The peritextual literacy framework: Using the functions of peritext to support critical thinking

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ABSTRACT

The peritextual literacy framework (PLF) is a tool for accessing, evaluating, and comprehending the content of media using elements that frame the body of a work and mediate its content for the user. Paratextual elements are the focus of research in classification, bibliometrics, reader's advisory work, and in studies of authorship and publication. However, paratextual theory is just beginning to be acknowledged in LIS. The PLF closes a gap in paratext theory by categorizing the functions of peritext into six types: production, promotional, navigational, intratextual, supplemental, and documentary. The PLF is unique that it provides both a framework for further research on peritext, as well as a pedagogical tool that supports teaching in the areas of information literacy, media literacy and analysis, critical thinking, reading, and media design and production.

1. Introduction

The peritextual literacy framework (PLF) is a tool for accessing, evaluating, and comprehending the content of media using elements that frame the body of a work and mediate its content for the user. The concept of paratext was defined by Gérard Genette (1997) as common elements provided within a book (peritext) and elements outside of the book (epitext) that refer to the book and can affect individual, as well as cultural, perceptions of a text (pp. 4–5). Examples of peritextual elements include the foreword, table of contents, index, and source notes. Epitext refers to communications outside the book that can influence whether and how the text is read. Examples of epitext include book reviews, interviews, author websites and letters, and critical literary analysis. Genette's theory defines paratext as follows: Paratext = peritext + epitext (p. 5) (Table 1).

Genette saw functionality as the most important concept in his theory, noting that "Whatever aesthetic intention may come into play as well, the main issue for the paratext is not to 'look nice' around the text but rather to ensure for the text a destiny consistent with the author's purpose" (p. 407). The functionality of paratext is important to library and information science (LIS) as paratextual elements are the focus of many of its research areas. However, these subfields generally have not considered the role paratext theory can play in both research and professional work. Examples include classification, bibliometrics, reader's advisory, and information literacy, and are discussed below. The PLF isolates peritext for examination and builds on Genette's work by organizing peritextual elements by function as an aid for media analysis and as a scaffold for teaching critical thinking. It is unique in that it provides both a framework for further research on peritext, as well as a pedagogical tool that supports teaching in the areas of information literacy, media literacy and analysis, critical thinking, reading, and media design and production.

Genette describes paratext as a threshold at which, a reader can decide whether or not to enter the work (p. 2). While Genette applied his theory to printed books, paratext is an aspect of many media types. An analysis of peritext can help users to understand how those elements that frame a work influence whether and how media is consumed. Further, examination of paratext allows the reader to think critically about the author or creator's intent as well as the veracity of the work, and, when used to consider a work, can allow readers to reflect on the role of individual paratextual elements that help the reader to identify, navigate, and connect the work to the reader's interest as well as the resources that support the author's presentation. Peritextual elements can illuminate a reader's understanding of how the author knows what he or she knows about the subject and how that knowledge was attained.

1.1. Problem statement

According to Birke and Christ (2013), "Paratext is now one of the basic analytical tools taught in textbook introductions to the study of narrative and explicated in handbooks of literary analysis" (p. 65).

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Table 1
Examples of paratextual elements.

Paratext = Peritext (comes with the text) + Epitext (outside of the text)	
Preface	Reviews
Foreword	Interviews
Table of contents	Author websites
Index	Correspondence
Acknowledgements	Diaries
Source notes	Critical literary analysis

Although paratextual elements also play a role in information skills instruction, methods for incorporating paratext theory into instruction have been few. The PLF provides a type of literacy that mediates engagement with a work in a way that promotes critical thinking. While the individuals involved in the production of works are not obligated to provide paratext, and readers are always free to ignore paratext, many may be unaware of its function and utility as well as the opportunities it provides for critically assessing a text. Genette notes that "just as the presence of paratextual elements is not uniformly obligatory, so, too, the public and the reader are not unvaryingly and uniformly obligated: no one is required to read a preface" (p. 4). However, readers who understand the functions of peritext are better prepared to use peritext in both the consumption and the production of texts.

In his 2014 article, "The Paratext's the Thing," Doherty examines the increasing importance of paratext in mass media production and study, and presses the point that "in today's digital media environment the 'text' itself is becoming increasingly dispersed and this makes paratexts more important and more interesting" (p. B14). The importance of paratext in relation to the proliferation of media underlines its potential importance in teaching students how to approach a work, use it as an information resource, assess its aesthetics and credibility, and comprehend the intent.

2. Related literature

Genette (1997) analyzed paratextual elements as manifested in printed books. The presence or absence of these elements, however, is not uniform. For example, a work may or may not have a preface, index, or other type of paratext associated with it. The presence or absence of these elements will vary depending on various factors including when the item was produced, the culture that produced it, the genre, or the edition. This necessitates that paratextual analysis take place on a work-by-work basis. Genette suggests that "defining an element of paratext consists in determining its location (the question *where?*); the date of its appearance and, if need be, its disappearance (*when?*); its mode of existence, verbal or other (*how?*); the characteristics of its situation of communication – its sender and addressee (*from whom? To whom?*); and the functions that its message aims to fulfill (*to do what?*)" (p. 4).

Others have followed suit across a variety of disciplines to integrate paratext into investigations related to the history of the book, the book as artifact, the marketing of books, and literary analysis. Moreover, although the theory as described by Genette related to printed books only, paratext is now seen as playing a role in a variety of media and interest in paratext continues to grow. Paratext theory has been used to study fan fiction (Fathallah, 2016; Hill & Pecoskie, 2014; Leavenworth, 2015), videogames (Rockenberger, 2014), film (Gray, 2010; Kummerling-Meibauer, 2013), DVDs (Benzon, 2013), digital texts (Malone, 2015; McCracken, 2013; Strehovec, 2014), networked media (Nacher, 2014), transmedia (Nottingham-Martin, 2014), and more. The literature demonstrates the utility of paratext, examines the types of paratext that are associated with specific types of media, and explains how paratext can affect the user's relationship to media. Authors also point out that paratext is critical when thinking about the design of interfaces and in supporting orientation to and immersion in a work

(Malone, 2015), as well as in designing the work itself (Stanitzek, 2005). While much of this work is published outside of LIS, this work is relevant to LIS scholars interested in media.

Specific elements of paratext have also been the subject of research in LIS as well as in communication and education. Examples of such research include authorship (Cronin & Franks, 2005; Cronin, Shaw, & La Barre, 2003; Weber & Thomer, 2014), book jackets and covers (Martinez, Stier, & Falcon, 2016), endpapers (Coifman, 2013; Duran & Bosch, 2011; Sipe & McGuire, 2006), acknowledgements (Cronin, 1995; Cronin et al., 2003; Desrocher & Pecoskie, 2014; Salager-Meyer, Ariza, & Berbesí, 2009), blurbing (Cronin & La Barre, 2005), and dedications (Gifford, 1988). In information science, paratext is referenced in works on classification (Paling, 2002), bibliometrics (Åström, 2014), and reader's advisory work (Pecoskie & Desrochers, 2013), and has been promoted as a research tool (Nottingham-Martin, 2014; Pecoskie & Desrochers, 2013).

The role of paratext in materials developed for children and how these paratextual elements support interactivity with a text, as well as emergent literacy and beginning reading skills, has also been the subject of study pointing to the importance of understanding paratext as a support for basic literacy. The role of paratext in picture books is recognized as particularly significant as the paratextual elements "frequently carry a substantial percentage of the book's verbal and visual information" (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001). Since emergent literacy is an area of special programming in libraries, paratext in picture books is of concern to researchers in LIS.

Several authors explore the unique role that peritext plays for readers of picture books (Higonnet, 1990; Martinez et al., 2016; Sipe, 2008) and conclude that paratext supports comprehension and appreciation of texts, and that attention to paratext can deepen the experience of the story and assist in immersion in the text for readers. In the library literature there are calls to include paratext in storytimes in order to offer children "a richer and more gratifying reading experience" (Coifman, 2013, p. 21) as part of a "whole book approach" that encourages children to consider paratext as part of their experience of the work (Lambert, 2010). Notwithstanding the potential benefits of examining peritext, it has been observed that little attention is paid to paratext in educational environments (Kummerling-Meibauer, 2013; Martinez et al., 2016) despite its importance for media literacy (Kummerling-Meibauer, 2013).

Another way authors have responded to Genette's work has been to fill in gaps in the theory. For example, Sipe and McGuire (2006) created a typology of endpapers based on their analysis of picture books. Their typology focuses on whether the front and back endpapers contain illustrated material and whether the front and back endpapers are identical or not. Duran and Bosch (2011) presented their own typology of picture book endpapers, differentiating between endpapers that provide epitextual content related to the story and endpapers that provide peritextual content related to the story. They defined epitextual content as that information related to collection, series, or publisher, information about the author, the dedications and any tribute, as well as spaces that invite children to write their names (for example "this book belongs to…."). Duran and Bosch identified endpaper peritext as any content related to the story, including how it related to characters, location, or theme, the preface and epilogue, and any bonus track (similar to what is seen on music CDs, with bonus track here referring to added content, such as a game provided with the book).

Recently, there have been several authors who have explored the concept of functionality regarding paratext and how paratext might be further categorized. These authors refer to "paratext" and do not differentiate between peritext and epitext in their typologies. Birke and Christ (2013) sought to explicate the function of paratext by categorizing it into three types: Interpretive, commercial, and navigational. The interpretive function describes how paratextual elements guide the reader's understanding of the text. The commercial elements influence decisions about purchasing based on elements such as

advertisements and price tags. The navigational elements relate to the reader's need to be oriented in order to understand where he or she is in a text, as well as potential directions for the reading process.

Nottingham-Martin (2014) proposed a model for the analysis of how transmedia texts[1] work to engage the reader with the story based on Genette's analytical approach (looking at the spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic, and functional aspects of paratext). Nottingham-Martin's model considers the relationship of paratext to the overarching narrative, rather than its appearance around materialized substantiations of the text (that is, book, film or device). In this model, the categorization of paratext asks the question "does a particular element build on the narrative from within, or does it comment on the narrative from an outside perspective of awareness of the narrative itself as an entity?" (p. 292). In considering the functional aspect of paratext theory, Nottingham-Martin presents the functions of paratext in relation to transmedia:

1. Navigational (helps the reader move within and between texts)
2. Commercial (advertising, branding)
3. Didactic (helps define the user's relationship to the text)
4. World-building (fills in gaps in the narrative, provides other points of view)
5. Community-building (allows readers to interact with each other)
6. Activates text (elements that ask readers to respond to the text).

Rockenberger (2014) developed a typology of paratext based on her analysis of the opening sequences of a video game called BioShock Infinite. She isolated sixteen functions of paratext used in the game:

1. Referential: Identifying the work, establishing its legal and discursive fingerprint;
2. Self-referential: Drawing attention to the paratext or its elements;
3. Ornamental[2]: decorating and 'looking nice';
4. Generic: Categorizing the work, indicating genre, establishing a 'generic pact' concerning the appropriate attitude of reception;
5. Meta-Communicative: Explicitly excogitating the conditions and constraints of mediated communication in general and the work's placing in particular;
6. Pragmatic: Controlling and managing the work's overall public reception;
7. Informative: Mediating true empirical data, clarifying internal and external relations and properties of the work, explicitly revealing intentions, removing epistemic obstacles to the reader's understanding; referring to other helpful information or services;
8. Staging: Image cultivation or self-display, biased depiction of the author and/or his work, thereby promoting certain expectations or pro-attitudes
9. Ideological: Promoting a certain viewpoint and trying to change the recipient's belief to fit the author's;
10. Hermeneutical: Offering certain cognitive framings, directing attention, exposing certain aspects or qualities, mediating relevant contexts, instructing the understanding or interpretation – i.e., the explanation of the text's characteristics as a result of authorial decisions and actions – and thus widening or restricting interpretative options;
11. Evaluative: Claiming or demanding value and cultural significance;
12. Commercial: Advertising, praising, selling; attracting and directing

buyer's attention; cultivating needs; referring to and recommending other products;
13. Legal: (a) *informative* (informing about legal entitlements), (b) *illocutionary* (symbolically establishing legal rights and obligations, formal or informal contracts and guarantees);
14. Pedagogical: Establishing standards for behavior;
15. Instructive, Operational: Or, to employ a term suggested by Birke and Christ (2013, p. 68), "navigational" (facilitating and guiding the reception and use of the product, offering orientation, suggesting, organizing, and structuring possible approaches to the product, recommending actions);
16. Personalization: Only for *interactive* paratext elements: temporarily adjusting elements to personal needs. (pp. 262–263)

Rockenberger (2014) acknowledges the limitations of building a typology based on analysis of a single game, but she offers her work as an example, calls for audio-visual research that uses paratextual theory in a way that more closely adheres to Genette's theory, and makes specific recommendations for how this might be accomplished.

In thinking about YouTube, Simonsen (2014) proposes that the concept of visibility is important in understanding the role of paratext in relation to YouTube content. Further he proposes that YouTube paratext can be divided into five categories: YouTube Auto-generated Paratexts, Video-Embedded Paratexts, Peripheral On-Site-Paratexts, User Generated Content (UGC), and Non-User Generated Content (Non-UGC).

Although paratext has been the subject of much inquiry, it has not been promoted as a "literacy" in other writing. Peritextual literacy is not conceptualized as an all-encompassing literacy framework, such as metaliteracy (Mackey & Jacobson, 2011), which seeks to integrate and unify various literacies in order to reframe thinking about information literacy in response to new media environments. Peritext, as demonstrated above, has utility and importance across media types and is relevant to both media use and production. As such, the PLF addresses a skill that has significance for the literacy frameworks with which metaliteracy is concerned: Information literacy, media literacy, digital literacy, visual literacy, cyber literacy, and information fluency. The PLF has a relationship to transliteracy, which is defined as "the ability to read, write, and interact across a range of platforms, tools, and media from signing and orality through handwriting, print, TV, radio and film, to digital social networks." It offers another skill that is relevant to "reading, writing, interaction and culture, both past and present" (Thomas et al., 2007, pp. 1–2).

3. The peritextual literacy framework

The peritextual literacy framework (PLF) isolates peritext from epitext, focusing on the presence or absence of paratextual elements that accompany a work and thus are readily available for use and analysis. While epitext, elements outside of the work that refer to it, has its own role to play in providing a threshold for users, it is set aside for now as a separate topic to be explored in the future. It should also be clear that the PLF is focused on Genette's (1997) final step in thinking about paratext, that is, "the functions that its message aims to fulfill" (p. 4). The PLF is provided in appendix A.

A main assumption of the PLF is that an emphasis on the functions of peritext has value in research and teaching across a wide variety of media as it can

- Reveal the scope of a work and the users decision as to whether to engage with the work (or not)
- Prepare the user to understand and appreciate the work
- Expose the extent to which a work provides navigational aids and the relative ease with which information contained in the work can be accessed
- Provide insight into the information and sources a work provides

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[1] Multiple definitions of transmedia are currently used. However, the term "transmedia storytelling" was coined by Henry Jenkins in 2003. He says that, "transmedia storytelling represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience. Ideally, each medium makes its own unique contribution to the unfolding of the story" (Jenkins, 2010, 944).

[2] This category of functionality, as Rockenberger explains in a footnote (p. 284), is not supported by Genette.

without an in-depth analysis of the work itself, allowing users to make a preliminary assessment of the credibility of a work

- Explain how the author knows what the author knows
- Explain what the author is trying to convey
- Clarify understanding of how sources are used in specific disciplines

In keeping with paratext theory, the PLF uses the terms "peritext," "text," "author," and "user" with the following stipulated definitions. Peritext is composed of those elements that are provided with the text but are not part of the text proper. Text stands for any work, document, or realia and includes both textual as well as non-textual substantiations. Likewise, author stands for anyone involved in the role of creator or producer, and allows for multiple authors and other collaborative relationships responsible for the text. In the framework, user can be used interchangeably with reader, player, viewer, listener, or consumer. The term user is preferred as it responds to the multiple ways that texts, broadly defined, can be interrogated, consumed, or otherwise experienced.

The PLF has been pretested and refined with several different user groups for use in teaching information literacy and critical thinking. It was introduced in a workshop with instructional librarians for use in teaching information literacy with nonfiction texts at the Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy (Gross & Latham, 2015) and with library and information science students in a graduate level course focused on the information needs of young adults. Use of the framework was then piloted with middle school students engaged with science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) texts, through a grant from the ALAN Foundation (Gross, Latham, Underhill, & Bak, 2016). The results of this study informed the naming of the functions of peritext and demonstrated that middle school students can identify the presence and absence of peritextual elements, understand the functions of peritext, and use peritextual analysis as an aid in approaching, navigating, and assessing works of nonfiction.

3.1. Types of peritext

The PLF categorizes six types of peritext that illuminate its function in referring to, supporting, and illuminating a text. These are production, promotional, navigational, intratextual, supplemental, and documentary. Examples of these elements provided below refer to common elements found in printed books in order to simplify the discussion. As other work has shown, peritextual elements accompany many types of media. Some of these elements such as title are commonly encountered. Others may be more unique. A full catalog of peritextual elements across media types is beyond the scope of this discussion but is warranted in our future work. The categorization of peritext into these six functional types allows for the analysis of peritextual elements by how they are positioned in relation to the text and for peritextual elements to be understood and discussed based on their function or purpose in relation to the work. Genette saw the functional aspect of paratext as essential, stating that "No matter what aesthetic or ideological pretentions…no matter what coquetry, no matter what paradoxical inversion the author puts into it, a paratextual element is always subordinate to 'its' text, and this functionality determines the essentials of its aspect and of its existence" (Genette, 1991, p. 269).

Production elements are elements that help to identify a text and provide data related to the facts of the creation of a text. These elements help the reader identify and refer to a text (what am I examining? what are we discussing?), to locate a particular work, and to differentiate a work from other similar works. Common examples of peritext that function in this way include title, author, illustrator, publisher, copyright, and edition or version number. While not all works carry the same production peritextual elements, this information has been and continues to be critical to researchers and practitioners in library and information science and to consumers of media. Understanding what these elements have to say about the work in hand, knowing where they

are located in the text, as well as the ways in which these elements can be used (that is, classification, meta-analysis, bibliometric studies or, on the user's end, perhaps finding and sharing media) reveals their importance and can prompt explorations into their presence or absence across various types of media as well as their role in interface design. Production peritextual elements may affect the user's decision to further engage with a text depending on the ability of the element to spark interest. Examples include provocative or interesting titles, familiarity with the author, illustrator, or producer of a work, or even the date of publication where currency or historical significance are important.

Promotional elements are instances of peritext that interface between the text and its potential audience. These elements help to market the work in terms of making it appealing or providing information that will increase the appeal of the work for its intended user. Examples of promotional peritext include covers and dust jackets, author biographies, endorsements, blurbs, award medallions, and lists of other works by the author. Explorations of the extent to which these elements are presented with the text and how they affect the potential or actual use of the text reveal another threshold where users can decide whether or not to further engage with a text. Users can begin to think critically about the text based on these peritextual elements. For example, if there are two different versions of a work and one displays an award seal, what is the effect of this added promotional element?

Navigational elements are peritext that assist the reader in understanding how the text is organized and how to search its content. Examples include tables of contents, chapter divisions, indexes, page numbers, and find features. Examining these features can reveal how information is presented in terms of scope, topic arrangement, emphasis, and approach. Navigational peritext can also reveal information about the usability of the text in terms of accessing the information it contains and is particularly important for works that are not meant to be experienced in a linear way (such as reference works or databases). Key considerations when approaching navigational peritext are assessments of how the information is organized and how easy these elements are to use.

Intratextual elements are meant to interface between the text and the user. They can inform the user's sense of the text by providing insights into the author's vision or intentions for the text, relationship to the text, or purpose in creating the text. Examples of intratextual elements include the foreword, preface, afterword, dedication, and acknowledgments. This type of peritext can be examined for what it offers in terms of increasing the user's understanding of the text, how the work should be read or consumed, and how it clarifies the origins or purpose behind the creation of the text.

Supplemental elements are peritextual elements that expand understanding of the content. Examples of supplemental elements include pictures, drawings, maps, tables, photographs, glossaries, and timelines. These elements provide additional information that assists the user in building contextual, historical, linguistic, or other kinds of knowledge that allows for a deeper understanding of the work being presented. Supplemental elements can be analyzed to discern how they work to extend and deepen the body of the work as well as how they help the work achieve its goals. Users can also consider if there are supplemental elements that are missing, but would make the work stronger or easier to engage with if they were present,

Documentary elements connect the audience to external works used in the production of the work or that support or extend the content of the work. Examples include source notes, references, bibliographies, suggested readings, webographies, discographies, and image credits. This category of peritext is often an aid to understanding from where the information contained in the text came, assessing the credibility of the text, and revealing the origins of the author's point of view. Users can use the inclusion of documentary elements, as well as the lack of documentary elements, to develop an initial impression of the verity of the text, which may affect how the user engages with the material presented in the body of the text.

Table 2
The functions of peritext: A comparison of approaches.

Peritextual literacy framework (Gross & Latham, 2015)	Digitized texts (Birke & Christ, 2013)	Transmedia (Nottingham-Martin, 2014)	Video games (Rockenberger, 2014)	YouTube (Simonsen, 2014)
Production			Referential	
			Generic	
			Legal	
Promotional	Commercial	Commercial	Self-referential	Visibility
			Staging	
			Commercial	
Navigational	Navigational	navigational	instructive, operational	
Intratextual	Interpretive	Didactic	Meta-communicative	
		Activates text	Pragmatic	
			Ideological	
			Hermeneutical	
			Evaluative	
			Pedagogical	
			Personalization	
Supplemental		World-building	Ornamental	
		Community-building		
Documentary			Informative	

3.2. Comparing the peritextual literacy framework with other typologies of function

As noted in the discussion of related literature, other authors have sought to provide definitions of the functions of paratext as regards various types of media. These discussions demonstrate the applicability of Genette's theory outside of the realm of printed books. Interestingly, there are overlaps in terminology and approaches used to further define the functions of paratext that result in both broader and narrower conceptions of the purpose of paratext than proposed in the PLF. For instance, in the case of YouTube videos, the primary function of paratext is described as providing or increasing visibility. Visibility, in terms of the PLF, falls within the promotional peritextual type.

On the other hand, a wider variety of paratextual functions have been explicated in relation to video game analysis. This variety of functions makes for interesting discussion, but may be overwhelming as an initial educational scaffold. However, the specific functions do fall within the types defined in the PLF and could be used in research and teaching to tease out the various dimensions of the peritextual literacy types.

It should be noted that the production and documentary functions of peritext have received less attention than other functions of peritext in the literature. Consideration of the text in hand would seem to be critical to any examination, but perhaps is at times taken for granted. On the other hand, while source documents are not always associated with a text, their absence can at times be as telling as their presence, and so are worth considering when deciding whether or not, or how, to engage with a text (Table 2).

In comparison with existing typologies, the PLF seeks to provide functional categories that are applicable to a wide variety of media as well as a framework that has a wide variety of applications. The PLF can assist users in using and analyzing texts, but as a pedagogical tool it has the potential to help readers develop critical thinking about works as well as support the creation and production of new works across a variety of media.

3.3. Peritextual literacy and critical thinking

Discussion of critical thinking has a long history and has captured the imagination of scholars in a variety of disciplines including philosophy, psychology, education, teaching, and information science (Albitz, 2007; Ennis, 1962). Despite this long history, there is no standard definition of critical thinking that has been broadly adopted.

Further, while critical thinking is a preferred term in education, information literacy, which requires critical thinking, is the term more widely used in information science (Albitz, 2007; Wallace & Jeffereson, 2013; Weiner, 2011).

Ennis (1962) provides a practical explication of the concept of critical thinking. He asserts that critical thinking is "the correct assessing of statements" (p. 83). He conceives of critical thinking as having a minimum of twelve aspects (Ennis, 1962, p. 84):

1. Grasping the meaning of a statement
2. Judging whether there is ambiguity in a line of reasoning
3. Judging whether certain statements contradict each other
4. Judging whether a conclusion follows necessarily
5. Judging whether a statement is specific enough
6. Judging whether a statement is actually the application of a certain principle
7. Judging whether an observation statement is reliable
8. Judging whether an inductive conclusion is warranted
9. Judging whether the problem has been identified
10. Judging whether something is an assumption
11. Judging whether a definition is adequate
12. Judging whether a statement made by an alleged authority is acceptable

Critical thinking is one of the objectives of information literacy outlined in the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (Association of College and Research Libraries, 2016) and the *Standards for 21st Century Learners* (American Association of School Librarians, 2007) and has an important place in library programming for students. Teaching critical thinking also has a key place in current educational policies, such as those promoted by the *National Assessment of Education Progress* (NAEP) framework (Institute of Education Sciences, 2015), the *Next Generation Science Standards* (NGSS Lead States, 2016), and the *Common Core State Standards* (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2016). All of these frameworks conceptualize critical thinking in terms of students' competency in interacting with texts. The PLF provides a vehicle for guiding and assessing students' ability to understand and interpret texts, to locate and recall information in texts, to use supplemental material provided in texts, and to analyze and critique texts in a variety of ways including their credibility and aesthetic value. All of these abilities also strengthen what has been conceptualized as information literacy and media literacy in LIS.

Nonetheless, while increasing attention is being paid to integrating critical thinking into education "many students do not receive explicit instruction in CAT [Critical-Analytical Thinking] or are not provided tasks suitable to developing either the disposition or analytic skills that it requires, especially in schools that serve students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds" (Brown, Afflerback, & Croninger, 2014, p. 545). The potential of the PLF to serve these populations is great, as it is not reliant on the purchase of specific texts or technologies. Further, the PLF can support initiatives such as the *Next Generation Science Standards* (NGSS Lead States, 2016) in helping students work toward a habit of mind that uses critical thinking to approach evidence in texts.

The PLF also has a role to play in information literacy instruction in support of the development of critical thinking skills needed when determining the relevance, credibility, and usability of texts. Further, as emphasis on knowledge creation in relation to information seeking grows, students can be taught to consider how the inclusion of peritext in their own information products can enhance their presentation.

4. Implications for research

While there has been a great deal of research that utilizes paratext theory, much of it resides outside of LIS. It would be interesting to see analytical work that utilizes the PLF in interrogating various kinds of texts. There are also investigations needed into the usefulness of the framework as a tool to teach critical thinking. The authors theorize that the framework, and its parts, can be incorporated into information literacy training in the K-20, and possibly into research on teaching emergent literacy skills. The framework needs to be tested in both formal and informal learning environments and assessed for how understanding the functions of peritext facilitate user experience of media as it relates to their ability to understand, navigate, assess, and use texts. There is also the question of whether instruction in peritextual literacy will motivate students to read and use peritext as well as to incorporate it into their own texts.

The PLF takes its examples from the printed book. However, current research across a variety of fields demonstrates the potential of using the PLF in assessing many types of texts, and hints at its potential role in promoting media literacy. As work related to electronic media continues, the question of the role of peritext in the usability of media continues to be an open one. There is more to be known about what kinds of elements are being utilized in the production of media and the potential role of peritext in interface design and its impact on usability.

There is also work needed regarding epitext, elements outside a text (for example, book reviews, interviews, author websites), and how they influence whether and how the text is read, understood, and evaluated. Works on the functions of epitext are minimal, and it may be that epitext has a role to play as a scaffold for critical thinking.

5. Implications for education

The PLF has applications across the grade levels K-20. It provides a specific approach to thinking critically about a text that can be used with a variety of media to develop both skills and dispositions necessary for critical thinking and to attain information literacy competency. When used as an educational aid, peritext provides a scaffold for students to know, use, and interpret peritextual elements in order to

1. Understand how the author has formed an opinion or point of view
2. Assess the credibility of information

3. Assess the usability of the text
4. Assess the ethical dimensions of information used and presented
5. Consider how supplemental elements augment presentation of the text
6. Develop confidence in interpreting texts
7. Consider incorporating peritextual elements into their own writing and design.

Peritextual elements can also be incorporated into library programming for very young children who are attaining emergent literacy skills, such as developing a knowledge of how books "work." Emergent literacy programming as demonstrated in the literature can include introducing concepts such as author, illustrator, and publisher, as well as examining book covers and endpapers.

6. Conclusion

The wide array of literature that continues to take paratext as its subject is an indication of continuing interest in Genette's theory among many researchers and writers. Paratext theory is already informing work in a variety of fields such as communication, media studies, and literary studies, and is beginning to be incorporated into LIS research. LIS researchers and practitioners may benefit from exploring how paratext theory, and the PLF in particular, can enhance their work. The PLF fills a gap in paratext theory by explaining how peritextual elements function in a way that can be applied to a variety of media, assisting not only in media analysis but also in media production. As a pedagogical tool, the PLF provides a method for teaching media analysis. The PLF is unique in offering support for researchers, librarians, teachers, and learners interested in media use, analysis, and production.

The PLF will be useful in considering a wide variety of text types, developing new media and interfaces for information systems, and improving critical thinking about texts through literacy programming. The authors are currently using the PLF as a tool to analyze young adult nonfiction texts and have developed, along with collaborator Shelbie Witte (College of Education, Oklahoma State University), a new instructional model designed to assist students in learning peritextual reading strategies and practices in reading nonfiction. The PACT (peritextual analysis and critical thinking) instructional model will be tested using an experimental design to investigate its potential for improving reading and critical thinking outcomes in a way that is educationally meaningful for students. The next step will be to test the PLF in libraries and classrooms to determine the extent to which the framework is useful to librarians, teachers, and students, as well as its analytical role in studying various kinds of media.

It is very easy to be immersed in these thoughts about the role of peritextual elements, which are about the text, but not the text itself. Genette warns, "Watch out for the paratext!" as "the discourse on the paratext must never forget that it bears on a discourse that bears on a discourse, and that the meaning of its object depends on the object of this meaning, which is yet another meaning. A threshold exists to be crossed" (p. 410).

Appendix A. Peritextual literacy framework

Peritext type	Examples of peritext elements	Consider
Production (Elements that uniquely identify a work)	Author Book designer Copyright ISBN Illustrator Publisher Series title Title (and subtitle) Translator	What do they tell you about the work you have in hand? Where do we find these elements? What uses are there for these elements?
Promotional (Elements that interface between the work and its potential audience)	Advertisements Author biography Author website URL Award medallions Blurb/bla-bla Dustjacket Endorsements List of other works by author List of other works by publisher List of other works in series	Are they present? How do these elements affect your view of the work? Are they: • Interesting? • Convincing? • Effective?
Navigational (Elements that assist the reader in understanding the organization of the work and how to search the content)	Chapter divisions Index Intertitles Page numbers Table of contents	How is the information organized? How easy are these elements to use?
Intratextual (Elements within the work that interface between the work and the reader)	Acknowledgments Afterword Dedication Foreword Preface	Do these increase your understanding of the work? Or, make clear the origins or purpose of the work?
Supplemental (Elements outside the text proper that augment understanding of the content)	Pictures Endpapers Glossary Maps Photographs Tables Timeline	How do these help you understand the work better? Are there elements missing that you wish were there? How do these elements help the author make his or her points?
Documentary (Elements that connect the audience to external works used in the production of the work or that reify or extend the content of the work)	Bibliography Discography Image credits References Source notes Suggested reading Webography	Is it clear where the information came from? Do they help you understand the author's point of view? Do these elements color your impression of the text?

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