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PARATEXTS 2.0

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LITERARY NARRATIVE

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Dedicated to Paolo

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Why write? Because you *desire to see things as they are*. A writer has to work incredibly hard these days to counter the great mass of fatuous, venal and false realities heavily promoted to people through their TVs and magazines, consoles and iPads. Which brings us back to Orwell's final motive, the political, because I believe that the elusive sensation a writer tries to provoke in his reader is inherently political [...] When counterfeit realities are all around us, the desire to see things as they are is itself a radical act.
~ Zadie Smith, 2011. *Why Write?*

Few artists dare to try to talk about ways of working toward redeeming what's wrong, because they'll look sentimental and naive to all the weary ironists. Irony's gone from liberating to enslaving.
~ David Foster Wallace, 1993. Interview with L. McCaffery.

52. And I still love her. *I love you, Bean. (And even now, I don't say it straight. Let me try one more time:* I love you, Bean. *I say it.)* And I place this in the middle of a short story in the midst of our modern YouTube, iTunes, plugged-in lives. I might as well tell her right here. No one's looking; no one's listening. There can't be any place better to hide in plain sight.
~ Nathan Englander, 2012. "Everything I Know About My Family on My Mother's Side."

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the twenty-first century has witnessed the rise of literary experimentations concerning the materiality of the book, and of extra-textual authorial manifestations in the Internet and social media. This dissertation is my attempt to understand these phenomena. Although the use of visual elements in literary narrative is not a novelty per se–experimentations with the printed medium date back, at least, to the mid-XVIII century with Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*–the emergence of new digital technologies has given a further impetus to unconventional modes of literary production and reception. Accordingly, explorations of digital narrative (e.g. virtual reality, hyperfiction), the multiplicity of semiotic modes employed in a given narrative (i.e. multimodality), and stories told on social media have received much attention in narrative theory. The dynamics of the digital turn and its critical vocabulary have been widely investigated, within different approaches and disciplinary agendas.

The present study, however, as the title indicates, builds on Gérard Genette's concept of paratext. Although formalized before the digital revolution

(1987), Genette's proposal to distinguish between peritext and epitext provides an important key to understand contemporary literary writing. Specifically, the definition of paratext manages to encompass the various functionalities of both (1) the unconventional visual elements in the printed text (the peritext) and (2) the elements interacting with the narrative communication although not materially attached to it (the epitext). I argue for the need to extend Genette's categorization according to twenty-first century literary practices, i.e. the increasing use of multimodal features (such as unusual layout, typography, images, colors) and the interaction of authors and readers in the digital world.

"Paratexts 2.0" are formalized in a model that presents the new categories of *material* peritexts and *digita*l epitexts and their main functions. This proposal has two main aims. First, the new model provides a heuristics for contemporary narratives whose authors exploit (1) various semiotic modes in their printed books, and (2) the properties of Web 2.0 technologies in the digital world. Second, since my dissertation follows the principles and the method of the rhetorical approach to narrative, the conceptualization of the paratext 2.0 is also an attempt to complement the rhetorical approach with medium-specific analyses and with a discussion on the extra-textual dimension of authorial agency.

Thus, my investigation relies primarily on the work of rhetorical narrative theorists, but it is complemented with researches on mediality and modality. In addition, the following perspectives are central to the construction of my critical arguments:

1. Liesbeth Korthals Altes' invitation to a "more systematic research into [the] connection between changing cultural models and narrative devices, reinforcing historical awareness in narratology" ("Sincerity" 108);
2. Paul Dawson's call for a *discursive* narratology and a theory of authorship;
3. The urgency for *antimimetic* texts to be "fully included and centrally featured in the theory and analysis of narrative" (Richardson 180).

Significantly, the new framework of paratexts 2.0 offers the necessary flexibility to analyze a large variety of contemporary literary narratives. Moreover, since the strategies and devices that today we associate with experimentation may become conventional in the future, the model allows for further extensions of categories and functions. Finally, with regard to a diachronic perspective, this study explores the ethical values embedded in the choice of using paratexts 2.0 as resources of narrative communication in relation to today's authorship and to the "general current in American literature which rejects postmodern irony in favor of emotionality, sharing and truthful commitment" (Korthals Altes "Sincerity" 107).

Many authors today are concerned with the future of the novel. My investigation tries to identify and define some of the recurrent practices and discourses which are modeling twenty-first century narrative. In so doing, I do not provide any ultimate answer to the future of literary writing and reading, but I offer some significant tools to understand the present.

The dissertation is structured in six chapters. The present chapter introduces the central issues informing this study and presents its main results with regard to the methods employed and the principal purposes of the inquiry. Chapter 2 describes in details the theoretical approach adopted, i.e. the rhetorical approach to narrative developed by the third generation of the Chicago school of criticism. Specifically, it explains how the new typology of the paratext 2.0 introduced in Chapter 3 intersects with the underlying principles of the rhetorical approach and with some of the key issues it addresses. The chapter also clarifies the perspective adopted as far as authorial agency and audience are concerned. Section 2.2 focuses on the concept of paratext, from Genette's original formulation to more recent discussions, such as Werner Wolf's (con-)textual framings (2006). In particular, I bring to the fore the strengths and weaknesses of Genette's categorization, especially with regard to the current socio-historical context. Section 2.3 answers to the "implicit rhetorical call for paying attention to the context of literary creation and reception," (Shen "Implied" 141), and examines in detail the way new media technologies are influencing literary creation and reception. Besides, section 2.3 introduces an intermedial perspective (i.e. phenomena taking place between media), and some concepts–such as multimodality, remediation and materiality–investigated within the theoretical areas of transmedial narratology, digital media, sociolinguistics, and visual rhetorics.

Chapter 3 presents the model of paratexts 2.0. First (3.1), the chapter argues for the importance of acknowledging the role of the different media and

modes that authors choose to employ in their narratives-choices that are especially relevant within a diachronic perspective and for the ethical value they carry. Second (3.2), Chapter 3 provides a definition of paratext 2.0, and of its categories and functions. The description of these categories and functions is combined with numerous examples of twenty-first century literary narratives. The chapter then introduces (3.3) a heuristic tool for measuring the value that authors attribute to paratexts 2.0 as resources of narrative communication.

Chapter 4 puts the model, with its new categories and functions, into practice through the analysis of two contemporary narratives: Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010) and Jonathan Safran Foer's *Tree of Codes* (2010). The chapter aims at illustrating how paratexts 2.0 can be rhetorically used to better understand the *purposive communication* from author to audience. I particularly focus on the effects that the categories of material peritexts and digital epitexts have on the reading experience, and on the significance, or value, that authors give to these new resources. The two case studies are different enough in their drawing on paratexts 2.0 to prove the revision useful both for paradigmatic narratives and for less exemplary ones.

Chapter 5 delves deeper into issues of authorship and readership and offers tentative answer(s) to the question "what's new?" Specifically, it looks at the authorial stance toward media engagement and at the kind of readers' expectations it may trigger. The chapter also hints at some aesthetic values of post-postmodernism, such as sincerity and *sharing*. Additionally, I argue that paratexts 2.0 are part of the means through which authors build their *ethos*. I further show that the extension of the concept of paratext to the new categories

and functions 2.0 allows for the inclusion of the multiplicity of discourses *alongside* a given narrative that Dawson is arguing for. In particular, I suggest that one of the key principle guiding the author-reader relationship at the beginning of twenty-first century is what I call a double-sharing logic involving the author's sharing of *sincere* features and intertextual sources.

To strengthen my claims and to illustrate a complementarity between the way digital media affect today's authorship and readership and the way today's authorship and readership interact through digital media, I draw on several literary examples, such as Jonathan Lethem's *The Ecstasy of Influence* (2011), David Foster Wallace's *Octet* (1999) and "E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S Fiction" (1993), and Zadie Smith's *Changing My Mind* (2009). Furthermore, section 4.5 looks at David Shields' *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto* (2010) to extend the typology of the paratext 2.0 to nonfictional narratives. In this regard, I pay particular attention to the functioning of the double-sharing logic and the distinction of fiction and nonfiction. The chapter concludes with a visual comparison of the value given to the categories of the paratext 2.0 (as resources of narrative communication) in *Reality Hunger*, *A Visit from the Goon Squad,* and *Tree of Codes*.

Finally, Chapter 6 resumes the arguments of the dissertation about the model of paratext 2.0 postulated as a valuable heuristics for the rhetorical approach to narrative. I especially highlight the flexibility of my proposal for further improvements and revisions. Accordingly, I outline some future directions for inquiries into issues of paratextuality, medium-specific analysis,

author-reader relationship, and for a contextualized and cultural-aware rhetorical approach to narrative.

Chapter 2

FRAMING THE FRAME

2.1 RHETORICAL APPROACH TO NARRATIVE

The following study situates itself within the rhetorical approaches to narrative. This tradition considers literary narrative "as an art of communication" (Phelan "Rhetorical Approaches" 500). Its roots are to be found in Aristotle's definition of tragedy [1] "as the imitation of an action that arouses pity and fear and leads to the purgation of those emotions" (Phelan "Rhetoric/ethics" 207). Two of the most influential scholars that champion this approach, James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz, have been students of Wayne C. Booth, who is deemed to be the founder of the rhetorical tradition. Booth, in turn a student of R. S. Crane,[2] with his groundbreaking *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) and *The Company We Keep* (1988) "inverted the relation between poetics and rhetoric," arguing that since "any technique will produce some effects on its audience rather than others [...], any technique is rhetorical" (Phelan "Rhetoric/ethics" 207). This idea emphasizes the rhetorical importance of authorial choices as they bear on the

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[1] *Poetics* (384-322 BCE)

[2] Crane belongs to the first-generation of neo-Aristotelians at the University of Chicago. See, for instance, *Critics and Criticism: Ancient and Modern* (1953).

audience, shifting the focus of narrative inquiries to the "interaction between an author and an audience through the medium of a text for some purposes" (Phelan "Rhetorical Approaches" 500).

Phelan and Rabinowitz have contributed extensively to this field, helping articulating a complete theory of narrative communication. On the one hand, in *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (1987) Rabinowitz defines four types of audience (flesh and blood, authorial, narrative and ideal); on the other hand, Phelan provides a definition of narrative that highlights the author's communicative purpose to affect readers. This definition, to be taken as the default starting point for rhetorical narrative inquires, describes narrative as "somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose(s) that something happened to someone or something"[3] (Phelan *Living* 18). Drawing from Phelan and Rabinowitz, I will briefly summarize the salient components of the rhetorical approach to narrative according to their own subdivision in six main principles.

2.1.1 Paratexts 2.0 and the Six Principles of the Rhetorical Approach

The six principles of the rhetorical approach to narrative are at the basis of the present work (although some are more central than others). In the following

[3] Phelan and Rabinowitz recognize that "individual narratives may not conform exactly to every element of the definition," such as in narratives narrated at the present or future tense. The definiton, therefore, is a starting point for discussion about significant deviations, as well as for highlighting the main interest of rhetorical narratologists in the "multidimensional purposes of narrative acts and in the relationships among authors, narrator(s), and audiences" (4-5).

overview, I will clarify to what extent they underlie the investigation of paratexts 2.0.

[1] The first principle states that narrative is "*a multidimensional purposive communication from a teller to an audience*" (Phelan and Rabinowitz 3; emphasis in the original). The focus of rhetorical narrative theorists is therefore on the rhetorical act and the way the elements of any narrative are shaped to convey thematic meanings and the experience of affective, ethical, and aesthetic effects (3). My own emphasis, hence, is precisely on how *paratextual* elements are used in contemporary literary narratives, in combination with other textual phenomena, to shape particular meanings and effects.

[2] The second principle of the rhetorical approach highlights an hermeneutic practice: the interpretative task of rhetorical narratologists shall conform to an "a posteriori" stance (Phelan and Rabinowitz 5). This tenet, as opposed to the "a priori" one, simply means that rhetorical narratologists "shall not preselect for analysis particular issues such as gender or cognition" but focus on "how narratives seek to achieve their multidimensional purposes" (5). My own analysis, although focusing on a particular kind of narrative (twenty-first century literature employing unconventional paratextual devices), is motivated by an a posteriori starting question. In other words, my dissertation is consistent with this principle in its primary aim of understanding how contemporary paratextual phenomena affect the *achievement* of the multidimensional purpose of the narrative.

[3] Following again a hermeneutical strategy, the third principle claims that the rhetorical critic "may begin the task of interpretation from any point of the rhetorical triangle ... considering how each point both influences and is influenced by the other two" (Phelan "Rhetoric/ethics" 209). The rhetorical triangle is made of speaker, text, and audience. It involves the effects of narratives which are inscribed into this "feedback loop among authorial agency, textual phenomena (including intertextual relations), and reader response" (Phelan and Rabinowitz 5). This principle stresses the "recursive relationship" (Phelan "Narrative Theory" 300) among (i) author, (ii) text, and (iii) readers as a key component of the rhetorical analysis since "texts are designed by authors (consciously or not) to affect readers in particular ways" (Phelan and Rabinowitz 5). In my study, I analyze (para) textual *phenomena* (ii) conceived and foregrounded by the authorial agency (i) to affect readers in particular ways (iii). The reason why contemporary authors draw on such unconventional (para) textual phenomena is linked to socio-cultural and historical factors. Similarly, reader response to these specific designs is itself inscribed into a broader cultural context, which allows for decoding (para) textual devices (see 5.4).

[4] According to Phelan and Rabinowitz, the fourth principle of the rhetorical approach concentrates on the progression of a narrative (6). As opposed to plot, which is merely concerned with textual dynamics, progression regards both "textual and readerly dynamics, as the key means by which an author achieves his or her purposes" (6). As illustrated below (see fig. 2.1), narrative progressions can be generated and developed through instabilities

(involving elements of the story) and tensions (involving elements of the discourse) that tend to be resolved toward the ending (Phelan "Narrative Progression" 359).

	Beginning	**Middle**	**Ending**
Textual Dynamics	Exposition Launch	Exposition Voyage	Exposition/Closure Arrival
Readerly Dynamics	Initiate Entrance	Interaction Intermediate Configuration	Farewell Completion

Fig. 2. 1 Narrative Progression (adapted from Phelan *Experiencing* 21).

Textual dynamics are defined as the "internal processes by which narratives move from beginning through middle to ending," while readerly dynamics are "the corresponding cognitive, affective, ethical, and aesthetic responses of the audience to those textual dynamics"[4] (Phelan and Rabinowitz 6).

According to Phelan, a progression of audience response corresponds to the progression of events (*Experiencing* 15-22). Readerly and textual dynamics are thus connected by narrative judgments of three kinds: interpretative, ethical and aesthetic (Phelan and Rabinowitz 6). Narrative judgments are intertwined and concern the nature of actions of the narrative (interpretative); the moral value of characters and actions (ethical); its overall artistic quality (aesthetic) (Phelan *Experiencing* 9). Cues to ethical judgments, such as ethical standards,

[4] As Phelan argues, the first aspect of "Beginning," called "Exposition" encompasses most paratextual elements such as the front matter, the title page, illustrations, epigraphs, preludes, notices, and author's or editor's introductions (*Experiencing,* 17). The correspondent readerly dynamic, "Initiation," somehow follows Rabinowitz's "Rules of Notice" (47-75).

are to be found in the narrative. As Phelan argues in *Living to Tell About It* (23), "at any given point in a narrative, our ethical position results from the dynamic interaction of four ethical situations." These ethical situations involve (1) the character-character relations (ethics of the told); (2) the narrator's relation to the characters, to the telling, and to the audience, as well as (3) the implied author's relation to these things (ethics of the telling); and (4) the flesh-and-blood audience's response to the first three positions (Phelan *Experiencing* 11). The four ethical situations outlined by Phelan belong to the wider principle that literary narratives are a privileged space to explore ethical issues.

This general idea is part of an ethical turn in literary studies which has started in the 1980s (Korthals Altes "Ethical" 142). The distinction of the four ethical positions helps "to trace how the technical choices of the narrative entail ethical consequences," as well as to determine the rhetorical narrative theorist's engagements with those consequences (Phelan *Living* 23). Phelan's thesis highlights the meta-hermeneutical stance of the rhetorical theorist, who seeks to "reconstruct the ethical principles upon which the narrative is built" (*Experiencing* 10), but who, at the same time, is aware that "There is no such thing as 'the' ethics of a text, only various ethical readings" (Korthals Altes "Ethical" 145).

In this dissertation, my focus is mainly on "the ethics of rhetorical purpose, that is, the ethical dimension of the overall narrative act" (*Experiencing* 11). More precisely, my main interest lies in the ethical and cultural issues involved in the use of new media and new technologies, and the way these issues are materialized through paratexts 2.0 and a digital interaction

with the audience. As we will see more in details in the analysis of the selected narratives (Chapter 4), authors employing paratexts 2.0 show a particular attitude toward our information age and the present ethical debate around the role of new media and the changes they are bringing to our lives. This attitude is expressed not only through storytelling, but also through the devices used to *materialized* it.

[5] The fifth principle of the rhetorical approach regards specifically fictional narrative and the two positions that the actual audience adopts in the rhetorical exchanges (Phelan and Rabinowitz 6). According to Phelan and Rabinowitz, "Reading a work of fiction ... always entails at least a double consciousness: ... an actual reader needs to recognize that it is an invented artifact ... *and*, at the same time, to *pretend* to be a member of the narrative audience who takes what he or she reads as history and treats the characters as real" (140; emphasis in the original). Readers join (or try to join) the authorial audience (the hypothetical group for whom the author writes) and pretend to join the narrative audience, i.e. "the audience that receives the narrator's text" (6).

It could further be argued that this principle involves the need to distinguish up to five different audiences (Phelan "Rhetoric/ethics" 210): the flesh and blood audience (actual reader); the authorial audience (the author's ideal reader); the narrative audience (the position assumed by the reader when responding to characters as if they were real people); the narratee[5] (the

[5] The notion of the narratee has been originally conceptualized by Gerald Prince's 1973 "Introduction to the Study of the Narratee."

audience addressed by the narrator); the ideal narrative audience (the narrator's hypothetical perfect audience). Narratives using paratexts 2.0 play with this *double consciousness* that reading entails, as they constantly remind readers of the materiality of the printed book.[6]

[6] The sixth and last principle describes the three different kinds of interests and responses that audiences develop in relation to the components of narrative: mimetic, thematic, and synthetic (Phelan and Rabinowitz 7). The readers' interests in the mimetic component concern "the characters as possible people and ... the narrative world as like our own"; whereas the readers' responses to the thematic component are tied to "the ideational function of the characters and [to] the cultural, ideological, philosophical, or ethical issues"; the readers' interests in the synthetic component focus on the narrative as an artificial construct, and therefore they are linked to aesthetic judgments (7). Although these different focuses are inevitably intertwined, every narrative may be dominated by one of them. For instance, metafictional narratives makes the most of the synthetic component counting on the readers' awareness of the narrative as a made object ("Rhetoric/ethics" 211). Like postmodernist fiction, contemporary literary narratives employing paratexts 2.0 foreground their synthetic component. By breaking the mimetic illusion through material elements, they highlight the physical presence of the book as object. To conclude, the six principles are at the basis of my overall project and they provide the basic vocabulary for my investigation. In the following section, I will

[6] I use the term "readers" throughout this study meaning rhetorical readers, i.e. I use "readers" and "actual audience" interchangeably.

turn to narrative communication, another crucial concept for rhetorical narrative theory.

2.1.2 Narrative Communication

As we have seen, a foundational principle for rhetorical narratology is that narrative is "a communicative event, a rhetorical action in which an author addresses an audience for some purpose(s)" (Phelan "Rhetoric, Ethics" 57).[7] Given this principle, Phelan argues that the analysis of narrative communication between an authorial agent and (an) audience(s) shall rely on a narrative communication model that highlights the communicative *event* rather than the structure (59). The "classical" narrative communication model, however, is based on the binary distinction of story and discourse (or *fabula* and *sjuzet* in formalist terminology): the chronological sequence of events and situations that constitutes the *what* of narrative, as opposed to the *how*, the telling or presenting of the story.[8] Following this distinction, Seymour Chatman's communication model (151) falls within the discourse side. The real author and the real reader are placed outside the narrative transaction, whereas the implied author, the implied reader, the narrator and the narratee are agents inside it:

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[7] In 2.1.2, the citations by Phelan come exclusively from "Rhetoric, Ethics, and Narrative Communication: Or, from Story and Discourse to Authors, Resources, and Audiences," therefore, from now on, in this section the title will be omitted in the parenthetical references.

[8] As Dan Shen summarizes: "Rather than referring to content in general, *story* refers specifically to the narrated events (actions and happenings) and existents (characters and setting), and *discourse* to the rearrangement or treatment of the events and existents on the level of presentation" ("Story-Discourse" 566).

Real author → [Implied author → (Narrator) → (Narratee) → Implied reader] → Real reader

According to Phelan (59), in light of the story/discourse distinction, it is clear that characters (part of the story) are not part of the communication model (part of the discourse). However, in the analysis of *The Friends of Eddy Coyle* (1970) by George V. Higgins, Phelan points out that the standard functions of narration–"reporting about characters and events, interpreting those reports, and evaluating them"–are performed by character-character dialogue (57). Therefore, Chatman's model must be revised in light of those narratives that allow multiple channels of communication (67). In the final chapter of Higgins' novel, thus, Phelan unveils two levels of communication interacting with each other: author-character-audience and author-narrator-audience (66). These two levels might not be sufficiently accounted for in Chatman's model, since the author-character-audience channel cannot be conceived outside the story, whereas the model is centered on the discourse level.

The recognition that "character-character dialogue often functions simultaneously as events and as narration by other means" leads Phelan to the conclusion that the story/discourse distinction is not always a helpful heuristic (65). Besides, the acknowledgement of the author-character-audience channel helps him to identify a third channel relative to the overall narrative structure. Here, the author "skips over both the narrator and the characters in order to communicate to the audience" through the various devices at his or her disposal (66). To better capture the synergy among these different channels, Phelan

proposes a chart (as opposed to a two-dimensional model).[9]

Implied Author	RESOURCES:	Actual Audience
(outside the text; in history; occasion of writing)	Occasion Paratexts Narrator(s) Character(s) as teller(s) & listeners(s) FID Structure/Gaps Narratee/Narrative Audience Authorial Audience Etc.	(rhetorical readers; in history; occasion of reading)

Fig. 2.2. Phelan's "Chart of Variables in Narrative Communication, a.k.a. IRA" (adapted from Phelan 71).

The "Chart of Variables in Narrative Communication" (fig. 2.2) displays the implied author and the actual audience outside the narrative text, whereas narrator, authorial audience, characters, etc. are listed in the same column, being all "equally the product of the implied author's communicative choices" (71).

[9] Phelan had already argued that the distinction was "better understood as a helpful heuristic than a rigid boundary between the elements of narrative" in *Living to Tell About It* (Phelan "Narrative Theory" 289). Moreover, Phelan is not the only one having criticized the formalist distinction of story and discourse, and its relative concepts of diegetic levels and narrative framing. For an account of some previous attempts to subvert this paradigm, see, for instance, Dan Shen's "Defense and Challenge: Reflections on the Relation Between Story and Discourse." In this article, Shen already points out that "the distinction between story and discourse will be blurred when [...] one element belongs at the same time both to the level of story and to that of discourse" (230). For recent discussions around this paradigm and the model see, among others: "Unnatural Narratology, Unnatural Narratives: Beyond Mimetic Models" (Alber, Iversen, Nielsen and Richardson), and *The Rhetoric of Fictionality* (Walsh).

While the resources are variable and may change from narrative to narrative, the implied author and the actual audience are two *constants*. Before dwelling on these constants (see 2.1.3), I shall stress the potential openness of the list of resources available to the author. According to the "Chart of Variables in Narrative Communication," paratexts are among the *resources* available to the author for his or her communicative purposes. In this study, I endorse Phelan's new model of narrative communication, but I also suggest the need of further discussion, as far as *paratextual* resources are concerned. In twenty-first century literary narrative, resources belonging to the realm of paratext are increasingly foregrounded both at textual level, emphasizing the medial dimension of a given narrative in the form of the printed book, and at extra textual level, in terms of the authorial presence in digital media, as well as the use of such media to create additional material for the same given narrative.

2.1.3 Authorship, Ethos, and Audience

In James Phelan's chart of variables, the two agents involved in the narrative communication are the implied author and the actual audience, in history and in the occasion of writing. Despite the asymmetry of the terminology, both of them are placed outside the text, in a defined historical period, and within a particular occasion of writing or reading. While it is not my aim in this study to focus on the debate around the concept of the implied author,[10] I shall clarify

[10] See, for instance, Tom Kindt's and Hans-Harald Müller's *The Implied Author: Concept and Controversy*, and Wolf Schmid's "Implied Author."

my position and explain why I believe that the concept of the implied author somehow clashes with my tentative implementation of the model with mediality and epitexts.

As Dan Shen points out, in Wayne C. Booth's formulation, "the 'implied author' is both the 'author' (writer) of the text and the authorial image 'implied' by the text (by 'the sum of his own choices') for the reader to infer" ("Implied" 142). Following Booth's original conceptualization (1961)–according to which the implied author is the "author's 'second self'" (71)–Phelan defines him or her as "the streamlined version of the real author responsible for the construction of the text" (*Living* 5). He then suggests that to identify "the initial agent as the implied rather than the actual author adds a greater precision to the model because it recognizes that the same actual author can employ different versions of himself in different narrative communications" ("Rhetoric, Ethics" 68). According to Phelan, the relationship between the streamlined version of the actual author and the flesh-and-blood author can be compared to the one between a craftsman constructing a chair and himself or herself outside his or her studio (69). To Phelan there is a *continuity* between the streamlined version and the real author (69), but it appears to me that this continuity does not sufficiently justify the choice of such concept other than being an "interpretative strategy," as Liesbeth Korthals Altes puts it (*Ethos*).

The implied author, I argue, is a useful tool, which, as such, shall be paired with the other resources and listed in the middle column of the chart. In

twenty-first century narratives using paratextual resources,[11] for instance, the streamlined versions of himself or herself that the real author employs might be different in the various paratextual devices (see also 2.3). To investigate these versions of the author and their interplay might be rhetorically useful, especially when the image of the author that readers infer from the text *implies* an ethical stance that differs to a great extent to the author's public image inferred from existing epitexts.[12] Accordingly, I prefer to rely on Phelan's communicative model *pairing* the two agents as actual author and actual audience (see 5.2 for further discussion). The latter being the one that the *author* wants to affect and therefore the one whom the ethical component of narrative communication is directed toward ("Rhetoric, Ethics" 69). My preference for the symmetry in the model, however, does not imply that I do not share Booth's claim that "the picture the reader gets of [the author's] presence is one of the author's most important effects" (71). To discuss this "picture," instead of relying on a binary opposition (real versus implied), another theoretical construct may be useful: the concept of authorial ethos.

Building on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Korthals Altes ("Slippery Author"; and *Ethos*) defines ethos as a person's character or characterizing spirit, tone or

[11] Since it might be argued that there is never a paratext-free moment, the verb "use" intends to highlight a specific communicative choice made by the author.

[12] Reaching opposite conclusions, Shen too observes that "we can discuss variable degrees of distance between the image of an implied author of a text and that of the historical person, depending on the degree of role-playing of the implied author in the writing process" ("Implied" 148").

attitude whose value may change over time and social situation.[13] In her extensive study on authorial ethos (*Ethos*), Korthals Altes criticizes the ambiguity and fuzziness of the concept of the implied author, since it "refers both to the origin of the text and to the reader's post-hoc construction of a unifying authorial intention and value position."[14] As a confirmation of my own insights on the importance of identifying but also distinguishing the different versions of an author in the various paratextual devices, Korthals Altes reminds us that "we need to investigate more closely the relationship between the inferences summarized under this concept of implied author and those that result from *clues* for authorial postures that readers may glean from the public domain, paratexts, and so on" (emphasis added). Paratextual elements are a privileged space to investigate ethos clues and, more generally, the shared enterprise of narrative communication. As Gérard Genette points out, the main aim of paratexts is "to ensure for the text a destiny consistent with the author's purpose" (*Paratexts* 407). In addition, as I mentioned above, although paratexts are listed among the resources used by the author, they are not, in Phelan's model, explicitly comprehensive of extra-textual manifestations. And, as Korthals Altes' argues, "a narratology that does not include the extra-textual

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[13] See also Ruth Amossy's "*Ethos* at the Crossroads of Disciplines: Rhetoric, Pragmatics, Sociology."

[14] Korthals Altes' approach combines hermeneutics with concepts of cognitive sciences (e.g. Ervin Goffman's frame analysis; "folk psychology," "Theory of Mind"), sociology (e.g. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the literary field), evolutionary psychology (e.g. Merlin Donald's definition of culture), phenomenology (concerning reception theory, such as Wolfgang Iser), discourse analysis (e.g. Ruth Amossy and Dominique Maingueneau), and a practice of self-reflection called meta-hermeneutics.

author expels a potentially important factor in the meaning-making processes it aims to describe" (*Ethos*).

It is in this spirit that I try to integrate Phelan's rhetorical model with epitextual (or extra textual) features, medium awareness, and discussions about the construction of the authorial ethos. Moreover, this study is situated within a particular moment in history, the beginning of the twenty-first century, whose context will provide another level of complexity. With these aims and principles in mind, I now proceed with a description (2.2.1) and a discussion (2.2.2) of the notion of paratext.

2.2 PARATEXT: FROM *SEUILS* TO PARATEXTS 2.0

2.2.1 Genette's Paratext: Formulation and Establishment

Appeared for the first time in Gérard Genette's *The Architext: an Introduction* (82), the concept of paratextuality has been afterwards briefly introduced in *Palimpsestes* (2–4). Here, Genette describes the paratext (the second type of transtextual relationships) as "one of the privileged fields of operation of the pragmatic dimension of the work–i.e., of its impact upon the reader–more particularly, the field of what is now often called, thanks to Philippe Lejeune's studies on autobiography, the generic *contract* (or *pact*)" (3). In "The Proustian Paratexte," Genette differentiates paratextuality according to the degrees of authorial responsibility and divides the paratext of Proust's *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (1913-27) in three groups: official paratext; unofficial paratext; posthumous paratext. In *Paratexts* (*Seuils* 1987), Genette expands his

categorization, defining paratext as a heterogeneous group of practices and discourses characterized by an authorial intention and assumption of responsibility, that functions as a guiding set of directions for the readers (2-3).

The metaphor of the threshold is used to highlight the indeterminate quality of the paratext, which belongs to an undefined zone between two ontological realities, the storyworld and the real world. To express this ontological uncertainty, Genette draws on J. Hillis Miller's remark about the prefix 'para':

> *Para* is an antithetical prefix which indicates at once proximity and distance, similarity and difference, interiority and exteriority ... a thing which is situated at once on this side and on that of a frontier, of a threshold and of a margin, of equal status and yet secondary, subsidiary, subordinate .... A thing in *para* is not only at once on both sides of the frontier which separates the exterior and the interior; it is also the frontier itself, the screen which creates a permeable membrane between the inside and the outside (219 qtd. in Genette *Paratexts* 1).

Despite this versatile mode, Genette suggests to classify the elements composing the whole category of paratext according to: their location (attached to the hard book or not); time of appearance; mode (verbal or other); communication agents (*from whom, to whom?*); and function (*Paratexts* 4).

Genette's distinction in terms of location conceives paratextual elements situated in proximity of the text as part of the *peritext*, whereas those "not materially appended to the text within the same volume, but circulating ... in a

virtually limitless physical and social space" as part of the *epitext* (*Paratexts* 344). As the chart below illustrates (fig. 2.3), the formal characteristics of these elements are inseparable from their functions, since, as I mentioned above: "The most essential of the paratext's properties ... is functionality. 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" (*Paratexts* 407).

Formal Categories			
Peritexts	Lack of internal borders.	Epitexts	Lack of external limits.
	• The publisher's peritext (formats, series, cover, typesetting); • The name of the author; • Titles; • The please-insert; • Dedications and inscriptions; • Epigraphs; • The prefatorial situation of communication; • The original preface; • Other prefaces; • Intertitles; • Notes.		• The public epitext (auto-reviews, public responses, media epitexts, delayed auto-commentaries); • The private epitext (correspondence, oral confidence, diaries, pre-texts).
Functional Typology			
Peritexts	Inseparable from its paratextual function (to present and comment on the text).	Epitexts	Paratextual *effect* (Publisher's; Semiofficial allographic; Public authorial; Private authorial.)

Fig. 2.3. Genette's paratexts. An outline of formal categories and functional typology.

Genette's typology formalizes the various categories in this heterogenous group of elements and assigns to each of them a certain function. He further argues that not only paratextual elements are necessary to "present the book and ... make it present, assuring its presence in the world, its 'reception' and its consumption" (1), but also that "no reader should be indifferent to the appropriateness of particular typographical choices, even if modern publishing tends to neutralize these choices by a perhaps irreversible tendency toward standardization" (34). In conclusion, despite the remarkable significance of Genette's conceptualization and taxonomy (to which a large diffusion of the terminology has followed), some of the aspects introduced, such as the lack of boundaries, were not sufficiently discussed. In the following section, the outline of the main points that have been debated from 1987 onwards (although the English translation of *Seuils* came out ten years later, in 1997), will pave the way for my own elaboration of the concept of paratext.

2.2.2 Discussions and Reformulations

David Gorman, in the "Paratext" entry of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (2005), points out that, "Although the term has come into wide usage in recent years, in English-language criticism so far most paratextual investigation has focused on the study of title" (419). If this claim might have been true before 2005, in more recent years, paratextual investigations have relevantly increased within narrative theory. This is probably due to several factors: (1) the renewed interest in authorial intention, of which the paratext is a

privileged manifestation; (2) the whole spread of inquiries regarding new media; and (3) the incremental use of paratextual features (such as footnotes) in postmodernist fiction. With regard to the latter, in his review of *Paratexts,* Jan Baetens highlights a significant lack in Genette's framing category: it "does not sufficiently stress what is characteristic of modern literature: the paratextualization of the text and the textualization of the paratext, i.e. not the breakdown of boundaries, but the multiplication of relations between two poles that are no longer antagonistic opposites" ("Review" 713-4) In the attempt to compensate for this lack, Edward Maloney, in his *Footnotes in Fiction: A Rhetorical Approach* (2005), provides an extensive study of the use of footnotes in fictional narratives when they are "incorporated into the story as part of the internal narrative frame" (ii). To stress their significant role on narrative progression, he labels this specific kind of paratext "artificial paratexts."

While David Herman, Brian McHale and James Phelan, consistently with Genette's original formulation, delimit the domain of paratext to the readers' interpretation "within generic categories, historical epochs, author's oeuvre, [and] sociopolitical controversies" (308), Porter Abbott claims that the influence paratextual devices may have on the audience's experience of a narrative can be so powerful that these devices become part of the narrative (30). He further suggests that, in some cases, a piece of paratextual information outside a narrative may transform it "without, at the same time, changing a single word of it" (31). Abbott's point highlights that Genette's theorization of paratext is both powerful and problematic.

A major problem lies in its spatial collocation: how can something be simultaneously a frame, a threshold, and part of the story? A very partial answer to this question would be to to consider Genette's *Paratexts* as the initial unit within this area of investigation, a primary resource establishing valuable terminology and laying bare its first "rudimental" mechanisms. On the one hand, as Baetens notices, experimental literature has always been challenging textual boundaries (see also 2.3.2), complicating even more paratext's spatial definition; on the other hand, the study of paratext should be accompanied by a discussion around its material realization, i.e. its medium. Media have been discarded in the study of narrative theory for many years. Today, however, much has been done in this direction (see the next section, 2.3).

To include the role of the medium in the analysis of the paratext, I argue, allows for a deeper understanding of the interrelation of the different levels involved (which might help us to define "para"), as well as of the different degrees of importance that characterize various paratextual features. Georg Stanitzek, for instance, discusses the question of paratext and media by pointing out that Genette's account of paratextual functions does "not explore the function of the book form as such" (31). The book "is simply the concrete realization of a literary work," so that "the distinction between the work and its paratext is absolutely parallel to the hermeneutic distinction between the whole and its parts" (32). Two aspects in particular, according to Stanitzek, are missing in Genette's study: the theoretical area of media or communication theory, and the question of authorial intention (35). More specifically, Stanitzek criticizes the twofold role that Genette assigns to the author: as agent or

function[15] responsible for the paratextual elements, and as a paratextual element himself or herself (35).

This ambiguity still holds true in positioning paratexts as resources in Phelan's "Chart of Variables." As I suggested above (2.1.3), the model allows for the question: where shall those paratextual elements belonging to the epitext be located? If the implied author is the streamlined version of the actual author in the occasion of writing and with the intention to communicate something to his or her readers for some purposes, what happens to the other versions of himself or herself that he or she uses to communicate to the same actual audience through a different medium? And, how do readers interpret those various authorial versions?

Korthals Altes offers a possible solution to this ambiguity by identifying the importance of the ethos of the author for the readers' reception of narrative. In her investigation, she suggests a "Multi-Faceted Author" made of six main aspects of authorial image or *ethos*: (1) the author as a flesh-and-blood person; (2) the author in his or her social role as a writer; (3) the author-image constructed from previous works (*prior ethos*); (4) the ethos constructed from peritext and epitext; (5) the implied author, intended as inferred from the text by the reader;[16] (6) the author as narrator (*Ethos*). These facets highlight the fact that there are multiple factors involved in the narrative communication concerning the paratext and its relative author image. The author's posture,

[15] As defined by Foucault in "What Is an Author?" (1969).

[16] Which is different from Phelan's implied author, who is "outside the narrative text, as the agent who construct the text and not as a product of the text itself" ("Rhetoric, Ethics" 68).

according to Korthals Altes, includes a twofold phenomenon: the clues offered by the author to be classified within a particular social role as writer, and the readers' perception of such writer. The author posture emerges from paratextual elements, both peritextual and epitextual (*Ethos*).

Korthals Altes' insights about the authorial ethos clues to be found in the epitext confirm the necessity of a clarification on the role of the author as both agent and function of paratexts. If we consider the various versions of an author as resource of the narrative communication, we may be able to include in our analysis the multiple ethos clues to be found in the epitext. Besides, the *continuity* between actual author and implied author (see 2.1.3) may lie in the paratext. The peritext, as featured in the printed book, belongs to the implied author, while the epitext (e.g. various media appearances), belongs to the flesh-and-blood or actual author (see 5.2). In the following section, I finally introduce the conversation around narrative and media to contextualize this study and to later include these concepts in the categorization of paratexts 2.0 (Chapter 3).

2.3 Narrative and Media

New media technologies, such as websites, blogs, videos and social networks, are undoubtedly facilitating the flourishing of author/reader extra-textual communication. Therefore, it appears extremely important to extend the study of the paratext to researches exploring narrative and media. This area of inquiry may lead up to refining Genette's theory through the analysis of such new ways of producing and reading narratives. In a very recent article (2013), Dorothee

Birke and Birte Christ started mapping the field for studies dealing with the connection of paratext and digitized narrative. First, they suggest to focus on the *functionality* of the paratext, which can be discussed in terms of the interplay of (1) the interpretative function; (2) the commercial function; and (3) the navigational function (67-8). The categorization in three main areas has the merit of distinguishing two significant functional aspects that often overlap in twenty-first century epitextual elements, namely the elements created by the author to guide the readers in their experience, and those with a purely promotional intent.

Birke and Christ pinpoint three fields of debate particularly relevant for the current discussion on paratexts: (1) "The materialization of the object"; (2) "The boundaries of the text"; (3) "The question of authorization" (68-70). Although not specifically dealing with "digitized narrative," my work touches upon these three areas, especially with regard to the first and the second fields. In terms of authorization, a detailed discussion of the other agents involved in the production of paratextual elements, such as the editor or the publisher, and the whole realm of promotional material (which is linked to Genette's distinction between *allographic* and *autographic* paratext) is beyond the scope of this study. What follows will explore the question of the text as physical object combining the rhetorical approach with inquiries usually belonging to other theoretical traditions, such as *transmedial* narratology and visual rhetorics.

2.3.1 Frames, Framings, Framing Borders

In describing a transmedial approach to narrative, Werner Wolf suggests the necessity of "account[ing] for the fact that stories can be represented in different media [without] imply[ing] that medial conditions have no influence on the realization of the frame narrative" ("Narratology" 164). Although Wolf's commitment is inscribed in a conversation called "Frame Theory" applied to literature and other media, I will explore some of the issues discussed because my investigation intersects with his to a great extent. In addition, the concept of frames, which has been introduced by sociologists Gregory Bateson and Erving Goffman, also underlies Korthals Altes' insights on authorial ethos.[17] In his explanation of frame theory, Wolf defines cognitive frames as "culturally formed metaconcepts [...] that enable us to interpret both reality and artifacts" ("Frames" 5). For instance, the aesthetic approach (usually associated with the *artwork* frame, or genre and fictionality) can be considered as a cognitive frame (13-4). Furthermore, since frames "function as preconditions of interpretation," they also "control the framed" (5), and from this tenet follows the idea of "framings." Framings are interpretative codings of abstract cognitive frames, including textual and contextual elements and the "concrete spaces or parts of artefacts ... in which the coding of frames occur" (7).[18]

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[17] As she argues, ethos ascriptions are "interwoven with generic classifications, [and] arguably allow readers to frame the kind of game they are engaging in, determining their reading strategies and the value regimes they believe should apply to the work" (*Ethos*).

[18] Simply put, the distinction between frame and framings is that frame is an abstract cognitive metaconcept, while framing denotes the activity (Wolf "Frames" 7).

According to this theory then, paratexts are "important instances of framings" (7*),* while framings, as Wolf further remarks, are transmedial phenomena, i.e. they exist in more than one medium (10). Like Genette's typology of paratext, Wolf's typology of framings allows for the agencies involved (sender, message, recipient), and for a distinction between contextual and textual framings (15-6). Since Genette's typology focuses only on printed literature, the spatial metaphor inside/outside that characterizes the distinction between peri- and epitext, in Wolf's typology is revised in the light of these "(con-)textual framings." This last observation confirms the importance of including a transmedial perspective in the discussion of paratexts, and thereby of the rhetorical communication model. Other than (con-)textual framings, Wolf's typology comprises criterions of extension, number of media employed, authorization, saliency, location, intertextuality and paratextuality (18-21).

Interestingly, Wolf adopts Genette's idea of paratext as one of the criteria in his typology, but reducing it to the peritext. Paratextual framings are then the elements in a liminal position (i.e. on the threshold) with a functional role for the reception and interpretation of the work. Wolf further introduces the concept of framing "borders." Framing borders may be relevant to an entire work, easily identifiable, and inclusive of paratextual and intertextual elements (22-24). As Genette has stressed the functionality of the paratext, Wolf outlines the five functions of such framing borders, of which the basic one is to "help the recipient to select frames of interpretation or reference relevant for the work under consideration" (26). As a result, the emphasis moves from the author to the audience. The first and most "natural" function is "text-centered," namely

"attributed to all elements providing a direct interpretative help for, or a control of, the reception by commenting on the 'text' or artefact and by creating certain expectations about it" (Frow: 26-7 in Wolf "Frames" 27). Therefore, the framing elements with text-centered function, such as generic markers, are completely subservient to the main text and lack in independent value (29).

According to Wolf, Genette's conception of paratext highlights the text-centered function at the expense of "defamiliarized framings" (self-centered function)[19] which, on the contrary, "foreground conventions of paratexts or constitute a space for experimental games" (29-30). Accordingly, Wolf's frame theory sheds some light on Genette's paratext's ambiguities and lacunae. First of all, it has the advantage of (1) accounting for a phenomenon that exists in a plurality of media; then of (2) outlining the interconnections among the various layers of paratextual elements and functions; and of (3) highlighting the importance of such elements for the readers' interpretation. Besides, the analysis of framing borders makes room for experimental works that, in their being unconventional, challenge Genette's paratext. My own investigation is indeed directed to those literary narratives which foreground paratextual elements to the point that the borders of the para/text become even more blurred. Not only in every given narrative, as Phelan argues, some resources are more valuable than others, but it is also worth noticing that the value attached to them may vary.

[19] The other functions are context-centered, sender-centered (involving the author's intention), recipient-ceneterd, and self-referential or meta-referential (30-1).

These observations draw attention to the necessity of a clarification around the category of "paratext" as resource in the narrative communication model. The self-centered function suggests that unconventional paratexts (such as paratexts 2.0) may be used by an author for a different purpose as compared to conventional ones. The self-centered function is particularly relevant with respect to both peri- and epitextual elements in our twenty-first century historical context. Before outlining the elements which I labelled paratexts 2.0, I will first introduce some other significant concepts related, in general, to our digital age and, more precisely, to the importance of the medium in relation to the paratext and to the narrative communication model.

2.3.2 Media, Transmedial, Intermedial, and Multimodal

As mentioned above, Wolf's framing typology is inscribed in a wider framework of analysis that aims at providing an approach to narrative which accounts for narratives in all media, as opposed to the predominance of studies on verbal literary narrative. Following an "intermedial turn" (Wolf "(Inter)mediality"), the study of narrative across media has been recently labelled as transmedial narratology (Ryan "Introduction" 35; Herman 47-75). Starting from a cognitive

default definition of narrative as mental image[20] (Ryan "Introduction" 11), studies within narrative across media have helped the emergence of concepts such as multimodality and materiality, which are now widely used and investigated. Instead of approaching broad categories such as literature, history, medicine, and law, transmedial narratology focuses on language, image, sound, gesture, spoken language, writing, cinema, radio, television, and computers (Ryan "Introduction" 1). In particular, the project is directed toward the investigation of the *embodiment*, namely "the particular semiotic substance and the technological mode of transmission of narrative" (1).

This perspective highlights the fact that media are never mere "hollow conduits for the transmission of messages, but material supports of information whose materiality, precisely, 'matters' for the type of meanings that can be encoded" (1-2). Although language is still a privileged medium in Ryan's view, she also stresses the fact that there are meanings (intended as mental images) that, for instance, are better expressed visually or musically (12). If we try to link these ideas with the rhetorical communication model, paratexts (in particular paratexts 2.0) are the place where meanings can be also expressed visually.

[20] As opposed to the rhetorical default definition that, according to Ryan, suggests "a speech act" (5). In her semantic approach, Ryan suggests that "rather than locating narrativity in an act of telling, [her] definition anchors it in two distinct realms," one that sees narrative as a "textual act of representation–a text that encodes a particular type of meaning," and the other one that conceives narrative as a mental image built by the interpreter as a response to the text" (9). Ryan further proposes a distinction which accounts for the cases in which a semiotic object is produced with the intent of evoking a narrative script in the mind of the audience (being a narrative), and it is able to evoke such a script (possessing narrativity) (9). She defines a narrative script a text that fulfills these conditions: (1) it creates a world with characters and objects; (2) it has a temporal dimension given by change of states; (3) it allows the reconstruction of an interpretative network which turns physical events into a plot (8-9).

When language does not satisfy the communicative purpose of the author, he or she draws on other semiotic modes, such as different typography, images, graphic layouts. How these different semiotic modes are combined in narrative has been recently investigated in a new area of study called "multimodality."

The term "multimodal" was introduced between 1992 and 1996 by Theo van Leeuwen, Gunther Kress and the New London Group.[21] While arguing for a multi-literacy approach (as opposed to traditional language-based ones) that would better capture the historical period dominated by globalization and new technologies, the New London Group claimed that "in a profound sense, all meaning-making is multimodal." Kress and van Leeuwen maintain that "in a multimodal text using images and writing, the writing may carry one set of meanings and the images another" (*Reading* 16). In addition, Anthony Baldry and Paul J. Thibault (2006) identify the core principle of multimodal texts as "integrated selections from different semiotic resources," which "are not simply juxtaposed as separate modes of meaning making but are combined and integrated to form a complex whole which cannot be reduced to, or explained in terms of the mere sum of its separate parts" (Baldry and Thibault qtd. in Nørgaard "Modality" 64-65).

Since Kress' and Leeuwen's defined multimodality as "The use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, together with the particular way in which these modes are combined" (*Multimodal* 20), new investigations on narrative and multimodal narrative analysis have focused on

[21] See, *Reading Images: the Grammar of Visual Design*, "The Schoolbook As a multimodal text," and "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Features."

the "dynamic interplay of semiotic resources as they contribute to narrative meaning" (Page "Introduction" 8). Ruth Page, following Ryan's semiotic definition of media, defines mode as "a system of choices used to communicate meaning ... realized materially through particular media" (6). In particular, Ryan distinguishes between a *transmissive* definition that describes media as channels of communication; and a *semiotic* definition that identifies media as material means of artistic expression ("Media" 289). As Ryan points out, if we consider the medium of a literary narrative to be the material book, then we are arguing for a "transmissive" conception of medium (such as TV, radio, the Internet, etc.); but if we shift our focus to the semiotic definition, than the media would be the language, the image, or the paper itself (288-9). Digital technology complicates even more this ambiguity, since usually in literary narratives the properties of "digital technology as expressive medium" (289) are, for the most part, neutralized: a word processor is only a software support, a "submedia of digitality" comparable to a notebook or a pen (290).

Following Werner Wolf's invitation to take into account multiple dimensions in the transmedial analysis of narrative, such as technical/material, semiotic and cultural historical factors ("Narratology" 166), recent studies in multimodal narrative analysis focus on the investigation of "the integration of semiotic resources" (Page "Introduction" 6). In this direction, Alison Gibbons, Wolfgang Hallet, and Nina Nørgaard (to name only a few), have recently labeled literary narratives employing typographical and visual interventions *multimodal* novels (see Gibbons "Narrative" 285-311, Hallet 129-135, and Nørgaard "Modality" 63-80). Nørgaard describes the narratives in terms of a

"high modality" effect, namely "what we see is what we would have seen if we had been there" (van Leeuwen qtd. in Nørgaard "Semiotics" 148), and points out that images enhance the authenticity of narratives ("Modality" 73). Hallet defines the multimodal novel as "a type of novel that [...] incorporate a whole range of non-verbal symbolic representations and non-narrative semiotic modes" in such a way that they do not have a disruptive or disturbing effect on the reading process (129-131). Gibbons further explains that not only "multimodal literary novels ... utilize a plurality of semiotic modes in the communication and progression of their narratives," but those modes "have distinct means of communicating [and they] constantly interact in the production of narrative meaning" (*Multimodality* 2).

The increasing number of studies centered on the multiplicity of media and modes shows the attempt to provide a vocabulary for the new ways of producing literary narratives that result from the twenty-first century cultural environment. As Katherine N. Hayles (19) points out, the materiality of the artifact becomes central as a consequence of electronic textuality. New technologies, the Internet, social networking, and the blogosphere facilitate new ways of producing meaning, or "new ways to read and write" (Wysocki 2). Besides, according to Anne F. Wysocki, new media texts highlight the relation between form and content, namely the content of the story is embodied by its form, in the material way it is shaped and in the context it is used/read. New media texts are made by "composers who are aware of the range of materialities of texts and who then highlight the materiality, ... such composers design texts that make as overtly visible as possible the values they embody" (Wysocki 15).

Finally, a text's materiality depends on "how the work mobilizes its resources as a physical artifact as well as on the user's interactions with the work and the interpretative strategies she develops" (Hayles 33).

In the new historical context of the digital age, the *mode* becomes the material resource which is essential for articulating the discourse (see Kress's and van Leeuwen's *Multimodal Discourse* 25 qtd. in Wysocki 13). However, although undoubtably linked with the emergence of new technologies, the significant role of the materiality of a narrative had already been emphasized by Laurence Sterne in *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67), by Apollinaire, the Dadaists, Mallarmé or, more recently, William Burroughs and his cut-up method, Raymond Queneau (1961), Marc Saporta (1962), Italo Calvino (1973), Georges Perec's *Life: A User's Manual* (1978), and many others. In addition, postmodernist novels such as William H. Gass's *Willie Masters' Lonesome Wife* (1968), and Donald Barthleme's "Brian Damage" (1970) are discussed by Brian McHale as *iconic shaped* texts. According to McHale (*Postmodernist*), since the dominant of postmodernist fiction is ontological, the use of typographical and visual interventions in postmodernist literature is linked with the tension created in juxtaposing two different ontological worlds (see also 3.2). Therefore, we may distinguish two opposites: one in which iconic shaped texts stress the ontological tension between the book as object and its narrative, and another one in which they simply "illustrate ... their own existence" (184). If it is true that "foregrounding the materiality of the text instead of effacing it (McHale "Postmodern" 459) was already a hallmark in the poetics of postmodernist novels, the interdisciplinary character of the recent studies around narrative

and media seems to suggest that the function of such emphasis on the materiality exceeds the mere tension created by ontological worlds.

In our digital-dominated age, the effects of "media revolution affect all stages of communication, including acquisition, manipulation, storage, and distribution; [and] all types of media–texts, still images, moving images, sound, and spatial constructions" (Manovich *Language* 19). The Internet, as Ryan points out borrowing Bolter's terminology, "remediates all other media by encoding them digitally in order to facilitate their transmission" ("Narration" par. 14). *Remediation* is another key term in this debate. Introduced by Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (1999), it describes the way in which media refashion other media forms, (Grusin 497). The double logic of remediation identifies two strategies, *transparent immediacy* and *hypermediacy*. In the former the goal of a medium is "to erase or eliminate the signs of mediation," whereas in the latter is "to multiply and make explicit signs of mediation" (497). Contemporary digital media remediate previous media according to this double logic that makes mediation "simultaneously multiplied and erased" (497). As Irina O. Rajewsky points out, remediation is "a particular kind of intermedial relationship" and an essential facet of current medial practices (60).

Intermediality is yet another term which attempts at distinguishing the phenomena taking place *between* media from those *intra*media and *trans*media (Rajewsky 46). In this way, intermediality is intended in a broad sense. By contrast, according to Rajewsky (51-3), intermediality in a narrow sense is divided into the categories of (1) medial transposition, such as film adaptions and novelizations; (2) media combination, resulting from the combination of at

least two medial forms of articulation (e.g. comics, films, illuminated manuscripts, opera); (3) intermedial references, including phenomena where the single, materially-present medium thematizes, evokes, or imitates features of another medium (e.g. imitation of filmic techniques in literary texts, musicalization of literature, references in film to painting). A given medial configuration may fulfill all those criteria (53).

2.3.3 Conclusions

To summarize, twenty-first century literature is inscribed in a historical context where digital media are widely used for human communication. An transmedial approach to narrative aims at including the variety of inquiries relative to the importance of media, whose interests often intersect and whose areas overlap, such as studies of mediality and multimodality. Building on such concepts allows us to further enrich rhetorical narrative theory with significant synchronic and diachronic facets. Besides, paratexs 2.0 are resources entailing media-related issues. As Genette's points out, the paratext is a functional instrument which helps the immutable text to adapt to the socio-historical reality of the text's public (*Paratexts* 408).

While Genette refers to the continual modifications in the text's mode of being present in the world, paratext 2.0 is used as an umbrella term to identify all those features employed in twenty-first century literary narrative to convey meaning through multiple modes and media. Besides, the paratext 2.0 follows Genette's distinction of peritext and epitext which connects two levels usually

separated. As an analytical tool within a rhetorical communication model, the paratext 2.0 allows for the inquiry of the various multimodal elements, intermedial references, and media transpositions, as well as the connections and interplay between the two peri- and epitextual levels. In the next chapter, I will present the formal and functional characteristics of paratexts 2.0 that will be at the basis of the textual analysis of the selected literary narratives in Chapter 4.

Chapter 3

PARATEXTS 2.0: A TYPOLOGY

3.1 PARATEXTS 2.0, AN INTRODUCTION

The typology of paratexts described by Genette in *Paratexts* contains an accurate account of the kind of *expository* material (e.g. the front matter, the title page, the epigraphs) which, according to Phelan (*Experiencing* 17; 55), belongs to that part of narrative progression called *exposition* (see 2.1.1). Indeed, in his analysis of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (51-78), Phelan defines paratexts those "expository materials provid[ing] a complex backdrop against which to begin reading, a set of thematic associations that provides a context within which to understand the rest of the narrative" (55). Consistent with Genette's original idea of the paratext as a *guiding set of directions* for the readers, Phelan's definition attributes to paratexts the function of providing the kind of preliminary context necessary for the readers to guide their experience of the narrative.

As framing devices, then, paratexts offer, among other things, indications in terms of genre. Generic distinctions, in turn, engage readers in various contracts (see Lejeune 1977) and, more significantly, allow them to distinguish a

fictional narrative from a nonfictional one. In this regard, the concept of paratext has been employed within several theoretical perspectives. For instance, Henrik Skov Nielsen discusses the implications of ambiguous paratexts for the author-narrator distinction (see 5.5), and Richard Walsh considers fictionality to be "the product of a narrative's frame of presentation, of the various possible elements of what Gérard Genette has described as the paratext" (45). Paratextual elements may also indicate, as Korthals Altes argues, the various *postures* that authors assume in different occasions and in different media.[22] As observed earlier (2.1.3), Korthals Altes emphasizes that authorial ethos attribution "bear on the aesthetic and ethical value of [a] work" ("Slippery Author" 104). Therefore, if the various *clues* about an author's ethos that readers glean from the public domain and paratexts are important for the "interpretation and evaluation of literary works" (95), investigations on paratexts are essential to determine such a construction.

The question, hence, does not only deal with the way readers interpret the various authorial manifestations, but also with how those manifestations interact with the narrative communication. In cases of authors who exploit digital media to communicate with their audience, for a given narrative there can be extra or para-textual communication between author and audience. At the same time, at a textual level, narratives employing paratexts 2.0 foreground an ethical position toward certain cultural values, such as the use of hybrid or new media and the role of technological innovation. The ethics of the telling, in

[22] Following Jerôme Meizoz (2004), Korthals Altes refers to the author not as flesh-and-blood person but as posture that he or she "re-plays or negotiates [...] in the literary field through different modes of self-presentation" ("Slippery Author" 96).

turn, affects the overall audience' response. In this regard, although Genette's conceptualization of paratext encompasses both the graphic realization of a given text (the peritext) and the elements somehow related but not materially attached to it (the epitext), his typology is limited as he mainly describes paratextual elements neutralized by publishing conventions and *located* in proximity to the material book (what Phelan calls *expository* material).

Conversely, the typology of paratexts 2.0 that I will present in this chapter calls for a view of paratexts able to account for issues relative to the epitextual material (e.g. cues of authorial ethos) and to peritextual materials not exclusively positioned at the beginning of narrative progression, or simply regarded as framing device. Furthermore, given the increase of paratextual elements employed in contemporary literature (in combination with other communicative resources), the model of paratexts 2.0 is then inscribed in the diachronic dimension of the twenty-first century. More specifically, my aim in this chapter is to put forth a framework that will provide tools for the analysis of contemporary literary narratives that make use of unconventional paratexts within the printed book as physical medium (1) and/or digital epitextual supports (2). Therefore, the new framework of paratexts 2.0 draws attention to the importance of acknowledging the role of the medium for narrative communication since, as Ryan highlights, "narrative can actively fight some of the properties of the medium for expressive purposes" (*Avatars* 30).

Besides, the framework of paratexts 2.0 brings to the fore issues that go beyond the creation of an analytic typology. Indeed, an additional aim of my proposal is to set the stage for further exploration of (some) key concepts of

narrative theory, such as medium-specific analyses of printed literature, the narrative communication model, issues of authorship, and digital narratology.[23] In other words, the need of creating a new categorization emerges not only from the necessity of a theoretical framework for contemporary narratives that foreground their (new) paratext, but also from the need of extending the study of the categories and functions of paratexts to include issues of media and authorial ethos, or author as public figure, in the discussion of narrative communication. Indeed, despite the open-ended quality of its spatial boundaries, the prime categorization of paratext as peritext and epitext catches a useful correlation for the analysis of literary narratives. Therefore, in the supplemented version 2.0, I emphasize that the use of unconventional paratexts within the physical medium of the book is connected with the diffusion of epitexts in digital media. Both events are linked with the rise of digital technologies and new media culture.

3.1.1 2.0: A Diachronic Perspective

Contemporary media culture provides the historical and social context for a given authorial agency to draw on multiple semiotic modes and extra-textual support for his or her narrative. At the same time, the emergence and growth of

[23] According to Ruth Page, digital narratology is limited in the following: (1) "it tends to focus on fictional examples of narrative art"; (2) "interactivity is primarily conceptualized in terms of reader-text relations rather than interaction between human participants"; (3) it is mainly "interested in readings of particular texts, rather than a more fully contextualized approach to narrative production and reception" (*Stories* 4). To me, the proposal of paratexts 2.0 is also an attempt to establish a link between digital and printed literature and researches in this direction.

new and social media–such as the Internet, video-sharing websites, social networking services, and blogs–has eased author-readers extra-textual communication (2.3). Taking up Korthals Altes' insights about an author's ethos inferred from his or her presence in media and other epitextual manifestations, the increase of authorial epitextual material to be found in digital and social media is one of the socio-cultural factors stretching the borders of Genette's typology. Noticeably, I labeled my revision of paratexts "paratexts 2.0" to evoke the up-to-date version of the World Wide Web, namely Web 2.0. Coined by tech guru Tim O'Reilly in 2005, the term 2.0 refers to the higher degree of interaction featured on social media.[24] Social media–i.e. Internet-based applications such as social network sites, video sharing, blogs, discussion forums, microbloggings, wikis–are primarily characterized by user-generated content. The practice of appropriation and remix, fragmentary production and reception, transmedia storytelling and knowledge sharing (discussed, to name a few, by Manovich [2001] and Jenkins [2007]) are among the many consequences of the development and impressive growth of social media and new technologies in the last few years.

In terms of media affordances, stories told in social media, as Page suggests, "can use words, images, sound, and audiovisual resources" (*Stories* 2). A detailed discussion of the influence that such technologies (and the new practices they enable) have on narrative production and reception, as well as on

[24] The term Web 2.0 is not uncontested. For instance, Page prefers to employ the term "Social media," for she believes O'Reilly's use of the label "Web 2.0" was "a key rhetorical strategy in demarcating a new era for online interaction [to] create a clear contrast between old and new web genres" (*Stories* 7).

the author-reader relationship, is too broad a discourse to be done justice to in the present study.[25] However, despite the narrower scope of my dissertation, the socio-cultural landscape of Web 2.0, social media, and user-generated content constitute the underlying context for paratexts 2.0 to be employed by contemporary authors as *resources* of narrative communication. As suggested above, in many twenty-first century literary narratives, the issue concerning the paratext does not only deal with how readers engage with the various authorial manifestations (including their presence on Web 2.0 technologies and their use of social media), but also with how those manifestations interrelate with the narrative communication.

In this respect, a further impetus to refine the descriptive vocabulary of paratextual categories and functions originates from the ambiguity of the role of the author as both the agent responsible for the paratextual elements and a paratextual element himself or herself (see 1.3.2)–an ambiguity that is foregrounded by the increased authorial extra-textual manifestations in the social media realm. According to Genette (*Paratexts* 346), "Everything a writer says or writes about his life, about the world around him, about the works of others, may have paratextual *relevance"* (emphasis added). Moreover, since the epitext is "a fringe of the fringe [that] gradually disappears into ... the totality of the authorial discourse," Genette suggests to bear in mind the epitext's "potential for indefinite diffusion" (346). Surprisingly, however, in his typology,

[25] For a thorough account of the development of stories and social media from a sociolinguistic perspective, see Page's *Stories and Social Media: Identities and Interaction* (2011). According to Page, social media formats are "collaborative, dialogic, emergent, personalized, and context-rich environments" (8).

the epitext does not have the same extended treatment that the peritext has, since, he argues, it has already been discussed at length by critics and literary historians (346).

Today, however, the Internet and social media have contributed to, on the one hand, "enable authors to establish a public presence alongside their own non-fictional and journalistic writing" (Dawson "Real Authors" 104), and on the other hand, to the flourishing of collaborations of authors and software designers (Manovich "Who is" #5) to create additional material for their literary narratives. Therefore, as Paul Dawson connects the rise of omniscient narration in contemporary fiction with the anxiety about the loss of authority in the digital age (*Return*; see 5.2), my investigation connects the rise of novels that make use of multimodal features with the widespread authorial presence in the public (digital) sphere. Indeed, the current trend that brings the printed page to the fore mirrors a need for authors to thematize the medium.[26]

By foregrounding the synthetic component of the narrative, thus, contemporary authors take a stance toward the role of the medium in a period of media change. Paratexts 2.0 become a key resource for contemporary authors to tell stories linked with thematic meanings and ethical issues which relate to broader questions, such as the transition from postmodernism to post-postmodernism (see Timmer 2010). In this regard, the interrelation of paratexts

[26] See, among many: *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (2000) by Dave Eggers; *House of Leaves* (2000), *Only Revolutions* (2006) and *The Fifty Year Sword* (2012) by Mark Z. Danielewski; *Everything is Illuminated* (2002), *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), *Tree of Codes* (2010) by Jonathan Safran Foer; *Austerlitz* (2001) by W. G. Sebald; *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (2003) by Mark Haddon; *The Selected Works of T.S. Spivet* (2009) by Rief Larsen; *The Autograph Man* by Zadie Smith (2002); and *Nox* (2010) by Anne Carson.

2.0 with contemporary poetics provides a further evidence of the need of extending and refining the concept of paratext.

The typology of paratexts 2.0 is thus a pivotal tool to frame and discuss contemporary narratives that make use of multiple semiotic modes and/or digital supports. By connecting the textual level of paratext with its extra-textual counterpart, the framework of paratexts 2.0 not only tries to better capture the overall purpose of a given narrative, but also to refine Genette's original theorization pointing to the questions of media affordances and to the support of new digital media. The importance for the author-reader relationship of authorial extra-textual manifestations is also connected with the expectations readers may have in terms of genre, as well as concerning the construction of an authorial ethos. Furthermore, by foregrounding paratextual devices, the experience of reading is challenged by the intrusion of paratextual elements in the progression of the narrative (other than simply in the beginning). As we will see in section 3.2 below, paratexts 2.0 perform specific actions which can be mapped in terms of categories and functions.

3.2 Categories and Functions: Toward a Model for Paratexts 2.0 in Literary Narrative

I define paratexts 2.0 as resources of narrative communication at the author's disposal, specifically concerned with the interaction of peritextual and epitextual elements with the author's telling and the peri/epi-texts potential

relationship. The framework of paratexts 2.0 accounts for both peritextual (e.g. photographs, typographical experimentations, illustrations, unusual page layouts), and epitextual elements (e.g. the author's or the novel's website, social networking, application software) jointedly used to communicate narrative meaning. I define *material* peritexts the visual, iconic, and material elements, i.e. the multiple semiotic modes as "graphic realization inseparable from literary intention" (Genette *Paratexts* 34); and d*igital* epitexts the digital paratextual elements officially produced or released by the author as support to her narrative. In this regard, it could be argued with Werner Wolf, that paratextual resources 2.0 highlight their "self-centered function" (see 2.3.1). Noticeably, the categorization of paratexts 2.0 is strictly linked with their functions, as figure 3.1 shows. In other words, paratexts 2.0 are resources of narrative communication defined as the categories of material peritexts and digital epitexts performing specific functions.

More specifically, material peritexts consist of different semiotic modes, such as unconventional typography, graphics, color, layout, drawings, images, illustrations and design, employed by the authorial agency as resource of narrative communication, in combination with the verbal medium and the other resources, to fulfill four main functions: *narrative* (**MP1**), *indexical* (**MP2**), *synthetic* (**MP3**), *authorial* (**MP4**). What I call the *digital* epitext comprises extra-textual elements (such as authors' websites, blogs, videos, social network sites, intermedial transpositions) produced or released by the author in support to the literary narrative. Therefore, as resources of narrative communication,

digital epitexts are employed to fulfill four main functions: *augmentative* (DE1), *dialogic* (DE2), *social* (DE3), *locative* (DE4).

PARATEXTS 2.0			
CATEGORIES			
Material Peritexts		**Digital Epitexts**	
Semiotic modes such as unconventional typography, graphics, color, layout, drawings, images, illustrations and design employed by the authorial agency as resource of narrative communication, in combination with the verbal medium and the other resources, to fulfill specific functions.		Digital support officially produced or released by the author (author's website, blog, videos, social network sites) together with the literary narrative; as well as intermedial transpositions (Apps or eBooks) when including extra features.	
FUNCTIONS			
MP1. Narrative	To foreground the narrative graphic realization in order to affect readers' responses, materializing the mimetic and thematic component, as well as the ethical dimension of the narrative.	**DE1. Augmentative**	To visually enhance and/or extend the printed narrative and to materialize intermedial references.
MP2. Indexical	To refer to the digital epitext.	**DE2. Dialogic**	To establish a relation with the printed narrative.
MP3. Synthetic	To highlight the synthetic component and produce a tension among ontological worlds.	**DE3. Social**	To interact with the readers through digital platforms.
MP4. Authorial	To offer clues for the "discursive ethos" (e.g. hybridity, medium affordances, genre).	**DE4. Locative**	To offer clues for the "non-discursive ethos" (e.g. authenticity, irony, originality, sincerity).

Fig. 3.1. Paratexts 2.0 as resources of narrative communication.

Promotional material that does not fulfill any of the four main functions, i.e. digital support that has not be created to enhance or extend the printed narrative, to socially interact with the readers, to establish a relation with the printed narrative, or to position the author figure, will not be considered part of

a narrative's digital epitext since that material is not a resource of narrative communication.[27] Moreover, as it will be exemplified in the textual analyses presented in Chapter 4, in any given narrative, the various functions are interconnected. In this regard, I shall highlight once again that the framework of paratexts 2.0 below is intended as a guiding tool in the analysis of contemporary literary narratives and not as a normative model with clear-cut boundaries. Conversely, the framework illustrates the interrelated distinguishing features of paratexts 2.0, leaving ample space for extension and improvement.

MP1 What I call the *narrative* function is fulfilled when material peritexts visually enhance or foreground the narrative graphic realization in order to affect readers' responses, materializing the mimetic and thematic component, as well as the ethical dimension of the narrative. For instance, some narratives attempt to engage readers by visually integrating their thematic meanings such as the cut out words of Jonathan Safran Foer's *Tree of Codes* (2010) which are materially missing to emphasize Bruno Schultz's lost words. In this sense, material peritexts are physical traces of a(nother) narrative used by the author to create new meanings. Another example is chapter 12 in Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010): since the narrator writes her journal employing a presentation computer software, the slides are materially reproduced as the printout of seventy-two PowerPoint slides. Mark Z. Danielewsky's *The Fifty Year Sword* (2012) employs colored quotation marks to delineate five alternating voices, and Reif Larsen's *The Selected Works of T. S.*

[27] Sometimes, however, it is difficult to separate the promotional function of a website from the augmentative, dialogic, social or locative functions relative to the narrative communication.

Spivet (2009) integrates the verbal medium with multiple drawings that graphically narrate part of the story.

Examples of material peritexts fulfilling a *narrative* function can also be found within fictional works which cannot be easily labeled as experimental. For instance, graphic realizations in Dave Eggers' *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* (2000) and in David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* (1996)–such as unconventional typography, interventions on the copyright page, small drawings (Eggers), and almost one hundred pages of footnotes (Wallace)–are, in all respects, part of the narrative. All these examples show how material peritexts are intertwined with the narrative progression, rather then being only a guiding tool for the actual audience or a mere framing device.

MP2 The *indexical* function occurs when material peritexts refer to the narrative's digital epitext, triggering a possible intermedial dialogue between the paratextual resources. In some narratives, material peritexts may guide the audience toward digital epitexts, where it will find a remediated version of the narrative or additional material connected to the printed book. To exemplify, the *indexical* function of *Goon Squad*'s material peritexts is fulfilled when the slide journal, which in the book version is a black and white printout of PowerPoint slides, is presented in the author's website in its conventional medium, as slideshow (see 4.2). In *The Fifty Year Sword* the stitched illustrations are to be found in the eBook version of the short story as animated, i.e. non static, but appearing and disappearing throughout the (virtual) unfolding of the pages. Therefore, paratexts 2.0 not only engage readers by visually integrating meaning *(narrative* function), but also connect them to an

extra-textual world where the narrative communication might be integrated with extra material (*indexical* function).

DE2 What I call the *dialogic* function of digital epitext reflects the *indexical* function of material peritexts and describes the possibility that digital epitexts may establish a relation with the printed narrative. As material peritexts may cue the audience toward the supportive epitextual material, digital epitexts may cue (potential) readers toward the narrative told in the physical book. In other words, I suggest a possible interplay between material peritexts and digital epitexts, which causes an *intermedial* relation (fig. 3.2).

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">PARATEXTS 2.0: TWOFOLD LEVEL OF NARRATIVE COMMUNICATION</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">AUTHOR</td><td>Material Peritexts
(e.g. typographic experimentations, images, etc.)</td><td rowspan="3">ACTUAL AUDIENCE</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intermedial Relation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Digital Epitexts
(e.g. websites, blogs, apps, etc.)</td></tr>
</table>

Fig. 3.2. Paratexts 2.0: Twofold Level of Narrative Communication.

This intermedial relation may have consequences for the author-reader relationship, such as a sense of *open-endedness* associated to a literary narrative. Indeed, as Page remarks, the quality of open-endedness, is a quality associated with narratives in new media (Hoffmann 2010 and Lunenfeld 2000 qtd. in Page *Stories* 12).[28]

[28] See 5.3 for a discussion on authorship and narrative communication when paratexts 2.0 are employed.

MP3 The third function concerning material peritexts is what I call the *synthetic* function which is fulfilled when material peritexts foreground the synthetic component of the narrative and produce a tension among ontological worlds. More specifically, the *synthetic* function occurs when material peritexts are employed to allow readers to focus on the narrative as artificial construct–what Phelan and Rabinowitz (7) call the synthetic component–which is linked with the hybrid ways in which narrative meanings (the *thematic* component) are conveyed.

Brian McHale, in his seminal work on the poetics of *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987), has identified, in narratives using unconventional paratexts, an ontological tension between the real world of the material object and that of the fictional world projected by the narrative (179-196). Significantly, the same effect takes place in these contemporary narratives with the (possible) juxtaposition of another ontological world. Indeed, analyzing paratexts 2.0 as a twofold resource of narrative communication shows how peritextual elements that in postmodernist fiction were foregrounded in the printed book to create a tension between the *real* world and the *story* world, today are also a cue toward a *digital* world. By acknowledging that the *synthetic* function is strictly linked with the *indexical* function, we may further speculate that a characteristic of contemporary poetics might precisely lie in this juxtaposition of three different ontological realities.

MP4 DE4 The function concerning the *authorial* ethos construction is fulfilled when the material peritext offers clues for the "discursive ethos" (e.g. hybridity, genres, specific medium affordances). Likewise, the *locative* function

occurs when digital epitexts offer clues for the "non-discursive ethos" (e.g. authenticity, irony, originality, sincerity).[29] Therefore, I position paratexts 2.0 among the many *discursive* ethos clues (e.g. intertextual references) contributing to the readers' building of an image of the author and specific values to be attributed to him or her (Korthals Altes "Slippery Author" 98). As Korthals Altes notices, the author's choice of using a certain genre or medium elicits distinct expectations (104); similarly, the disruption of paratextual conventions may as well stimulate different expectations, which will in turn influence readers' judgments above the overall ethical purpose of the narrative. *Non-discursive* ethos clues are linked with the *locative* function, which thus highlights the kind of expectations readers may have, not only concerning the kind of work they are going to experience, but also about the authorial agent who is in charge of the communication.

As a result of the *authorial* and the *locative* function, on the one hand, the authorial audience of narratives employing paratexts 2.0 has to cope with the hybridity resulting from the integration of material peritexts, to accept this format and, in some cases, also to catch the interplay with digital epitexts. On the other hand, the actual audience will take the various uses of material peritexts and digital epitexts as indications of authorial posture which influence, as pointed out by Korthals Altes, the overall interpretation of the author's communicative purposes. Finally, the *authorial* and the *locative* functions are connected to a broader discourse on authorship and the challenge that paratexts

[29] By classifying ethos attributions in *discursive* and *non-discursive*, I am following Korthals Altes' own subdivision ("Slippery Author" 103-10).

2.0 pose to the role of the *implied* author in the narrative communication model (see 5.2 and 5.3).

DE1 DE3 What I call the *augmentative* function of digital epitexts aims at visually enhancing and/or extending the printed narrative, as well as at materializing its intermedial references. Thus, an author's website which contains verbal, audio and visual material to extend the literary narrative in its printed form fulfills an *augmentative* function. The above-mentioned example of the slideshow reproduced in Egan's website is very illustrative of this kind of interplay, especially because, as it will be discussed at length in Chapter 4, it also contains the sound of the songs mentioned in the printed narrative. Another example is again Larsen's *The Selected Works of T. S. Spivet*, which has a website on its own (tsspivet.com) that includes narrative-related interactive material.

Intermedial transpositions of printed narratives in application softwares or eBooks might also be categorized as digital epitexts, as long as they are not a mere reproduction of the printed format without any significant supportive intent. The affordances of intermedial transpositions as digital epitexts offer a high level of interactivity, such as the possibility of changing the narrative chapters' order or sharing quotes on social media. In this regard, the level of interactivity of digital epitexts concerns what I call their *social* function. Indeed, the boundaries of the functions of digital epitexts are, by definition, not clear-cut but rather fluidly interconnected the one with the other.

Further examples of authors/novels websites are: Danielewsky's *Only Revolutions* (www.onlyrevolutions.com), which include the author's readings of

the narrative together with music and pictures with interactive sequences; E. L. James' page (www.eljamesauthor.com) where particular attention is given to the author's interaction with readers through social media, some of which she is personally "in charge of"; J. K. Rowling's *Pottermore* (www.pottermore.com) where some parts (including unpublished texts) of the Harry Potter saga are re-told in an interactive way; Jonathan Safran Foer's *Eating Animals* (www.eatinganimals.com) which offers links to get involved against factory farming; Jonathan Lethem's page (www.jonathanlethem.com), where the section *Promiscuous Stories* is dedicated to a project of co-authorship. Many other authors, then, interact with their audience through their websites or blogs, sharing videos, photos and notes. To name just a few: Nathan Englander on microblogging platform *Tumblr* (www.nathanenglander.tumblr.com); Alison Bechdel (dykestowatchoutfor.com/blog); Mark Haddon (markhaddon.com); Hari Kunzru (www.harikunzru.com); Douglas Coupland (coupland.com); and Adam Thrilwell (www.adamthirlwell.com).

The latter examples of digital epitexts, however, even if they fulfill a *locative* function, are less easily recognizable in terms of being part of the resources of narrative communication. Besides, they are problematic to categorize with regard to the audience. Some authors' websites may be intended not only for communicating with the actual audience of their narrative(s), but also with *potential* readers. In connection with this, the audience in Web 2.0 environments has been described as possibly infinite (Georgakopoulou "Small Stories" 9) and "part of the so-called long tail phenomenon, which refers to the fact that most of the content available online–including that produced by

nonprofessionals–succeeds in finding an audience" (Manovich *Art of Participation* 68). Although rapidly changing, then, it is important to acknowledge the applicability of these phenomena to digital epitexts and contextualize them in the broad landscape of Web 2.0 dynamics. In describing the consequences of *tellability* in social media, Page points out how the engagement with *social* activities creates "an illusion of back-stage intimacy" when celebrities incorporate "stories from their private lives" (*Stories* 201). Besides, the use of hyperlinks, which characterizes Web 2.0 media, has not only an intertextual function, but also a social dimension, as narrators use links to "indicate their interests or areas of expertise" (203).

The idea of sharing experience is at the core of social media practice. As Georgakopoulou observes, "The increasing media convergence and the fusion of social networking sites activities, along with social engineering principles on various platforms, clearly encourage the sharing of life" ("Narrative/Life"). In this regard, the *social* function of digital epitexts is observable in many authors (e.g. Salman Rushdie, Arnon Grunberg, Margaret E. Atwood, Chuck Palahniuk) by means of social networking sites as Twitter or Facebook. However, a detailed discussion of the various ways single authors can engage with social networking sites, whose data are, by definition, ephemeral, is beyond the scope of the analytical model for paratexts 2.0 illustrated in this chapter.

Another category in connection with digital epitexts which is worth mentioning in this discussion but that is not part of the framework of Paratexts 2.0 as a resource of narrative communication–although it could to some extent be relevant for the analysis of literary narratives–is what I call *readerly* epitexts.

I define *readerly* epitexts as a subcategory of digital epitexts consisting of unofficial material (e.g. readers' websites, blogs, maps, fan versions) which, relatively to the authorial communication, may fulfill a *collaborative* function, when they creatively interact with the authorial communication; a *supportive* function, when they support it; and a *resisting* function, when they try to reverse or resist it (fig. 3.3).

Subcategory of Digital Epitexts		
Readerly Epitexts		
Digital material related to the literary narrative created by actual readers (e.g. maps, fan versions, blogs).	**Collaborative**	To creatively interact with the authorial communication.
	Supportive	To support the authorial communication.
	Resisting	To reverse or resist the authorial communication.

Fig. 3.3 Paratexts 2.0. Readerly Epitexts as subcategory of Digital Epitexts.

Readerly epitexts, however, encompass a too broad variety to be useful within the analysis in this study. The whole realm of fan fiction, for instance, can be considered part of a narrative's readerly epitext *supporting* and creatively *collaborating* with the authorial communication. Some readers, however, may also attempt to *resist* the authorial communication by reversing part of the literary narrative. On several blogs and websites readers may want to share their experience with other readers. In this regard, the are many communities centered on a specific author, such as *The Howling Fantods* (www.thehowlingfantods.com/dfw) dedicated to David Foster Wallace, or mailing lists, such as *About Pynchon-L* (www.waste.org/pynchon-l) about

Thomas Pynchon. It is important, hence, to recognize that on the one hand, the subcategory of readerly epitexts may be linked with the framework of paratexts 2.0, but that on the other hand, a thorough discussion of it will require a much broader scope than that of this dissertation.

3.3 PARATEXTUAL DYNAMICS 2.0

3.3.1 Resource Presence and Function Fulfillment

According to Phelan's narrative communication model, "All the resources are equally the product of the implied author's communicative choices [although], in any given narrative, some [of them] will be more *valuable* than others" ("Rhetoric, Ethics" 70-1; emphasis added). Putting forth an heuristic framework for contemporary literary narratives employing paratexts 2.0, I aim at providing an analytical vocabulary that addresses issues of authorship, media affordances, author-reader relationship, and narrative communication. Therefore, given the assumption that paratexts 2.0 are among the resources at the author's disposal for different communicative choices, authors give different *value* to the categories of paratexts 2.0 in any given narrative.

The value attached to paratexts 2.0, I argue, can be measured according to two criterions: (1) the presence of material peritexts and digital epitexts in the progression of a narrative in a gradual range from low to high; and (2) the level of fulfillment reached by their functions in a continuum that moves from insufficient to total (fig. 3.4). Therefore, individual analyses of literary narratives employing material peritexts and/or digital epitexts will reveal, in

connection with textual and readerly dynamics, different interpretative, ethical and aesthetic judgments, according to the value that the author attributes to these resources.

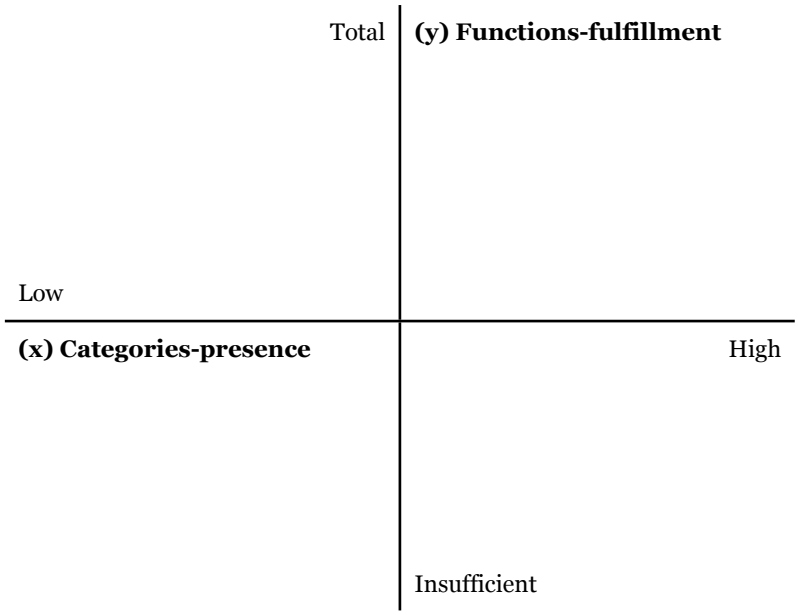

Fig. 3.4. Resource Value of Paratexts 2.0 according to the degrees of function fulfillment and resource presence.

Paratextual dynamics 2.0 bring to the fore questions concerning how readers interpret the paratexts 2.0 with regard to their function fulfillment and their resource presence, as well as which kinds of ethical indications, that will intersect with the ethics of the told, the ethics of the telling and the audience's overall ethical position, they reveal. A given narrative may thus have a low to high presence of material peritexts and digital epitexts, which may in turn fulfill their functions more or less completely.

3.3.2 Reconfigurations

The value given to paratexts 2.0 as resources of narrative communication, according to the function fulfillment and the resource presence, is hence another key tool to investigate *why* these paratextual resources are foregrounded; *how* they relate to the text they are enhancing; and *what* are their possible effects on the reading experience. Indeed, two main theoretical issues need to be reconsidered when analyzing contemporary narratives employing paratexts 2.0: authorship and the author-reader relationship (1), and media affordances (2). As figure 3.5 shows, the use of paratexts 2.0, among the other communicative choices (e.g. narrator(s), FID, Structure/Gaps), triggers reconfigurations of authorship when readers identify in digital epitexts the presence of the author in the public domain, the various information he or she decides to share, and the ethos clues of his or her public figure.

	Paratextual Cues 2.0		
	Material Peritexts	**Digital Epitexts**	**Reconfigurations**
Examples	**1.** Markers of authorial style; **2.** Ethical stance toward the role of the medium.	**1.** Author as public figure; **2.** Presence of the author in the digital world; **3.** Interaction with the audience; **4.** Sense of intimacy triggered by the author's sharing of personal information.	**Authorship**
	Exploitation of media affordances through the use of: **1.** Hybrid media (range of different semiotic modalities); **2.** Intermedial transpositions; **3.** Intermedial relations; **4.** Extension of the narrative through other media.		**Media Affordances**

Fig. 3.5 Reconfigurations of theoretical issues triggered by the use of paratexts 2.0.

At the level of material peritexts, I suggest that the presence of a material intervention on the printed page provides an indication of authorial style, comparable to the line in graphic novels which, as Jared Gardner remarks, "is determined by physical specificities that cannot be ignored or effaced" (64). Such as the visual component of a graphic narrative "*cannot* erase the sign of the human hand" (65; emphasis in the original), the visual component of material peritexts reminds readers of the authorial presence, as well as of his or her ethical *stance* toward the role of the medium in the digital age. Cues toward a reconfiguration of the role of media affordances concerning printed narratives are to be found in the various modes of media-exploitation that go from the combination of different semiotic modalites to the extension of the narrative through other media, the creation of intermedial transposition, and intermedial relations.

The categorization of paratextual cues related to questions of authorship and media affordance, however, should not be considered as a conclusive proposal. On the contrary, it is a first step in the study of the distinguishing features of paratexts 2.0. To the same extent, it is important to acknowledge how my proposal for a typology of paratexts 2.0 may challenge established theoretical concepts. In particular, I am referring here to the exclusion of the epitextual material from the rhetorical approach and, therefore, the exclusion of the "real" author from the communication model; and the insufficient attention given to the affordances of the printed medium which, conversely, needs to be contextualized in the twenty-first century.

Chapter 4

READING AND WRITING PARATEXTS 2.0:

JENNIFER EGAN'S *A VISIT FROM THE GOON SQUAD* AND JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER'S *TREE OF CODES*

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter illustrates how the model outlined in Chapter 3, combined with a rhetorical analysis, may help us to better capture the overall purpose(s) of literary narratives. Putting the theoretical framework of the paratext 2.0 at work, the following analysis aims at showing that the new categorization of material peritexts and digital epitexts provides essential terminology for the interpretation of contemporary literature. In particular, this chapter focuses on the authorial choice of drawing on paratexts 2.0 as resources of narrative communication. Through exemplary case studies, I wish to draw attention to what the authorial agency may attempt to communicate by means of paratexts 2.0, as well as to the way material peritexts and digital epitexts interact with the readers' interests (mimetic, thematic, synthetic).

The corpus is limited to two case studies, *A Visit From the Goon Squad* (2010) by Jennifer Egan, and *Tree of Codes* (2010) by Jonathan Safran Foer, and their comparison aims at investigating the use of paratexts 2.0 from a broad perspective. While the former is the prototypical case in which an author fully

relies on paratexts 2.0, in the latter the author draws significantly on material peritexts, but less profusely on digital epitexts. Nevertheless, both cases give to paratexts 2.0 a rhetorical value. Therefore, by taking into examination two very different ways of employing paratexts 2.0, I hope to show the flexibility of the framework of the paratext 2.0, which is able to provide useful tools both for paradigmatic narratives and for less representative ones.

As I have illustrated at length in Chapter 3, paratexts 2.0 can be used as heuristics to enrich rhetorical narrative analysis with questions of media affordances and extra-textual authorial presence. Indeed, the choice of comparing a more paradigmatic case to one (supposedly) less exemplary, substantiates my claim of the importance of acknowledging paratexts 2.0 among the resources of narrative communication (in Phelan's IRA-model).[30] By providing a case that *embraces* the categories and functions of the paratext 2.0 and one that embraces some but *resists* others, I will show how the model might be employed to interpret a numerous range of narratives. In sum, paratexts 2.0 are part of a discourse:

(a) historically grounded–which therefore connects narrative analysis with the socio-cultural context in which it appears;

(b) about the awareness (or unawareness) of the properties of the print media and the possibility of exploiting such properties for communicative purposes;

(c) about the awareness (or unawareness) of the use of digital media, either in support of the printed narrative or to construct an authorial public figure.

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[30] Implied Author ⟶ Resources ⟶ Actual Audience (see 2.1.2, p. 32).

The rhetorical analysis of the two case studies will begin with a general introduction to each narrative (4.2.1 and 4.3.1). It will focus on the main resources employed and the main components of the narrative (mimetic, thematic, synthetic). Then, the chapter continues with the description, for each case study, of how material peritexts and digital epitexts are used by the authorial agency to influence or achieve the overall purpose(s) of the narrative (Egan's *A Visit From the Goon Squad* in 4.2.2 and 4.2.3, Foer's *Tree of Codes* in 4.3.2 and 4.3.3). Here, I will follow the theoretical model defined in Chapter 3, to accurately outline how the four functions of material peritexts––*narrative* (**MP1**), *indexical* (**MP2**), *synthetic* (**MP3**), *authorial* (**MP4**); and the four functions of digital epitexts––*augmentative* (**DE1**), *dialogic* (**DE2**), *social* (**DE3**), *locative* (**DE4**), are fulfilled and combined in the two narratives. The consequences of the rhetorical choice of using paratexts 2.0 will be sketched out throughout the various sections, while the concluding section 4.5 offers a thorough account of the results in terms of a comparison of the different value given to the paratexts 2.0 as resource in the case studies.

4.2 JENNIFER EGAN'S *A VISIT FROM THE GOON SQUAD*

4.2.1 Introducing the Narrative

Will language and literary creation be debased by texting shorthand and the plagiaristic 'sampling' mentality of Web culture, as the music industry has been? Culturally and humanistically, these are vast, gaping questions. ... *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is my attempt to answer them.
~ Jennifer Egan, 2010, *BookBrowse*

The thematic component of *A Visit From the Goon Squad* deals primarily with the passing of time and the changes that new technologies are bringing to our lives. This subject is presented by mapping the evolution of the music industry from the late seventies punk rock bands to a not-so-distant future where people have never heard live music. As the narrator in chapter two points out: "the problem [is] *digitization*, which suck[s] the life out of everything that [gets] smeared through its microscopic mesh. Film, photography, music: dead. An *aesthetic holocaust*!" (23; emphasis in the original). To address these cultural and ethical issues related to the old-versus-new-media motif, two main *resources* are predominantly valuable: paratexts 2.0, and a disconnected temporal ordering. Since the use of paratexts 2.0 will be discussed at length in 4.2.1 and 4.2.3, in the following section I will sketch out some preliminary considerations about the use of a disconnected temporal ordering with regard to the narrative progression.

The events told in *A Visit From the Goon Squad* (hereafter *Goon Squad*) start in the late 1970s, but the thirteen chapters do not follow a chronological sequence. The events involve several characters and narrators whose story lines intertwine throughout the narrative progression. Echoing Ryan's concept of

proliferating narrativity, according to which contemporary fiction "becom[es] a collection of little stories loosely connected through common participants" (*Avatars* 10), the story lines of the two main characters–Bennie Salazar and Sasha Blake–function as larger narratives around which the other embedded stories are narrated. Indeed, the rhetorical effectiveness of the overall narrative depends largely on discovering the multiple relations of the various characters despite the continuous analepses, and prolepses.[31] To exemplify, the first chapter, "Found Objects," introduces the two main characters, Sasha and Bennie, in New York City at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In the second chapter, "The Gold Cure," there is a continuity in the setting and time (although the events happen a couple of years later), but there is a change of *voice*. In "Found Objects," the narrator is Sasha, while in "The Gold Cure," the story is told by an omniscient narrator. The fact that each chapter changes voice, time and space but is connected with the others through the story lines of the multiple characters seems to confirm Ryan's take on contemporary fiction.

The whole narrative begins with a thirty-something Sasha working as assistant to music industry executive Bennie. She suffers from kleptomania and goes on a date pretending to be younger (chapter one). Then, the audience is introduced to Bennie, some years later, a middle-age divorced man who drinks coffee with gold flakes as a cure for his exhausted sex-drive and who has sold his music label to a multinational oil corporation (chapter two). A jump back in

[31] Analepsis (flashback) and prolepsis (flashforward) are the terms Genette employs to define chronological deviations (*Narrative Discourse)*.

time and space to San Francisco in the late seventies/early eighties, where Bennie and his friend Scotty Hausmann used to play in a punk band, follows. Lou Kline, a famous music producer with problems of addiction, will become Bennie's mentor (chapter three). The account of Lou's safari in Africa (chapter four) is the first in chronological order, but also the more loose in terms of characters' connections. When Lou is approaching death (chapter five), many years later, he eventually meets again Bennie and his old gang.

Jumping to the future and New York again, the narrative moves on to Scotty's adulthood which did not turn out as he expected: instead of being a musician, he works as janitor in an elementary school. When he meets his former friend Bennie, they are forced to face how much their lives ended up differently (chapter six). At this time (mid-nineties) Bennie has a successful career, a wife, Stephanie, and a nice house in New York City suburbs. The apparently idyllic life, however, is disrupted by the presence of Stephanie's brother, Jules Jones, who just came out of prison, and Stephanie's request for divorce after she discovers her husband's nth infidelity (chapter seven). Chapter eight is devoted to a new character, Dolly, linked with the other characters' stories through Stephanie, Bennie's ex-wife, who had worked for her when she was a famous publicist known as La Doll. Together with her daughter Lulu and an actress in decline named Kitty Jackson she goes to the Middle East to help a genocidal dictator. We then discover more about Kitty Jackson and Stephanie's brother imprisonment (chapter nine): Kitty was a young celebrity who, during an interview with the then journalist Jules Jones, managed to escape from his rape attempt.

With chapter ten the narrative connects again with the main storyline of Sasha; the you-narrator is Rob Freeman, her best friend during college years at NYU. After a suicide attempt, he will end up drowned in the Houston River, despite his friend (and Sasha's boyfriend) Drew's desperate attempt to rescue him. Chapter eleven is again strongly connected to Sasha: set years earlier, it recounts of Sasha's runaway at seventeen and her uncle's rescue in Naples. Yet again, Chapter twelve is devoted to Sasha. Sasha's daughter, Alison, is a young teenager who keeps track of her family life through a digital journal, written with the presentation software Microsoft's PowerPoint. The chapter is set in the year 202-something, in the California desert. Alison's younger brother Lincoln is a "slightly autistic" (233) boy obsessed with rock songs that have pauses in them. The audience is informed that, after Bennie had fired Sasha for stealing, she moved from New York City and reconnected through Facebook with her former boyfriend Drew, they got married and moved together to the desert. Drew is a doctor who spends most of his time at the hospital and finds it difficult to communicate with his son Lincoln.

Finally, chapter thirteen reconnects with Bennie, Scotty, Alex and Lulu. Entitled "Pure Language," this chapter is the final one both structurally and chronologically. It is again set in a slightly dystopian future, where technology has been interiorized by humankind to the point that even the ability to communicate orally is threatened. An example of how language has been altered by SMS abbreviations is the following dialogue (326):

> *only Ets chInEs*
> *!*
> ...

tel me hEs betr in prsn
nevr met
4 rEl??
shy
*#@&**

However, the final scene offers a happy ending to the narrative. Scotty will finally be playing live, thanks to Bennie who organizes a concert at the World Trade Center site for a generation that has never heard live music.

The continuous chronological deviations provide a tool for interpreting the title as a metaphor of the passing of time, which will eventually *visit* every character. The ethical dimension of the overall narrative act (the consequences of the passing of time) emerges not only from the ethics of the told, but also from a paratextual indication. Right before the first chapter, a title page informs readers–through the letter "A"–that there would be two *sides* forming the whole narrative. Indeed, the thirteen chapters are structurally divided in two parts, *A* (chapter one to six) and *B* (chapter seven to thirteen). This paratextual division fulfills a narrative function (**MP1**) through the intermedial reference to LP records. This reference to a medium that is in contrast to the relentless digitization of music symbolizes the cultural issues explored in the narrative: the passing of time and the old-versus-new media question. In this regard, also one of the epigraphs from Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (1871-1922) is significant:

> Poets claim that we recapture for a moment the self that we were long ago when we enter some house or garden in which we used to live in our youth. But these are most

> hazardous pilgrimages, which end as often in disappointment as in success. It is in ourselves that we should rather seek to find those fixed places, contemporaneous with different years.

The authorial audience will then confirm the hypothesis on the consequences of the passing of time as the main communicative purpose of *Goon Squad* throughout the narrative progression. For instance, in the first chapter of *side B*, aptly entitled "A to B," Scotty tells his successful friend Bennie that "*A* is when we were both in the band, chasing the same girl. *B* is now" (101). Yet again, the concluding chapter, "Pure Language," is a reflection on how new technologies have changed and are changing human relationships, starting from the way we communicate, up to the way we produce art, music and literature. Bennie's line: "'Time's a goon, right? You gonna let that goon push you around?'" (332) confirms that the *Goon Squad* of the title is precisely time or, more precisely, what *changes* in time. The ending substantiates this once again: after Scotty's concert, Bennie remarks to his assistant Alex: "'You grew up, Alex ..., just like the rest of us" (340). This brief comment makes Alex realize that the "strange sound" he was constantly hearing was just "the sound of time passing" (340)

The ending, thus, allows for a resolution of the tension between the characters–i.e. the tension between Scotty and Bennie has a solution and a reconfiguration when Scotty finally becomes a rock star,–and for an ethical situation between the author and her audience that concludes with the projection of the role of new technologies in the future. Besides, the

transgressive temporal ordering of *Goon Squad* emphasizes the centrality of the time-passing motif by interweaving embedded narratives featuring several narrators. In this regard, *Goon Squad* is a paradigmatic twenty-first century novel confronting the ethical issues of the changes new technologies are bringing to humankind.

Nonetheless, Egan does not shape her narrative to offer a clear, distinct position concerning such overall ethical situation (the ethics of the telling, in Phelan's terms). On the one hand, the reconfiguration of the main characters sees a victory of live music over technology with no human interaction. On the other hand, some characters are extremely involved into these (future) digital devices as to show how far the *aesthetic holocaust* of the digitization process has already gone. Like the passing of time, this process is indeed irreversible. Moreover, as we will see below, Egan's reliance on paratexts 2.0 offers sharp ethical indications of her engagement in the present conversation about media affordances and authorship.

4.2.2 Material Peritexts: *A Visit from the Goon Squad*'s Slide-Journal

The category of material peritexts employed by Egan as resource of narrative communication to fulfill specific functions can be easily identified with *Goon Squad*'s unconventional layout. Material peritexts are displayed in a clear-cut space: chapter twelve, "Great Rock and Roll Pauses by Alison Blake" (hereafter

GR&RP), is a slide-journal and, as such, is graphically realized as the printout of seventy-five PowerPoint slides (fig. 4.1).

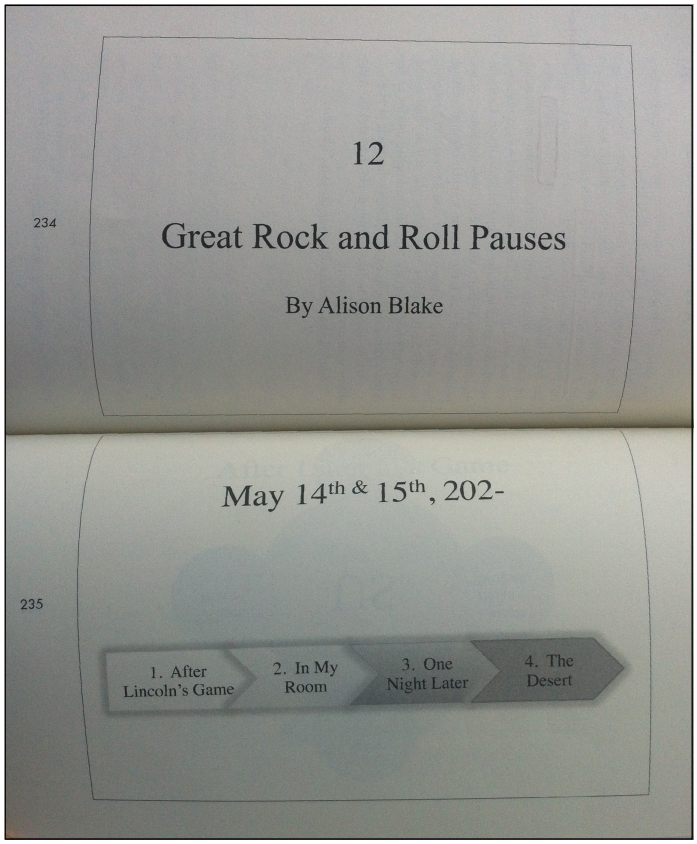

Fig. 4.1. Alison's slide journal. Jennifer Egan, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010), pages 234-5. © Jennifer Egan. Image digitally edited for reproduction.

GR&RP, together with chapter thirteen, is the only one that does respect a sequential temporal ordering, being set in an undetermined close future, the year 202-something. The futuristic setting provides a first hint toward the material inclusion of an unconventional medium into the narrative, which become itself part of the narrative world. The story level of a possible future in

which writing will consist of combining new technologies and new softwares is materialized in its graphic realization.

Following the typology of the paratexts 2.0 outlined in Chapter 3, the slide-format fulfills a narrative function (**MP1**) by materializing the mimetic and thematic components of the narrative to enhance its main purpose(s). While an older generation, represented by Sasha and her husband Drew, resists to the idea of a life fully dependent on new technologies, the younger one, embodied by Alison and her brother Lincoln, deals with it more spontaneously (i.e. writing a journal with a presentation software). This generational tension–also known as the digital natives versus digital immigrants debate–emerges through the mother not understanding her daughter's slide-format journal full of charts and diagrams (fig. 4.2), and the daughter trying to understand her mother's habit of making collages with old notes and "'found objects'" (265) from her past.

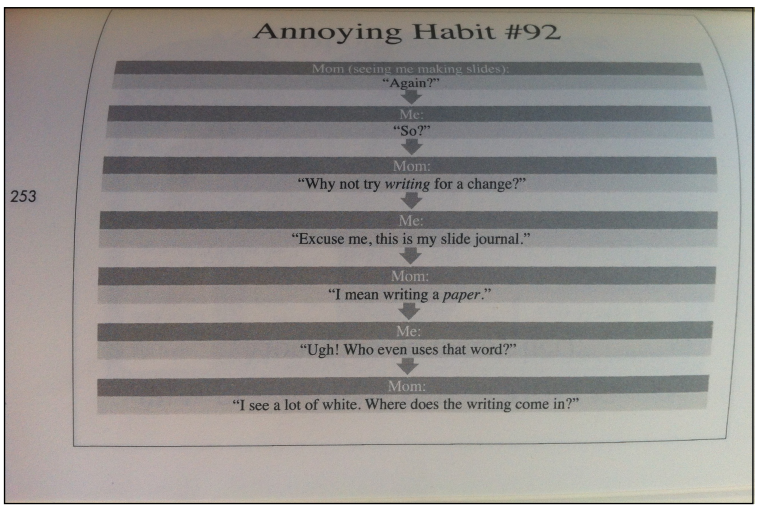

Fig. 4.2. Alison and Sasha about the use of digital software instead of paper. Jennifer Egan, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010), page 253. © Jennifer Egan. Image digitally edited for reproduction.

Of similar nature is also the tension between Lincoln and his father. Although part of the obsession Lincoln has with rock songs that have long pauses in them is due to its slight autism, the idea of searching for pauses (i.e. temporary stops) mirrors *Goon Squad*'s thematic component of the passing of time. Through the intermedial reference to music, readers will judge the pauses to be part of the musical composition. In so doing, they are further guided in their ethical judgments about the literary artifact they are reading. The two-sides format of the narrative seems to suggests that chapter 12 may be read as a long pause in the progression of *Goon Squad*.

Sasha, having worked in the music industry herself, seems to better understand her son's passion: "'There's smokiness to the 'Bernadette' pause, probably because it's recorded on 8-track'" (247). In line with the overall ethical dimension of *Goon Squad*, this remark pinpoints that analog music recording formats, such as the eight-track tape, were able to catch sounds, like "smokiness," that digital formats cannot. Nevertheless, it is Lincoln's sister Alison the one that appears to be the more supportive of his activity. She writes down on her slide journal that listening to the pauses makes her *notice* things–such as "A whisper of orange in the horizon," and "Miles of solar panels like a black ocean" (251), or "The whole desert is a pause" (287)–confirming once again the centrality of these temporal stops.

When the narrative approaches the ending, it offers a resolution to the characters' instabilities. Sasha explains why the pauses are so important to Lincoln: "'The pauses make you think the song will end. And then the song isn't really over, so you're relieved. But then the song *does* actually ends, obviously,

and THAT. TIME. THE END. IS. FOR. REAL'" (281). The graphic realization of the resolution to the tension between father and son is materialized in the four final graphs included at the ending of Alison's journal (305-308). Here the father, after having eventually acknowledged the importance of his son's survey of rock and roll songs with pauses, creates for him several charts that should outline Lincoln's main results.

The pauses are graphically reproduced as empty spaces (fig. 4.3). The intermedial reference to a pause in music is visually represented in terms of absence in a way that suggests an iconic power comparable to panels in sequential art. As Scott McClouds has pointed out, "The panel acts as a sort of general indicator that time or space is being divided" (99). Indeed, in this case, we have a wide empty frame to represent a long temporal pause. If the frame/ pause would be smaller, we would perceive it has shorter in time (fig. 4.4). Indeed, according to McClouds, "The panel shape can actually make a difference in our perception of time. Even though [a] long panel has the same basic 'meaning' as its shorter versions, still it has the feeling of greater length" (101).

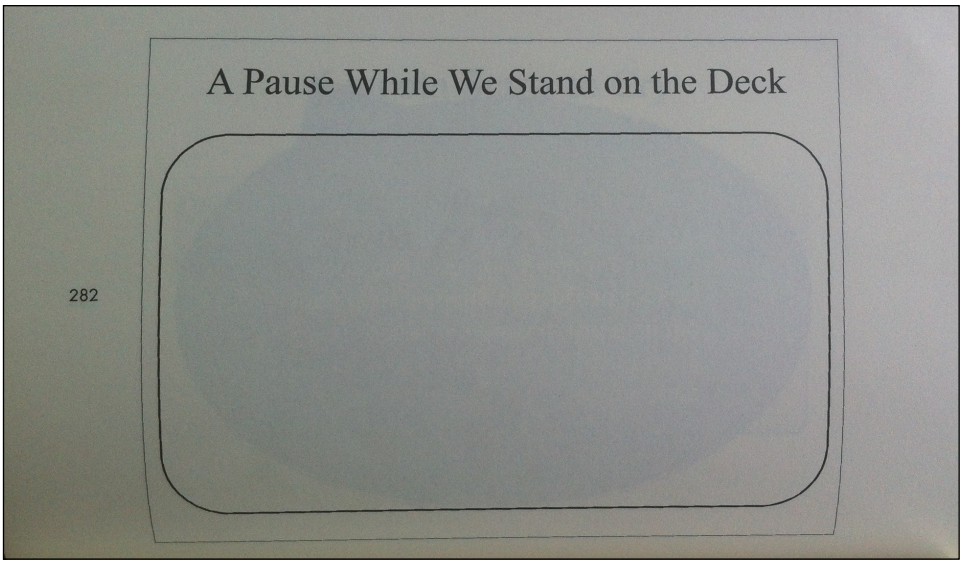

Fig. 4.3. The graphic realization of a long pause. Jennifer Egan, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010), page 282. © Jennifer Egan. Image digitally edited for reproduction.

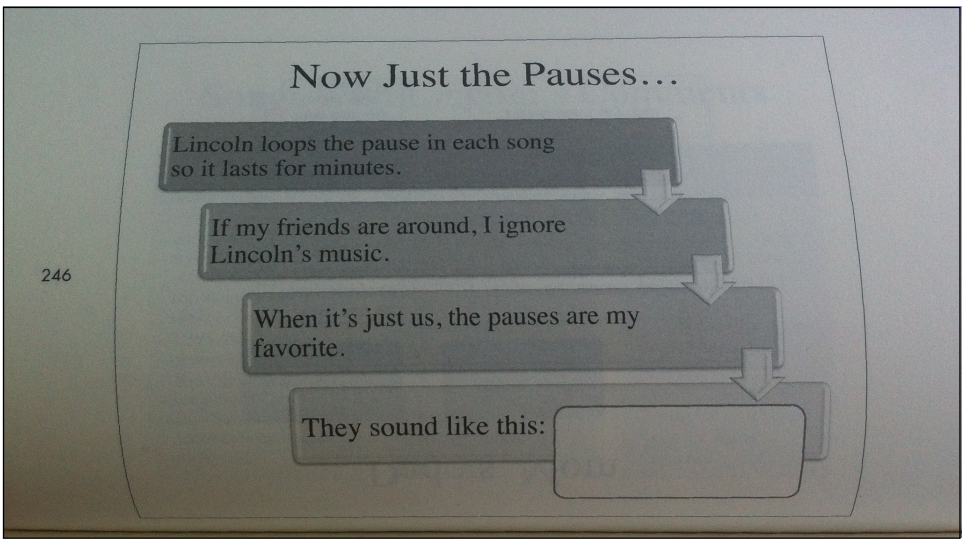

Fig. 4.4. The graphic realization of a short pause. Jennifer Egan, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010), page 246. © Jennifer Egan. Image digitally edited for reproduction.

Comparing presentation software to comics reveals another ethical issue raised by Egan's choice of employing material peritexts in the narrative communication. Following Ryan (*Avatars* 30), I argue that Egan exploits the medium at her disposal (a computer) for expressive purposes, so that charts, arrows, and diagrams become artistic devices to convey narrative meanings. The overall purpose of this multimodal feature, however, is not related to the question whether presentation softwares may become new media to create new narratives. Rather, by juxtaposing a meta-discourse on the devices at an author's disposal to a generational clash, Egan uses specific medium affordances to reinforce the overall ethical dimension of *Goon Squad*–that is, by showing how much digitization is already part of our lives. Indeed, as much as PowerPoint slides are an unconventional mode in fictional narration, they are a standard mode of presentation in several common situations (e.g. classroom lectures, business meetings). Therefore, it is important to pinpoint that *Goon Squad*'s authorial audience *is* familiar with the medium in itself. At the same time, it must be added, Egan is not the first author who used PowerPoint slides as an art medium. Interestingly, a musician, David Byrne, has used PowerPoint slides to create artworks since 2001 (published in a collection in 2003).

Even though in the ending the narrative progression offers a resolution for the communication problem between Drew and Lincoln, it does not offer one for the instability between Sasha and Alison. Just as the graphs symbolize the resolution of the situation between Drew and Lincoln, Alison does not include any conventional typography layout to symbolize her writing on *paper* (see fig. 4.2). The lack of resolution between the writing with paper and pen

versus the writing with a presentation software and a keyboard, reveals the great role given to this issue. Furthermore, this unresolved tension foregrounds the synthetic function of material peritexts (**MP3**)–a function that highlights the narrative synthetic component to create an ontological tension between the real world of the artifact and the story world of the narrative. Since conventional paratexts tend to minimize the presence of mediation, whereas material peritexts lay it bare, while reading the slides, the narrative audience is constantly aware of the material object that contains the narrative. This awareness offers cues toward questions of ontological and epistemological nature such as: What *is* a slide? Is it a valid means to convey narrative meaning? In other words, readers' *aesthetic* judgments are led to evaluate whether the slide format is a satisfactory mode of expressing meaning; readers' *ethical* judgments reflects about the consequences for human communication in a purely digital culture.

In *GR&RP,* therefore, the synthetic function (**MP3**) is strictly connected to the indexical function (**MP2**). As described above (3.2), the indexical function (**MP2**) occurs when material peritexts refer to the narrative's digital epitexts, where readers may find additional elements in support to the printed narrative. Here, the slides are paradigmatic of the presence of mediation, since their printout highlights the limits of print. On the one hand, in order to include the slides in the printed book, Egan had to limit the properties of the software. On the other hand, the media presence is foregrounded by such appropriation and remix of the presentation software.

Indeed, we can further assume that the iconic power of the slides has a different degree of intensity compared to its digital counterpart. The process of *remediation*, which here adopts a strategy of *hypermediacy*, takes place in the form of an old medium (print) *refashioning* a new medium (digital software). In so doing, the remediated slides fulfill an indexical function (**MP2**). By remediating another medium, the slides direct the authorial audience toward another extra-textual level of communication, that is the counterpart of material peritexts, *Goon Squad*'s digital epitexts.

Within the typology of functions of the paratexts 2.0, the question of specific medium-affordances, implied in the use of material peritexts, offers an indication for the construction of a *discursive* authorial ethos. The choice of using material peritexts as resources of narrative communication reveals the author's choice of playing with generic and media conventions. Material peritexts fulfill an authorial function (**MP4**) by providing features concerning Jennifer Egan as public figure who takes a stance in the new versus old media debate. By means of material peritexts, readers may construct Egan's authorial ethos through the ontological and epistemological significance of her re-use of a digital medium. A construction that may be integrated by *non-discursive* ethos clues to be found in *Goon Squad*'s digital epitexts.

4.2.3 "To see what might happen." The Many Digital Epitexts of *A Visit from the Goon Squad*

Unlike its material peritexts, located in a delimited space (CH. 12 and its graphic realization in slide format), *Goon Squad*'s digital epitexts are composed of various elements located in multiple spaces. To highlight the dialogic function (**DE2**) of digital epitext and the intermedial relation of digital epitexts and material peritexts, I will first focus on the digital counterpart of *GR&RP* to be found on Jennifer Egan's website (jenniferegan.com), under a header called "Court Street, July 2009" (as well as under another header, aptly entitled "Great Rock and Roll Pauses"). Here, the authorial audience finds the slide-journal chapter in its conventional format, a slideshow.[32]

GR&RP in the digital format of a slideshow better exploits the properties of the presentation software. It may otherwise be argued that this digital epitext provides the *original* version of the chapter (before Egan's appropriation and re-use on print), in its familiar context, with full color slides and the sound of the rock and roll songs with pauses analyzed by Lincoln in a sort of *materialization* of the intermedial references to music. Besides, the slides on the slideshow increase their iconic function, compared with the black and white printout. Colors, as McClouds points out, "objectify their subjects" (189), adding a layer of expressiveness and awareness of the physical form (189-192).

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[32] As mentioned above in Chapter 3, the audience of digital epitexts is potentially infinite. However, if not otherwise specified, since my focus is narrative communication, my point of view in this analysis focuses on the actual audience (and the authorial and narrative position assumed, when relevant).

Therefore, this digital epitext fulfills its augmentative function (**DE1**) on the one hand, offering the audience a 9:04 minutes slideshow that *remediates* the static, black-and-white, printed version of chapter twelve and, on the other hand, materializing the intermedial references to the PowerPoint medium and, especially, those to music. The fulfillment of the augmentative function (**DE1**) in *Goon Squad*'s digital epitexts therefore, allows readers to experience the reading with additional elements (fig. 4.5). The slideshow, however, is not the only digital support to the literary narrative to be found on Egan's webpage.

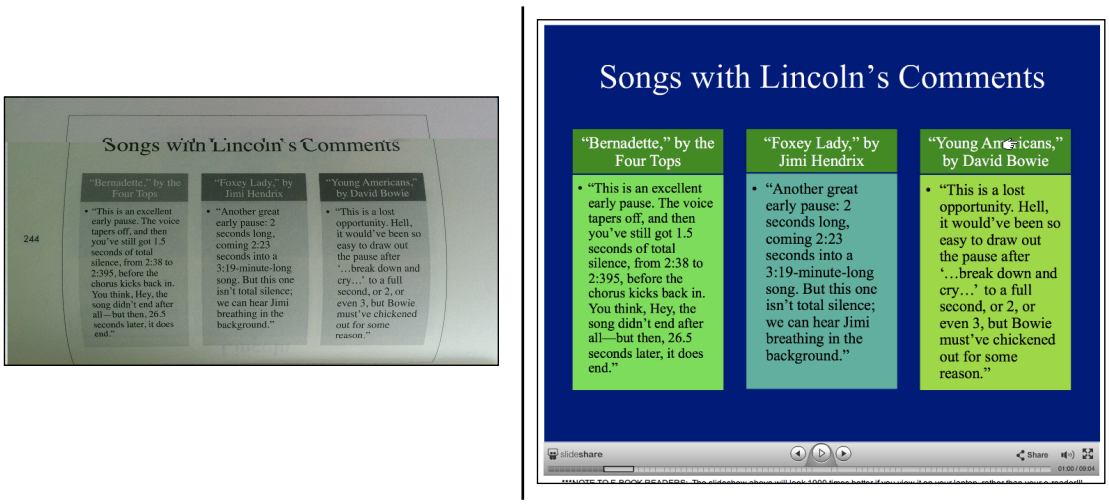

Fig. 4.5. Alison's slide journal in the printed version compared to the online slideshow. Jennifer Egan, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010), page 244; and retrieved at jenniferegan.com. © Jennifer Egan. Images digitally edited for reproduction.

The homepage is divided into eight columns (fig. 4.6). At the top of the webpage there are the corresponding links to the sections: "News, Books, Non-fiction, Interviews, Reviews, Engagements, Photos/bio, Contact." In the remaining space, there are thirteen titles, mostly containing a place and a date, such as "Naples/July 1997," or "Fort Green/March 2008." The place/year title

indicates *where* and *when* Egan wrote each chapter. Indeed, when scrolling with the mouse on these titles, it appears a pop-up window (fig. 4.6) with the indication of a chapter's title and some additional information on its creative process.

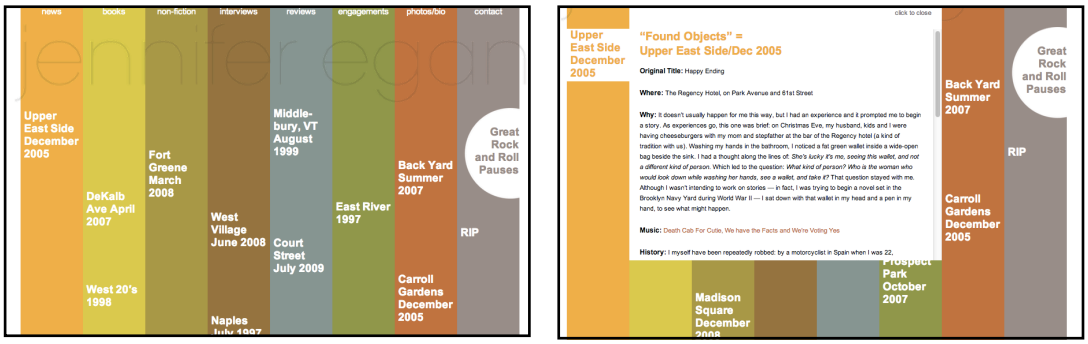

Fig. 4.6. Jennifer Egan's website and Pop-up window: "Found Objects." © Jennifer Egan. Retrieved at jenniferegan.com. Image digitally edited for reproduction.

The pattern followed by the majority of pop-up windows includes various sections: the chapter's *original title*; the location *where* the author came up with the idea of writing the story, and/or *where* she experienced a personal life event that triggered the idea of writing such story, and/or *where* she actually wrote it (e.g. a café, a room, an armchair); a short life narrative about such event (*why*); a soundtrack, either as verbal suggestion, or as a link on iTunes, YouTube, and Amazon (*music*); some memories about the author's experience related to the thematic component of the narrative (*history*); the *beginning* of the chapter (in italics, the titles of the various sections). For instance, when scrolling on the title "Upper East Side/December 2005," the pop-window tells the nonfictional narrative that inspired the author to write *Goon Squad*'s chapter one.

To exemplify, at the beginning of "Found Objects," Sasha is in a hotel's bathroom and, as she suffers from kleptomania, she steals a wallet left unattended on the lavatory. In this digital epitext, the audience is informed that the *original title* for the story was "Happy Ending;" that the production of the narrative has been triggered by Egan's own personal experience at "The Regency Hotel, on Park Avenue and 61st Street" (*Where*), when "Washing my hands in the bathroom, I noticed a fat green wallet inside a wide-open bag beside the sink ... I sat down with that wallet in my head and a pen in my hand, to see what might happen" (*Why*. Available at jenniferegan.com). The digital epitext also provides a nonfictional narrative about Egan's experience as victim of thefts (in Spain, Lisbon, and New York), and a soundtrack. In this case, the music indication is a link to the iTunes store for Death Cab For Cutie's concept album "We Have The Facts And We Are Voting Yes" (2000).

The authorial audience, thus, may navigate through the thirteen pop-up windows and retrieve all these additional contents. Besides, the intermedial reference to music as *soundtrack* offers an ambivalent communicative intent. On the one hand, it seems a signal of the soundtrack to be listened to *while* reading the chapter; on the other hand, it can also be part of the nonfictional description of her creative process, that is the music *she* was listening to while writing the chapter. Indeed, in "West 20's/1998" (the pop-up window linked to chapter nine), Egan explicitly *shares* the music she was listening to in 1998 when living on West 28th Street: "Truthfully, I don't remember. But in those years on West 28th Street we listened to a lot of Bjork, Aimee Mann, Everything But the Girl, and (in my case, I'm ashamed to say), Deep Forest." The reference

to music is incorporated in the text through hyperlinks that become indications for the authorial audience toward the experience of other artworks, in a sharing mode consistent with social media affordances. Besides, this aspect of digital epitexts offers *non-discursive* ethos clues of authenticity, as well as *backstage intimacy,* e.g. Egan's emphasis on her sincerity (*truthfully*), and her actual feelings (*I'm ashamed of*).

Many other autobiographical details are shared with the same purpose. For instance, in "'Out of Body'/Madison Square, Dec. 2008," Egan tells about herself going to Madison Square Park in 2008 and recalling the first job she had close to Madison Square Park in N.Y.C. while trying to become a writer. In "Forty-Minute Lunch/West 20's, 1998," she adds an anecdote (*Fact*) about an unsuccessful experience of publicly reading the chapter (at that time a story in itself). Yet again, in "Pure Language/Prospect park, October 2007," she reflects on the generation of young New Yorkers that has never seen the World Trade Center: "a strange idea for those of us who were here before." She shares even a "RIP" section, containing references to "Other Songs that Mattered" with pauses, and "Other Important Ones."

By means of her website, thus, the author also draws on digital epitexts to fulfill a social function (**DE3**). As mentioned earlier, the social function (**DE3**) of digital epitexts is strictly interconnected with the augmentative function (**DE1**) and concerns their level of interactivity. As it has now become evident from the above, a key feature of all these supportive materials is indeed one of the core characteristic of social media: the sharing of life experiences. Moreover, this idea is linked to Jenkins' definition of *participatory culture*, according to

which, one of its more significant traits is its "strong support for creating and sharing one's creations" ("Confronting" 7).

In this regard, another digital epitext of *Goon Squad* is particularly meaningful: the novel's *Wordpress* blog (available at avisitfromthegoonsquad.com). In the blog, the materialization of the intermedial references to music (**DE1**) takes place in the form of music videos embedded in the website. Furthermore, through the blog it is possible to access a blogroll with interviews to the author, a link to Egan's *Facebook* profile and to read excerpts from the novel. The latter option highlights the dialogic function (**DE2**) fulfilled by *Goon Squad*'s digital epitexts, since the excerpts are an explicit reference toward the printed book.

In addition, through the blog it is possible to download the novel's application software (app). This intermedial transposition of *Goon Squad* as app features *interactive* choices as far as temporal ordering and sharing options are concerned. Therefore, this platform fulfills a social function as well (**DE3**). Its interactivity is indeed one of the features that distinguishes the reading of *Goon Squad* through the app from its printed version.[33] At the *opening* of the app, readers are asked to make a choice among: "read, listen or linear notes." The "Linear Notes" section concerns temporal ordering. It displays thirteen round drawings, each of which depicts an iconic object to represent the corresponding chapter (fig. 4.7).

[33] As Wysocki points out, interactivity is "a term about the relations readers (are encouraged to) have with texts, given the ways texts and textual technologies are structured" (17).

Fig. 4.7. Opening interface and Linear Notes. © Jennifer Egan. *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010). App developed by PopLeaf. Constable & Robinson Ltd, London, 2011. Images digitally edited for reproduction.

By choosing the "Original" option, the chapters' icons are displayed following the temporal (dis)order consistent with the printed version of the narrative. Conversely, by choosing the "Date" option, readers are allowed to read *Goon Squad* without the continuous analepses and prolepses. The "Shuffle" option is meant to offer a casual temporal order.

An additional feature in this section corresponds to the pop-up windows that appear when chapters' icons are pressed. Their content can be divided into three main sections. The first section, called "Sharing," allows (by clicking on the link provided) to share an excerpt from each chapter on the readers' Facebook walls. The second and the third sections offer almost the same enhancing material to be found on Egan's website. The second section, called "Jennifer's Notes," shares the nonfictional information about "Jennifer's"

writing to be found in the pop-up windows on the author's website. The third section, called "Discography," provides again a soundtrack with hyperlinks.

In the app version of *Goon Squad,* Egan exploits a symmetrical *sharing* mode embedded in Web 2.0 technologies, through the three sections. While the readers are invited to share an excerpt of their reading activity on a social network, the author shares her personal life stories, such as her "notes" or her soundtrack. The soundtrack of the particular occasion of her writing may, in turn (through the hyperlinks), become the soundtrack for the particular occasion of reading.

This *sharing* mode to be found in the *Goon Squad*'s app, and in the other digital epitexts described above, is part of the *non-discursive* ethos clues that Egan deploys thanks to the paratexts 2.0. In other words, the locative function **(DE4**) of digital epitexts is fulfilled thanks to the author's attempt to frame her public figure as sincere and authentic. She tells her readers that she *really* wrote those stories, in those actually existing place at a specific time in history (read *nonfiction*). She experienced something so common that it could have happened to anyone, and that perhaps *did* happen to (some of) her readers. By offering such ethos clues, the author attempts to establish a relationship with her readers based on a sharing mode that can be associated both with the participatory culture dominant within Web 2.0, and the sense of *human* which features post-postmodernism. Therefore, Egan's stance toward new media *embraces* the affordances of social media to strive for that sense of authenticity and empathy with her readers that was beautifully conveyed by David Foster

Wallace's line: "'This thing I feel, I can't name it straight out but it seems important, do you feel it too?'" (*Octet* 131).

4.3 JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER'S *TREE OF CODES*

4.3.1 Introducing the Narrative

It's a way to remembering something about books ... I think there's going to be something that happens now, where books move in two directions, one toward digitized formats and one toward remembering what's nice about the physicality of them.
~ Jonathan Safran Foer, 2010, *NY Magazine*

The passerby

had their eyes half-closed

. Everyone

wore his

mask .

children greeted each other with masks painted

on their faces ; they smiled at each other's

smiles

The excerpt above is an approximate reproduction of the beginning of Jonathan Safran Foer's *Tree of Codes* (8). In a video promo, the author declares that *Tree of Codes* is "the perfect intersection of the visual arts and literature" and that it is "certainly not a book that looks like any other books in a bookstore" (Visual

Editions video promos, available at www.visual-editions.com/our-books/tree-of-codes). Indeed, as shown in another video promo, the usual reaction people have after opening the front cover is surprise and wonder. The book-format is, to say the least, unconventional. Physically cut-out, *Tree of Codes* is composed by 134 pages full of holes and few words. Readers are challenged from the beginning: how are they to approach a narrative presented through scattered words on carved pages?

The dominant component of *Tree of Codes* is, thus, necessarily synthetic. Readers' interests focus on the narrative as an artificial construct: by foregrounding its synthetic component, the narrative reveals that its purpose(s) is inevitably linked with its graphic realization. This connection is further consolidated by the indication, on the copyright page, of the author of the die-cut pages design (Sara De Bondt studio).[34] Moreover, in the same paratextual occasion, a publisher's note states that, "In order to write *Tree of Codes*, the author took an English language edition of Bruno Schulz's *The Street of Crocodiles* and cut into its pages, carving out a new story."

With these *expository* informations (which include a dedication to Liev Schreiber, the director of the movie adapted from Foer's debut novel, *Everything is Illuminated* [2002]), readers are provided with two main pieces of paratextual information about the narrative. First, they establish that the visual and graphic realization of the text will influence the audience's

[34] In an interview, Foer explains that the process of die-cutting is "a really old process that's mostly used in manufacturing – for example die-cutting metal to make pieces of a car [and is] really difficult to do delicately and, as far as I know, it has never been done in mainstream publishing before" (*Dazed Digital*).

configuration of the purpose of the whole narrative. Second, a previous narrative (Schulz's *The Street of Crocodiles*) functions as inter-text for the entire narrative. Since the use of material peritexts as resource at the author's disposal to communicate to the actual audience will be discussed at length in the section 4.3.2, I will now focus on the appropriation of Schulz's story.

The intertextuality underlying Foer's communicative purpose(s), although echoing postmodern rewriting and pastiche, is more oriented toward the current use of the term. In particular, intertextuality today is connected to the hypertextuality embedded in the Internet and its open-source model of authorship. Indeed, new technologies champion an ideology of appropriation of the sources, remix, and mashup. Manovich summarizes this trend as follows:

> The practice of putting together a media object from already existing commercially distributed media elements existed with old media, but new media technology further standardized it and made it much easier to perform. What before involved scissors and glue now involves simply clicking on 'cut' and 'paste.' And, by encoding the operations of selections and combination into the very interfaces of authoring and editing software, new media 'legitimizes' them. Pulling elements from databases and libraries becomes the default, creating from scratch becomes the exception. The Web acts as a perfect materialization of this logic. It is one gigantic library of graphics, photographs, video, audio, design layouts,

> software code, and texts; and every element is free because it can be saved to the user's computer with a single mouse click. (*Language* 130).

The context described by Manovich plays a crucial role in the understanding of the overall ethical dimension of the narrative–the ethical dimension enclosed in Foer's choice of using a material-peritext resource (the die-cutting technique) that makes the narrative impossible to digitize. The dominant synthetic component of *Tree of Codes* becomes the means by which Foer challenges the practice of "creative plagiarism" described by Manovich and embraced by many contemporary authors.[35] At the same time, in nevertheless rewriting Schulz's story, Foer situates his narrative in exactly this conversation around contemporary literary production.

To express this purpose, Foer offers a further paratextual element: an afterword. *Tree of Codes*'s afterword (together with the copyright and the dedication pages, the only ones with a standard layout) is entitled "This Book and The Book," and is divided into five sections. The first is a brief biographical introduction to Bruno Schulz, a "high school teacher by profession," who

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[35] See, for instance, David Shields' *Reality Hunger* (2010), a manifesto for a new novel in the form of literary collage. Shields is aligned with the predominant ideology of the digital world in which "a mashup is more important than the sources who were mashed" (Lanier 79). The main motif of the manifesto might be summarized by William Gibson's words (here appropriated and remixed by Shields): "Who owns the words? Who owns the music and the rest of our culture? We do–all of us–though not all of us know it yet. Reality cannot be copyrighted" (Shields *Reality* 299). Jonathan Lethem expresses similar concerns in his collection of essays *The Ecstasy of Influence: Nonfiction Etc.* (2011). He argues: "My target was the reactionary backlash at what Internet and sampling culture happened to make (even more) obvious: the eternal intertextuality of cultural participation–of reading, writing, making things from other things" (122). See 5.2 and 5.5 for further discussion.

expressed "his explosive creative energy ... through fiction, correspondence, drawing and painting" (137). Much of his art, however, has been lost as a consequence of the German invasion of Drohobycz, his hometown, at that time part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, today in western Ukraine. Indeed, *The Street of Crocodiles*, "The Book," is one of Schulz's few remaining works of fiction. For this reason, what has been lost of his *oeuvre*, Foer claims, is "the story of the century" (137).

The second section of the afterword is an account of the folklore story about the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem which, Foer tells us, was spared from the Romans destruction of the Second Temple as a proof of their own greatness. From that moment, the tradition of leaving "small notes of prayer in the cracks of the wall" (137) started a custom which, according to Foer, forms "a kind of magical, unbound book" (137). Then, the afterword continues with the story of the Gestapo officer who killed Schulz out of a revenge (third section). Significantly, Foer compares Schulz's surviving literary narratives to the Wailing Wall, as if what survives inevitably evokes what has been destroyed. This reference, in turn, cues readers to compare this dichotomy to *Tree of Codes*' way of evoking what has been destroyed in order to save it. Indeed, the fourth section focuses on the process behind the creation of a "die-cut book by erasure, a book whose meaning was exhumed from another book" (138).

Foer's personal account of *Tree of Codes*' purposes in the afterword confirms that the author's choice of using material peritexts (the die-cut pages) was to create a text "whose erasure would somehow be a continuation of its creation" (138). He further includes a generic frame, claiming that although

Tree of Codes "is a story on its own right, it is not exactly a work of fiction" (139). Finally, in the fifth section, Foer expresses his doubts about the way *The Street of Crocodiles* was eventually published in 1934: "Schulz's hand must have been forced, ... there must have existed some yet larger book from which *The Street of Crocodiles* was taken" (139). Therefore, he concludes, *Tree of Codes* becomes only another "act of exhumation" (139) of this other, imagined larger book: the ultimate book made by all survived and re-exhumed narratives.

In light of Genette's description of postfaces, "This Book and The Book," has a "curative, or corrective function" (*Paratexts* 239) after a (probable) problematic reading of the narrative through the many holes and few words. Furthermore, by guiding the actual audience to recognize the central role of Schulz's *The Street of Crocodiles, Tree of Codes*' afterword invites to read the narrative's intertext. This invitation has a twofold function: first, it reflects the post-postmodern and Web 2.0 "sharing" mode usually accomplished through the social function of digital epitexts (**DE3**); second, it offers authorial cues with regard to a Jewish literary tradition. Indeed, according to David Goldfarb, *Tree of Codes* is another homage to Bruno Schulz in tow with novelists such as Philip Roth, David Grossman, and Cynthia Ozick, who have all built legends around Schulz invoking his biographical figure as a trope in their own stories.[36] Significantly, Goldfarb identifies Foer as another "western writer who has appropriated not just Schulz's modest oeuvre but also his life story, rendering

[36] Respectively in: *The Prague Orgy* (1985); *See Under: LOVE* (1986); *The Messiah of Stockholm* (1987).

the figure of Schulz himself as a symbol of loss and absence." As a literary homage, then, *Tree of Codes* is not limited to Schulz's oeuvre, but rather it inevitably evokes the long tradition of authors who have exploited the possibilities of the material page with typographical experiments–from Italian Futurists to Tzara and the Dadaists, William Burroughs and Bryon Gysin, Queneau (and in particular his *Cent Mille Milliard de Poemes*, a set of ten sonnets, each line written in a separated strip so that, potentially, one could read one thousand billions poems) and the *Oulipo* group.

Finally, through the paratextual element of the afterword and the material peritext of the die-cut pages, the author stresses the importance of *sharing* his precursors with the actual audience. In doing so, Foer inscribes his narrative in the current discourse about the practices enabled by the Internet and endorsed by digital culture. In particular, Foer shares his influences with his audience in an explicit way (see 5.2.1), with an attitude similar to Jonathan Lethem's criticism concerning the hypocrisy behind the role of the author, who is "not meant to refute critics," who should not "acknowledge Internet discourse about [his] books" and, most importantly, whose "influence is semiconscious, not something to delineate too extensively" (xviii). *Tree of Codes'* purpose, however, is not only to embrace a new concept of authorship, but also to (in part) resist new media affordances through the material disappearance of the text(s).

4.3.2 Material Peritexts: *Tree of Codes*'s Die-Cut Book

In the introduction to *Tree of Codes* above, I focused mainly on the narrative's purpose(s) conveyed through the afterword, namely, to share the narrative's own inter-text (*The Street of Crocodiles)* and to pay homage to its author (Bruno Schulz). I also pointed out the ethical dimension resulting from Foer's choice of using a material peritext (the die-cut pages, inevitably connected to Schulz's story, the *erased* book), which makes the narrative impossible to digitize (**MP4**). In this section, I will focus on how the material peritext is employed to influence the aforementioned ethical dimension, to materialize the narrative's mimetic and thematic component (**MP1**), and highlight its synthetic component (**MP3**).

As observed above, unlike *Goon Squad*, in *Tree of Codes* material peritexts are, so to speak, disseminated. Indeed, the book presents itself as carved-out, with many holes through which few scattered words belonging to the following pages emerge (fig. 4.8).

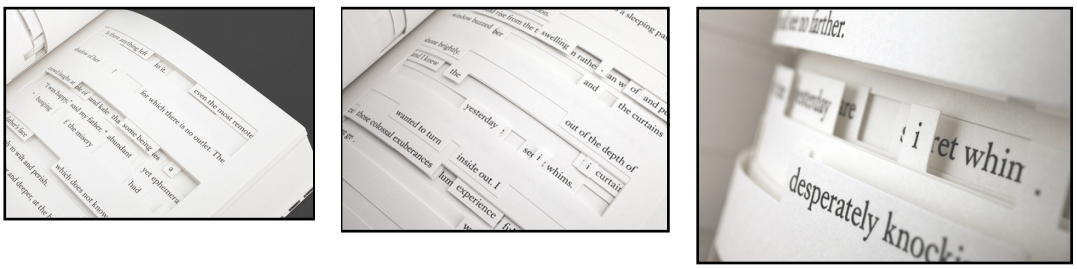

Fig. 4.8. *Tree of Codes*. Jonathan Safran Foer, *Tree of Codes* (2010) © Visual Editions. Image digitally edited for reproduction.

The whole narrative therefore has to be read through these material gaps. We can assume that, before the actual audience understands that it is possible to read the story flipping pages one by one (very carefully), they will read through the multiple holes of the carved-out pages some of the words contained in the following ones.

In 4.3.1, I also suggested that the dominant component of the narrative is synthetic and that readers' interests in the narrative as artificial construct are conveyed through the material peritexts. Here, I further argue that, at the level of discourse, there is a tension triggered by the synthetic function (**MP3**) of material peritexts. Since the synthetic function (**MP3**) of material peritexts brings to the fore the ontological tension between the narrative world (in which the actual audience pretends to join the narrative audience) and the real world (where the actual audience is), *Tree of Codes*' material peritexts also highlight the tension between the actual audience and the position it adopts in the rhetorical exchange. This tension highlights a pivotal characteristic of the reading experience from a rhetorical perspective: the *double consciousness* (Phelan and Rabinowitz 140; see page 28). In *Tree of Codes,* the ontological tension between the narrative and the real world generated through the intrusion of material peritexts in the progression of the whole narrative, challenges this double consciousness–double consciousness which according to Phelan and Rabinowitz, is a key "aspect of reading in the authorial audience of fiction" (140).

Without, for the moment, delving deeper into issues of reception (see 5.4), the point I want to underscore here is that, since the story is readable only

if each single page is lifted up, in order to read *Tree of Codes*, the actual audience is required to accomplish a necessary gesture to join the narrative audience. In other words, by bringing to the fore the usually subconscious gesture of flipping the pages, the material peritext ensures that readers recognize the importance of the materiality and the spatial dimension of the text. A materiality that in turn highlights a tension in the double consciousness of the actual audience. Significantly, it is in the very making of the simple gesture that readers acknowledge the impossibility of making those pages digital. Thus, *Tree of Codes'* material peritext fulfills their synthetic function (**MP3**) by creating a tension not only between the narrative and the real world, but also by involving a third world–the digital world–by denying it. As mentioned above, despite its denial, it is the reference itself that nevertheless conveys a communicative choice. In this embedded reference to the impossibility of a digital (intermedial) transposition, the cutout pages also partially fulfill an indexical function (**MP2**).

In this regard, the synthetic function of *Tree of Codes'* material peritext is intertwined with its narrative function (**MP1**). The denial of digitization embodied by the die-cut pages condenses a cultural issue around contemporary literary production and reception. Besides, thanks to the presence of multiple holes and few scattered words, *Tree of Codes* resembles a lyrical short story or a verse novel. The narrative results discontinuous, recalling an Avant-Garde poem with what McHale calls "weak narrativity" ("Weak" 165). The high level of indeterminacy and the low level of narrative coherence ultimately challenge the narrative progression. Material peritexts are a crucial means by which to

materialize the sense of loss portrayed in the narrative through the illness of the narrator's father. The fragility of the medium materializes the fragility of life expressed through verbal means, as in the following passage:

> I began to understand the backdrop of life, the noisy bustle, the scraping danger now calm and returned to its corner, the sweetly restored normal and the urge to joy. Something stirred in me. The feeling of no permanence in life transformed into an attempt to express wonder. (66-7.)

The fragmented sentences are full of allegories, metaphors, symbolic language and synecdoches, and they contribute both to the overall telling of the family tragedy, and to the telling of a meta-discourse about digitization.

As a result, in *Tree of Codes* there are at least two conversations going on: one involving the narrator's lyrical telling of a family surrounded by an hallucinatory landscape ("The sleeping garden screamed," pages 11, 12), by disease ("The plague of dusk spread from one object to another. People fled but the disease caught up with them and spread in a dark rash," page 113), and apocalypse ("The world was to end," page 130); and one involving a meta-discourse about itself. The two conversations are strictly connected and some of the fragmented passages express issues of recovery (from sufferance/from the past) and loss (of a character/of previous ways to produce narrative meaning)- see fig. 4.9.

Through the die-cutting technique that *erases* Schulz's *The Street of Crocodiles,* Foer materializes its constitutive sense of loss and absence.

Therefore, the main purpose of Schulz's narrative is maintained through Foer's physical intervention on the pages.

p. 18	There was something tragic in fighting the borders
p. 48	What relief it would be for the world to lose some of its contents
p. 51	We openly admit: our creations will be temporary

Fig. 4.9. Approximative visual representation of *Tree of Codes*: pages 18; 48; 51. © Jonathan Safran Foer 2010.

The lyrical language of *The Street of Crocodiles* is kept alive through Foer's use of material peritexts. To exemplify, the passage below from Schulz's narrative is erased by Foer as follows (fig. 4.10):

> Reality is as thin as paper and betrays with all its cracks its imitative character. At times one has the impression that it is only the small section immediately before us that falls into the expected pointillistic picture of a city thoroughfare, while on either side the improvised masquerade is already disintegrating and, unable to endure, crumbles behind us

into plaster and sawdust, into the storeroom of the enormous empty theater. (Schulz 67-8.)

. Reality is as thin as paper
. only the small section
immediately before us
is able
to endure, behind us sawdust in
an enormous empty theater.

Fig. 4.10. *Tree of Codes*: 92-3. © Jonathan Safran Foer 2010.

As mentioned above, the sense of emptiness and loss subsumes a discourse around the narrative as artificial artifact inscribed in the wider conversation around the consequences of new media.

Finally, by means of the material peritext, Foer is communicating the importance of (1) *remembering* the past (in particular, the holocaust); (2) situating the narrative in a diachronic perspective (i.e. as a continuation of the tradition of experimentations with the medium); (3) positioning himself as author in the conversation about how new media are affecting literary production and reception (**MP4**). In this regard, Foer's choice of employing the die-cut technique (itself a old technique, as mentioned above) expresses the idea that not always what is new (i.e. digital media) is better. Conversely, we should try to retrieve what we already have (print media), otherwise we may lose a sense of who we are. Consistent with a post-postmodern "turn to the

human" (Timmer 361), *Tree of Codes* eventually highlights that it is our history that makes us human.

4.3.3 "A Question of Balance." The Resisting Digital Epitexts of *Tree of Codes*

As showed above, in his narrative Foer implicitly refers to the digital world by means of material peritexts that make *Tree of Codes* impossible to digitize. The indexical function (**MP2**) of material peritexts, I argued, is here fulfilled through a denial of such digital world. We also observed how this denial is linked with the narrative purpose of continuing Schulz's story through the dichotomy that I described in terms of recovery and loss. This dichotomy also emerges through the fragmented passages of *Tree of Codes'* lyric narrative. The overall narrative purpose is therefore dominated by the readers' synthetic interests that draw their attention to the narrative as artificial construct and to Foer's authorial stance within the old/new media debate.

Given these assumptions, it is somehow predictable that the author has not extensively drawn on digital epitexts as resources of his narrative communication. Indeed, to Foer's refusal of creating a digitizable artifact corresponds a denial of social media affordances. As a consequence, the value given to digital epitexts as resources of narrative communication for *Tree of Codes* is very low, but not unintentionally. On the contrary, this low value is part of *Tree of Codes*' narrative purposes. This claim is strengthen by the fact that Foer provided official websites with supportive material for his previous works.

For instance, for *Everything is Illuminated* the website "Who is Augustine" (www.whoisaugustine.com; design by era//404) contains various sections (*Who is Augustine? Follow Jonathan, Visit the Ukraine, The Translator*) with music, links (e.g. to fictional websites belonging to characters of the novel), videos, and animations (fig. 4.11). For *Eating Animals* (2009), a nonfictional narrative about our relation with eating meat and the exploitation of animals in the factory farming industry, the website www.eatinganimals.com provides a support for the narrative purpose(s) and further resources (through links) to involve the audience in the social issues discussed in the book.

Fig. 4.11. "Who is Augustine": *Everything is Illuminated*'s website. Retrieved at www.whoisaugustine.com. Images digitally edited for reproduction.

Moreover, according to these websites, Foer previously had two personal webpages, www.theprojectmuseum.com and www.jonathansafranfoer.com, which are, significantly, no longer available.

The only digital epitexts provided for *Tree of Codes* are those released by its publishing house, *Visual Edition*. As mentioned above and as we have seen in the analysis of *Goon Squad*'s digital epitexts, the borders of digital epitexts employed as resources of narrative communication and of other digital supports

mainly created as promotional material are fuzzy. Indeed, some websites, blogs, or videos may function as both advertisement and digital epitexts. This is the case for the videos created by the author together with the publishing house in support of *Tree of Codes* (available at www.visual-editions.com/our-books/tree-of-codes).

The dialogic function **(DE2)** of establishing a relation with the printed narrative is fulfilled together with the videos' attempt to advertise the book. At the same time, none of the three videos completely fulfills an augmentative function **(DE1)** either. The first video is entitled "Tree of Codes by Jonathan Safran Foer: Public Reactions." It lasts 1:08 minutes and contains images of various people, apparently interviewed on the street, whose facial and verbal expressions show surprise, interest and puzzlement after opening the front cover of *Tree of Codes* (fig. 4.12).

Fig. 4.12. Tree of Codes by Jonathan Safran Foer: Public Reactions, minute 0:15.
© Visual Editions 2010. Retrieved at www.visual-editions.com/our-books/tree-of-codes.
Image digitally edited for reproduction.

The second video, aptly entitled "Tree of Codes by Jonathan Safran Foer," is a 1:22 minutes long presentation of the narrative by his author. First, Foer introduces himself ("Hi, this is Jonathan Safran Foer") and what he is doing ("I'm here to talk about my new book, *Tree of Codes*"). Then, he expresses his choice of using the technique of die-cutting ("It seems to me the perfect interface or intersection of the visual arts and literature"), and the procedure to materially realize *Tree of Codes* ("To make *Tree of Codes,* I printed out numerous manuscripts of Bruno Schulz's *Streets of Crocodiles* and tried to find a story within his story.") Finally, he talks about the reading experience, claiming that it "probably changes as you move through it," and concludes by positioning *Tree of Codes* in a conversation "about what's literature and what is possible with paper." The third video, "Making Tree of Codes, Three Months in Three Minutes," is a 3:33 minutes long visual account of the production process to materially realize the narrative as artifact, shot in the Belgian printing company Die Keure (fig. 4.13).

Fig. 4.13. Tree of Codes: Making of. © Visual Editions 2010. Retrieved at www.visual-editions.com/our-books/tree-of-codes. Images digitally edited for reproduction.

Unless one considers the use of the die-cutting technique in the book as an intermedial reference to the media that realizes it, the videos simply restate

the cultural issues argued by means of material peritexts (see 4.3.1). Also in terms of the social function **(DE3**), neither the videos nor Foer's Facebook page are used to interact with the audience, *despite* their affordances. The interaction on the social platforms (YouTube and Facebook) works only for readers who (mainly) post comments of gratitude, and other who reply to previous comments. But it is exactely this resistance to the affordances of social media that Foer applies in order to *position* himself as author in the current cultural landscape.

The resistance to the "dialogic possibilities of social media" (Page *Stories* 196), and to the use of digital epitexts as resources is itself a *non-discursive* cue for the readers' construction of Foer's authorial ethos. As Page points out, "social media have developed in line with the capitalist ideologies that promote networks dominated by commercial interests and rewards competition with increased social and economic gains" (206). Therefore, Foer's resistance of new media affordances is not accidental: as Egan's use of digital epitexts was a cue towards her *embracing* an ethical position in terms of the old/digital media debate, Foer's denial of such resource (together with the impossibility of digitizing the printed narrative) is a cue towards a *resisting* position. And to substantiate this claim, in a recent article ("How Not To Be Alone," *New York Times* 2013) Foer explains that to him "Technology celebrates connectedness, but encourages retreat."

One could wonder, then, why such extensive use of material peritexts and such resistance to digital epitexts. But this apparent discrepancy is what guides readers (and critics) to build an image (**DE4**) of an innovative author, who is

also politically active (his previous novels were about the holocaust, the terrorist attacks of 9/11, and vegetarianism) and who demonstrates the sense of sharing what means to be human that characterizes post-postmodern novels–a sense which is nevertheless linked with the sharing-mode embedded in Web 2.0 technologies. As Foer puts it: "Each step 'forward' has made it easier, just a little, to avoid the emotional work of being present, to convey information rather than humanity" ("How Not"). Through a narrative that balances the use of material peritexts and digital epitexts, Foer manages to balance his position concerning the new media debate ("It's not an either/or—being "anti-technology" is perhaps the only thing more foolish than being unquestioningly "pro-technology"—but a question of balance that our lives hang upon.") In so doing, the expectations of readers of *Tree of Codes* are not disappointed. The ethical values at work in the narrative (e.g. the importance of remembering the past in order not to forget what makes us human) are conveyed both through material peritexts and through the resistance to digital epitexts.

4.4 Resource Reliance: Comparing Results, Assessing Value

As I have tried to demonstrate throughout the analysis of *Goon Squad* and *Tree of Codes*, paratexts 2.0 are among the resources at the author's disposal for his or her different communicative purposes. Following Phelan's IRA model, we know that, for any given narrative, some resources are more *valuable* than others. But how can we evaluate to what extent are the paratexts 2.0 valuable or worthless resources? As I have argued (3.3.1), we can measure the degree of

resource reliance of paratexts 2.0. Resource reliance is the result of the intersection of (**x**) the level of presence of paratexts 2.0 in a gradual range from low to high (the categories-presence axe) and (**y**) the level of fulfillment of their functions in a gradual range from insufficient to total (the functions-fulfillment axe).

By establishing the resource-reliance value for paratexts 2.0, we are able to better *frame* (a) the purposes of a given narrative; (b) the kind of relationship that authors wish to establish with their readers; (c) their level of commitment toward digital culture and practices; (d) the different expectations readers construct about an author and his or her narrative(s). In both *Goon Squad* and *Tree of Codes* the presence of material peritexts reflects a need to thematize the medium in a period of media change. However, whereas Egan *embraces* the affordances of material peritexts and digital epitexts, Foer *refuses* to draw on digital epitexts. Foer's decision of going against the grain is nevertheless a cue to *Tree of Codes*' purpose(s) and his stance toward the role of social media and, more generally, to the social-cultural issues relative to digital culture.

The analysis of *Tree of Codes* and its comparison with a more paradigmatic case as Egan's *Goon Squad* proves the flexibility of the paratexts 2.0 model, which succeeds in providing pivotal vocabulary for rhetorical narrative analysis, also for those twenty-first century literary narratives for which paratexts 2.0 are less valuable resource. Figure 4.14 and figure 4.15 summarize the use of the paratexts 2.0 in *Goon Squad* and *Tree of Codes*, while figure 4.16 compares their degree of reliance upon such resources.

Jennifer Egan, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010)			
CATEGORIES			
Material Peritexts		**Digital Epitexts**	
• CH. 12: 75 PowerPoint slides.		• Jennifer Egan's website; • *Goon Squad*'s Wordpress blog; • *Goon Squad*'s App;	
FUNCTIONS			
MP1 Narrative	CH. 12 visually materializes the old/new media debate and the corresponding characters' tension.	**DE1 Augmentative**	• CH.12 as slideshow with animation, full of colors and music (materialization of the intermedial references); • Autobiographical narratives relative to the writing of *Goon Squad*;
MP2 Indexical	CH. 12 refers to the *remediated* digital medium to be found on digital epitexts.	**DE2 Dialogic**	Relation with the printed narrative established through the slideshow, the excerpts, the materialization of the intermedial references.
MP3 Synthetical	CH. 12 overlaps the narrative, real and digital world.	**DE3 Social**	Option to share on social media excerpts of the narrative; option to change the order of the chapters.
MP4 Authorial	Discursive cues of authorial engagement on new media affordances.	**DE4 Locative**	Non-discursive ethos clues of *embracement* of social media affordances; authenticity; sincerity; sharing.

Fig. 4.14. Paratexts 2.0 in Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad*.

Jonathan Safran Foer, *Tree of Codes* (2010)			
CATEGORIES			
Material Peritexts		**Digital Epitexts**	
• 134 cutout pages (die-cutting technique).		• Three Videos: the public reactions to the unusual layout, the author's presentation of the book, the making of in the printing company.	
FUNCTIONS			
MP1 Narrative	The cutout pages materialize the themes of loss and absence (both in the narrative progression and of the intertext).	**DE1 Augmentative**	The author's presentation of the narrative has the same *curative* function of *Tree of Codes*' afterword.
MP2 Indexical	The cutout pages embed a reference to the impossibility of a digital (intermedial) transposition.	**DE2 Dialogic**	Relation with the printed narrative combined with promotional intents
MP3 Synthetical	Tension between the narrative and the real world and the digital world by denial.	**DE3 Social**	∅
MP4 Authorial	Discursive ethos clues of authorial refusal of new media affordance.	**DE4 Locative**	Non-discursive ethos clues of *resistance* to social media affordances; political involvement.

Fig. 4.15. Paratexts 2.0 in Jonathan Safran Foer's *Tree of Codes*.

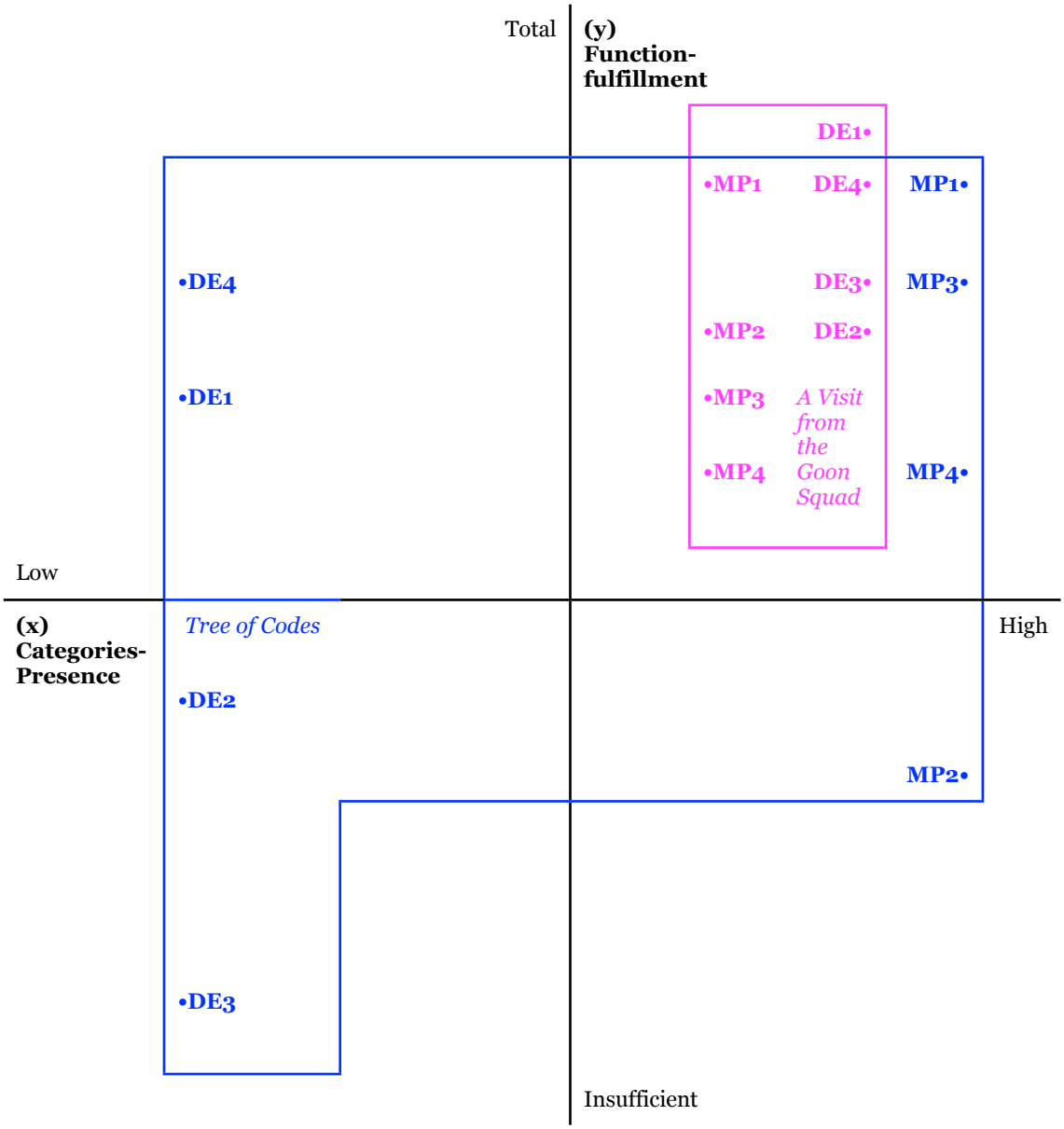

Fig. 4.16. Resource Reliance: A Comparison of Paratexts 2.0 in Foer's and Egan's Narrative.

Chapter 5

WHAT'S NEW? CONNECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

I think we are entering a revolutionary period of intimacy between writer and reader.
~ Zadie Smith, "Why Write?"

5.1 NEW PERSPECTIVES ON TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LITERARY NARRATIVE

In this chapter, I approach the theoretical conceptualization of the paratext 2.0 turning to a literary-historical perspective. Through the analysis of *Tree of Codes* and *Goon Squad,* I have shown that the typology of the paratext 2.0 is not only a flexible model able to accommodate a large variety of narratives, but also that that the practices it attempts to describe in terms of categories and functions are among the resources that contemporary authors draw on more extensively. Therefore, even though it is from the 1920s that, as Jan Baetens points out, "book-object artists have tried to engender narratives by merging word and images" ("Image" 237), the conceptualization of the paratexts 2.0 aims at providing a framework to tackle contemporary (and future) tendencies in the production and reception of literary narratives. What is new, after all?

The values that readers can elicit from the presence of paratexts 2.0 and in particular from the authorial reliance on material peritexts and digital epitexts involve specific expectations about (the convention of) media affordances. As suggested above, the value given to paratexts 2.0 is linked to an authorial stance toward digitization, new technologies and social media properties that I have described as *embracing* for Jennifer Egan's *Goon Squad* and as *resisting* for Jonathan Safran Foer's *Tree of Codes*. According to the authorial stance toward media awareness and engagement–which we can infer from the levels of the presence of material peritexts and digital epitexts, functions fulfillments and resource reliance–literary narratives employing paratexts 2.0 may be situated in a continuum that goes from resisting to embracing (fig. 5.1).

Categories presence	Low		High
Functions fulfillment	Total		Insufficient
Resource reliance	Zero	Partial	Full
Level of New Media Awareness/ Engagement	Rejecting	Resisting	Embracing

Fig. 5.1. A Continuum of New Media Awareness/Engagement for 21st literary narratives.

This continuum works in two ways. First, we can gain insight about the readers' expectations on the socio-cultural issues that authors bring to the fore by means of paratexts 2.0, as well as on the author-reader relationship at large. Second, it is a cue toward how the study of paratexts 2.0 can offer new insights on twenty-first century poetics. In the following, these two dynamics will be discussed in detail.

5.1.1 Post-postmodernism

In his study of antimimetic narratives, Brian Richardson highlights how "antimimetic poetics has regularly provided a wonderful source of literary playfulness ever since Aristophanes' *The Frogs* was produced in 405 B.C.E." (*Core* 176). In the present study, I outlined some of the elements of continuity between the use of paratexts 2.0 and the dominant character of postmodernist fiction, i.e. the ontological (see McHale 1987). In particular, I maintained that while postmodernist narratives foregrounded their synthetic component to provoke a tension between the narrative and the real world, twenty-first century narratives employing paratexts 2.0 juxtapose also a third *digital* world. To which kind of dominant characteristics could this and the other functions of paratexts 2.0 point at? The following is my attempt to answer this question.

If postmodernism has been a debated term, post-postmodernism is still very far from being widely acknowledged as its legitimate successor. Nevertheless, some studies (e.g. Timmer 2010; McLaughlin 2012) have started

to sketch out some significant shifts, both relative to a simple change of time frame and of a much deeper change in narrative and aesthetic values. With regard to the time frame, post-postmodern narratives would be those written by authors born in the 70s or 80s. With regard to aesthetic values the point of departure seems to be David Foster Wallace's "E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S. Fiction" (1993). Wallace's idea is that there is a nexus between television and fiction made of self-conscious irony (161). He argues that "the best TV of the last five years has been about ironic self-reference like no previous species of postmodern art could have dreamed of" (159). Therefore, "the use of 'low' references in today's literary fiction [...] is meant (1) to help create a mood of irony and irreverence, (2) to make us uneasy and so 'comment' on the vapidity of U.S. Culture, and (3) most important, these days, to be just plain realistic." (166-7). To Wallace, the "next real literary 'rebels'" will be those who, despite their inescapable exposition to television irony, "dare to back away from irony watching [and] who have the childish gall actually to endorse single-entendre values" (192).

By analogy, his concern about the way *television* mirrors what people want to see–making us "just viewers ... E unibus pluram" (152-3)–reflects the way contemporary authors engage with the way the *Internet* creates what people want to see. Within this realm, one of the key features of social media, as argued above, is the participation promoted through a model of knowledge-sharing. The knowledge-sharing model, thus, is one of the values embedded in the web 2.0 affordances with which contemporary authors necessarily have to deal. In this regard, the model of the paratext 2.0 helps us to position authors in

this discussion. Accordingly, paratexts 2.0 are upholders of a poetics inevitably entangled with the new technologies which have increasingly pervaded our everyday life.

5.2 AUTHORSHIP 2.0

Paratexts 2.0 are cues for the author's public figure, or ethos: by means of the same new technologies they are questioning, contemporary authors build their own public figure challenging a traditional idea of authorship. Thereby, I endorse Paul Dawson's claim that we should "reconsider the narrative communication model by articulating an approach to narrative that acknowledges fictional narratives as public statements in a broader discursive formation and therefore as vital elements of public discourse" ("Real Authors" 104). Dawson also states that such an approach "does not proceed from a distinction between what is inside a narrative text and what lies outside it, but treats narrative *discourse* of fictional texts *alongside* other nonfictional and nonliterary discourses in the public sphere" (104; emphasis in the original).

While I endorse the latter observation, what I tried to demonstrate in this study is precisely that in order to be able to treat "narrative *discourse* of fictional texts *alongside* other nonfictional and nonliterary discourses in the public sphere," we need a model of paratext that explains how this *discourse* is shaped and interlocked inside and outside a narrative text. Dawson mentions the emergence of authors' interviews and writers' festivals as the means by which authors can "explain the genesis and motivations of their work and comment on

the broader social issues with which their fiction engages, as if to supplement what cannot be made overt in the fiction" (104). The Internet, I argue, has given these phenomena a further impulse: authors may as well release their own website with a whole range of digital support, engaging with their fiction and/or with their personal life and opinions, and sometimes with literary theory itself. In doing so, they position their public figure and their fictional works within discourses about literature, participating to a wide critical discussion.

Jonathan Lethem, for instance, by writing an essay, "The Ecstasy of Influence" (originally published on *Harper's* and available online), made of a collage of excerpts from other authors' works, positions himself and his work in a conversation which is connected to the authors he openly plagiarizes. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, one of them is precisely Wallace, and in particular "E Unibus Pluram."[37] As mentioned in Chapter 3, Lethem's website offers a section called "The Promiscuous Material Project." Here, consistent with his ideas about the "eternal intertextuality of cultural participation–of reading writing, making things from other things [which] the Internet and sampling culture happened to make (even more) obvious" (122), he explains:

> I decided to start giving away some of my stories to filmmakers or dramatists to adapt. (I also write some song lyrics and invited musicians to help themselves to those.) You can see some of the results here. The project continues, and anyone should feel free to leap in. The

[37] "E Unibus Pluram" has somehow "become viewed as Wallace's artistic manifesto" (Adam Kelly).

> stories are available non-exclusively -- meaning other people may be working from the same material -- and the cost is a dollar apiece.

The section *materializes* the theoretical arguments presented in his essayistic writing (**DE1**), contributing to the construction of a narrative as a whole, as envisioned by Dawson. The point made by Dawson is itself inscribed in the discourse around the *Anxiety of Obsolescence* theorized by Kathleen Fitzpatrick in 2006. Fitzpatrick argues for:

> a new critical practice that pays careful attention both to cultural milieu and to textual particulars, moving between extended close readings of a number of important contemporary U.S. novels and the broader historical, cultural, and technological context for that fiction, in order to return our critical attention to representations and to the specific ideological formations with which those representations interact. (3).

Joseph Tabbi as well has pointed out that the digital turn influences "not the book *per se* but the way that books can be read now. The end of books is more accurately the end of academic readings that isolate texts from the larger media ecology" (qtd. in Fitzpatrick 3).

If we then turn to the fact that Lethem includes a list of all his appropriations at the end of his essay, we can understand the kind of author-reader relationship underlying Lethem's discourse. The reference list gives the readers the opportunity to recognize the kind of conversation *alongside* other

twenty-first century authors' discourses he wants to join. In addition, the reference list represents Lethem's authorial move toward the readers: by sharing the references, he rejects the authorial privilege on his sources and invites his audience to join the same conversation. Lethem's sources lay bare both its influences and the purpose(s) of his nonfictional narrative. For instance, by quoting several excerpts from *Free Culture* (2004) by Lawrence Lessig–"the greatest of public advocates for copyright reform" (Lethem 115)– Lethem discusses *inside* his essay the challenges to copyright laws perpetuated by the Internet and, at the same time, pushes readers *outside* toward further inquires in the subject. Indeed, Lessig's claims support Lethem's strategy:

> In the next ten years we will see an explosion of digital technologies. These technologies will enable almost anyone to capture and share content. Capturing and sharing content, of course, is what humans have done since the dawn of man. It is how we learn and communicate. But capturing and sharing through digital technology is different. The fidelity and power are different. You could send an e-mail telling someone about a joke you saw on Comedy Central, or you could send the clip. You could write an essay about the inconsistencies in the arguments of the politician you most love to hate, or you could make a short film that puts statement against statement. You could write a poem to express your love, or you could weave together a string—a mash-up—of songs

> from your favorite artists in a collage and make it available on the Net. This digital "capturing and sharing" is in part an extension of the capturing and sharing that has always been integral to our culture, and in part it is something new. (184).

This refashioned form of intertextuality, involving a negation of the authorial privilege to his sources through the sharing of the references, is the phenomenon partly outlined above in the analysis of *Tree of Codes*.

5.2.1 The Double-Sharing Logic

Given these assumptions, the author-reader relationship in the twenty-first century seems to be guided by a double-sharing logic involving an authorial "downgrading" to get closer to the readers. The first sharing principle involves the idea of an author who shares with the readers the sources of her fictional or nonfictional writing (as in Foer's and in Lethem's case). The second sharing principle involves the idea of an author who shares with the readers the sense of *sincerity* invoked by Wallace and exemplified by Egan's emphasis on her creational process of writing. This double-sharing logic underlying contemporary author-reader relationships is thus unveiled by the authorial choice of employing paratexts 2.0, which enables such sharing practices (either by means of material peritexts or digitial epitexts).

The paratext (and the paratext 2.0 in particular) plays a crucial role for our understanding of contemporary literature if we agree, with Dawson and Fitzpatrick, that we need an approach encompassing the discourse on a fictional text and its contextualizing discourses. Furthermore, if we account for a narrative communication that copes with such multiplicity of discourses, readers will be less keen to seal a generic pact with clear-cut boundaries. For instance, to Wallace's *essayistic* call for sincerity instead of irony has corresponded a *fictionalized* need of sharing an "urgent interhuman sameness" (*Octet* 133), that in his short story *Octet* takes the form of the direct question to the readers: *do you feel it too?* (131). And the very consequence of this direct question is that it will make him (Wallace/the author) look

> more like a reader, in other words, down here quivering in the mud of the trench with the rest of us, instead of a *Writer*, whom we imagine[18] to be clean and dry and radiant of command presence and unwavering conviction as he coordinates the whole campaign from back gleaming abstract Olympian HQ. (136).

This example also confirms Dawson's claim for a *discursive* narratology: "a work of fiction is a public statement circulating in the same discursive formation as its author's nonfictional statements" ("Real Authors" 108). Here, to a call for sincerity in the nonfictional realm corresponds one in the fictional domain. The model of the paratext 2.0 provides a significant contribution to grasp this all-embracing discourse of a narrative text and of the narrative authority operating

[18] (at least I sure do...)

"via a continuum between narrative voice, extrafictional voice, and authorial voice" (108).

5.3 THE NARRATIVE COMMUNICATION MODEL

The connection between the (material) peritexts and the (digital) epitexts shows the importance of acknowledging on the one hand, (1) the author as flesh and blood public figure with the entirety of her fictional and nonfictional discourses, who interacts with the actual audience on social media (see **MP1**, and **DE1**, **DE3**, **DE4**) and, on the other hand, (2) how readers respond to this authorial figure. Phelan's IRA model suggests an asymmetry between the author, who is implied, and the actual audience, who is not. The reason of this asymmetrical pairing is that, to Phelan, it "better captures the experiences of both constructing and reconstructing narrative communication" ("Rhetoric, Ethics" 68). Conversely, the audience is "actual" because it is the *real* audience (i.e. rhetorical readers) the author wants to affect with her telling. The author, on the contrary, is implied but not as a construction of the readers, but as a *streamlined* version of the actual author. According to Phelan, the main argument in defense of the conception of the implied author is that it recognizes "that the same actual author can employ different versions of himself in different narrative communication" (68).

As I tried to show throughout this study, however, if we allow for a communication model that excludes these many different versions, we risk to leave out a large area of rhetorical exchange between an author and her readers.

For instance, the observations about the double-sharing logic behind many contemporary narratives (5.2.1), and the effacing of fictional and nonfictional boundaries to communicate (5.2), lead to a communication model able to represent also the actual author as the *somebody who tells*. More significantly, it is the connection of (material) peritexts and (digital) epitexts that challenges Phelan's asymmetrical pairing. If we agree that the paratext, and in particular the paratext 2.0, is made of both the (material) peritext and the (digital) epitext, then we should agree that also the digital epitexts must be included in the narrative communication model.

As we have seen in the textual analyses, the clues for the authorial figure (**MP4** and **DE4**) in the material peritexts and in the digital epitexts not always correspond. This means that the *implied* author in her occasion of writing the material peritexts of a given narrative, does not always correspond to the the *implied* author in her occasion of writing the digital epitexts of the same given narrative. Therefore, the model of the paratexts 2.0 suggests that the authorial agency employing (material) peritexts in the narrative text is defined as *implied* in the specific occasion of writing, while the authorial agency employing (digital) epitexts in the extra-narrative realm is defined as (actual) author.

The diagram below (fig. 5.2) allows for both the streamlined version of the author in the occasion of writing the narrative text and the many other versions employed in the public discourse that emerges from (digital) epitexts and other fictional or nonfictional writings.

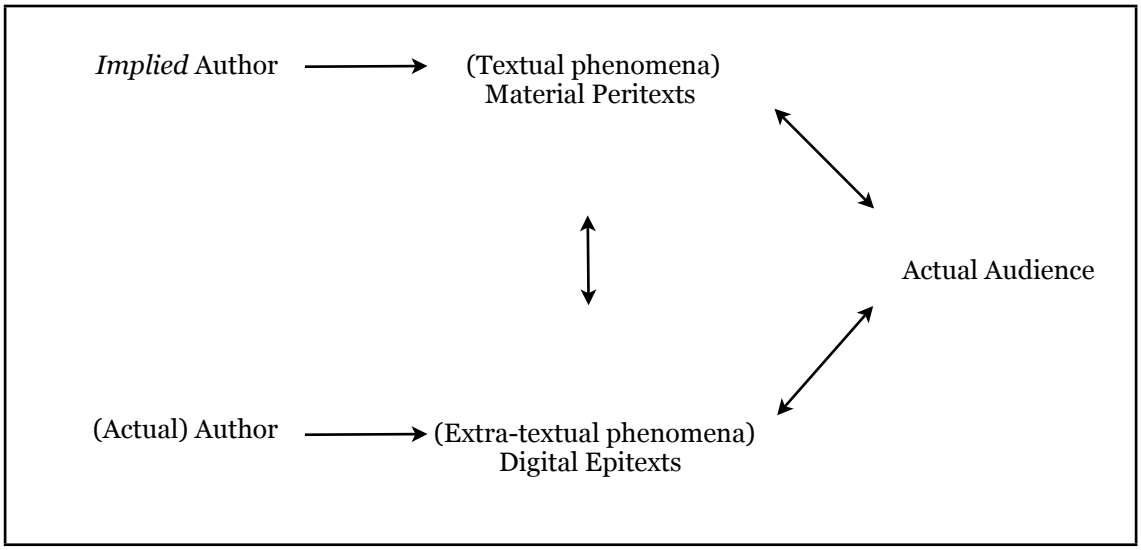

Fig. 5.2. Narrative Communication according to Paratexts 2.0.

This narrative communication model that, according to the paratext 2.0, account for both the implied and the actual author helps us to enrich a rhetorical analysis not only with the broader *discursive* purpose(s) of an author, but also with the reader dynamics responding to new categories and functions.

5.4 Readership 2.0

In the typology of the different functions of paratexts 2.0 (Chapter 3) and in the narrative analyses (Chapter 4), I have pointed out (1) how material peritexts are interwoven with the narrative progression, (2) how they influence readers' mimetic, thematic and synthetic judgments, and (3) how digital epitexts fulfill a social and augmentative function interacting with the readers through social platforms, offering supportive material, and sharing authors' personal stories. As far as the readers are concerned, Dawson makes explicit that: "actual

readers' public responses ... can be situated alongside the narrative discourse of fiction" ("Real Authors" 105). And he further claims that the paratext "must include the textual phenomena produced by the reading public as the other part of the transaction" (110). Although my focus is not the construction of the authorial voice, I agree with this inclusion of readers in the epitext, as showed above in the subcategory of digital epitext which I have called *readerly* epitexts. Dawson's claims, thus, strengthen my thesis about the importance of refining the useful concept of the paratext not only to offer a new heuristics for the interpretation of twenty-first century literary narrative, but also to integrate the rhetorical approach to narrative with the extra-narrative realm in which actual authors and actual readers do indeed communicate. More specifically, we can cluster the results of this study to outline some common traits in the author-reader relationship in our digital age.

On the one hand, we can observe that not necessarily to narrative's level of new media awareness (or engagement) correspond symmetrical readers' responses. As far as readerly epitexts detect the level of more or less active participation in the discourse around a narrative, to an author's rejecting, resisting or embracing reliance does not correspond a zero, partial or full readers' participation. Rather, this kind of readers' response may vary in numerous combinations, such as a resisting resource-reliance and a full active readers' participation or vice versa. Indeed, recent studies on readers'

participation, especially about fan fiction,[38] highlight this new idea of participatory readership.

On the other hand, if the purposes of twenty-first century authors are instructed by a double-sharing logic to get closer to readers (the sharing of the sources and the sharing of *sincere* features), readers adopt a similar sharing logic by participating in the discourse of a narrative. For instance, readers created an "Interactive Character Map" for *Goon Squad* (available at www.filosophy.org/projects/goonsquad) that interactively visualizes the many evolving relationships between the characters; and a website (available at goonsquadtimelines.weebly.com), which retraces *Goon Squad* narrative timeline to "help to disentangle the novel by reconstructing the arcs of the characters in chronological order." The very idea of sharing ideas, comments, and interpretations about a narrative to *help* other readers is itself embedded in the affordances of the Internet and social media. In this regard, a further paradigmatic example is the case of the listserv "Wallace-l" and the fansite *The Howling Fantods* which provide key resources for "communal online sharing of experiences and interpretations of Wallace's works" (Adam Kelly).

Kelly further suggests that the reception of the author's work (in this case, Wallace's) follows a process of democratization of criticism:

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[38] See, for instance, Bronwen Thomas (2011) or Henry Jenkins (2007). Jenkins argues that, "the encyclopedic ambitions of transmedia texts often result in what might be seen as gaps or excesses in the unfolding of the story: that is, they introduce potential plots which can not be fully told or extra details which hint at more than can be revealed. Readers, thus, have a strong incentive to continue to elaborate on these story elements, working them over through their speculations, until they take on a life of their own. Fan fiction can be seen as an unauthorized expansion of these media franchises into new directions which reflect the reader's desire to "fill in the gaps" they have discovered in the commercially produced material" ("Transmedia").

> The ease of publication which the internet allows has meant that the detailed close reading of Wallace's texts, traditionally the preserve of academic engagement, has in great part been carried out by skillful and committed non-professional readers, who publish their findings in the public domain of the web.

In the broader discourse on new technologies and the changes that the digital turn is bringing to our culture, however, this democratization of the Internet has also been criticized. In the following, I present a few observations on some discourses about readership, authorship, and the digital revolution.

5.4.1 A *Discursive* Foray into the Digital Revolution

Virtual reality pioneer Jaron Lanier has recently contested the dominant ideology of the digital world–what he calls "cybernetic totalism"–in the manifesto *You Are Not A Gadget* (2010). According to him, no software is innocuous, but rather it can be subject "to an exceptionally rigid process of 'lock-in'" (3). This process is dangerous because it "removes ideas that do not fit into the winning digital representation scheme, but it also reduces or narrows the ideas it immortalizes, by cutting away the unfathomable from a command in a computer program" (10).

These considerations provide further evidence for Wallace's pairing of the fiction of his generation with the established practice of television watching *and* my attempt to connect the public discourse about the digital age with the

way contemporary authors engage with these subjects. Endorsing a discursive approach, we can observe that if we analyze a narrative from a perspective that takes into account the totality of the discourses involved, we are better able to catch an author's purpose(s) in his (narrative) telling. Again, paratexts 2.0 are key categories for the discovery of the ethical and the thematic component of a narrative, as they uncover part of the totality of these discourses through their functions.

Another young contemporary author who supports Lanier's critiques is Zadie Smith, who adopts a resisting stance toward new technologies and social media. She writes: "When a human being becomes a set of data on a website like Facebook, he or she is reduced. Everything shrinks. Individual character. Friendship. Language. Sensibility" ("Generation"). Her article "Generation Why?" contains a cautionary moral instruction for her generation raised on TV in the Eighties and Nineties: "our denuded networked selves don't look more free, they just look more owned." Neither her emphasis on the self and its possible transformation by means of the dominant softwares in the digital world is accidental. In an essay on David Foster Wallace she opens with a quote from Wallace in which he remarks that "a big part of serious fiction's purpose is to give the reader ... imaginative access to other selves" (Wallace "Interview" qtd. in Smith *Changing* 257). How to do it, however, is no easy task, as "TV and the commercial-art culture's trained [today's readership] to be sort of lazy and childish in its expectations" (257).

In this regard, contemporary authors employ paratexts 2.0 in their narratives not to be experimental, but rather to engage today's readers despite

their *lazy* and *childish* expectations–laziness and childishness that the Internet and the 2.0 technologies have amplified. To label the practices of material peritexts and digital epitexts as experimentations would be a mistake: they are resources used to embody the authors' discourses on the controversy about computer-mediated communication and the future of literary writing. Jonathan Lethem makes this point clear: "My writing isn't experimental. When I've nodded to the repertoire of avant-garde effects, I took it for granted that the experiments in question were conducted by other, in the past. Now they're part of the palette" (136). Nevertheless, if we assume with Bray, Gibbons and McHale that literary experiments are committed to "raising fundamental questions about the very nature and being of verbal art itself" (1), and that they make "alternatives visible and conceivable [for] some of these alternatives [to] become the foundations to future developments" (1), Lethem, Egan, Foer and Wallace are all committed to experimentation. However, the qualities of "shock and affront, iconoclasm and difficulty" (2) that are associated with the term "experimental," are very distant from the post-postmodern axiom of *the need always to be liked* (Wallace "Interview" qtd. in Smith *Changing* 258) to which Lethem's, Egan's, Foer's and Wallace's narratives seem to respond.

Another contemporary author sensitive to these matters is Jonathan Franzen. Well known for his attacks to Amazon, Facebook and Twitter, Franzen has recently published an article with similar concerns where he argues:

> In my own little corner of the world, which is to say American fiction, Jeff Bezos of Amazon may not be the antichrist, but he surely looks like one of the four

> horsemen. Amazon wants a world in which books are either self-published or published by Amazon itself, with readers dependent on Amazon reviews in choosing books, and with authors responsible for their own promotion. The work of yakkers and tweeters and braggers, and of people with the money to pay somebody to churn out hundreds of five-star reviews for them, will flourish in that world. But what happens to the people who became writers *because* yakking and tweeting and bragging felt to them like intolerably shallow forms of social engagement? What happens to the people who want to communicate in depth, individual to individual, in the quiet and permanence of the printed word, and who were shaped by their love of writers who wrote when publication still assured some kind of quality control and literary reputations were more than a matter of self-promotional decibel levels?

Franzen's critique goes as far as mentioning writers who disagree with his rejecting attitude toward the Internet, such as Salman Rushdie: "But I confess to feeling some version of ... disappointment when a novelist who I believe ought to have known better, Salman Rushdie, succumbs to Twitter." Significantly Rushdie, responding through the same social network site, has involved other writers by exploiting the affordances of Twitter through its *tagging* device (see fig. 5.3).

Fig. 5.3. Screenshot of Salman Rushdie's *tweet* in response to Franzen's critique on *The Guardian*. (Available at twitter.com/SalmanRushdie).

These latter considerations confirm once again our positive answer to the question: are new media influencing new narratives? As Ryan has pointed out, the survival of narrative is not at risk because of the digital revolution. Rather, the future of new media depends on "their ability to develop their own forms of narrativity" ("Will New Media?" 356). Therefore, we may assume that there is a complementarity between the way new media affect contemporary authorship and readership and the way authorship and readership are represented in new media. On the one hand, contemporary readers have more *childish* expectations while contemporary authors try to engage them with a double-sharing logic. On the other hand, authors appropriate these new media softwares to build their own image (**DE4**), to interact (**DE3**), to *share* fictional and extra-fictional material (**DE1**) while readers share their reading experiences (readerly epitexts).

5.5 Extending the Model to Nonfictional Narrative: David Shields's Reading (Play)list

The complementarity between the way new media affect contemporary authorship and readership and the way authorship and readership are represented in new media is also what underlies David Shields' *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto* (2010). As mentioned above (section 4.3.1), *Reality Hunger* is a controversial manifesto "for the obliteration of distinctions between genres, overturning the laws of appropriation, and a call for artists to create new forms for the twenty-first century" (Shields "Interview"). Significantly, Shields employs material peritexts in his nonfictional narrative. The manifesto is presented as an alphabetical list, in turn divided in 618 numbered fragments of a couple of hundred words each. Although the fragments are made of collaged snippets of quotations taken from different authors and occasionally mixed with Shields' own words, they are not followed by a reference. This, together with the lack of a preface, makes it impossible for the readers to be aware of the remixed material that composes *Reality Hunger*.

The unconventional layout of the numbered list of fragments not only materializes (**MP1**) the ethical dimension of the narrative (the need of a new form for the twenty-first century). Rather, in Shields' words, "the book completely embodies the argument" (Shields "Interview"). Shields' discourse(s) on the digital revolution is very clear: "We're surrounded by digital culture, so I do think literature is going to move forward. We can't endlessly write the nineteenth-century novel." In line with the current *anxiety of obsolescence,* he further adds that "publishers will vanish. Writers, like musicians will post their

work on the Web and will eliminate the 'middleman'–agents, editors, and publishers" (Shields "Interview"). In addition to the use of material peritexts to embody the narrative's purpose(s), Shields also draws on another paratextual element: an appendix. The aim of the appendix is to inform the actual audience that the uncertainty about the authorship of each snippet is not an incidental by-product, but a crucial tenet of his poetics. It is through the appendix that Shields reveals the distinguishing feature of the manifesto, i.e. the remix/ appropriation artifice.

The remix/appropriation artifice is disclosed through a numbered reference list of the various authors plagiarized in the fragments. The list is particularly significant with regard to the double-sharing logic underlying twenty-first century literary writing. Although Shields clarifies that the references are included only to avoid legal issues and readers would better served to dismiss them, they nevertheless guide the actual audience to chose whether to overlook the list or "to go back to the fragments disassembling the collage to give the right reference to each quotation" (Pignagnoli 242). Indeed, despite Shields' contradictory move made explicit by his last warning: "Stop; don't read any further" (*Reality* 209), the fact that the reference list does not follow a conventional guideline, but rather offers incomplete names or hints, is a cue to read the list as *part* of the narrative. This satisfies the principle of sharing the sources with the readers.

To exemplify, fragment #133 states:

> I've always had a hard time writing fiction. It feels like driving a car in a clown suit. You're going somewhere, but

> you're in costume, and you're not really fooling anybody. You're the guy in costume, and everybody's supposed to forget that and go along with you. (48).

The corresponding reference says: "133 Dave Eggers, interviewed by Tasha Robinson, *Onion*; Eggers reminds me that he said this ten years ago in a conversation about semi-autobiographical fiction, and that he no longer subscribes to the sentiment expressed here" (213). The remark by Dave Eggers seems to belong to a private conversation between him and Shields. Therefore, together with what look as clues of insincerity (i.e. the appropriation of other people's words), Shields constructs his authorial voice out of the same post-postmodern double-sharing logic by both sharing his sources and a (private) *sincere* information.

Ultimately, the reference list resembles a reading list. The reference/ reading list supports Kevin Kelly's claims about the future of writing. Kelly, who is himself plagiarized in fragment #37 and #42, explains that "once digitized, books can be unraveled into single pages or be reduced further, into snippets of a page." The consequences will be that

> these snippets will be remixed into reordered books and virtual bookshelves. Just as the music audience now juggles and reorders songs into new albums (or "playlists," as they are called in iTunes), the universal library will encourage the creation of virtual "bookshelves" — a collection of texts, some as short as a paragraph, others as long as entire books, that form a library shelf's worth of

> specialized information. And as with music playlists, once created, these "bookshelves" will be published and swapped in the public commons. (Kevin Kelly)

Following Kevin Kelly, Shields' both draws on techniques of creative plagiarism and then creates a reference list as a *bookshelf* to share with his readers.[39] Shields' reading (play)list repeatedly refers to the digital world and to the narrative's digital epitexts (**MP2**). Indeed, most of the references are to be found online and in some cases, there are actual links to the online sources through web addresses (e.g. reference #8, #129, #188). Therefore, the intermedial references are necessarily materialized (**DE1**). This materialization is significant for the new media debate because it points directly to the ontological legitimacy of the digital world as being (or not being) *real*. According to Shields' fragments and reading (play)list, the digital world is undoubtably part of that reality he is hungry for.

Despite the sharing logic underlying *Reality Hunger*, "the final discovery of the fragments' unoriginality may trigger a feeling of betrayal" (Pignagnoli 243). Nevertheless, this feeling of betrayal the actual audience may experience is not caused by the fact that Shields has sacrificed his "responsibility to the extratextual dimensions of [his] narrative on the altar of authorial purpose" (Phelan "Rhetoric, Ethics, Aesthetics" 8). Rather, it is part of the purpose(s) of his telling, i.e. of creating a new form for the twenty-first century.

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[39] In this regard, Irene Kacandes notices how Alison Bechdel in *Fun Home* (2006) "meticulously reproduces numerous documents and photos by redrawing them into her work not only to make visible her 'data base' in Cohn's sense or to render something about her own compulsive personality as an artist, but also to emphasize the emotional meanings of those objects" (Cvetkovich qtd. in Kacandes 384).

In this sense, the feeling of betrayal triggered by the lack of information about the authorship of the fragments mirrors the uncertainity of authorship embedded in web 2.0 technologies (see above, Manovich 2011). Although Shields shares with other contemporary authors "the rejection of conventional aestheticism, and the fascination of the 'real' and the 'authentic'" (Korthals Altes "Sincerity" 125), he is also careful to offer a double-play in which he portrays an argument for truth, sincerity, and reality within a deceitful narrative.[40]

From this sincerity/deceit perspective, it is not surprising that readerly epitexts may *resist* the authorial communication, as in the case of the fan website version of the manifesto called "Reality Hunger, Remixed: A Representation of David Shields' Reality Hunger" (available at realityhunger.com). The website presents the narrative with the source of each quotation relocated close to the corresponding fragment. The online readerly version is both a response to the disorienting double-play and to Shields' contradictory ethos cues. Indeed, it seems somehow inconsistent to declare your own authorship "for a book that is a patchwork of other books" (Pignagnoli 243).

The whole section "G. Blur" is then aptly dedicated to the blurring of generic distinctions. Fragment #184, which has no corresponding reference in the appendix (i.e. readers will assume that the fragment is indeed Shields'), declares:

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[40] My claim follows Korthals Altes' argument about a double-play in *A Heartbreaking Work for Staggering Genius*, in which Eggers' longing for sincerity is reflected ironically (2008: 125).

> I think of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, drama, and all forms of storytelling as existing on a rather wide continuum ... And in between at various tiny increments are greater and lesser imaginative projects. An awful lot of fiction is immensely autobiographical, and a lot of nonfiction is highly imagined ... "Fiction/"nonfiction" is an utterly useless distinction. (63).

This claim picks up a well known (and highly debated) issue which has recently been addressed by Henrik Skov Nielsen. Nielsen suggests a new taxonomy (modeled on Marie-Laure Ryan's distinction of fiction, nonfiction and metafiction ["Postmodernism" 181]) with the categories of fictional, *underdetermined, overdetermined,* and nonfictional texts (284). The addition of underdetermined and overdetermined texts is meant to oppose a sharp (and for Shields *useless*) distinction between fiction and nonfiction. Nielsen argues for a not absolute boundary between the categories and therefore the taxonomy forms a continuum (285). According to Nielsen (284), with regard to the fiction/nonfiction distinction, texts shall be classified as *overdetermined* when their paratexts "send mixed or mutually exclusive messages" (e.g. in Bret Easton Ellis' *Lunar Park*), and as *underdetermined* when their paratexts "send no clear message" (such as in James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*). Thus, his taxonomy should be able to account for that "minority of sometimes highly interesting and controversial texts [which] display ambiguous, deceptive, missing, or self-contradictory paratexts" (284).

Nielsen's main argument is directed toward (1) dismissing the category of the implied author in favor of the real author; (2) showing that not all narration is communication; (3) demonstrating that approaches to narrative based upon communication models are not able to account for limit cases where narration "deviates from the paradigm of natural, i.e. oral narratives" (279). One of Nielsen's example of *unnatural* narration comes from *A Million Little Pieces* (2003) by James Frey: a case of an *underdetermined* text in which "the real author seems *not sufficiently* to be a part of the story for it to be clearly nonfictional" (286; emphasis in the original). According to Nielsen, in Frey's description of falling asleep "there is no one to tell, and no one with a conscious mind able to do the telling" (286): "I fade in and out. The TV is narcotic. In and out. In. Out. In. Out" (Frey 286 qtd. in Nielsen 297).

Phelan's IRA model seems precisely a response to Nielsen's invitation to account also for limit cases (e.g. *unnatural* narration). By positioning the narrators(s) among the resource-column, Phelan acknowledges that the overall someone telling is the implied author, while narrator(s) may or may not be employed to convey narrative meaning. Without delving deeper into the debate unnatural narration/communication models, the point I want to underscore here is that Nielsen's new distinction in *overdetermined* and *underdetermined* texts is based on Genette's definition of the paratext without any attempt to refine it. In other words, Nielsen inquires "into the question of what problematic paratexts do to the narrator-author distinction supposedly present in fiction and absent in nonfiction" (285) without attempting to refine the concept of the paratext itself, but simply labeling it as "problematic." When he

says: "I have argued that underdetermined and overdetermined narratives pose a problem to any theory that acknowledges distinctions between fiction and nonfiction but grounds the decision in paratextual information" (296), it seems to me contradictory to criticize the fiction/nonfiction distinction grounded on paratextual information by establishing two new categories (underdetermined and overdetermined narratives) based on the same (problematic) paratextual information.

As Nielsen himself acknowledges, "an underdetermined text may occasionally change its status to an overdetermined text if new paratextual information is added" (285). Indeed, the history of literature is plenty of genre-bending narratives that seek "to alter established generic norms" (Phelan "Foreword" xi) and play with the conventions of the paratext. Instead of adding categories whereby authors are playing with such conventions,[41] my suggestion is to rethink the theoretical categorization of the conventions. My proposal of calling "paratexts 2.0" those paratexts employed not only to establish a generic contract or to provide a set of directions for the readers, but rather as resources of narrative communication is an attempt in this direction. Another significant attempt is Dawson's view of the paratext as "a type of discursive formation, a set of textual statements whose interrelations construct the text as its object" ("Real Authors" 110). His definition is broader than Genette's "in the sense that if [the paratext] constitutes a 'zone of transaction,' an attempt to influence the public, this zone also must include the textual phenomena produced by the reading

[41] E.g. Nielsen's example of overdetermined text, *Lunar Park* (2005) by Bret Easton Ellis, in which the protagonist shares the same name of the author and many events told in the narrative hold true for Ellis the author as well.

public as the other party in the transaction" (110). The diagram of narrative communication, according to Dawson should be as follows:

epitext (author) ↔ *peritext* (extrafictional voice) ↔ *text* (narrator > narratee) ↔ *epitext* (reader)

If we acknowledge the connection between peritext and epitext, we allow for the communication to be between the actual author and the actual audience. Thus, the case of *Lunar Park* (and all those in this fashion) can be defined as a fictional narrative playing with the fiction/nonfiction distinction within a rather postmodern irony-mode which includes the use of digital epitexts, such as the novel's and a character's website. Besides, if we read *A Million Little Pieces* in light of the new literary practices that new media enabled (i.e. in light of a more discursive approach), we will discover that Frey's narrative is one among many trying to establish the new genre of the memoir. In this regard, it is not incidental that *Reality Hunger* dedicates a chapter to Frey and other authors of memoir ("D. Trials By Google"). Shields' point is that the boundaries between fiction and truth have never been absolute (he mentions Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* as example), but today are even more blurred. He claims: "No one gives a damn anymore about the novel per se or the garret-bound artist struggling with 'his' truth narrative. Contemporary narration is the account of the manufacturing of the work, not the actual work" (#93; 36).

Following the framework of the paratext 2.0 for *Reality Hunger*, we are able to identify the material peritexts employed by Shields as resources to communicate specific purpose(s) the unconventional layout (the numbered fragments) and the appendix (with dotted lines drawn on the side of the pages

to indicate to the readers where to tear the page out). As mentioned above, the structure of *Reality Hunger* embodies the argument and consequently materializes the thematic component and ethical dimension of the narrative (**MP1**). The reading (play)list offers cues toward the digital world (and therefore the digital epitexts) through web addresses (**MP2**) to be found online (**DE1**). The numbered fragments foreground the synthetic component of the narrative (**MP3**) but, more significantly, the presence of the digital web addresses (URLs) produces a tension between the ontological existence of the nonfictional world and the digital world. As for ethos clues, material peritexts offer contradicting interpretations of Shields' authorial figure according to the double-play of sharing through a deceitful narrative (**MP4**).

The ethos clues concerning sharing are also to be found within the digital epitext. The author's website (www.davidshields.com) is mainly employed to advertise Shields' works (**DE2**) and to establish an embracing attitude toward new media (**DE3**). Following the links on the website, it is possible to access to Shields' Facebook and Twitter profile and to his Tumblr blog. Especially through the Facebook page, Shields is able to interact with his audience (**DE3**) and to share facts belonging to his personal life (**DE4**). Along with articles or reviews on his works, he shares personal photographs and comments, consistent with the double-sharing logic underlying contemporary authorship.

To summarize the use of paratexts 2.0 in *Reality Hunger* see fig. 5.4 below.

David Shields, *Reality Hunger* (2010)			
CATEGORIES			
Material Peritexts		**Digital Epitexts**	
• 618 numbered fragments; • Reading (Play)list		• Author's Website; • Author's interaction on social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr).	
FUNCTIONS			
MP1 Narrative	The 618 numbered fragments and the reading (playlist) materialize the main purpose of the manifesto on the need of new forms for the 21st century.	**DE1 Augmentative**	∅
MP2 Indexical	Presence of URLs.	**DE2 Dialogic**	Relation with the printed narrative combined with promotional intents.
MP3 Synthetical	Tension between the ontological existence of the nonfictional *real* world and the digital *real* world.	**DE3 Social**	Interaction through social network
MP4 Authorial	Discursive ethos clues of authorial acceptance of new media affordance.	**DE4 Locative**	Non-discursive ethos clues of *embracement* to social media affordances; logic of sharing personal life events.

Fig. 5.4 Paratexts 2.0 in David Shields' *Reality Hunger* (2010).

Finally, according to the resource-reliance value given to the paratexts 2.0, we can juxtapose the level of presence and fulfillment of the categories and functions in *Reality Hunger* to those of *Goon Squad* and *Tree of Codes* (fig. 5.5).

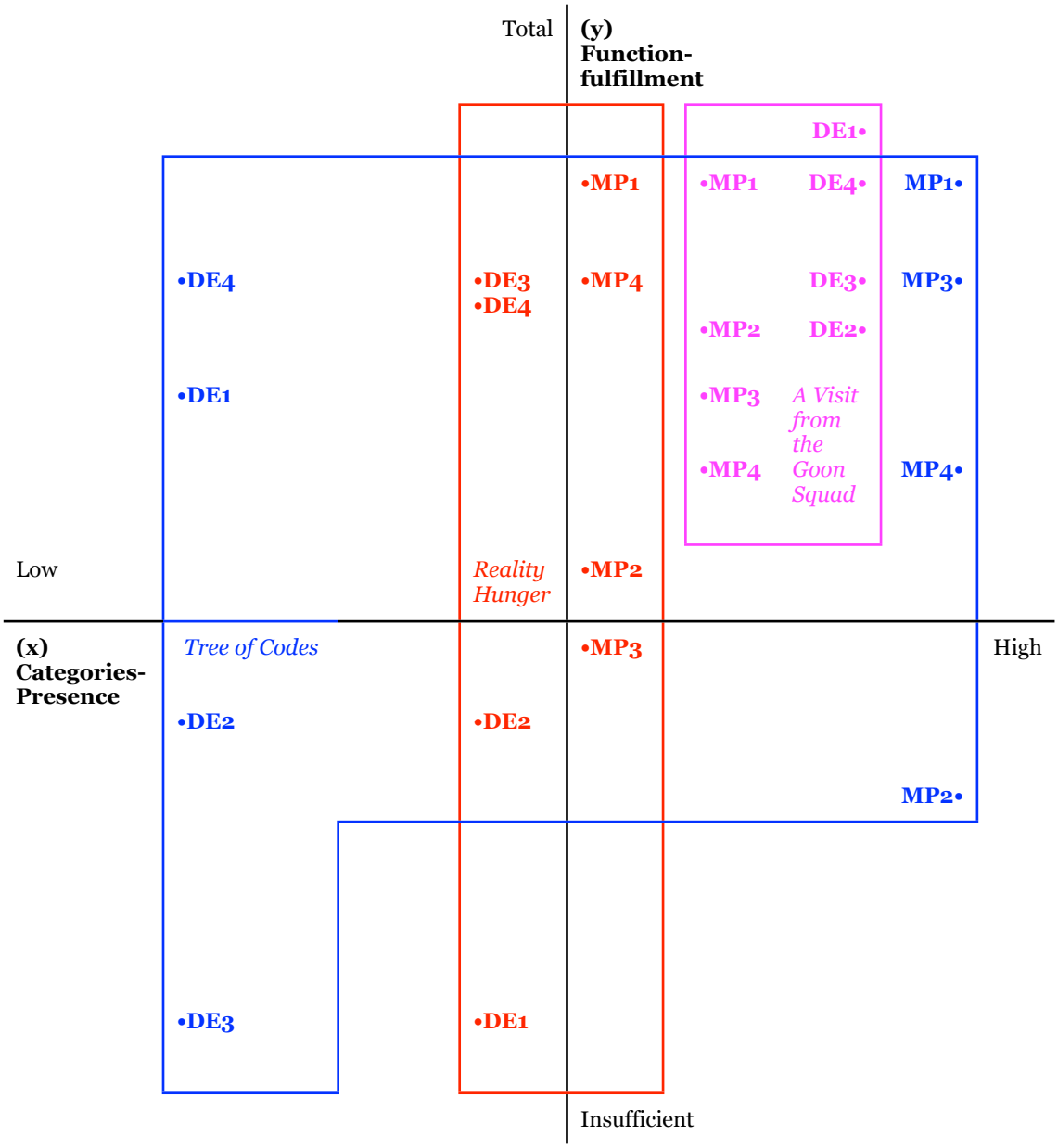

Fig. 5.5 Resource Reliance: A Juxtaposition of Paratexts 2.0 in Shields' *Reality Hunger* and in Foer's *Tree of Codes* and Egan's *Goon Squad*.

The value given to the paratexts 2.0 of *Reality Hunger* is situated somehow in between that of *Tree of Codes* and *Goon Squad*. It reveals an authorial ethos who embraces new media practices (mashup and remix) and tries to *remediate* them within prose narrative. *Reality Hunger* is yet another narrative that, through paratexts 2.0, is trying to *give* the reader something–a reader whose

expectations respond to the same double-sharing logic, induced by digital media, which underlies contemporary narration.[42]

[42] The concept of *giving* something to the reader comes from a quote by Wallace who says: "It seems like one of the things really great fiction writers do – from Carver to Chekhov to Flannery O'Connor, or like the Tolstoy of 'The Death of Ivan Ilych' or the Pynchon of *Gravity's Rainbow* – is 'give' the reader something" ("Interview" 148).

Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER DIRECTIONS

This study has proposed a framework to extend and update Genette's typology of the paratext which I called "paratexts 2.0". The label "2.0" points to the need of acknowledging that narrative analysis may benefit from a contextualized perspective. The categorization of the paratext 2.0 in material peritexts and digital epitexts offers both essential vocabulary for twenty-first century literary narratives and a heuristic viewpoint on the narrative communication model and a theory of authorship. Moreover, one of the advantages of the model of the paratext 2.0 is that it is open to further revisions and it stages a dialogue with many current conversations in the discipline of narrative theory.

This study complements Genette's typology with two categories of paratextual elements, material peritexts and digital epitexts, that contemporary authors employ in their narratives. Indeed, although my dissertation focuses on a limited chronological span (the beginning of the twenty-first century), it is within this limited time frame that the exploitation of the liminal space of the paratext is flourishing. This time frame is also what connects the study with investigations on mediality and modality. The digital turn has led to new discussions in contemporary literary and cultural criticism: new

conceptualizations (e.g. remediation, new media texts, transmedial storytelling) have been proposed and new fields of inquiry have emerged (e.g. multimodal narrative, digital narratology). As I have shown, by combining concepts from different theoretical traditions, we may be able to gain new insights into some unresolved instabilities within narrative theory.[43]

In this regard, I have tried to demonstrate how a rhetorical approach to narrative would benefit from a medium-specific analysis and from an intermedial perspective toward the many ways a narrative can be shaped according to the material properties of its medium. Furthermore, studies about the effects of the new digital devices are usually limited to inquires on digital narratives. Conversely, the aim of this study was to look at the consequences of the current digitization process for literary (printed) narratives. As a result, the concept of the paratext 2.0 discloses a broader discourse on authorship and on the author-reader relationship. Therefore, as compared with studies focusing on multimodality, this investigation offers an analysis which includes the multiplicity of the semiotic modes employed in a given narrative *and* the whole domain of digital media used in support of that given narrative.

At the same time, this dissertation remains consistent with the rhetorical approach to narrative. According to the six principles described by Phelan and Rabinowitz (2.1.1), I have examined how (1) paratexts 2.0 are employed in contemporary literary narratives to shape particular meanings and effects; (2)

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[43] With "unresolved instabilities," I am precisely referring to Phelan's 2006 article in which he outlines four unresolved instabilities concerning narrative theory and (1) the tradition of nonmimetic narrative; (2) digital narrative; (3) the borders between fiction and nonfiction; (4) narrative space (334-335).

they affect the achievement of the multidimensional purpose of the narrative according to an a posteriori stance; (3) they can help to better understand the feedback loop among author, text and readers; (4) their dynamics intersect with the narrative progression; (5) they affect the reading experience, with regard to (6) the mimetic, thematic and, in particular, the synthetic responses. Thus, I have pointed out a correlation between the increase of paratextual *resources* employed by the author, and the need (in turn linked to today's socio-cultural context) to engage with the medial dimension of a narrative at the textual level, and with the possibility of creating additional material for the narrative, as well as to interact with the audience through digital media at the extra-textual level.

This dualism, embedded in the concept of *para*text itself, opens up a whole range of questions regarding the need of theoretical models able to throughly account for new forms of narrative production and reception. Likewise, the model of paratexts 2.0 is meant as a working conceptualization, which might help us discover new perspectives on twenty-first century literary narratives. Some future investigations may include the following questions.

1. How can we further describe the consequences of the juxtaposition of the narrative world with the real world *and* the digital world, triggered by the synthetic function of material peritexts?
2. Which additional functions material peritexts and digital epitexts can perform?
3. Other than the double-sharing logic, which other features of post-postmodernism may the concept of the paratext 2.0 help us identifying?

4. What is the relationship between the paratexts 2.0 in literary narrative and the paratext in other media?
5. What is the relationship between contemporary (printed) narratives employing paratexts 2.0 and those exploiting digital support merely for promotional reasons?
6. Concerning the question of authorization, how do paratexts 2.0 challenge the idea of a singular authorial agency when many other agencies are involved in the creation of websites or softwares?
7. Within a discursive or contextualized approach, how can we account for the countless discourses around a narrative and her author in the ever-growing media and new media domains?
8. Since the idea of paratexts 2.0 calls for a communication model that allows for the implied author at the textual level (i.e. the author in her occasion of writing) and for the actual author at the extra-textual level (i.e. in the occasion of creating digital epitext for a narrative), how can we further distinguish the various digital epitexts belonging to the same author but to different narratives?[44]
9. How can we formally account for readerly epitexts? What is the relationship between readerly epitexts and the reading experience according to a rhetorical approach?
10. How might we further account for the way the Internet and social media are influencing contemporary readership?

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[44] This question may, to some extent, evokes Booth's idea of the career-authors, defined as as the "sustained characters who somehow are the sum of the invented creators implied by all the writer's particular works" (*Critical* 270).

11. Finally, how can the typology of the paratext 2.0 be fruitfully employed within different approaches to narrative?

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Titolo della Tesi: Paratexts 2.0: New Perspectives on Twenty-first Century Literary Narrative

Abstract: In this study, I argue for the need to extend Genette's typology of the paratext to analyze twenty-first century literary narratives. "Paratexts 2.0" are formalized in a model that presents the new categories of *material* peritexts and *digital* epitexts and their main functions. The new model provides a heuristic for contemporary narratives whose authors exploit various semiotic modes in their printed books, and the affordances of Web 2.0 technologies in the digital world. My dissertation is therefore also an attempt to complement the rhetorical approach to narrative with investigations on mediality and modality, and a discussion on the extra-textual dimension of authorial agency. Finally, according to a diachronic perspective, this study explores the ethical values embedded in the choice of using paratexts 2.0 as resources of narrative communication in relation to post-postmodern American literature.

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Estratto: In questo lavoro, si tenta di dimostrare la necessità di estendere la categorizzazione di paratesto di Genette per analizzare narrazioni letterarie del ventunesimo secolo. I "paratesti 2.0" vengono formalizzati in un modello che presenta due nuove categorie, quella dei peritesti *materiali* e quella degli epitesti *digitali*, con le rispettive funzioni principali. Il nuovo modello si propone di offrire una chiave di lettura per narrazioni contemporanee i cui autori fanno uso di diversi modi semiotici nel libro stampato e sfruttano le proprietà del Web 2.0 nel mondo digitale. La mia dissertazione è pertanto un tentativo di completare l'approccio retorico alla narrazione attraverso studi su medialità e modalità, e con una discussione circa la dimensione extra-testuale dell'autore. Infine, da una prospettiva diacronica, questo studio esamina i valori etici determinati dalla scelta di usare i paratesti 2.0 come una risorsa narrativa in relazione alla letteratura americana post-postmoderna.