

**Between Intermediality and Paratextuality:
Challenging the Genre in *A Visit from the Goon Squad***

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Abstract

This study investigates how intermediality and paratextuality do affect the novel as a literary genre. It does so by applying these approaches on Jennifer Egan's Pulitzer Prize winning novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad* (2010). Intermediality is represented in the novel through the use of PowerPoint and the journalistic report formats. The unique employment of these formats is discussed in the light of the standard and variable properties of the printed novel. These deviated standards of the novel and their aesthetic value are highlighted in relation to intermediality. The presentation of the novel is further discussed reflecting on Gerard Genette's concept of Paratextuality. Paratextuality is detected through the peritextual and epitextual elements of the novel. Music is especially discussed as an epitextual element that plays a vital role in the presentation of the novel on both the thematic and structural levels. The intermedial reference of music along with the other intermedial features and paratextual elements contribute to the problematizing of the novel as a literary genre and puts into question the impact of intermediality on the presentation and apprehension of the novel genre.

Keywords: Jennifer Egan, Irena Rajewsky, Werner Wolf, Gerard Genette, Power Point, Music

Introduction

Literary theory and criticism have an inherited renewable faculty in accordance with the changing outlook of literary works. The literary genre theory has witnessed a considerable attention during the last few decades to cope with the everchanging nature of existing works that depend on different media in their narrative. Such intermedial works of art have posed the argument surrounding the borders and limits of these works of art. This study intends to participate in the field of the intermedial studies in literature drawing on the literary genre theory. It discusses the influence of intermediality and breaking borders between different media on genre theory and how does such blurring of media affect the presentation, appreciation, and apprehension of the literary work. It does so through the depiction of different medialities in Jennifer Egan's novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. Despite being thoroughly studied in the light of intermediality, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is, to the researcher's best knowledge, not being approached from the lens of intermediality in its relation to genre theory. Thus, through this paper, the researcher aims at bringing new knowledge to the fields of intermediality and literary genre studies.

First, the theoretical framework of the paper is constructed through defining intermediality and introducing its different typologies as presented by two of the most prominent critics of the theory; namely Irena Rajewsky and Werner Wolf. Gerard Genette's concept of 'Paratextuality' is also discussed in its relation to intermediality and genre theory. In addition, Kendall Walton's aesthetic properties of a work of art with its two divisions; the standard and the variable ones and how they contribute to the apprehension and appreciation

of a work of art are illuminated. Next, the novel is analysed in the light of the theoretical part. I argue how the variable properties are evident in the novel and their relation to revolutionizing our understanding of the novel genre. This is illustrated by the thorough analysis of chapters 9 and 12 of the novel in the light of intermediality; through the use of PowerPoint and the Journalistic article format as narrative tools of these chapters' main protagonists. The paper further explains the critical role the PowerPoint format plays in the structuring of the story and how it enables for the fragmentation and reconstruction of events, by giving an example of reconstructing the events concentrating on the slides that present the character of Sasha. The focus on the analysis of these two chapters of the novel is pertinent to being the ones that visually deviate from the standard properties of the printed text. Then, the concept of Gerard Genette's 'Paratextuality' is highlighted throughout the novel, and its two divisions: the peritextual and the epitextual elements are traced. Finally, the chapter ends with a conclusion that sums up the main points and findings.

Defining Intermediality

Intermedia refer to works that contain more than one medium, a term coined by Dick Higgins who used it to identify "works which fall conceptually between media that are already known" (27). Jack Ox defines it as the "combinatory structure of syntactical elements that come from more than one medium but are combined into one and are thereby transformed into a new entity [...] Intermedia is the product of interactions between independent systems in time and space." (47). Due to such 'interactions' between different media in diverse 'time[s] and space[s],' and due to the fact that intermediality "has become a central theoretical concept in many disciplines such as literary, cultural and theatre studies as well as art history, musicology, philosophy, sociology, film, media and comics studies" it is "impossible to develop one definition of intermediality" (Rippl 1).

Typologies of Intermediality: Rajewsky and Wolf

Irena Rajewsky perceives broad and narrow perspectives of intermediality: "the first concentrates on intermediality as a fundamental condition or category while the second approaches intermediality as a critical category for the concrete analysis of specific individual media products or configurations" (47). She proposes three subcategories of intermediality. The first one is "medial transposition (as for example film adaptations, novelizations, and so forth)." The second category is 'media combination,' such as performances, theatre, opera, or film. It is "the result of the very process of combining at least two conventionally distinct media or media forms of articulation." The third category is the 'intermedial reference,' through which a work of art is referred to in another work through, for example "the evocation or imitation of certain [...] techniques" (51-2).

While Rajewsky divides intermediality into two basic categories; the broader and the narrow one, with putting three subcategories for the second, Werner Wolf distinguishes also between two basic variants: the 'intracompositional' and the 'extracompositional' intermediality. Intracompositional sense of intermediality is the "direct or indirect participation of more than one medium in the signification and/or structure of a given semiotic entity." Whereas extracompositional forms of intermediality "result from relations or comparisons between medially different semiotic entities" (Wolf, 253). He observes two variants of intermediality under each of his two basic forms. Thus, Wolf here refers to four main phenomena or variants of intermediality: Intermedial Reference and Plurimediality as intracompositional variants, and Transmediality and Intermedial Transposition as extracompositional variants. In introducing 'Intermedial Reference', Wolf clarifies that, it refers to the presence of one medium in another medium "covertly or indirectly." Whereas 'Plurimediality' takes place when more than one medium are "overtly present in a given

semiotic entity” (253-4). Transmediality, as referred to by Wolf, “point to palpable similarities between heteromedial semiotic entities [...] such as repetition of motifs and thematic variation.” While the ‘Intermedial Transposition’ can be recognized in the “adaptations of novels into film, film into novels, drama into opera, etc” (253-4).

Standard and Variable Properties in the Novel

Contemporary writers, by using unconventional intermedial narrative, recontextualize the novel as a literary genre. Such intermediality puts in question, in the first place, the mediality of literature. The novel as a literary genre must be mediated by at least one sense modality, which is the sight and consequently the novel is a visually mediated art form. Bradley Elicker claims that “Literature should not be viewed as an art form of language but rather an art form of mediated language [...] Literature is not just some specific type of language use. It is language use plus a method of presentation mediated by the senses” (150). Thus, the way of presenting language ‘mediating it’ plays a role in the perception of the text from a different level because it contributes to the presentation of the work of art. In “Categories of Art,” Kendall Walton categorizes art forms according to the aesthetic properties exist in a work of art. Such aesthetic properties include the visual features of a work of art - here the particular concern is the novel.

The aesthetic properties are divided by Walton into two categories: the standard and variable properties. The standard property is that prerequisite element that determines a work of art to belong to a category of art which is basically characterized by the existence of such element and the absence of this specific element disqualify the belonging of that work to this certain category (339). He argues that these ‘standard properties’ despite being taken for granted, they have an artistic significance in defining the work’s genre or category. Consequently, the standard qualities of a certain work of art echo the concept of the “reading regime” of John Frow through which our apprehension of “the structure of reading regimes” enables us to “acquire the background knowledges, and the knowledge of rules of use and relevance, that allow us to respond appropriately to different generic contexts” (140). The important role of the standard properties is confirmed by Walton when arguing that “because of the very fact that features standard for us do not seem striking or noteworthy, that they are somehow expected or taken for granted, they can contribute to a work’s sense of order inevitability, stability, correctness” (348). Elicker gives instances of the standard properties inherited in works of art; painting is composed of paint and is static and two- dimensional, music is composed of sound and literature is composed of words and language (155). I can argue that such standard properties are being under question after the remarkable ‘experimental’ innovations in the creation of both painting and literature with the ingenious application of new technologies in the process of creating and representing such works of art. Elicker argues that; the existence of an artistically significant visual feature in a literary work makes this feature no longer ‘standard’ but rather ‘variable’ (150). The ‘variable’ property is a feature that its existence or absence does not affect the belonging of the work of art to its classified category (Walton 339). Contemporary novels deviate from the standard properties of the novel genre and thus, they enrich the discussion of genre in light of intermedial representation.

Paratextuality and Materiality of the Novel

While the novel is a literary genre that is communicated through one or more medium, the materiality of the novel as a printed literature is widely discussed by a number of scholars and literary critics. ‘Media’ is considered by Marie-Laure Ryan as “material supports of information whose materiality, precisely, ‘matters’ for the type of meanings that can be

encoded” (“Introduction” 1-2). Thus, medium is the channel through which meaning is communicated, whether it depends on (a) technological device(s) or not. And ‘media’ is the plural form of ‘medium’ with applying the same conception of the singular form. What indicates that; ‘media’ may refer to a number of media gathered in a single work of art with the presence or absence of the mediation of a technological device.

Thus, a medium is a visual ‘text’ that has a material presence, and the materiality of a certain work is constituted via one or more medium. Such materiality of the literary work is referred to by Gerard Genette as ‘paratexts.’ Paratexts are the “verbal or other productions, such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations” (1) which ‘accompany’ the literary text. Genette clarifies the role of the paratextual elements of a work of art that they “surround it and extend it, precisely in order to present it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to make present, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its "reception" and consumption” (1). The paratextual features can be classified into peritexts and epitexts. The peritexts are those features that distinguish the printed book such as the cover, the author’s name, the title and the epigraph. Whereas the epitexts are the external materials which are related to the text; such as the author’s interviews, blogs, website and YouTube videos.

A Visit from the Goon Squad

The paper examines the intermedial features in Jennifer Egan’s Pulitzer Prize winning novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. To discuss the intermedial narration in the novel requires first to introduce its narrative world. However, the multiplicity of the novel makes it difficult to synopsise its plot. It consists of thirteen chapters with different narrators, story- worlds, styles, time and space. JØrgen Bruhn indicates that the novel “is almost impossible to synopsise” (104). In an attempt to highlight the whole plot of the novel Will Blythe writes for the *New York Times*:

The book starts with Sasha, a kleptomaniac, who works for Bennie, a record executive, who is a protégé of Lou who seduced Jocelyn who was loved by Scotty who played guitar for the Flaming Dildos, a San Francisco punk band for which Bennie once played bass guitar (none too well), before marrying Stephanie who is charged with trying to resurrect the career of the bloated rock legend Bosco

This summary sheds light on the complex relations between the novels characters, despite the apparent disconnection between them, but they are all connected through music and through their relation to Bennie. Blythe’s synopses authentically reflect first) the entangled relations between the characters of the novel, second) the absence of a main character or a sole protagonist, third) the non-linearity of the story time, fourth) the impossibility to summarize characters’ lives (within the story-world) in a one or few sentences and fifth) the possible variety of narrative techniques the writer uses to create such richness in the narrative world. Reaching that point, the paper analyses how Egan does succeed in creating a unique piece of art that makes us reconsider the novel as a literary genre through representing an intermedial narration.

Journalistic Format as a Variable Property

Through intermediality, Egan presents a work of art that deviates from the standard properties of the printed novel. The structural format of chapters 9 and 12 is a variable property that carries an artistic significance. In Chapter 9, Jules Jones, a news reporter meets a young actress, Kitty Jackson, in order to make an interview with. The meeting ends by Jones in prison due to his attempt to rape the movie star. In this chapter, Egan not only allows Jones to narrate his own story from his own perspective, but she also makes him write it with his own expressive way of writing: ‘a report.’ As long this format belongs to the journalistic writing not the

fictional one, then using it to structure a whole chapter constitutes a variable property. What is the significance of using such narrative structure within the text and what is its artistic significance? The answer to this question requires first to shed light on the different journalistic formats and genres. The journalistic report format lies under the 'informative genre' as Jose de Melo and Francisco de Assis explain in their paper "Journalistic Genres and Formats: a Classification Model." They argue that "the journalistic work, organized and regulated according to pre-established standards, is subdivided into, at least, two complementary stages: the genres and formats" (40). Through adopting the functionalist perspective of genre through which "the media operate to meet the demands arising in the society context," de Melo and de Assis distinguish five journalistic genres that are classified according to their respective functions; "informative: social surveillance, opinionative: ideas forum, interpretation: educational role, diversional: distraction, leisure, and utilitarian: assistance in everyday's decisions" (48). Our concern here is the 'informative genre' which informs or provides information about certain social subject. This genre is, thus, divided into four formats: "Notice, News, Report, and Interview" (49). The main function of the four formats is to construct a form of social control over the different incidents take place in the society.

Through such classification we find out that, by using the report format as a subgenre of journalistic communication, Egan blurs both the fictional and non-fictional media. She expresses intermediality by the imitation of the structure of another medium, namely the journalistic report, representing Rajewsky's subcategory of intermediality; 'intermedial reference.' Rajewsky discusses intermedial reference, giving instances:

References in a literary text to a film through, for instance, the evocation or imitation of certain filmic techniques such as zoom shots, fades, dissolves, and montage editing [...] In this third category [...] intermediality designates a communicative- semiotic concept, but here it is by definition just one medium – the referencing medium [...] the given media-product thematizes, evokes, or imitates elements or structures of another, conventionally distinct medium through the use of its own media-specific means. (52)

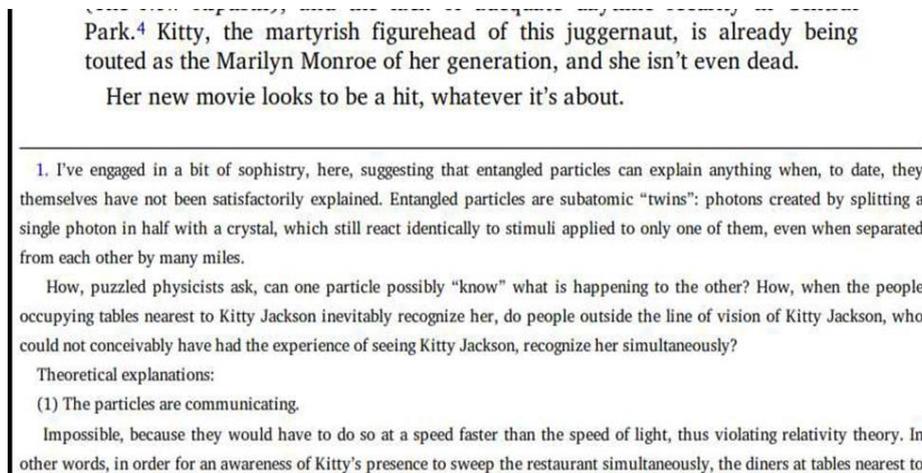
Despite putting similar typologies for intermediality, Wolf's conception of 'intermedial reference' does not carry the same perspective of Rajewsky's. He finds that in the intermedial reference "the involvement of another medium [here] takes place only covertly or indirectly: through signifiers and sometimes also signifieds pointing to it [...] the other medium enters as a conceptual rather than a physical presence" ("Intermediality" 253-4). In Chapter 9 of Egan's novel, she imitates the structure of another medium, which is the journalistic format, and thus the presence of the intermedial reference takes place directly not only through "a conceptual rather than a physical presence" (Wolf, 254).

A well-organized writing consists of a headline, a lead paragraph and (a) completing paragraph(s). In his report, Jones begins his chapter with a headline that reflects an attention-getting statement about the event which is an interview with the movie star "Forty- Minute Lunch: Kitty Jackson Opens up About Love, Fame, and Nixon!" followed by a byline that tells who wrote the story "Jules Jones reports," then a lead paragraph that is supposed to give the reader information about the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the story. However, Jones concentrates in his report on Kitty Jackson herself because she is the protagonist of this chapter of his life. So, the lead paragraph comes out so personal "Movie stars always look small the first time you see them, and Kitty Jackson is no exception, exceptional though she may be in every other way" (*Goon Squad* 105). In writing the body of his report, Jones, first; gives information about Kitty's character supported by evidence:

It is instantly clear that Kitty belongs in the category of nice stars [...] Kitty is sorry for the twelve flaming hoops I've had to jump through and the several miles of piping hot coals I've sprinted across for the privilege of spending forty

minutes in her company. She's sorry for having just spent the first six of those minutes talking to somebody else. (*Goon Squad* 105)

Second, he includes notes in the news report; when Jones asks Kitty about her relationship with Tom Cruise, she replies, "That's absolutely not true!" Kitty cries. "Tom and I have a wonderful friendship. I love Nicole. She's been a role model for me. I've even babysat their children" (107). Third, he includes attributions; "if the piece stinks—i.e., if it fails to unveil some aspect of Kitty that you haven't seen before [...] thus further reducing my stock in New York and Los Angeles and prolonging the "bizarre string of failures you've been having, buddy" (—Atticus Levi, my friend and editor, over lunch last month) (107). Thus, Jones writes a report about the report he was going to write about Kitty Jackson. He also inserts footnotes that include his speculative thoughts regarding his meeting with the movie star: "I'll mention instead (in the footnote-ish fashion that injects a whiff of cracked leather bindings into pop-cultural observation)" (106).



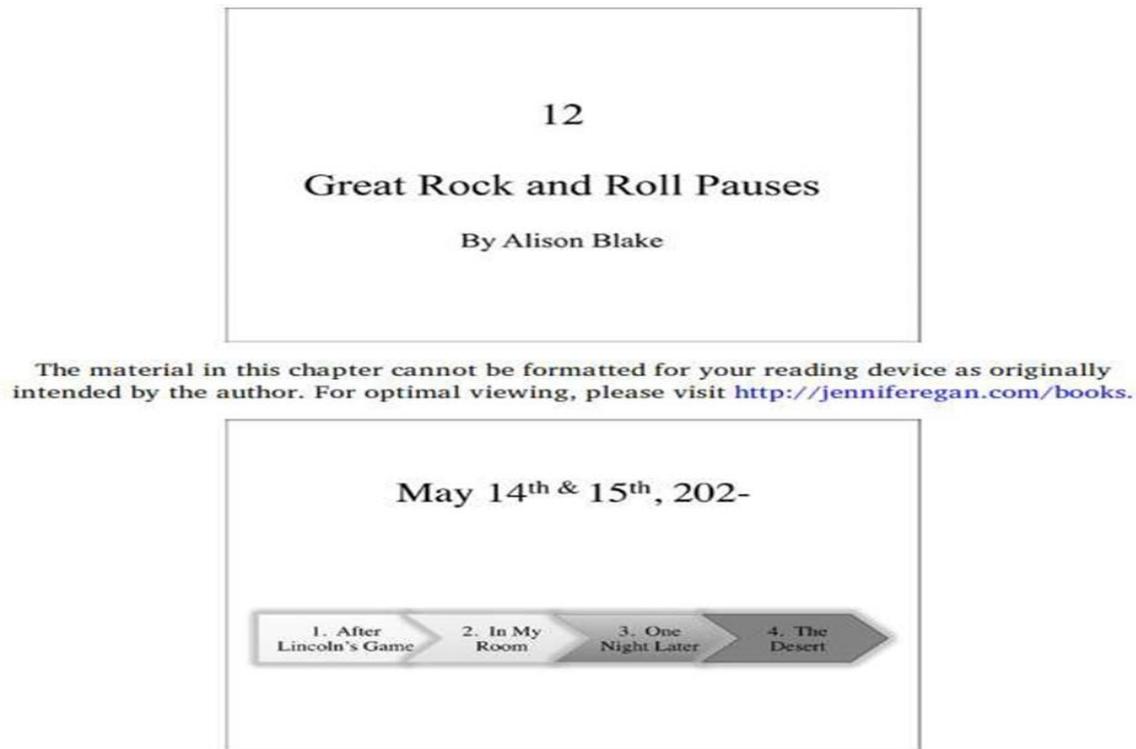
(Figure 1. From *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan)

The figure reflects Jones' contemplation on the idea of sitting with Kitty as a public figure and wondering whether other people in the restaurant perceive her attendance. He tries to find an answer to this question through physics and its scientific logic. The sophisticated way of thinking in a simple instance like this can be interpreted as a reflection of Jones' hallucination and obsession of Kitty. This interpretation justifies Jones' succeeding action of trying to rape the movie star imagining that she carries feelings towards him, an imagination that has no evidence to be recognized through Kitty's whole meeting with Jones.

PowerPoint Format as a Variable Property

The other chapter that reflects Egan's experimentation with structure is Chapter twelve. Its title is "Great Rock and Roll Pauses," followed by the subtitle "By Alison Blake." Here, the twelve years old Alison Blake narrates herself through writing her diaries. Thus, the chapter consists of 76-page of Alison's diaries, and - like chapter 9 - is written in the preferable format of its narrator. It is written in a PowerPoint format. Here, Egan uses the PowerPoint in an unconventional way; the application is basically used in educational purposes and business presentations. However, "Egan powerfully re-functions this pragmatic tool into an aesthetic mediality" (Bruhn 105). Thus, the use of the PowerPoint application in the novel as a narrative medium is a variable property that adds an aesthetic value to the apprehension and appreciation

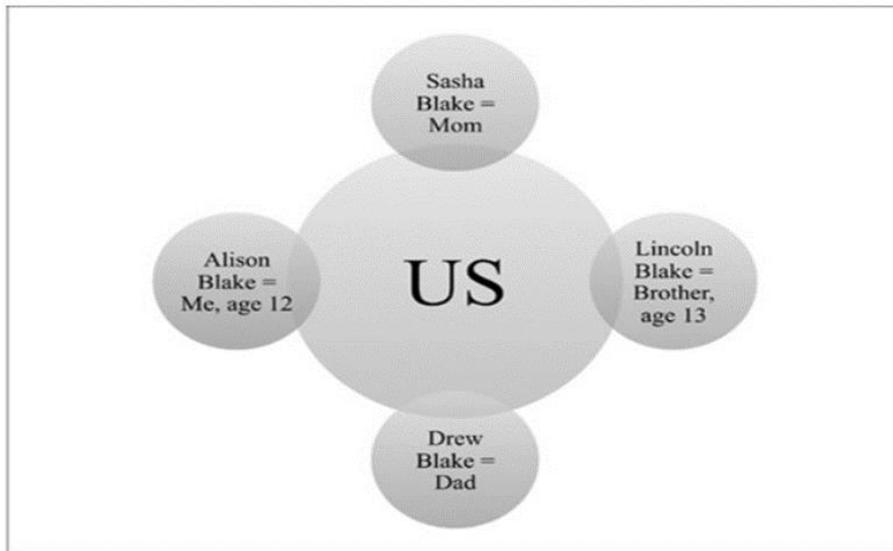
of the novel. It also reflects the influence of digital technology in the culture of expressing and communicating information; as the events of the story-world of this chapter take place in ‘the near future’ by the 2020s - the novel was written in 2010. Alison Blake uses the application in writing her diary and telling us about her family.



(Figure 2. From *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan)

The cultural variation between two generations and consequently between two periods of time - represented through Alison and her mother Sasha - is observed through detecting the difference in the way of communicating and documenting the present. In a slide (page) of chapter 12 Alison’s mother, Sasha, suggests that Alison to try “writing” instead of creating such PowerPoint slides, she states ““Why not try writing for a change? [...] writing a paper” where Alison replies ‘Uh! Who even uses that word’” (*Goon Squad* 153).

The slide show presented in the e-book or found on Egan’s website plays a vital role in the narrative. It both allows the reader to read it in its sequence or to shift through the story-world of the chapter and construct her/his own sequence of story line. In a slide/page of her diaries, Alison reflects the relationship between the members of her family. The center is the whole entity ‘US’ and each member/character involves in that entity separately. So, we can trace the interwoven relations between Alison’s family members as a whole or follow the line of one character in its relation to another/other character(s).

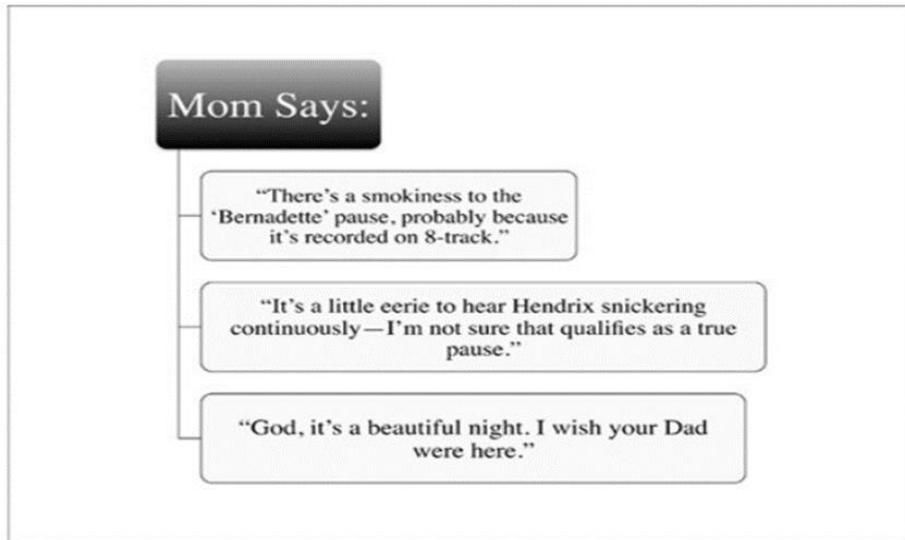


(Figure 3. From *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan)

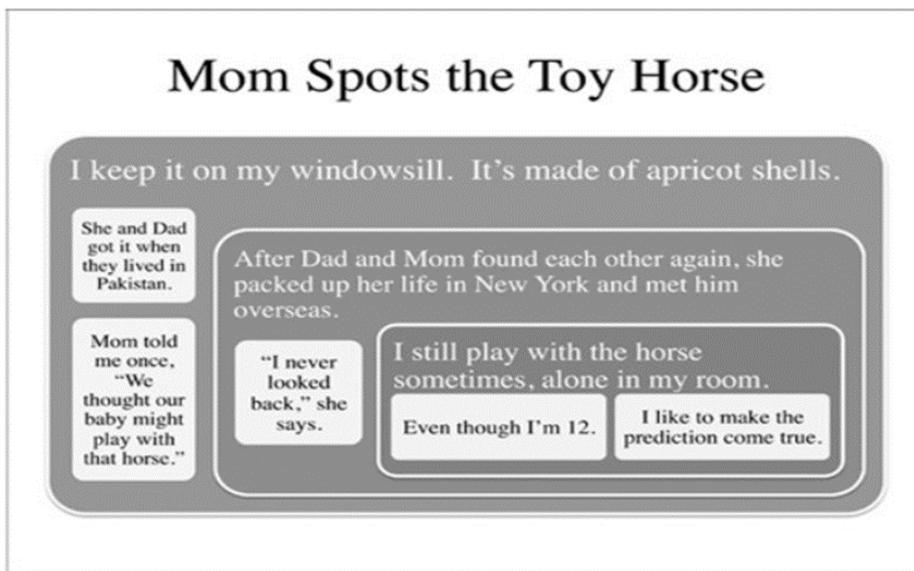
For instance, we can follow Sasha’s character through the eyes of her daughter Alison and skip the unrelated slides to construct a vision of Sasha the mother/wife. Here, I collect a number of slides that represent the character of Sasha, in an attempt to reconstruct the chapter from another perspective. Thus, I do not discuss the content of each slide separately as long the target of displaying these next slides is to highlight the character of Sasha and what the organization of the slides in that order does reflect on the meaning of the chapter and on our understanding of the function of the PowerPoint slides in the reconstruction of characters and events. I then comment on the slides and their interpretative meaning within the context of the novel.



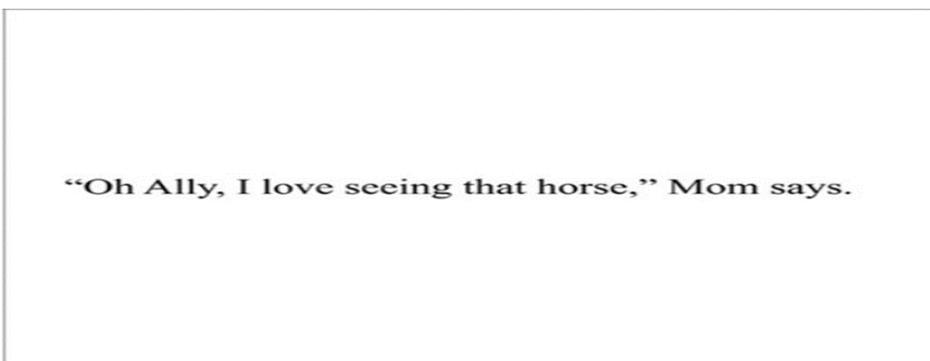
(Figure 4. From *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan)



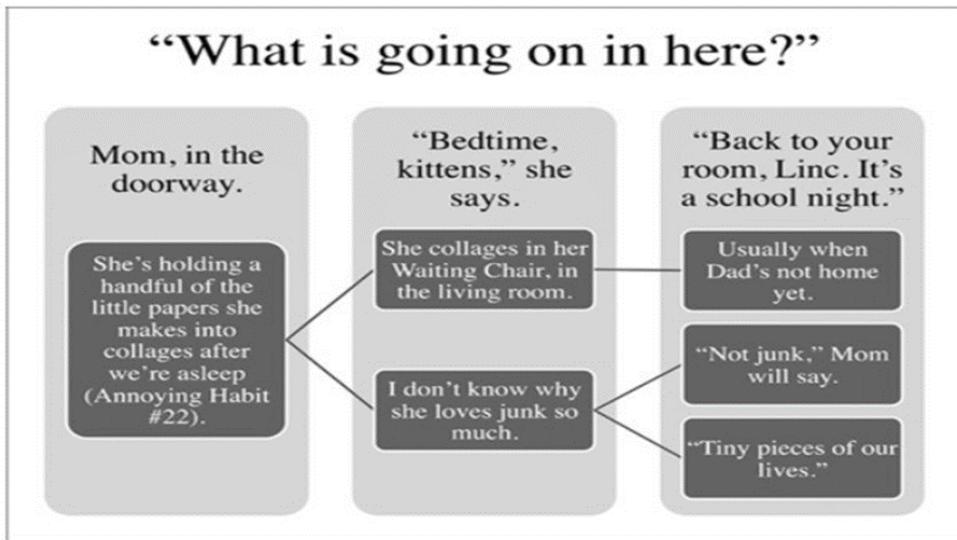
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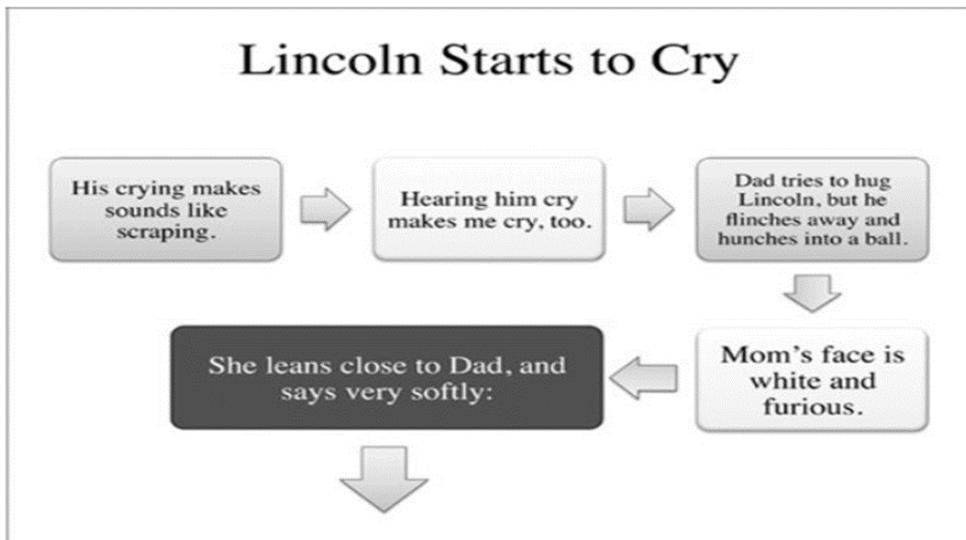
(Figure 6. From *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan)



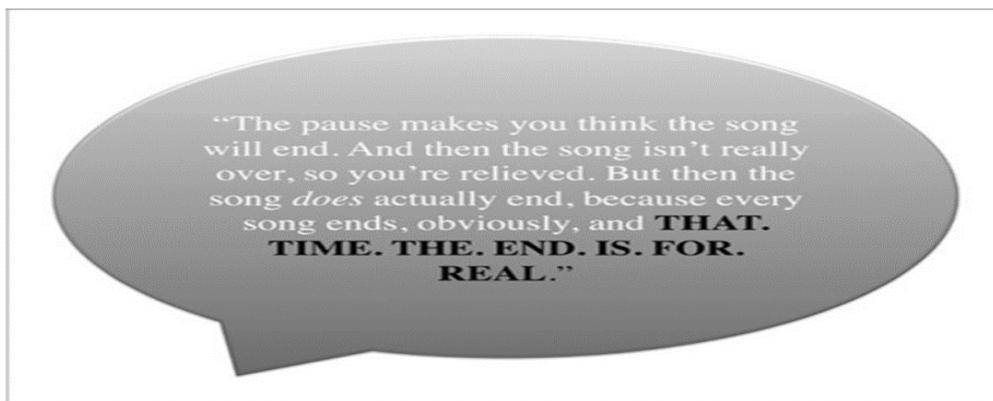
(Figure 7. From *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan)



(Figure 8. From *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan)



(Figure 9. From *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan)



(Figure 10. From *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan)

Figures from 4 to 10 show Sasha's character; she is a caring mother (fig. 9 & 10), an adventurous romantic person (fig. 6 & 7), a loving wife and a person with musical background who has a musical ear (fig. 6 & 10), an artist (fig. 4 & 8).

As illustrated through the figures, the PowerPoint Presentation allows the fragmentation and reconstruction of events. It also allows tracing a certain character throughout the narrative and construct diverse story lines. Consequently, the PowerPoint format performs a thematic and structural role allowing the narrative to fragment within each part of the story, create contrapuntal, oppositional lines of characterization, or encouraging the reader to take in a whole image of a situation in any order, through disconnected statements. In accordance with Ryan's idea that "narrative can actively fight some of the properties of the medium for expressive purposes" (*Avatars* 30). Here, in order to contextualize the narrative to reflect the influence of digital technology on the way of expression, Egan puts the content in a format that does not comply with the 'standard' properties of the whole text. The same view is reflected through Gregory Curries' assumption that "any text-based work was created intentionally to communicate some meaning from the author to the reader" (qtd. in Elicker 115). Actually, it is not the 'text-based' only that aims at communicating meaning, but rather any work of art can be viewed in the light of presenting, expressing and communicating meaning.

The presentation of the two chapters under scrutiny have a special significance here in relation to the novel as a literary genre. Elicker remarks that "The achronological presentation relates to the way the chapters of the work are presented in a non-linear function with respect to time" (138). In other words, the non-linearity of the events is in comply with the non-linearity of the story time, it can be deconstructed and reconstructed again through the reader.

Bruhn argues that the existence of these two chapters with their unique format "challenge the diegetic levels of the novel [...] being the only two chapters of the novel that mimic other forms beyond the conventional form of novelistic discourse" (114). He describes such narrative as a "metalevel" in which the texts of their narrators "are reproduced in the novel, and they choose to represent their content by way of specific qualified medialities" (115-6). In other words, the texts of these two chapters are created in the way their narrators choose to reflect themselves, and consequently they are 'reproduced' and 'represented' by the narrators and by their 'specific qualified medialities' which are the journalistic report and the PowerPoint. By 'metalevel' Bruhn may refer to the process of writing these chapters in the conventional form and then reproducing it in the characters' preferred form, thus the text carries many levels of expression.

Paratextuality in *A Visit from the Goon Squad*

The conspicuous prodigious use of the paratextual elements of the contemporary novel is partially due to the application of the digital technology in the creation of these novels. Instances of such works that reflect a hyper conscious attitude towards the use of these elements include Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad*. Egan's novel, through using various prominent paratextual elements and distinguished narrative techniques, capture a certain cultural moment in the history of people - either in the current moment of the 21st century or in the different times and spaces of the narrative worlds through a contemporary culturally-oriented writer – the history of the novel as a literary genre and the history of printed literature (the bookishness). Virginia Pignagnoli argues that "The new millennium, most likely as a consequence of the rapid development of digital technologies and new media, has seen a tendency toward the literary production of hybrid narratives that integrate images, typographical variations, and specific design into the text" (103). *A Visit from the Goon Squad* reflects such hybrid narrativity through the evocation and imitation of non-fictional media (chapters 9 and 12). It has been described in terms of genre as "a hybrid genre that anchors speculative projections of the future

within traditional mimetic fiction” (DeRosa 96). In a more specific term, the novel has been classified as a “music-saturated fiction” (Hertz and Roessner 10).

The following part of the paper analyses the paratextual elements (both peritexts and epitexts) in *A Visit from the Goon Squad* in light of intermedial representation. It highlights how the representation of these elements affects the text and our understanding of it as a literary genre. First, peritexts are represented in: the chapters in their relation to music-mimicking, the title of the novel, and the presentation of the text; its division into sections. Then, the epitexts are reflected through the iOS mobile application - iPhone operating system - and Egan’s website. The e-book and the audiobook are also briefly referred to. All these paratextual elements are presented in their relation to music, as being thoroughly illustrated through the following discussion.

The Genre is’ ‘Concept Album’: Music as a Peritextual Element

The present section discusses the theme of music, its importance in the narrative, and how it is related to paratextuality. Through music, Egan detects the socio-cultural changes taking place in the fictional world of America from the period of the 1970s to the near future of the 2020s. These changes are depicted through tracing the ‘development’ occurs in music industry. Thus, music plays a focal role on both the thematic and structural levels of the novel. It is the gathering point that relates all characters in the story-world of the novel. All characters by one way or another are related to Bennie Salazar, a music producer. Bruhn summarizes the thematic presence of music in the novel, explaining that:

Music is by far the dominant represented aesthetic mediality in the novel. It is present in both descriptions of rehearsing and performing punk music (in Chap. 3), in discussions of the history and forms of rock and punk music (for instance, in Bennie’s reflections and discussions with both Sasha and his son in Chap. 2), and in Bennie’s remembrance of the “waves of pure, ringing, spooky-sweet sound” of nuns (Egan 23), as opposed to the music of the two sisters in the “Stop/Go” indie group. (106)

Thus, almost all characters in the novel either (former) musicians, work in music industry or people related to these characters by a way or another. Through music, Egan presents the world of these characters from the 70s to 2020s:

Music occupies a central place in Chap. 12, where Sasha’s son Lincoln is engaged in analysing the presence of pauses in pop and rock music [...] The music industry is discussed on numerous occasions, both as seen from the perspective of the outsider Scotty (in Chap. 6), or via the insider Bennie’s many reflections on the decay of musical taste and the possibilities of digitalization (in both producing and distributing music) as well as the destructive tendencies of the music industry (in both Chaps. 2 and 13). (Bruhn 106)

Egan’s conscious decision to represent music in the novel is not restricted to the thematic level only, but it is uniquely applied on the structural level also. The ‘intermedial reference’ comes apparent in both an indirect way; through the thematic reference to music, and directly as reflected in the structure of the chapters of the novel. The thirteen chapters of the novel are divided into two parts, the first part (from chapter one to six) is preceded by a page remarked by the letter A, and the second part (from chapters seven to thirteen) is preceded by a page remarked by the letter B. This peritextual element of dividing the novel into two sections is not a conspicuous visual feature that carries an artistic significance in itself. Here, sectioning as visual feature is considered significantly important because it is used in relation to the thematic content of the novel as explained above through Bruhn’s excerpt. As indicated

by Egan in different occasions and further discussed by many scholars - Jørgen Bruhn and Virginia Pignagnoli are examples - the division of the text into two sections (A and B) imitates the format of an LP (long play) album; the two sections represent the two sides of a concert album. As remarked by Bruhn, it is a kind of “formal imitation” (106) to the materiality of the album. This imitation functions as an intermedial reference to music. In this respect, Rajewsky’s division of the proposed subcategories of intermediality is present into discussion. Here, the ‘intermedial reference’ through the “the evocation or imitation” (Rajewsky 52) of a certain medium (music) takes place “through the use of its own media-specific means” (Rajewsky 52) which is the structure of the LP album. In an attempt to unravel the relationship music creates between the thematic and structural levels of the novel, Pignagnoli remarks that “The intermedial reference to a medium with an analog sound storage materializes the criticism of the relentless digitization of music expressed through the narrative” (108).

Through the intermedial reference, the novel establishes one of the main concerns of its narrative, which is the influence of digital technology on producing, presenting and apprehending the cultural media, represented here by music and literature. The novel as a genre has been influenced by such technology in the way we perceive the structure of the novel in its relation to the culturally produced new media through the ‘formal imitation.’ Bruhn argues that “our current moment, when production and distribution channels (and consequently reading experiences and interpretative communities and analytical possibilities) are appearing to change, a shift probably connected to ideas about books” (112).

Related to the novel’s division into two sections imitating the two sides of an LP album, the chapters of the novel can be seen in the light of being music tracks. Thus, positioning chapters can be considered a third element of the epitexts in the novel. Although they constitute a novel, each chapter can stand by itself. Each chapter of the novel has its own narrator, story-world, time and space. What supports this argument is the fact that eight chapters of the novel have been published as short stories in different newspapers on the course of different periods of time. In a part entitled “Reading Guide. A Note from Jennifer Egan,” posted in Egan’s website, she writes the reading rules she had put for herself while writing the novel: “1) Each chapter had to be about a different person. 2) Each chapter had have different mood and tone and approach. 3) Each chapter had to stand completely on its own.” Regarding the last point, Egan guides the reader while reading the novel; “you can read this book without making a single connection between any two chapters. They were written – and published – as individual pieces, apart from the book as a whole.” In displaying the idea of classifying the text Egan states that:

I didn’t think of *A Visit from the Goon Squad* as a novel while I was working on it; nor did I think of it as a collection of short stories. I honestly wasn’t sure what it was. Only when I found myself wanting to call its halves “A” and “B,” did I suddenly realize which genre I’d been working in all along: the concept album. By which I mean the great storytelling albums [...] A concept album is a story told in parts that sound completely different from each other [...], yet also work together.

The intermedial reference to music through both content and structure has influenced the genre of the novel and highlighted the intermingled relationship between intermedia, genre and digital technology. The existence of LP album, in a certain period of time, has inspired Egan while approaching life (the story-world of the novel) through music. When the theme and structure of the novel represent a ‘formal imitation’ of a concert album, this imitation introduces a different perspective to the novel as a genre that carries new possibilities, as Bakhtin remarks “Genre is reborn and renewed at every new stage in the development of literature and in every individual work of a given genre” (106). Also, the ‘reading guide’ and

'writing rules' shared by Egan on her website enable us to approach the novel differently. They emphasize the role epitexts play in the process of re-presenting, apprehending and contextualizing *A Visit from the Goon Squad* and the novel in general as a literary genre in the presence of the influence of digital technology.

Another epitextual element of the novel is its title. *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, what is the 'goon squad' of this narration? and what is its relevance to the themes and structure of the novel? The answer is deciphered by unfolding the events of the novel; it is TIME. The idea of time as the hidden protagonist that plays the most crucial role in the narrative through its effect on the characters is represented through different levels in the novel – thematic and structural. It is introduced to the reader from the very beginning of the text; through the title. The title here is a paratextual element that performs the 'threshold' to the narrative. Time is the 'goon squad' that steals the moments and days of characters in the novel. Egan traces the effect of time on her characters through different periods of their lives. Calling time a 'goon' is repeated twice in the novel. In chapter seven when Bosco, a former guitarist turns into a cancer survival, a fat and old man comments on the effect of time on him, "Time's a goon, right?" (*Goon Squad* 82), and in chapter thirteen when Bennie Salazar, the music producer, convinces Scotty Hausmann, a former guitarist, to perform a live concert for the first time in his life; "You gonna let that goon push you around?" (*Goon Squad* 195).

The idea of time is epitomized in chapter twelve through the reference to songs' pauses. Alison, the narrator of the PowerPoint chapter mentions that her brother Lincoln is obsessed with rock and roll songs' pauses, from which the title of the chapter emerges; "Great Rock and Roll Pauses." Pignagnoli points out that "the idea of pauses is [...] embedded in the recurrent theme of the narrative, as pauses delimit a period of time [...] The music pauses are graphically represented as empty frames [...] their dimensions influence the readers' perception of duration" (109). When you think that the song reached its end, it happens that it plays again, and it was just an elusive end. The end is definite, but its time is not definite. Through reference to pauses in music, it can be indicated that even the time that we think is meaningless, it has a meaning. And despite life's hard times, we need to go on. That meaning is reflected through each character's attempt to defy the 'time,' the 'goon squad' that has a temporary 'visit.' In relating the idea of time on the thematic level to the representation of time on the structural level, Pignagnoli remarks that "the exceptionality of pauses in rock-and-roll songs symmetrically recalls the exceptionality of the slides in a book" (109).

Egan is concerned with time in her novel, however; time is represented achronologically rather than chronologically. It is represented in a nonlinear rather than a linear way. In the introduction to an interview between Jennifer Egan and Heidi Julavits for BOMB journal, Julavits states that "In *Goon Squad*, time is deep, [...] better understood vertically than horizontally" (83). Egan explains her perception of time and its representation in her 'text' through that interview:

HJ: "Let's talk about how time functions in *Goon Squad*? [...] I thought a lot about the many worlds theory. Every time I encountered your characters anew it wasn't as though I was moving back and forth on a horizontal timeline, but rather I felt like I'd been transported to a parallel universe that was occurring simultaneously"

JE: "I don't experience time as linear. I experience it in layers that seem to coexist. I feel like 20 years ago was really recent even though I was much younger and had a different kind of life. Yet at the same time I feel like I'm still kind of there. One thing that facilitates that kind of time travel is music, which is why I think music ended up being such an important part of the book." (85)

Thus, Egan skillfully relates time to music through theme and structure that defy the former representation of the novel as a literary genre and in collaboration with the unique use of technological advancements to create intermedial narration.

Epitextual Elements in the Novel

Epitextual elements of *A Visit from the Goon Squad* are the external parts of or about the novel that contribute to representing the text on multiple levels. In analysing the novel, Bruhn divides epitextual elements into ‘pre-texts’ and ‘post-texts’ (115). By pre-texts he “refer(s) to a very limited part of a potentially enormous body of intertextual material (for instance, Egan’s literary sources of inspiration, her notes for the book, and intentions expressed around her earlier work but related to *Goon Squad*). Such pre-texts have been later “incorporated into the novel” and constituted ‘intertextual material’” (115). By post-texts Bruhn refers to “texts that she (Egan) authored, designed, or adapted directly from *Goon Squad*” (116). Bruhn attributes the creation and distribution of *Goon Squad*’s post-texts to the success of its “published” text (115). While TR Andersen imputes it to Egan’s tendency to experimentation with external medialities, “a continuation of Egan’s experiments with various formats and media forms [of and in *Goon Squad*, JB]” (Qtd in Bruhn 116). Forms of media channels that represent the epitextual elements of the novel and through which the novel is represented include an iOS App., an e-book and an audiobook. The e-book and the audiobook versions of the novel have been normalized through the frequent use of them as a way of publication. This is definitely in accordance with the technological culture of this millennium. Thus, the discussion of the epitextual elements is restricted to iOS app and the stupendous presentation of the novel on Egan’s website.

Despite the interactive property of the iOS app., that allows the narrative to be differently apprehended, it is no longer valid due to the ever-changing technological advancement. This invalidity of the app in itself is a remark for the shortcoming of new technology when applied as a channel of representation for literary works. However, it documents a certain moment in the history of creating and distributing literature through different distribution channels different from the published book. Consequently, it puts in the fore the issue of publication in its relation to the ‘bookishness.’ In enumerating the advantage of the iPad/iPhone app. of the novel Shane Richmond writes in *The Telegraph*; “The audiobook, which plays alongside the text, is something that can be done only in a stand-alone app. Then there are the ‘liner notes’ – the extra material that provides background on the novel [...] Finally, there’s the option to rearrange the chapters into chronological order or a random order if you prefer.” However, these advantages could be reached through other channels of the book’s presentation; through the e-book, audiobook, and the part dedicated to the novel in Egan’s website.

The website with its link to other supplementary material of the text is a unique representation of the epitextual elements of the novel. In colourful rows, there exists the original title of each chapter – in a non-linear way. When pointing to a chapter’s original title, a window appears with details about the “the location where she (Egan) came up with the idea of writing the story, and/or where she actually experienced a personal event that triggered the idea of writing such story, and/or where she actually wrote it; a short life narrative about such event; a soundtrack, either as verbal suggestion or as a link on the iTunes Store” (Pignagnoli 110). All these external medialities of the narrative introduce different interpretations to the ‘text,’ as Egan prefers to call it.



(Figure 11. From *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan)

Fig. 11 represents the supplementary materials to each chapter. Here, the chapter appears in its original name as found in the novel or as its old naming, before Egan changes it to the published one. For example, chapter twelve is entitled “Great Rock and Roll Pauses,” while the title “RIP” appears on the website as the old version of the chapter’s title.



(Figure 12. From *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan)

Another example is the chapter entitled “Found Objects” which is the first chapter of the novel. It carries two titles as illustrated here through the website only, the printed or electronic version carries only the above title. When we click on the title, as illustrated in (fig. 12), a window opens and supplementary information about the chapter appears. In this instance, we can find the original title of the chapter; “Happy Ending,” where the idea of writing this specific chapter came over; “The Regency Hotel, on Park Avenue and 61st Street,” and Egan’s motive behind writing it.



(Figure 13. From *A Visit from the Goon Squad* by Jennifer Egan)

When scrolling down after ‘where’ and ‘why’ of the chapter, we find the name of the accompanying music that Egan recommends for listening while reading that chapter. Or it might be the music she was listening to while writing it. Here, Egan presents the ‘History’ of incidents of robbery she encountered before, as kleptomania is the subject of that chapter of the novel. Then, she illustrates the ‘Beginning’ of the chapter through an inner monologue of its main protagonist, Sasha. Through the three figures above, the supplementary information that preceded the reading of the chapter constitute a knowledge that may affect the reading experience and our apprehension of the text.

Conclusion

In conclusion, through the lens of intermediality, the paper has discussed Jennifer Egan’s novel *A Visit from the Goon Squad* depicting the different medialities represented in the novel and how they affected the novel as a literary genre. The intermedial reference in the novel took place through the use of journalistic report format as a narrative tool of the protagonist in chapter 9 of the novel. While the protagonist of chapter 12 uses PowerPoint as a way of narrating her story. The two intermedial references are embedded in the narrative deviating from the standard properties of the novel. Works of art can be discussed in the light of the aesthetic properties they inherit. These properties are either standard or variable. The standard properties are these that are prerequisite for the belonging of a work of art to a certain genre. Instance is the written language for a literary work. Whereas the variable properties do not affect the belonging of the work of art to its genre, they rather constitute the prominent features in a given work. The use of the journalistic report as a way of literary narration is considered a variable property that distinguishes the novel. The narrator of that chapter is a journalist; thus, Egan allowed her narrator to tell his story using the narrative tool he prefers. Consequently, the intermedial reference here to the journalistic report format functioned as a variable property that added value to the novel through embedded structure of a non-literary narrative into the literary one.

The other prominent variable property that presented the literary narrative in a different way through intermedial reference is the use of PowerPoint. Again, Egan gives her narrator the power to use her preferred way of narrating her story. While the narrator of chapter 12 is a teenager who is deeply engaged with the use of digital technology, she uses the PowerPoint format in writing her diaries and narrating her story. While being mainly used as an educational

and business tool of presentation, the PowerPoint functions here as a literary narrative tool. Thus, it represents a variable property that adds value to the presentation of the novel. Its function is not restricted to the striking presentation in the novel, however; it allowed for the fragmentation and reconstruction of the characters and events of the chapter. The PowerPoint slides enabled for either following the order of the narrative line or skip slides and concentrate on others, following a certain event or character.

The intermediality of the novel puts in the fore its medial position. The novel is basically composed of written language and thus is a visually mediated art form. Its presence constitutes its materiality. The materiality of the book is thoroughly discussed by Gerard Genette under the concept of paratextuality. The paratextual features of a literary work are those features that present the work on the physical world. They are divided by Genette into peritexts and epitexts. Examples of the peritexts are the title, the cover, the book division and sectioning, and the publishing house. These peritextual elements introduce the book to the reader. While the epitextual elements are the features that extend outside the book and contribute to its apprehension such as the writer's interviews, webpage, and YouTube videos. In *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, music has been discussed as a fundamental peritextual element that plays a vital role on both the thematic and structural levels of the novel. Almost all characters in the novel work in the field of music industry or have relationships with these characters. Thus, the music is the linking point that constitutes the world of the novel's characters. On the structural level, the novel is divided into two sections that imitate the form of the LP album. In addition, the chapters of the novel have been written and published in different places before being collected to construct the book as a novel. Egan considers the novel genre as a concept album. Consequently, the paratextual elements of the novel change the way it is presented and apprehended and introduce new perspective to the novel as literary genre.

The epitextual elements are represented in the external body of the book that contribute to its understanding from a different angle. Most remarkable elements are Egan's interviews, website, and the e-book. The interviews reflected Egan's vision towards the novel and how she considers it a 'book' not a novel because its constituent parts were formerly published separately, and latter gathered to form the book. Through the website, she gave instructions towards the way of reading the novel through which she confirmed the ability of the reader to read each chapter separately or read the book as a whole entity. This is because each chapter can stand by its own with its narrative world, time, space, and characters. This structure confirms the fragmentation of the literary world and the PowerPoint's deconstruction and reconstruction of events. The website functions as a unique epitextual element as it presents the PowerPoint chapter in its original format. In addition, information about the pre-process of writing each chapter; the sequences led to the emergence of the idea of the chapter, the place where Egan started writing the chapter, its original name before being changed to the published one, and the accompanying music that either inspired Egan during writing the chapter or recommended to the reader to hear during reading it. Thus, the epitextual elements contributed to the revaluation and reappréhension of the novel.

Egan's novel reflected on the journalistic and PowerPoint formats as references to media other than the standard property of the novel which is the specific language of the literary work. In addition, she employed music as a further intermedial reference that added value to the novel as a literary genre. The novel used intermedial narrative that expands the frame of the written novel and opens discussion of the endless possibilities the literary work can carry when combined with different media of representation. Thus, the question of the boundaries of the literary genre permanently exists as long the relationship between the novel as a cultural production and the digital culture is present.

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