consumption (fruition) is a fundamental condition for its existence (*passage* from the potential state to the realized state). When we deal with a transmedia text, the fan is anyone willing to explore these transtextual relationships and to *work with, about* or *based on* the reference text as if it were a kind of *artificer*.

But, in this *work*, the relationship between producer and fan is rarely exclusive. As they gain greater circulation, the network conversations shaped from transmedia text may involve other actors. Based on the observation of transmediation of Rede Globo *telenovelas* (Lima, 2018), it was possible to state that, although there is a fan centrality in strategies implementation, they usually mobilize other actors whose roles are defined based on their performance in digital social networks and according to the transmedia actions themselves. These actors were named, at least provisionally, as *anti-fans*, casual spectators and non-spectators. This categorization does not refer to static positions, so different roles can be assumed by the same individual, depending on the moment and the type of emotional investment in the text.

The anti-fan occupies a role diametrically opposed to that of the fan. With the same intensity with which the fan invests passion in a television genre (in this case, the *telenovela*), in a specific plot or character, the anti-fan invests hatred, anger, resentment. Anti-fans do not dislike media texts for no reason; on the contrary, they are often familiar with the texts and quite aware of the reasons for their dislike (Theodoropoulou, 2007). According to Theodoropoulou (2007), *anti-fandom* concept has, as its fundamental principles, moral and ethical issues, as well as considerations of textual and class. That is, it is predominantly the moral value of the text, interpreted and received by the consumer, that triggers the *anti-fandom*. For Gray (2003), this negative feeling may be the result, for example, of a dislike for the genre, director or stars, or for having seen unfavorable previews, announcements or criticisms.

When allied to the use of social networks, anti-fans make a point of expressing their rejection, often seeking confrontation, producing original critical content and even boycotting a particular media object. By attacking the object of *devotion*, they provoke an immediate counterattack, sparking controversies<sup>10</sup> that can last a long time and involve other actors such as *casual spectators* and *non-spectators*.

The idea of *casual viewers* is close to Jenkins's (2018) postulation of casual consumers. They are those who watch *telenovelas* and participate in social platforms, but without an effective engagement or without showing an affective involvement with a particular media object. However, they often respond to the production callings or get affected by the fans' activism themselves regarding a particular cause that surrounds them (for example, the defense of social values and moral behaviors raised by a *telenovela*, a television series etc.).

When a strong repercussion in social networks occurs regarding a particular action related to some television product – usually due to the high activity of fans or anti-fans – the conversation also reaches the *non-viewer*. This term

<sup>10</sup> Belonging to the family of polemical exchanges, the controversies, for Marcelo Dascal (2001), are intermediate verbal confrontations between disputes (extremely passionate) and discussions (extremely rational, in which the contenders seek to find the truth to get to the solution of a problem). In the controversy, the participants' goal is to persuade opponents and the audience, which often involves a range of argumentative moves and can aggregate a wide range of interactors, often from localized dissent and spreading rapidly.



designates users on social networks who neither consume the television products in question nor have prior knowledge about them. But, as they are often active in social media platforms, they become involved in the conversations that mobilize their networks.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup>Among these actors, we also have the network's auxiliaries, including bloggers and specialized profiles, subjects who seek to build their own reputation as television critics and leverage their social capital in the orbit of transmedia actions. But these roles, since they are located in a frontier between the poles of production and reception, require a more complex discussion, which does not fit the limits of this article. As our focus, in the proposed categorization, were television viewers who are also users of digital social networks, we chose not to discuss these roles here, although we cannot fail to recognize their importance in an interactional universe driven by the transmedia text.

As it can be seen, the *anti-fan*, *casual viewer* and *non-viewer* positions are generally defined in relation to the performance and *work* of fans of a particular television product on social networks, based on any action of the production, whether deliberate (as in the transmedia strategy) or not. That is why the fan's role is so fundamental to the strategy and identifying them as the recipient of the transmedia actions is obligatory. Their reward for such *work* is the possibility of embarking on an adventure in which they have fun occupying the roles of *hunter* – the search and connection of texts scattered in various media is their first activity – and *poacher* – armed with the most varied interpretive practices – that are carefully attributed to them.

### FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The course presented here sought to define the required *work* of the fans for the accomplishment of a transmedia text based on television. Such work cannot be confused with the *reading* practices and critical interpretation that are the object of reception studies. We are not dealing with an *interpretive cooperation*, which viewers produce a plurality of meanings, determined not only by textual materiality and structure but by social conditions and their interaction with other loyal consumers of the program.

Sandvoss (2007) reinforces the idea that every media object forms a *gravitational field*, around which several other support and relate texts circulate. In the case of the transmedia text, seems safe to say that one of its peculiarities is to place the fan at the center of its gravitational field. It is from their active consumption that the transtextual relations between the various complementary contents – otherwise dispersed – are established and the transmedia text is accomplished as a whole endowed with meaning.

This *work* is also associated with the characteristic endeavor of fans to reverberate their affection object. By sharing and interfering with transmedia content, media fans contribute to the circulation of the reference text, encouraging the consumption – although symbolic – of other interactors. That is, as part of a transmedia production model, fans and their engagement are fundamental to enable the distinct content to succeed in reaching a possible audience on social networking platforms. The research initiated here opens the path for studies on roles of the other interactors mentioned – anti-fans, casual viewers,

non-viewers – be more deeply addressed in future works. In, addition, it offers theoretical insights and guiding categorizations for future empirical research that looks more closely at the behavior of these actors. ■

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## The fan's work in the transmedia text

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Article received on August 3, 2018 and approved in January 15, 2019.