



Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation (Literature, Culture, Theory)

Gerard Genette

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Paratexts are those liminal devices and conventions, both within and outside the book, that form part of the complex mediation between book, author, publisher and reader: titles, forewords, epigraphs and publishers' jacket copy are part of a book's private and public history. In this first English translation of *Paratexts*, Gérard Genette shows how the special pragmatic status of paratextual declaration requires a carefully calibrated analysis of their illocutionary force. With clarity, precision and an extraordinary range of reference, *Paratexts* constitutes an encyclopedic survey of the customs and institutions as revealed in the borderlands of the text. Genette presents a global view of these liminal mediations and the logic of their relation to the reading public by studying each element as a literary function. Richard Macksey's foreword describes how the poetics of paratexts interact with more general questions of literature as a cultural institution, and situates Genette's work in contemporary literary theory.

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