Patricia Tomaszek
University of Bergen
www.elmcip.net/person/patricia-tomaszek

Locating Literary Heritage in Paratexts:
An Analysis of Peritexts in Electronic Literature

Gérard Genette's Theoretical Framework

1987, Seuils: *Seuils*
1997, Cambridge UP: *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*

Peritext → part, but peripheral to a work

Epitext

"the epitext is any paratextual element not materially appended to the text within the same volume but circulating, as it were, freely, in a virtually limitless physical and social space. The location of the epitext is therefore anywhere outside the book - but of course nothing precludes its later admission to the peritext"
(Genette 344).

Genette's Methodological Framework

Locate a paratextual element by determining:

• its location (*where?)*
• the date of its appearance (and its disappearance) *(when?)*
• its mode of existence, verbal or other *(how?)*
• the communication situation *(from whom? to whom?)*
• & the functions that its message aims to fulfill *(to do what?). (4)*

Genette's Methodological Framework

Identify a paratextual element by examining the

"spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic, and functional characteristics" (4).

Collection of Lost Works

RESEARCH COLLECTION

Collection curated by:

Patricia Tomaszek

Description:

This collection is dedicated to inaccessible works of electronic literature, creative works that are no longer online. If you encounter a work with a broken link, add the work to this collection and provide all data (description and images, most preferably a screenshot of the opening page+ screenshots from within the work) you have at hand in the record of the creative work. Ideally, make a note underneath the works description when you have encountered a "work's death".

Also, please provide URLs of works that are still retrievable from the Internet Archive and provide the link in the field "Archive URL". Cross-references to scholarly articles about a respective work that is now lost are also most welcome.

The collection intends to provide recognition and assure that lost works will still be eligible for scholarly post-processing. It may serve for future research on archiving practices in electronic literature.

What paratexts remain of a work, if a work is lost?

Creative works

Title ▲	Author	Year
Faen. Nå har de senket takhøyden igjen. Må huske å kjøpe nye knebeskyttere.	Tor Åge Bringsværd	1999
Inbox Outbox	Jerry Pinto	2001
Ingen elge på vejen den dag	Sonja Thomsen	2001
Le Noeud	Jean-François Verreault	1998
Love is in the air (first performance)	Sonja Thomsen	2010
Love, Life & Email	Simon Beaufoy	2001
Mola	Michael Joyce, Carolyn Guyer, Suze Schweitzer, Nancy Lin, Nigel Kerr	1995
Peau nue	Jimmy Owenns	2001
Placing	Carl Steadman	1997
Skakbræt	Sonja Thomsen	2002
Tumulte, 227 histoires brèves	François Bon	2008
Two Minutes	Anonymous	1999
You and We		2003
一棵会走路的 树 (The tree that can walk)	Shaolian Su	

Peau nue

CREATIVE WORK

Author:

Jimmy Owenns

Year:

2001

Publication Type:

Published on the Web (individual site)

Record Status:

Incomplete record (stub)

Description (in English):

No info online except an entry in Rhizome Art Base. The original URL given there (http://www.blackeyed.com/art/) is now a spam site. JWR, 29 August 2013.

Critical writing that references this work:

Title	Author	Year
Creating Screen-Based Multiple State Environments: Investigating Systems of Confutation	Donna Leishman	2004

Research Collection that references this entry:

Title
Collection of Lost Works

Add new research collection.

The permanent URL of this page : http://elmcip.net/node/8362

Record posted by: Jill Walker Rettberg

Locating a Work's Content and Text in Peritexts and Author-Descriptions to Works of Electronic Literature

Girls Day Out, Kerry Lawrynowicz
(Electronic Literature Collection I (ELC), 2006)

A block of text that on first appearance seems to be a simple description of a pleasant outing reveals a grisly story of murder as words successively fade away. This work makes innovative use of simple combinatory techniques, reminiscent of Burroughs cut-ups, to reflect on a real-life tragedy.

(ELC I editorial)

This is a work in Flash format. It contains three separate but related sections: the title prose poem, "Girls' Day Out"; the author's note on the poem; and "Shards," a poem composed from phrases found in articles in the Houston Chronicle that covered the events that inspired the poem.

(ELC I author-description)

***Girls Day Out,* Kerry Lawrynowicz (ELC I)**
 What the work was about…..

**The peritext presents what we will remember about the work's
literary content:**

a

simple description of a
pleasant outing reveals a
grisly story of murder as
words successively fade
away

(ELC I author-description)

(ELC I editorial)

What works of e-lit are about…..
The peritext of X presents:

X is a work that renegotiates the concept of the hypertext to present a reconfigurative narrative. As the reader moves the mouse over links, segments of a page replace one antoher fluidly, giving the reader the sensation of watching a single page evolve step by step into another kind of textual instrument with its own sense of narrative rhythm.

(ELC I editorial to X)

X is an interactive, non-linear, multivalent narrative, a storyspace that is unstable but nonetheless remains organically intact, progressively weaving itself together by way of subtle transformations on a single virtual page.

(ELC I author-description to X)

What works of e-lit are about…..
The peritext presents what we will remember about the works
literary content, guess what X was

(ELC I author-description to X)

(ELC I editorial to X)

What works of e-lit are about…..
The peritext to X presents:

Some of the innovations of X are immediately apparent in the combination of navigable Myst-like landscapes with linked texts. Others can only be read through repeated encounters with the four fictional systems of text that correspond to four "worlds." Mingling instructions, stories, and "nonsense" texts (which can be eliminated by re-visiting and re-reading), X is a meditation on forgetting and loss in which text and image work together interactively in an intricate and compelling way.

(ELC I editorial to X)

X is an odd mixture of stories and images, voices and places, crimes and punishments, connections and disruptions, signals on, noises off, failures of memory, and acts of reconstruction. It goes into some places not customary for "writing." I think of it as a space probe. I have no idea what you'll think.

(ELC I author-description to X)

What works of e-lit are about…..
The peritext presents what we will remember about the
works literary content, guess what X was:

X is an odd mixture of stories and images, voices and places, crimes and punishments, connections and disruptions, signals on, noises off, failures of memory, and acts of reconstruction. It goes into some places not customary for "writing."

X is a meditation on forgetting and loss in which text and image work together interactively in an intricate and compelling way.

(ELC I author-description to X)

(ELC I editorial to X)

Another peritext that presents what a work is about:

In X XY invents a world where bruised adults attempt, over and over, to rewrite the violent scripts of their childhood.
Preston Morris is an accomplished lawyer and novelist who writes painful, provocative stories to shore up fragments of his own desperate life. One of Preston's works, which forms the core of X, tells of a sadly streetwise adolescent named Missy who struggles to come of age during the short space of a weekend when her mother finally leaves her tortured, brilliant lover, the artist Val Rivson.
Preston's genius -- or is it X's? -- is the accuracy with which he portrays the sublime compulsions of several tortured yet resilient people. Holding everything together is the unique hypertext structure X, which dramatizes a theme evident throughout: how the past can compel the present, through the fragmentary, unreliable, but ultimately persistent medium of memory.

Eastgate Systems peritext to X

A paratext, or is it a "meditext?! that presents what a work is about:

X is a web-based digital fiction that juxtaposes two temporally remote narrative strands. One involves an aboriginal named Mouth with a penchant for exploration and discovery; the other tells of Crockford ("Cro") de Granville, a voracious business mogul who heads the Institute for Cognitive Emergence. Mouth's present is 40,000 years before de Granville's, which is described as the "present day" but appears much more like a mildly dystopic near-future, where a pretentious and egotistical de Granville targets his clients to secure their popular and financial support in the form of "skinny-casts" (an inversion, we can presume, of the less discriminate and mass-cultural "broadcast"). Mouth likewise spends his time trying to convince his dull cousin, Tuber, of a world much larger and more complex than their current way of life would allow them to grasp. Thus both Mouth and de Granville conspicuously crave knowledge, but for vastly different ends.

David Ciccoricco, excerpt from Electronic Literature Directory record. A "meditext" to X.

What another work of e-lit is about…….
The peritext to X presents:

X steps through a play of words and lines in a different way each time, as the animation and music are generated. Running the poem several times in a row can show how different renderings of it interact with its sequence of language.
(ELC I editorial to X)

X is a typical example of adaptive generation. It is an association of a combinatory generator of sound and a syntactical animation of text that changes its tempo according to the speed of the machine. So, it is not possible to synchronize the sound and the visual. But the reader often has the impression that the sound is designed for the visual process. This result is obtained by a programmed communication between the visual and the sound that uses programmed meta-rules in order to preserve the perceptive coherence. These meta-rules also create a new kind of non-algorithmic combinatory generator by focusing the attention at different moments of the reading. In this situation, the sense created by reading can vary slightly from one reading to another. The reader himself makes this combinatory by rereading. So, this work is interactive, not by managing input devices but through meta-rules. Meta-rules are not "technical rules," but the expression of a complex esthetical intention that lies in programming and can only be perceived by looking at the program. This intentionality is not addressed to the reader but to a "meta-reader": reading is a limited activity. (ELC I author-description to X)

What another work of e-lit is about…….
The peritext presents what we will remember about the literary work X:

(ELC I editorial to X)

(ELC I author-description to X)

Remember to write concise work-descriptions that locate the literary, thank you for your attention!