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Expanding Genette's Epitext/Peritext Model for Transitional Electronic Literature: Centrifugal and Centripetal Vectors on Kindles and iPads

Although avant-garde digital literature made inroads among a few experimental artists and a very small number of readers in the 1980s and 1990s, it was not until 2009 that sales of small portable electronic devices and easily obtainable digital texts changed reading patterns in the developed world. Sales of dedicated e-readers such as Amazon's Kindle mushroomed from early 2009 on, and with the introduction of Apple's iPad in April 2010, a new form of transitional electronic literature began to take hold—an intermediary form between print and digital platforms without the complexities of avant-garde, digitally experimental literature. Whereas early multiform digital literature excluded much of the reading public with its extensive hyperlinks and sometimes confusing hypertextual pathways, the new transitional texts on small portable e-readers engage in much more moderate adaptations of traditional printed literature. In contrast to "digital born" literature such as blognovels, interactive texts with complex rhizomatic paths and algorithmic sequences, and multi-media digital genres that blur the borders between video, game, and literature, a much more palatable transitional literature is in the forefront of cultural change now—electronic texts that mimic the format and appearance of print books and add a few innovations.[1]

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This new transitional literature represents a key stage in the shift between print and digital books underway in the 21st century. At this moment in history, a new electronic literature that seeks widespread mass consumption and encourages extensive readership of literary texts precedes and supersedes the radically experimental electronic literary forms for which the public is not entirely ready. Dedicated e-readers such as the Kindle, the Nook, and the Kobo compete with multi-function tablets such as the iPad, the Kindle Fire, and the Nook Tablet, and smaller smart phones including the iPhone, the Blackberry, and Android devices to offer readers a series of convenient, portable platforms on which to read transitional literature.

Gérard Genette's formulations on paratexts—the framing elements both inside and outside printed texts that shape the reading experience although they are not part of the text proper—need augmentation and modification for the analysis of transitional electronic texts. Elements such as covers, epigraphs, footnotes, auto-commentaries and publishers' ads take on new paratextual functions in the age of digital reading and join a large array of new paratexts not developed in print literature. Literary expression is both enriched and impeded by the new or modified paratexts at this moment of transition between print and digital platforms. This study examines the new paratexts of literature on portable electronic reading devices and the ways in which they encourage readers to perform centrifugal and centripetal movement.

Important new elements of motion pervade the reading experience on portable electronic devices, beyond the standard page turning and eye movements involved in traditional print literature. A wider array of paratexts is made possible by these additional modes of motion involved in the new technology of reading. Concomitantly, paratexts can no longer be studied as singular fixed objects. They exist temporally and spatially within particular dynamic viewing practices. It is therefore useful to focus on the centrifugal and centripetal motion to which they invite readers who use portable electronic devices. If one conceives of the principal verbal literary text as the center, one can identify exterior and interior pathways leading readers both away from and more deeply into the words at hand.

Genette's groundbreaking 1987 study *Seuils* expanded traditional notions of the text and painstakingly documented a wide array of paratextual devices throughout several centuries of print literature. *Seuils* gave us the terminology and conceptual model with which to understand, evaluate, and take into account the elements authorized by the publisher or author that surround the text proper and affect its interpretation. The concepts of "epitext" and "peritext" continue to be useful for the analysis of digital literature on portable electronic devices but need expansion as categories. New paratexts sometimes move beyond Genette's precise formulations but continue to function in the spirit of his analysis. Rather than attempting to fit all of the new paratextual practices exactly into his categories, which privileges the theoretical model over the empirical object under study, it is more useful to employ them as guidelines for analysis and models that can be expanded. The concepts of centrifugal and centripetal vectors offer one mode of expanding Genette's concept for the analysis of digital textuality on portable electronic devices. With the verbal literary text as the center, outward and inward pathways of semiotic engagement lead readers in various ways to the exterior and interior. Centrifugal paratexts draw readers outside the text proper.

On the centrifugal vector, for example, while reading an e-book, readers can easily engage with blogs, other readers' comments, or an author's web page without putting aside the e-device. Centripetal paratexts, in contrast, modify readers' experience on inward vectors. On centripetal digital pathways, readers engage with new paratextual elements such as format, font changes, word searching, and other enhancements.

Platforms and Content

In 2007 Amazon introduced its paradigm-changing Kindle e-reader, beginning the e-book revolution. Electronic reading of books had been possible on computers for two decades, but it was not until the introduction of the lightweight portable Kindle e-reader that digital reading became popular. Launched on 17 November 2007, the device sold out in five and a half hours and remained unavailable until late April 2008. Although the first Kindles were relatively expensive at $399, sales took off in late 2008 followed by price-drops and new models. By August 2010 when the Kindle III model was introduced for $139, an almost viral proliferation of the new reading platform occurred. Weighing 8 ounces, the Kindle fits into purses, briefcases, and bags enabling wide portability. It uses "e-ink" technology that claims to prevent eye-strain and is readable outdoors in sunlight. The battery lasts over a month even with daily use. The device provides free samples and one-minute downloading of books, text-to-speech audio versions of many books, note taking and highlighting of texts, definitions and origins of words as one reads, word searches within books, several enlarged font-size choices, and automatic syncing to the current page or other location as one reads at different times and places. In an astute marketing strategy, Amazon initially sold e-books at $9.99, slightly under cost, in order to hook readers on their new device before competitors entered the market. Five of the six conglomerate U.S. publishers successfully banded together in spring 2010 to stop Amazon from doing this and maintain their high prices but many free or low-cost books are also available (see Timmer).

Apple trumped everyone with the launch of its groundbreaking iPad tablet in April 2010. More than an e-reader device, the somewhat heavier iPad has a 10-inch color screen, the availability of thousands of applications for games, music, movies, TV shows, newspapers, magazines, podcasts, productivity aids, lifestyle tools, social networking and other Internet material. As an e-reader, the iPad offers more flexibility and a more pleasurable visual reading experience than does the Kindle. In the iBooks reader on the iPad, color images in books can be viewed, video links can be accessed in enhanced e-books, the double-page format of regular books is available, electronic "page turns" three dimensionally mimic print books, passages can be highlighted with finger strokes in a choice of colors, and readers can add neatly typed notes in the margins where they wish. As with the Kindle, font can be enlarged, words can be searched, definitions and origins of words are available with the tap of a finger, and voice-over can electronically read the text, although it is more complicated to access this feature than on the Kindle. Internet access is much easier on the iPad, allowing readers to check facts or pursue other information while reading.

But Amazon and Kindle have stayed in the running by brilliant strategic moves. The company developed free applications for mobile devices so that readers can read Amazon digital books on various platforms. Nonetheless, many consumers became hooked on the 8-ounce e-ink device and remain committed to it. Bloomberg reports that 2.4 million Kindles sold in 2009 and over 8 million in 2010, and estimates are as high as 13.5 million for 2012 (Meadows).[2] Even a bus driver in Oregon was caught reading his Kindle while driving in rush hour traffic (Jeff Thompson). In contrast, luxury sedans now come with "an iPad at every seat" (Stevens). The portability and accessibility of reading material on these devices has resulted in increased readership and new reading patterns for many, evidenced by testimonies on blogs, and by May 2011, digital book sales outnumbered those of both hardcover and print titles on Amazon. E-book sales grew 117% in the U.S. in 2011, with the mass market paperback segment having lost the most—36% ("AAP Estimates"). The growing excitement about e-readers and transitional e-literature has given a jump-start to the long intermediary process during which the portable electronic screen will gain more and more ground over the book and most likely replace it, just as the printing press eventually replaced the manuscript.

Several other e-reading tablets have entered the market to compete with the iPad, most notably the 7-inch Kindle Fire and the Nook Tablet, each about 14 ounces, and Google's 12 oz. Nexus 7 released in July 2012. The 7 oz. Nook Simple Touch with Glow light (April 2012) is an intermediary between the tablet and the e-ink e-reader, allowing reading in daylight as well as the dark, where previously only one or the other was possible. However, despite Amazon's selling between 4 and 4.8 million Kindle Fires in just two months of its launch quarter (Nov-Dec, 2011), the figure is estimated to have dropped to 750,000 the following quarter perhaps because Apple reduced the price of the iPad II and thereby cut Amazon's price edge (see Epstein). The smaller size of the Kindle Fire and the Nook Simple Touch and their Android interface is not as popular as Apple's iOS. Some analysts believe that the originally groundbreaking e-ink devices will not survive the competition because of the attractiveness of color tablet devices and their multi-functionality ("How Amazon's").

I focus here on two pervasive yet sharply contrasting devices in the transitional period—the e-ink Kindle and the iPad—to examine the changed paratexts that underlie the new reading processes and textualities of portable reading devices. I start with the basic premise that the medium in which the text appears is not neutral. The text's materiality changes the sense readers make of the "same" content. Unlike those who assert that the devices are simply new containers in which singular literary texts persist despite the medium, I argue that entirely new systems of reading and textuality are engendered with e-readers.

John B. Thompson contends that "the digitization of content dissociates content and form. It captures content in a way that separates the content from the particular form in which it is, or typically has been, realized; it also captures content in a way that is sufficiently flexible to enable it to be realized, at least in principle, in a multiplicity of other forms" (329–30). He argues that the physical book is a particular vehicle or form customarily used for 500 years and now can be separated from content. At one point Thompson compares publishers of print books to a water company that

owns and controls the water supply but does not own the pipes that deliver the water (345). I argue, in contrast, that e-reading platforms are not simply pipes carrying water, but produce substantive textual transformation.

Another view that I can hardly agree with is Craig Mod's who, looking at the Kindle and iPad, delineates two kinds of content: formless and definite. In the first category he includes most novels and works of non-fiction. When Danielle Steele writes, Mod argues, she thinks about her text as a waterfall that can be poured into any container, not how it will look when printed. In contrast, definite content consists of texts composed with images or charts and poetry. When definite content is "reflowed, inherent *meaning* and *quality* of the text may shift." Whereas the Kindle and other early e-readers lend themselves particularly well to formless content because the new format does not change the content, the iPad lends itself well to definite content that can now be reflowed in exciting new ways. Its versatility allows for more innovation in layout than simply the imitation of the printed page, Mod notes.

Thompson's metaphorical "pipes" are far from neutral, however, and Mod's dichotomy misses the point that the medium of reading re-shapes all content in subtle and sometimes strong ways. Readers' perception and cognition are missing from the metaphors of pipes and waterfalls that can be poured into any container without change. How does the reader's perception that he or she is reading a text on a cool, ultra-modern device that may carry the large cultural capital of the Apple logo affect the perception and meaning of the text? Textuality is changed as well by format, appearance, errors, the absence of some of the usual paratexts such as the color cover, new patterns of reading that must be engaged in such as having to move backward to see the dedication or epigraph (if one even thinks to do so), viewing larger or smaller segments of the text when font size is adjusted, and the quick opportunity to see word definitions or other textual references to a character or concept. Readers using the Kindle now find "popular highlighting" in some new books they purchase—passages underlined by other readers—as Amazon attempts to create what it terms reading communities. They are invited to make changes in some of the new paratextual material that the publisher Amazon introduces such as character lists and praiseworthy quotations in a feature called "Comments of the Editable Community," as if readers are also writers now in the new "communities" of e-book readers. Here I amplify Genette's concept of paratext. I term this paratextual material because it is a new part of the authorized text presented by the publisher, Amazon. While it is clear that the author did not add the underlining, just as he or she did not pick the cover, it becomes physically part of the digital edition of the text. Similarly, the new dictionary function that is integrated in e-readers allows the definition and origin to be part of the new electronic text—one of its "clicks," "taps," or touchscreen interfaces.

It is important to note at the outset that portable electronic reading devices constitute a new materiality of textuality. The text is materially present in a form distinct from that of the print book, but it is not simply a series of disembodied digital codes in cyberspace. Rather, readers hold lightweight Kindles, Nooks, iPads, or phones that frame the arrangements of words and images on the screen and affect the decoding of the text. Fluidity marks the electronic text in contrast to the stationary nature of print on a page: adjustment of font-size, brightness, contrast, and landscape or por-

trait orientation affect the speed of reading and the length of lines and sentences that are cognitively decoded. The immediate availability of word definitions functions as a type of textual embedding: whether chosen or not, they represent a material presence distinct from those existing in an outside printed dictionary. This easy availability as a secondary but nonetheless material appendage of the text itself affects reading and textuality because more words can be quickly looked up; when this occurs, cognition is enhanced.

Paratextual Interfaces: Advances and Distortions

This new transitional literature mushrooming on portable e-reading devices is moving into wide acceptance in contrast to the experimental avant-garde digital literature of the past two decades because it engages in only "light" enhancements and departures from the conventions of print. Readers will not get lost on hypertextual paths from which they cannot easily exit nor will they create new plots with each reading. Although all reading is rewriting, the relatively easy opportunities that transitional e-literature offers for reader performance and light re-mixing distinguish it from many print texts. Distinct engagements with paratextuality shape e-reading; readers establish centripetal and centrifugal trajectories when engaging with the new paratexts of portable electronic reading devices.

Whereas Genette argues that paratexts are neither exterior nor interior to the print text—existing rather on the threshold (*seuil*)—several of the new paratexts involved in portable electronic reading have migrated outside the electronic literary texts proper, functioning as expanded versions of what Genette terms epitexts. Before buying an e-book on Amazon, for example, readers may have encountered references to the book on blogs; seen other readers' comments and ratings posted on Amazon, other websites, or Twitter; viewed the author's web page on Amazon; or followed a link on Amazon to algorithmic recommendations based on browsing history and purchases. As part of a larger textual orbit, these new digital epitexts are intended to propel readers toward the central reading experience of the text itself along a centripetal vector, and from there, further inward. During or after the reading process on the portable device, however, this same paratextual material can also work centrifugally, interrupting or extending the story outward. During the reading process one can easily tap a tablet's touchscreen to view comments, ratings, reviews, and author information and commentary without putting the device aside.

Extending Genette's categorization, I would argue that Amazon, as the new digital publisher of these texts, encourages readers to write comments and mention blogs on the Amazon website as a new tool of marketing when they appear on the web page for a given book. At the end of some books on the Kindle, a screen appears asking readers to "Tweet/share that you've finished this book" and to rate it from one to five stars. The page lists other books that readers who bought this book also purchased and other titles by the author to entice further book purchases. These strategies are expanded versions of some of the epitexts Genette analyzes.

Additionally, Amazon makes free samples of e-texts available on e-readers and Kindle applications on other devices, hoping to convince potential readers to buy the entire book. These paratexts function centrifugally, bringing the textual excerpt outside its original context to a distinct reading situation of the fragmentary. If the reader clicks "purchase" at the end of the selection and downloads the book to continue reading, the paratext also functions on a centripetal vector. Another new paratextual element is the price of the e-text, as many readers spend time and work searching for free or low-priced bargains before buying an electronic book, and fierce battles currently rage about price points between publishers and e-device makers.[3] Readers and potential readers must often perform work to access these new kinds of epitexts.

Traditional publishers are also putting pressure on writers to produce digital paratexts to enhance sales, including participation on Twitter and Facebook, and even to write short digital fiction that sells for $.99 in order to entice readers to buy longer, more lucrative works by the same author (see Bosman). These short narratives serve as primary digital texts while readers consume them but effectively are part of the publishers' peritext for a given author's work. They both propel readers centripetally toward the longer narratives the publisher wants the reader to purchase and can also draw readers centrifugally away during the reading process through an easy click or tap if one wishes to find more works by an author one is currently enjoying.

To what extent do these phenomena continue to function as cognitive thresholds of the reading experience, as Genette argued? How is the role of the front cover of the print book, for example, transmuted on various e-devices? In some cases, the cover is absent or plays a diminished role, and readers are forced to access an image of it elsewhere if they wish, rather than seeing it every time they pick up the book. In place of the diminished book cover, how does the Kindle's April 2011 introduction of paid advertising content on screensavers and banners on the device offer more distractive centrifugal cognitive thresholds adjacent to the text and align readers to a greater degree with consumer capitalism? Instead of the front cover being an ad for the book itself, now the "front cover" of the Kindle is a screensaver that advertises credit cards, anti-aging cream, and luxury cars.

Unlike DVDs, which provide many paratexts adjacent to the main filmic text and easily available on the menu, some e-books require readers to perform outside work through other vehicles to access important paratextual material. The color images on the book's front cover are absent on the e-ink Kindle and must be accessed online, whereas smaller digitized versions of the original full-color covers are viewable on the other e-reading devices and applications. Even on the iPad with its brilliant color screen, many free books for download come with boring generic covers. Bloggers tell others what steps to take to retrieve a color image of the cover to superimpose so that it will look attractive on one's iBooks bookshelf. Covers are important paratexts that print publishers design to sell books, but old ways die hard, and covers are important also to readers of the new transitional e-literature on mobile devices. Even after buying the e-book, some readers want to possess a digitized rendition of this key trope of the print book. The cover seems to represent a sense of completeness for some, an apparent necessity inherent to long-form reading genres.

In this age of digital transition, David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas,* for example, has an unattractive black-and-white cover on the e-ink Kindle edition in contrast to its colorful cover on the print edition. The editors of the digital edition added "The" to the title despite its absence in the original. The cover of Luis Alberto Urrea's *Into the Beautiful North* is not so beautiful on the standard Kindle device, having lost its color. In contrast, the Kindle Fire and downloaded book collections in the Kindle, Nook, and iBooks applications on the iPad reproduce stunning color covers, perhaps more enticing than even the color print covers.

Although modified in both good and bad ways, the front cover serves several traditional paratextual functions. Like the print book's front cover, displayed face-out on a bookstore shelf or reprinted in print advertisements, the digitized color image of the cover displayed online on Amazon or other websites functions as an enticement to buy. During the reading process after the digital purchase, the cover interacts with the literary content, affecting interpretation.[4] This occurs to a lesser degree on e-readers than in print texts in which the cover is seen frequently throughout the reading process, but bloggers' insistence on finding color cover images for their e-books points to a persistent importance for the cover in the transitional moment. Downloads of books on the e-ink Kindle and its related apps on tablets diminish the cover's function, however, by programming the book to open at the first page of text rather than the front cover. Readers must click backwards several screens to see the front cover if they so desire.

New forms and expanded varieties of peritexts also exist within the electronic text, expanding textuality by drawing readers into activity along centripetal paths. These elements include: the text's formatting (which often at this early stage of digital production includes errors); the text's appearance on the electronic screen (e.g., brightness, horizontal or vertical orientation); numbering according to "locations" as opposed to page numbers (although Kindle has attempted to remedy this perceived shortcoming); easily accessed dictionary definitions of words and their origins; word and phrase searching ability; enlarged or reduced font at the reader's discretion; the reader's ability to highlight and excerpt passages; and alternative modes of consumption such as "text-to-speech" in which a digitized voice reads the text aloud. Kindle devices now allow "popular highlighting," whereby, if readers agree, their highlighting is reproduced in copies of the book that others download. Some find this disconcerting, and the feature can be turned off, but it potentially allows the opportunity for greater communication among readers. If we consider that Kindle is effectively the publisher of these new digital editions and first editions of new e-books, the popular highlighting functions as part of the new publisher's peritext. The popular highlights that appear as underlining in the text are embedded in the new edition and constitute a new form of textuality for those who do not turn them off. The word and phrase searching capability similarly functions as an additional publisher's peritext; it constitutes a different form of textuality for those who use it than does searching back and skimming through pages to find textual elements in a print book. Word searches are now materially present in the electronic text.

Several of these expanded peritexts that function as centripetal vectors inside of and around the text materially present on the portable e-reader represent the hypos-

tasizing of the materiality of the book form during the transition to digital reading. Simulacra of print materiality such as digital reproductions of sticky notes, 3-D page turns, and images of the thickness of pages on the left and right margins of the horizontal double-page views to show how much one has read and how much remains suggest that the e-book is a surrogate of print rather than an exciting new entity. E-books want to have it both ways, however, and also emphasize the dynamic new features they offer over print such as instant downloading, rapid word searches, fast links to word definitions and origins, font changes, and audio renditions of books. In some instances, technical innovations proudly present themselves without attempting to hypostasize or recreate the book form. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary HD,* for example, a free iPad application introduced in May 2011, allows users to speak a word into their iPad and be instantly linked to the definition, avoiding the necessity of typing the word or turning through pages of alphabetical listings to find a definition.

One of the first centripetal paratexts on the Kindle reader, again expanding Genette's schema, is the individual Home page and list of titles in one's library which can be clicked on to open books, entering the text at the beginning or on the last page one has read. These verbal titles function similarly to hot links on an e-book's table of contents because they move readers on a centripetal vector into the book. The order and style of the titles listed on the Home page is programmed by Amazon, allowing readers to choose between alphabetical order by title or author, chronology of downloading, and recently, according to folders the reader creates. In contrast, to the black-and-white list on the e-ink Kindle, the iPad reading apps feature bright colorful covers and titles in the individual's "Library" or home page. On another feature, the Kindle's dropdown Menu, one can access the "Book Description" which, in contrast, takes the reader on a centrifugal path to Amazon's page for the book with price, customer reviews, and sales rank. There is also a link to information such as "Characters and Important People," "Setting," "Ridiculously Simplified Synopses" by readers, and other information about the book. And finally, one can view readers' comments called "Comments by the Editable Community." In principle these new paratexts represent a democratization of reading whereby ordinary readers can communicate about books with people they have never met. Whereas the print format usually includes cover blurbs with comments from "experts," sanctioned reviewers, or even (anonymously) the author, the Kindle's comments and synopses come from a wider public and are included in embedded textual links, forming part of the e-text's materiality.

At this early stage of the e-reader revolution, some mutilation and distortion of the paratextual elements of literary texts occur in transitional e-literature. A new convention of reading has been established in which the programmers of downloads for e-books have almost excised the paratexts of the front matter by setting the book to open on the first page of the main body of the text. If they even think to do so, readers must click backward to see the dedication, epigraph, title page, and cover. Most likely thinking they are making the e-book more convenient for readers, programmers in effect have changed the conventions of viewing important paratexts that some writers count on readers engaging with before reading the main text. For example, writers sometimes play with reality and fiction in the dedication or epigraph, a key textual

element that may remain hidden if the reader does not think to click backwards to previous pages.

Another mechanical problem in Kindle e-books is that location numbers substitute for page numbers because when readers enlarge type font or when texts are read on smaller devices, pages change.[5] This mechanical problem leads to paratextual distortions, in particular with regard to footnotes, as these can hardly be placed at the bottom of the non-existent pages. The Kindle version of Junot Díaz's 2007 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, for example, destroys the relationship between the extensive, integral footnotes by introducing hyperlinks and placing the notes at the end of the book instead of in the text itself. I argue that Díaz's footnotes in fact engage in a rhetorical strategy of non-paratextuality—an integral continuation of the main narrative and essential to the reading process, but they nonetheless have been excised from this continuum in the electronic version of the novel.[6] The Kindle and iPad versions further mutilate the novel by formatting a Derek Walcott poem in an epigraph at the beginning as a run-on paragraph instead of lines of verse and introducing a completely new paratext, a hyperlinked table of contents that interrupts the novel after page eight.

In his insightful study *Show Sold Separately*, Jonathan Gray delineates the numerous powerful paratexts that shape cinematic texts, in effect, reconstituting them. Trailers and news reports are early frames through which viewers think of genre, tone, and theme. Spinoffs are filters through which we must pass on the way to the film, not simply extensions of it. When we get to the film itself, we have already begun to decode it. The paratextual network of film is, in effect, an enveloping book cover, and we judge the cultural artifact through the optic of this cover. Hype about the film creates meaning, he argues, "trimming" or editing the text for us. Paratexts start, create, and continue texts, and their work is never over. We should not see cinematic paratexts as peripherals given that $36 million or one-third of a film budget is often spent marketing a film.

How do the epitexts of e-books function similarly to the massive network of film paratexts? Without entering into a close analysis of media and genre distinctions in forming initial comparisons, I would note that although both give a taste of things to come and have similar marketing goals, the movie preview differs from the free samples of e-books that readers can download because the latter involves a direct excerpt from the text's beginning rather than the flash fragments of the film preview. Readers of e-books can almost seamlessly continue reading the novel after the sample by downloading it in seconds. Readers are directly immersed in the authorial narrative sequence rather than the mash-up of the film preview.

Gray argues that because of the cluttered media environment, all texts "need" paratexts to help people choose and sort out. Many more such sorting aids exist for digital literature than for print, as discussed above. These paratexts propel readers both toward and away from the text before, during, or after the reading process, preparing, interrupting, or extending the story. They consist of scattered references to specific texts in blogs about e-reading; publishers' descriptions and readers' comments posted on the point-of-sale sites of web merchants such as Amazon and Barnes & Noble;

dedicated author web pages; personalized algorithmic recommendations to readers based on their browsing history on such websites as Amazon; along with author interviews on television, YouTube, and other advertising media. Given this expanded network of epitexts for e-books, the front cover is perhaps less important now as a marketing device than it is for print books.

Gray's emphasis on the movie industry's creation of stars that function as paratexts through which viewers decode film texts has its counterpart in publishing paratexts, such as Oprah's recommendations, interviews, and book giveaways. But when writers have access to direct e-publishing, new stars begin to arise outside the marketing regimes of big publishers through digital communication among readers and bloggers.[7] These self-constructed and community-constructed author images create new textualities transcending the "container" fallacy that some argue separates print from digital literature.

Work needs to be done on the geographies of e-reading, the spaces in which reading takes place that shape textuality. The easy portability and diminished size of the new devices situate large numbers of readers in new public and private locations that affect the act of reading, introducing new contextual centrifugal modalities that alter the story's reception. These sites function as expanded forms of epitexts—the intimacy of reading on a small hand-held device or phone in a private or public space and the perceived privacy of others not seeing what you are reading. It is quicker and easier to pull out an iPod Touch or mobile phone to continue reading a novel in a supermarket line that a heavy book which may have been left at home or in the car.

How does switching between e-devices such as one's Kindle, iPad, or phone with immediate synchronization constitute a new paratextual overlay of the text in progress? The text layout is different on each device, lines vary in length, and the text is different on a back-lit screen versus an e-ink device. Beyond Genette's allusion to the miniature books that French women fit easily into the pockets of their long dresses, contemporary readers on small e-devices can choose from hundreds of books on one device to suit their mood in a particular moment or space. This new accessibility to multiple texts in new spaces has resulted in e-device users noting that they read more works now than they did with print texts. On the other hand, how might the distractions of the many apps on the iPad, iPhone, or Kindle Fire interrupt reading and render sustained engagement with a novel more difficult?

Commercial Paratexts: Ads on the Periphery of E-books

Amazon instituted a radical change on some of its e-ink Kindle readers in April 2011 with the introduction of advertising. These new paratextual overlays mark a significant change in the textuality of e-books, in which non-related ads surround and overlay the texts on the device, effectively bringing the book reading experience closer to that of reading commercial magazines. A few of the dozens of ads introduced in the first months of the program are for book offerings, such as Kathryn Stockett's *The Help* and the Kindle Singles program that offers short texts under 30,000 words.

Such ads align with Genette's category of the publisher's epitext: "value-inflating hyperbole inseparable from the needs of the trade," such as posters, advertisements, and commercials on radio and television (Genette 347). The majority, however, are for non-book-related products such as cars, beauty creams, swimsuits, sandals, toys, televisions, computers, and credit cards and would constitute an expanded notion of Genette's epitext. Despite Amazon's arguments to the contrary, in effect, the ads affect textuality on the Kindle.

At the discounted price of $114, the wi-fi "Kindle with Special Offers" entices readers to view advertisements on the home screen and on the screen savers.[8] Claiming not to want to disrupt customers' immersion in books while reading, Amazon places small ads at the bottom of the home page with links to full-screen ads. In locating the ads outside the books themselves, Amazon reassures those using the new software that their reading enjoyment will not be interrupted by ads.[9] However, when one stops reading even for a short time, a new screensaver ad appears, to be glanced at before continuing to read. Thus, the reading process is also an experience of ads in the new Kindle with Special Offers. Commercial texts, in effect, become embedded in the reading process.

In May 2011 Amazon introduced a new free "game," Amazon AdMash, that Kindle users can "play" to voice their opinion on which ads they like or dislike. The huge Kindle audience is invited to vote for which of two full-page screensaver ads they prefer, engaging in unremunerated market research under the guise of a game or a mash-up. Readers are also invited to choose screensaver preferences "to give us hints on the style and types of sponsored screensavers you prefer. . . . [Choose from] elements such as landscapes and scenery, architecture, travel images, photography, and illustrations" ("Kindle with Special Offers"). This "game" for advertising research and Amazon's large audience suggests that the company intends to roll out a much broader use of advertising on its reading devices and applications. Surprisingly, the unattractive black-and-white ads that are sometimes difficult to see because they are surrounded by the black frame of the Kindle III were not replaced by color ads on the Kindle Fire released in November 2011. Amazon's new tablet does not include "special offer" ads.

With the introduction of advertising on the e-ink Kindle III, euphemistically termed "special offers," Amazon radically changes the nature of the reading device and the experience of literary textuality. Despite the company's claim that the reading experience will not be disrupted, Genette's formulations about the key role of paratexts in the construction of textual meaning tell us otherwise. Previously, screensavers that appear on the "front cover" of the Kindle depicted portraits of classical authors such as James Joyce, Emily Dickinson, Charlotte Brontë, and Mark Twain, implying that a modicum of high culture would inform digital reading on the new electronic device. These visual icons of the canon of great literature in effect gave their blessing and approval to the reading practices that would be engaged in on the Kindle. Reading Kafka, a romance novel, a newspaper, or a blog on the new device would merely be an extension of traditionally sanctioned reading practices.

Now, advertising, the supreme cultural artifact of consumer capitalism, shapes reading on the Kindle paratextually. An ethos of advertising overlays the April 2011 iteration of the device. Although the Kindle proudly insists on the singular experience

of reading that it provides, it now also positions itself to become a kind of special deal network such as Groupon, offering readers, for example, $100 Amazon gift cards and special hotel upgrades for signing up for Visa credit cards. The Kindle now also gradually becomes like a magazine, where ads precede, surround, and interrupt articles.[10] The rhetorical practices and positioning of advertising in magazines will now help to shape textual formatting in the Kindle. Where in a print magazine, ads physically interrupt and split up the text of articles, on the Kindle, readers will both unwillingly and willingly create such paratextual interruptions themselves. After a pause in reading to attend to something else, upon returning the consumer will see a new ad on the screensaver before the text can be resumed. As a larger number of ads becomes available, readers might voluntarily stop reading a text from time to time to see what new ads and special offers have been downloaded on their device. Indeed, the ads and offers have become so enticing that people try to buy them from Kindle owners on eBay. Especially lucrative coupon codes on the device give readers 20% off flat-screen TVs and laptops, not only making the Kindle with Special Offers effectively a free e-reader, but a money-maker for the consumer as well. Whereas a print book might have a few ads for other books, the Kindle with Special Offers is well on the way to being overwhelmed by advertising.[11]

Thus, a new network of expanded paratextuality now overlays the purportedly primary function of reading on the device. A reader of popular romance novels (or even Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*) on the Kindle, for example, might align the personal fantasies she engages in while reading a novel with the tropes of ideal womanhood in the ads for Olay Regenerist Serum, which promises eternal youth. Kindle ads for discounted women's swimwear, luxury hotel upgrades, and expensive cars will interact with the texts being read. The two credit cards that the new Kindle ads promote with especially strong incentives, Visa Signature (with seven hotel upgrades) and the Amazon Rewards Visa card (with a $100 Amazon gift certificate), overlay the reading process with the implied promise of endless consumption of products and services. Implicit in all of the special offers is the common contradictory ideology in advanced consumer capitalism of "spend to save." These expanded paratextual messages interact with and shape the textuality of the reading material on the new device.

An even more disturbing scenario for literary textuality on portable e-reading devices is the rumor that Amazon is planning a new Kindle that will accept credit card transactions. Consumers would perhaps swipe their cards into a slot in the top of the device and make payments to vendors through wi-fi or 3G (see Dilworth). The rumor comes at a time when several portable devices are announcing this capability. It merits serious consideration because of the strong push that the new Kindle with Special Offers is making for two separate Visa credit cards. If this occurs, not only the ethos of advertising will paratextually overlay reading material on the device, but a physical and kinetic materiality of purchasing will overcode literary textuality. Symbolic consumerism will be augmented with actual purchases of a variety of goods and services as one reads. The materiality of the print book, with its array of concomitant paratexts, will be replaced with the materiality of real consumer purchases. Genette's spectrum of epitexts would now be expanded to include physical objects such as a credit card and its swipe mechanism not related overtly to the literary text displayed

on the device. Unlike a poster announcing a book signing or a souvenir given to promote a novel at a book festival, the credit card would be an epitext entirely other.

Enhanced E-books

Many of the peritexts of e-books strive to create simulacra of print texts and are primarily word-based. Readers engage in centripetal trajectories to engage with further word-based enhancements such as dictionaries, word-searches, text-to-speech, popular highlights, synopses, character lists, and note-taking. Readers also move outside the text to visual/verbal epitexts as we have seen. Since the launch of the iPad in April 2010, a new genre of enhanced e-books has burgeoned and generates new paratextual formations.

A stage beyond the Kindle is the multimedia book, alternately called the enhanced e-book, the Vook (video-book), V-book, or digi-book. These electronic texts began to blossom after the introduction of the iPad and allow readers to quickly link to an embedded video clip, Wikipedia excerpt, map, street scene, photograph, illustration, or definition and easily return to the text with a click. Brad Inman pioneered Vooks in 2009 as mobile applications for the web, but other publishers began to produce enhanced e-books in spring 2010 because of the iPad's huge success and the possibilities for new forms of embedding that it offers. By May 2012, nearly 1500 enhanced e-books were available in the iBooks store, with over 700 titles from Vook.[12] Unlike regular digital books that are formatted for reading on dedicated e-readers or within the Kindle or Nook applications on tablets, enhanced books are often separate applications that use a larger amount of storage space on the iPad. The enhanced Vook, *Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography* is 177 MB, for example, and *The Sherlock Holmes Experience* is 311 MB. Combined with other apps on one's iPad, enhanced e-books with substantial video can quickly add up to consume available storage space.

Some enhanced e-books include authors' research photos, deleted scenes from manuscripts, and even video clips of TV adaptations. Simon and Schuster's *Nixonland* has 27 videos throughout the book including television news segments from the period, easily available for the publisher to integrate since it is a subsidiary of CBS Corporation. Hachette's Penguin released an enhanced e-book of Ken Follett's *Pillars of the Earth* with video-clips from the current TV series based on the book and many multi-media inserts. Al Gore's enhanced book *Our Choice* is a 2011 iPad app that includes half an hour of video, 20 interactive infographics that allow readers to see how different variables affect climate change, and photos that link to a world map to view the corresponding geographic locations. Multimedia items can be "lifted" off the page through finger gestures, swipes move through pages, and content can be pinched and zoomed when desired.

In June 2011 Penguin introduced a rich amplified edition of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. The application opens with visual/verbal links to the text of the novel and four categories of enhancements on the "front cover," surrounding the title and author lines. The amplified material includes photos, audio of Kerouac reading, his es-

says on the Beat Generation and other writing, maps and sketches of his late 1940s trips across the U.S. and Mexico, textual comparisons between the scroll and the first edition, commentary, memos and letters, and photos and brief biographies of the members of the Beat Generation. Throughout the digital text of the novel are links in the margins to the corresponding biographies of the people that various characters represent. Although "The Book" link to the text itself appears in the upper left-hand corner of the opening screen, the other attractive visual links to the amplifications most likely draw readers in first. These enticing centripetal links lead to extensive paratexts where readers can spend hours engaging with fascinating information before even beginning to read the novel. It is as if the linear text of the novel must wait while one engages with the glitzy new enhancements Penguin provides. In contrast, readers often skip standard introductions of books, anxious to begin reading the text proper. Here the extensive paratextual network entered through the "front cover" or opening screen of the app plays an even greater role in affecting the reading of the novel than traditional print peritexts such as the cover and comments inside praising the book, or the publisher's epitexts relating to marketing and the needs of the trade. Vooks, in contrast, usually begin each chapter with a video that may or may not be accessed, and embed links throughout the text proper to enhance the literary work. The large number of augmentations in Penguin's new edition of Kerouac contrasts the more moderate quantity of enhancements in Simon and Schuster's editions of William Styron's *Lie Down in Darkness* and *The Long March*, which unobtrusively include video and print texts at the beginning and end to avoid interrupting the reading process.

Unlike avant-garde electronic literature, the digital links in most of the early enhanced books are not ends in themselves and do not allow readers to pursue endless hyperlinks to construct digital texts of their own. Some, as in the case of the amplified Kerouac book, may present a large number of options on the opening screen that seem to eclipse the original text's presence. However, in most enhanced books to date, there exists a primary text that is "enhanceable" should the reader desire to pursue links to video clips, pictures, Wikipedia entries, and definitions of some words. They are hybrid texts because of the intermedial enhancements; there exists a new multimedia cultural text in addition to the primary verbal text. Readers must actualize the hybrid text as an active choice, however, by clicking on links, and should they desire solely to read the verbal text, the hybrid text exists only as a potential entity for them. Imagine a reader of a printed book with illustrations who is so engrossed in the plot that she does not actively look at the intervening illustrations, quickly turning pages to read the ensuing text. She will have passing eye contact with them at least, even in a quick glance, and they will in this way enter only into a minimal interaction with the written text.

The reader of an enhanced book may also engage in this cursory glance at the additional images and links inviting a click or tap, and therefore the reading of the e-text is slightly altered because of the intervening images. But in order to fully engage in the enhanced book as a new digital genre, the reader must depart from the main text for a short time to view the video, look at an image, or read a dictionary definition. Unlike DVD extras that appear at the end of the movie, Vook's and Penguin's

enhancements appear throughout the text and can be either bypassed or clicked on according to the reader's choice. In contrast, Simon and Schuster's enhanced edition of *Lie Down in Darkness* aims to unobtrusively include video and print texts at the beginning and end to avoid interrupting the reading process. Vook's *The Sherlock Holmes Experience*, on the other hand, augments two Sherlock Holmes stories with video clips at the beginning of each newly added section. This video-book is in effect co-authored by the writer and the videographers, a new hybrid genre that combines video and words. The enhanced edition fundamentally alters the textuality of the two stories by adding multiple extra materials. The new edition divides the two stories into seven and eight parts respectively that do not appear in print editions or other digital editions. By adding this new fragmentation to the stories, Vook enables itself to begin each section with a link to a video.

How do we classify the additional paratextual material included in the new enhanced e-books? I would argue that the embedded videos in the Sherlock Holmes Vook function as more broadly defined peritexts, that is, centripetal pathways that take us to a deeper level within the new text that is the enhanced e-book. They become part of the new materiality of the digital version of the Sherlock Holmes' stories. Unlike a hot link that would take readers outside the text to a Wikipedia page or a YouTube video, requiring that the reading device have Internet access turned on while one reads the book, the new videos created especially for Vooks and other enhanced books become materially part of the new hybrid text. The beginning of the embedded video appears as an image to be tapped on the first page of each chapter to activate the entire video clip. So the Sherlock Holmes Vook allows both centripetal and centrifugal narrative enhancements, the latter for readers to choose if they are connected to the Internet.

In principle, such enhanced editions facilitate readers' greater learning opportunities. However, in comparing a purely verbal digital edition of the Sherlock Holmes stories on the e-ink Kindle to the enhanced version on the iPod Touch, I noticed more nuances of the literary text on the Kindle—foreshadowing, symbolism of names, and other rhetorical devices apparent in close literary reading practices—when I was not distracted by the video clips, illustrations, links to maps, and scenes of Baker Street. Will we lose our understanding and appreciation of the features that were the objects of traditional literary/textual analysis when these features become overshadowed by the glitzy new paratexts? Will readers be transformed into viewers, as the enhanced book becomes more and more a spectacle? Will engagement with the larger number of attractive paratextual overlays in enhanced digital books eventually substitute for the informed, sensitive decoding of authorial words? Will people's ability to carefully decode written words atrophy?

In tracing the centrifugal and centripetal paratextual paths that readers are invited (or forced) to pursue in transitional electronic texts, we can chart the ways in which the narrative is both enriched and impeded in this new experimental form. Paratextual paths that make a dictionary instantly available enrich the reading experience, while briefly impeding on narrative flow. In contrast, removing footnotes from their intended position at the foot of the page and burying them within a series of key strokes that the reader is forced to perform in order to see them effectively erases

them from the linear reading process, destroying the original text and sabotaging a writer such as Junot Díaz's complete narrative utterances. The burgeoning popularity of the new e-reading devices suggests that many are willing to ignore or put up with the errors and distortions at this primitive stage of the transition from print to digital books. The advent of digital advertising on the e-ink Kindle reader is the most radical enhancement to date. An expanded model of Genette's groundbreaking theory of paratexts offers one key optic through which to categorize and understand the new exterior and interior textual pathways offered on portable e-reading devices. These new paratexts will continue to evolve, both as marketing devices and textual enhancements, as this watershed in reading practices continues to develop and work out its foibles.

Endnotes

1.   For key studies of avant-garde digital born literature see Aarseth; Hayles; Murray; and Ryan, *Narrative as Virtual Reality* and *Cyberspace Textuality.*

2.   Other estimates project sales of 7.3 million Kindles in 2011 and 13.5 in 2012; see Boulton.

3.   On August 9, 2011, the Hagens Berman law firm filed a class-action lawsuit against Apple and the big five publishers, alleging that Apple, HarperCollins Publishers, Hachette Book Group, Macmillan Publishers, Penguin Group, and Simon & Schuster "colluded to increase prices for popular e-book titles to boost profits and force e-book rival Amazon to abandon its pro-consumer discount pricing" (Boog). Concerned that Amazon's $9.99 price for e-books would endanger the huge profit they make from hardcover book sales, the publishers forced Amazon to adopt the "agency model" under which the five publishers would set the price of books. Hardcover sales in fact deteriorated with e-books surpassing hardcover book sales on Amazon in the second quarter of 2010, followed by their surpassing paperbacks on Amazon in January 2011. In April 2012, the U.S. Justice Department filed a lawsuit accusing the five publishers and Apple of conspiring to fix e-book prices. Three of the publishers—Hachette, HarperCollins, and Simon and Schuster—settled the claim while admitting no wrongdoing.

4.   For an analysis of the idealist frames book covers establish in the work of U.S. Latina writers, creating the aura of postmodern ethnic commodities that interacts with the reading process, see McCracken, *New Latina Narrative.*

5.   Amazon has attempted to remedy this shortcoming, which causes difficulty for citation or groups such as classes and book clubs who wish to reference certain pages for discussion. The company has introduced a means whereby readers can see the corresponding page number in the print edition if one exists. This involves a complicated algorithm to correlate "locations" in digital texts to page numbers in printed versions. It does not solve some of the problems I discuss later in the essay, however.

6.   Díaz's notes combine authorial and actorial enunciative statuses, as does the first-person homodiegetic narrator of many sections of the novel. This combination allows readers to slip easily between the text and notes, as do the common performative strategies and themes of the authorial persona in both text and notes. Moving beyond Genette's formulations about the liminal nature of footnotes, I argue for the overriding non-paratextuality of Díaz's notes which are, in effect, also the main text.

7.   See, for example, "Self-Published Author."

8.   Three weeks later, on May 24, Amazon added the Special Offers feature to the Kindle 3G model, lowering the device's price to $164. The announcement coincided with Barnes and Noble's release of a new one-button Nook for $139 and Kobo's day-earlier announcement of an e-reader with a touch-sensitive screen for $130.

9.   *Kindle User's Guide,* 3rd Ed., loc. 473.

10. For an analysis of the ethos and pervasiveness of advertising in U.S. women's magazines, often as high as 95% of each issue, see McCracken, *Decoding.* While some might argue that readers can tune out ads in magazines while reading the editorial material, I contend that this rarely occurs in women's magazines, given the ubiquity of ads throughout. Ads may be temporarily tuned out or ignored while reading a page of a magazine but they continually call out to readers, aiming to pull the consumer back to the ad, even if briefly. Even when there are comparatively fewer ads on a reading device such as the Kindle, and readers can certainly tune them out while emerged deeply in uninterrupted reading sessions, ads ideologically affect the textuality of long-form reading on the device, as I analyze it here.

11. Indeed, one blogger urged readers to buy a Kindle simply in order to take advantage of the lucrative 20% discount on laptops, then to return it within the 30-day grace period if desired ("Updated").

12. Additionally, the iBook Store listed over 3200 books that had been created with the free iBooks Author software for Macintosh released in January 2012, through which people can make enhanced e-books for the iPad themselves. Most are very short "how to" books, children's titles, travel accounts, classroom publishing experiments, and a few literary works. The difficulty of navigating through thousands of self-published enhanced titles created through Apple's free software in only four months points to the usefulness of traditional publishers' epitexts for guiding prospective readers' choices, as Gray notes it with respect to the paratexts of film.

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