Author, Reader, Text:

Collaboration and the Networked Book

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Abstract

Written, edited and published in a networked environment, the networked book makes the process of collaboration between its authors and readers visible. This collaboration is recorded in the peripheries of the text through a record of interactions, shared ideas, conversations and annotations and becomes part of the book. The presence of this documentation of the collaborative process challenges the traditionally held positions of author and reader and produces a new form of collaborative work. The divisions between the author, reader and the text become blurred as the book in the networked environment moves from being a physical product and the process of its creation becomes a collaborative experience. Authorship becomes an activity of exchange as the networked book champions the idea that multiple authors can take part in textual production.

This thesis uses Gerard Genette's theory of paratextual analysis to examine in depth the peripheries of three networked books; *A Million Penguins, The Golden Notebook Project* and *Paddlesworth Press*. It argues that the paratexts of the networked book are where the dialogues between authors and readers are located and an in depth examination of these is crucial for an understanding of how the process of their collaboration is made visible. Using this approach, the thesis examines and identifies the thresholds between author, reader and text. The text of each of the three case studies is examined as a space where authors and readers communicate through an analysis of behaviour, an identification of roles and a consideration of hierarchies in the collaborative process. The thresholds, boundaries, freedoms and restrictions of both the author and reader positions are explored. The collaborative experience of textual production is one of multiplicity; there is no one author, reader or text and the thesis

concludes that a networked book is a book about the dialogue between author and reader and that these dialogues become part of the book.

0. Introduction

Written, edited and published in a networked environment, the networked book makes the process of collaboration between its authors and readers visible. This collaboration is recorded in the peripheries of the text through a record of interactions, shared ideas, conversations and annotations and becomes part of the book. The presence of this documentation of the collaborative process challenges the traditionally held positions of author and reader and produces a new form of collaborative work. The divisions between the author, reader and the text become blurred as the book in the networked environment moves from being a physical product and the process of its creation becomes a collaborative experience. Authorship becomes an activity of exchange as the networked book champions the idea that multiple authors can take part in textual production.

0.1 The Networked Book

A networked book is defined by the Institute for the Future of the Book[1] as 'an open book designed to be written, edited and read in a networked environment' (Vershbow, 2006). Readers and authors are able to collaborate, to varying extents, to create the text. This collaboration is guided by parameters set by those designing the book. The networked book becomes a book about dialogue as the annotations that surround the book in its networked environment becomes part of the book and can be read as part of its text.

1The Institute for the Future of the Book is 'a think-and-do tank investigating the evolution of intellectual discourse as it shifts from printed pages to networked screens. There are independent branches of Institute in New York, London and Brisbane. http://www.futureofthebook.org

Kim White was the first to posit the idea of the networked book (White, 2005a) by drawing on Joseph J. Esposito's idea of the processed book (Esposito, 2003). In her paper for the Computers and Writing Online Conference, White (2005a) describes the networked book as having four primary characteristics. Firstly, it is open and its content can be altered by the reader. Secondly, it has a disaggregated structure and is composed of smaller pieces that can be manipulated and reorganised. It is also social; meaning that authorship is collaborative. Lastly, the networked book is processed in an act that White describes as the reader or editor 'implement[ing] strategies for marking out meaningful pathways through the material using search engines and visualization applications' (White, 2005b).

Esposito claims that the 'Processed Book' is:

'[W]hat happens to the book when it is put into a computerized, networked environment. To process a book is more than simply building links to it; it also includes a modification of the act of creation, which tends to encourage the absorption of the book into a network of applications, including but not restricted to commentary' (Esposito, 2003).

For Esposito, such a book typically has at least five 'aspects'; 'as self-referencing text; as portal; as platform; as machine component; and, as network node' (Esposito, 2003). The processed book may challenge the position of the author as a 'response to romantic notions of authorship and books' (Esposito, 2003).

After Esposito's (2005) essay, 'The Processed Book', was published in *First Monday*, Esposito develops his ideas into a practice through 'The Processed Book Project'[2] (2006). This project includes an essay that takes the form of a Processed Book and so can be 'can be read, annotated, linked to and linked from, analysed linguistically,

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2 The Processed Book Project: http://prosaix.com/pbos

measured quantitatively, and anything else that the Processed Book tool set permits' (Esposito, 2006).

In a later paper, 'The Platform Book,' Esposito (2006) develops his vision of the Platform Book, which he defines as 'a dimension of an electronic book in a networked environment in which other books, notes, and commentary were built upon the original book, the platform' (Esposito, 2006). The processed book and the platform book may at first appear similar to the networked book. However, Esposito strongly states that he views the processed book as different from the concept of the networked book as developed by The Institute for the Future of the Book as it 'derives from a different set of interests and emphases' (Esposito, 2006). For Esposito, the networked book is 'very much orientated towards production, technology and users' whereas the Processed Book is more 'orientated towards the creation of content than its use and can be relatively limited in its technical aspect if its creative impulse has been satisfied' (Esposito, 2006).

Among the earliest examples of a networked book is Wikipedia[3], an online encyclopedia launched in January 2001, which Ben Vershbow (2006) calls 'the networked book par excellence,' and describes it as a 'vast, interwoven compendium of popular knowledge, never fixed, always changing, recording within its bounds each and every stage of its growth and all the discussions of its collaborative producers' (Vershbow, 2006).

Wikipedia is a wiki, which can be defined as:

'[A] web-based software that allows all viewers of a page to change the content by editing the page online in a browser. This makes wiki a simple and easy-to-

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3 An online collaborative encyclopedia: http://en.wikipedia.org This thesis focuses specifically on networked books as works of fiction though does acknowledge the importance of wikipedia as a non-fiction networked book.

use platform for cooperative work on texts and hypertexts' (Ebersbach et al, 2010, p.12).

The technology was designed by Ward Cunningham in 1994 and released in 1995 as a tool for collaborative work, particularly aimed at facilitating communication between software developers (Cunningham and Leuf, 2001). Cunningham called his new development, 'WikiWikiWeb' and it allowed users to create, edit, and distribute content through a web browser. Every user could take on the role of author and also edit the text written by others. Each version of the text is saved and a former version of the text can be reverted to if necessary (Emigh and Herring, 2005).

When using a wiki, there is no inherent editorial function that examines the contributions or guarantees quality and accuracy of its content. It is the responsibility of the users to ensure correctness and their collective responsibility to take care of aspects of policy, such as rules and appropriate behavior in the community (Halvorsen, 2005). As anyone can contribute literally anything, vandalism sometimes occurs in a wiki but it is typically quickly stopped or reversed according to the collective ethos of the authors (Vegas et al, 2004).

The wiki is an open form and operates in real time. It is open to revisions by anyone authorised to edit it and holds a record of these revisions, including the date when the revision was made. It becomes a record of all these revisions, including additions, edits and deletions. In this way, it is an evolving record of collaboration and documentation of the collaborative process.

Wikipedia does not have a single authorial voice but instead a multitude of individual voices collect together within the project as they make textual contributions. Jill Walker (2005) claims that, due to the lack of control over the text, Wikipedia is an example of an electronic text gone 'feral.' For her, it is a 'large collaborative projec[t]

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that generate[s] patterns and meanings without any clear authors or editors controlling the linking [...] these feral projects accept messiness, errors and ignorance, and devise ways of making sense from vast numbers of varying contributions' (Walker, 2005). However, it has been documented by others (Kidall and Stern, 2011) that Wikipedia does hold strict control over the encyclopedia and only specific contributions are permitted. There have been several research projects addressing Wikipedia (Priedhorsky et al, 2007; Chi et al, 2007; Kittur et al, 2007; Kriplean et al, 2007; Burke and Kraut, 2008; Reagle and Lessig, 2010, Lovink and Tzacz, 2011).

Authors and academics have explored the potential of the networked book to edit and revise a book using the collective knowledge of its readers. For example, in 2005, Stanford law professor Lawrence Lessig (1999) started a wiki using the text of his 1999 book *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace*. He asked readers to help him to update the work and then re-published the revised text, along with his own edits, as *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace* v.2[4] (Lessig, 2006a; 2006b), which could be bought as a paper copy or downloaded for free by readers as a digital text. In this networked book project, Lessig took on a role resembling that of a facilitator as he oversaw the contributions to the text. He was also able to authorise and legitimise the contributions through the re-publication of his book.

Another early networked book, operated in similar way, was *Gamer Theory*[5]. McKenzie Wark (2006), in collaboration with The Institute for the Future of the Book, invited comments from readers on his own book to develop a collaboratively authored, and revised, text. The comments left directly on Wark's work by readers became a form of secondary text to be read alongside the text that Wark had previously written. The

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4 Code, v.2 2006 is available from: http://codev2.cc

5 Also referred to as GAM3R 7H3ORY.

revised book was then published as *Gamer Theory* (Wark, 2007). As Lessig, Wark took on a role similar to that of a facilitator leading a discussion around a set topic. The readers of the work become collaborators as they contributed their ideas to the discussion through the annotations they added to the networked book. Through this process, a kind of collective voice was established. This collective voice closely resembled the dialogue of an oral debate. The reader was directly brought into conversation with the author and the text was challenged and refined by its readers. In 2006, Yochai Benkler set up a similar form of networked book with a wiki allowing readers of his book *The Wealth of Networks: How Social Production Transforms Markets and Freedoms* to leave comments about the text. His aim was to build a learning and research environment based on his book.

Authors began to realise the potential to create collaborative fictional work online. Recognising the success of wikipedia, in terms of the huge numbers of people who contributed, several turned to the wiki as a platform for writing a collaborative novel. 'Wiki novel' became a term used to describe a collaborative fictional work written by a community of contributing authors using a wiki. The wiki novel that has attracted the most contributors has been *A Million Penguins*[6], which was developed by a collaboration between Penguin and De Montfort University. Launched in February 2007, this was a novel where anyone could take on the role of author and contribute to the novel. The process was controlled, to some extent, by a team of editors from Penguin and De Montfort University who tried to steer the novel towards being a coherent piece of fiction.

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6 *A Million Penguins* will be addressed in depth in Chapter One of this thesis.

Following *A Million Penguins,* several writing communities were launched online where members were encouraged to collaborate to write works of fiction together and these can be viewed as forms of networked books. One of the first of these was Protagonize[7], which was launched in Vancouver, Canada in late 2007. It was first designed as a platform dedicated to writing addventure[8] fiction and later as a place to create works of linear collaborative fiction. It fostered the idea of building a creative writing community. WikiStory[9] was launched in 2008 as a space where writers could either write a short story in collaboration with other authors or alone and receive feedback. MetaAnovel[10] appeared later in 2008, followed by Fabulate[11]; a project designed to write a collaboratively authored book. Tailtelling[12] later emerged as a project where participants could create stories in collaboration with one another.

In 2007, Kate Pullinger and Chris Joseph launched *Flight Paths;* a networked novel that used stories, videos, sounds and animation to tell a story. The project was open to collaboration and contributors were invited to send Pullinger and Joseph inspired stories, texts, fragments, anecdotes, memories, musings' (Pullinger and Joseph, 2007). These contributions were then developed into a narrative. This project aimed to open up the research and writing processes of fiction writing to potential collaborators and experiment with writing fiction within a network (Collab Docs, n.d).

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7 http://www.protagonize.com

8 A type of online interactive fiction written by multiple authors. Addventures combine features of round-robin and Choose Your Own Adventure stories and individual authors contribute by writing separate sections.

9 http://www.wikistory.com

10 This website has now been removed but it was located at http://www.metanovel.com

11 http://www.fabulate.co.uk

12 http://www.tailtelling.com

The Golden Notebook Project (2008)[13], designed and run by the London branch of the Institute for the Future of the Book, was an experiment in close reading undertaken over five weeks from late 2008 to early 2009. Its aims were to document the experiences of seven readers as they read the novel *The Golden Notebook* by Doris Lessing and build a virtual community of readers to discuss the text. The discussions that surrounded *The Golden Notebook* in this project became a form of networked book, one which explored the nature of collaborative reading.

Songs of Imagination and Digitisation[14] was launched in 2009, also by the London branch of the Institute for the Future of the Book. Inspired by William Blake , this book contained moving images and interactive elements. It aimed to be an illuminated book for the digital age and explore the potential of what a book could become online. It offered a transliterate experience for readers, defined by the Transliteracy Research Group as 'the ability to read, write and interact across a range of platforms, tools and media from signing and orality through handwriting, print, TV, radio and film, to digital social networks.'[15] *Songs of Imagination and Digitsation* offered readers the experience of interacting with digital text, sound and moving images and the opportunity to contribute their ideas in the form of comments.

In 2010, a team of writers produced a spoof newspaper online entitled *Paddlesworth Press*.[16] This newspaper was named after a real village in the south-east of England but all its editors and writers played the fictional roles of the village residents who reported news stories in the newspaper. Several of the newspaper's

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13 *The Golden Notebook Project* will be addressed in depth in Chapter Two of this thesis.

14 http://www.songsofimaginationanddigitisation.net

15 http://nlabnetworks.typepad.com/transliteracy

16 *Paddlesworth Press* will be addressed in depth in Chapter Three of this thesis.

fictional writers and editors had their own Facebook[17] and Twitter[18] accounts, enabling readers to directly engage with them in real time. This expanded the text of the networked book and made the experience of reading and collaborating much more immersive.

The process of writing a book within a network can be seen (Arnold, 2006; Vershbow, 2006) as a development in the wider history of authorship. It is an experiment into how an author or authors can facilitate a discussion around a text to produce a collaborative version of a book. For Vershbow (2006), the 'integration' of text with discussion leads to:

> '[A] new relationship between author and reader, merging their activities within a single organ (like the systole-diastole action of a heart). Both activities are altered. The text, previously undisturbed except by the author's hand, is suddenly clamorous with other voices' (Vershbow, 2006).

Vershbow recognises that in the development of *Gamer Theory,* Wark took on the role of 'moderator' and collaborated with his readers to produce the book. For him, '[t]he reader, in turn, is no longer a solitary explorer but a potential partner in a dialogue, with the author or with fellow readers' (Vershbow, 2006). The textual contributions from readers, which add to the networked book, become part of the book.

Vershbow wonders how the comments that readers provide on a networked book contribute to the finished version of the book:

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17 www.facebook.com

18 www.twitter.com

'If selections from the comments are integrated into a subsequent version, either directing in the text or in some sort of appending critical section, [the author] could find himself performing the role of editor, or curator. A curator of discussion' (Vershbow, 2006).

These comments contributed by readers become a part of the networked book. For Vershbow (2006), a requirement of the networked book is the figure of 'curator' to moderate and shape collaborative contributions.

0.2 Collaborative Writing

This thesis focuses on the process of collaboration involved in writing a networked book and it is necessary to first develop a definition of collaborative writing by looking at the wider history of collaborative authorship. Researchers have previously developed various definitions. For Andrew Dillon (1993), collaborative writing refers to:

'[A]ctivities involved in the production of a document by more than one author, then pre-draft discussions and arguments as well as post-draft analyses and debates are collaborative components' (Dillon, 1993).

For R. Rimmershaw collaborative writing is:

'[A]ny piece of writing, published or unpublished, ascribed or anonymous, to which more than one person has contributed, whether or not they grasped a pen, tapped a keyboard, or shuffled a mouse' (Rimmershaw, 1992).

These definitions are broad and refer to multitude types of writing activities. In *Collaborative Writing: An Annotated Bibliography,* Bruce W. Speck et al. (2008) acknowledge the complexities of defining 'collaborative writing.' At the start of their research, they 'accep[t] the common sense idea that collaboration is writing done by

more than one person' (Speck et al. 1999, p.ix). They soon realise that the concept is more complex than they had believed as they found authors who questioned traditional notions of authorship, believing instead that all writing is to some extent collaborative.

It is not just the act of authorship that is collaborative. Scott Rettberg (2005) believes that printed books 'are almost always products of collaboration' and that, 'literary culture makes any contributions other than the author's less visible' (Rettberg 2005, p.1). A book does not need to be written by multiple collaborating authors for it to be collaborative. The nature of collaborative authorship is complex and difficult to define as, to some extent, authorship is always a collaborative process. Each author is inspired by the work of others and ideas are shared. The process of writing, editing and distributing a printed book requires the work of many individuals working together, although often only one contributor is named and recognised as the author of the work.

Networked books are often a form of mass collaboration. Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams (2006) use this term to describe the process by which individuals are empowered to take part in the global economy through their use of new media. They specifically focus their attention on developing business models but the term 'mass collaboration' is being increasingly used to describe the expansion of collective creativity (Elliot, 2007). It can be used to describe the large-scale collaboration evident in the production of a networked book.

In his research, Mark Elliot (2007) examines how individuals take part in mass collaboration projects and draws connections between human and social insects through the biological concept of stigmergy. He defines stigmergy as 'a class of behaviour in which collective activity is coordinated through the individuals' response to and modification of their local environment—one agent's modification becomes another's cue' and argues that this process it is a fundamental part of mass collaboration (Elliot,

2007). A networked book develops a kind of virtual environment where responses are elicited from both authors and readers. They interact according to this textual environment and these interactions become a fundamental part of the networked book. These interactions are possible through mass collaboration as a multitude of authors and readers are needed to create enough interactions to instigate textual production.

This thesis specifically addresses collaborative authorship and examines the process of collaborative writing through mass collaboration. It defines collaboration as the act of working with someone else to produce or create something. This broad definition addresses all forms of collaboration undertaken to produce a networked book. It acknowledges that determining authorship is not straightforward and the forms of collaboration evident in the process of writing a networked book are often difficult to identify. The process of collaboration is complex and all collaborators play different roles. Not all collaborators will have the same level of authority or freedoms in the process and necessary hierarchies will be evident as collaborators take on separate, through at times overlapping, roles.

Networked books often involve mass collaboration as many individuals work together to produce a text. This thesis defines mass collaboration as the collective action of large numbers of individuals working on a single collaborative project. It specifically addresses mass collaboration and attention is focused on examining networked books which were written through the process of mass collaboration. These are of particular interest as they demonstrate a form of collaboration that is only possible online.

When considering the process of collaboration and mass collaboration, this thesis must take into account the nature of community. The term 'community' is commonly used to describe the process of individuals coming together to produce collaborative work. The presence of community can be identified in the networked book

when multiple individuals collaborate to write a book. As a category of social interaction, a community is 'an organised group where members share a relatively homogeneous system of values' (Heller, 1984). In a far-reaching networked environment, it would be impossible for all collaborators to share a homogenous value system. They would have been prompted to collaborate for a wide range of reasons.

This thesis acknowledges the challenges faced by individuals working together to produce a networked book and defines their collaboration as a 'collaborative authoring process.' The roles, responsibilities and behaviours of individual collaborators may be different, and at times conflicting, but they are all part of the collaborative authoring process.

0.3 Context

This thesis examines the networked book from a literary, new media and cultural studies perspective at it adapts a framework through which to analyse collaborative writing in the context of the networked book. As will be explained in depth in this introduction, this thesis adapts the work of structuralist Gerard Genette (1997) to examine the peripheries of the book; where the interactions between authors and readers are visible on the text. Although it adapts a structuralist approach, this thesis does not closely follow a structuralist perspective. Instead, it uses Genette's understanding of the structure of a book's paratext to methodically explore a form of book which, to some extent, may have little sense of narrative, temporal or physical structure.

It will also address key work in the understanding of the positions of author and reader, including the work of Michel Foucault (1972; 1979), Roland Barthes (1974; 1988), Jacques Derrida (1976; 1979; 2004) This thesis also considers the work of

Reader-response theorists, including Stanley Fish (1967; 1980), Norman Holland (1968), David Bleich (1975), Wolfgang Iser, (1980) and Hans-Robert Jauss (1982) and theorists of intertextuality, including Julia Kristeva (2007). In discussion of the networked book as resembling a form of oral narrative, it addresses the work of and Davis Olson (1977; 1986) and Walter Ong (1982; 2000).

This thesis recognises that the networked book is a form of hypertext and so the work of new media theorists is used, including specifically (although not limited to), Theodor H. Nelson (1965), Jay Bolter (1991; 1992; 1998), Jermone McGann (1991; 2001), George P. Landow (1991; 1994; 2001a; 2001b; 2006), Stuart Moulthrop (1991; 1997), Paul Delany (1991; 2004), Brenda Laurel (1993), J. Yellowlees Douglas (1994), Espen Aarseth (1997), Janet H. Murray (1998), Mark Poster (2001), Henry Jenkins (2001; 2006; 2008), N. Katherine Hayles (2002; 2005), Martin Lister (2003) and David Ciccoricco (2008).

The work of these new media theorists is vital to put the networked book into context. A literary perspective is used to draw out connections with print and oral cultures, which will enable us to understand both the nature of collaborative writing and the networked book. A cultural studies perspective is important to understand the context of each project and to gain an understanding of the cultural significance of the roles of author and reader and the position of the text.

0.4 Intertextuality

A text can be read only 'in relation to other texts and it is made possibly by the codes which animate the discursive space of a culture' (Culler, 1981, p.38). These 'intertexts' are one or more texts which the reader must know in order to understand a work of

literature in terms of its overall significance (as opposed to the discrete meanings of its successive words, phrases and sentences) (Rittaterre, 1990). This connection between texts is 'intertextuality' (Kristeva, 1986). All text is intertextual. For Derrida (1979), text already possesses hypertextual functions. Text is no longer a finished body of writing but rather 'a differential network, a fabric of traces, referring endlessly to something other than itself, yo other differential traces' (Derrida, 1979, p.84).

In a hypertext, the reader does not need to have previous knowledge of these other texts. Instead, they can be directly linked to using hyperlinks. Hypertext is inherently a form of intertextuality. Hyperlinks allow the reader to create and follow connections within a text, and to locations outside the text and allows them a level of control over what they read and the sequence in which they read. Landow and Delany (1994) claim that hypertext emphasises intertextuality in a way that page bound text in a book can not. Instead of alluding to something, direct links can be made.

In describing hypertext, Landow (2006) draws comparisons with the textual form of the scholarly article, the text of which contains numbers or symbols referring to footnotes or endnotes. The reader of the article encounters numbers or symbols referring to footnotes or endnotes and leaves the main body of the article to read them. These notes may contain information about related sources and parallels to other texts or influences. Landow views these notes as much the same as hypertextual links as they take the reader away from the main text (Landow, 2006, p.3).

The networked book makes the process of intertextuality visible. Authors are able to contribute links to the text, which connect readers both to locations within and outside the text. These expand the boundaries of the networked book as it comes to include all linked text. For Landow (2006), the hyperlink takes the reader away from the

main text but in the networked book the link can also draw the linked material into the text.

0.5 Orality and the Hypertext

Jay Bolter (1991) claims that the author enters into a 'dialogue' with the reader through the hypertext and it can be seen that the hypertextual narrative begins to resemble spoken word and can reestablish an oral relationship between author (who takes the role of speaker) and reader. Markus Deseriis (2009) specifically recognises that networked narratives possess elements of oral traditions. Some aspects of hypertext can be viewed as a return to oral culture, or what Walter Ong (1982) calls a 'secondary orality.' Ong claims that, despite being textual, the hypertext presents a 'striking resemblance to the old in its participatory mystique' (Ong, 1982, p.136). For Ong (1982), written discourse has become detached from its author. This detachment elevates the author to a position resembling that of 'the oracle or the prophet' (Ong, 1982, p.78). The book becomes the relayer of 'an utterance from a source' and is therefore both detached and unquestionable (Ong, 1982, p.78). It is far removed from being an oral discourse. The hypertext, however, can be viewed as a return to this closeness between author and reader (Bolter, 1991). Once text has been written down, it becomes static and closed but the hypertext possesses an openness that resembles orality (Simone, 1996).

Boyd H. Davis and Jeutonne Brewer (1997) believe that, 'electronic discourse[19] [...] very often reads as if it were being spoken' (Davis and Brewer, 1997, p.2). They focus their research on how individuals use language to exchange ideas and see that

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19 In their study, Davis and Brewer use the term 'electronic discourse' to describe 'the two-directional texts in which one person using a keyboard writes language that appears on the sender's monitor and is transmitted to the monitor of a recipient, who responds by keyboard' (Davis and Brewer, 1997, p.1).

online communication more closely resembles oral than written discourse. Writing is often seen as 'space-bound, static, and permanent' whereas speaking is viewed as 'time-bound, dynamic, transient' (Davis and Brewer, 1997, p.2). Although not specifically writing about hypertext[20], Davis and Brewer's ideas can be used to address the networked book. To them, online communication 'becomes a conversation and contains a number of performance features generally characteristic of in process or in situ communicative events and behaviors, such as repetition, direct address, disfluencies, and markers of personal involvement' (Davis and Brewer, 1997, p.3). This can be seen in the networked book as conversations between readers and authors take place in the margins of the book.

As the position between author and reader becomes established in a hypertextual narrative, both author and reader become responsible for their part in the dialogue. Bolter (1991) claims that, '[a] hypertextual essay in the computer is always a dialogue between he writer and his or her readers, and the reader has to share the responsibility for the outcome' (Bolter, 1991, p.117). If the reader becomes empowered to take part in textual production in the networked book then responsibility for the outcomes rests on the collaboration between author and reader.

0.6 Approach

This thesis argues that all contributions to a networked book become part of the text. Every annotation made by a reader, every piece of text contributed by an author and every link added to the text is part of the collaboration that produces the book. The

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20 Davis and Brewer (1997) focus on how participants take part in computer conferencing. However, their discussion of how these participants collaborate in a large-scale discussion make it relevant to use when discussing collaborative writing in the networked book.

networked book is able to make the process of collaboration between authors and readers visible in a way that a printed book is never able to do. This collaboration, through a record of interactions and conversations, is recorded in the peripheries of the text and becomes part of the networked book. The thesis proposes that the presence of this documentation of collaboration challenges the traditionally held positions of author and reader in the text and results in new form of collaborative work.

This research focuses specifically on fictional networked books, as opposed to works of non-fiction, such as Wikipedia, to reach an understanding of the collaborative authoring process. It is interested specifically in creative authoring and in how multiple authors contribute their ideas to a networked text and how multiple readers then react to these ideas. Collaborating to produce a work of fiction is a different experience to collaborating to produce non-fiction and this thesis seeks to understand the specific processes of mass creative collaboration.

This thesis offers detailed examinations of three case studies; *A Million Penguins (2007), The Golden Notebook Project* (2008) and *Paddlesworth Press* (2010). These networked books contain each of the four primary characteristics of networked books identified by White (2005a). They are each open and their content can be altered by the reader. They each have a disaggregated structure and several of their parts can be manipulated. They are social and as the process of authorship is collaborative. They are also processed through the implementation of pathways through the text, such as links. These three case studies share these characteristics but each place emphasis on different aspects of the process of collaboration.

A Million Penguins was a wiki novel produced by the mass collaboration of thousands of authors who were led by a team of editors at Penguin publishers and researchers at De Montfort University. This case study is be used in this thesis to

explore the nature of authorship in the networked book. *The Golden Notebook Project* was an experiment designed by the Institute for the Future of the Book into social reading through the gathering of readers around a novel. This case study is used to explore the experience of reading the networked book and how readers are able to move to the position of author. *Paddlesworth Press* was a fictional newspaper collaboratively produced by an anonymous team. Its readers were encouraged to engage with the text by engaging with news stories, connecting with the project through social media and leaving comments. This case study is used to explore the position of the text in the networked book.

In this thesis, each of these three networked books is examined both during its collaborative authoring stage (when it was actively being written) and the archive stage (after the collaborative authoring stage had ended). Both these stages offer an opportunity to examine various processes of the networked book. While each book is being written there is potential for a reader to take part as an author. When it has been achieved, the options open to the reader become limited but we are able to see an archived record of the collaborative authoring process. This allows us an opportunity to see how the networked book was created through the record of the behaviour of its authors and readers. Investigation of both stages are vital for a full understanding of the networked book.

The term 'project' is used in this thesis to refer to each of the three case studies. This acknowledges the language used to describe the process of creation, transmission and reception of each of the networked books by those groups and individuals responsible for their instigation (Mason and Thomas, 2008[21]; *The Golden Notebook*

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21 Mason and Thomas refer to *A Million Penguins* as a project in *A Million Penguins Research Report.*

Project, 2008[22], 2009; Kingsley, 2010[23]). The term 'project' is most appropriate to use to refer to these networked books as it encompass not only the text of each but also the way they were written.

Each of these three networked books are read in this thesis in their entirety as a 'project text.' This includes the collaboratively authored fictional narratives, as well as documented conversations between authors and readers. These include, for example, dialogues recorded on project blogs and forums, conversations conducted using social media and digital marginalia[24] left by readers directly on the fictional narrative. The threshold between the text and its outside will be examined as part of the project text. The networked book is defined as including all associated material as an expansion of the book in the print tradition.

Over three chapters, this thesis explores the processes of the networked book and examines all traces of authors and readers left on the text. It examines the text as a space where readers and authors communicate by analysing behaviour and identifying and considering the roles in the collaborative process. It examines the thresholds, boundaries, freedoms and restrictions of both the author and reader positions and argues that the collaborative experience is one of multiplicity; there is no one author, reader or text. It explores how a networked book is a book about the dialogue between author and reader and that these dialogues are part of the text. The annotations left on a digital text by its multiple authors and readers can not be read fully if removed from their context as part of the collaboratively authored narrative.

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22 *The Golden Notebook Project* used the term 'project' to define itself in its title.

23 *Paddlesworth Press* is described as a 'project' by its creators in a *Guardian* newspaper article.

24 The term 'digital marginalia' is used in this thesis to describe textual contributions to the margins of a networked book. The history of marginalia is addressed in Chapter Two.

0.7 Thresholds

In order to develop a framework to analyse and discuss a networked book, consisting of not only the narrative but also the documented interactions between authors, readers and text as well as annotations left on the text, this thesis adapts Structuralist Gerard Genette's theory of paratextual analysis, as detailed in Genette's influential work *Seuils,* published in France in 1987 and translated in English in 1997 as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation,* to examine the peripheries of the networked book. The paratext is the material outside a text which ensures or constructs its reception. It is also interior to the text as a set of conventions, which represent a sort of threshold that a text is either constrained by or seeks to overcome. Genette views the paratext as a liminal device within the framework of the printed book (including signs of authorship, notes and front and back covers), which form a threshold between what is inside and what is outside the book (Genette, 1997). He defines it as:

> '[A] zone between between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of transaction: a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that - whether well or poorly understood and achieved - is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it (more pertinent, of course, in the eyes of the author and his allies' (Genette, 1997, p.2).

The presence of the paratext can be applied to the networked book and the textual material surrounding it can be explored as a framework, which transmits meaning to readers. These devices are the threshold between text and reader and so Genette considers paratexts to be a framework of interpretation:

'A literary text [...] is rarely presented in an unadorned state, unreinforced and unaccompanied by a certain number of verbal or other productions, such as author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations. And although we do not always know whether these productions are to be regarded as belonging to the text, in any case they surround it and extend it, precisely in order to present, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense to make present, ensure the text's presence in the world, its "reception" and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book' (Genette, 1997, p.1).

The text is interpreted by a reader through its threshold. All elements, including the cover, date, title and information about the author, give the reader an impression of the text. These make up a framework, which serves as a way for readers to make sense of the context of the book. As a zone of 'transaction', the paratext allows the reader to take part in the process of textual construction. They are able to interpret the text and create their own understanding.

Following Genette's method for analysing paratextual material, this thesis addresses specific features of a paratext, which describe its spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic and functional characteristics (Genette, 1997). This analysis discusses the location of the paratextual element in terms of where it is positioned in the project text. It addresses the time span of the project and consider elements of 'prior' (in this case, information released before the project began that frames the project), the 'original' paratext (which appear at the same time as the text) and the later (that come after the project is finished and included in the project text). It explores the 'factual' elements, which transmit accurate information to the reader, who then reads it in the light of this information and considers the positions of the 'sender and addressee' and the authority that each position holds. It addresses the 'illicutionary force'; the message that the paratextual element transmits to the reader and this includes 'information', 'intention', 'interpretation' contained in the text or its transmission. Through a

discussion of what the inclusion of certain elements achieves, this thesis considers the function of the paratext (Genette, 1997, pp.4-12).

Using this approach, we will be able to examine and identify the thresholds between author, reader and text. This thesis argues that the thresholds of the networked book are where the dialogues between authors and readers are located and an in depth examination of these is crucial for an understanding of how the process of their collaboration is made visible. As a threshold of interpretation, the presence of the paratext contributes to the way readers make sense of the networked book. It forms a border between what is part of the book and what lies outside. In a networked environment, this border is less distinct than in a printed text and the reader is able to move, often seamlessly, between what is part of the book and what lies beyond. Its importance lies in its function as a place where readers can shift from the position of reader to author and contribute to the book they are reading.

Through the process of collaborative writing, paratextual elements can potentially be contributed to a networked book at any point but they may also disappear with equal ease. Conversations between readers, as well as the annotations they leave behind, can be deleted. Genette acknowledges evidence of this in the printed book:

> 'If, then, a paratextual element may appear at any time, it may also disappear, definitively or nor, by authorial decision or outside intervention or by virtue of the eroding effect of time' (Genette, 1997, p.6).

All material associated with the networked book, whether it appears only for a short time and then disappears, is part of the paratext and therefore can be seen as part of the networked book. It may have been deleted by the publishers of the book, by an editor or

by one of its many authors, but it is a part of the history of the text. It alters a reader's understanding and subsequent understanding of the networked book as a whole.

Adopting this theoretical approach allows us to read and discuss all elements of the project text and discuss the function of each. By expanding Genette's consideration of the relations between text and reader, this thesis addresses interactions that occur when the lines between author, reader and text overlap. In a consideration of the threshold of the project text, we address the thresholds of the positions between author, reader and text. Genette states that, '[b]y definition, something is not a paratext unless the author or one of his associated takes responsibility for it, although the degree of responsibility may vary' (Genette, 1997, p.9). This thesis considers the official, unofficial and semi-official areas of the paratext. In doing so, it explores how, in the networked book, authorial authority, and the authority of the publisher, is disrupted.

This thesis argues that the annotations, notes and textual conversations around the text are a fundamental part of a networked book. The dialogue between a networked book's authors and readers become part of the text and should be read as such. Reading the paratextual elements of the project can allow an understanding of the nature of collaboration in the project. We can use the paratext to address how the role of author and reader overlap through this process and their interactions with the text. Genette asserts that [a] threshold exists to be crossed' (Genette, 1997, p.410) and we explore how the networked book repeatedly, and deliberately, crosses and recrosses the threshold of the book.

0.8 Criticism of Genette

Genette's paratext provides a threshold for readers to cross to enter a text. It offers them important information about the text, such as its 'title and genre, its author and the circumstances of its publication, its relationships to other texts and the appropriate methods for digesting or applying it' (Sherman, 2007, p.69). This approach does not acknowledge that readers encounter books according to their own historical context. In their collection of essays, *Renaissance Paratexts*, Helen Smith and Louise Wilson (2011) address the limitations of Genette's paratextual theory when considering early-modern texts. They acknowledge that it has become 'a critical commonplace to suggest that Genette's survey of paratextual possibilities is insufficiently attentive to historical difference and change' (Smith and White, 2011, p.2). William Sherman (2007) argues that if Genette looked back to early modern writers and readers he would find that the division between text and reader was not so absolute. The idea of 'authorial responsibility' was 'too embryonic' to be universal and it was less that clear where the paratext ended and the text began (Sherman, 2007, pp. 69-70).

Others theorists have drawn attention to Genette's consideration of the roles and authority of authors and publishers in a text. Juliet Gardiner (2000) criticises Genette's 'fundamental failure to account for the distinction between the author and the publishers, his tendency to see the publisher as enabler, indeed the continuation, of the author's intention, and paratexts as the vehicle, signals an untenable, essentialist fixity of meaning for the text' (Gardiner, 2000, p.258).

Some theorists have suggested that Genette's approach is limited as it does not reach far enough into the 'sociology' of the text' (Finklestein and McCleery, 2005, p.15) and instead focuses attention on literary functions. In *The Textual Condition*, Jerome McGann (1991) notes the value of Genette's approach and his approach towards looking at paratextual elements, which are 'consistently regarded as only quasi-textual,

ancillary to the main textual event' (McGann, 1991, p.13). In his own approach, McGann argues for the importance of studying parts of the text dismissed as peripheral or irrelevant. He claims that the distinction made between the text and paratext can be useful for certain descriptive purposes, 'but for a deeper investigation into the narrative of textuality, it is not strong enough' (McGann, 1991, p.13). McGann argues that Genette should have extended his attention to include non-linguistic elements of the paratext, such as ink, typeface, paper and what he sees as various other phenomena crucial to the understanding of textuality. He notes that these fall outside Genette's concerns because such textual features are not linguistic but argues that they are of importance. McGann's (1991) approach calls attention to the text as an interweaving network of linguistic and bibliographic codes and argues that a linguistic approach is not enough for a full understanding. He acknowledges the usefulness of Genette's view of what constitutes the paratext (the preface, dedications, footnotes etc) but believes that he ignores other elements. To counter what he sees as a limitation, he extends Genette's methodology to address other materials that he sees as crucial for textual understanding.

0.9 Socialisation of the Text

McGann's (1991) approach is committed to viewing texts as 'social acts'. He believes that textual study until the 1980s adopted a 'linguistic approach that wrapped up literary texts in a close-spun web of hermeneutics and textual interpretation' (McGann, 1991, p. 13) and instead McGann believes that, as an alternative, there needs to be an understanding of the 'socialization of the text.' This includes focusing on the social practices and materials of transmission and publication. His approach is influenced by Don McKenzie's (1999) who outlines his views in his Panizzi Lectures of 1985, where

he calls for book history to be viewed in sociological contexts. He stresses the importance of delving into 'the sociology of the texts' (Finkelstein and McCleery, 2005, p.7) rather than only considering its literary aspects.

This thesis, taking into account the works of McGann (1991) and McKenzie (1999), expands Genette's paratext to explore the social context of the networked book. It seeks to examine the interactions between authors and readers through the traces they leave on the text. These are not only textual contributions but also social interactions. The thesis addresses in depth the context for the production of the text, through detailed examination of three case studies. In following Genette's approach to examining the periphery of the text, it argues that, in the networked book, social interactions are documented on these digital peripheries.

0.10 Genette and New Media Narratives

Genette's used paratextual analysis to examine the printed book and many of the liminal elements that he explores (such as front and back covers and other printed elements) are specific to this form of book. The paratext is a part of the printed book and centers on the physical space inside and outside the book. This thesis uses Genette's method of paratextual analysis to analyse the networked book. It must be questioned whether paratextual analysis is appropriate for examining new media narratives such as the networked book. Genette (1997) acknowledges that his concept can be applied to other media forms and this thesis takes this acknowledgement as a starting point. There is existing research into the possibility of the paratext being reinterpreted using ideas from new media (Lunenfeld, 1999). Gavin Stewart (2010) examines the paratexts of a digital

novel entitled *Inanimate Alice.*[25] Mia Consalvo (2007) applies the concept to argue for the importance of forums, walk-throughs and other non-game texts for understanding experience of video gaming. She argues that, in games, paratexts are not peripheral (Consalvo, 2007). As a part of its approach, this thesis argues that the networked book, as a form of new media narrative and hypertext, can be examined using paratextual analysis.

0.11 Method

This thesis develops Genette's method of paratextual analysis into a framework for examining the text of a networked book. The definition of what constitutes peripheral elements of the book is expanded to include not only elements of the text but also the documented behaviour of its author and readers, their interactions with the text and the annotations (forms of digital marginalia) that they leave behind. In the networked book, the thresholds of the book become the space where interactions between author, reader and text take place.

The paratext of three networked books, *A Million Penguins*, *The Golden Notebook Project* and *Paddlesworth Press*, will be divided into two distinct areas, according to Genette's (1997) approach to the spatial areas of the book, and then examined in depth. These areas will be:

The **Epitext** (Liminal devices outside the book).

The **Peritext** (Liminal devices inside the book).

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25 http://www.inanimatealice.com

Together, these two areas constitute the paratext of a book and frame its transmission and understanding. These two areas are specific to the printed book, where it can be clear to see what is located inside and outside the book. The nature of 'inside' and 'outside' is more complex when analysing a networked book. In this thesis, the 'epitext' is expanded to include all areas of the networked book where readers and authors discuss their collaboration outside the narrative. This includes textual information written by the 'project authors' who designed the project and any blogs or forums where authors gather to discuss their collaboration. This peripheral space is vital for collaboration and this thesis argues that it becomes part of the networked book.

The 'peritext' is used to describe the narrative of the networked book. This is the spatial area inside the book and includes all parts open for collaboration. This space has been expanded to include evidence of the behaviour of both authors and readers.

Through a close examination of each of these textual spaces within three networked book case studies, we will be able to read each as part of networked book. In his forward to *Paratexts*, Richard Macksey calls Genette 'the most intrepid and persistent explorer' (Genette, 1997, p.xii). This thesis follows his lead and explores the paratext of the networked book to find out how its authors and collaborate and how this collaboration becomes imprinted on the text.

0.12 Contribution to the Field

Most existing critical work into the networked book specifically addresses works of non-fiction. This thesis will provide a through examination of three networked books and draw conclusions about the specifics of writing collaborative fiction. It will adapt

Genette's (1997) paratextual analysis as a framework with which to examine all elements of the networked book. It will draw together the work of other literary, cultural studies and new media theorists in an inter-disciplinary approach to understand how to read the process of collaboration in the networked book. This approach specifically places emphasis on the importance of the threshold of the book as a way for the collaborative author or reader to enter the text and the threshold as a place for their collaboration to be documented. It is the hope that this approach can then be used to examine further networked books for a richer understanding of the collaborative processes of the networked book.

This thesis will conclude with a series of thirteen findings, which will address the nature of creative collaboration, the roles of the author, reader and text in the networked book and the process of how collaboration becomes visible. These findings will provide potential subjects for further research.

0.13 Chapter Overview

Chapter One

Author: Collaborative Authoring in *A Million Penguins*

This chapter begins by positioning the networked book in a wider history through an examination of the history of collaborative authorship. It then looks specifically at *A Million Penguins* and addresses how individuals access the project and the ways in which they take part. The structure of the collaboratively authored text means that certain boundaries and thresholds are put in place to structure collaboration and the role

of project editors includes gatekeeping the text. This chapter analyses the language of authority and the features of control present in the networked book by looking at instructional text and project rhetoric to identify how individuals are encouraged to take the role of author and contribute to the project text.

A hierarchy of authorship is evident in the creation of the narrative and authors often attempt to subvert this through sabotaging the text. This sabotage leads to the development of an incoherent and fragmented text. This specific type of incoherent, nonsensical narrative is a form of narrative made possible through the multiple authorship. This chapter considers the tools that were used to create the project and discusses whether a wiki can be used to create a fictional work.

A Million Penguins was launched with the intention of building a community of authors. This led to behaviours in the textual space and roles that individuals adopted. It was the adoption of these roles that created a chaotic textual space. The collaborative authoring process resembles the carnival, with roles being subverted and later reverted.

The chapter examines the relationships between authors, which are evident in the text, and argues that these can be read as a key part of the networked book. The documentation of the process of writing the text can often be more valuable than the finished text for an understanding the nature of collaborative authorship.

Chapter Two

Reader: Collaborative Reading in *The Golden Notebook Project*

This chapter begins by considering the history of reading and explores its roots as both a solitary and social experience. This consideration draws connections to reader-response theory and argues that the networked book offers a new way for readers to engage with

a text, which has connections with the wider history of reading. Collaborative reading is an outward, social process, which is no longer private as readers gather around a text. This chapter explores collaborative reading through an examination of the interactions between authors and readers in the margins of the networked book.

The text of the networked book is a virtual space made up of formal and informal spaces. These spaces, within the process of collaborative reading, become sites of encounter and experience for readers. This is a shift away from the book being seen primarily as a physical object. Instead, it is an opportunity for experience and a place where readers can congregate.

The reader of a networked book subverts the traditional idea of the reader as the amateur and the author as expert and is given an active, rather than passive, role. The active role is viewed as textual production and the passive role is viewed as reading the text. This chapter discusses how much agency this active role has through a consideration of the nature of control within the text. It addresses issues of power and authority in the textual space and explores the idea that power for the reader in the networked book is limited. It identifies that decisions are made by project authors and that these shape the reading experience. It looks at boundaries, freedoms and limitations within the text and argues that these can create a prescriptive reading environment.

Conflicts between authors and readers in the text can be identified. In particular, this chapter identifies a hierarchy of 'featured' and 'general' readers and analyses the behaviour of each in relation to the freedoms each is offered within the text. The transactional relationship between author and reader is altered as the reader can take part as an author.

Within this project, readers are able to share their reading experience in a public space. Readers influence each other's readings and are not able to read a text away from

their own frame of reference. Instead, they have a plural reading experience. Readers are not only able to read the text but they also 'read' one another through their textual contributions. The pages of a networked book are a starting point for further exploration by the reader rather than a finished, static text.

This chapter considers the margins of the networked book as a space where conversations between readers are recorded and argues that such spaces are fundamentally important as a part of the text. In making connections with the history of marginalia, it discusses the features of this new form of digital marginalia. It examines the position of the active reader who annotates the networked text and addresses the nature of this form of marginal exchange. The text is changed by the addition of the annotation of its readers and this can be read as part of the project text. Connections can be drawn between the margins of the text and the oral tradition and this chapter considers readers as a collaborative audience. The documentation of the reading experience is a type of performance.

Chapter Three

Text: *Paddlesworth Press,* Artefact to Experience

This chapter explores how the networked book shifts the book from being a physical artefact to a digital experience for both its authors and readers as their roles overlap. The networked book is a form of performance, in which both readers and authors take part. This performance is time-specific, lasting for the duration of the collaborative writing project, and when the performance is over only the text remains. The networked book is

connected to the oral tradition and, as a non-static text in a state of flux, it resembles many characteristics of the spoken word.

The networked book is also a spatial construct where interactions and conversations between authors and readers are recorded as a part of the book. Through reading the text as a social construct, this chapter examines it as documentation of interactions. It recognises private and public spaces within the text and views the networked book fundamentally as a place rather than an artefact or object. The networked book is a place where readers and authors interact and collaborate and these collaborations become part of the text.

This chapter considers the use of social networks and argues that, within the networked book, these become part of an expanded narrative. Through an examination of the documented interactions between authors and readers, it argues that these textual transactions are part of the text. In particular, marginal notes (contributed by readers and authors) are an important part of the text.

This chapter explores the restrictions, boundaries and thresholds for readers and authors of the text. The text is a mediated space but not freely accessible to everyone. There are clear hierarchies of textual production within a textual framework and project structure designed by project authors. These textual thresholds, through which the text can be entered and added to by authors and readers, must be examined. This chapter also examines the frames of the project text and considers what lies inside and outside the text.

The networked book must be examined as a form of hypertext. In particular, this chapter looks at the role of hyperlinks in expanding the dynamics between authors, readers and the text and argues that, through the use of links, the project text is expanded. The networked book is a form of open book and this chapter examines what a

lack of closure means for the narrative. The non-linear narrative is also examined to identify the ways in which it can be navigated by a reader.

This chapter considers book history and asks whether the networked book is a book at all. It argues that it is given many of the characteristics of the book but that it is a new form, which draws on earlier traditions and conventions. It addresses the materiality of the networked book through, in part, a discussion of book history and finds that the networked book does have materiality in the form of physical components. It then discusses the temporal nature of the networked book and considers whether it can be published or whether it becomes an archive. It argues that the unfinished text-in-progress is as important as the finished form as a record of collaboration.

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Chapter One

Author: Collaborative Authoring in *A Million Penguins*

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1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Background

A Million Penguins is a literary and social experiment, which ran between 1st February and 7th March 2007. It was devised by editors from Penguin publishers[26] and researchers from De Montfort University.[27] Bruce Mason and Sue Thomas's 'A Million Penguins Research Report' (Mason and Thomas, 2008)[28] identifies that Penguin provided the technical resources for the project and two editors; digital publisher Jeremy Ettinghausen and literary editor Jon Elek. The team of researchers at De Montfort University provided consultation during the development and oversaw day-to-day operations. This team was led by Kate Pullinger and supported by Sue Thomas and consisted of six Masters students.

The aim of the project was to create a collaborative wiki novel. Anyone could contribute to the novel simply by registering to take part and then logging in each time they wanted to make changes to the text. These collaborating authors could shape the narrative by adding their own words, edit the words of others or even delete them or revert the text back to a previous version. They could use the project's discussion forum

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26 http://www.penguin.co.uk

27 De Montfort University is based in Leicester, UK. Available from: http://www.dmu.ac.uk

28 This research report will be referred to extensively in the this chapter. It is a valuable resource of details of the project that were not shared on the project website as well as a thorough analysis of *A Million Penguins*.

to communicate with one another about how the wiki novel was taking shape. The editors from Penguin and the researchers from De Montfort University, (who will hereafter all be referred to as the 'editors' of the project) documented the writing process on three separate project blogs.[29]

Within a networked book, authorship has moved from being seen as a solitary act to one of collaboration. Authorship has always been an activity of exchange but here the act of authorship is about multiple authors writing and editing the book together. There is opportunity for anyone to take part and, to some extent, take on the authority of authorship. This thesis defines the authority of authorship as the ability to make textual contributions. It must also be acknowledged that not all authors will have equal authorial authority. They will typically be allowed varying levels of agency depending on how closely they are involved with instigating the project. Overall control of a networked book is taken by its project authors. In designing the networked book, they make crucial decisions about how the book will be structured and how collaboration will be organised. They typically hold a high degree of power and control over the resulting project text as the decisions they make and the project rhetoric that they introduce leads the subsequent behaviour and output of the authors. This extent of the power possessed by the project authors may not appear obvious to contributing authors as the project rhetoric is typically one expressing openness and collaboration. However, the fact that the rhetoric has been written by the project authors displays the extent of their control over the networked book.[30]

In *A Million Penguins,* the perception of open collaboration caused chaos. As anyone could edit or delete anyone else's words, many of its collaborating authors

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29 These three project blogs are 'A Million Penguins', 'Team Blog' and 'The Penguin Blog'.

30 Specific issues of power and control will be further discussed in Chapter One. This will include further discussion of the role of both project authors and project editors.

appeared to embrace a sense of chaos and radically edited and deleted sections of text. With a degree of textual freedom for everyone, the archived wiki novel, its text divided into several strands, is almost nonsensical.[31] Due to the large number of authors and editors, the narrative is non-linear and veers in multiple directions at once. The editors from Penguin and De Montfort University attempted to control and contain the text through various measures, such as locking the wiki novel at certain times so that they could edit and structure the text without it being changed. There appeared to be a continual battle between chaos and control during the collaborative writing process.

This battle for textual control and the creation of an almost nonsensical narrative became part of the wider project text. Each shift and change in the narrative was recorded as tracked edits on the wiki and became part of the narrative. A reader, reading the networked book either when the project was in progress or after it had been archived, can read these elements. The networked book is a form of social text and these interactions between authors are of value. In many ways, the process of its creation is equally as important as the archived novel. These interactions will not make sense as a narrative away from the rest of the project text. Here, the threshold between what is inside the book and what is outside is blurred as all elements of the book need to be read together and within the context of the *A Million Penguins* project.

1.1.2 Chapter Overview

This chapter begins by positioning the networked book in a wider history through an examination of the history of collaborative authorship. It then looks specifically at *A*

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31 The 'novel' or 'wiki novel' is used in this chapter to refer to the multiple narratives that were created. Although they were divided into separate sections, they will be referred to singularly for referencing purposes.

Million Penguins and addresses how individuals access the project and how they take part. Through identifying who makes decisions and how, it argues that authorship is not open to everyone in the same way. The structure of the collaboratively authored text means that certain boundaries and thresholds are put in place to structure collaboration and the role of project editors is one of gate keepers of the text. This chapter analyses the language of authority and features of control present in the networked book by looking at instructional text and project rhetoric to identify how individuals are encouraged to take the role of author and contribute to the project text.

A hierarchy of authorship is evident in the creation of the narrative and authors often attempt to subvert this through sabotaging the text. This sabotage leads to the development of an incoherent and fragmented text. This specific type of incoherent, nonsensical narrative is a new form of narrative, made possible through the multiple authorship of networked fiction. This chapter considers the tools that were used to create the project and discusses whether a wiki can be used to create a fictional work. Although *A Million Penguins* intended to build a community of authors, the hierarchy of authorship meant that a complex form of community was formed. This was influenced by the particular behaviours in the textual space and roles that individuals adopted. It was the adoption of these roles that created a chaotic textual space. The collaborative authoring process resembles the carnival, with roles being subverted and later reverted.

The chapter examines the relationships between authors, which are evident in the text, and argues that these can be read as a key part of the networked book. The documentation of the process of writing the text can often be more valuable than the finished text for understanding the nature of collaborative authorship.

1.1.3 Approach

In order to explore *A Million Penguins* as a piece of collaboratively authored writing, we can not read the multiple versions of novel that made up the project text in isolation. The process of the collaboration must also be read. The project text of *A Million Penguins* is defined in this chapter as:

Project information: This is where project authors (those individuals and organisations who developed and lead the project and are evident in the project text) provide information about the *A Million Penguins* project. This includes information transmitted through structural and navigational devices.

Discussion: This is where editors and authors taking part in the project communicated.

Blogs: There are three blogs within the project text. These are 'The Blog' (the project blog where Penguin editors posted information about the project), 'Penguin Blog' (the 'official' blog of Penguin Books UK), the 'team blog' (of the De Montfort University editors).

The Wiki Novel: This is the digital text of all versions of the wiki novel.

In order to fully discuss the project text of *A Million Penguins*, we must begin to understand the collaborative authoring process and explore the roles of the authors and

readers. This thesis adapts Genette's approach (1997) and examines the paratexts of the project text. Genette defines the paratext as the liminal devices within the framework of the printed book (including signs of authorship, notes and front and back covers), which form a threshold between what is inside the book and what is outside the book. The presence of paratext can be applied to the networked book and the textual material surrounding it can be explored as a framework, which transmits meaning to readers. These devices are the threshold between text and reader and so Genette considers paratexts to be a framework of interpretation. In examining *A Million Penguins*, this threshold is of particular significance. It is 'a zone between text and off text, a zone not only of transition but also of transaction: a privileged place of pragmatics and a strategy' (Genette, 1997, p.2). In the project text of *A Million Penguins*, this zone becomes a battleground. As authors and editors fight for control over the wiki novel, all the conflict is documented in the paratext. Using the paratext to address how the roles of author and reader interact through this process and their interactions with the text, allows an understanding of the nature of collaboration in the project.

To address this concept of the paratextual threshold in relation to the project text of *A Million Penguins,* this thesis divides its paratext into two areas, according to Genette's (1997) approach. These areas in *A Million Penguins* are:

The **Epitext** (Liminal devices outside the book.): This includes the project information, blog and discussion.

The **Peritext** (Liminal devices inside the book.): This includes the wiki novel that was produced during the project. In this thesis, this is expanded to include the behaviour of authors, readers and editors within the textual space.

A Million Penguins raises many questions about the nature of collaborative authorship, interactions between author, reader and text and the potential for the construction of narrative by multiple authors. This chapter, through a critical focus on both the peritext and epitext of the project text, examines the nature of authority and control in the collaborative text of the networked book. By addressing the behaviour of authors and the role of editors as a part of the paratext, it considers the narrative that was produced through this project and discusses how its paratext frames it for interpretation. It then examines how the paratext influences the experience for the readers of both the wiki novel and the project text (both in its real-time form and its archived state after the project had finished). Through a comprehensive examination of the paratextual elements of the project text, it draws conclusions about collaborative authoring and addresses how it challenges the traditionally held positions of author, reader and text. It examines the process of collaborative authorship and sees the networked book as a form of social text. It concludes with the understand that a reading of the book must include a reading of all its peripheral elements.

1.2 History of Authorship

The networked book must be positioned within a wider history of authorship. This chapter, which examines how the role of the author and their behaviour becomes a part of the networked book, will first look at the history of authorship. By understanding the position of the author in the print tradition, we will be able to analyse how their position changes when their writing is published and read online. The introduction of this thesis has addressed the nature of collaborative writing and will now consider the wider history of authorship.

1.2.1 Single Authorship

In print traditions, the concept of authorship has moved from the oral tradition of myth and storytelling to the production of a printed book being seen as the work of a sole individual. The author whose work is published in print form is traditionally seen as an individual figure, one who often works alone to create a piece of writing to which, when it is completed, their name is attached. This often ignores the role of co-authors, editors and publishers in the writing and publishing process. Jack Stillinger (1991) calls the traditional image of the author 'the romantic myth of the author as solitary genius' (Stillinger, 1991, p.202). M. Thomas Inge (2001) also describes the solitary author as a 'myth' and recognises that it was established by English and American Romanticism (Inge, 2001, p.624). It is difficult to pinpoint exactly where and when this myth of the solitary author began but according to James S. Leonard and Christine E.

Wharton (1994) it is entrenched in the idea of the poet being able to capture something of the essence of life:

> '[W]riting is the tool with which the poet tries to capture (or recapture) the elusive glimpse into the good and beautiful truth of things lying at the heart of silence. The silent locus/nature of truth calls for solitude, mirroring the truth itself as transcendentally unitary' (Leonard and Wharton, 1994, p.25).

The figure of the author developed as someone who writes alone (Brodkey, 1987). This image of the solitary writer focuses our attention on creation as part of isolation rather than the social aspects of writing, which include 'reading other writers, discussing ideas with other people, and writing to and for others in a language whose grammar, genres, and figures of speech encode collectivity' (Long, 1992, p.180 -181). These collaborative aspects of the writing process have been ignored and the image of the single, isolated author has endured.

Through a key investigation of the evolution of authorship, Martha Woodmansee (1994) determines that until the 1750s in Germany the writer was still represented as one of the many craftsmen involved equally in the production of a book. She finds that the idea that the writer is a 'special participant in the production process - the only one worthy of attention- is of recent provenience. It is a by-product of the Romantic notion that significant writers break altogether with tradition to create something utterly new, unique - in a word, "original"' (Woodmansee, 1994, p.16). The author became celebrated as a 'unique individual responsible for a unique product' (Woodmansee, 1994, p.38) This notion of the author as sole creator of a work has endured and has become a fundamental part of contemporary print authorship. Esposito (2003) refers to the printed book as the 'primal book' and recognises that its authenticity comes from the

idea that it is created by one author who has something to say. However, the primal book is a myth as a book is typically created by multiple individuals working in collaboration. However, this myth has endured.

Woodmansee (1994), through studying writing practices since the Renaissance, identifies that the modern definition of authorship is a 'relatively recent formation'. Previously, authorship was a collaborative process. She further argues that the concept that genuine authorship consists in 'individual acts of origination' is an entirely modern myth (Woodmansee, 1994, p.38). The formation of this 'modern myth' is connected to ownership of a text. As a text became printed, following the invention of the Gutenberg press, and bound as a book, it acquired a single author. Through this monumental shift in the nature of book production and distribution during the print revolution, the author's role came central and their name served as a means of classification and cannonisation of a text.

Peter Jaszi (1994) argues that this, as well as the rise of copyright in Britain in 1709, has meant that the Romantic notion of the single author creating a single work has endured. The rise of copyright legislation has led to the professionalisation of authorship. Authors were given the legal right to be recognised as the originator of a text and therefore owners of a commodity, which could then be sold. This notion of copyright formed the basis for a new profession and industry to develop in the eighteenth century, where the author was viewed as creating a profitable work (Hammond, 2006).

1.2.2 History of Collaborative Writing

A networked book is the mass collaborative effort of multiple authors. However, collaborative writing is not a new form of authorship. For some, collaboration is identified be a 'primary mode of composition' (Bennett, 2005, p.96). Stillinger suggests that multiple authorship is a 'frequently occurring phenomenon' and has been 'one of the routine ways of producing literature all along' (Stillinger, 1991, p.201 in Bennett, 2005, p.96). Thomas M. Inge argues that collaboration is not simply the act of two or more individuals creating something together but that, '[a]nytime another hand enters into an effort, a kind of collaboration occurs' (Ing, 2001, p.629). Collaborative authorship has become understood as a primary means of creation in a networked environment and provokes a re-evaluation of the collaborative nature of authorship.

1.2.3 The Death of the Author

This notion of the sole author has endured into Western society of the twenty-first century as reflection of the enduring value of ownership as well as of talent originating within an individual. However, the myth of the single, solitary author possessing power and authority over their writing has been continually and critically challenged during the twentieth century. In the late 1960s, post-structuralist critics Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault begin to criticise the author as a social construct rather than a social fact. Barthes argues that the author has control over the text only until the work is released to its audience. For him, assigning a text to an author is to impose a limit on the text and he declares that, 'the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author' (Barthes, 1968, p.148).

In his essay, 'The Death of the Author,' Barthes (1968) challenges the concept of the author as holding authority over the creation and reception of a text. Instead, he sees an author's role as that of a 'scriptor.' This role involves combining pre-existing texts in new ways to present something new to a reader. For Barthes, all writing draws on previously written texts and so the author can not be viewed as creating something entirely new. The reader holds an active position and they must interpret the text rather than be led through it by the author:

> '[A] text is made of multiple writing, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where the multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unit lies not in its origin [...]' (Barthes, 1968, p.148).

For Barthes, the author is no longer at the centre of the work. Instead, he attributes authority and significance to the reader.

Barthes's notion of the author has been subsequently used to explore hypertext. In S/Z, Barthes writes about an 'ideal textuality,' which Landow (2006) recognises as matching what has become known as hypertext. For Landow, hypertext blurs the boundary between reader and author and so resembles Barthes's vision of the ideal text. His distinction between readerly and writerly text appears to mirror the distinction between print and electronic texts. The presence of 'multiple reading paths' (Landow, 2006, p.25) within a hypertext has created the 'writerly' text' and has empowered the reader and disrupted the authority of the author. As Bolter observes, 'what is unnatural in print becomes natural in the electronic medium and will soon no longer need saying at all, because it can be shown' (Bolter, 1991, p.143).

1.2.4 What is an Author?

In his essay 'What is an Author?', Foucault (1969) asks literary critics and historians to question the modern idea of authorship and to imagine its future by re-understanding its past. He recognises the emergence of the author in the cultural context of the eighteenth century and argues that, '[t]he coming into being of the notion of the 'author' constitutes a privileged moment of individualization the history of ideas' (Foucault, 1979, p.29-57).

Foucault responds to Barthes, arguing that while his separation of author and text is productive, it is not sufficient. He suggests that the figure of the author exists not as a 'real writer' but rather as a discursive function created and perpetuated by state and cultural discourse (Foucault, 1969, p.112). He disputes Barthes's vision of the 'death of the author.' For him, conclusions drawn in a text by an author are part of discourse rather than a part of authorship. The end of these conclusions does not signal the death of the author but rather the death of the discourse they created and presented to a reader.

Foucault recognises that a text, even if attributed to one author, will be interpreted according to its relation to other sources. In *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* Foucault (1969) claims that the 'frontiers of a book are never clear-cut' because 'it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network...[a] network of references' (Foucault, 2007, p.2).

1.2.5 Reconfiguring the Author

In hypertext, the functions of reader and author become more deeply entwined with each other than ever before. One clear sign of such transference of authorial power from author to reader (in terms of the ability to contribute to the text) appears in a reader's ability to choose his or her own path through the text, to annotate text and to create links between documents written by others. What the hypertext solicits of the reader is not simply reception but instead the active, independent, autonomous construction of meaning (Landow, 1991, p.71).

For Landow, (1991) hypertext embodies many of the ideas proposed by Barthes and Foucault. He summarises the link between hypertext and literary theory by noting that, 'critical theory promises to theorise hypertext and hypertext promises to embody and thereby test aspects of theory' (Landow, 1991, p.2). For Barthes, Foucault and Landow, the text is a form of non-linear network connected to more than just itself. The self takes the form of a de-centered (or centerless) network of nodes that, on another level, also serves as a node within another centerless network (Landow, 1991). Landow sees the text as being formed of networks and links and believes that this creates a sense of an eroding, or even vanishing, authorial figure. Some researchers, such as Michael Heim, (1987) see this erosion as a part of electronic information technology. For Heim, the author becomes less important as readers are able to search for text for themselves. Heim claims that, 'the arbitrariness and availability of database searching decreases the felt sense of an authorial control over what is written' (Heim, 1987, p.220). Here authorial control is construed as the ability to present information directly to a reader. If the reader is able to search for this information themselves then their level of control is decreased.

Within a hypertext environment, all writing becomes a form of collaborative writing. The first aspect of this collaboration can be seen when comparing the role of

author and reader; since the active reader collaborates with the author in producing a text by the choices he or she makes. The second aspect of collaboration appears when comparing the author with the virtual presence of all previous authors whose work is still present (Landow, 1991, p.88). Within this network, a text does not exist by itself. Instead, it exists in relation to the other texts that surround it. Any text electronically linked to it can be seen as part of a collaboration (Landow, 1991). The sense of collaboration in hypertext is prevalent as collaboration can exist in many and varied ways.

1.2.6 The Disappearing Author

In the networked environment, where multiple individuals can take on the role of author, the author can be seen to be disappearing (Miller, 2005) and the roles of the author and reader have overlapped. Traditional values of authorship and ownership are particularly challenged in a networked book as readers can take on many of the functions of the author, including writing text and communicating with readers. Woodmansee recognises this overlap and notes that, 'the computer is dissolving the boundaries essential to the survival of our modern fiction of the author as the sole creator of unique, original works' (Woodmansee, 1994, p.27). The notion of the sole author, who holds complete authority, is vanishing and in its place is emerging the sense that anyone can take part in textual production as an author. Networked books invite their readers to take part as authors by adding annotations on the text, leaving comments, editing the text or adding their own textual contributions. This new sense of

textual freedom is a shift in the traditional view of authorship to something much more collaborative.

1.2.7 Genette and Authorship

The paratext frames the reception of a book. In a printed book, it denotes authorship and sets a physical division between author and reader. Genette views it as being 'characterized by an authorial intention and assumption of responsibility' (Genette, 2007, p.3) He focuses his attention on the printed book and recognises that the author, as well as the publisher, is seen as being responsible for the creation, distribution and reception of the text. Its readers view the author as being in control of what is produced and how it is received. This sense of responsibility for the paratext is an important feature of the printed book to Genette. He states that, 'something is not a paratext unless the author or one of his associates accepts responsibility for it' (Genette, 2007, p.9). This identification of an authorial presence, responsible for the text, can be argued (Smith and Wilson, 2011, p.8) is an ideological product of the impulse to establish intellectual property authorial rights.

1.3 Project Information

The project text of *A Million Penguins* does not only include the wiki novel (in its multiple versions) but also all the information displayed on the project website. This information includes text written before, during and after the project's duration and appears in several sections on the project website. It includes the 'About the Project', 'Pre-Launch Discussion', 'Current Events', 'Recent Changes', 'Guidelines' 'Contact' and 'Toolbox' on the left hand side of the page.

Fig 1 *A Million Penguins* Project Information

This project information frames the project, it is instructional, organised and allows a reader or author to navigate the text. This project information was authored by the project authors and editors. This role was not taken by a sole author but instead by the project editors from Penguin and De Montfort University working together to structure the project and explain its aims and contexts to potential and actively contributing authors. The text they collectively produced to provide information and guidance to these potential participants can be read as a paratext, which informs reception of the

project and frames collaboration. This project information serves as a framework for authors and readers to engage with the project and a tool for interaction and so it forms part of the project text. These textual instructions are part of the networked book.

A key part of the project is encouraging readers, as potential authors, to take part as authors. It is the 'story' of the project that is, in part, told by project authors and editors through the project information that engages individuals in participating in the project. Part of the wider narrative of this networked book is this 'story.'

1.3.1 Preface

The project information can be read as a form of preface, which Genette defines as a 'publisher's peritext' (Genette, 1997, p.161). He describes this form of paratext as 'every type of introductory (preludial or postludial) text, authorial or allographic, consisting of a discourse produced on the subject of the text that follows or precedes it' (Genette, 1997, p.161). The project information, in its aim to introduce the project, operates as a preface, both during the time span of the project (to encourage people to take part as authors) and when the project was over (and readers read the archived project text).

Through the project information, the role of the project author is asserted as one of control. They not only edited and structured the novel but also developed a framework for the novel within the project text. For example, when the project ended and the archived novel appeared on the project website it was accompanied by text written by the project authors:

'Okay – that's it. Stop writing and put your pencils down.' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

This statement is reminiscent of a statement given by an invigilator at the end of an examination. The project authors are asserting authority by ending the project. They thank everyone who took part, on behalf of Penguin Books and De Montfort University. This implies that their role was one of control and, although authors could take part in writing and editing the wiki novel and add comments in the discussions, there are areas of the project website where only project authors have access.

The project authors include the team of editors from Penguin publishers and researchers from De Montfort University. This information is clearly displayed in the project information and re-iterated throughout the project text. This paratextual information frames the project authors in a specific context. Both are institutions with a background in writing and publishing. There is an assumption that they have knowledge and this gives them authority. Logos of both institution are displayed on each page of the project website. This gives a continual visual reminder of the origins of the project and of their two identities.

Despite this continual presence of both De Montfort University and Penguin, the project authors often remain anonymous in the project information. Text, in particular instructions, is not attributed to a particular author, which would, as Genette (1997) claims, provide key information. A reader would interpret the name of the author in a specific context and so read their words in a particular light. Instead, a reader reads the information in the context of the project as a whole and makes assumptions that the project authors are speaking rather than an individual authorial voice. When an identity is given to text in the project information, it is often credited to 'Admin@Penguin'. This does not give specific information about an author's identity. Instead they are speaking

for an organisation and so assume a position of authority while at the same time do not assert individuality or individual responsibility for the words.

1.3.2 Prior Paratext

Examining the project information from a temporal perspective reveals that it resembles what Genette terms a 'prior paratext' (Genette, 1997, p.5). He adopts the date of the text's appearance before publication as a frame of reference and elements of the prior paratext appear before a text goes to print. These include 'prospectuses, announcements of forthcoming publications, or elements that are connected to prepublication in a newspaper or magazine' (Genette, 1997, p.4). Genette's idea of the prior paratext can be extended in the networked book to include elements of the book that were written before the book was made public. In the case of *A Million Penguins,* this 'publication' is defined as the date when it went public as a space for collaboration.

In *A Million Penguins,* the 'Pre-Launch Discussion' can be read as a a prior paratext. This section of the project text includes technical notes made by several editors of the project from Penguin and De Montfort University. These include requests for changes to be made to the project website. For example, the addition of details that would make the project text easier to navigate. This information can be recognised as a prior paratext as dates and times appear next to each part of the discussion. Names of the authors of each comment are recorded and we are also able to see the time of each discussion. These paratextual elements, structured in the 'Pre-Launch Discussion' section of the project website, gives initial information about the project editors. We read them as individuals making requests, on behalf of potential contributors to the

project, to an anonymous technical support team (who, although anonymous, are also project authors).

This form of prior paratext serves as a record of the discussions that led to the development of the networked book. They also function as an assertion of the control the project authors have over the project. The inclusion of this material enforces the idea that this networked book was conceived of and designed by a team.

Fig 2 Pre-Launch Discussion

The navigational and structural elements of the project text are crucial elements of the project's epitext. Their presence controls how both potential authors and readers were able to interact with the project text and it would have shaped their experience. These can be also be read as a 'prior paratext' (Genette, 1997) as these elements were decided on before the process of writing the book began. This form of navigational and structural paratext includes links, which readers could use to navigate the project text. A search feature is included so that readers could find relevant information. Links could also take readers away from the project text to the websites of Penguin and De Montfort University. These destination add a sense of authority to the project text as they are linked to established organisations.

1.3.3 Guidelines

The project authors provide 'Guidelines' for authors contributing to the project. These include 'Technical Guidelines', 'Ethical Guidelines' and 'Terms and Conditions' (*A Million Penguins*, 2007).

Fig 3 Technical Guidelines

Each of these linked options takes a reader or potential author to the appropriate section and gives them information about how to navigate the project text, including the wiki novel. The name of the author of each piece of information is not given, which implies that project authors have written these guidelines. These guidelines can not be edited by authors as part of the wiki. They are a form of closed text within the project text.

The ethical guidelines are of particular interest as they set the standards of behaviour for authors who taking part in the project. They transmit information about

the intended 'sender and addressee' of the project text (Genette, 1997, p.322). This text includes the passage:

> '*A Million Penguins* is an experiment in creativity and community - it will only work if we work as a community and leave our egos at the door, next to the coat-rack. Above all, remember always that all contributions may be edited, altered or removed by other contributors. Below are a few guidelines which we hope will make this collaborative exercise as harmonious as possible - but treating other users and their writing with respect will be key to producing a successful wikinovel' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

Such project rhetoric frames *A Million Penguins.* In several places in the project text, the project authors re-enforce the idea that this project is focused on community and collaboration. Although these assertions of collaboration are often found in parts of the project text where they can not be edited. This sets a division between collaborator and emphasises the idea that different collaborators had different roles.

1.3.4 Author Contributions

Other areas of the project text were able to be edited by authors. To do so, they made the transition from reader to potential author by creating an account.[32] This involved submitting personal information to verify their identity. This project was designed to be open to everyone but, in reality, they needed to register to take part. Each author was required to log in before they had the freedom to edit the wiki. This provided a level of control for the project authors. Theoretically, they could restrict access to the project and authors could not contribute freely. However, once someone had registered and logged in, they were allowed a level of textual freedom over the majority of the project

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32 During the first ten days of the project, more than 1200 people created an account (Ettinghausen, 2007e).

text. Certain forms of project information and guidelines could not be edited but most of the project text could be altered, added to or deleted. An 'edit' link appears next to the text that could be edited. This then either prompted a potential author to log in or allowed an author to make changes to the wiki.[33] The 'History' link allows subsequent readers to see the history of edits. These edits appear in chronological order alongside the contributing author's name.

This information gives context to the project and knowledge can be gleaned from information about contributions. This allows interpretation of the project text as a whole. These edits form the 'original' paratext, defined by Genette as elements that 'appear at the same time as the text' (Genette, 1997, p.5). These contributions to the wiki were live, having been added during the project time span. They illustrate that this project is a form of collaborative writing as the activity of all authors is documented directly on the project text. This activity is then read as part of the networked book.

1.3.5 Terms and Conditions

Readers were required to register their details with the project to take part as authors but they were also bound by Penguin's 'Terms and Conditions', displayed on the wiki. Potential authors were instructed to read these and 'register [their] compliance':

> 'By clicking on the "Register" button you are confirming that you have read these rules and Terms and Conditions and you agree to abide by them' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

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33 During the first ten days of the project, 600 pages had been created and more than 7000 edits had been made (Ettinghausen, 2007e). After three weeks, there had been more than 9000 edits. (Ettinghausen, 2007g).

Copyright of *A Million Penguins* was held by Penguin and in the terms and conditions they disclaimed all liability. They asserted that:

> 'By posting your submission on the Wiki Novel and the Site, you grant us a non-exclusive, perpetual, royalty-free, world-wide license to use, reproduce, modify, adapt, translate, publish, distribute and display any content you submit to us in any format now known or later developed. If you do not want to grant us these rights, please do not submit your content to us' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

This information made it clear that Penguin were ultimately in control as project authors. They also give interesting details about their perspective on the nature of collaboration in the project. They set out the types of potentially offensive contributions that they will not allow and they note that:

> 'Penguin does not moderate submissions before these are posted on the Wiki Novel but retains the right to delete, move, edit, update or otherwise alter submissions in any way, at our discretion and without notice' (A Million *Penguins,* 2007).

Here, it is made clear to potential authors that they are welcome to contribute but not every contribution will be accepted and become part of the wiki novel.

1.4 Discussion

Everyone involved in *A Million Penguins* was able to contribute to the 'Discussion'. This is a key area of the wiki and a link to it is given prominent position in the project text. This space operated in a similar way to wiki novel but was an epitextual space for authors and editors to reflect on the project. Here, they gathered to propose ideas on how to develop the novel, made suggestions about how best to work collaboratively and complained when their writing was altered or deleted. Multiple authors added their own text to this discussion space through a series of headings. These epitextual elements are framed by the name of their author and the date and time. These locate the paratexts in the timeframe of the project. Titles were given to each discussion, added by their author. This gives an element of textual authority as discussions were framed by their titular apparatus (Genette, 1997).

Fig 4 Discussion

1.4.1 A Large Scale Conversation

The discussion became a form of 'large scale conversation' (Sack, 2004). Warren Sack (2004) defines this form of conversation as large, networked-based and public as a 'space' created through the electronic exchange of words' (Sack, 2004, p.247). Sack considers that existing social scientific theories for understanding conversations, in particular, discourse analysis (Schiffrin, 1994) and conversation analysis (Hutchby and

Wooffitt, 1998) are unsuitable for analysing large-scale conversations. He notes that existing theory addresses small-scale conversations (interactions between thirty or fewer people) and these theories can not simply be scaled up due to the numbers taking part. Instead, large scale conversations, such as those taking part in the peripheries of the networked book, must be viewed as of mass collaboration rather that other forms of conversation.

In *A Million Penguins*, the conversation is tangled and confused as everyone was able to speak over everyone else. The discussion is difficult to navigate. Individuals made suggestions but these were frequently ignored. For example, in the 'About' section of the discussion, which includes 'Hints for Discussion', one author makes suggestions for the layout and structure of the discussion pages. He or she suggests a level of organisation in the discussions and states that, '[a] little organisation never hurts' (*A Million Penguins*, 2007) but their suggestion is ignored. In this way, the discussion resembles the wiki novel. It is a chaotic textual space with few boundaries. The only boundaries were set by decisions taken by project authors concerning structural and navigational devises and the transmission of project information through the project text. As a paratext, the discussion frames the wiki novel and provides an indication of the difficulties faced in the project's attempts at collaborative authorship.

1.4.2 Collaboration

The discussion space was used both to reflect on what was being written in the wiki novel and the collaborative writing process. Authors discuss the perceived vandalism of the text, which many saw as anti-collaborative behaviour:

'It seems that we get the story to develop a bit, then one or two individuals come in and walk all over everything, spraying vulgarity like graffiti on every screen. I am concerned, but do not know how to proceed?' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

Frustrations were expressed in the discussions and it became obvious that many authors viewed the project differently from one another. Some saw it as an opportunity for textual graffiti and others wanted to write a structured and coherent novel. Conclusions were drawn about the difficulties of collaborative authoring. For example, one author claims, '[t]he only way to make this a serious and controlled work is to eliminate every author but one' (*A Million Penguins*, 2007). This statement is then taken by another author and turned into part of a short piece of prose and presented as their contribution to the discussion (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

Editors are also present in the discussion. In one discussion, entitled 'Notes From Penguin', editors ask authors for feedback on the project. This both offered authors a chance for their ideas to be heard but also asserted editorial control over the project. In asking for feedback, they assumed a role of authority. Just as in the wiki novel, it is difficult to see who was in control of the discussion. The editors, project authors and authors were all permitted a level of textual control in this epitext as they could start their own discussions and add to, or edit, those of others. Conflicts arose due to these freedoms and created an unstable form of paratext. During the project time frame, the peritext could be altered at any moment. A record was kept of all the changes but it resulted in an unstable text, which mirrored the instability of the wiki novel. There was a battle for control of the text and it was partly fought in the discussions. By reading the discussions, we can clearly see this conflict and confusion. Reading them alongside the narrative that the authors created provides part of the reading experience.

The discussions provide a framework for interpreting the text as they document the process of its creation.

1.5 Editorial Blogs

It was not just the authors who were instrumental in shaping the wiki novel by adding their ideas and editing the text. A team of editors from Penguin and De Montfort University worked hard to keep the project running. They fought against the chaos, tried, to a certain extent, to control the text and imposed certain rules on contributors and even banned a few from taking part. The editors documented their part in the project on three separate blogs, which are part of the project's epitext. These blogs appear in the project text as, 'The Blog,' 'Team Blog' and 'Penguin Blog.' Each was authored collaboratively by a small group of people but not everyone had equal access to them. For example, editors from De Montfort University and Penguin were able to contribute to the *A Million Penguins* Blog. The Team Blog was restricted to the editors from De Montfort University and Penguin Blog was only for editors from Penguin. In this collaborative project, the two teams of editors (from each organisation) separated themselves into two groups. The distinction between both commercial and literary (Penguin) and academic (De Montfort University) appears to divide the two editorial teams. Interaction between the two is seen to some extent in the 'Pre-Launch Discussion' section of the project text. Project information, not credited to either team, can be assumed to come from both.

1.5.1 Power and Control

It is important to consider whether the role of the editors was to control and shape the novel or to help support the collaborative process and assess the realities of the editor's

presence in the novel. It is necessary to question whether they simply re-enacted the role of editors in the creation of a print novel or whether they developed a new role of editor in response to the shifting needs of the wiki novel. It is also important to discuss how the authors viewed the editors and how any perception of editorial control, real or otherwise, influenced the development of the wiki novel. In this project, a great deal of information about the way the wiki operated was recorded in the three project blogs, which form a part of the project's epitext.

The project text encouraged high numbers of people to contribute to the wiki novel. By the time the novel was archived on 7th March 2007, 1,476 people had registered as 'users' and between them they had made over 11,000 edits (Mason and Thomas 2008, p.3). As soon as the project was launched on 1st February 2007, it became evident, through the numbers of people beginning to contribute to the novel, that it needed a greater level of management and control to stop the text resulting in chaos and the interactions between authors leading to arguments. Over the first weekend of the project, the editorial team organised itself to particularly work to prevent textual vandalism and remove spam. This information is documented in the project blogs as a form of factual paratext (Genette, 1997), used to frame the events of the project.

The project's research report, authored by Bruce Mason and Sue Thomas, reveals the private email discussions between editors during this time. These show that the editors from De Montfort University were battling against a lack of sleep and that they were exhausted by checking through never-ending edits (Mason and Thomas, 2008). The language used in descriptions of the editorial work evokes a sense of a battle. It emphasises the idea that editors were fighting against contributing authors. This may have been a collaborative work but it was also a fierce battle to prevent the writing of a completely unreadable mess.

There were attempts by the editors to develop a narrative and a clear direction in the plot of wiki novel. This came particularly from the editors from Penguin who had hopes of producing a publishable novel by the end of the project. At many points in the project, they urged authors to work together to develop a clear narrative structure. In his post on the project blog on 13th March 2007, Penguin editor Ettinghausen called for 'wiki-ists (wikitas? wikitors?) to take hold of the novel and pull a plot together' (Ettinghausen, 2007e). These pleas for a sense of order in the novel were provoked by the constantly changing plot and the characters who were continually being created and deleted. The Penguin editors attempted to assert some sense of editorial control in their calls for some kind of continuity in the wiki novel.

To understand how the collaborative novel became so overwhelmed by the shift and changes of its authors it is necessary to look at how this wiki novel was designed. Choosing to use a wiki meant that anyone could register and take part and add, delete or reverse any of the text of the novel. The epitext reveals that the project used a 'MediaWiki'[34] and a linked logo at the bottom right hand side of each page on the project website is provided to take users to further details about this free software package. The aim was for the wiki novel to be open to anyone who wanted to take part as an author. One editor explains that this proved to be both a strength and a weakness of the project and suggests ways to limit contributions from what she termed 'vandals':

> 'Restricting entry would be counter to the ethos of the project and I wouldn't want to advocate that, but what if there was a way to limit the scope of destruction by vandals? For example, I think it would make quite a difference if there was some mechanism in the software that prevented contributors pasting the same word or phrase repeatedly, ad nauseum. If YellowBanana had to type banana over and over, they'd probably tire of it much sooner. Not so much damage would be done' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

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34 MediaWiki is a free software open source wiki. Available from: http://www.mediawiki.org

There was a clear sense, through such editor's comments, that some authors were labelled as 'vandals' and that their contributions needed to be restricted, contained or deleted. Although understandable in a practical sense, this view placed value judgements on certain contributions to the project. Contributions that resembled elements of traditional print novels were nurtured by editors and writing judged to damage the novel as a whole was deleted. This included spam, misspelled words, repetition, randomly inserted words and obscenities. This might limit the creativity of the novel in terms of any purposefully playful approach to language use or the emergence of new literary techniques that resembled anarchy.

Throughout the project, the editors tried to develop strategies to counteract the unpredictable nature of the novel. They soon realised that it could not be written entirely in real-time. The whole text changed so continually that it was impossible for the editors to catch up. They were chasing an ever-changing text in an attempt to fulfill their perception of their editorial role. Pullinger, leading the project at De Montfort University, describes the experience of editing the novel:

> '[T]here's a wiki-storm raging at http://www.amillionpenguins.com and we've been battening down the hatches, chopping down broken branches, and hammering plywood across the French doors, so to speak' (Pullinger, 2007b).

This description sums up the experience articulated by many of the editors. There was a sense that their role was to tidy up the text after the extreme battering that it endured from the authors. They appeared to be protecting the novel from the damaged caused by the authors who were creating it rather than encouraging any output as part of the novel.

By the Monday after the first weekend of the project, the editorial team decided in desperation that they needed to set clear 'reading windows'. These were times when

all writing stopped for a few hours each day and the editors took full control over the text. The aim was to give the editors time to do their work, which they viewed to be to 'restructure, tidy, fix links, do minor edits, and delete the pornification of some of the writing' (Pullinger, 2007b). This work that the reading windows would allow is described by Ettinghausen:

> 'This will enable us to do some housekeeping (restore links, remove pornography (!) and Chinese (!!)), Jon to have a read of a static novel and perhaps you, the community, can also use this time to read the work so far, check in on the discussions and have a think about where the story might be heading. Above all, it will also give us the chance to catch our breath - another five and a half weeks of this might send us over the edge!' (Ettinghausen, 2007c).

One aim of the reading window was to allow the editors to read a 'static novel'. The wiki novel in progress was impossible to read as it was continually changing. Everything from plot to characters was in flux. However, by imposing reading windows, the novel was contained by the editors in a traditional and comprehendible print format. This allowed them to do what they perceived to be their job; editing text as through this was a 'static' print novel. The process of collaboration had to be halted to allow editors to perform their expected role in the process. The editors having such control over the text is recognised by Pullinger, as she viewed the reading breaks as a 'lock down' on the novel:

> '('lock down' seems more appropriate somehow, with its echoes of imprisoning the text and controlling the population, than the more genteel 'reading break'!)' (Pullinger, 2007b).

Although Pullinger's comment about the reading break appears to be sarcastic, it illustrates how the reading break could have be seen by authors contributing to the wiki novel. The editors did have ultimate control over the text. They were able to impose reading breaks and change author's work without permission and so assert their authority.

The views of some authors about the role of the editors and their authority over the novel were evident within the novel. This was the place where authors could best express themselves and so within the novel authors played with the ideas of control and censorship. For example, a character in the novel is asked to write a great novel but is given certain restrictions:

> 'Oh, one more thing. Try to steer clear of drug references. They are unsavory, and one would not want to have it appear we condone or support drug use by having any references to such things. Oh, and now that I think of it, don't make it too flowery or pretentious. And I don't much like self-referential elements. Oh. but, MAKE it Great. Make this the greatest novel of the twenty-first century. ....Oh.... and... that reminds me, try to avoid religious references. Ah... and if at all possible, don't make it too funny, or lateral, or way-out, or you may get accused of writing pulp fiction. ... Oh and....' (*A Million Penguins*, 2007).

This is a clear parody of *A Million Penguins*, where authors were both encouraged to write, and write well, but their output could be controlled by the editors. This appears to be an attack on the authority of the editors over the project. Such commentary on the writing process in the project's epitext illustrates how both need to be read together for a full understanding of the project text.

In many ways, the editors appeared to struggle with their role. In one way, they seemed to hold onto traditional expectations of an editor's role in creating a print novel (which can be seen as to make, or suggest, structural and editorial changes to a text) and

in another they tried to embrace the uncertainties of the collaborative process that new technology allowed. In particular, the Penguin editors appeared to struggle to develop their role so that it was suitable for a collaborative digital format. In many ways, they simply transposed their existing roles as Penguin editors onto this new medium and worked in a way that would have been familiar to them.

In their posts on the Penguin project blog, the editors struggled to make sense of this new type of novel and their shifting roles. For example, Ettinghausen comments that, 'Jon too is struggling as by the time he has read the novel and written his report, something completely different has appeared on the screen' (Ettinghausen, 2007c). The editors appear to be have remained in a traditional role as they tried to make sense of the novel and produce a clear report in response. Ettinghausen draws attention to the conflicts of the editor's role as he writes jokingly, 'PS I see Jon scrawling on his monitor with a red marker pen - expect an editorial report soon!' (Ettinghausen, 2007d). There appears to have been a sense of awareness here that traditional methods of editing were becoming less relevant.

Although the editors did have a sense of control over the project they were also aware that this was a collaborative project. At many points in the process, they urged authors to take part in the decision making process and directly questioned their own roles as editors. There were frequent comments on the Penguin project blog that authors could get in touch if they had any suggestions or ideas about the way the wiki novel was developing. Editors appeared to be uncertain about what their role should be. As Ettinghausen posts on the 'Penguin Blog' early on in the project:

'So we now have a dilemma as the creators of the site - do we take a hands of stance and let you, the community sort everything out for yourselves with the

freedom and anarchy that that will bring? Or should we try and add some additional structure to this project in the hope that it will improve the experience for many and minimise the frustration caused by reversion wars?' (Ettinghausen, 2007b).

This dilemma is at the heart of *A Million Penguins*. If the authors took full control of the wiki novel then it would be completely unreadable. If the editors asserted control then the structure of the novel would be clearer and it would be easier to read. It would be collaborative but would replicate the relationship between author and editor as seen in print publishing. The only difference was that in *A Million Penguins* there were thousands of authors to keep in order. These dilemmas echo through the project's epitext. They are situated outside the wiki novel but form a key part of the project text. This epitext allowed authors and readers to begin to understand the complexities of the project and realise their own roles and the level of authorial authority that they were permitted.

1.6 The Wiki

A Million Penguins aimed to produce an experimental novel, explore the potential for new collaborative publishing technologies and play with the traditions of the authoring and publishing processes. In facilitating the creation of a collaborative novel, its editors (both from Penguin and De Montfort University) had to make many decisions about how the project would be organised and managed. In doing so, they made fundamental choices that influenced the kind of literature that could be produced. These decisions were displayed and reinforced in the project's epitext. The authors had control over the words that they wrote and edited but the editors had wider control over the structure of the project through the initial decisions made while planning the project. They decided that the aim of the project would be to write a novel; an established form of literature tied to existing print traditions.

In his definition of the novel, E.M. Forster (1927) cites Abel Chevalley and states that it is a fiction in prose of a certain extent and adds that he defines this 'extent' as being over 50,000 words. The novel is commonly thought to have come to prominence in eighteenth century England (Eisenstein, 1997), but has been recognised as emerging much earlier (Moore, 2010). Although it can be identified as having several key characteristics (it consists of a prose narrative, has some degree of plot, is substantially long and has it origins in print) it is a flexible form, [o]pen to every possibility, its boundaries fluctuate in all direction' (Robert, 2000, p.58). Despite this sense of freedom for an author to write any novel they choose, the expectations concerning the format of the printed novel remain fairly consistent.

By choosing to call the wiki novel a 'novel' *A Million Penguins* is addressing the potential for what a novel could be. However, though the involvement of Penguin, a well respected publisher with a long history, certain expectations were set and this seemed to influence the motives and ambitions of authors who took part. By choosing to write the novel using a wiki, they made decisions about the way that authors would collaborate with one another. All these decisions both limited and liberated what the project could produce and tied it to existing literary traditions.

1.6.1 The Wiki Novel

The project text of *A Million Penguins* shows that the project's aim was to produce a coherent wiki novel written by multiple authors. However, by attempting to write a wiki novel, the project set certain expectations on the authors who took part. As a form, the novel has a long established literary history and its readers would hold certain preconceptions of the form in terms of its length, format, appearance and the way it has been authored. The novel is typically seen as a single-authored work. In reality this is rarely the case as authors work closely with editors but the enduring preconception is that a novel is written by one author and that only one imagination is present in the work. By attempting to write a type of novel using an openly collaborative process, the editors of the wiki novel attempted to shift the idea of what a novel could potentially be.

There was criticism of this ambition to use a collaborative approach while focusing on an already established literary form. In a blog post on *if:book*[35], Ben Vershbow criticises Penguin's choice of form:

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35 *if:book is the blog of The Institute for the Future of the Book. Available from:* http://www.futureofthebook.org/blog/

'Penguin too had the whole wide Web to work with, not to mention the immense body of literature in its own publishing vault, which seems ripe for a remix or a collaborative cut-up session. But instead they chose the form that is probably most resistant to these new social forms of creativity. The result is a well intentioned but confused attempt at innovation. A novelty, yes. But a novel, not quite' (Vershbow, 2007).

This idea, that Penguin could have chosen a more suitable literary approach is a relevant one. Preconceived ideas about what a novel should be encouraged authors to follow its established conventions rather than experiment with the potential of the networked book.

Although in its form the wiki novel is firmly rooted in the print tradition it also appears to have much in common with the oral traditions of storytelling. Mason finds that the wiki novel, with its multiple competing versions, motifs and plot lines transmitted over time and the relationship between performers and texts, displays many features of oral folklore traditions (Mason, 2008). With its multiple authors competing for attention, the wiki novel does appear more like a performance than a print novel. The text does not seem confined to a printed page but rather appears as an elaborate performance piece. The text of the wiki novel can be read alongside discussions in the epitext where authors communicated and argued about how the wiki novel was taking shape. In this way, the authors of the wiki novel are characters within the text who perform the novel rather than write it for a reader.

Penguin's vision for the project was clear. In the press release for the project, one of the editors states that, 'people are not simply content to be passive consumers of content, they want to get involved and the internet has given them the means to do this' (Ettinghausen, 2007a). At the start of the project, Penguin thought it possible that a publishable print novel might be a possible outcome despite the reservations of the researchers at De Montfort University (Mason and Thomas, 2008). However, what they

certainly did not want was thousands of people trying to prove their literary talents in the hope of securing a publishing deal. One of the editors tries to make this clear in an early post on the project's blog:

> 'I'm saying this because I guess I want to get something out of the way: the wikinovel experiment is not a place to prove to Penguin we should publish your book. I hope very much that the project shows evidence at some level of brilliance, but that this will stem from the collaborative nature of what you're doing rather than the individual contributions' (Elek, 2007a).

Although the aim of the project was to experiment with the potential of collaboration, there was a sense that many of the authors taking part in the project were trying to showcase their writing talents to Penguin. Penguin's reputation as a successful publisher seemed to influence what was produced and the way that the authors viewed the project. There is a strong sense of competition between authors in the project text rather than a sense of collaboration towards a shared goal. The motivations of people taking part in the project can only be guessed at but the involvement of Penguin certainly attracted more contributors than any other previous project of this kind. Their ability to publicise the project widely, as well as their own commercial reputation, meant that thousands of people took part.[36]

The aim of the project was to write a novel using the wiki format. Traditionally, a wiki is entirely collaborative and open to many authors (Cunningham and Leuf, 2001). It can be questioned whether the wiki can ever be a suitable format for writing a collaborative novel and argued that this wiki novel can not be described as a wiki novel due to a fundamental contradiction in terms. A researcher from De Montfort University,

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36 By March 7th, when the wiki closed, at least 75,000 different people had viewed the site. Of those, 1,476 people had registered as users of the wiki....most of those who registered for the wiki either never contributed or contributed on just one occasion. Although there were over 11,000 edits made, the majority of those edits were performed by a relatively small number of contributors (Mason and Thomas, 2008).

who worked on the project, claims that a novel must be linear and as the wiki is non-linear, or anti-linear, they aren't compatible (Wilks, 2007b).

It can be argued that the wiki is 'misapplied' to this project and that editors should have chosen a different platform (Vershbow, 2007). The wiki is certainly suitable for collaborative writing as proved by the enormous success of Wikipedia. Although Wikipedia is concerned with factual writing, there is an established shared goal of collecting knowledge and an overall aim to present fact. A fictional wiki written by various authors is different and appears much more difficult to control. In the wiki novel, there are no right or wrong or facts to check, only creative expression and the editor's enduring hope for collaborative work. It is difficult to judge whether a novel can be written in this way. A wiki is certainly an existing accessible tool for collaborative work and one with which many authors may have already been familiar. Although the ease in which an author could erase the work of others and insert their own seemed too tempting for some. The problem with *A Million Penguins*' approach was that its authors did not all share a similar vision for the project. Most people seemed to be working individually to develop their own ideas and it was as if, at times, they viewed the other authors as obstacles rather than fellow collaborators.

In a presentation of the findings of the project's research, Mason (2008) explains that the wiki novel is a reversal of both the normal rules of wiki and of those of writing and publishing. For him, it is not a wiki or a novel. It is not just one novel, as it is not consistent in terms of style, content or narrative, and neither is it collaborative. If it is not a novel and not a wiki then what is it? It contains elements of both but these do not seem entirely compatible. The wiki did not necessarily lead to collaborative work between authors at it was too easy for them not to collaborate and there does not seem

to be a sense of a shared goal. The text does not always appear to be a novel as it rebels against many of the traditional conventions of the form.

One particular conflict between the two forms of the wiki and the novel is the way that they are developed. A wiki is a tool used in real time and its contributors are able contribute continually (Cunningham and Leuf, 2001). It changes and adapts with each new contribution. In a blog post written about *A Million Penguins,* Bud Parr (2007) explores this real time feature of the wiki that differentiates the wiki from a printed text:

'Wikis are typically used to harness collective knowledge, intelligence, and emendation in real time. It's that "real time" element that separates them from print and perhaps what makes the difference here. The "Art" in a wiki novel may not be reading it in its final form, but reading it in real time as changes are made, watching the story and characters evolve non-linearly' (Parr, 2007).

Readers were able to contribute as authors in real time when the project was live but the archived novel is static and fixed.

The novel, however, is tied to the much slower time scale of print traditions. Once printed, it is fixed and static. It seems that once the project was finished and no more contributions could be made, the wiki novel became almost as static as a printed text. A wiki does not seem suited to this sudden shift to the limitations of a printed text. The wiki novel was a wiki during its creation but was almost confined to novel form once it was finished.

Perhaps the new digital form that the project was looking to find was the very process and experience of writing a collaborative fictional text rather than the finished text. Rather then it being published, Mason (2008) describes the text as being 'fossilized' as though it was once more alive than just being words confined to a printed page. By the end of the project, the editors at Penguin wanted to preserve the wiki novel

as a ebook. They tried to find a format that would keep all the links intact (Ettinghausen, 2007h). The project might have resulted in a wiki novel but no one appeared quite sure what to do with it next or whether it was the most appropriate format in the first place.

1.6.3 Community Authorship

A Million Penguins launched with the question, 'Can a community write a novel?' As thousands of individuals flocked to the site led by their own motivations and with their own agendas, it became obvious that this was the wrong question to ask (Mason and Thomas, 2008). Elek soon realised that this was not a setting within which a community could form and concluded that, 'the words '"novel" and "community" don't cut much ice in a situation like this' (Elek, 2007d). These statements need to be addressed and considered to understand whether collaborative authorship requires the development of a community.

It is necessary to assess whether a community of authors can potentially develop around a networked book. Using Heller's (1984) definition of community as an organised group where members share similar values, we can see that in *A Million Penguins*, the sense of community was complex. Individuals contributed to the project but appeared to not to share many of the same values about how to write a collaborative novel. They would have been attracted to the project for a wide range of reasons and this would not have made it possible for a community to establish.

Due to the nature of the wiki as a format to which anyone can contribute, as well as the many creative freedoms offered by the project authors, there was also little opportunity for collaborators to write what is traditionally considered to be a novel. If it is the case that no community was formed and that a wiki novel is a contradiction in

terms (Vershbow, 2007) and so neither a wiki or a novel, then how did the authors behave as a group and what did they produce?

Thousands of individuals worked collaboratively to write a wiki novel. It is evident that although many of the authors worked together to some extent, many others tried to force their own ideas and visions into the project. Vershbow (2007) recognises that many of the wiki novel's authors tried to write their own individual novels within the project. They developed their own plots and characters and expressed annoyance when these were changed, deleted or vandalised. Vershbow remarks '[h]ow ironic it would be if each user ended up just creating their own page and writing the novel they wanted to write – alone' (Vershbow, 2007). There is a sense that many of the novel's authors would have found the process much easier if they had ultimate control over their own words. Instead, anyone could change or delete their words and if their words did remain in the novel they would not receive credit for having written them. In this environment, it proved extremely difficult for authors to work together.

This was an experimental literary project combining a novel and a wiki and these two very different forms of writing also proved difficult for many authors. Some authors would have been interested in writing a novel and understood many of the conventions of the genre while others would be interested in developing a creative wiki. Mason and Thomas's research report (2008) shows that many of the authors struggled with several unfamiliar literacies, such as how to write a novel in the wiki form, how to use a wiki, how to edit and how to behave within a wiki. This lack of familiarity of the form certainly influenced how they worked together. As each possessed a different form of knowledge they could not all work in an identical way. They would have had different ideas about what the wiki novel could or should be based on their existing knowledge of the two forms. This meant that authors were not all approaching the

project with the same aims or skills and so it was inevitable that they could not work as a community who had agreed on working towards the same goal and had collectively prepared themselves for the project.

These differences in approach and understanding are evident in the lack of title for the wiki novel. A title provides a great deal of paratextual information. It frames a text and offers direction for interpretation (Genette, 1997). The project is entitled '*A Million Penguins*' but the wiki novel as a whole remains untitled. It is referred to as '*A Million Penguins*', 'The Novel' and the 'wiki novel'. It is not formally titled in the text by an author or editor. This provides both ambiguity and certainty. The wiki novel is not owned by its authors who are not able to give it a title, either collectively or individually, and the project authors are able to assume its title without explicitly stating so.

The project soon became more of a social experiment than a literary one. As it progressed, the editors spent the majority of their time trying to manage the seemingly destructive behaviour of many of the authors, attention began to turn away from the writing to the social interactions between authors. This was evident through the blog posts written by editors during and after the project, as well as the form of the wiki novel, as they tried to understand the behaviour of the multiple authors. In particular, they often focused on the dichotomy between those authors who wanted to make the experiment a success (to write a comprehensible novel as a community) and those who wanted to sabotage or vandalise the experiment (to disrupt the writing of others). In his post on the Penguin blog after the project had finished, Elek (2007) discusses this division between authors and connects them to the wider aims of the project:

> 'So what of the experiment - can a collective really write a novel? I guess the answer has to be a qualified maybe. Watching the recent changes and the

discussion pages and the user talk pages gives me hope - it is clear that some people have really worked well together, discussed each others contributions and have even made plans to collaborate further in the future which is really encouraging. But clearly opening this experiment up to 'the whole world' caused problems - we had vandals, pornographers, spammers and any number of people who had such differing ideas about what would make a good novel that a real sense of cohesiveness was always going to be hard to achieve' (Ettinghausen, 2007h).

Success of the project for Elek appears to be judged on how well authors worked together as well as on what they produced. The understanding of community here appears based on people working successfully together towards a common goal rather than the presence of a myriad of individuals with differing views working towards different goals. Elek's realisation at the end of the project is that this was never going to be about building something resembling his definition of a community. He modified his own goal for the project to be to show what would happen if, 'a bunch of strangers with both nothing to lose and nothing to gain worked toward a nebulous common goal' (Elek, 2007d). This goal takes into account the true nature of the project and the different multiple of the authors. Authors would have joined the project for different reasons (anything from getting noticed by Penguin, to causing trouble or an interest in producing collaborative writing or the potentials of digital publishing) and these would have affected their behaviour within the project. These authors were effectively anonymous strangers hiding behind user names. The freedom to write whatever they wanted was not coupled with a sense of responsibly and so they could behave however they wanted.

Mason and Thomas's research report (2008) concludes that a wiki novel was not a suitable environment to try to develop any form of community. They realise that the experiment could not answer the question of whether a community could write a novel

because it did not even produce a novel. Instead, the finished work more closely resembled a performance. Authors were not able to form a community but instead they 'spontaneously organised themselves into a diverse, riotous assembly' (Mason and Thomas, 2008, p.21). The research report also finds very little sense of collaboration in the wiki novel. It concludes that although many individuals participated in writing the novel, they rarely collaborated with each other. Although labelled a 'novel,' and so fulfilling the project's aims, this wiki novel does not resemble many of the conventions of the novel. Instead, it is made up of a collection of different versions of the same novel, fragments of different novels, multiple narratives and dozens of unconnected characters and ideas. This fragmented piece of writing was made possible by the wiki format. This allowed many freedoms for creation of narrative structure and meant that anyone could participate and add their own ideas. However, Mason and Thomas (2008) conclude that in reality a novel could not be produced by the project and a community could not be formed. The project's peritext framed the project in a way that prevented full participation. Instead, it led the authors into certain behaviours and enforced a level of textual restriction.

If there was any community present in *A Million Penguins* then it was made up of thousands of individuals with different ideas and motivations and differing knowledge. The project was collaborative and the structure of the wiki novel meant that participants were forced to work together, some begrudgingly, some readily and some rebelliously. The project was so vast and uncontrollable, despite the efforts of the editors, and the time to write so short that there could be no real forging of a community. The wiki had already proved to be a successful form for collaborative work but during the course of the project it became clear that it was difficult to use it for

creative work. What was produced was neither entirely a wiki nor a novel but an interesting new genre created by over a thousand strangers with millions of ideas.

1.7 Narrative

The narrative structure forms part of the project's peritext. It mirrors challenges faced by those taking part in the project as it directly explores the collaborative authoring process. It can not be read simply as a piece of fiction but as a part of the threshold between text and reader. The sense of disorientation evident in the narrative can be used to reflect on the project's problems and its successes and as a framework to explore the collaborative authoring process.

1.7.1 Non Linear

During the collaborative authoring process (before the text of the novel was archived), the narrative of this wiki novel was non-linear. Its direction shifted and changed endlessly as hundreds of authors edited and adapted every word. The story was taken in dozens of directions all at once and these strands were rarely concluded. Instead, one simply careered into the next. Different stories competed for space, time was disrupted, there were digressions and interruptions and multiple points of view. Authors took ownership of different sections of the text and so different narratives competed with one another for space and the reader's attention. There was a hierarchy of narrative as those who had more time to take part in the project controlled the direction of the narrative. There was a sense of individual authors sabotaging the text by repeatedly adding nonsensical details. Together, they created a non linear narrative that was disjointed and pulled in many different directions at once.

However, a sense of the potential of a non-linearity, as opposed to a linear narrative, can be seen in discussions of hypertext. Murray defines hypertext as a 'set of

documents of any kind (images, texts, charts, tables, video clips) connected to one another by links' (Murray, 2008, p,55). Hypertext does not follow the physical limitations of a printed book, where one page reliably leads on to the next. The wiki novel contains many features of hypertext. One of these features is the inclusion of links throughout the novel. These often lead to additional information about individual characters, to wikipedia definitions of specific terms or links to relevant places elsewhere in the novel. These create multi-linearity in the novel as a reader can jump to different points in the text or gather background information. This allows the reader to navigate the text in a different way than they would read a book.

The idea of non-linearity is explored by authors of the novel and also explored within the narrative. In one section of the novel, a character called Inu makes a discovery:

> 'Perhaps this was the key: Animals live in circles, humans in linear progression. Perhaps then, if a person could live with the circular structure of this text, if they could truly be at peace with its serpentine narrative devouring its own tail, and its refusal to serve up pre-packaged understanding, then perhaps they were on the path to a meaning that humans, for all their self laudable wisdom, had lost' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

The novel is directly referred to by the author and it is acknowledged that the narrative has a 'circular structure'. The collaborative nature of the project meant that many of the themes of the project were worked into the narrative. The non-linearity of a wiki novel was experienced by authors through the writing process and developed into the text of the novel.

1.7.2 Navigating the Narrative

The project was collaborative and anyone registered to take part could change the text and so shape the wider narrative. The narrative quickly became almost impossible to navigate. The influence of these multiple voices meant that the plot changed dramatically from one minute to the next. Characters were created and suddenly disappeared. Nothing was fixed and the narrative was in a constant state of flux. As the novel was being written as the same time as others were trying to read it, it was almost impossible to understand. Elek recognises the problems caused by this constantly shifting and changing narrative:

> 'The main problem I have is that every time I go back to the website it's changed, a bit like my girlfriend's mind. And perhaps like that it resists rational enquiry. I've found the best way to approach amillionpenguins is to sample it basically at random' (Elek, 2007c).

Elek devised his own way of navigating the narrative by reading it at random. In doing so, he is acknowledging that it is different from a print novel. By reading sections in isolation, a reader does not need to try to understand the whole narrative. As there is not one authorial voice with control over the text it must be experienced as a different form of narrative. The shifts and changes of the narrative must be accepted as an outcome of the collaborative process of its creation. Wider meaning can not be forced onto the text and instead it must be experienced for what it is.

Rasmus Blok (2005) recognises these characteristics as features of the hypertext. His research focuses on the hypertext as a form of non-linear interactive narrative; where the reader is able to make choices about the narrative. He contrasts this to the conventions of print literature, which typically involve a linear narrative presented to the reader with a sense of textual authority, a context and opportunity for the reader to reflect on the meaning of the narrative.

1.7.3 The Kaleidoscope

Murray (1997) explores the new opportunities for online digital narratives by exploring the metaphor of the kaleidoscope. She follows Marshall McLuhan's (1967) idea that communication of the twentieth century is mosaic rather than linear in structure. The opportunity of the development of a kaleidoscopic approach fits with the developing kaleidoscopic sensibility of the twenty-first century (Murray, 1998). There is no longer a sense of a single reality or one defining point of view but a myriad of overlapping, inter-playing perspectives. Murray uses her vision of a kaleidoscopic narrative in digital storytelling, where multiple and often converging stories are experienced by the reader or audience, to discuss games but it can also be used, to some extent, to explore the wiki novel. Here dozens of competing story lines and characters fight for attention. The narrative does not have one clearly defined viewpoint but rather hundreds of individual visions of what the narrative should be, what the story should be about and how it should be experienced by a reader. These individual pieces of text, written by different authors and edited by many more, build a kaleidoscopic narrative. Reading the wiki novel is an experience of navigating multiple perspectives and ideas all at once.

1.7.4 The Incoherent Narrative

Murray (1998) sees that a kaleidoscopic narrative captures a sense of the real world and as it presents its complexities from many perspectives it does so in a coherent way. In contrast, the wiki novel is certainly not coherent. Its narrative structure is incoherent and

this incoherence comes from the way it was written, often with non-cooperation and discordance amongst its authors.

Vershbow writes on if:book:

'Not surprisingly it's incoherent. You might get something similar if you took a stack of supermarket checkout lane potboilers and some Mad Libs and threw them in a blender' (Vershbow, 2007).

He recognises that the form of mass collaboration that led to its creation could not have produced a novel with a coherent narrative. It is the process of creation that is of value rather than what is created. Authors competed for their ideas to lead the narrative and others simply deleted the work of others as soon as it had been written. There was little chance for a clear narrative to develop due to the nature of such an open collaborative process of creation. Anything could be created, and by anyone, and so ultimately what was produced was often incoherent. A researcher from De Montfort University notes:

'Once you let go of the idea that this is going to make any kind of sense in the usual novel fashion, it starts to become fun' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

Once expectations of what a novel should be are abandoned then the wiki novel can be experienced as an experimental piece of literature. The incoherence of the novel then becomes of interest or, as it was pointed out, it can start to become fun.

David Ciccoricco (2007) writes that new forms of narrative become possible in network fiction and that these can not be contained within a printed book. In network fiction, he claims, the narrative 'emerges gradually through a recombination of elements' (Ciccoricco. 2007, p.6). We can argue that the narrative does not need to be coherent and instead the reader can experience a different sense of narrative. Ciccorrico places value on the structure of network fiction, which often consists of, 'parts, or

nodes, of network narratives are self-contained semantic entities [...]' (Ciccoricco, 2007, p.6). These pieces of narratives can be experienced individually. Narrative coherence in this type of fiction is not dependent on a clear sense of coherent story but on a sense of experiencing a narrative. Instead of the idea of an author holding responsibility for creating a coherent narrative, Ciccoricco sees that the responsibility of 'assembling sequence and, in turn, narrative coherence' is held by the reader (Ciccoricco, 2007, p.9). It is they who must navigate the incoherent narrative and from this can build their own coherence.

Ciccorrico's (2007) ideas of network fiction can be directly related to the wiki novel where readers experience a seemingly incoherent narrative. It is a collection of different narrative fragments which appear, disappear or merge together. This creates a fragmented reading experience. Coherence for the reader can only be experienced through an understanding and acceptance of the novel's lack of coherence. The novel offers a different reading experience, which has only been made possible through the collaborative nature of its creation.

The text that was deleted from the wiki novel and the project text has an important function. Genette (1997) asserts that deletions of paratextual elements are made by an author or publisher who holds control over the text. In the wiki novel, textual freedom was offered to authors by the project authors, and vocalised in part through the words and actions of the editors. This freedom allowed text to be deleted entirely. However, these deletions are recorded in the 'History' of the project text and so still remain as part of the networked book. This project 'History' can be seen as part of the project text; one which documents the process of collaboration. The inclusion of such a detailed history of the text is not possible in the printed book. Changes to a

printed book result in the publication of a new edition. There is no possibility of editing the text in such a continuous way.

Murray compares the experience of the electronic narrative as a labyrinth; 'tricky, full of dead ends, uncertainties and questions that do not resolve' (Murray, 1998, p.173). She particularly considers this experience in relation to games but it can also be applied to *A Million Penguins*. While it was being written, the wiki novel was similar in form to a labyrinth, both in the experiences it offered to author and reader. Different plots, characters and ideas were created but rarely concluded. Different story lines looped around each other and overlapped. There was a sense of being entangled in a plot that no one had control over. While it was being written, the project text resembled what Jill Walker terms 'electric text gone feral' (Walker, 2005). This was a narrative that had run away with itself.

1.7.5 The Open-Ended Narrative

Even when the novel was archived, the narratives of the various strands were typically left open-ended and there is little sense of narrative closure. Murray terms this state, where narrative closure is withheld, 'refusal of closure' (Murray, 1998, p.173). There is a clear sense that no one was fully in control of the text and so no one knew how it ended. This state is evident in the last section of the novel, 'Möbius Strip', as the characters discuss a book that will apparently explain everything:

> 'John couldn't help but notice Carlo's interest. "Would you like to read it?" he asked. "Where would you like to start? Carlo smiled in a knowing and unwry manner. "In the middle," he said. "But I don't have time"' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

The book they are looking at appears to be the book in which they feature as characters. The idea of starting to read the book in the middle references the notion of the incoherent and open ended narrative. The characters of John and Carlo often appear in the novel as emblems for the confusion experienced within the narrative. They do not know whether they are writing the book or are part of it. The closing sentences of the wiki novel continue this idea:

> 'As he came closer, John asked Carlo Impatiently: "How does your book end?" John stared at him for a long hard moment and replied: "Like this!"' (*A Million Penguins*, 2007).

This reference to the characters as trapped within the narrative while trying to make sense of it is a valuable metaphor for the novel. There is little sense of closure but rather a feeling of being lost in an incomprehensible maze. This mirrors the reading experience of *A Million Penguins*. It can not be read away from the process of its creation. The multitude of authors echo through the text, demanding attention.

This lack of closure is a part of the wiki. It is a 'communally editable webpage driven by a server-side database that further complicates the idea of closure in narrative production' (Lichty, 2007). Its multitude of collaborators mean that, during the writing process of *A Million Penguins*, the narrative was continually changing. Even when the project was archived, a lack of closure remained in the narrative due to the process of its creation.

1.8 Textual Space

In *A Million Penguins,* a space was created by the project authors for individuals to come together and write a wiki novel. This space operated outside many of the traditional conventions of writing and publishing and can be read as a form of peritext. This peritext marks the boundary between the text and its periphery. It sets restrictions and boundaries but also offers freedoms to authors taking part in the project. It is necessary to question this space both in terms of what was established and how it developed. This can be done by considering the development of key spaces in the text. There is evidence within the text of a formation of a space where a carnival could take place. In this carnival space, authority was challenged and the crude celebrated (Mason and Thomas, 2008). The development of a garden can also be identified as a metaphor for the wiki novel flourishing and being cultivated (Mason and Thomas, 2008). The way that authors used the space can also be considered as this offers an indication of how the space was navigated. Discussions surrounding the project often defined the wiki novel as a 'space' rather than simply a 'text.' Its collaborative nature means that it was both a space and a place where authors could come together and collaborate. This reinforces the idea that this was a move away from the page in the physical novel to a new form of networked narrative.

1.8.1 The Carnival

The behaviour of authors and the structure of the novel created a type of performance space specific to the carnival. This carnivalesque space offered the authors a form of creative freedom. In their research report, Mason and Thomas (2008) draw on Mikhail

Bakhtin's (1968) ideas of the carnival as a time and space where people could overturn traditional power relationships in society and celebrate excess and the grotesque. Bakhtin sees the carnival as a place where everyone was equal for a short time and able to take part in an activity that was purely about having fun (Bakhtin, 1968). This subversion of social norms in the carnival space echoes throughout the wiki novel.

Such subversions, particularly the reversal of roles, are identified by Mason and Thomas (2008). They categorise the first of these reversals as the reversal of the author-publisher relationship, which in the project text of *A Million Penguins* was established through the use of the wiki as publishing medium. The project authors were a figure of authority and stability but authors and readers were encouraged to take control away from this authority figure through submitting textual production. This led to a wide spread anti-authoritarian element to the project. Mason and Thomas (2008) identify this as the setting of a carnival relationship between publisher and potential authors as lines of authority and expected behaviours were blurred and subverted. Authors were offered a collaborative role and so were able to claim textual authority. The use of a wiki meant that they were given the power to write and edit at will.

The second reversal that Mason and Thomas (2008) identify is the reversal of wiki norms, which resulted in a wiki that differed in many ways from what is generally characterised as a wiki. Although the novel takes the form of a wiki, by the end of the project it was clear that the wiki had not been used in the way it was intended. Instead of adding to each other's writing, it was more common for authors to delete each other's words and replace them with their own.

These role reversals contribute to the image of this writing experience as an uncontrollable and raucous carnival. However, there does need to be some clear restrictions for a carnival to take place. In particular, a carnival needs to be bounded in

time and space and have a clear endpoint. It needs to be a time and space away from authority where normal rules are subverted or reversed but everything also needs to go back to normal afterwards (Bakhtin, 1968). *A Million Penguins* had a clear duration; it was only going to run for six weeks and after this time the writing produced would be archived as a finished novel. This time restriction allowed a space for the carnival to take place and the chance for everyone to go back to normal afterwards. Once the novel was finished, the collaboration ended and the carnival was over.

Bakhtin (1968) focuses on the carnival as a place where ordinary people can celebrate crude and base humour. For him:

> 'Official authority is subverted most by laughter. Through laughter 'the world is seen anew, no less (and perhaps more) profoundly than when seen from the serious standpoint…Certain essential aspects of the world are accessible only to laughter' (Bakhtin, 1968, p.66).

This is also evident in the wiki novel as the opportunity for anonymous authorship allowed the authors to write whatever they wanted. Due to this sense of textual freedom, it became a rebellious space where anyone could write about anything and alter anyone else's writing. This led to a celebration of crude humour and mischievous writing. The process of writing the novel became a carnival space and the writing produced was carnivalesque. Many of the project's successes were those connected to its carnivalesque features (Mason and Thomas, 2008, p.19) When the rebellious authors, those who changed everyone else's writing immediately after it was written could be laughed at as figures of the carnival, they were not seen as so annoying to readers and their fellow authors. The value of the writing as literature can be overlooked in favour of placing attention on the process by which it was created as a space away from traditional publishing and writing where long established norms are reversed. The crude features of the novel can be celebrated as part of a carnival space, a unique mix of

literary experience and sense of creative freedom. Mason and Thomas recognise this value in the wiki novel:

> 'If one reads the wiki novel as celebration of excess and grotesque rather than a crowdsourced novel it makes sense in its own terms' (Mason and Thomas, 2008, p.19).

This is a useful way of looking at the wiki novel. Its value appears not to be in it being a brilliantly written or tightly crafted novel but in the space that was forged for writing to take place. The freedoms offered to its authors and the chance to experiment in a collaborative project on a large scale meant that this space was of importance. By reading the novel as a celebration of a carnival space, the writing and its chaotic structure and often crude prose is of great interest as part of the literary experiment. It needs to be read with consideration of space for its value as a novel to be appreciated.

1.8.2 Place

This idea of the wiki novel being a type of spatial environment can be expanded into a consideration of the structure of the novel as a place. A wiki can be viewed using the metaphor of a garden. The premise is that a wiki 'grows from the bottom up and structure emerges over time, something along the lines of cultivating wild lands. In this metaphor, users are gardeners who are responsible for 'seeding, organising, weeding and watering the material in the wiki' (Mason and Thomas, 2008, p.14). The pages of the wiki are connected together by links and then linked to other wikis and, in this way, the textual garden is able to grow.

Mason and Thomas consider what happens if the garden does not grow. If the links between pages are not created then this leads to 'wastelands of unlinked pages' or

'walled gardens of pages that only link to each other and are not integrated with the rest of the wiki' (Mason and Thomas, 2008, p.14). There is evidence of these 'walled gardens' in many parts of the wiki novel where there are no hyperlinks and the text can not go any further. In fact, 366 of the nearly 500 pages in the novel do not contain any links, implying that approximately 75% of these pages do not link to any other pages (Mason and Thomas, 2008). Authors were warned against producing these seemingly dead spaces within the novel in the discussion space, which forms part of the peritext:

> 'If you feel you have a lot of content to contribute to a wiki all at once, you may be tempted to write a bunch of different pages, interlinking them all. Don't. We call this is a WalledGarden, and it stands out in stark contrast to the areas of the This Wiki that are living. The living areas are much trafficked, edited by many and read by even more. They exhibit the selflessness of a living space, belonging to nobody and everybody. If you learn to slowly integrate your o w n wisdom into this broader space, the process will be far messier and slower, but the feedback you receive from others will be more considered and rewarding' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

This attempt to encourage authors to participate in the project in such a way that it creates 'living space', aimed to inspire collaboration between authors. The labeling of space as 'living' values it as healthy and valuable. Such clear reference to the wiki novel as a physical space encourages people to imagine it as located away from the physical page and as a networked book.

These 'walled gardens' operate as individual sections within the novel and are not seen to connect to the aim of producing a wiki novel. Without hyperlinks, a wiki novel will just be a representation of a print novel. The links form a key part of the peritext. They frame the project text and provide a clear threshold. However, the wiki novel was viewed by many as a successful despite a limited use of links. The lack of linked connections between one section and another meant that individual sections did not get swamped by contributors. There were unread sections where authors could

produce and collaborate with just a few others and so avoid the masses. Authors began to value these quiet spaces. For example, in a discussion, one author writes:

> 'Partner sought: is there anyone out there who wants to tag team on the Fantasy section of Write Your Own Adventure. No-one is touching it - and it seems like a quiet place to get some solid writing done. Look forward to replies' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

This creation of semi-private spaces within the novel was noticed by (Pullinger, 2007a), In her post on the 'Team Blog', written while the novel was still in progress, she identifies these 'secret corners' as the 'most interesting parts of the wiki novel' where collaborative work could take place. She wonders whether they should be disturbed by editors in the spirit of encouraging wider collaboration.

This appears to be how the wiki novel developed in the way that it did. It was made up of distinct and fragmented sections, written in part by collaboration and in part by particular authors asserting authorial ownership. It is clear that many authors wanted to construct their own spaces within the novel. The idea that there were physical spaces within the text, where authors could hide and write on their own or in small numbers, reinforces the idea that its creation was made possible by the establishment of a place.

1.9 Author Behaviour

It is necessary to consider the experience and behaviour of the authors of the wiki novel as evident both during the writing process and in the archived version of the novel. Their experiences are documented in the threshold between text and reader. The way they behaved and the specific roles that they adopted of performer, vandal and gardener (Mason, 2008) give indications into the way they viewed the collaborative process and their own place within the writing of the wiki novel. Examining the way individual authors behaved as they interacted with one another during the live stage of the wiki novel helps us to explore the different interpretations and expectations of collaboration within the project. Their behaviour within the text of the wiki novel, both collective and individual, can be read as a form of peritext. This behaviour is imprinted on the wiki novel as a space inside the text and it influences both the writing and reading experiences of the project text. To explore this, an examination is needed of the wiki novel in the light of the documented discussions within the project text. Mason and Thomas' research report (2008) is of particular interest here as it examines the roles that author's adopt within the text and this will be discussed.

1.9.1 Roles

Within this collaborative environment, authors adopted different roles and many of these have been identified and discussed in Mason and Thomas's research report. Mason and Thomas use critical discussions of wikis as their starting point and note that in a wiki some authors become 'wikicitizens', who are interested in developing and expanding the work and shared a common purpose. Some take the role of 'vandals' or

'trolls' and are interested instead in disrupting or destroying the wiki. Others may invade a wiki as spammers or hackers. Through their research, Mason and Thomas (2008) expand on these roles identified within a wiki by looking at the social behaviour of the authors and identify a number of roles specific to *A Million Penguins*. These are the performer, the vandal and the gardener (Mason, 2008). To explore the figure of the performer, they look particularly at the writer Pabruce, the most frequent contributor to the novel, who contributed 1,780 edits through the project (Mason and Thomas, 2008). This author adopted a dramatic persona and appeared to see his role as one of a performer. Although he contributed to conversations in the discussion space, he seemed to prefer to contribute text and edit the text that he had written. His view of himself seemed to be as a creator of the novel but he was also was prone to creating drama. During discussions, he often became angry and announced that he would leave the project before returning a short time later. When the project ended, he appeared to recognise his role as performer in his farewell message posted on in the discussion space:

> 'Had a wonderful time. The bull has left the china closet' (*A Million Penguins*, 2007).

Another role evident in the project and identified by Mason and Thomas (2008) was that of the vandal who sees their role as being to disrupt the wiki. There were several vandals operating within the wiki novel. The most noticeable of these was YellowBanana, who disrupted the wiki novel through deleting text and adding references to bananas.

Fig 5 Banana Version of Novel

YellowBanana was not one of the wiki novel's most prolific authors but he or she was frequently talked about in the discussion space. In this way, his or her role also resembled that of a performer (Mason, 2008). The editors were not sure whether YellowBanana was someone who should be blocked from the project or whether they were simply being playful. Ettinghausen, discusses this dilemma in his post on the 'Penguin Blog':

'So, backstage conversation has turned to the bananapolisation of A Million Penguins and what, if anything, we should do about it. Is our banana obsessed contributor a mere vandal, a warped genius, some sort of whacky performance artist or simply a very naughty boy (or girl)? Should we ban him/her (permanently, or just for a few days?) or celebrate the infusion of fruity fun into this project? Basically does this gag have apeel, or have you all had a skinfull of bananaman's monkeying about? So in the spirit of openness with which (we hope) we have approached every aspect of this project we ask you, contributors and readers, to suggest a route forward' (Ettinghausen, 2007f).

It was not clear how to view YellowBanana. In one way, he or she was following in the spirit of the collaborative project and in another he or she was vandalizing the novel. Their approach was creative and experimental but also annoying for other authors. However, the presence of YellowBanana initiated discussion between the editors and authors about what to do next and reinforced the idea that this was a collaborative project. The vandalism was a form of graffiti as YellowBanana used his or her words to cause disruption and erased the words of others.

There were other authors who were not considered as favourably in their position as a few vandals were banned from contributing. In particular, Brutalhelm deleted all the content on the welcome page and was subsequently banned. Another, named CarlGriffith, was banned for continual obscenity. Only a few authors were banned during the course of the project as it was seen that to achieve the aim of creating a collaborative novel all but the most destructive vandals must be tolerated.

Mason and Thomas (2008) identify a third role in the wiki novel; that of the gardener who focused on 'pruning, replanting, re-ordering'. One such gardener was Sentinel68 who was the second most prolific contributor to the novel, with 1,114 edits (Mason and Thomas, 2008, p.10). Unlike Parbruce, who wanted to assert a sense of his own individuality, Sentinel68 spent all of his time trying to establish order in the novel. He appeared to understand the difficulties inherent in writing collaboratively. In an

interview with one of the wiki administrators, he explains articulately what he felt was needed to create collaborative fiction. He believed that there needed to be clear communication of plot and genre and a mutual agreement to build on the work of others instead of removing it entirely (Mason and Thomas, 2008). During the project, he worked towards these aims as he attempted to communicate with other authors, encourage their work and try to garden the wiki novel. He did not focus on adding his own words, as many others did, but instead concentrated on developing existing text.

Within the role of the wiki gardener, Mason and Thomas (2008) also identify the role of the garden gnome. This role is based on the wikignome, who operates within a wiki correcting and adding details. There were 570 authors who edited the wiki just once or twice and around 380 of these only made small, simple corrections to the text. Such work was important and was done quietly as the performers and vandals took the spotlight.

1.9.2 Writing Collaboratively

The authors involved in the project faced a challenge in working collaboratively together. The wiki format meant that anyone could change or delete what they had written and replace it with their own words or revert back to an earlier version of a piece of text. Even someone dedicated to the idea of producing a collaborative work would have found this to be a difficult and frustrating way to work. This is evident in the archived project discussions where authors were able to communicate with one another. There were many instances when authors tried to call for a sense of order and a clear working practice. The need to establish rules, guidelines and clearly defined spaces

seemed to be obvious to some authors amid the chaos of the more rebellious or egotistical authors:

> 'Hello everyone - I think I'm at the stage where I'm ready to give up. I can't see where this is going, if anywhere. There are a multitude of different chapters, none of which tie into other chapters. The idea of locking chapters doesn't seem to have gone anywhere, which seems to be the only way that a logical flow can develop...and if I see one more Big Benjy reference.. argh.. so tired...' (*A Million Penguins*, 2007).

Here the sense of frustration is clear as the narrative quickly became inconsistent and was always changing. Authors debated in the discussion space about locking chapters, deciding together who the main characters would be and whether to keep certain plot details consistent. Many suggested the idea of making decisions collectively but then writing separately. They talked about limiting sudden and dramatic changes or reverting to earlier versions of the novel after edits took place. They discussed whether authors should focus independently on different sections of the novel rather than work together.

Creative Direction [edit]

May I simply add that after the apparent orgy in hyperactive vandalism, that we embrace this newfound creativity and cease this futile attempt at creating a controlled, dull, amateur action thriller. The only way you will ever succeed in creating a serious work with structure and continuity is when you impinge so many rules on the creative process that it ultimately stops being a Wiki.--Pippinz 08:17, 6 February 2007 (EST)

The only way to make this a serious and controlled work is to eliminate every author but one. --Thunderfoot 12:32, 6 February 2007 (PST)

> Hello everyone - I think I'm at the stage where I'm ready to give up. I can't see where this is going, if anywhere. There are a multitude of different chapters, none of which tie into other chapters. The idea of locking chapters doesn't seem to have gone anywhere, which seems to be the only way that a logical flow can develop... anbd if I see one more Big Benjy reference.. argh.. so tired...
> --TheRevisionist 12:32, 6 February 2007 (PST)

> > Don't give up Revisionist! Take a walk in the fresh air! Have a cup of coffee! Strength! --Sunlight 08:52, 8 February 2007 (EST)

> > > Too late for me. I left for a weekend, and *everything* was different when I got back. Really, only the URL and the underlying software was the same. There's really no point to staying involved if this project moves away from cohesion as it progresses...I think this project will end up stabilizing only because most of the people who cared just moved on to more worthwhile projects.--Gamblor856 00:10, 12 February 2007 (EST)

multiple stories competing for existence [edit]

I suggest dividing the story in multiple arcs, wherein the competing stories all function as arcs of a single story, with the connections tying them together to be revealed in the conclusion, or in crossovers between the arcs. --User:Gamblor956:Gamblor956

When in doubt, blame a penguin for the problems in the story and move on...--Penguin952 15:08, 5 February 2007 (EST)

Conclusion #2 has it... in spades.--Djjansen 06:29, 5 February 2007 (EST)

The first chapter is undergoing continual revision. Let's leave it as a 'fake' first chaopter and the real novel can start from chapter 2 onwards... no-one will ever know!!

I notice the story has basically reverted back to what it looked like 10 hours ago. someones got some issues.

Yes, I think we can see this as a result of the experiment. what has occured is that this has coalesced around not a single but multiple competing storylines, with several people being involved in each. one group puts in their story then the other erases their story and puts theirs back. So individual story elements, like genes are changed around within stories, deleted, added, mutated, but on a larger scale these develop around competing lines which can not coexist. We thus see both competition and cooperation like story lines. We see an ecosystem of story ideas developing. It really is quite fascinating. --Alex bunker 06:51, 4 February 2007 (EST)

Ecosystem of story ideas sounds good to me - especially as different story strands can be developed, but

Fig 6 Author Frustrations

There was debate about having one 'Real Novel' as well as multiple additional novels. It was proposed that this 'Real Novel' would be where the serious and consistent work would be completed:

> '[I]n Novel anyone and everyone can do whatever they want, in Real Novel it is structured and restricted and ones role is limited to refinement' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

Many authors supported the idea of stricter controls, attempted to write new project rules and tried to pass these on to the editors to enforce. The aim of many authors seemed to be to create a finished linear novel by the end of the project.

It was challenging for a group of strangers who had never met one another to write a coherent collaborative novel in real time. Many of its features are in opposition with what is needed to write a piece of collaborative fiction. J. Howard notes that to write collaborative fiction one needs:

1. Clear communication of plot and genre (clear forum for conveying of it and arguing/ dialoging).
2. One needs to agree to build upon and add to the work of others, not readily remove (unless clear process and reason to do so, and communicated in forsaid forum)' (Howard, 2007).

The project editors provided a space for authors to communicate with one another but there was little sense of resulting communication or agreement. Some authors did attempt to create order and instigate the decision making process but they were often ignored. Matt Law notes, during the writing process, that the authors of A Million Penguin did not, on the whole, display the characteristics necessary to write a novel together:

'Unfortunately a controlling mind what is required from a task like writing a novel. At least someone has to know what happens to each character, and what the arc of the story is. And considering what the opening paragraphs currently read like and the fact that there are so far 44 characters and counting, this doesn't seem to be happening' (Law, 2007).

Although the project authors had conceived of the project and were in a position of control, neither they nor the project editors were able to control the majority of the collaborative authoring process.

Some authors found that the wild chaos and uncertainty were fundamental parts of the novel. It was not a single authored novel and so the process of collaboration, and the problems and frustrations that this caused, were part of the novel itself:

> 'As for asking people not to delete you - I'm afraid that so many people are revising the wiki all the time, some with good intentions, some not, that no one individual has control. It's infuriating, but that's how a wiki works' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

This debate amongst the authors about how to work collaboratively became part of the project text. The complex process of authoring the text became a fundamental part of the narrative.

1.9.3 The Crowd

Collaboration in the project more closely resembled a crowd gathering around the text than the forming of a community (Mason and Thomas, 2008). This was due to the often-repeated idea that anyone could contribute and so a large number of people gathered without necessarily an interest or commitment to the aims of the literary experiment. The crowd is different from the community. While community is a category of social interaction, the crowd is not. It refers to a 'being-together of a certain number of people on the occasion of a given action, either as active agents or as bystanders' (Heller, 1984, p.33). It is not necessarily about taking action together. There can be inactive or passive roles within any crowd or participants can be spurred on by mass action.

In *A Million Penguins,* authors and readers did not seem to develop a communal sense of working together but instead predominately worked in isolation on their own sections of the wiki novel. This idea of the crowd writing the novel is again connected to Bakhtin's (1968) idea of the carnival. Due to the time constraints of the project and the editors ultimately controlling the project text, the authors were often more closely resembled a rabble than a community. The process of writing the wiki novel, and the opportunity for communication that the discussion allowed, developed into playfulness, disobedience and performance.

We can examine the nature of the crowd that gathered about *A Million Penguins* using ideas from the forming of physical crowds in crowd behaviour theory. Gustave Le Bon, in *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, closely examines the power of the crowd and sees the emergence of the crowd as dangerous and destructive (Le Bon, 2005). For him, the crowd is a new phenomenon and one to be feared. He explains how the crowd is formed:

> 'Under certain circumstances, and only under those circumstances, an agglomeration of men presents new characteristics very different from those of the individuals composing it. The sentiments and ideas of all the persons in the gathering take one and the same direction, and their conscious personality vanishes. A collective mind of formed, doubtless transitory, but presenting very clearly defined characteristics. The gathering has thus become what, in the absence of a better expression, I will call an organised crowd, or, if the term is considered preferable, a psychological crowd. It forms a single being, and is subjected to the law of the mental unity of crowds' (Le Bon, 2005, p.15-16).

According to Le Bon, the crowd behaves as one mass instead of as a group of individuals. Individuals lose their sense of identity, become anonymous and act as one destructive force. These ideas have been contested by critics, such as Clark McPhail (1991), who points out that some studies show that the crowd does not take on a life of its own in such an extreme manner. Instead, the crowd's behaviour is made up of the

thoughts and intentions of members. Sigmund Freud was influenced by Le Bon and began to consider social or group psychology as opposed to individual psychology. For him, people in a crowd act differently towards people from those who are thinking individually. They begin to act as a herd with a common way of thinking (Freud, 1949).

In contrast to the contagion stance of Le Bon and Freud, convergence theory explains that crowd behaviour is caused by the individuals who make up the crowd. The crowd does not cause individuals to act in a certain way but they are brought together as a crowd because they want to act in a certain way. They are in control of their own actions and the crowd does not control them and make them behave irrationally. The crowd amplifies the behaviour and attitudes of the individuals that make up the crowd. (Heller, 1984, p.33).

In response, Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian (1987) developed the emergent-norm theory, which states that crowd behaviour is not as irrational as contagion theory suggests nor as deliberate as convergence theory implies. Crowd behaviour reflects the desires of participants but is also guided by norms that emerge as the situation unfolds.

Ideas from crowd theory can be applied to the emergence of online crowds. Christian Russ believes that online crowds have similar mechanisms to real crowds but they vary in terms of 'speed, size and scope' (Russ, 2007, p.68). Much like in contagion theory, Russ believes that individuals in online crowds behave irrationally and follow one another. The behaviour of the crowd in *A Million Penguins* can be explored. Here the crowd of authors follows what Russ identifies as the three three major phases of an online crowd - initiation, propagation, amplification, ending with termination (Russ, 2007, p.69). The project authors called for people to become involved with the project (initiation). The project began with guidance from the project authors and editors

(propagation). The novel was able to be read in real time as it was being written (amplification). Finally, the project was finished and the novel archived (termination).

The crowd of authors and readers that formed around the project text are a form of rational crowd that is guided by the project as it unfolded. In this way, it follows Turner and Killian's (1987) emergent-norm theory. The project shifted and changed as individuals became involved and took on the roles of authors and readers. Using a wiki as its form meant that it was collaborative and so dependent on who took part. The project authors and editors had to adapt to each new situation and the authors had to react to one another. However, these responses were not always successful and as the project text took many unexpected directions.

1.9.4 Control and Agency

This sense that no one had full control over the whole of the project text is evident both through the documented writing process and the archived novel. By adopting a wiki format as a place to write a novel these challenges were inevitable but they were also part of the collaborative process. Though this collaborative way of working, there was opportunity for creativity:

> 'May I simply add that after the apparent orgy in hyperactive vandalism, that we embrace this newfound creativity and cease this futile attempt at creating a controlled, dull, amateur action thriller. The only way you will ever succeed in creating a serious work with structure and continuity is when you impinge so many rules on the creative process that it ultimately stops being a Wiki' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

The inability of authors to create order and uniformity in the novel and produce something familiar meant that they could instead focus their efforts on creating a new

type of novel. Many used humour, surrealism or mixed and matched elements from a wide range of literary genres instead of relying on a traditional single authored approach. Through the development of an inconsistent non-linear narrative, they were able to experiment with what a novel could be if it ignored all the preconceived rules and embraced inconsistency.

To work collaboratively on such a project needed a new way of approaching the nature of writing and of the structure of the novel, which many authors rejected and others embraced. In her essay 'Community of People with No Time: Collaboration Shifts', Victoria Verna (2004) examines the nature of collaboration within an online network. For her, the word 'collaboration' assumes a very different meaning when there is a lack of time and too much information' (Verna, 2004, p.257). In an online environment, his lack of time and an abundance of information means letting go of a sense of 'control' (Verna, 2004, p.249). Verna identifies three qualities needed to work within a collaborative network. These are, 'a need to connect, a willingness to collaborate, and the ability to embrace the fact that the work may change form and be re-appropriated in the process (Verna, 2004, p.249). These qualities can be applied to *A Million Penguins* as when one or all of these qualities were acknowledged by authors or editors a shift in the way they saw the novel occurred. An acceptance that the wiki novel would not and should not resemble a traditional novel seemed to allow an individual to see this wiki novel as a new form to be appreciated even if it could not be fully understood.

Textual contributions of authors of *A Million Penguins* had to fit into the wiki form and their words could be deleted or changed at any time by other authors. Individually they held a limited amount of agency. They did not even hold the copyright of their own writing. In 'Agency: Promiscuous and Protean' Karlyn Kohrs Campbell

(2005) offers a structure for analysing agency within a given rhetorical situation. To her, agency:

> '1. Is communal and participatory, hence both constituted and
> constrained by externals that are material and symbolic
> 2. Is "invented" by authors who are points of articulation
> 3. Emerges in artistry or craft
> 4. Is effected through form
> 5. Is perverse, that is, inherently protean, ambiguous, open to reversal.'
> (Kohrs Campbell in Kennedy, 2009, p.61)

In *A Million Penguins*, power lies with the project authors and editors. They conceived the project and were able to exert overall control over the structure of the project text. The project rhetoric states that the project was open to all and it was. However, agency was permitted to authors only to a limited extent. They could only contribute words and delete the words of others. They could not make overall decisions about the text. This was the role of the project authors and editors.

1.10 Author as Reader

The wiki novel was authored by 1,476 authors and each played their part in writing, re-writing and editing. In order to fully consider the nature and experience of collaborative authoring and analyse all aspects of the project text, we must also look at the readers of the project text and analyse their experiences of textual production and reception. By the time the project was closed to contributions and archived on 7th March 2007, at least 75,000 different people had viewed the site and there were more than 280,000 page views. This prompted Penguin's Chief Executive to observe that it was 'not the most read, but possibly the most written novel in history' (Ettinghausen, 2007h). Authorship is an activity of exchange and the authors of *A Million Penguins* were not only its authors but also its readers as the roles of author and reader overlapped.

1.10.1 State of the Text

It is necessary to identify that the wiki novel existed in two very different states and the experience of reading each of these states would be very different. The first state can be identified as when the novel, and the project text, was in the process of being written. Here, readers experienced a constantly changing text. This novel was difficult to navigate as the narrative, structure and even the characters kept changing. Reaching a sense of understanding or even comprehending of the wiki novel was almost impossible as a reader could start reading one novel and end up reading another as it was changing as they were reading.

The second state of the novel can be defined as being after 7th March 2007 when the project was over and the novel was archived. The experience of reading this

version of the wiki novel is very different. The novel is now static and fixed. The reading experience of the novel is still a disorientating one due to the non-linear and discordant narrative but it is no longer shifting and changing around the reader. In many ways, this static state of the wiki novel more closely resembles a print novel. To achieve an understanding of the position of the reader in the wiki novel and analyse the reading experience, it is necessary to look in turn at both of these states rather than assuming that the novel always existed in its archived state. Paratextual elements (both epitext and peritext) within the project text influence the reader's interpretation of both the project and the resulting wiki novel and so this reading experience must be explored.

By looking at the first state of the novel, the period from 1st February 2007 to 7th March 2007, when the wiki novel was in progress and continually in flux, we can consider both the position of the reader as well as how they experienced the wiki novel through the paratextual apparatus. Their position is a complex one as they are encouraged to move from a reader to an author position and can also exist in a place somewhere in between the two. Their experience of the novel-in-progress is unique. They are continually encouraged to join as collaborators and so if they remain as reader they are positioned on the edge of the author experience. A reader of the project text during the writing process was offered a unique reading experience; one which played with the idea of authorial control within a text. They could remain as a reader or contribute as an author.

1.10.2 Project Rhetoric

To begin to understand the position of the author within *A Million Penguin's* project text, it is important to first look at the way readers were encouraged to become authors

through the structure of the wiki, the language used to promote the project and the publicity it generated. By using a wiki form, the project explicitly invited contributions and made it easy for people to contribute by simply registering to take part. The form was particularly open and individuals could change any aspect of the novel through their contributions. This ease of collaboration made it easy for readers to become authors. In the 'Technical Guidelines' section of the wiki, this attempt at accessibility was made clear:

> 'To encourage as wide a participation as possible we have tried to make this site as easy to navigate and use as we could. But if anyone has any suggestions as to how we could make it still easier, please contact us at the address shown in the left hand column' (*A Million Penguins,* 2007).

This call for collaboration was a fundamental part of the project. It tried to encourage people to become authors and communicate their experience of the project. The information displayed in the project text was written by the editors and emphasises that this was a wiki novel to be a part of rather than something to read. It was made clear that this was a participatory process, and a literary and social experiment, rather than just the mass writing of a novel. All the language used to promote the project emphasised its participatory nature. A press release issued by Penguin to launch the project, a form of prior paratext, emphasises that anyone could take part (Ettinghausen, 2007a). The mass of publicity that spread after the project was launched drew on the opportunity for collaboration. This was viewed by many as an exciting opportunity for collaborative creative work led in part by a major publisher.

The position of the reader within the wiki novel during the writing process can be seen as someone who is part of the action. They may be readers but are also encouraged to take part as authors in an open call for collaboration. By its very structure as a wiki, and the presence of a team of editors, the emphasis was clearly on writing

rather than reading. This led to a new positioning of author and reader. This was compounded by the options that an individual was offered when visiting the wiki. They could freely read the existing wiki novel or register and contribute. However, many individuals registered to take part but then did not contribute to the wiki novel and instead existed in a role somewhere between reader and author.

1.10.3 Potential Authors

In their research report, Mason and Thomas (2008) consider the position of the reader as being that of a potential author. They look particularly at the reader-participant who registers to take part as a writer but does not contribute by writing or editing the text. They label this mass of approximately 1,500 registered readers a 'crowd', who gathered and had the potential to contribute (Mason and Thomas, 2008, p.16). Mason and Thomas see this crowd as present in the wiki novel even though they did not contribute anything. In fact, most of the people who registered to contribute to the wiki novel either never contributed or contributed on just one occasion. Although over 11,000 edits were made, they were made by a small number of contributors (Mason and Thomas, 2008).

The readers of the project text during its live state were in a position that can never be possible in print publishing. They could instantly take part in writing the wiki novel and so move from the position of reader to author. To explore the position of the reader who has the potential to become the author, Mason and Thomas use the 90-9-1 theory (Nielsen, 2006). They explain that typically 90% of all users of any Internet resource are 'lurkers', who read but don't contribute. A further 9% are occasional contributors, and only 1% are extremely frequent contributors. They apply this theory to

the wiki novel and find that here the participation ratio is approximately 55-40-05. However, they conclude that of the 85 who contributed on multiple occasions, most (67) contributed on five or fewer occasions. In contrast, 18 contributed more often and two contributed over 1,000 edits each. If they took these vast differences in writer participation into account then a figure more similar to the 90-9-1 theory emerges. (Mason and Thomas, 2008) Mason and Thomas conclude that instead of a 'non-interactive crowd of lurkers', who remain in the reader position, the registered users could be seen as a crowd reacting to the performance of the novel with a fluid interchange between the roles of performer and audience (Mason and Thomas, 2008, p. 19). This again connects to Bakhtin's (1968) notion of the carnival and the idea that participants (both readers and authors) are part of the action in this form of public authorship.

To understand the experience of a reader of the wiki novel during its writing state we also need to consider the experience of a reader as on the edge of an author experience. To do so, we can first look at the experience of moving from the position of reader to that of author. Here it is interesting to look again to the work of Murray (2007) and her consideration of how electronic environments structure participation. She focuses her attention on digital platforms that are altered by a user's participation. Such interactive spaces differ in many ways from the wiki novel but certain ideas can be connected. Murray looks at the pleasures of participation and the joy that a sense of agency can bring a user as a way to actively explore a digital space. During the writing of the wiki novel, the experiences of readers were not recorded but the preserved discussions by authors often show frustration with the space as well as clear attempts to control it, rather than indications that authors were able to explore it for pleasure. This would also have prompted many readers to become authors as a way to make sense of

the wiki novel. The confusion and frustration experienced by the reader of the wiki novel may have encouraged many readers to start contributing.

We must also look at the experience of the reader who remained a reader, and did not move into the role of author. There has always been a complex paradox between the position of author and reader and many theorists have questioned whether it is the reader or author writer who controls the text. Much discussion has been concerned with network narratives where the reader is guided through the text by the author. There are choices to be made, and a certain amount of creative opportunity for the reader, but ultimately power still lies with the author. Ciccoricco (2007) recognises that although network fiction may celebrate the idea that the reader holds the power much of this power is limited. It is the author who prearranges all available options and so the reader has no real power. Aarseth (1997) notes that often the reader has more freedom while navigating through the pages of a printed book than they do in a digital narrative.

1.10.4 The Archived Novel

When the writing process of the wiki novel was completed on 7th March 2007, the novel was archived. The project text, including the wiki novel, appears on the project website as part of the project text but can no longer be altered or added to. It is important to consider how the position of the reader and their experience of the wiki novel shifted from reading the novel, as it was being written, to reading the archived novel. As the wiki novel was being written, the reader was able to participate in its creation. In the archived wiki novel, the reader is no longer offered this freedom and has to interact with it differently. There are now fixed and distinct author and reader roles which need to be discussed. The reader is now offered a different way to experience the

wiki novel and this is connected to print culture traditions. Now that the wiki novel is static, it can be seen in many ways as resembling a print novel and this needs to be considered. It can be questioned whether the wiki novel has more in common with print or digital literary traditions and whether it can be understood if separated from its technological context or away from the paratexts of the project itself or situated in a new form of paratext. We must also consider the reading experience that it offers the reader and how a fragmented reading experience connects or separates author and reader. It is also interesting to look at whether a hint at a meta narrative in the wiki novel allows the reader to experience, to an extent, how it felt to be one of its authors.

During the writing process, the wiki novel was interactive as anyone could potentially contribute by writing or editing the text. When the novel was archived at the end of the project, a reader was only be able to read in a form removed from the writing process and was not be able to take part in its creation. We need to consider whether this means that the reading experience offered by the wiki novel in its archived state is interactive, participatory or closed.

In the live text, there was certainly no sole author. Instead, over a thousand authors competed to express themselves. While reading the wiki novel in progress, the reader's position would have been the only constant. The text was constantly changing around them and so their reading experience would have been unique. In addition, no author was able to control or direct their own reading experience as they were not even in control of the text. With no coherent authorial voice and no sense of narrative direction, it is almost as through there was no author. The reader, although experiencing a fragmented and incoherent reading experience, was more in control. They could develop their own unique reading of the novel independent from authorship. It was

literally, as Barthes metaphorically claimed of the printed text, 'eternally written here and now' (Barthes, 1988, p.170).

In addition, the reader was not just able to create the text through their engagement with it. They were also able to radically change the text by participating as an author. This moves beyond Barthes' theory that the reader can be a 'scriptor' (Barthes, 1988) and Michael R. Allen's definition of the hypertext 'wreader' as someone who in the process of reading can participate in the writing or re-writing of the text (Allen, 2003). In the wiki novel, the reader and author positions are blurred and overlapping. While the wiki novel was being written, the reader did not just metaphorically hold control of the text through their interpretation of it and experience through it. They could also take control by becoming one of its authors.

1.10.5 Hyperlinks

The use of hyperlinks between various parts of the text connects the epitext to the peritext. The inside and outside of the networked book are linked. Links are given to sources of information on the internet and these become part of the project text. The presence of these links allows a reader to have more of an understanding of the thought processes of an author and see what prior or parallel information they are drawing on. It widens the breadth and depth of the project text.

The presence of links within the wiki novel means that there is a certain amount of agency for a reader. A reader can choose to access additional information or follow a particular non-linear route through the wiki novel by following these links. Due to these offered choices, the narrative is not fixed and so becomes a network with which the reader can interact. In this way, it resembles Blok's idea of the possibility of a

networked narrative as theoretically having no predetermined beginning, middle or end, as assumed in narrative theory' (Blok, 2004). The wiki novel has little sense of sequential order as the narrative is non-linear and open ended but through the use of links the reader is able to navigate the text and to some extent interact with it.

Links can often give a reader a sense of power over the digital text. They can imagine that they are able to navigate the text in their own way but in reality in hyperlinked texts they are often simply following a limited set of options offered by the author. Aarseth claims that one of the ways that hypertext blurs the boundary between author and reader is by 'by permitting various paths through a group of documents, it makes readers, rather than authors, control the materials they read and the order in which they read them' (Aarseth, 1997, p.170). In this way, their position begins to resemble that of the author who is able to make choices over narrative direction.

In the project text of *A Million Penguins*, the links are not made by just one author and so there is not a series of structured options for the reader. The links may have been 'tidied and fixed' (Pullinger, 2007b) by the editors but they offered no cohesive journey for a reader. Instead, they offer a limited and random journey created by many authors.

1.10.6 Structure and Titles

During the writing period, the wiki novel was divided into seven sections and additional information, such as character lists and alternative versions of the novel, was included as separate sections. These titles were a form of titular apparatus and framed information (Genette, 1997). All information was then read using preconceived ideas prompted by these titles and their position in the project text. The aim of this division of

sections was to make the wiki novel easier to edit and navigate. Each section was linked to and so an author or reader could jump through the novel from one section to the next and could theoretically choose his or her own route through the wiki novel. These links were then preserved in the archived wiki novel. This structure of the wiki novel was created by the editors and so shows their influence. There were many authors but the structure of the novel was developed by a few. In this way, the interactive nature of the wiki novel in its achieved form resembles the single authored hypertext.

1.10.7 Fixing the Text

The experience of reading the wiki novel in its archived form may be partially interactive but it is no longer participatory. When the live stage of the project ended, and the wiki novel was archived, the roles of the author and reader were fixed. To begin to understand these roles, it is important to consider the role of the author in the reading experience. It can be argued that although the reader is offered a form of interaction with the wiki novel there is still a clear distinction between author and reader. Ciccorrico recognises that this distinction is maintained by network fictions 'even if the notion of "writer" gives way to a creative consciousness that is often plural and collaborative' (Ciccorrico, 2007, p.10). When the wiki novel was being written, the reader had the opportunity and potential to shift between the roles of reader and author. They were also seen as participating through providing an audience to the performance of the novel. Now, in contrast, a reader coming to the archived text is positioned as a reader who is not able to participate.

As Blok claims, the medium is part of the narration and that the digital narrative is very much bound to its medium (Blok, 2004). *A Million Penguins*, in its archived

state is no longer participatory but is still firmly positioned according to the technology that produced it. It is also read in its archived form on the computer screen and so this also affects the narrative and again positions the wiki novel as part of a wider tradition. Blok recognises that the idea of medium as part of narrative is not just limited to the digital narrative. A narrative within a printed book is also affected by form, through due to the five hundred year history of the printed press this is often overlooked (Blok, 2004).

The differences between the experience of reading a book and reading a digital text on a computer screen need to be considered to understand this influence of medium on narrative. One of these difference is the non-trivial reading effort (Blok, 2004) that Aarseth terms 'ergodic', signifying 'work' and 'path' (Aarseth, 1997, p.1). The reader has to move beyond trivial physical effort, such as moving their eyes and turning the page, to more complex and demanding activities, such as making choices and choosing links. This can be applied to some extent to the wiki novel, where readers are presented with multiple narratives and paratextual information and need to apply effort in order to navigate it. In this way, their experience of the archived wiki novel as a reader is directed by its form; which can only exist online.

1.10.8 Reading the Text

There has been much debate about how to approach the concept of reading in the light of new technologies. Much existing theory considering technology and reading assumes that it is possible to update theories of reading by applying these to new technologies. Viewed in this way, reading will always retain its links to the print tradition and any understanding of readings of digital literature will always be based on an understanding

of the printed form. For Allen (2003), this approach considers hypertext not as a new textual form but as a new set of textual conventions. This approach appears limited as it ignores new technologies as holding the potential to create new forms of literature. For example, collaborative forms such as the wiki novel, which would not have been possible in print.

Stuart Moulthrop (1991) recognises the approach of applying existing literary theory to new technologies as limited but also sees its benefits. He proposes a dual approach more suited to the electronic environment. His model is 'based on integration with existing conventions of writing and on innovation as a way of opening up new avenues for discourse' (Moulthrop, 1991, p.292). He supports the idea of looking both to the past and the future for a full understanding of the position of digital literature. This approach is most relevant when considering the project text of *A Million Penguins*. The wiki novel exists away from the print tradition in its creation but in its archived form it also possesses many intrinsic features of the print novel.

We can also consider the wiki novel's connections to, and release from, print culture through a discussion of physical form. It exists online in the public domain and can not be experienced in the same way in any other form. In many ways, the book has disappeared and left the narrative behind. It does physically exist in software form but its experience different to a printed work. This offers a new type of interaction for the reader and one which is removed from the experience of print culture.

In *Phenomenology of Reading*, Georges Poulet (1969) explores what he sees as the disappearance of the book as an object and concludes that this places the focus on the subjective experience of the reader. Meaning transmitted from the book is interpreted by the reader and their experience is subjective and not led by the original intentions of the author. This connects to Barthes' (1968) idea of the death of the author

but considers specifically how the book exists and disappears. In network fiction, the book did not just disappear according to the subjective experience of the reader; it never existed.

The wiki novel is a result of the project that led to its creation and it can not be fully read or experienced away from this project. It could never exist as a printed book as both its structure and content are depended on wiki technology. It is reliant on its context to transmit meaning to the reader. It would be a very different reading experience to read the wiki novel away from the context of the project. The paratextual material of the project information, the three blogs and the authors' comments in the discussion space, provides a framework for the project text. These elements provide the threshold between text and reader. They add to a reader's understanding of the wiki novel in such a fundamental way that it would be a very different experience to read the novel away from these elements The wiki novel can not be viewed as a published novel, instead it is archived project what includes a wiki novel and several alternative versions of the same novel located firmly within the wider framework of the project.

It is clear that the wiki novel is not archived in traditional book form nor can it be fully experienced out of the context of the project. It is also interesting to consider how a reader is able to experience it in its archived form. A reader is offered some limited interaction through the process of following links through the archived text but the wiki novel is no longer participatory. It is necessary to consider whether in this static form it resembles the printed novel or whether it retains feature of a digital text. Blok considers that digital narratives can be very different from conventionally printed narratives, which typically contain a linear narrative and a sense of textual authority. A place is created for readers to interpret the meaning of the narrative.

The digital narrative, according to Blok (2004), is more problematic as the reader has to struggle to get hold of the ending and define a sense of time. The wiki novel, as a non linear narrative with little sense of narrative closure, stands in contrast to Blok's idea of a conventionally printed narrative and so offers a different reading experience. The narrative is unreliable and open ended and with the presence of so many authors rather than one sole authorial voice it is both difficult to navigate and to achieve meaning from.

It is also important to consider the experience of reading the project text in its archived state. For this, we can look to the act of reading as defined by Wolfgang Iser (1980) as a process of 'becoming conscious' and discovering an 'inner world of which we had hitherto not been conscious' (Iser, 1980, p.58) For Iser, the reading experience does not involve passively reading a text to receive meaning transmitted by the author. This vision of reading as an engaging rather than passive process has become particularly evident in digital literature.

In his paper, 'This is Not a Hypertext, But...' Allen (2003) discusses Jerome McGann's notion of the 'radial reader' as a reader who exists in a digital environment and navigates their own path through a digital text. In digital literature, the reader is often encouraged to take the route of a radial reader and experience an open ended reading experience through hypertext. The experience of this type of reading is often fragmented and full of gaps. To understand this fragmented experience for the reader, we can look again to the work of Iser (1972). He proposes that a text that contains gaps can inspire engagement from the reader as they can develop their own unique interpretations. Instead of damaging the reading experience, gaps can enhance it. The wiki novel is certainly a fragmented text even it its archived form. It is full of unintentional and intentional gaps, inevitable considering its number of authors and the

collaborative nature of its creation. The paratextual use of links and the division of the text into sections makes the reading experience fragmented and the reader can navigate it in their own way and use their own imagination to fill these gaps. As the reader experience is not controlled by the author, there is little sense that this reading experience is a particularly guided one. Instead, it appears to be unintentionally fragmented.

Landow (1991) believes that reading within a fragmented environment can be assisted by authors establishing relevant links. He states that, '[t]he very existence of links in hypermedia conditions the reader to expect purposeful, important relationships between linked materials' (Landow, 1991, p.83). Within the wiki novel, there is little control over links, apart from editor intervention. There is no guarantee that they will be relevant or useful. In this archived wiki novel, the reader must chart their own course through the narrative and can not rely on an author to lead them on their way.

1.11 Conclusions

The aim of *A Million Penguins* was to bring together a community to collaboratively author a novel, but both the collaborative process and the end result proved complex. This was particularly due to the continually changing nature of the project text during the project's time span. To fully examine the project, as well as its aims and outcomes, the project text, including all paratextual elements, had to be read as a whole. The wiki novel is not simply a static text. It can not be separated from the project that created it. The documented collaborative writing process was of specific interest and had to be read alongside the wiki novel. In particular, the project information, blogs and discussion space had to be examined as peritextual elements of the project text. Here, project authors, editors and authors communicated through both the text and structure of the project. There was a unique opportunity for each to document their experiences of the writing process. What is captured here is vital for an understanding of the nature of mass collaboration. The project authors remained primarily anonymous and controlled the structure of the project through decisions made before the six week writing process began. The editors, both from Penguin and De Montfort University, were of interest as they held a level of control over both the project and the text. The authors were encouraged to participate but in reality they were not allowed full access to the text. Their behaviour was also documented both the peritext and epitext of the project text. From mischievous rebellion, attempted sabotage to strict editing, each author had their own approach to the project. In a discussion of the roles and experiences of both the authors and editors, it was necessary to return to the idea of a the project as a community writing a novel and assess whether this was, or could be, possible. The position of the readers was also addressed. As readers of either a constantly changing

text, during the writing process, or a static novel, during its archived form, they were offered contrasting and complex reading experiences and the potential to take on the role of author.

It was also necessary to examine the project's epitext, the areas inside the wiki novel that affected its creation and reception. The form and narrative of the wiki novel raised many questions about the nature and construction of the networked narrative and the form of a wiki novel. It promoted further questions about the creation of space within the wiki novel as a place for authors to participate in. It also led to a consideration of the wiki as a suitable tool for writing a novel.

During this project, questions were raised about the nature of collaborative authorship, interactions between author, reader and text and the potential for the construction of narrative by multiple authors. By addressing the paratexts of *A Million Penguins*, we were able to examine all elements of the project text and discuss their functions. The threshold between text and reader proved to be a complex and shifting space. During the collaborative process, paratextual elements could appear and re-appear, continually framing and re framing the project text. The roles of author, reader and editor blurred and overlapped. Textual authority was asserted by project authors and editors but was also continually subverted by authors. Individual reading experiences altered as the author and readers struggled to assert authority and make sense of the collaborative authoring process.

Reader: Collaborative Reading in *The Golden Notebook Project*

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Background

As the act of reading moves from the printed page to the online space, the positions of author and reader are shifting. The relationship between author and reader is altered and, while exploring a text, readers can be encouraged to leave a trace of themselves behind. Discussions between readers can be recorded and the reading experience moves from being a private and solitary experience to a social one. The experience of reading becomes collaborative and the boundaries between author and reader adapt and change. The roles of author and reader are no longer fixed and static. Through these encounters between author and reader, the book becomes a place rather than an artefact and readers gather around the text and contribute their own ideas. The familiar concept of the book begins to include the commentaries and notes left by its readers. These annotations, made on the virtual book, influence the reading of the text by future readers.

The Golden Notebook Project, designed and run by the Institute for the Future of the Book, was an experiment in close reading undertaken over six weeks, starting in late 2008. Its aims were to document the experiences of seven readers as they read the novel *The Golden Notebook* by Doris Lessing and build a virtual community of readers who discussed the text. The seven commissioned readers (referred to hereafter as the

'featured readers') were able to leave notes of their thoughts and ideas in the digital margins of the novel. Other readers, who chose to take part in the project (referred to hereafter as the 'general readers') were able to discuss their readings of the novel in the project forum. The project became a form of public conversation and resembled a virtual book group as it experimented with the concept of the book as well as with how to build a reading community.

2.1.2 Chapter Overview

This chapter begins by considering the history of reading and explores its roots as both a solitary activity and social experience. This consideration draws connections to reader-response theory (Fish, 1967, 1980; Holland, 1968; Bleich, 1975, Iser, 1980; Jauss, 1982) and argues that the networked book offers a new way for readers to engage with a text, which has connections with the wider history of reading. Collaborative reading is an outward, social process, which is no longer private as readers gather around a text. This chapter explores collaborative reading through an examination of the interactions between authors and readers in the margins of the networked book. It seeks to identify the point at which readers become authors through their contributions to the text.

The text of the networked book is a virtual space made up of formal and informal spaces. These spaces, within the process of collaborative reading, become sites of encounter and experience for readers. This is a shift away from the book being seen primarily as a physical object. Instead, it is an opportunity for experience and a place where readers can congregate.

The reader of a networked book subverts the traditional idea of the reader as the amateur and the author as expert and is given an active, rather than passive, role. The active role is viewed as textual production and the passive role is viewed as reading the text. This chapter discusses how much agency this active role has in a consideration of the nature of control within the text. It addresses issues of power and authority in the textual space and explores the idea that power for the reader in the networked book is limited. It identifies that decisions are made by project authors and that these shape the reading experience. It looks at boundaries, freedoms and limitations within the text and argues that these can both create a prescriptive reading environment and offer freedoms.

Conflicts between authors and readers in the text of a networked book can be identified. In particular, this chapter identifies a hierarchy of 'featured' and 'general' readers and analyses the behaviour of each in relation to the freedoms each is offered within the text. The transactional relationship between author and reader is altered as the reader can take part as an author.

Within *The Golden Notebook Project*, readers are able to share their reading experience in a public space. Readers influence each other's readings and are not able to read a text away from their own frame of reference. Instead, they have a plural reading experience. Readers are not only able to read the text but they also 'read' one another through their textual contributions. The pages of a networked book are a starting point for further exploration by the reader rather than a finished, static text.

This chapter considers the margins of the networked book as a space where conversations between readers are recorded and argues that such spaces are fundamentally important as a part of the text. In making connections with the history of marginalia, it discusses the features of this new form of digital marginalia. It examines the position of the active reader who annotates the networked text and addresses the

nature of this form of marginal exchange. The text is changed by the annotation of its readers and these can be read as part of the project text.

Connections can be drawn between the participatory margins of the text and the oral tradition. This chapter considers readers as a collaborative audience and the documentation of the reading experience as a type of performance.

2.1.3 Approach

The Golden Notebook Project can be read in its entirety as a project text. Reading it in this way acknowledges that the networked book can include all associated materials published alongside the book. The project text of *The Golden Notebook Project* is defined in this chapter as:

Project information: This is where project authors (those individuals and organisations who developed and led the project) are evident in the project text.

Forum: This is where everyone interested in the project could post comments and start discussions.

Blog: This is where featured readers documented their reading experience and reflected on the project.

Book: This is the digital text of *The Golden Notebook* by Doris Lessing.

Margins: This is the textual space within *The Golden Notebook* by Doris Lessing where featured readers left notes.

In order to fully read the project text of *The Golden Notebook Project,* this chapter examines all its textual elements. To enable us to closely consider all textual elements and signifiers, and the complexities of the potential interactions and transactions between text, author and reader, we must examine the paratext of the project text (Genette, 1997). In addressing this concept of the paratextual threshold in relation to the project text of *The Golden Notebook Project,* this chapter divides its paratext into two areas, according to Genette's (1997) approach. These areas are:

The Epitext (Liminal devices outside the book): This includes the project information, blog and forum.

The Peritext (Liminal devices within the book): This includes the digital text of *The Golden Notebook.* The textual space within the book has been expanded in this chapter to include the textual space within the margins of the book. This space, where the featured readers left their notes, will be considered as a liminal space within the book.

Adopting this theoretical approach allows us to read and discuss all elements of the project text and discuss their functions. We expand Genette's (1997) consideration of the relations between text and reader by addressing interactions that occur when the lines between author, reader and text overlap. In a consideration of the threshold of the project text, this chapter addresses the thresholds of the positions between author, reader and text. Genette states that, 'something is not a paratext unless the author or one of his

associates accepts responsibility for it' (Genette, 1997, p.2). This chapter explores how, in the networked book, authorial authority and the authority of the publisher is disrupted. It addresses the crucial functions of both the epitext and peritext in relation to the context of *The Golden Notebook Project.*

Through a detailed examination of this project using Genette's (1997) paratextual analysis, and specific examination of the epitext and peritext of the project text, this chapter explores the potential of the networked book to offer a collaborative reading experience, resembling elements of a social experience. It considers whether the reading experience of the networked book possesses elements of orality. It addresses how this impacts the perception of the book as it moves from a physical artefact to a virtual space and from an object to an encounter. It also considers the multiplicity of the author and reader positions and their interactions with the text. It addresses how these multiple positions, of author, reader and text, affect the traditional concept of the book and the reading experience. It discusses the ways that the reader is able to navigate the project text and how both the author and reader are able to control and shape the reading and authoring experience. It explores the digital margins of the networked book and examines the nature of digital marginalia. It discusses how the peripheries of the networked book become part of the book and shape the reading experience.

2.2 History of Reading

The networked book potentially offers a different reading experience from a printed book. Readers are often asked to collaborate in textual production as they are typically asked to change or annotate existing text or contribute text themselves. The reading process becomes social as readers are able to become authors of the book they are reading. They are encouraged to communicate with their co-readers and leave a textual trace of themselves behind, which then becomes part of the book. Through this process, the networked book becomes layer upon layer of pieces of text left by its readers. To begin to understand the collaborative nature of this new form of reading experience, is necessary to look at the history of reading and uncover its roots in the social experience and explore how groups of readers have experienced the spoken and written word in different times and places.[37]

2.2.1 Social Practice

The experience of engaging with literature has not always been of reading text written, or printed, onto paper. In oral-based cultures, '[n]arrative was a living organic thing which articulated and elaborated every complexity of human interaction with each reading. A single anonymous storyteller would pass their tale to a listener, who would make some subjective response which would change the tale as they themselves retold it' (Wendt, 1995, p.83). The listener played a role similar to that of the reader but could

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37 This exploration will focus on European readers but we must remember that, '[r]eading has a history. It was not always and everywhere the same' (Darnton, 1990, p.187).

take on the role of author by retelling the story to someone else. There was little sense of a passive recipient of a narrative.

To a medieval reader, reading was a public, spoken act, which occurred within a group of people. Reading and interpreting in such groups brought together a community united around the common goal of understanding a text (Howe, 1992). Interpretation of a text was key and the aim of these groups was to reach a collective understanding. These groups of medieval readers can be seen as a form of textual community with their needs being simply a text, interpreter and a public (Stock, 1996). In a medieval culture, reading would have been an unfamiliar and unfathomable process for many and the role of the textual community was to decipher the text collectively. The process of decoding the text would have been seen as a 'riddle to be solved' (Howe, 1992, p.62).

For people in early modern Europe, engaging with literature was a social activity. It took place in workshops, barns and taverns. It was almost always oral but not necessarily about deciphering a text collectively. It became about entertainment (Darnton, 1990). Natalie Davis' study, 'Printing and the People', examines groups of readers in sixteenth century France who made newly available printing material their own. In doing so, they became not just readers but also writers. There were readings in village communities. Craftsmen met in groups to read instructional books and the bible. Printers built up reputations as scholars and authors (Long, 1993). Brain Stock calls such groups of communal readers 'textual communities' (Stock, 1983). They 'not only empower their members, but also helped to create community, sustain collective memory, and challenge tradition' (Long, 1993, p.193). Reading was much more about a collaborative effort than an individual experience.

The reading experience in Europe of the early eighteenth century was often domestic, with people reading out loud at home or in social groups, or within the

church. Even silent private reading to oneself was seldom solitary. Instead, it was carried out in shared household space or outside the home in coffee shops, bookshops and libraries (Darnton, 1990).

Reading in Europe was most typically a social and collective experience until the late eighteenth century when the image of the solitary reader, a figure trying to decipher the text alone, began to slowly develop. Assumptions, now challenged by Saenger and Heinlen (Saenger and Heinlen, 1999), were that the coming of the printed book put an end to 'public, communal, highly directed reading and led to silent, solitary, anarchic reading' (Jackson, 2001). Studies have placed doubt on the supposedly solitary image of reading in the eighteenth century (Raven, Small and Tadmor, 1996). 'Not only did public reading outloud persist as an important part of culture (notably in churches) but there was a great expansion in domestic reading, that is, reading aloud in small circles of family or friends' (Jackson, 2001, p.66). Private reading (silent reading to oneself) was rarely solitary as it took place in shared household space or outside the house in coffee shops, bookshops and circulating libraries (Jackson, 2001). This reading in groups made reading a shared experience as readers could share ideas and interpretations with one another. At this time, readers began to annotate printed books as documents of their own reading experiences. Reading was seen to become an 'interactive' experience when it reality it has been for thousands of years previously (Radway, 1999, p.11).

By the nineteenth century, reading was still public for artisans in Europe, such as cigar makers and tailors who read to each other while they worked or hired a reader to read to them (Darnton, 1990, p.169). Books had audiences rather than readers. Reading was a more private activity for the majority of educated people who could afford to buy

books. They joined reading clubs, 'cabinets litteraires' or 'Lesegesellshaften' and read in a social atmosphere in exchange for a small payment (Darnton, 1990, p.169).

The rise of print culture influenced reading practices. Marshall McLuhan calls print 'the technology of individualism' (McLuhan, 1962, p.158). He claims that it started the practice of silent reading by making printed material easily accessible to individuals. It is this which promotes individualism as the printed book is, for the most part, intended to be read alone and silently. It can also be argued that it was not solely the invention of the printing press that created the notion of the solitary author. It remained a social and oral event until the industrial expansion of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. What changed reading to a solitary activity was the societal changes brought about by the experience of industrialism and the rise of individualism (Tuman, 1992).

2.2.2 Reader-Response

Reader-response theory focuses on the role of the reader in the reading process. This represents a shift from attention being focused on the author and the text. For reader response theorists, (Fish, 1967, 1980; Holland, 1968; Bleich, 1975; Iser, 1980; Jauss, 1982) the reader is an active agent in the reading process and is able to interpret the text. They are a fundamental part of textual construction.

Norman Holland (1968) believes that each individual experiences a literary text differently. They each develop what he calls an identity theme, which imprints itself on every aspect of his or her behaviour, including acts of textual interpretation. The reader will filter a text through his characteristic fantasies, translate the experience into a

socially acceptable form, and produce his or her interpretation (Thompkins, 1980). Hans Robert Jauss (1982) situates our apprehension of a literary text within the processes of reading, contextualising and interpretation. Here emphasis is on the understanding and interpretation of the reader and the balance of authorship is shifted from author to reader. Stanley Fish (1967) argues that meaning is not the product of the fixed text or the individual reader but rather it is made by collaborative 'interpretive communities' of readers. This collaborative process is what creates meaning for reader (Fish, 1980). Wolfgang Iser (1980) believes that the reader actively participates in the production of textual meaning. David Bleich (1975) also considers the interpretive power of a reading community. He refers to the importance of a reader's 'community of interpreters' in their response to a literary text.

2.2.3 Reading the Networked Book

The emergence of the digital text has changed the reading experience. Sven Birkerts (2006) identifies several of these changes as he laments what he sees as a move away from print based reading. For him, reading is an individual activity that, 'inscribes the limit of the old conception of the individual and his relation to the world' (Birkerts, 2006, p.15). It is a private encounter that stands in opposition to mass-produced entertainment. The shift to reading online means, for Birkerts, a shift from 'intensive' to 'extensive' reading (Birkerts, 2006, p.72) and a shift from inward to outward experience.

Birkerts's (2006) fears about the future of reading may appear confirmed by the emergence of the networked book. Here, there is less emphasis on the private, solitary

reading experience and more on the potential for mass collaboration. The reading process is often public and the reader is surrounded by a reading, as well as an authoring, community. However, looking at the history of reading, we can see that it has not always been concerned with the private experience and individual interpretation of a text. With its roots in the oral tradition and a long history of collaborative reading, the networked book can be seen, to some extent, as a return to these oral and collaborative roots. In general, digital literature appears to more closely resemble oral discourse than it does conventional printing (Noblitt, 1988). In the oral tradition, the audience can express approval through applause. The electronic reading space is shared between author and reader. The reader participates in calling forth and defining the text of each particular reading (Bolter, 1991). The experience returns to that of a collaborative process.

In digital literature, the role of the reader becomes similar to that of the author. Jay Bolter argues that, '[t]he role of the reader in electronic fiction therefore lies halfway between the customary roles of author and reader in the medium of print' (Bolter, 1991, p.158). In the networked book, the roles are even closer. The reader can contribute to the text and cross the boundary into authorship and then return to the role of author.

The reader is surrounded by an interpretative community and the text can be shaped and changed by the responses of this community. This expands on the ideas posited by reader-response theorists (Bleich, 1960; Holland, 1968; Fish, 1967; Iser, 1980; Jauss, 1982). The authors and readers of a networked book form a textual community and it is this community that collaboratively authors the text.

2.2.4 Genette and Reading

Genette (1997) argues that the paratext should be read as transactional as it transmits meaning about the book to its readers and influences its reception. It directly addresses the reader by inviting them through the periphery of the text and guiding them in their encounter with the book. His view of the reader is as a passive figure who interprets a book through the materials that frame it. The reader of the networked book contrasts this figure as having the potential to be active as, in the collaborative authoring process, they are able to take part in authoring the text. The networked book does not offer a passive reading experience as readers have to construct meaning not just about the text but about how it was created. They may be provoked to address their role as reader and consider that is closely aligned to that of an author.

2.3 Project Information

The text of *The Golden Notebook Project* does not include just the novel *The Golden Notebook* by Doris Lessing. It also includes the information that appears on the project website. This paratextual information was aimed at encouraging visitors to become authors or readers, in the project. The project rhetoric, in the directions, instructions and information surrounding the text, establishes the idea that this project is about a community of readers. People were encouraged to become readers and read the novel collectively and contribute their responses. However, any community that developed around *The Golden Notebook Project* was directed by its coordinators at the Institute for the Future of the Book, who were the project authors. The decisions that they made in structuring the project directly influenced the type of community that was formed, the position of each person taking part in the project and their subsequent behaviour. In addition, they had the authority and ability to remove the project website at any time and edit or remove any comments.

There were other project authors present in the project text and these were introduced in the project information. The Institute for the Future of the Book were the publishers of the project but HarperCollins were the publishers of *The Golden Notebook* (Lessing, 1962). They digitised the book for the project and gave permission for it to be reproduced at no cost. This information appears on the homepage alongside a link that leads to HarperCollins' own website. The project was funded by the Arts Council England, two trusts and New York University and the homepage features the logo of the

Arts Council England and a link to their website. The project is acknowledged to be a collaboration between The Institute of the Future of the Book, and Apt, an art, design and technology consultancy. The partnerships between these organisations and the Institute for the Future of the Book emphasise the project aims for forming collaborative ways of working. These organisations can be read collectively as the project authors and their presence has influence over the project and the way it is read. The names of these organisations are an important epitextual feature and their presence affects how readers and authors view the project.

2.3.1 Project Authors

The project authors chose seven women to take the position of the featured readers in the project. These readers were able to comment in the margins of the book. Limitations on the number of readers permitted to write in the margins was blamed on limitations in available technology;

> 'Good conversations are messy, non-linear and complicated. The comment area, a chronological scrolling field just isn't robust enough to follow a conversation among an infinite number of participants. Seven may even be too many' (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008).

This early decision limited the experiences of many readers taking part and set in place a clear division between featured readers and everyone else.

The invitation encouraging other readers to join in appears as a note on the homepage within the common questions:

'[Note: the forums are open to everyone and we do hope that readers beyond the initial seven will join the fray there both as regards the text and the process' (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008).

The general readers, as opposed to the featured readers, were positioned as secondary readers. Their participation was framed as, 'join[ing] the fray'. Their role was to join in and contribute rather than lead the way. The reading experience was lead by the featured readers whose role was positioned as unravelling the text for the other readers. They led discussions and drew attention to points of interest in the novel. In this way, they followed the theological tradition of educated readers leading the way through group interpretations of religious texts.

Although the project focused on the position of the readers in the text, the nature of authorship is also brought into question. Authorship, at first, appears singular with the position of author being held by Lessing. The title of her novel, *The Golden Notebook,* and her name appears handwritten at the top of the homepage. This text is scrawled in pen, accompanied by several ink blots. This handwritten element, the only in the project, denotes authorship. This detail asserts that Lessing is the author of the fictional work. Genette (1997) explains that assumptions about a text will be made based on its author's reputation. Lessing's reputation as a successful and respected author give the project weight. It can be assumed that this attracted readers to the project.

However, the names and photographs of the featured readers are also recorded as part of the project information.

Meet the Readers

Naomi Alderman grew up in London and attended Oxford University and UEA. Her first novel, *Disobedience*, was published in nine languages... More

Nona Willis Aronowitz writes for numerous publications including The Nation, The New York Observer, The Village Voice, VenusZine, and Salon.com. She currently co-writes a blog called GIRLdrive... More
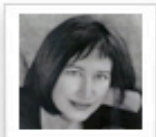
Laura Kipnis Laura Kipnis is a cultural critic and theorist whose most recent books are *Against Love: A Polemic* and *The Female Thing: Dirt, Sex, Envy, Vulnerability* (both from Pantheon)... More

Philippa Levine's publications include *The British Empire, Sunrise to Sunset* (2007), *Gender and Empire: Oxford History of the British Empire Companion Series* (2004)... More

Lenelle Mo◆se co-wrote the screenplay for a Rodrigo Bellot film, *Sexual Dependency*, which has been screened at dozens of international festivals. Her newest musical *Expatriate*... More

Helen Oyeyemi's first novel, *The Icarus Girl*, is about a young girl and her imaginary friend. Her second novel, *The Opposite House*, is a nominee for the 2008 Hurston/Wright Legacy Award.... More

Harriet Rubin is best known as the author of The Princessa: Machiavelli for Women, which is now in its twelfth paperback printing. She currently writes for the New York Times... More

Fig 7 Featured Readers

The homepage includes biographical details of the seven featured readers and their names appear next to their comments in the book, their blog posts and comments in the forums. On the homepage, we are presented with biographical information about each of the featured readers. We are given details of each reader's background and previous publications. This frames each reader as a professional author and also as a professional reader. As the featured readers are presented as being authors they are given additional authority in the project. They become more closely aligned with Lessing, as the author of the novel, and the Institute for the Future of the Book, as the project author. They become a visible presence through their photographs, which contrasts with general readers who remain invisible.

The Institute for the Future of the Book are present in the information that surrounds the digital text of *The Golden Notebook*. They, as an organisation, hold the position of the project author. This contrasts with Lessing's position as the author of the novel but their role is textually important. Evidence of their involvement is evident in the physical structure and textual directions. They designed the project interface and so directed the way the reader experiences the project, influenced the social experience and the way they navigated and participated in conversations.

The paratextual elements of this interface can be examined. The project is presented as an experiment into reading, one where the process as important as the results. For example, in the information on the homepage, potential readers are told, 'We really want to know what you think works and what does not' (*The Golden Notebook Project*, 2008). The Institute for the Future of the Book attempts to position itself as a part of the process; not as a director but as a facilitator and producer.

The aims of the project can be seen in further epitextual elements of the text. These include, as Genette (1997) states, material written about the text. Bob Stein, (2008b) of the Institute for the Future of the Book and a project author, writes about his aims for the project in a blog post. He explains that there is potential for development of reading as a social practice:

> 'As networked books evolve, readers will increasingly see themselves as participants in a social process. As with authors, especially in what is likely to be a long transitional period, we will see many levels of (reader) engagement - from the simple acknowledgement of the presence of others presence to very active engagement with authors and fellow readers...' (Stein, 2008b).

This paratextual element explains several of the motivations and aims for the project. Through this information, readers will have understood their intended role in the project as taking part in a social process. This directs readers to explore this potential and may have influenced their behaviour.

However, this assertion that this project was social and collaborative ignores the premiss that as a collaborative experience not everyone taking part will have the same aims. As project authors, the Institute for the Future of the Book are in the position to make the decisions about the aims for the project.

It is not just the textual information contained within the site but also the structural information that can be examined as a form of epitext. When readers enter the project website, they are directed to several options 'book', 'blog' 'forum'.
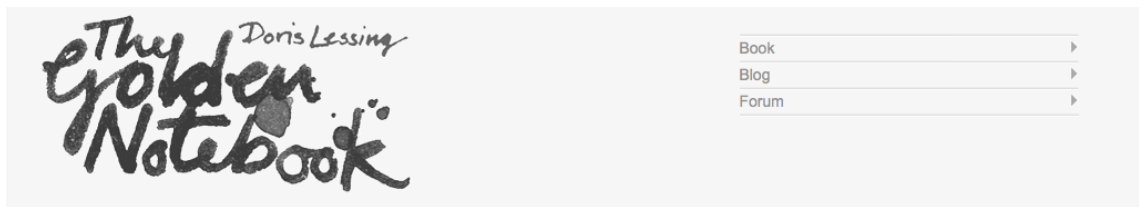
Fig 8 Book/ Blog/ Forum

This emphasises the perceived hierarchy of the project through the order of this list of options. The book appears as the dominant choice as the place where readers are directly to take part. This is emphasised by the text 'Welcome to The Golden Notebook Project' and 'Start reading the book online.' Reading the book is positioned as the dominant activity and this reading experience can then be discussed in the forum. The homepage, containing the project information, is returned to through the 'Home' option, which is displayed on the rest of the pages. This emphasises that this is the centre of the project.

Although the book is seen as the dominant option and the place where readers are directed, epitextual information is used to recommend that the reader buys a printed copy of the novel. A link, 'Buy the Book' takes the reader to a website where they can buy a UK or US edition of the book. The project authors explain that the reader benefits from reading the physical book as opposed to the electronic version of the text displayed on the project website (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008). These directions validate the physical book as the authentic form of reading experience.

At the bottom of the homepage is a feed of recent comments made by the featured readers, blog posts and forums and a list of pages of the novel currently featuring the greatest number of comments. This outlines the information that is seen as

the most important and leads the way readers navigate the project. This information also appears on the bottom of each page in the project as a means of navigation.


Fig 9 Comments

To explore the project's epitext using a development of Genette's (1997) approach, we can examine it as temporal space. The project is set in clear a temporal frame. The project information explains that the project will run for five to six weeks. Readers know that the project will only be active for a short period of time and that their comments will only be read by the featured readers and project authors during this time. This sets limitations on the project and emphasises the authority of the project authors. Information and contributions are read in the knowledge of this finite amount of time. However, after the project ended, comments still appeared on the site. These were forms

of automatically generated spam advertising products were posted in the forums. Irrelevant pieces of information appear on the project homepage in the feed of recent comments in the forums. When the project ended, it was no longer monitored and regulated by the project authors. This end of the moderation period meant that such spam might never be removed. This makes the project space appear abandoned. Readers accessing the project after its end date will view the epitextual elements as emphasising that this project is over and if they add their own comments to the forum they may go unread.

Fig 10 Discussions

2.4 Forum

The forum within *The Golden Notebook Project* was designed as a place where all readers could communicate. Although the featured readers were also able to use this space to communicate, it is signposted as a place for communication for those readers not able to comment directly in the margins of the book. It is an informal space within the project that is open to all, as opposed to other formal areas such as the editorial blog and the margins of the novel. The forum was a space designed for communication between readers as they read the book. These conversations can be read alongside the text of *The Golden Notebook* and have the potential to influence the reading experience for other readers.

2.4.1 Navigating the Forum

In a discussion of the epitextual space of the forum, it is important to consider its structure and examine how textual information is organised. The project authors designed how the project would be navigated, made decisions about the navigation of the forum and its position on the website. The forum is linked to from the top right hand corner of each page, giving it clear visibility. However, it is the last of three options available to the reader navigating the site, below 'book' and 'blog'. This positioning appears to indicate that this is the least important section of the project. This contrasts with the rhetoric of the project information, which emphasises the importance of the readers and their experience of the project. These readers are only able to communicate in the forum.

Readers are able to choose how they want to view the forum. It can viewed as 'Discussions' (where a reader sees a list of all discussions), 'Categories' (where readers are able to choose between viewing), 'General Discussion' (where readers are encouraged to reflect on the project) and 'Discuss Pages' (where emphasis is on discussing and analysing specific pages of the book.) 'Search' is a further available option and by using this readers can search discussions by topic, comments and users. The dominant option is viewing the forum divided into two categories, 'General Discussion' and 'Discuss Pages'. This option automatically appears when a user clicks on 'Forum'.

This choice of the dominant way to view the site has been chosen by the project authors. Discussions are divided into two clearly distinct categories and contributors are encouraged to divide their comments into either about the project or the book. However, contributors' comments do not seem as rigid as the structure and both general discussion of the project and specific comments on the novel appear in both categories.

2.4.2 Terms and Conditions

Readers were required to register to take part in the project as authors. Textual information such as 'apply for Membership' by completing a 'Membership Application Form' and 'all information entered in this form will be kept strictly confidential' emphasises that an organisation, with administrative structures, was responsible for the project.

2.4.3 Mediated Space

The presence of the project authors appears in the forums as 'Admin'. Readers are reminded that the forum is moderated and therefore controlled. It is not as open a space for free discussion as first appears. It can be seen that, 'Admin' has started the majority (37 of 42) of discussion threads and the title of each thread corresponds with the page of the online version of the book that is to be discussed. These pages are those where featured readers have made annotations in the margins. Each of the first posts contains the statement:

> 'Please show a courteous regard for the presence of other voices in the discussion. We reserve the right to edit or delete comments that do not adhere to this standard' (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008).

This warning to potential contributors contains interesting epitextual information. We can see that project authors valued the 'voices' in the discussion. This reference to voice evokes the idea of oral discussion rather than a written text where the storyteller engages the audience in the process or composition of a story. The presence of the audience is necessary for the story to proceed (Bolter, 1991). These voices are referred to as present by the project authors, as though the discussion is taking place in a physical space where they can be physically located. This frames the forums as a space; a place of discussion and communication.

The project authors ask contributors to show 'courteous regard' to each other and in doing so they set expectations on behaviour. This deliberate choice of words reflects the direction that the project authors wanted the project to take. It is led in the direction of being a respectful and polite discussion and certain standards on behaviour are set. The word 'please' is used and this is an indication that the project authors want to request, rather than demand, specific behaviour from contributors.

The second sentence is more authoritarian and refers to 'rights', which asserts control over the project. Contributors are reminded that this space belongs to someone who is able to place controls and restrictions on it. The project authors also assert authorship over the paratextual space of the forum as they remind contributors that they are able to edit or delete their comments. This reminds us of the power that they hold due to the access that they have. They are able to edit and delete other peoples' words, whereas no other reader has been given this freedom. They have access to unseen areas of the project where such changes can be made. The project authors have set the standards to which contributors must adhere otherwise they are removed from the text and rendered invisible. Only the contributions that are deemed appropriate for the project were allowed to remain. Such regulations emphasise who is in control of this textual space and how this control many be exerted. This connects to Genette's (1997) view that a paratextual element may disappear, definitely or not, at any time, by authorial decision. His view relates specifically to print culture and the removal of textual apparatus from the text by the author or publisher. In this project, as only project authors could remove textual elements, they took the role of publisher.

Most of the threads that 'Admin' started have no further comments from readers. Those that do have responses only have one or two and so threads rarely turn into conversations (defined in this instance as when contributors comment and then reply to other contributors within the same thread). In the 'Discuss Pages' forum, 18 people contribute to threads and only three conversations occur. In the 'General Discussion forum', there are 35 contributors to threads and only three conversations occur. These low response rates from readers indicate that either there were few readers involved in *The Golden Notebook Project* or if there were readers they chose not to become contributors.

2.4.4 Titles

The titles of the discussions can be read as part of the project text. They can be analysed in much the same way as Genette analyses the 'titular apparatus' of a printed text (Genette, 1997, p.55). Genette takes his understanding of titles from Leo H Hoek, who, he claims, sees the contemporary understanding of the title as an artificial object, an artefact of reception or of commentary to be separated from the title page and cover. For both Genette and Hoek, the title influences the reception of the text. This has relevance in the forum of *The Golden Notebook Project* and these ideas can be used to analyse the titles of discussions within the forum. Here, there is not one author, but instead multiple authors are also readers of a communal book. Each author starting a discussion gives it a different title this affects the reception of the discussion and, in particular, how many other readers respond to the discussion. The majority (33 of 42) of the discussion threads in the 'Discuss Pages' section started by 'Admin' are titled only with a page number of a page in the online version of the book.

Fig 11 Discuss Pages

These discussions did not attract the attention of readers and they left few comments. The titles of the discussion threads relate directly to the page of the novel where comments had been left in the margins by featured readers. If these did not interest the reader then no comments would be left on the discussion thread. The titles also take their titles from blog posts written by featured readers. Several titles are both the title of a blog post and a title of a forum discussion.

These discussion threads are directly connected to the project authors and seem to be an authorised space for commenting rather than a spontaneous conversation. Several discussions started by readers also use page numbers as their titles as they adopt the conventions of the forum and closely specify what the discussion is about. Other

general readers, and featured readers, chose different titles, relevant to what they are discussing. These typically led other readers to add their comments to the discussion.

Genette (1997) claims that the place of the title is of paratextual important. He refers to the position of the title in the printed text although his discussion of place can be expanded in to a consideration of the position of the titles of discussion threads in the forum of The Golden Notebook Project. Titles form part of the structure of the forum. Information, both temporal (the date of the post) and biographical (the name of the post's author) appears in the same form. This illustrates Genette's (1997) recognition of the order of information in the title of the printed text. Information is structured and so a reader would know where to locate each piece of information. This order, imposed by project authors makes the text straightforward to navigate.

Genette (1997) considers the sender of the message, in the form of the title, and its addressee. Due to the multiple authors and readers in the forum, questions can be raised about who takes the position of producer. It can be argued that it is the author of the comment or the author who first started the discussion thread. It can also be argued that the producer is the project authors, who designed and mediated the project. It could also be argued that the producer of any discussion in the forum is Lessing, as it is her work that inspired the output and the discussions analyse her novel. Genette (1997) believes that the legal sender of the title does not have to be its producer. This is certainly the case in the forum as readers add to each discussion, which is given the same over-arching title. In this way, their words have been titled by someone else and they do not hold have full control of its dissemination or who later adds to the discussion.

According to Genette's (1997) analysis of titles, we must also consider the addressee of the title; the intended reader. However, a book reaches further than its

readers and involves people who do not read the book and includes anyone who participates in its dissemination. This is the case in *The Golden Notebook Project* as not everyone who reads a post in the discussion forum will read the whole post. Many will just read the title, which is displayed as a list of titles for a user to click on to read the full post. In contrast to Genette's view of the address of the title of printed text, a reader of a discussion thread in the forum could join in the discussion and move from the position of the addressee to that of the sender. The addressee has the opportunity to be present in the text and respond to it.

2.4.5 A Public Experience

In *The Golden Notebook Project*, reading becomes a public experience. An individual's reading of the book is shared and discussed. In contrast, the reading experience is often thought of as a private and solitary act. For many people, after learning to read, which is a collective process guided by a parent or teacher, (Visel, 2007) reading becomes an individual experience but the ideas emerging from the process are shared publicly. Here the reading experience can be part of a public experience as the reading process is informed by the experience of other readers, often in the form of their annotations left on the text. There is the opportunity to share someone else's reading process, to see the connections they make between words and passages, to see what they think of certain characters and share their views of key themes. What is unique about the experience of reading the networked book is that these connections, once just marked in printed books by readers, are made public (Yankelovich, Meyrowitz and Van Dann, 1991).

Although readers could become authors of discussion posts, very little sense of community or collective reading experience appears in the forums. Readers responded to each other's comments in several posts but few conversations were started. The maximum number of replies in any thread is 17. Readers did not typically support each other's reading experiences. In the many discussion threads, a reader made a single comment and received no responses. In the 'General Discussion' forum, two contributors were students looking for information to help them research a thesis and neither received any replies. Contributors did not often comment on threads started by 'Admin' whereas threads started by readers received more responses. This may have reflected a sense of general readers wanting to comment on what they felt was interesting and by doing so asserted their own presence on the space. This reluctance to comment on threads started by 'Admin' may also have been due to the titles of the topics in the 'Discuss Pages' forum simply being the page numbers of the novel.

Featured readers commented in the forum but did not typically start discussion threads. In 'Discuss Pages', no discussions were started by featured readers and in 'General Discussion' only four were started by featured readers. This reinforces the idea that this is the reader's space and that the featured reader's space is the margins of the novel. There appears a division between the formal and informal spaces in the text of the project. The forum is seen as an informal space for the readers to gather whereas the margins of the novel is the formal area for the featured readers. The text surrounding the project, providing information and structuring the site, is again formal, having been developed by the Institute for the Future of the Book.

The division of threads into discussions on specific page numbers of the novel enforces a prescribed way of reading the novel. The reading experience is directed towards trying to unravel and understand each page individually and then comment on

what is uncovered for further discussion by other readers. Decisions about how to structure the project and the encourage discussion of the novel imposes limitations on possible reading experiences. The lack of comments in the forum suggests that readers may not have wanted to work within this rigid framework. Decisions about the nature of the reading experience offered by the project had to be decided by the project authors in the same way that Lessing previously made her own decisions about how to structure the novel for her readers to experience and interpret.

2.4.6 Documented Reading Experience

Readers reflect on the reading experience of which they are a part but the documented reading experience is that of the featured readers. The general readers attempt to read the novel while also reading the notes left in the margins of the book by the featured readers. This reading process proves difficult to follow for several general readers. For example, one general reader, Taryn, notes that the notes in the margin 'were happening linearly and tangentially i.e.: read some, type some, move back to the text and on to the next chunk, repeat' (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008).[38] He or she also recognises that what they are reading is often the initial and half-finished ideas of the featured readers and that this makes them difficult to follow. He or she suggests changes to the way the book was navigated. Instead of relying on navigating by chronological order or by time the notes in the margins could be read or searched through differently. Other readers also found the reading experience challenging and the notes in the margins difficult to follow. Another general reader who called herself Kittent finds that the notes

38 A post contributed to the 'Forum' on 21/11/2008.

in the margins 'interrupted the flow of the book (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008) [39]

and marthaquest felt lost as the different voices in the text went 'back and forth' *(The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008).[40]

2.4.7 Dates

Genette (1997) stresses the importance of dates as paratextual apparatus, used to locate a text in a particular time and provide context. In the forum, discussion threads are organised chronologically so that the progression of discussions can be easily seen. It also emphasised that this project is operated in real time. Readers respond to one another and the dates of their interactions are recorded as part of the paratext. Although the project ran for a limited amount of time, people were able to continue to add their comments after the featured readers had finished commenting in the margins of the text. The dates attached to each discussion post show which are written during the project and which are written after it had finished. It raises questions as to whether comments left after the project finished can be seen as part of the project.

2.4.8 Reading the Readers

The project is not just about reading the text of *The Golden Notebook*, including the additional notes in the margins but also reading both the epitextual material surrounding

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39 A post contributed to the 'Forum' on 12/11/2008.

40 A post contributed to the 'Forum' on 13/11/2008.

book (the project information, forum and blog). It also involves a reading of the project as a whole and of the readers. As part of social interaction, people read each other and this is also the case in a textual community. Here the word 'read' is used in a non-textual sense when we talking about reading a situation. This is not simply extending the meaning of reading from a textual to a non-textual situation.

General readers were only able to express themselves through their words, their user name and user statistics. There is information about the featured readers on the project homepage and their professional experience becomes a part of their identity. They need to read each other in the forum to make sense of both the project and the book. There are several comments which can be defined as spam. These were randomly generated and left after the project had finished. Readers appeared to discard these as irrelevant discussions and did not leave comments in response.

The identity and the aims of *The Golden Notebook Project* are both complex and ambiguous. It both frames itself as an experiment in close reading, where seven readers document their reading experience and conduct a conversation in the margins, and a project where any reader can participate by commenting on their reading experiences in the forum. A reading community could not be formed as the process was directed both by the project authors and the featured readers. The ambiguity about who the project was for caused conflict in several discussion in the forum as several general readers were confused about their role in the project and how the book was to be experienced.

2.4.9 Conflict

Early in the project, conflict arose in the 'General Discussion' section of the forum. The first discussion was started on 11th November 2008 and early discussions address the

positive aspects of the project and expresses enthusiasm. For example, one discussion

thread started on 15th November is entitled 'This is Amazing' and refers to the project.

On 16th November, the first criticism appears in a thread entitled 'International Project'.

In it, a reader questions the dominance of what they call a 'Native English speaking

perspective' dominate in the project. On 12th December, the most critical discussion of

the project appears in a discussion entitled 'Is the form in conflict with the aims'. In this

discussion, a general reader, Ltaps, writes:

> 'I realise that it is very early days but I am a little worried that the instantaneous form of the comments thread invariably precludes consideration, the very thing which makes a close reading worth doing...' (*The Golden Notebook Project*, 2008).[41]

This comment shows their sense of dissatisfaction with the project. They began to feel
as though the comments of the featured readers was spoiling, not adding to, their
reading experience.

2.4.10 The Crowd

The reactions and behaviour of the readers resemble the actions of a crowd. When one

comment attacks a particular aspect of the project then others follow. There is a clear

distinction between the crowd of the readers and the authoritarian presence of the

featured readers and the project authors, who try to contain the conflict and direct it

towards practical resolutions (for example, by asking for suggestions for how to

improve the project). The early epitextual elements of the project position it as a place

of experimentation and collaboration. This did not wholly materialise and the conflicts

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41 A post contributed to the 'Forum' on 12/12/2008.

between the general readers and the project mirror in many ways tensions between society and the individual. Readers attempt to assert individual opinions and suggest individual ways of engaging with the book. The featured readers and the project authors take on a controlling role as they attempted to diffuse criticisms.

2.4.11 Positions

In the project, the readers were not all equal. Some were positioned more closely to the traditional role of author and perceived hierarchies emerged. The position of the featured readers were viewed as different to the other readers encouraged to take part and contribute in the forums. Featured readers had a role similar to that of an author. They were able to write their annotations in the margins of the book and write blog posts, whereas other readers were only able to comment in discussion forums. A distinction made by one general reader, marthaquest, who chose to participate in the project, was that the featured readers were 'Capital R readers' and the general readers were 'small r readers'. The reader felt that the comments from the small r readers were:

> '[M]uch more inspiring, comfortable, um, sisterly, and clear than the capital R readers (and   sorry, I have not read 1/4th of you) as the latter often have an academic, theoretical, or abstract tone (*The Golden Notebook Project, 2008.)*[42]

There was a perceived difference in value between the comments of each reader type and it provoked several frustrated reactions. The fact that the featured readers were being paid to contribute appeared to align them with the traditional role of author. One general reader commented:

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42 A note contributed to the 'Forum' on 15/11/2008.

'I don't understand the structure or concept of this project. The Home page explains it as 7 women reading and sharing their comments in the margins.??? I thought we were more than 7. Maybe this could be talked about? What is the role of the 7?' (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008).[43]

The project was framed as an experiment, as evident in the epitextual project information, and so both featured readers and the project author's frequently re-enforced the idea that any difficulties were part of the process and could be resolved.   For example, in response to Angeles' comment, Harriet, a general reader responds, 'Please give us an example of what you were hoping for but didn't find. The project isn't over yet' (*The Golden Notebook Project*, 2008).[44] The role of the project authors became one of speaking for the project and re-interacting their sense of the process being as important as the outcome. For example, at the start of the project Stein, the project co-ordinator, addressed technical concerns and called for general readers to make suggestions about the direction of the project and reflect on their experiences. He explains, 'we have a lot to learn' (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008).[45]   In doing so, he moves the project authors away from the role of expert and into the position of experimenters. He attempts to position the project authors, featured readers and readers on an equal footing.

However, Marthaquest's criticisms should have been addressed to the project authors, as they designed the project, but he or she did not appear to see their presence as evident in the project. In his or her comment on the discussion entitled *Reading Schedule*, he/she vented this sense of anger at the project. This anger appears to be about a lack of planning and a lack of framing the reading of the book as a learning

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43 A note contributed to the 'Forum' on 15/11/2008.

44 A note contributed to the 'Forum' on 28/12/2008

45 A note contributed to the project information.

experience. This reader wanted more direction from the featured readers and insights into the book, which he or she did not find evident in this project. He or she directly attacks the featured readers as 'these 7', and believes that they are unable to find jobs in universities, publishing, or in any literary field (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008).[46] Another general reader, Taryn, adds to this discussion on the same day and tries to explain his/her feeling that the lack of structure is a part of the project:

'If it seems as though it suffers from a lack of structure, it might be because the appropriate structure needs to emerge from the activity and not that the activity needs to occur within a pre-defined framework' (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008).[47]

Several general readers appeared to expect a teaching experience rather than simply a reading experience. The epitextual elements in the project information introduced the featured readers as experienced writers and/ or teachers and several general readers expected that their readings of the book, illustrated by their notes in the margins, would guide general readers through the reading experience. One reader expresses that at the start of the project he or she expected important comments from people who were considered specialists on writing but was then disappointed (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008).[48] This emphasises the idea that the text of the book is something to be deciphered and understood.

The project rhetoric is that this was a close-reading experiment but the featured readers were seen by several readers as the ones doing the close reading work. General readers were reading their comments rather than adding their responses. This idea that

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46 A note contributed to the 'Forum' on 15/11/2008.

47 A note contributed to the 'Forum' on 21/11/2008.

48 A note contributed to the 'Forum' on 24/12/2008.

featured readers understood more of the book and could aid understanding was evident in the forums. Discussion threads started by readers often directly asked the featured readers to add the opinions on a particular subject or to clarify their notes in the margins. What none of the general readers addressed was their role in the forum as authors. Several criticised the perceived hierarchy between readers and featured readers. However, they did not see that their comments in the discussion forum might influence the reading experience of other general readers. The comments left by general readers in the forum would have affected the reading experiences of these groups.

Whereas the role of the featured readers was a public one, the general readers could remain almost private within the forum. The featured readers were not able to be anonymous. They each are assumed to have used their real identity, which is outlined on the project homepage alongside a photograph of each woman. However, general readers were able to conceal their identity or assume another. In order to contribute, readers had to register with the project to be visible as readers, through their comments, and log in each time they visited. The question 'Want to take part in these discussions?' appears to the left hand side of each page of the forum encouraging users to participate as general readers. The process to participate involves filling in an application form and providing a user name, email address and password. Readers are able to remain anonymous and use a user name. Brief information about each general reader is displayed when a user clicks on their name. Certain statistics relevant to each general reader are displayed; the date when their account was created, the last date they were active in the forum, visit count, number of discussions started and comments added. 'Real name' is also included, emphasising the idea that readers may not be using their real name. This information had not been entered by many readers, who preferred to remain anonymous. The name of an author can influence the reader as certain connotations are attached to the name

(Genette, 1997). A few readers chose user names taken directly from or inspired by *The Golden Notebook* (Lessing, 1962) For example, one general reader is called Harry, a character in the novel and another is called Marthaquest, a name taken directly from the title of another novel by Lessing.

2.4.12 Intertextuality

There are further elements of intertextuality in the project, as presented and explored in the forum. Genette (1997) views intertextuality as a being part of transtextuality which he defines as 'everything that brings in into relation (manifest or hidden) with other texts and goes on to outline a five part schema (intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality and architextuality)' (Genette, 1997, p.xv). Such intertextual features include the use of user names taken from or inspired by the novel.

A few readers who contributed in the forum considered other texts that could be connected to the project to make sense of the process. One discussion considers the authority of storytelling and authorship, in response to comments in the margins of the novel. Here, Kirsten, a general reader, aims to provide context for the project and so links to additional sources, located elsewhere. She provides a link to Foucault's work 'What is an Author?' and quotes from this text (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008).[49] In bringing Foucault's (1979) ideas to the forum she makes connection between these and the project and makes intertextual connections for other readers to follow. Another reader, Taryn, wanted the featured readers to make more connections to other texts by suggesting links to other relevant reading materials. He or she suggests, 'why not use

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49 A note contributed to the 'Forum' on 17/11/2008.

the space and functionality to build the bridge to it and open this novel up to its own themes and implications?' (*The Golden Notebook Project*, 2008).[50]

   The Golden Notebook Project reflects certain themes and ideas evident in the book. This provides another layer of intertextuality in the forum as discussions about the book are connected to the way the book is discussed. One reader, Kittent, sees a direct parallel between a section of the introduction to the book and the aims of the project:

   'Art during the Middle Ages as being communal, individual; it came out of a group consciousness' (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008).[51]

Stein responds:

   'OMG. Thank you so much for pointing that out. I completely missed it. And yes, this project at its core is about developing new forms of collaborative effort' (*The Golden Notebook Project,* 2008).[52]

   Such intertextual connections made by general readers in the forum add to the peritextual elements of the project text. The textual space of the forum is positioned as reflecting on a wider sense of literary history.

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50 A note contributed to the 'Forum' on 18/11/2008.

51 A note contributed to the 'Forum' on 08/11/2008.

52 A note contributed to the 'Forum' on 09/11/208.

2.5 Blog

The blog can be read as an epitextual element of the project text. It is a threshold between the book and the project, space where featured readers were able to write about their experiences of both the book and the project. Here they expand on their own responses to *The Golden Notebook* and conversations between the featured writers take place.
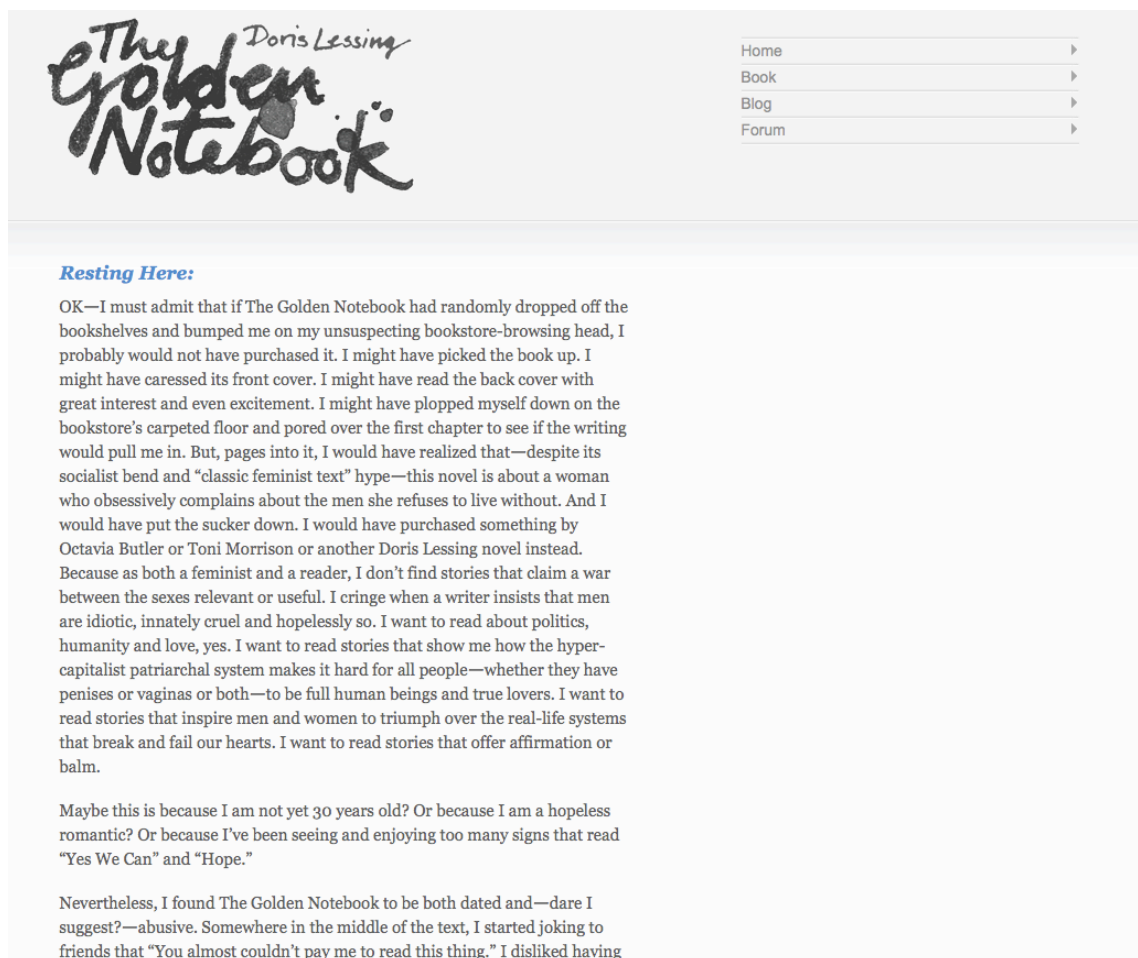
Fig 12 Blog

2.5.1 Freedom and Restrictions

It is interesting to consider who was able to post and comment on the blog and who was not. The featured readers and the project authors were able to contribute, both by adding their own posts and adding comments to other posts. General readers were not able to contribute to this area of the project. This division reinforces the project's hierarchy. The project authors and the featured readers took a position closer to that of an author than a reader and were able to make more textual contributions than general readers. The general readers are absent in this paratext. They are frequently discussed but not able to directly contribute. However, although featured authors contributed to the blog, it was the project authors who had complete textual control. They designed the structure of the blog, assigned the structural links and were able to remove or add textual material.

The blog was not a widely used area of the project website. There are only eighteen discussion posts on the blog. Seven of these are posts introducing each of the featured readers. These posts, a short extract of information about each featured reader, focus on details of their professional background. This information also appears on the project homepage. The information has been contributed by the featured readers but each women is referred to in the third person in their introduction. This sets a division between their personal identity and their professional selves. The information, and its repetition in the project information, encourages readers to read these featured readers as experts. They are initially, and then repeatedly, referred to as the 'readers' and their professional background and literary experiences are repeatedly referenced. This also reinforces their role in the project as one of sharing their reading of the novel, from their position as experienced readers, with the general readers. The numbers of comments replying to each blog post was also low. Only seven posts received comments and the

maximum number of comments left on any one post was eight. There were several spaces where featured readers could leave their comments and the majority of these were left directly in the margins of the book. There is no trace left of general readers reading the blog as they were not permitted to contribute.

The first post following these introductory posts is one written by Bob Stein, one of the project authors, in which he outlines the origins of the project. This post sets out its aims and objectives and in doing so it asserts authority and authorship. It explains that seven women will read Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* and take part in a conversation in the margins (Stein, 2008b). This is the focus of the project and begins the confusion expressed by general readers in the forum as to just who is included in the experience; whether the experience was for everyone or just for the featured readers. Stein explains the origins of the project; which are personal to him. He takes the role of the co-ordinator of the project and so assumes a role similar to that of an author. In explaining that the impetus for creating the project came from his own re-reading of The Golden Notebook, and that the novel had been among the 'lost influential books of [his] youth', he assigns himself the dual role of reader and author of the project (Stein, 2008b). He reflects on the importance of his own reading experience in shaping the project and, as his experience initially influences the project, his role as an author of the project is pivotal and influential. Stein continues his post to explain that the project is designed in a way that satisfies his own curiously (Stein, 2008b).

The post is structured as a personal letter, albeit one addressed to an unseen audience. It includes the words 'I am writing to you now' which resembles the letter form (Stein, 2008b). Stein also uses his name as he signs off the post. He also includes a postscript at the end of the post, as if it is a letter. By adopting a letter form, rather than the traditions of the blog form, Stein appears to be reaching out to potential readers and

encouraging them to participate in the project. He is also asserting his role as instigator of the project and places himself in the position of project author.

In this first post, Stein comments directly on the experience of online reading. He suggests that although it is possible to read the novel online, the act of sustained reading of a linear narrative is more suited to a print version. He recommends that readers buy a copy of the printed novel. This recommendation within the textual material of the project points the reader away from the project to a printed source. This asserts *The Golden Notebook Project* itself as a paratextual threshold between discussion and the printed novel. In this way, the project (the project information, the forum, blog and book) can be seen as paratexts of a printed edition (the project recommends reading a specific US and UK edition) of the novel.

The featured readers and project authors speak directly to the general readers through the blog. They are encouraged to participate and their reading experience are directed. The general readers are explicitly encouraged to take part in the project in a post by Kathleen, from *if:book* (*The Golden Notebook Project*, 2008). As a project author, she encourages general readers to contribute their thoughts in the forum and links the words 'Have your say' directly to the forum. Later, she posts a reading schedule which outlines the pages of the book that the featured readers will read each week over the six weeks. The general readers are encouraged to follow this timetable. This emphasises the prescriptive nature of the reading experience for the general readers.

2.5.2 The Role of the Featured Readers

The blog was used primarily as a space for the featured readers to document and share their thoughts on their reading process and of taking part in the project. Their discussions become part of the epitext of the project text. Initially, they disclose their previous experience of the book, for example whether they had read it before and any existing understanding or knowledge of its themes and position in the literary canon. They assert their identities and speak about their individual experiences. The process is explored predominately in the final posts as featured readers sum up their experiences. Featured readers reflect on their own role in the project. For example, Lenelle Moïse describes the featured readers as a team:

> 'We didn't have a uniform or a united goal. There was no opponent or scorekeeper. But we were a kind of team, yes' (Moïse, 2009).

It was important for many of the featured readers that they met in person before taking part in the project. Moïse explains:

> 'We all met in person-once-before the project went live which helped me to become curious about the members of our circle. I couldn't have participated without that initial face-to-face meeting. I might have participated more if we had met more than once' (Moïse, 2009).

Her sense of participation in the project was influenced by the lack of personal contact:

> 'I prefer live group discussions for their casual, unedited and unapologetic spontaneity. In person, a participant's meaning is reinforced by gesture, intonation, ellipses and eye-contact' (Moïse, 2009).

The featured readers reflect on the experience of reading publicly. Several were uncomfortable with the experience. Moïse describes that, for her, 'reading is usually a

very private activity' (Moïse, 2009). She felt hesitant about starting her views of the book as she was reading. During the project, the featured readers began to consider why they read and discussed why it was important to them personally. Other featured readers continued this theme. (Rubin, 2008; Alderman, 2008b, 2008c).

Several of the featured readers express their sense of discomfort and feelings of vulnerability at making the reading experience public, especially at documenting the reading experience as it was in progress. Moïse felt a pressure for her comments to be clear and her ideas understandable:

> 'I often felt a self-imposed pressure to be precise, clean and clear. I felt this, in part, because I knew there was a wider audience tuning in. For me-against our best efforts-communicating with each other online always felt formal' (Moïse, 2009).

There is something about the isolated experience of reading that makes the experience of sharing reading a difficult one. Alderman explains;

> '[B]ut fundamentally, it is a curious business. We read in private. When we read, even if we are in a busy cafe, we are essentially alone in our experience of reading. And yet we are with the writer. Alone and in company; both at once' (Alderman, 2008b).

This image of being one reader connecting with one author endures but the networked book can never be just one book, instead it is a book with no copies, which can be read simultaneously by multiple readers. The experience of reading becomes a mass experience.

The documentation of the individual reading experience emphasised the position of the blog as a textual space in between the act of reading and the novel. It was a sort of hinterland where the reading experience could be discussed and commented on away

from the text. It also asserted the differences between the position of featured readers and general readers. As general readers were not able to comment here it became a place of reflection but not for everyone taking part. The experiences documented were limited to those who were able to comment in the margins of the book. Certain hierarchies were imposed on the readership but the role of the reader was expanded into something more closely resembling the author. Several readers, both featured and general, express the idea that the featured readers have a more active experience. As Alderman comments on the blog:

> 'I'm not sure how much fun it is for forum participants to read what seven random women writers have to say about this book. It might have been more interesting if there were podcasts available or if both featured and forum readers had the option to video blog' (Alderman, 2008c).

2.5.3 Titles

Following Genette's analysis of paratextual information, it is necessary to consider the titles of the blog posts as epitextual elements. These were authored by different people, both featured readers and project authors. Titles reflect the individuals who wrote them and so are varied; from Helen Oyeyemi's cryptic title 'kill the puppetmaster and & the revolution will come' (Oyeyemi, 2009) to Alderman's straightforward title 'In the Process' (Alderman, 2008c). The titles both reflect the subject matter and the featured reader's individual personality. Several titles reference the nature of reading. For example, a post by Helen Rubin is entitled 'The death of a reader', which references Roland Barthes' 'Death of the Author' (Rubin, 2008). Titles also fulfill a structural function as a way to navigate the blog. Each is linked to the post featured alongside its

comments. A link then directs a reader to discuss the post in the forums. Using the blog post titles, general readers are able to navigate the project website.

2.5.4 Naming

It is also important to consider the names of the author of the blog posts. The names of project authors also appear was part of their posts. Featured readers are also positioned as authors and their names appear as a part of their posts. Their names are linked to their biographical information on the homepage, which is positioned alongside a list of their comments in chronological order. Each featured reader or project author who authors a post, has an author avatar (a photograph of the individual) displayed by their name. This element makes them visible in the project. The name of an author can influence the reader as certain connotations are attached to the name (Genette, 1997). In the blog, they are given a name, an identity and are able to show their face. In contrast, the general readers, contributing in the forum, are not able to contribute a photograph.

2.5.5 Dates

Genette (1997) stresses the importance of dates as paratextual apparatus used to locate a text in a particular time. This date then provides context for the text. As in the forum, dates are used to organise the posts. They appear chronologically and are navigated by scrolling through posts or following links to sections of the blog. Blog posts appear as 'prior' paratexts (elements connected to pre-publication), 'original' paratexts (which appear at the same time as the text) and 'later' paratexts (which appear after publication)

(Genette, 1997, pp.5-6). The temporal location of each blog post gives important information about its relationship to the project text depending on when it was published. Posts published before the project start date offer a frame of reference to general readers and an introduction. Posts published during the project are a documentation of the reading experience and reaction to discussions. Posts published after the project had ended are a reflection on the experience of participating in the project. All posts are contributed in real-time and so posts could be read as the project progressed. Times of posts are also included. These times and dates provide valuable information as a reader is able to follow the blog posts as a form of conversation. This resembles a real-time discussion of a book between a group of people but differs due to the numbers of people able to contribute.

2.6 Book

The novel, *The Golden Notebook,* appears on the project website under the link 'book' and is the focus of the project. This book becomes a place for the featured readers to gather and share their ideas in the margins. To begin to understand this textual space, we can explore how peritextual features position the book as a place and how structural elements of the book, as designed by the project authors, shape the reader's interaction with both the book and the project text. We can examine these elements using Genette's paratextual analysis and focus on peritextual features present within *The Golden Notebook Project.*
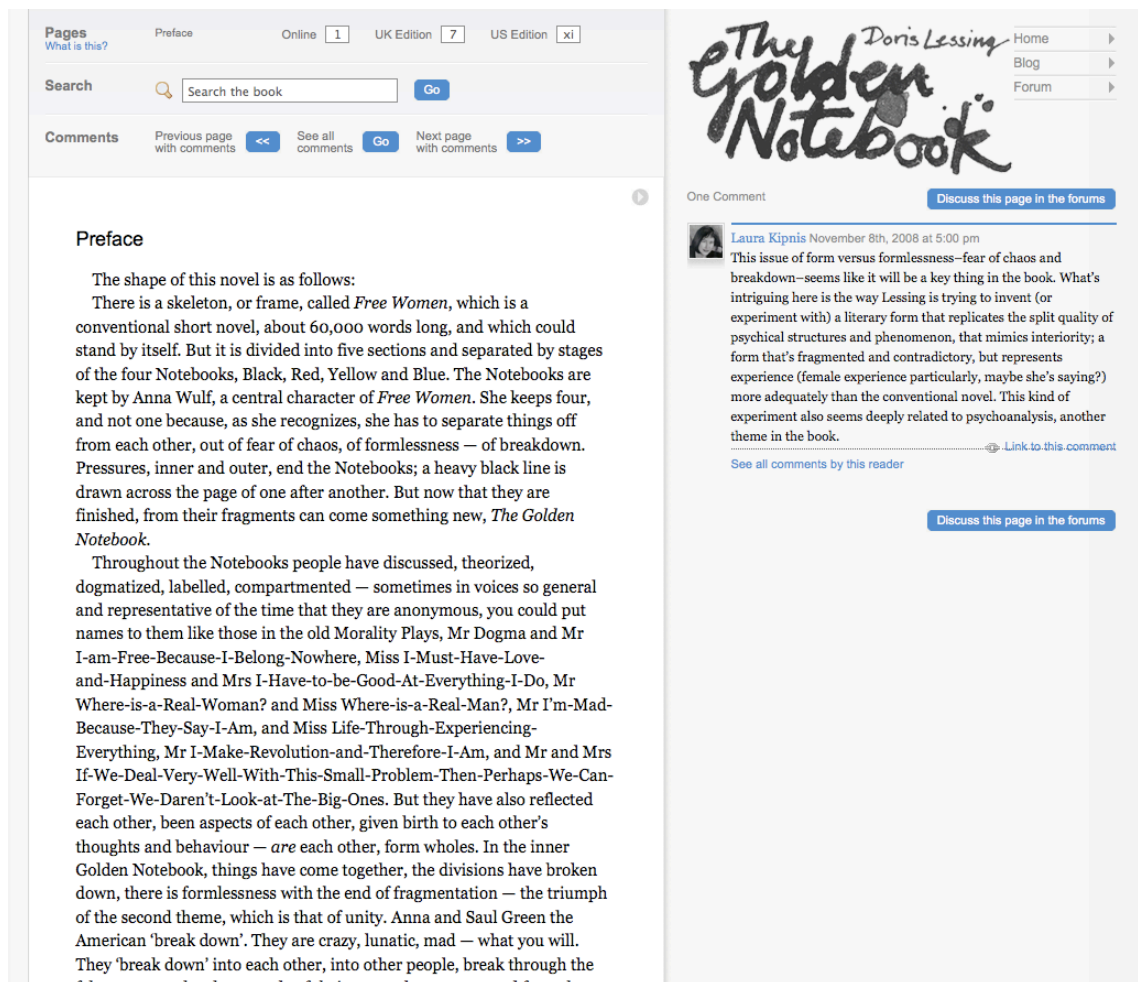
Fig 13 Book

The Golden Notebook Project is a re-imagining of *The Golden Notebook* by Doris Lessing as a networked book. Here, *The Golden Notebook* is no longer a physical, tangible object but it does resemble one in its physical appearance. The page format and layout is preserved. The reading experience closely resembles that of a printed book. The pages can be turned (by clicking) and the text is read left to right across the page. It is the addition of the readers' comments and discussions that make this book networked. However, the project authors recommend that general readers read a physical copy of the book and use the project text as a reference when recording their comments in the forum. It is seen that the reading experience is best suited to the physical copy of a

book. This raises questions about the position of the digital text in the project. It becomes a place rather than a reading material. It is a site to collect and present information rather than a series of printed pages.

2.6.1 Space

As reading moves within the networked environment from a solitary act to a public conversation, the book is no longer seen as a physical artefact. Instead, the networked book can be a place; a space where readers can meet and communicate with one another instead of reading in isolation. The function of their printed words does not only have to be to transmit meaning to readers. Instead, the book, in its networked form, can become a place where readers can read what has already been written and add their own meaning. *The Golden Notebook* Project was conceived as a new form of book and a new type of reading experience. This experience was one where readers visited a book as a virtual space. Stein viewed this as an experiment designed to explore the potential of the book to become more than the traditionally held view of it as an artefact. He wanted to see what would happen if the act of reading moved away from the printed page. In doing so, the Institute for the Future of the Book could explore the premise that, 'a book is a place (where readers, sometimes with authors, congregate)' (Stein, 2008b).

The featured readers led the way and recorded their comments and thoughts directly onto a digital version of the text by writing in the margins of each page. Their experiences were documented and a trail was set for other readers to follow. Parallels and connections were pointed out, background information was shared. It became a vast

conversation as the readers added their thoughts to other reader's notes. General readers could read these comments as they appeared in the digital margins of Lessing's book and add their own thoughts in discussion forums. By clicking on the link 'Discuss this Page in the Forums' they could easily record their thoughts in the appropriate place. The book became a site of interaction and conversation as readers shared their reading experiences. Routes through the book were documented and the process of reading moved from being traditionally private to collaborative.

However, books have always existed beyond their physical limits. Their words may be contained within their covers but their impact is far reaching. The ideas they record can be shared, discussed and criticised. They can evoke emotion and inspire new thoughts in those who read them. Habermas (1991) considers the emergence of the public reader as being when, 'the privatized individuals coming together to form a public also reflected critically and in public on what they had read' (Habermas, 1991). Cory Doctorow rejects the idea that the book was ever an object. Instead, he sees it as a 'practice' by which he means a 'collection of social and economic and artistic activities' (Doctorow, 2004). Doctorow considers everything that went into the creation of the book and rejects the idea that it is simply distilled into a physical object but rather it exists beyond the realm of the physical object. The contents of a book are also discussed. The meaning of each sentence and each word are analysed. Discussions about books are published and readers read these to try to understand the original work.

The paratextual space within this digital version of *A Golden Notebook* differs from that found in printed books and impacts how it is read and interpreted. The physicality of the literary artefact affects what the words and other semiotic components mean (Hayles, 2002). Here, the book's lack of physical presence and the project's semiotic components position the book as a space for interaction and communication.

The featured readers take part in a role resembling the author as the structure of the project allows them opportunity to comment directly on the text. This shift is coupled with the perception of the online text as having less authority than the printed word. It can appear 'weightless, almost invisible' (Birkerts, 2006).

We can use Bolter's (1991) view of the writing space to reflect on this networked version of The Golden Notebook as a reading space. Bolter (1991) views the book as a 'conceptual space' (Bolter, 1991, p.11). He considers how electronic literature remakes the book and so reshapes this space. To him, this new space, produced by a computer is 'animated, visually complex, and to a surprising extent malleable in the hands of both writer and reader' (Bolter, 1991, p.11). It restructures writing and changes the relationship of the author to the text and of both author and text to the reader (Bolter, 1991).

The Golden Notebook, as a networked book present within the project, becomes a textual space that shifts the position of the author, the reader and the perception and understanding of the text. Only the featured readers can add their comments into the margins of the book and so become positioned as a form of author. The project authors designed the way the textual space could be navigated and so also take a authorial role. The reading experience is altered by the opportunity for more voices to be heard, in addition to those of Lessing and her publishers, to contribute peritextual elements to the text. All these elements can be read as challenging the authority of the traditional author and publisher roles. The concept of the space within the book is also challenged. Bolter, (1991) explains that this is seen as 'one in which writing is stable, monumental, and controlled exclusively by the author. It is a space defined by perfect printed volumes that exist in thousands of identical copies' (Bolter, 1991, p.11). In *The Golden Notebook Project,* the space within the book is viewed differently. It is not a stable text to be

distributed physically. Instead, during the project time span, it is a space of flux as featured readers add their comments to its margins. In this way, the concept of the book, along with role of the publisher, readers and author is disrupted. The authority of authorship and the dominance of the physical book are challenged as the positions of author and reader become combined in the electronic text (Bolter, 1991).

2.6.2 Navigating the Textual Space

The way that the book can be navigated within this project holds paratextual significance. General readers can choose to navigate the textual space of the networked book in several ways through a series of links. The featured readers comments are used as tools for navigation. These appear on the right hand side of each page, opposite the text of the book. Readers can move straight to pages containing comments, or move back to the last page with a comment or see all comments at once. They can also search the book for key words or move to individual pages by entering page numbers (of both US and UK editions of the book). When reading comments left by featured readers, they can opt to see all comments by this reader or discuss the page in the forums. The option 'discuss this page in the forums' appears at the beginning and end of the comments. This encourages general readers to comment within the forums; their designated space for participation.

The book has been authored by Lessing but the structural elements, and means of navigation, have been designed by the project authors. Their role, in part, resembles that of a publisher in print publishing. The publisher of a book typically controls the majority of its paratextual features. For example, they often commission the front cover and make decisions about the layout and typesetting of the book. In *The Golden*

Notebook Project, the book's publisher, HarperCollins, are present as an external agency through the permission the gave for the book to be reprinted but it is the project authors who make decisions usually made by a publisher. Their roles as project authors and publishers overlap and merge.

2.6.3 The Golden Notebook

In many ways, the text of *The Golden Notebook* serves as a metaphor for *The Golden Notebook Project.* Reading the novel alongside the peritextual features that surround it gives us insight into wider themes evident within the project. The novel, *The Golden Notebook,* is concerned, in part, with the novel form, something which the project disrupts (particularly using the roles of author and reader). As Laura Kipnis, a featured reader, explains in the margins of *The Golden Notebook Project:*

> 'This issue of form versus formlessness, fear of chaos and breakdown seems like it will be a key thing in the book. What's intriguing here is the way Lessing is trying to invent (or experiment with) a literary form that replicates the split quality of psychical structures and phenomenon, that mimics interiority; a form that? Fragmented and contradictory, but represents experience (female experience particularly, maybe she? saying?) more adequately than the conventional novel (Kipnis, 2008).

The Golden Notebook Project also experiments with these themes. The project can be read as an experiment into form and formlessness. In this way, the themes of the novel at the centre of the project are played out in its very structure. Lessing's vision of a golden notebook that marks the end of fragmentation does not appear in the project text as roles and textual space remains in disarray. Reading the project in this way, as entwined with the themes of the book, places emphasis on the role of Lessing as the

author. If it is her ideas that form the conceptual framework of the project then she may

regarded as holding the authority that the peritextual elements of the project text appear

to challenge.

2.7 Digital Margins

This discussion of the book can be expanded to include its margins. The margins of a book were once seen as a space for readers to interact with the text but as Bolter explains:

> '[I]n the age of print, marginal notes became truly marginal, part of the hierarchy of the text that only the author defined and controlled: eventually they became footnotes and endnotes. Readers could still insert their own notes with a pen, where there was sufficient white space, but these handwritten notes could no longer have the same status as the text itself. There were private reactions to the public text' (Bolter, 1991, pp.162-163).

The Golden Notebook contains a form of marginalia. Its margins, in this case defined as the space positioned alongside each page of text on the screen, is textual space. Featured readers used the margins to leave notes, in which they recorded their reading experiences and communicated with one another. These margins in the networked book became part of the book. Here, we are expanding the paratext found inside the book to include these elements of marginalia. These notes present in the margins contribute to the project text and reveal information about the positioning of authors and readers and reveal clues and signifiers about who controls the book and influences its reading.

Fig 14 The Margins

2.7.1 Social Reading

The notes left by the featured reader in the margins of the book influence the process of interacting with a text and the reading experience. It celebrates the characteristics of a social process. It becomes an exchange of ideas and information rather than simply being an inward process. Instead of remaining a private experience, it is public. The

image of the reader is changed along with the way they read. This view of the reading experience as social and collaborative and taking part in a public virtual space seems at first to be in opposition with the image of the reader and the experience of reading as private and individual. This view of the social nature of reading can be summed up by Jackson:

'[I]f "private" means exclusive to oneself, then reading is not a private but a social experience [...]' (Jackson, 2001, p.256).

Reading the networked book is no longer a private experience as readings are shared and can also be contributed to the text of the book. Each textual contribution to *The Golden Notebook Project* changed both the text and the way it was read by other. The reading experience was not private; it was public.

The connections between orality and literacy have been long discussed by theorists (Ong, 1982; Vansina, 1985; Goody, 1987; Street, 1995). Of particular interest is Walter Ong's (1982) assertion that culture does not necessarily benefit from literacy . He points out that the promotion of the graphic and the visual had depersonalized language and speaking (Fabian, 1992). Language has become altered to fit onto the printed page, which may limit its potential and the experience it offers its readers. This idea of the printed word ignoring the benefits of reading aloud is observed by Svenboro, (1990) who explains that, reading aloud is a part of the text, it is inscribed in the text. In this way, orality is a prevailing feature of textuality.

The presence of multiple readers in the networked book resembles elements of oral literary traditions. Digital literature can be seen as more closely resembling oral discourse than conventional printed books (Noblitt, 1988). In *The Golden Notebook Project,* multiple readers gather around the text of one non-present author - Lessing.

Together, the readers attempt to participate in a collective reading experience, one where there is not only a multiple readership but also multiple readers. The reading experience is a social one. The discussion of the text becomes more immediate. However, it must be considered whether the book is being read collectively or whether it is simply being discussed collectively by multiple readers. This experiment in close reading resembles the deciphering of a religious text. Collective reading has strong roots in theology, where readers follow the authority of those whose position it is to help them decipher and understand the doctrine (Boyarin, 1992).

In its project information, *The Golden Notebook Project* celebrates the idea of a collective reading experience. This is in part a move to an oral tradition of literacy as readers are urged to gather round the text. Although it must also be questioned how this experience can be collective. Readers have full textual access to the text but it is only the featured readers who have full spacial access. Their notes in the margins can be read as marks of ownership. They are able to exert a level of control over the text through the marks they are permitted to leave behind. These marks may also be seen as a violation of the text as they have not been individually approved by the author of the novel.

2.7.2 The Conversation

Although reading of a printed book in Western societies in now seen primarily as a private experience, there are usually multiple readers present in the readership. That is, the collective body of readers who read as individuals and then discuss their reading collectively. Multiplicity of readership is expected. For example, students produce individual readings of a text and discuss these together during a class discussion. Critics

argue in print for their own readings of a text as the definitive reading (Stillinger, 1990). These multiple readers and multiple reading experiences are common. The idea of a single reader, a single text and single author have developed into a plural (Stillinger, 1999). The reading experience has shifted from being an inward process, relating to an individual to an outward one and a form of mass experience (Birkerts, 2006).

To understand the nature of the plural reading experience, we must first consider how the reading experience is shared. Readers do not read in isolation. Instead, they read a text according to their own experiences and cultural assumptions. Stanley Fish (1980) wrote an influential book, *Is there a Text in this Class?,* arguing for the fundamental importance of readers' interpretations of texts. For him, a text is not a text without a reader and context. Meaning-making is not simply an extraction of meaning but rather a process that the reader undertakes. This process is influenced by the 'interpretive community' to which a reader belongs (Fish, 1980). It is within this community, and according to its collective understanding and experiences, that they shape their understanding and experience of a text. Away from a cultural context and a set of cultural assumptions, Fish (1980) believes that the text has no meaning. The interpretive community does not refer to a community based on one fixed geographical location. Instead, it is a culturally constructed group.

Taking a Marxist position, Tony Bennett (2009) sees readers as belonging to 'reading formations'. He defines this as 'a set of intersecting discourses that productively activate a given body of texts and the relations between them in a specific way' (Bennett, 1983, p.5). Reading formations have roots in social and historical contexts, which influence readings of any given text.

The readers of a networked book will be from a range of interpretive communities spreading globally. This diversity will produce a variety of responses to the book, which may be documented. A networked book may intentionally embrace the idea of the interpretive community. *The Golden Notebook Project* shaped its reading community by featured readers, each purposely reflecting a different age group. The comments of these readers annotated the text and so potentially informed the reading experiences of other readers.

This conversation, the active documentation of the reading process, can be viewed as a type of performance. The featured readers are performing their reading experience for others. This can be connected to the early tradition of reading in Ancient Israel as a 'speech act' (Boyarin, 1992, p.14). Here, reading was seen as something to be done out loud and any silent reading was simply preparation for this performance (Boyarin, 1992). The featured readers of *The Golden Notebook Project* read the novel and then perform their responses to their audience through words left in the margins.

The networked book is a starting point rather than an end product. A reader is able to interact with the text and they can shape and remold it through the process of reading. In doing so, they become part of the book. In its a role as a place for interaction, the book becomes a platform where readers can contribute to the text and influence its reading by future readers. The page of the book is a starting point for further exploration by the reader rather than a finished document.

The Golden Notebook Project, as an experiment into collaborative close reading, explored the potential role of the book as a starting point for conversation. The book established a common ground where readers could meet and share their own individual readings of the text. These readings were then documented and influenced future readings by setting context and laying signposts to certain points in the text. With the

evidence of past readers alongside the text, the reading process becomes open and collaborative. The networked book becomes an exchange. It becomes place for social interaction and conversation. The dialogue between the featured readers is in many places conversational. In sharing their comments they also shared parts of their own lives. They swapped stories and disclosed personal information that informed their reading of the novel. The lens through which they read the novel was discussed.

The Golden Notebook Project uses the margins of the book to display the featured reader's conversations. This project made this space public. These conversations in the margins become part of the novel. The annotations were recorded within the text and a reader could easily see what the seven featured readers where thinking and discussing at particular points within the novel. This shaped the reading experience and these documented conversations became a platform for further discussion.

Stein describes this experience of following the conversations in the margins of the book as being able to 'eavesdrop on a conversation' (Stein, 2008b). Reading some parts of the conversation held between the seven featured readers in the margins of the novel certainly feels like eavesdropping. It is as though the general reader is listening to a conversation but not fully allowed to join in. They could contribute their thoughts in the discussion forum but not directly onto the text. This set a hierarchy of readers. The featured readers were of a similar position to an author.

The featured readers offered their individual perspectives but also influenced each other's reading of the novel. For example, Nona Willis Arnonwitz says about Richard, one of the characters, 'you just feel so sorry for this guy' (Arnonwitz, 2008). This comment influences Alderman's opinion of the character and she replies, 'it's so interesting you said you felt sorry for him. Until you said it, I had just felt contempt for

him (Alderman, 2008a). In the same way that a book is discussed in a book group, the featured readers shape each other's reading experience.

2.7.3 Notes

The notes left by the featured readers in the margins of *The Golden Notebook* are not authorial notes, as explored by Genette (1997), but are instead notes directly left on the text by featured readers. These notes are not titled, instead they are positioned as a part of the text. The name of the author of each note becomes the signifier that this is not a piece of the original text of the book and so not authored by Lessing. The names of each author (the featured readers) provide links to their biographical information on the project homepage, which gives authority to their words.

These notes in the margins of the networked book can be read as a form of marginalia. It is relevant, at this point, to look briefly at the ways readers make notes in the margins. In the first century of what we know as print culture, readers wrote in books as part of learning (Jackson, 2001, p.50). By the eighteenth century, writers of marginalia usually wrote with an audience in mind; 'known individuals in their own social circles' (Jackson, 2001, p.67). Post 1820, '[r]eaders retreated into themselves, and annotation became predominately a private affair, a matter of self-expression. Annotating readers went underground' (Jackson, 2001, p.73).

In *The Golden Notebook Project,* marginalia serves a different function. In a networked book, the reading experience is no longer private and the featured readers are aware than their annotations will be read by others. They have an audience and their marginalia is addressed to other featured readers and intended to also be read by other readers. This differs from the traditionally held idea that there are just 'two "voices"

involved', where the annotator is 'talking either to themselves or to the author' (Jackson, 2001, p.83). In a networked book, the annotations of a book become part of the book and can be read by readers as part of the text. The process is more collaborative then it was when it was confined to each single copy of a book.

To further understand the specifics of marginalia, we can look at Jackson's outline of the several distinct types of marginalia, of which '[o]wnership marks', writing names, adding book plates and writing inscriptions, are the most common (Jackson, 2001, p.19). The next most common form are marks of ownership, where readers add details of acquisition, i.e where they bought the book, their address, the date (Jackson, 2001). Readers then begin to customise the book 'by introducing in the preliminary blank spaces the sort of material they might have encountered in the apparatus of textbooks.' They may collect additional material from other books at the beginning of a book as 'aids and reinforcements for the reading of the book at hand' (Jackson, 2001, p. 25). In *The Golden Notebook Project*, the marginalia that is present in the text is of a specific type and appears in a specific way. Only one page of the novel is displayed on the screen at a time. This can be seen as the verso[53] and the notes take the place of the recto. The annotations written by the featured readers are presented alongside the text. They respect the boundary and do not overlap.

The annotations can not be read away from the original text, otherwise they would not make sense:

'Marginalia are responsive, they need to be read as they are written, in conjunction with a prior text' (Jackson, 2001, p.16).

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53 The recto and verso are respectively the 'front' and 'back' sides of a leaf of paper in a bound item such as a codex, book, broadsheet or pamphlet.

The presence of marginalia can disrupt the reading experience for other readers:

'For readers who cherish the intimacy of reading, who hear only one voice at a time and can not selectively shut out another, annotations in a book are not merely a distraction, they are a disaster' (Jackson, 2001, p.242).

The annotations in the margins of *The Golden Notebook Project*, contributed by the featured readers are positioned as having authority in the project. However, the comments left in the forum could be left by any reader and, although not positioned in the margins of the book, they illustrate the presence of the readers in much the same was as marginalia.

2.7.4 Power and Control

The presence of these active readers in the book subverts the traditional idea of the reader as the amateur and the author as the expert. The form of exchange that takes place is different and has the potential to be more democratic, participatory and collaborative. The comments in the margins undo, in part, the authority of Lessing as the author of the novel.

Genette explores the idea of authorial elements. He draws on ideas from the Russian Formalist critic Viktor Shklovsky who particularly considers Tristram Shandy as a novel which uses devices to disrupt the narrative conventions of the book:

'He makes use of liminal devices paratextual elements by radical dislocation of readerly expectations i.e. dedications and prefaces scattered within the text. Notes, glosses and misplaced chapter headings interrupt the conventional diegetic process of the narrative. The signs of authorship are repeatedly undone' (Genette, 1997, p.xii).

The use of paratextual features, such as the notes in the margins, as well as the structure of the book as designed by the project authors, disrupts the signs of authorship. Lessing is not in control of the text. Her publishers have granted the rights to reproduce her work to the Institute for the Future of the Book and, during the duration of the project, it is in the hands of the featured readers.

Through reading the digital marginalia of *The Golden Notebook Project*, we can see a clear shift in the author/ reader power relationship. The featured reader is granted a powerful position. Birkerts (2006) considers this shift in power, and the move to a collaborative form of reader, in his discussion of digital literature. Here there are connections with the oral tradition and the move in Western culture to a fixed text with the author holding authority is being disrupted. The author's control over the text is eroded as the publisher's grip over distribution of the text is loosened.

As the annotators, the featured readers hold power over the text. The presence of marginalia 'heightens the natural tension between author and reader by making the reader a rival of the author, under conditions that give the reader considerable power' (Jackson, 2001, p.90). In *The Golden Notebook Project,* the featured readers are, to some extent, in tension with Lessing. Her position as sole author is challenged by the presence of the readers. A reader's notes 'are unpredictable and unanswerable' (Jackson, 2001, p.241) and the author of the original text has no control over them. They could be viewed as violations of the text, in much the same way as notes written in the margins of a library book.

With this new division of power between author and reader, it must be acknowledged that not everyone is permitted to fully take part in the reading experience. It must also be questioned whether instead of shifting old boundaries of reader and author new positions are created. There are structural systems in place,

designed by the project authors, so that not everyone can take part equally. The featured readers hold textual control and have spatial freedom. However, they are not able to privately edit comments that they make. (Moïse, 2008) The project authors have control over the structure of the project, how it is navigated and hold ultimate control over what appears on the website. It is they who ultimately hold the position of author as they control the project and the text. However, they do not have direct control over Lessing's work. They are not able to make changes to the text of the novel, only shape the framework around it. They had to obtain rights to reprint the novel and so do not have ownership over it. In this way, Lessing and her publishers hold an important level of control.

2.7.5 Time

To further explore the paratextual elements of the project, we can examine the concept of time in the margins as documented in the information presented to the reader. This conversation in the margins is made up of many people speaking at different times across the text. The featured readers were not communicating with each other in real time, as evident by the inclusion of a time on each comment. There were time lags between comment and response. Featured readers considered each other's comments and may have considered their own responses in depth before responding. Lessing's voice speaks through the novel. Her voice is a static presence in the conversation, present only in her written words, as the featured readers talk around her. The experience of the general readers is, in many ways, one of overhearing this conversation and neither they nor Lessing are able to take part.

2.7.6 The Reading Experience

Genette writes about what he terms 'transtextuality - everything that brings in into relation (manifest or hidden) with other texts' (Genette, 1997, p.xv). He defines a five part schema for transtextualities. He considers the relations that he calls 'hypertextual'. These are new texts written over older ones, inviting a double reading. I.e. James Joyce's Ulysses (hypertext) imposed on Homer's The Odyssey (hypotext) but the relation covers other forms of imitation, adaptation, parody, and pastiche (Genette, 1997). *The Golden Notebook Project* can be read as a form of transtextual narrative. The notes contributed to its margins can not be understood fully without reading the novel. They are a form of transtextual apparatus and need the original text to be understood by a reader. According to Genette's schema, this superimposition of a later text on an earlier one can be seen as a form of hypertextuality (Genette, 1997).

The act of reading can also be seen as an intertextual activity. Texts are interrelated and a text can only be read in relation to other texts (Culler, 1981). They are also a form of network, referring endlessly to something other than itself (Derrida, 1979). The deconstructionist view is that the meaning of a written text is unstable and has no boundaries (Bolter, 1991). It must be connected to other texts by its reader to make meaning. As Scholes claims, it is about making connections between texts (Scholes, 1989). If we read the notes in the margins as a text then we can see that it is inextricably connected to *The Golden Notebook* and can not exist outside it. The featured readers make other intertextual references in their comments as they mention other works and theory.

These notes left in the digital margins influence the way the text is read. The content of this networked book can be redefined to include the writing in the margins (Stein, 2009). The epitextual elements, in the form of comments left by the readers, become part of the novel. So too do the comments left by readers in the discussion forums. It must be considered whether the text is changed by the annotation and commentary of its readers. These conversations that the text engenders certainly become part of its reading. The novel can not be limited to printed words, it is now expanded to include the conversations that occur around it. This additional material shaped the reading experience.

Readers are not able to read a text away from their own frame of reference. This shapes their reading experience. Derrida (1979) claims that there is nothing outside of textuality. Scholes (1989) agrees but stresses that the reader is always outside of the text. We are always outside a text we try to read but are never outside the textuality where we hold our cultural being. Reading has two faces, looks in two directions. One direction is back, toward the source and original context of the signs we are deciphering. The other direction is forward, based on the textual situation of the person doing the reading (Scholes, 1989). Each reader has their own metatext to draw on. In *The Golden Notebook Project,* the readers not only read the text in reference to their own experiences but they also read each other through the notes in the margins. The featured readers, and their documented reading experience in the form of notes left in the margins, are read as part of the text of the project.

The reading experience for each reader will be, in many ways, unique. They not only read all the project material from their own frame of reference, although this will be influenced by their 'interpretive community' (which will have taught the reader to use a particular framework to interpret the world around them) (Fish, 1980), but also

experience the text in a non-linear way. In Aarseth's article on linearity and literary theory he defines a non-linear text as an 'object of verbal communication in which the words or sequence of words may differ from reading to reading because of the shape, conventions or mechanisms of the text' (Aarseth, 1997, p.762). *The Golden Notebook Project* can be read as a non-linear text. The text, the project information, the forum, the blog, the book and the notes in the margins can be read in any number of different ways. No reading experience will be exactly the same. This experience can be compared to that of reading a hypertext. Hypertexts are verbal structures, similar but different to other literary phenomena, with a 'paraverbal dimension' (Aarseth, 1997). Literary theorists claim that, despite the divergent nature of hypertext, when it is read, all text becomes linear. For Aarseth (1997) though, cybertexts can leave the reader with a feeling of paths not taken, of decisions made that reveal certain parts of the narrative but leave others inaccessible. The reader may never know what has been missed. A collective reading experience is not entirely possible as each reader has a different experience of both the project and the book.

The notes within the margins of *The Golden Notebook* form a kind of hypertext. (Nelson, 1983). The reading experience is an exploration of a 'network of interconnected writings' (Bolter, 1991, p.15). A reader can explore the project away from the traditional structure of a printed book.

Much of what is read of *The Golden Notebook Project* can be seen as unintentional. A reader will read the project information, the conversations held on the forum, the blog posts, the book and the notes in the margins. Not all of these pieces of text can be controlled by the project authors or the featured readers and so form an unintentional partatextual narrative. Intentionality can be seen as an essential ingredient of communication (Watzawich, 1967). Unintentionally does not fit into Genette's view

of the paratext as a feature of a book controlled by the publisher or author. However, as part of *The Golden Notebook Project*, the unintentional narrative plays an important part to play, both in placing the project into context, participating in the reading experience and in developing a collective and individual understanding of the book.

2.8 Conclusions

Through this analysis of *The Golden Notebook Project*, we have used Genette's (1997) paratextual approach to examine both the epitext (the project information, blog and forum) and peritext (the book and its margins) of the project text. The threshold of the book is expanded to include both the peritext and the epitext. The project information, blog, forum and the margins of the book become a part of the book and shape the reading and authoring experience for everyone taking part. What can be concluded is that the multiple positions of the author, reader, publisher and text are complex and ever shifting within the project text. Authorial authority is asserted in different ways by the individuals and organisations taking part. The authorial authority of Lessing, as the author of *The Golden Notebook*, is challenged by both the project authors, who control the structure of the project text (in terms of navigation and positioning of information), and add much of the paratextual apparatus, and the featured readers who take on elements of the authorial position through their notes in the margins of the digital book. The general readers also become authors through publishing their readings on the forum. This blurring of boundaries and positions is not without conflict. The general readers were often critical of the process and often felt both that their role was not as highly regarded as that of the featured readers who were not leading the reading experience with enough expertise and guidance. This became a source of tension in the project and a battle between readers to become authors and for authors to take a lead.

The Golden Notebook Project follows Stein's vision of book being a 'place' (Stein, 2008b) and this sense of place expands to include the project text. The text was a place for readers to gather and discuss the book. These interactions became a

form of social experience. The reading experience moved away from being seen as a private and solitary experience to a social one. This reflects elements of the oral tradition. Conversations were started in the margins of the book. Readers (both featured and general) were able to discuss their interpretations of the text. However, this community was never fixed or static as it included everyone reading the project text. By the end of the six week project, this included many individuals and organisations, some who may not have even contributed to the project text but whose presence shaped and influenced it. After the project finished, the project text was still public and could be added to by further collaborators.

The community of readers that developed during the project's six week timespan, and the process of collective reading, was not a harmonious one. The conflict between featured and general readers made it almost impossible for a collaborative reading experience to develop. Each individual experienced the book through their own interpretation of the project text and their position within the project. The featured and general readers held different positions. In many ways, the featured readers performed their reading of the book to an audience of readers. The featured readers were visible (through the inclusion of their real name, addition of a photograph and biographical information) and the general readers could remain anonymous. This distinction between the two roles meant that their motivations were different and often conflicting, as was their access to contribute to the project text. The divisions between who could and could not contribute, and where they could add their contributions, meant that the readers could not be fully equal.

The threshold of the text has become redefined to include the multiple voices of its readers. The notes in the margins of the book, and the discussions in the forums and on the blog, influenced the reading experience. This mass of paratextual apparatus

surrounding the book influenced its reception. The definition of *The Golden Notebook* in the context of this project became expanded to include the project text in its entirety. The book could not be experienced away from the structure of the project as all the ways of navigating the text were set up by the project authors. The structure of the project intrinsically affected how it was received and experienced.

Adopting Genette's (1997) theoretical approach has allowed us to explore and read all elements of the project text and discuss their functions. We can see how the traditionally held positions of author and reader overlap in this form of networked book. Genette (1997) believes that something is not a paratext unless the author or one of his associates accepts responsibility for it. By addressing interactions within the project, we can see that in this networked book, authorial authority and the authority of the publisher are disrupted. The paratext here has been defined as all elements added to the text by participants in the project. The project authors frame the project as experiment in reading and so give a level of authority to people taking part in the process. The paratext of this project is vast and includes both the book and all textual material surrounding it. The networked book can be seen as not just the author's text but everything that surrounds it. This includes the structure of the book, the forms of navigation as well as the readers' experiences. The networked book, in this expanded form, does have the potential to offer a collaborative reading experience containing elements of the social experience. It challenges the concept of the book as it redefines the book's commonly acknowledged threshold. It is not contained between two covers and can include much more than words on a page. It more closely resembles an experience than a physical artefact. It is an encounter with a virtual textual space rather than with a physical object.

The traditional reading experience, and the concept of the book, is challenged through *The Golden Notebook Project*. The positions of author, reader and text are

disrupted along with the role of publisher. The encounters and transactions between each are recorded in the textual space of the project. The thresholds of the book are challenged and stretched and the experience of collaborative reading, however conflicted, becomes an intrinsic part of the book.

Chapter Three

Text: *Paddlesworth Press,* Artefact to Experience

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Background

The project authors of *Paddlesworth Press* describe the project as 'the world's first mixed-media, collaborative novel' (Kingsley, 2010). This spoof newspaper was named after a real village in the south-east of England but all its editors and writers were fictional characters. The project was co-created by Stephen Eisenhammer and David Story and a team of writers. Writers played the village residents and told their stories in the newspaper. Several of the newspaper's fictional writers and editors had their own Facebook and Twitter account, enabling readers to directly engage with them in real time. Before the project was launched, the project authors seeded information on various online platforms. This information predates the launch of the project by several weeks. Eisenhammer is reported to have said, '[t]he village isn't just built from *Paddlesworth Press.* It's built from Facebook, Twitter and online reviews' (Kingsley, 2010). Each author remained firmly in character and there was no reference on the project website or on Facebook or Twitter to the newspaper being a work of fiction. However, several online articles and blog posts reveal that the newspaper is a work of fiction, supported by quotes from Eisenhammer. However, such articles are refuted on

the newspaper website by angry village residents who claim that both they and their village are real.

The project text was launched on 27th September 2010 with the announcement that the Paddlesworth village newspaper was being published online for the first time. The newspaper documents its own fake history on its project website, which plays with the idea of the transition of print to screen:

> 'The Paddlesworth Press was established in 1710 by Viscount Heasham of Dode... On September 27, 2010, the Paddlesworth Press had it's biggest overhaul since Lady Falshop brought a printing press to village in the early eighteenth century, with the launch of Paddlesworth Press Online' (*Paddlesworth Press,* 2010).

The online newspaper published the story that scientific evidence had emerged of a solar flare that would hit the world in ten weeks, resulting in Armageddon. The time span of the project was these ten weeks as the newspaper documented the reactions and opinions of the residents as some debated whether the world would really end and others began to prepare. Despite the news of the imminent end of the world, the newspaper also satirised everyday village life with its odd customs and quirky characters. The online newspaper featured several sections, including a letters page, horoscope and columns written by village residents. This newspaper juxtaposes the mundane aspects of village life with the story that the end of the world is approaching.

3.1.2 Chapter Overview

This chapter explores how the networked book shifts the book from being a physical artefact to a digital experience for both its authors and readers as their roles overlap. The

networked book is a form of performance, in which both readers and authors take part. This performance is time-specific, lasting for the duration of the writing project, and when the performance is over only the text remains. The networked book is connected to the oral tradition and as a non static text in a state of flux it resembles many characteristics of the spoken word.

The networked book is also a spatial construct where interactions and conversations between authors and readers are recorded as a part of the book. Through reading the text as a social construct, this chapter examines it as a documentation of interactions. It recognises private and public spaces within the text and views the networked book fundamentally as a place rather than an artefact or object. The networked book is a place where readers and authors interact and collaborate and that these collaborations become part of the text.

This chapter considers the use of social networks and argues that, within the networked book, these become part of an expanded narrative. Through an examination of the documented interactions between authors and readers, it argues that these textual transactions are part of the text. In particular, marginal notes (contributed by readers and authors) are an important part of the text.

This chapter explores the restrictions, boundaries and thresholds for readers and authors of the text. The text is a mediated space but not freely accessible to everyone. There are clear hierarchies of textual production within a textual framework and project structure designed by project authors. These textual thresholds, through which the text can be entered and added to by authors and readers, must be examined. This chapter also examine the frames of the project text and considers what lies inside and outside the text.

The networked book must be examined as a form of hypertext. In particular, this chapter looks at the role of links in expanding the dynamics between authors, readers and the text and argues that through the use of links, the project text is expanded. The networked book is a form of open book and this chapter examines what a lack of closure means for the narrative. The non-linear narrative is also examined to identify the ways in which it can be navigated by a reader.

This chapter considers book history and asks whether the networked book is a book at all. It argues that it is given many of the characteristics of the book but that it is a new form, which draws on earlier traditions and conventions. It addresses the materiality of the networked book through, in part, a discussion of book history and finds that the networked book does have materiality, in the form of physical components. It then discusses the temporal nature of the networked book and considers whether it can be published or whether it becomes an archive. It argues that the unfinished text-in-progress is as important as the finished form as a record of collaboration.

3.1.3 Approach

The chapter reads *Paddlesworth Press* as a networked book, following its project author's claims that it is a novel. It considers it in its entirety as a 'project text'. Reading it in this way acknowledges that the networked book can include all associated material alongside the book. The project text of *Paddlesworth Press* is defined in this chapter as including:

Project information: This is information transmitted through structural, navigational and textual devices by the project authors (individuals and organisations who developed and led the project)

The 'newspaper': This is the digital text of the newspaper, including news, lifestyle, sport, culture, comments, letters, horoscope, 'Pick of the Paddle' and several miscellaneous items.

Comments: These are the comments left by readers in response to news stories.

There is also material to be considered which is located outside the project text. In this chapter, this includes:

Social networks: The online social network profiles of *Paddlesworth Press* and its individual authors.

In order to fully discuss the project text of *Paddlesworth Press*, to begin to understand the position of the text in relation to its authors and reader, this chapter follows Genette's approach and examines the paratexts of the project text. In addressing the concept of the paratextual threshold in relation to the project text of *Paddlesworth Press*, it divides its paratext into two areas, according to Genette's (1997) approach. These areas are:

The Epitext (Liminal devices outside the book): This includes project information, the premise of the project as a whole and associated social network accounts.

The Peritext (Liminal devices within the book): This includes the project text of *Paddlesworth Press*, which includes comments by readers.

This chapter primarily addresses the position of the text as a site of interaction between author and reader. It also considers the nature of a non-linear text in flux, authored by mass collaboration between authors and readers.

Through a consideration of both the epitext and peritext of *Paddlesworth Press*, we begin to understand the position of the collaboratively authored, and continually changing, text as a site of interaction between author and reader. By exploring the text as a collaborative space of thresholds, barriers and freedoms for both author and reader, we see that their interactions with the text become part of the networked book.

3.2 Text

It is first necessary to consider what we mean by the term 'text' and whether a networked book, with its multiple authors and typical lack of linearity and digital materiality, can be defined as a text. Indeed, it must be also asked whether, with the presence of multiple authors and textual strands in the paratext of the book, it can even be thought of as a single text.

3.2.1 What is a text?

The media theory definition of text is a series of coherent sentences. In linguistics, the term is used for both written and spoken texts, but is sometimes used to refer only to written texts. A text is usually regarded as a product, rather than a process, as the text is the product of a process of text production. In this way, the text has a physical existence of its own, independent of both its sender and receiver (O'Sullivan, 1983). Literary theory has moved beyond the 'transmissive model of the writer-reader relationship' (Chandler, 1995, p.20) and through the text of the networked book, we are able to explore the multiple positions of both reader and author. There has long been debate about where meaning emerges in the relationship between readers and texts. Formalists, including David Olson, (Olson, 1977, 1986) believe that the meaning of a text is 'contained in' the text, and it must be 'extracted' by readers during the reading process (Chandler, 1995, p.20). This model of communication is 'transmissive' as meaning is viewed as something contained within a text, which can then be 'transmitted' from a 'sender' to a passive 'receiver' (Chandler, 1995, p.20). At the other side of the debate, both the act of reading and writing a text are seen as processes of

'negotiation' or 'construction' (Chandler, 1995, p.20). Text needs both a reader and a context and meaning-making is a process rather then simply the digestion of content (Fish, 1980). Reading is not simply passive 'information retrieval' and a text does not have a single, unchanging meaning (Chandler, 1995, p.22). Instead, meaning is constructed by a reader as they take part in the reading process. Their role is as partner rather than passive recipient.

3.2.2 An Ideal Text

In *S/Z,* Barthes (1974) considers the possibility of an 'ideal text'. Through a close structural analysis of Balzac's 'Sarrasine', using a model developed from Saussuren linguistics, he concludes that an ideal text is one that is reversible, or open to the greatest variety of independent interpretations and not restrictive in meaning (Barthes , 1974). Barthes describes this as the difference between the 'writerly' (lisible) text, in which the reader is an active participant in a creative process, and a 'readerly' (scriptible) text in which they are restricted to simply reading (Barthes, 1974). The readerly text does not require the reader to create their own meaning. Instead, he or she locates existing meaning within the text, which is left by the author, by following a linear and predetermined route. These texts are 'controlled by the principle of non-contradiction' (Barthes, 1974, p.156). They are ordered towards representation of the world and are associated with the realist novel of the nineteenth century (Allen, 2000, p. 79). They reinforce cultural myths and ideologies, which Barthes (1974) symbolises through the term 'doxa'. In the writerly text, stable meaning can be found and signifiers within the text will relate to an understandable signified (Allen, 2000, p.79). In this

process, the role of the reader is a limited one. They simply read and comprehend and do not actively contribute.

In contrast, the writerly text directly involves the reader in the meaning-making process. The aim of such a text is to 'make the reader no longer a consumer but a producer of the text' (Barthes, 1970, p.4). This creates an active rather than passive experience for the reader. The reader is an active participant in the process. The text becomes a dynamic space where the reader is directly aligned with both author and text. However, the degree of a reader's involvement depends not only on the type of text and on how readerly or writerly it may be, but also on the text is used (Chandler, 1995). Meaning-making is a direct result of collaboration between author, reader, text and is dependent on context. The experience is plural as it solicits collaboration from the reader (Culler, 2001, pp.441-44). They must work in collaboration to produce text.

Landow suggests that Barthes' discussion of the active or writerly reader 'precisely matches' computer hypertext (White, 2006, p.135). The networked book can also be seen as closely aligned to Barthes' view of the writerly text. It engages the reader directly with the writing process and the text can only be constructed through a partnership between reader and author. It fulfills many of the functions of the 'ideal text'. There are several entrances to the text rather than a clearly defined beginning and end. However, this view of the networked book as a writerly text is problematic. There can easily be a misconception that because the 'work' has taken a different form in electronic writing that it seems to closely resemble the Bartherian 'text'. This mistakes the 'physical manifestation' of the electronic technologies for the 'linguistic or discursive text' (Grusin, 1996, p.45). Mikhail Bakhtin, in 'The Problem of the Text,' expands the idea of the text as he states that, '[a] human act is a potential text' (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 107). Every act and every text are both a meeting point and a contrast. The word and the

writing of the word is a two-sided act where meaning is constructed by both author and reader (Bakhtin, 1987). This is a crucial claim made for both hypertext and interactive narratives. Such narratives allow opportunity for meaning to be constructed and shared by both author and reader as their roles overlap. Readers are able to choose their own pathways through the narrative and so experience a greater sense of agency than is offered to them in a printed book.

3.2.3 The Digital Text

Bolter specifically compares the choice-rich hypertext to a spoken dialogue, claiming that,'[a] hypertextual essay in the computer is always a dialogue between the writer and his or her readers, and the reader has to share the responsibility for the outcome' (Bolter, 1992, p.17). Both hypertexts and dialogues '[speak] with more than one voice and therefore shar[e] or postpon[e] responsibility' (Bolter 1992, p.117). Thus Bolter envisions the process of reading a hypertext as dual. In much the same way, he sees that the digital text is in itself a dual piece of text. For him, the printed book implies that it is a separate unit of meaning but the digital text is not (Bolter, 1991). The printed book exists in a physical form as a single copy but the digital text has the potential to exist within a network of other texts.

The form of interaction that the reader is allowed in the hypertext can also be seen as collaborative. Sven Birkerts argues that, 'the hypertext writer need not work alone' (Birkerts, 2006, p.160) and goes on to observe, '[a]lready users can create texts in all manner of collaborative ways - trading lines, writing parallel texts that merge, moving independently created sets of characters in and out of communal fictional

space' (Birkerts, 2006, p.160). Indeed, Birkerts surmises that this collaborative option is the true strength of the genre.

Landow focuses on 'network textuality'; textuality written, stored and then read on a computer network. For him, such technology transforms readers into 'reader-authors' or 'wreaders' as any contribution or changes to the text made by one is available to other readers. An individual's private notes become 'public statements' (Landow, 1994b, p.14). This freedom allows the reader experience to become fundamental in the authoring process. The text is written through these reader contributions. These private notes made public become part of the text.

The digital text is a technological emulation of the printed word. Hayles (2002) argues that the electronic word is not a product, but a process. It does not exist, like the printed word does, imprinted on paper before it is invoked, because the process of invocation is fundamentally what constitutes it. The pages of a book are static and fixed but the digital text is performative and only exists while its page does. The text is not even really text; instead it exists as machine data (Hayles, 1999). For McGann (2001), the digital text is 'algorithmic' and contains within itself the instructions for their display. Textuality itself here is illusory and fleeting. The experience with the text is an encounter.

This is a different experience than a reader has with a printed book but it is not necessarily limited. The performative aspect of the text allows opportunity for engagement and participation for a reader. The possibility that the text may disappear at any time makes it appear fluid and less fixed. This may be a disconcerting experience for the reader but it can also be liberating.

3.2.4 The Networked Book

As a form of hypertext, the networked book is a fleeting encounter for its readers but also offers a collaborative experience. It is both a technology and a social practice. The reader can experience the project as a reader and are also able to become the author of the text. This openness and collaborative nature of the text leads us to consider how it should be read. The text is surrounded by the voices of multiple authors. Each comment, annotation, conversation or piece of digital marginalia that has been left behind must be taken into account as part of the text. The thresholds of the text must be expanded to include these recorded elements that in print culture would have been ephemeral and unrecordable.

3.2.5 Genette and the Text

For Genette, the paratext is what enables a text to become a book (Genette, 1997, p.1). This space on the periphery of the text mediates and informs its reception by its readers. In the networked book, this periphery is textual space on the threshold of the book where both readers and authors enter and leave the text. To describe it, we can adapt Genette's description of the paratext as an 'undecidable space, which is neither container nor contained' (Genette, 1997, p.2). This threshold of the text of a printed book can be identified as a material route into the book through engaging with a physical copy. The threshold of the networked book more closely resembles Genette's

description of the 'undecidable space'. It is not contained within a physical space and in

the networked environment it is broadened.

3.3 Performance

Paddlesworth Press can be read as a digital performance. A reader is drawn into the text, possibly through the network it exists within, where they are prompted to engage and participate with not only the text of the newspaper but also with the premise of the project as a whole. The epitext of this networked book provides the space for this form of participation. The reader's experience is curated by the author through the text as documentation of a staged performance. The idea of reading hypertext as a form of performance is explored by Rita Raley (2001), who believes that the potential for performance is what separates analogue from digital.

3.3.1 A Situation

The project authors of *Paddlesworth Press* carefully curated a 'situation'. This situation was created by the project authors before the project began and readers were encouraged to engage with the scenario. This pre-released information formed part of the project's epitext. It marked a threshold for readers to cross in order to engage with the project text. Coverage of the project appeared first in *The Guardian,* both online and offline on 27th September 2010, and then later on several online news sites and blogs. Writers and editors remained in character and encouraged readers to take part in the action. Readers were encouraged to vote on village matters, leave comments on news stories and engage with the authors and editors through email and social networking

tools, such as Twitter and Facebook. The project website took the position of a stage, where the editors and writers of the newspaper acted out a fictional story for an audience; the readers. However, as a collaborative medium, readers were able to join in the performance.

3.3.2 A Happening

Paddlesworth Press can be read as a type of 'Happening'; a term first coined by performance artist Allan Kaprow (1958). This term was used to describe a non-linear performance where members of the audience become active participants as the boundary between audience and actor is re-conceptualised. Kaprow explains the need for an engaged and responsive audience for a Happening to take place, claiming that, 'a group of inactive people in the space of a Happening is just dead space' (Kaprow, 1966a, p.40). *Paddlesworth Press* invited participation from its audience through the construction of a situation. The epitext of *Paddlesworth Press* became a Happening as it was in this peripheral textual space that the audience was encouraged to engage with the premise of the project as well as the project text. It closely resembles what Kaprow later describes as an 'Activity' form of Happening:

> 'It is directly involved in the everyday world, ignores theaters and audiences, is more active than meditative, and is close to spirit to physical sports, ceremonies, fairs, mountain climbing, war games, and political demonstrations' (Kaprow, 1967, p.87).

Paddlesworth Press can be read as this form of a Happening. The newspaper claims to document the everyday world. It appears online as a type of performance, a spectacle for readers to watch but also take part in. Looking at Kaprow's 'Rules of the Game' for

Happenings, we can further identify *Paddlesworth Press* as a form of Happening. He sets out that:

> '1. The line between the Happening and daily life should be kept as fluid and perhaps as indistinct as possible.
> ...
> 2. Themes, materials, action, and the associations they evoke are to be gotten from anywhere except from the arts, their derivatives, and their milieu.
> …
> 3. The Happening should be dispersed over several widely spaced, sometimes moving and changing, locales' (Kaprow, 1966b, p.62).

Although there are other 'Rules for the Game', *Paddlesworth Press* certainly fulfills these three rules. The lines between it and daily life are fluid as reality and fiction blur. The project does not focus directly on the arts and instead takes its themes from everyday life. Although focused on the project website, *Paddlesworth Press* takes place over several 'locales', which include Twitter and Facebook. Located online, this is not a Happening as Kaprow would have imagined but it borrows heavily, though without direct acknowledgement, from this form of performance art.

3.3.3 Theatre

The epitext of the project text of *Paddlesworth Press* resembles a form of theatre. The position of the reader becomes that of audience member as the project text is expanded to include elements of performance in the text. To understand the idea of the online space as a form of theatrical performance space, we can look to the work of Brenda Laurel (1993). For Laurel, the computer interface is a form of theatre. She notes that researchers have discussed the idea that computer users resemble a theatrical audience who have a degree of control over the action on stage. She considers the chaos that

would ensue if audience members were permitted to interact spontaneously with actors on stage as active participants. Laurel concludes that people participating in this way are no longer audience members. Instead, they become actors and the 'notion of "passive" observers disappears' (Laurel, 1993, pp.11-14). The readers, alongside the authors, are the actors and the text becomes the stage.

We must also consider at what point the performance of the networked book ends. Does it end when the project authors have finished writing? Does it end when they have finished engaging directly with readers? Or does it only end when the readers have finished reading? *Paddlesworth Press* exists in a particular timeframe although once the project was over, and the project authors had finished writing their contributions, the text still remained on the project website. This can be seen as an archive of the project, although readers could still leave comments. If we shift our methodological focus to art theory, we can consider Nicolas Bourriaud's (2001) view that once a performance is over all that remains is documentation of the event, which should not be confused with the work itself. *Paddlesworth Press,* in its archived stage, is documentation of the project. The text remains, including the links and the readers' comments. It is no longer actively being written by the project authors but readers are able to engage with the text. The project is no longer a two-way process and in many ways becomes as static as a printed text. The performance is over but the stage remains.

3.3.4 Orality

During the collaborative authoring process, the project text of *Paddlesworth Press* appears removed from the printed word and instead resembled a form of oral performance. It takes aspects of oral culture or 'second orality' (Ong, 1982). However,

this form of orality does not take the form of the uttered word but instead is 'transmitted as the speed of light, mediated by computer screens and graphical user interfaces, and processed through layers and layers of code' (Deseriis, 2009). It retains much of the structure of the rigidity of the printed word, while at the same time borrowing elements from the oral tradition. In doing so, it is a new form of text, one which is open and vast.

Abbe Don (1990), in 'Narrative and the Interface,' argues that computers in modern societies play a similar role to that of the storyteller of oral cultures. For Walter Ong (1982), the word is an 'event' in the physical world. It is a representation of an oral form of storytelling. Within the collaborative authoring stage of the project text of *Paddlesworth Press*, the reader was directly connected to the author as though through a story told in the oral tradition. There was opportunity to share words and so directly communicate with one another. The multiple author and reader positions transformed the text into something different; a site for an event to take place. What was produced, the immediacy of its transmission to its readers and the potential for direct conversations between readers and characters, resembled the oral tradition. Here the spoken word is always an event, a movement in time, completely lacking in 'the thing-like repose of the written or printed word' (Ong, In Mahapatra 1993, p.49).

For Ong, the written word is detached from its author. It is fixed and static, situated in the past and controlled by the author. The author and reader are separated from one another by time and distance and they may be unknown to one another. They are connected only by visual marks on a page - a 'thing'. This form of communication is embodied by the 'thing' rather than a 'context or event.' Here, word becomes 'thing' (Ong, 1982). There is a no opportunity for a 'concrete dialogue' as the author is not physically present. The only trace of him or her are words on a page (Mahapatra, 1993). In contrast, the spoken word is an occurrence, an event (Ong, 1982). The Hebrew

word 'dabar' means both 'word' and 'event' and every word in 'its spoken state' can be seen as an event (Ong, 1982, p.32). Spoken words in an oral culture are inseparable from action and become a form of physical happening rather than an abstraction (Ong, 1967). Ong believes that the physical presence and continual participation of both speaker and listener produces a 'certain metaphysical presence' (Foley, 1998, p.103). The networked book takes on the form of a physical happening. It is a written 'event' removed from the printed word. The project text becomes the site of a performance.

During the collaborative authoring process of *Paddlesworth Press,* the written word was in transition. As a fictional newspaper, during the collaborative authoring process, it continuously reported news stories and readers were able to respond to these stories by leaving comments and connecting through social networks. The result was that the text was not static or fixed. Instead, it resembled the spoken word as it changed and shifted in response to both reader and author.

Paddlesworth Press, although appearing primarily in written form, is not a printed text and shares many characteristics with spoken word. It is not locked on paper in a fixed state and so was in a state of flux during the authoring process. Words could be added at any time to the project text by its authors and could also be removed without warning. Conversations between readers and authors were recorded on the periphery of the project text as comments on news stories. These direct responses from readers, both fictional and real, resemble a form of oral response. Though appearing in the written form, they are informal snippets formed often in immediate response to a news story. Written dialogue between reader and author in this textual space is a form of conversation. It had the potential to be immediate and responsive, just as an oral dialogue. This connects to White's definition of the networked book which compares the form to an oral structure. To her, the networked book contains aspects of a

conversation, which can be started, dropped or redirected by participants, with each contribution shaping the final form (White, 2005a).

For Ong (1967), spoken word is more powerful than the written word. The written word can not produce the same experience of encounter as it is not 'sufficiently living and refreshing' (Ong, 1967, p.125). He describes the act of writing as a 'silencing of words' resulting in 'a withdrawal into oneself' (Ong, 1967, p.126).

In the epitext of *Paddlesworth Press*, we can see the experience of the written word in the networked book was a form of public encounter. Orality is a form of participatory activity that connects people as they share knowledge, ideas and information (Mahapatra, 1993) and the networked book offers a similar form of immersion. Instead of offering a limited reading experience, it offered its readers, during the collaborative authoring process, a chance for collaboration. Through a consideration of Ong, we can see that the networked book possesses many qualities of spoken word. It offered a form of lived encounter to its readers and asked them to join in the performance. The project text became both the site of this performance and its documentation.

3.4 Social Networks

The *Paddlesworth Press* project authors used social media as a fundamental part of the project and the project text is firmly embedded in online social networks. In an article published in *The Guardian* on 27th September 2010, journalist Patrick Kingsley explains that *Paddlesworth Press* has an online presence on many social networking platforms and he provides links to several of these (Kingsley, 2010). For example, Major Fitzroy-Howard, fictional editor of the newspaper had a Twitter account[54].

Fig 15 Twitter

54 http://twitter.com/#!/doublemicrolite

There are also Facebook accounts for several writers, including Josey Barge and Major Fitzroy-Howard.[55] One Paddlesworth musician shared music on their MySpace[56] account, and another had a blog[57]. Several reviews for fictional pubs and restaurants mentioned in the newspaper appear at www.qype.co.uk[58]. One review was written by Mary Burgess, a fictional editor of the newspaper, on 16th September 2010, before the project website appeared on 27th September 2010. Each of these textual elements is on the periphery of the project text and is connected to the text by links. A reader is able to visit each of these and interact with associated elements of the narrative.

3.4.1 Engagement with Readers

Even after the collaborative authoring process officially ended, a reader of *Paddlesworth Press* can directly engage with its authors through these platforms. They can add further reviews of fictional locations in Paddlesworth, such as the Cat & Custard Pot pub. They can leave comments on the Paddlesworth poetry blog. They can send messages to the fictional newspaper reporters through Twitter, Facebook and MySpace. The fictional reporters remain in character in their replies and comments. One journalist notes that the 'website's interweaving of reality and fiction is so great that it is difficult to secure an interview with the project's architects. Contact details are on the website for the use of visitors, but they will connect you only to the Press's fictional personnel' (Goodland, 2010).

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55 https://www.facebook.com/people/Major-Fitzroy-Howard/100001558994077

56 http://www.myspace.com/skinpillow

57 http://paddlesworthpoetry.blogspot.com

58 http://www.qype.co.uk/place/351053-Cat-Custard-Pot-Paddlesworth

3.4.2 Back Story

The project authors present elements of the back story of the project text to readers through social networking sites. Several pieces of back story pre-date the project launch date. For example, the Paddlesworth Poetry blog[59] contains entries from August 2010, before the project was launched in September 2010. Such pieces of back story add to the illusion that this is a genuine newspaper with a history before its launch date and that its editors and writers are real people with authentic online presences.

When *The Guardian* published an article about the *Paddlesworth Press* project, the fictional residents of Paddlesworth were angry at being portrayed as fictional. Several fictional residents wrote comments on *The Guardian* website stating that the village is real. 'majorfitzroyhoward' commented on 27th September 2010:

> 'Frankly I'm appalled that a so-called 'reputable newspaper' can print such a load of tosh.' 'MorganSwah' wrote 'Fictional...as if. It's just that Paddlesworth is sooo boring that you sometimes feel like you're in a dream or something.' 'AdaKilmowski' wrote 'If I come down there and box your ears will you believe in me?' (Paddlewsorth Press, 2010).

The fictional writers also responded in the *Paddlesworth Press* with an article entitled 'Real Outrage at Guardian 'Fiction' Jibe.'

Such elements make up a form of 'intimate paratext' (Genette, 2007, p.9). For Genette, this is a private form of paratext, which can include an author's diary and private letters. However, for *Paddlesworth Press*, this intimate paratext becomes a public feature of the epitext. By using social networking tools, the project authors were able to make seemingly private elements of the text public. Elements at the periphery of

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59 http://paddlesworthpoetry.blogspot.com

the text became important features to be read alongside the project text. This intimate paratext is not a private space but instead is a space where fictional characters are explored in greater detail. These details can be read as a parallel text to the project text. They are not accidental details but rather constructed and intentional elements of the text transmitted to the reader in a different form. This serves to build an immersive experience for the reader. The experience is of the project text reaching out from one format into several and engaging with the reader in different ways.

3.4.3 Interaction

In addition, the *Paddlesworth Press* project website embeds many social networking tools and encourages readers to interact with the project. For example, each news story includes the option at the beginning and end of the text to 'Like' the content on Facebook. Options also appear at the end of each piece of text to share it via several social networking sites (Technorati[60], StumbleUpon[61], Sphinn[62], Google[63], delicious[64] and digg.[65]) These tools enable a reader to post the content to a range of social networks. The top left hand side of the website states 'Stay Connected' and provides options to view 'Latest Posts in RSS, Latest Comments in RSS' and options to 'Follow Us on Twitter' and 'Connect on Facebook.' The invitation to readers during the authoring process was that they could stay connected to the project in various forms.

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60 http://technorati.com

61 http://www.stumbleupon.com

62 http://sphinn.com

63 www.google.com

64 http://delicious.com

65 http://digg.com

The use of social media in this project produces a threshold between the project text and a wider network. Links in the project text take a reader to textual material displayed elsewhere on the Internet. Here the line between what is part of the project text and what is not becomes blurred. Material authored by those associated with *Paddlesworth Press* (its project authors, authors and readers) can be labelled as part of the project text but material that is authored by people not connected to the project is not. This is not as straightforward as it first appears as the associated textual material is displayed on social networking sites designed and authored by people not connected to *Paddlesworth Press* but their work frames its project text. This confusion illustrates the fine line between the project text and its periphery. In the networked book, what is positioned outside the book is very close to what is located inside the book. The line between the two is not clear cut.

3.4.4 Terms and Conditions

Readers can only take the role of author in fairly prescribed ways in this networked book; through adding comments to articles, interacting with fictional writers through social media channels and by voting in online polls on the project website. However, due to the nature of the project as a fictional newspaper, contributions are not tightly regulated. Authors are able to interact with its fictional authors and become part of the story.

3.5 Space

Within the networked book, text becomes space. This textual space becomes a space for interaction and collaboration. The presence of a network transforms the book into a spacial construct. It does not exist as ink printed on a paper page but rather as a space for authors to engage with readers, and authors to collaborate with readers, in the construction of a collaborative work of fiction. The text documents and reflects the experiences of both readers and authors during the process of its creation. Conversations are often captured and changes to the text are archived. The text becomes a space on which both the narrative and the story of its creation are written.

3.5.1 Series of Spaces

For an understanding of the construction of space within a book, we can look to the tradition of artists' books. Visual artist Ulises Carrión (1975) claims, that, 'a book is a series of spaces':

> 'Written language is a sequence of signs expanding within the space; the reading of which occurs in the time. A Book is a space- time sequence (...) Books existed originally as containers of (literary) texts. But books, seen as autonomous realities, can contain any (written) language, not only literary language, or even any other system of signs (...) A book can also exist as an autonomous and self-sufficient form, including perhaps a text that emphasises that form, a text that is an organic part of that from: here begins the new art of making books' (Carrión, 1975).

Although Carrión refers specifically to artists' books, his ideas can be used to explore the networked book. For him, a book is a form, a series of spaces in time where meaning is constructed as the book is navigated by a reader. It does not just contain text but also signs, which form a vital part of the book. The networked book can be understood in a similar way. As a virtual book, it is a series of constructed spaces, which are navigated during both the reading and writing process.

Western history has been dominated by the perception of the world as a linear thought: everything has a beginning, a middle, and an end. To Ong, narratives of literate cultures tend to follow a linear plot that is structured, detaching the author and reader (Ong, 1982). Marshall McLuhan (2003) hypothesises that such linearity is a side effect of the phonetic alphabet, which compresses the range of human speech and thought into a symbolic system of twenty-six characters. The result is a world view dominated by linear logic and the symbolic abstraction of meaning. There has long been a theoretical distinction made between the printed and spoken word. The act of writing words onto a page transforms non-linear speech into a visual space (McLuhan, 2003). For McLuhan, contemporary western cultural modality is visual, or at least visually-dominant. The sensory preference is to see words on a page and reading them allows meaning to be constructed and understood. This preference, and the limitation that McLuhan believes it brings, means that the perception of the printed word becomes a static, one dimensional space.

3.5.2 Space in the Networked Book

The spatial construct of a networked book is something different. This space, although still visual, is often non-linear and experienced in a way that can more closely resemble

the spoken word. Readers are typically given the opportunity to engage with both the text and its authors by taking the role of an author and leaving their own comments directly onto the text. There are typically multiple entry points of collaboration and a reader can engage directly with both the writing and reading processes.

For McLuhan, the 'electric word' is aural and it moves us back into the acoustic space of pre-literate culture (Schaffer, 1993). He believes that, 'until writing was invented, we lived in acoustic space, where the eskimo now lives: boundless, horizonless, the dark of the mind, the world of emotion, primordial intuition, terror. Speech is a social chart of this dark bog' (McLuhan, 2003, pp.56-7). Words written and distributed using computers are, for McLuhan, a return to this 'acoustic space'. His understanding of the acoustic space is inspired by Siegfried Giedion's understanding of architecture (Marchand, 1998, p.113).

For Bolter, the computer is the key for producing a dynamic textual space. Instead of producing 'static pages of the printed book, the computer can maintain text as a dynamic network of verbal and visual elements' (Bolter, 2001, p.9). In doing so, it produces a writing space framed by the 'computer window' (Bolter, 2001, p.67). The networked book is this type of textual space. It reverts the book to an earlier stage in book production when notes formed an important part of the text. The medieval book contained the 'marginal note', which offered explanation of the primary text by scholars. In the first century of printing, as the form of a text began to change, the role of the paratext shifted:

> 'As texts themselves crossed the threshold into the culture of print, the appearance and the function of paratext evolved in response to new socio-economic pressures and possibilities, gradually fixing the presentational apparatus into a form that has remained remarkably consistent throughout the history of printing' (Sherman, 2007, p.70).

After the Renaissance, marginal notes were thought to be a hinderance as they potentially contained multiple misreadings of the text. They were removed, or moved to the foot of the page or the back of the book, and the primary text took the centre space (Bolter, 2001). The networked book returns to the use of the note as a key paratextual element. Readers are typically able to leave comments directly on the text, just as scholars' notes were included as part of the medieval codex.

3.5.3 Spatial Terms

Early modern textual thresholds were discussed in spatial terms, often taking architectural forms. Readers were viewed as metaphorically entering the text through physical means. For example, spatial metaphors were used, such as 'the cultivated garden', 'the theater', 'the schoolhouse', 'the Church-porch' (Sherman, 2007, pp. 72-79). It became seen that the text was something to enter through; a specific entry point, designated by the author and/or publisher. These entry points mark out what is inside and what is outside the text. The entry points are a form of threshold that must be passed through to enter the text. In the networked book, these are initially marked out and controlled by the project authors. However, authors can extend the thresholds of the project text through the addition of links. These links may take a reader beyond the project text to encounter textual material that was not originally designed to be part of the project text, a space that Genette called 'beyond-text' (Genette, 1997, p.407).

In a networked book, such entry points into the text are both used and expanded. There are multiple entry points into the text, through a multitude of links. In *Paddlesworth Press*, it can difficult to see where the interior and exterior of the text

begins and ends. Readers are encouraged to take part in the text in such a way that interaction differs from a printed book. They are 'invited' to engage directly with the text. They are given a variety of entry points into the text, for example, through links on the fictional editors' profiles on social networking platforms. In this way, the text takes on a different spatial form, one which is both complex and shifting.

3.5.4 Frames

Marie Maclean (1991) describes the paratext as a 'verbal frame' and this idea can be used to explore the spatiality of the networked book. This frame can either draw a reader into or away from the text and into a consideration of its wider context rather than of the text itself (Maclean, 1991). Indeed, the paratext of *Paddlesworth Press* does act as a frame. It provides both a boundary and threshold for readers to enter and interact with the text. Links to other locations offers a reader a chance to explore the wider context of the project. Ann Lewis (2007) believes that while Genette does not specifically acknowledge the 'frame', the paratext is certainly an 'interface through which the literary text is presented to the public' (Lewis, 2007, p.18). The project text of *Paddlesworth Press* is framed by its paratext. It both acts to present the project text to the reader and gives them opportunity to look beyond it.

Derrida (1987) considers both the frame and framing in 'The Truth in Painting' as he deconstructs the opposition of an inside and outside to a work of art:

> 'The frame does not demarcate the two but it is rather "a hybrid of inside and outside"; it is "outside which is called to the inside of the inside in order to constitute it as inside" (Derrida, 1987 in Richardson, 2008, p.12).

When reading the paratext of a networked book as a frame, we can relate Derrida's (1987) idea to the 'inside' and 'outside' of the text. The frame here is not a physical boundary but a boundary separating the text from the rest of the internet. There is a clear distinction between what is authored by the project, and therefore part of the project text and what is not. A space is marked for authors and readers within which to collaborate.

When considering the interior and exterior of the project text, we can also ask whether the textual space is public or private space. Arendt argues that one approach to thinking about public is that which 'can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest possible publicity' (Arendt, 1998, p.50). Public can also be defined as a collection of people with a common understanding of the world (Livingstone, 2005). To some extent, the *Paddlesworth Press* project text, and its paratext, is a public space. Its project website is visible to its potential readership and participation is encouraged. However, there are also private spaces in the project, to which the reader, and potentially also many of the authors, have no access. Parts of the website, including details of its creation, will be accessible only to those who built or manage the website. This is not defined here as part of the project text or paratext and is viewed, in this instance, as a publishing function. However, access to this space is needed to control the project text in its entirety and is clearly viewed as private space. This contrasts with a printed book, where printing technology no longer controls interaction with the text once the book is printed.

3.6 Materiality

In order to fully understand the textual space of the networked book and the position of the peritext in *Paddlesworth Press*, it is necessary to consider the materiality of the project text. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the study of the nature of Anglo-American books was dominated by a preoccupation with the physical materiality of books (Finkelstein and McCleery, 2002, p.7). The wider paratext of a book is traditionally regarded as a material feature of the book (Kovacs, 2009). It is part of a physical space on a material page. However, the function of the paratext can also be seen as more than this physical paper space. The paratext can be seen as more than space-as-signifier and be perceived as a tool which both positions it within a cultural context and reveals information about its construction and production as well as highlighting elements and features of the text. As a digital text, the networked book is not immaterial but has a more complex materiality than a printed book.

3.6.1 The Book

To begin with, it is necessary to address whether the networked book is a book at all. A book is commonly viewed as a physical, material object. The materiality of the digital object at first appears paradoxical. Jan Ll Harris and Paul A. Taylor (2005) use Lukac's (1992) essay 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat' to suggest that his concept of 'reification' is a useful one to explore the 'paradox of im/materiality'. For them, 'reification' refers to the 'way in which otherwise abstract concepts and processes are perceived as thing-like' (Harris and Taylor, 2005, p.115). The networked book, as a

concept, is positioned as thing-like. It is often given many features and functions of the book, not least in its name. Its authors often ignore other predominate features of the book, such as linearity and the perception of the text having a sole author. Calling a digital object a 'book' causes it to be viewed through the weight of book history and positioned as a culturally and historically situated object. The networked book uses the concept of the book as a metaphor and then re-constructs this recognisable form into something both at-once recognisable and different.

The networked book is a book but it has been expanded through its positioning within the network. Instead of being a physically bound object it has been transformed into a participatory experience for both author and reader. It is a form that could not exist away from the network of which it is a part.

3.6.2 The Digital Object

Digital objects, or artefacts, of which a networked book is a form, have a variety of characteristics. They are marked by 'a limited set of variable yet generic attributes such as editability, interactivity, openness and distributedness' and are 'editable, interactive and distributed' (Kallinikos, Aaltonen and Marton, 2010). The steady transfiguration and the permeable boundaries underlying them suggest that they are no more than operations by means of which they are assembled to proxies of objects (Ekbia, 2009; Manovich, 2001) only to be unpacked, edited, reprogrammed and reassembled again' (Kallinikos, Aaltonen and Marton, 2010). For Hill, digital technology can no longer be seen as hardware in the same way as printing presses and moveable type but instead as computer source code. Our ability to 'manipulate the terms on which we can

communicate and collaborate, as long as we have access to the source code, is instantaneously and almost infinitely flexible' (Hill, 2003, p.9).

The distinction between the digital object and the physical object is played with in the peritext of *Paddlesworth Press*. In the 'About' section of the website, the project authors reference the division between print and online text:

> 'Mary has asked me to make the point that we are well aware of the limited number of computer terminals in the village. She requests that anybody who desires a hard copy of the issue should send her notice in writing. She will drop off your copy later in the week' (*Paddlesworth Press*, 2010).

This reference draws attention, in a humorous way, to the idea that this fictional newspaper could exist both on and off-line. In reality, the village is does not even exist and the text newspaper contains more textual spaces than could ever be replicated in printed form.

Landow (1991, 1994, 2006), Bolter (1991) and Poster (2001) view electronic literature as 'immaterial, ephemeral, evanescent' when in fact its works are 'dependent on extremely material hardware, software, communication networks, institutional and corporate structures support personnel, and so on' (Grusin, 1996, p.45). Hayles (2002) also explores the nature of the digital text as material. In *Writing Machines,* she describes the technotext and uses this concept to provide an analysis of a range of texts, including online work, based on their materiality. For Hayles, the digital text is fundamentally material as its parts are physical. She defines materiality as 'the physical attributes constituting any artefact are potentially infinite; in a digital computer, for example, they include polymers used to fabricate the case, the rare earth elements used to make the phosphors in the CRT screen, the palladium used for the power cord prongs, and so forth' (Hayles, 2002, p.32). The networked book can be viewed in this way, its

parts are constructed from physical technology. It may be ephemeral (it can appear and disappear from a reader or author's view at the will of the project authors), unstable (it can be changed and its parts deleted by a multitude of authors) but its origins are material and it is created from fixed resources and tools. Nick Montfort reminds us that we must consider the way programs work ('what rules they follow, functions they evaluate, procedures they carry out') to 'begin to understand digital literary work on its own terms' (Montfort, 2004).

Materiality of text can also be seen not just as physical raw materials, but as something constructed. This can include 'structures such as allegory, narrator, or plot' (Sloane, 2010). Viewed this way, any piece of writing whether networked or printed, has materiality.

3.6.3 The Screen

The networked book replaces the physical page with the computer screen. For Hanjo Berressem (2002), we have depended on a page as 'a material carrier of fixing language at the level of the signifier' but now it 'may no longer be meaningful to speak of a "page" at all.' Instead we have a digital page built from code, which means that '[T]here is no page 'in itself' (Berressem, 2002, pp.48-49). As the screen can 'no longer function as a material of information – as the page does – but as a disembodied, immaterial of realization or actualization.' The computer screen functions as what Deleuze and Guattari call a 'plane of consistency' – where writing can morph and change from one format to another (Berresseum, 1999, p.35). The digital page is no longer material in the same way as a printed page but it does possess materiality, which functions differently and offers textual and navigational freedoms to both authors and readers.

3.6.4 Social Construction

Although the printed book is seen as a material object, this is not its only feature. It is also a socially constructed form, which parallels the networked book as a form of social text. Its paratext holds a record of this social construction. The 1970s brought a renewed interest in the book as a material, social object and the printed edition as a type of cultural mediation (Kovacs, 2007, p.243). French literary sociologist Robert Escarpit (1970) sees the book as a 'social product' and applies communication theory to the understanding of the reader's encounter with the literary text. He uses the metaphor of the rolling pin (or 'laminoir') as an instrument used to compress the parts of the book to prepare it for binding to explain his view of the editing and publication process. The book, perceived as being created by a sole author, is therefore 'contaminated by historically-situated visual and typographical codes' expresses a preference to return to a 'more direct, unmediated contact between authors and readers' where unmediated work is presented in a 'pre-material, pre-historicized form' (Kovacs, 2007, p.245). The text of the book does not just belong to the author, it is instead a form of collaboration and, at the same time, is a record of that collaboration. The digital marginalia left by readers and the documented conversations between authors and readers surrounding the text become part of the project text. They serve as both a reminder that the book was written in a network, giving it context, and documents much of the authoring process. It also informs the reading process as the text documents the experiences of previous readers.

The text becomes the 'voice' of the collaboration and paratextual features record the collaboration. Roger Laufer (1972), a French information scientist, introduces the concept of 'typographical enunciation' to describe the features of the 'voice' of the text,

which include punctuation, page layout and typography. He believes that meaning is transmitted to the reader of a text, in part, through these typographic codes (Laufer, 1972 in Kovacs, 2007, pp.245-6). In the networked book, these typographical marks, in their digital form, become part of the text. In *Paddlesworth Press*, links within the project text, both leading to places inside and outside the project text, becomes a form of typographic feature. They inform how the text is received.

3.6.5 The Periphery

Philippe Lane (1992) offers a linguistic analysis of the 'periphery' of the text ('la périphérie du texte') in his study of contemporary authorial and editorial paratexts in a consideration of the ways in which the paratext transmits editorial or authorial voices. For McGann (1991), the paratext is only useful for certain descriptive purposes but for deeper investigation into the nature of textuality it is not strong enough. He takes the concept of the paratext further to explore 'the text as a laced network of linguistic and bibliographic codes' in the view that this will result in a more comprehensive study of textuality. McGann (1991) wants to explore non-linguistic features that Genette ignores, such as ink, typeface and paper. Genette does not focus his attention on material features of the book, although he does explore a material form.

The networked book recreates a form of physical, and public, space online. Readers and authors gather virtually in the margins of the book as they collaborate in a form of public space. This has parallels with forms of eighteenth century marginalia, when readers documented their reading experiences in the margins of books and shared them with fellow readers (Jackson, 2001). Stein (2009) explains that once he stopped thinking about the physical form or content of books and focused instead on how they

are used, he started to view the book as a 'place' rather than an object. This view of the book as more than a physical object has been explored by others who saw that, 'a book is not a case of words, nor a bag of words, nor a bearer of words' (Carrion, 1993, p.31) nor is it merely 'a reading appliance' (Schilit et al, 1999 in Harpold, 2009, p.136). Although the networked book is material, it is not an object. Instead, it resembles a place where readers and authors collaborate. In *Paddlesworth Press*, the peritext of the book becomes a site for this collaboration. The comments at the end of each article show the responses of readers to the project text and these comments becomes part of the project text.

3.7 Narrative

Paddlesworth Press is described by its project authors as 'the world's first mixed-media, collaborative novel' (Kingsley, 2010). Although it is debatable that it is the first of its kind, it is interesting that it claims to be a form of novel. If we examine it as a novel, as defined in Chapter Two of this thesis, we can see that its narrative includes several elements. The narrative of the *Paddlesworth Press* project text includes each section of the newspaper (News, Lifestyle, Sport, Culture, Comment, Letters, Horoscope, Pick of the Paddle), featured pieces of text (A-Z Apocalypse and Paddy Mortsworth), comments from readers, fictional writers and editors, contact details and tools for connecting to the project text (such as links to social networking sites.) The comments on each news story and article are viewed to be important as links these comments appear at the bottom of each page. During the time when the project was active, news stories, articles and comments were frequently published. The project authors provide search tools for readers to locate information. A search tool is located in the top right hand corner of

each page of the project text. By using this feature, a reader can search the whole

project for a key term. The 'Search Archive' option also appears on each page of the

project text. Using this tool, a reader can locate text through the options 'Search by

Date', 'Search by Category' and 'Search with Google'.

Fig 16 *Paddlesworth Press*

The narrative of *Paddlesworth Press* does not just include the project text (the text of

the fictional newspaper) but also the story of the context in which it was written. This

story was transmitted through articles and blog posts written about the project and

published externally. The concept of the project and the ability of the project authors to encourage other people to collaborate becomes part of the expanded narrative.

3.7.1 The Rhizome

Deleuze and Guattari's (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) rhizome is a useful concept to use to explore the hypertextual narrative structure of *Paddlesworth Press*. They define the rhizome as:

> '[U]nlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, even nonsign states' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p.24).

It allows for multiple, non-hierarchical entry and exit points in the narrative. Readers can navigate the narrative in any way they choose and are given the freedom to interpret it in different ways. For Landow (2006), it captures the 'provisional, temporary, changing quality in which readers make individual lexias the temporary center of their movement through an information space' (Landow, 2006, p.60). This form of navigation through a rhizome leads to a lack of textual closure. J. Yellowlees Douglas (1994) believes that closure in reading is found through reading and rereading. However, in *Paddlesworth Press* this approach may not lead to a sense of textual closure. The narrative can be read in multiple ways and not every aspect can be resolved, or understood, even through the process of rereading.

Paddlesworth Press is, in part, a non-linear form of narrative. As a newspaper it is ordered chronologically. News stories were published each day during the collaborative authoring process of the project and a reader can navigate the text

according to date. However, the text, as well as the reading experience, is fragmented and a reader can choose to read it in multiple ways. He or she can begin reading one story and then choose to proceed to multiple other stories. For example, the 'Home' page of the project text features details of current news stories in headline form, along with an image and a brief introduction. A reader can read the text in order they choose, according to whichever news stories catch their attention. The result of this approach is that each reader's experience of the text will be different. The order in which he or she receives information will change for each reader. With continually updated content and the ability for readers to leave their own comments, each reader will be presented with a different text. This form of non sequential text has links with the oral tradition (Landow and Delany, 2004). It resembles a conversation between speaker and listener; open to interpretation and deviation.

3.7.2 Hypertext

Paddlesworth Press is a form of hypertext. The reading experience of the hypertext can be a feeling of paths not taken, of inaccessibility due to the choice of paths taken or one of never knowing what you have missed. Aarseth (1997) views this experience as an 'aporia', or 'an absence of possibility' (Aarseth, 1997, p.7). These features exist in *Paddlesworth Press*. The text is a composed of branches rooted in the narrative. A reader can follow these branches within the text and those leading out of the text (through links to external sites, such as Twitter and Facebook). There are different ways to engage with the text and different levels of immersion. The experience is non-linear and fluid as the experience of each reader, at each stage of the project will be different.

As the hypertext has no fixed centre, each reader is able to centre the text according to their own interests (Landow and Delany, 2004).

However, a non linear text is not only present in the hypertext and it is important to note that several properties of the networked book are not purely digital. A printed text is not necessarily always linear. McGann (2001) argues that a printed text, like an electronic text, is fluid and unstable. He criticises both Aarseth and Murray for misconstruing 'ordinary text' as 'linear' (McGann, 2001, p.148). For instance, Murray distinguishes four central properties of digital environments, two interactive properties (procedural, participatory) and two immersive properties (spatial, encyclopedic), but McGann notes that 'these four properties characterize their operational status' rather than characterising the digital narrative (McGann, 2001, p.147). Slatin also sees that difference between hypertext and printed text is the technology that handles the material' (Slatin, 1992).

Aarseth finds the term 'non-linear' problematic when discussing hypertexts. Despite being commonly used as a literary term to describe a narrative 'lacking or subverting a straightforward story line', the act of reading must take place 'sequentially, word for word' (Aarseth, 1997). Aarseth identifies that he reads in a different way from a literary theorist through his claim that, 'while they focused on what was being read, I focused on what was being read from' (Aarseth, 1997, pp.2-3). He asks, '[w]hy is the variable expression of the nonlinear text so easily mistaken for the semantic ambiguity of the linear text?' (Aarseth, 1997, p.3). To find his own answer, Aarseth looks to the idea of a narrative text as 'a labyrinth, a game, or an imaginary world, in which the reader can explore at will, get lost, discover secret paths, play around, follow the rules and so on' (Aarseth, 1997, p.3). Here, the reader is 'powerless [...] like a spectator at a

soccer game, he may speculate, conjecture, extrapolate, even shout abuse, but he is not a player' (Aarseth, 1997, p.4).

This view of the reader can be used to consider the function of the text of *Paddlesworth Press*. For Aarseth, the routes in a hypertext are already pre-arranged. There are only so many ways to explore the text of *Paddlesworth Press* and each of these has been constructed by its project authors. The resulting experience is not autonomous but rather it is prearranged. The experience of reading *Paddlesworth Press* is, to some extent, led by the project authors. They conceived of the project and developed its form and structure. Readers are able to interact within spaces of this pre-designated structure. They can contribute text to the project text through leaving comments. These then become part of the project text and influence its further reception.

3.7.3 Textual Freedoms

Paddlesworth Press offers a level of textual freedom for its reader, though there are still obvious boundaries and limitations. In this networked book, the reader is able to contribute to the text, through leaving comments, which become part of the project text. These comments influence the reading experience of future readers.

This form of textual freedom takes several forms. 'LEAVE A REPLY' appears in a red box below each news story and encourages the reader to leave their name, email address, website and comment. Once approved by the project authors, these comments appear below the relevant news story. Readers can vote in polls to decide what action villagers should take. Regular polls are included on the project website, encouraging readers to engage with the text. For example, on 18th November 2010, the poll was:

'Should Christmas be brought forward?' and the options to choose from were 'Yes' or 'No'. Readers could vote in this poll and view the overall results. During the collaborative authoring process, readers could communicate with project authors and illicit responses to their questions. However, these project authors remained in character. The 'Contact Us' page includes multiple ways to contact the newspaper staff. There is a postal address as well as email addresses for the 'Editorial Sections' of the newspaper.

This level of collaboration and interaction between readers and authors is a key feature of the project. As project author Eisenhammer explains in an article about the project:

> 'What really thrilled us was the way we could lose the boundaries between us and the readers, because we felt there was a slight pointlessness in writing satirical papers without that interaction' (Knight, 2010).

The experience for the readers is one of immersion; one of Murray's three proposed aesthetic categories for interactive story experiences (Murray, 1998). However, the text, as well as the narrative is ultimately created by the project authors. The reader's role (through their collaboration with the project in the author role) is prescribed by the project authors. They can collaborate in set ways that are designed and moderated.

3.7.4 Unstable Text

The project text of *Paddlesworth Press* is fundamentally unstable and disordered. Although the narrative is structured as a collection of articles making up a newspaper, there is little order and the narrative takes multiple directions. Bolter asserts that:

'[E]lectronic text is the first text in which the elements of meaning, of structure, and of visual display are fundamentally unstable... This restlessness is inherent in a technology that records information by collecting for fractions of a second evanescent electrons at tiny junctures of silicon and metal. All information, all data in the computer world is a kind of controlled movement, and so the natural inclination of computer writing is to change, to grow, and finally to disappear' (Bolter, 1991, p.31).

This ability to change, grow and disappear creates a challenging reading and authoring experience. During the collaborative authoring process, elements of the narrative could appear or disappear at any time. The project authors could add and delete text while the readers could only add text in designated areas. This sense of instability became part of the project and could be identified in the narrative even when the collaborative authoring process was over.

3.7.5 Expanded Narrative

Paddlesworth Press is an unbound text. Its narrative stretches beyond the project text with the use of hyperlinks. The links within the project text are predominately internal. News stories are linked together to form narrative pathways. At the end of each news story, a reader is given the option to read a selection of 'Related Posts' and links are provided. News stories and comments are highlighted and linked to at various places within the text. When links do point to locations outside the project text, they are to accounts on social networking sites, which maintain the boundaries of the project text. When using these social networking tools, project authors remained in character and the text they produce is an extension of the project text. 'Featured Links' appear highlighted on the each page of the project text under a red banner. However, each of these links

directs a reader to information on WordPress[66], the software used to design the website. It provides a range of information, such as 'Documentation', 'Plugins' and the 'WordPress Blog' but none of this information interrupts the premise of the project narrative. These links allow a form of intertextuality that printed books can not. Rather than allusions, direct links can be made to other ideas, sources or materials (Landow and Delany, 2004).

Francisco Ricardo (1998) considers what a text would look like if its links were viewed as a 'second order text', parallel to the main text. He terms this second order text a 'paratext, comprising the layer-world of links, of intertextual referents that could be subjected to cluster analyses that reveal aspects of cohesion, breadth, and other speculative characteristics of the first order text' (Ricardo, 1998, p.1). For Ricardo, this method relates hypertext to intertextuality through the use of links.

It must be remembered that printed books also display 'internal hypertextual functions', for example, page numbers, chapters, footnotes and contents pages, which may be added by the author or publisher (Landow and Delany, 2004). These are similar tools that readers use to navigate the text but it must be also noted that they provide different functions. The form of electronic linking made possible in the hypertext 'destroys the binary opposition of text and note that founds the status relations that inhabit the printed book' (Landow and Delany, 2004, p.11). This can be used when considering the networked book; a form which consciously plays with the idea of the collaborative narrative where the lines between authorial narrative and reader contributions overlap.

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66 www.wordpress.org

Paddlesworth Press is not a printed book. Instead, it makes use of many cross-platform textual and non-textual elements within its peritext and these must be considered. For example, social networking sites are used as an extension of the project text and links to these are displayed within the project text. Parts of the wider narrative are developed through the Twitter and Facebook accounts of its characters.

Henry Jenkins believes that all stories are told across multiple media and currently 'the most significant stories tend to flow across multiple media platforms' (Jenkins et al, 2006). Such cross-platform approaches to storytelling across media have been given various names, including 'cross media' (Bechmann and Petersen, 2006), 'hybrid media' (Boumans, 2004), intertextual commodity (Marshall, 2004), transmedial interactions (Bardzell et al, 2007), multimodality (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2001), intermedia (Higgins, 1966) and multiple platforms (Jeffery-Poulter, 2003).

Higgins (1966) introduces the term 'intermedia' to describe the approach he and other Fluxus artists were taking by using existing media to create new forms. He uses the term to mean the act of 'crossing boundaries of recognized media or to fuse the boundaries of art with media that had not previously been considered art forms' (Friedman, 2005). This use of intermedia to describe visual art can be applied to the networked book. Through its position within a network, the book contains elements that would not otherwise be considered part of a book, particularly a novel. Conversations between authors and readers and digital marginalia become part of the book. Hypertextual links to various places on the internet are included as part of the text. The boundaries of what is included inside a book and what is considered outside are expanded to create a new form.

3.8 Open Book

A networked book is inherently an open book positioned within a network and this sense of openness, with a lack of a clearly defined boundary, is evident in the peritext of *Paddlesworth Press*. As an open book, its epitext blurs with the peritext and it is difficult to define what is contained within a networked book and what is part of its periphery. The printed book can be viewed as a closed book, turned over to the designer and printer after the content is finished and then distributed to a reader in its fixed and bound state. The networked book, however, remains open for the length of the project within which it is written. It encourages not only interaction but also participation in its open form. To fully explore the peritext of *Paddlesworth Press*, it is necessary to explore the role and function of the network in the creation, production and distribution of the text.

3.8.1 The Network

Manuel Castells (2001) recognises the importance of the network in digital media. For him, 'the internet is the technological basis for the organization of the Information Age: the network' (Castells, 2001, p.1). A networked book can not exist without this form of digital network. This network allows an author to reach a reader and it is only through the network that a reader is able to contribute to the book and assume the role of author.

During the collaborative authoring process, a networked book is continually evolving and it must be read as part of a wider network. Without including it in the

peritext, the processes that created the book, it can not be read completely. It is the interactions between authors, readers and text that shape the text and produce the networked book. By expanding the concept of the book, it must also be asked whether the networked book can be defined as a book at all. The stretching of its boundaries means that the book has becomes much more than can be contained within printed pages. Networked books often use time as a boundary, an edge to a text. The writing of a networked book typically takes place over a specific period of time. This writing period produces the book and then the text is closed.

3.8.2 The Open Book

Umberto Eco (1989) explores the concept of the open book as he examines how the reader navigates the text and how the process of reading changes the text. He distinguishes between the idea in aesthetic theory (that every text is more or less open, because every text can be read in an infinite number of ways depending on what the reader brings to the text) and his own more specific concept of the open work. For Eco (1989), an open work is a text which is not limited to a single reading but instead encourages a multitude of readings.

The sense of openness of a networked book, such as *Paddlesworth Press*, allows the reader to interpret the text in his or her own way, according to their own associations and prior experiences. They can also take part in the writing of the text, through contributing comments to form the peritext and interacting with the project in its peritext. However, the book is never completely open as the roles of project authors, authors and readers are kept separate. There is a sense of these roles overlapping within

these roles but the project authors have ultimate control over the text. They have the power to add or remove text instantaneously which changes and shapes the text and its reception.

A networked text requires more than an author and reader. It must also include a story to encourage authors to take part in constructing the narrative. This is typical of a network in general. As Weber (2005) points out, lacking a single centre or leader, a network must rely not only on the appeal of the stories it produces, but also on the 'capacity to disseminate those stories - that is, to be heard, read, understood, and to convince those who are the 'targets' of the stories, and thus the potential nodes or components of the network' (Weber, 2005, pp.102-3). The story of the networked book becomes important in the process of instigating the network. For example, in the case of *Paddlesworth Press*, the story of the project was transmitted alongside the project text. Through encouraging people to take part in the project by the inclusion of continual references to the potential for collaboration in the project text, the network was developed.

3.8.3 Publishing

Once the collaborative authoring process of *Paddlesworth Press* project was completed, the project text remained on the project website. It is necessary to consider whether this is a form of publication of a completed book or an archive of a temporal project. The printed book becomes a souvenir when you have finished reading it but it is still unclear what a souvenir of a digital experience looks like (Bridle, 2010). A completed networked book (according to conditions set out by its authors) can either be seen as an archive or publication.

The act of publishing typically makes a book public but *Paddlesworth Press* was public during the collaborative authoring process, before the project text was completed. The book was a work-in-progress and could be read as it was being written. Until the project was completed, this unfinished book was the text. Readers were offered snapshots of the book at any stage in its creation.

According to Wolfgang Ernst (2006), the invention of printing distances the reader from the text and beholder from the image. A kind of 'silence of the archive' develops through the silent reading process and, for Ernst, 'the printing press silenced the voice' (Ernst, 2006, p.111). Throughout the writing process, the networked book was certainly not silenced. It was an active text soliciting contribution and collaboration from readers. *Paddlesworth Press* was completed when the project authors finished their engagement with the project text although freedom remained for readers who could continue to contribute to the project text by leaving comments.

3.9 Textual Relationships

The relationships between author and reader form an intrinsic part of *Paddlesworth Press'*s peritext. These development of these relationships, through documented interactions between authors and readers, become a part of the project text. The fictional reporters of the newspaper encourage readers to become involved with the text, through leaving comments, voting in online polls and connecting through social networking platforms. The result is a shift in traditional textual dynamics. The role of author and reader overlap and there is opportunity for a range of textual transactions to take place.

3.9.1 Transaction

The paratext is defined by Genette as a 'zone not only of transition but also of transaction' (Genette, 1997, pp.1-2) and *Paddlesworth Press*'s paratext certainly provides a space where a reader and author can take part in a textual transaction. In this way, texts do not not simply serve as 'transmitters' to pass meaning to a reader (McGann, 1991). This moves beyond Rosenblatt's (1994) view that, while the process of communication with the author becomes a relationship through text, the reader only has the text to guide them. The peritext of *Paddlesworth Press* is a zone of transaction but the text has been expanded so that there is the ability for the authors to directly interact with readers. Transaction is immediate and the exchanges are preserved and become a part of the text. For McGann (1991), this participation in human exchanges in the form of textual events is the 'textual condition.' The text becomes a dialogue

(Landow, 1991); a record of the conversations between authors and readers as they converge in a textual space.

However, while these transactions between author and reader offer the potential for a sense of textual freedom for a reader, there are also restrictions, boundaries and thresholds within the text. These not necessarily as rigid as in a printed book but they certainly still exist. In print culture, we have access only to the published book and traditionally do not see other materials collected as part of the book. The linked structure of the networked book is a different construct:

> 'Electronic linking has the potential, however, radically to redefine the nature of the text, by connecting the so-called "main text" to a host of ancillary ones (that then lose the status of ancillary-ness). Who, then, will control access to such materials: the author, the publisher, or the reader?' (Landow and Delany, 1994, p.29).

This structure takes the form of a rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). The reader is able to access the text through multiple entry and exit points and take numerous pathways. However, the peritext of a networked book is mediated space but these pathways are not entirely free. There are clear hierarchies and the text of *Paddlesworth Press* is controlled by the project authors. The authors of the project text used pseudonyms as they played the roles of residents of the village. They contributed stories to the newspaper under these names and also used them when interacting with readers. Names of the contributors are included in the project text but articles and comments are attributed to fictional characters. The authors were able to disguise their real identities and so this gave them a degree of freedom. Readers who contributed to the project by leaving comments were able to choose whether to adopt a pseudonym or disclose their real name. This anonymity provided a sense of freedom to both authors and readers.

However, the power lay ultimately with the project authors as they approved any comments that a reader leaves before they appear on the project website. Readers did not have the same level of textual freedom.

The project website was designed by the project authors and so the structure, as well as the functions, allowed the authors a greater level of freedom than readers. This is understandable as the newspaper would not function as such if readers were able to post articles in the same way as authors. Their level of interaction during the collaborative authoring process was controlled and managed. This level of control impacted on author/reader interactions as ultimately the power rested in the hands of the project authors, who designed the project. They were able to control the text by the information that they did not share, for example information about the design, structure and programming of the project. Their ownership of the project text was asserted in part through the act of naming both the project and each article it contains. Genette describes the act of naming as 'baptizing' (Genette, 1997, p.79) and it is the role of the authors to baptize the text.

The role of the authors was also an editorial one. The acted as gatekeepers for the text and their interactions both with one another and the readers became a part of the peritext of *Paddlesworth Press*. The editing of the project text took place within the text as it became a place of interaction between authors and readers. The editorial role is mirrored by the presence of the fictional editors of the newspaper. In the project text, the fictional Major Richard Fitzroy-Howard acts as editor and Mary Burgess as co-editor. These characters hold a traditional view of the editorial role and, in the 'About' section of the website Fritzroy-Howard writes:

'Mary and I are delighted with our new site, and hope as editors we can remain as tirelessly devoted to the principles of good journalism as our predecessors were' (*Paddlesworth Press*, 2010).

The struggle for control within the narrative of the project text is mirrored by the fictional fight for control over the newspaper between the Fitzroy-Howard and Mary Burgess. On 7th November 2010, Burgess announces in an editorial that she is now the sole Editor-In-Chief of the newspaper 'following a successful ousting of former Co-Editor and road-block tyrant Major Fitzroy-Howard' (*Paddlesworth Press*, 2010).

Despite the constrains imposed on readers who could take on the role of author, there was also a degree of freedom. During the collaborative writing process there was an opportunity to collaborate, to a certain extent, with the project authors. The process was not democratic and collaboration was restricted but these can be seen as positive features of the collaborative process. Scott Rettburg (2005) writes that:

'Successful collaboration is always built upon constraints, whether the creators of the collective work explicitly agree upon the constraints or they are simply built into the system used to create the work' (Rettburg, 2005).

The constraints evident in *Paddlesworth Press* are a part of the project. Readers were able to contribute, and assume a degree of the authorship role, but only on the terms that the project authors set out. Their level of collaboration was not entirely open but it did allow readers to cross the boundary, to some extent, from reader to authorship.

3.10 Conclusions

Through this analysis of *Paddlesworth Press,* we have used Genette's (1997) peritextual approach to explore how the networked book shifts the book from being a physical artefact to a digital experience for both its authors and readers as their roles overlap. We have examined both the epitext (project information, social network) and peritext (newspaper text and comments) of the project text. The threshold of the book has been expanded to include both the peritext and the epitext and the text has been considered as a site of interaction between author and reader.

The networked book has been compared to a form of digital performance, with the text becoming a stage on with the authors and reader perform as actors. *Paddlesworth Press* constructed a fictional situation to draw readers into the text and establish a form of artistic Happening. The oral tradition has been explored as a way to consider a literary form that is positioned between the printed text and the oral as an immersive experience. We have also addressed the role of social networking as a means to connect readers to authors through the text. The text has been considered as a spacial construct, both an architectural and social space. The materiality of the networked book has been addressed. Despite being material, it is not an object and the metaphor of the book has been used to describe a the result of a collaborative process.

The narrative of the project text has been explored as a non linear, open ended text in a state of flux, offering an immersive experience for the reader. The nature of the open book positioned within a networked has been examined. We have also considered the potential relationships that have developed between authors and readers through readers leaving comments in the project text and taking part in polls. The experience is

one of participation and collaboration within a mediated space where project authors are still primarily in control.

During the ten week project, *Paddlesworth Press* was in a state of flux. Within Genette's analytical framework, the text is seen to retain a fixed status, whereas the paratext holds 'flexibility, versatility and transitory qualities' (Lewis, 2007, p.20). In networked book, both the text and paratext are continually changing according to the actions of both readers and authors. At the end of his conclusion, Genette warns that we should beware of the paratext as it has a dangerous tendency to overstep the mark and to 'reverse the text's dominant position by taking control' (Lewis, 2007, p.20). In *Paddlesworth Press,* the paratext is a shifting boundary that offers freedom as well as limitations to both authors and readers.

The networked book transforms the position of the book from that of physical artefact to digital experience. It is not printed, bound and distributed in a single copy. Instead, it is positioned within a vast network and open to participation. It radically shifts the way in which we think about the position of text, authorship and reading. They each become collaborative forms and the process of participation becomes imbedded on the digital text.

4. Conclusions

The networked book makes the process of collaboration visible. This collaboration is not only evident in the narrative that is co-created but also in the peripheries of the book. These peripheral spaces follow what Genette (1997) views as a book's paratexts. In the three case studies addressed in this thesis, these spaces have included forums, where authors and readers were able to communicate, blogs, where project authors documented their experiences of the project, and the margins of the book, where readers shared their readings of the book. The evidence of collaboration in these paratextual spaces becomes part of the networked book and shows the process of its creation. These spaces document the shifting roles of authors and readers as they collaborate in textual production.

Collaboration is not only made visible in the networked book, it is also traceable. The process of collaboration becomes embedded in the book and can be examined in order to see how it operates in the networked environment. This thesis has traced this documentation of collaboration to understand the behaviour of authors and readers as they collaborate to produce a work of fiction. The traces of all the collaborating authors and readers left on the text become part of the book and this mass of collaboration is part of the process of co-creation.

4.1 Reading the Periphery

This thesis has adapted Gerard Genette's (1997) paratextual analysis to examine in depth the peripheries of three networked books; *A Million Penguins, The Golden*

Notebook Project and *Paddlesworth Press*. It has argued that the paratext of the networked book is where the dialogues between authors and readers are located and an in depth examination of these is crucial for an understanding of how the process of their collaboration is made visible. Genette's paratextual analysis was adapted as a tool to examine the traces of authors and readers left on the digital text. This included all documented interactions between authors and readers as well as annotations they left on the text. A reading of these textual elements was needed in order to understand how they form an integral part of the text and how a fictional networked book consists of more than just a single story.

Genette's understanding of the paratext is that it is part of the physical printed book and he seeks to understand the peripheries of the book that inform its reception. There are limitations to consider when using Genette to examine a digital text and so, in order to use paratextual analysis as a basis for building a framework to examine all elements of a networked book, the concept, as well as the understanding of the peripheries of the book had to be expanded. In this thesis, the paratext was expanded to include all annotations left by authors and the documented interactions between authors and readers. A reading of these elements is acknowledged as vital for a reading of the networked book as a whole. By expanding Genette's understanding of the paratext, we have been able to develop a framework for examining the multiple, and extended peripheries of the networked book.

This framework followed Genette's approach and divided the paratext into the epitext (liminal devices outside the book) and peritext (liminal devices inside the book). The threshold between what is located inside and what is outside the book is more difficult to identify in a networked book than in a printed book. This thesis views the boundary of the networked book as including both the periphery of the text as well as

material linked to the text. Acknowledging this, understanding of the epitext has been expanded to include all areas of the networked book where readers and authors discuss their collaboration outside the narrative. This includes textual information written by the 'project authors' who designed the project and any blogs or forums where authors gather to discuss their collaboration. This peripheral space is vital for collaboration and this thesis has argued that it becomes part of the networked book. The peritext has been used to describe the narrative of the networked book. This is the spatial area inside the book and includes spaces where collaboration took place. This textual space has been expanded to include evidence of the behaviour of both authors and readers.

This thesis has examined three case studies in depth using this paratextual framework. Each was read in their entirety as a 'project text'. This includes the collaboratively authored fictional narratives, as well as documented conversations between authors and readers. Dialogues recorded on project blogs and forums, conversations conducted using social media and pieces of digital marginalia left by readers directly on the fictional narrative were all examined. The threshold between the text and its outside was also acknowledged as being a part of the project text.

This approach proved appropriate for examining the networked book and drawing conclusions about the process of collaboration. Genette's paratextual analysis, although envisioned for the printed book, can be applied to the networked book. By expanding the concept of the paratext, this thesis was able to address all aspects of the digital text positioned in a network. Genette's notion of the threshold or zone of transition was explored as a space where a reader could become an author and take part in textual production.

4.2 Findings

This thesis concludes with the following findings:

a) Digital marginalia becomes part of the networked book.

The margins of the networked book are a space where conversations between authors and readers both take place and are recorded. The notes left in the digital margins become part of the book and influence the way the text is read. The content of a networked book can be redefined to include these forms of associated writing (Stein, 2009). The text is changed by the annotation and commentary of its readers. These conversations that the text engenders certainly become part of its reception. These margins can take many forms, from the margins of the novel *The Golden Notebook* in *The Golden Notebook Project* to the blogs of *A Million Penguins*. These are the peripheries of the text but they also re-define what is inside the networked book and what lies outside. It forms a threshold to the book and can be both the entry and exit point for a reader. They extend the threshold of the book and redefine what Genette views as 'text and off-text' (Genette, 1997, p.2) or 'beyond-text' (Genette, 1997, p.407). The division between what is text and what is beyond-text becomes more difficult to define.

This thesis refers to the marginalia unique to the networked book as 'digital marginalia.' This digital marginalia can both enhance or disrupt the reading experience as it is always present in the periphery of the text. For some readers, digital marginalia adds to the reading experience as the text becomes transformed into a social

environment with the potential for interaction with authors and other readers. In contrast, it can also be viewed as a violation of the text and resembles notes scrawled in the margins of library books. What is clear is that digital marginalia can not be read away from the networked book. It is part of the project text and will not make sense away from it.

Digital marginalia disrupts the traditionally held images of reader and author in a similar way to marginalia in the print tradition of the eighteenth century. At this time, readers of print books penned notes in the margins of their books with an audience of friends in mind (Jackson, 2001). Readers wanted to share their interactions with a text and this became a public form of reading. Digital marginalia is, in part, a return to this tradition. Readers want to document, share and discuss their reading experiences. However, it differs in that it has become a much wider collaborative process. In the three case studies addressed in this thesis, both readers and authors share details of their reading and authoring experiences on the peripheries of the text. This is a much wider form of communication than could be contained in a printed book. It forms a kind of collective memory as the experiences of authors and readers become part of the networked book. The memory of the book's creation can not be separated from the book.

b) The narrative of a networked book includes the 'story' of the project that created it.

The networked book requires more than an author and reader. It must also include a wider sense of 'story' to encourage multiple authors to take part in constructing the

narrative. The story of the project that creates a networked book becomes a part of its narrative and can not be separated. The wider narrative that encourages a reader to collaborate in a project must be read alongside the project for a full understanding of the networked book.

This process of encouraging participation in the networked book is typical of a network in general. As Weber (2005) points out, lacking a single centre or leader, a network must rely not only on the appeal of the stories it produces, but also on the 'capacity to disseminate those stories - that is, to be heard, read, understood, and to convince those who are the 'targets' of the stories, and thus the potential nodes or components of the network' (Weber, 2005). The story must convince others to take part otherwise the network will not form.

The story of the networked book becomes important in forming the network needed to create the book. For example, in the case of *Paddlesworth Press*, the story of the project was transmitted alongside the project text. Individuals were encouraged to take part in the project by the inclusion of continual references to the potential for collaboration in the project text. This led to the development of the network needed for collaboration. *A Million Penguins* was framed by the involvement of both Penguin and De Montfort University. Collaboration was encouraged through the structure of the project, the project rhetoric and the project information evident in the networked book. There were continual calls for collaboration and this attracted a mass of collaborators. This sense of story must attract not only readers but also collaborating authors or the networked book will not be able to be written.

c) The networked book challenges the traditionally held hierarchies of author and

reader positions.

The networked book challenges the traditional idea of the reader as the amateur and the author as expert. Instead, the reader is able to take part as an author and the hierarchies are potentially shifted. This leads to a plurality in the networked book as there can be multiple authors constructing multiple versions of a book.

This potential for the empowerment of the reader is evident in hypertext and so this thesis has looked to hypertext theory to explore the reader/ author hierarchy in the networked book. Readers are often seen as empowered to make decisions about their reading process and move through the text in varying ways. Their experience is not wholly prescribed by the author of the text (Yankelovitch et al, 1991; Delany and Landow, 1991; Simone, 1996). However, to some extent, the author is still in control of the text. They can even become more dominant, with a greater level of control over the text. The reader is only able to contribute in certain ways and does not have ultimate freedom over the narrative (Aarseth, 1997). Bolter (1991) claims that in the hypertext the author enters into a 'new kind of dialogue' with the reader, which replaces the 'monologue' available in printed texts (Bolter, 1991, p.117). This can be seen in the networked book and this dialogue between author and reader has been expanded. Readers are able to take part as authors through textual production and so the networked book is not only a form of conversation between author and reader but also a collaboration. However, positions in this collaboration can not be equal for all authors and readers. Issues of power and authority are evident in the textual space, through the freedoms and restrictions offered to both authors and readers by project authors.

The computer takes on many of the functions traditionally viewed as undertaken by the author. Martin Lister (2003) argues that a consideration of the relationship between reader and text in hypertext often ignores the important role of the software and the processing units of the computer. This is evident, for example, in *The Golden Notebook Project* as automatically generated spam appeared in the project's forum even after the project had been declared finished.

d) There is a hierarchy of authorship evident in a networked book, which is maintained through the restrictions and freedoms offered to its authors and readers.

The structure of a collaboratively authored text has certain boundaries and thresholds, which influence the process of collaboration. These can be boundaries designed by project authors as part of the networked book. There are typically limitations set on who can take part, and in what way, and an equal level of authorship is not open to everyone. These limitations might be that a potential collaborator must register to take part in the project or only collaborate in certain parts of the project text.

Project authors are often positioned as gatekeepers of the networked book. The language they use asserts their authority and they have a level of control over the text. They are often able to edit and delete other peoples' words and have access to unseen areas of the project text. They set the standards to which collaborators must adhere otherwise they are removed from the text and rendered invisible. Such regulations emphasise who is in control of the textual space and how this control many be exerted. This connects to Genette's (1997) view that a paratextual element may disappear at any time by authorial decision. He relates specifically to print culture and the removal of

textual apparatus from the text by the author or publisher. The project authors of a networked book have a similar type of power to a publisher or author of a printed book and, because of this, the text of a networked book is often a mediated space and not freely accessible to everyone in the same way.

A certain level of power can be gained by collaborators in a networked book in various ways. For example, an author can gain a level of authority through spending large amounts of time contributing to the text, as evident in *A Million Penguins.* Readers can assert themselves and demand interaction with project authors and other readers as was evident in the forum of *The Golden Notebook Project.* Authors can also gain power through disrupting the text. This occurred frequently in *A Million Penguins* as authors continually deleted the writing of others.

The hierarchies of authorship evident in the networked book often cause tensions and conflict, which can lead to textual rebellion. Authors can challenge the project authors by sabotaging the text and this influences what is collaboratively produced. The rebellion of authors in a networked book can be compared to Bakhtin's (1968) ideas of the carnival as a time and space where people could overturn traditional power relationships in society and celebrate excess and the grotesque. Bakhtin sees the carnival as a place where everyone was equal for a short time and able to take part in an activity that was purely about having fun (Bakhtin, 1968). This subversion of social norms in the carnival space is part of the networked book.

There is not a singular form of hierarchy in the networked book. Instead, there are boundaries which can be crossed and recrossed by both authors and readers. Hierarchies are not always fixed and they can, to some extent, be overturned. At certain stages of the creation of *A Million Penguins,* authors were able to take control from the project authors and editors due to the numbers of authors taking part. The result of this

was that editors decided to place controls on textual production to take control of the text. The reactions to these imposed hierarchies were typically seen as textual sabotage.

The collaborative experience in a networked book is one of multiplicity and flux. Project authors set certain boundaries in the project which offer freedoms and constraints to collaborators. However, these can be overturned to some extent. Readers and authors can hold different positions at different times and can move between positions. In *A Million Penguins*, the thresholds between positions are of particular significance. It is an example of Genette's (1997) 'zone between text and off text, a zone not only of transition but also of transaction: a privileged place of pragmatics and a strategy' (Genette, 1997, p.2). In the project text of *A Million Penguins*, this zone becomes a battleground. This not always the case but it illustrates that the periphery of a networked book is often a space for asserting authority and taking textual power.

Some level of restriction is necessary in a collaborative work. As Rettburg (2005) believes, '[s]uccessful collaboration is always built upon constraints, whether the creators of the collective work explicitly agree upon the constraints or they are simply built into the system used to create the work' (Rettburg, 2005). A function of authoring the networked book becomes one of moderating collaborative contributions (Vershbow, 2006). With multiple authors with endless ideas, it is important to design some level of structure and hierarchy to create a sense of order. There is a need for a moderating force to oversee textual production if the aim of the project is to produce a coherent book.

e) An authorial community is difficult to establish in a networked book. Instead, the writing of a networked book is a collaborative authoring process.

A hierarchy of authorship is evident in all three networked book case studies discussed in this thesis. Authors and readers took on a level of control (in the form of the opportunity for textual production) not possible in a printed book but the project authors were identified as having a greater level of control over the text. This control was typically due to their greater level of agency in textual production, i.e their ability to delete text, as well as their role in designing the project.

Due, in part, to these hierarchies (as well as percieved hierarchies), chaotic textual spaces were created. The process of collaborative writing often resembles a transitory carnival rather than a community with a shared goal. The concept of community implies shared values and a collective willingness to build a community. This is often not present in a networked book as individuals gather around a text and collaborate in differing ways according to their own motivations.

Although *A Million Penguins* intended to build a community of authors, the hierarchy of authorship established in the wiki and the chaotic nature of the wiki form meant that a complex form of community was formed where individuals adopted different behaviours and roles. These included the roles of vandal, troll, gardener and garden gnomes (Mason and Thomas, 2008). It was the adoption of these varying roles that produced a chaotic textual space for both authors and readers during the authoring process and readers navigating the archived novel. The collaborative authoring process of this networked book resembles the carnival (Bakhtin, 1968); with roles being subverted and later reverted. Elek's (2007d) realisation at the end of the project was that building a coherent community in these circumstances was not possible.

The behaviour of authors and readers in a networked book often resembles the actions of a crowd. This type of gathering is different from the formation of a community. It is not a category of social interaction and so is not necessarily about

collective action (Heller, 1984). Instead, both active agents and bystanders gather around a text. In each of the three case studies discussed in this thesis, this gathering around the networked book does not form a community. The writing stage of each project (before the projects were archived) can be termed a 'collaborative authoring process.' This best serves to describe the process of mass collaboration. Individuals work alongside one another but do not necessarily work together. They collaborate through the mass of their individual contributions.

f) The documented interactions between authors and readers form a social text.

The documentation of the collaborative writing process in the peripheries of the networked book are valuable for an understanding of the nature of collaborative authorship. For example, conflicts documented between authors become part of the book and can be examined for a broader understanding of the nature of the collaborative writing on this scale. The text of the networked book is a virtual space made up of formal and informal spaces. These spaces become sites of encounter and experience for both authors and readers and can be read as spaces of interaction. This is a shift away from the book being seen primarily as a physical object. Instead, it is an opportunity for a social experience and a place where readers and authors can congregate. These form a type of unintentional narrative that documents the process of collaborative textual production.

The networked books examined in this thesis have been identified as forms of mass collaboration. Mass collaboration has connections with the biological concept of stigmergy (Elliot, 2007) and we can see evidence of this in the text of a networked book. Collective activity is led by an individual's response to their environment as well

as well as by cue's from one another. A networked book develops a kind of virtual environment where responses are elicited from both authors and readers. They interact according to this textual environment and their interactions become a fundamental part of the networked book.

This thesis has examined three networked books as social texts and explored in detail the process of their creation. This draws on McGann's (1991) approach to viewing texts as 'social acts'. He recognises that importance should be placed on the social practices and materials of publication and transmission. To understand the collaborative process inherent in the networked book, we need to understand not just the social practices that inform its reception but also the evidence of social processes evident in the process of its creation. The networked book is a social act as it is made up not only of narrative but also of the documented interactions between authors and readers. These form a fundamental part of the text. This thesis has adapted Genette's paratextual analysis to explore the social context of the networked book through these documented interactions. By developing his approach as a tool to examine the interactions between authors and readers, we have been able to analyse the traces they have left on the text. These are not only textual contributions but also social interactions embedded on the periphery of the text.

g) Incoherence is a part of the narrative of the networked book.

The process of multiple authors collaboratively authoring a networked book often results in incoherent, nonsensical writing and this incoherence becomes a part of the narrative and should be read as such. New forms of narrative become possible in the

networked book, which can not be created in a printed book (Ciccoricco, 2007). The narrative does not need to be coherent and instead the reader can experience a different sense of narrative. The networked book is made up of elements which can be experienced individually. The reader is responsible for constructing their own coherent narrative through a reading of these elements (Ciccoricco, 2007).

This was particularly evident in the narrative of *A Million Penguins*. Written using a wiki, the sense of open collaboration caused chaos. As anyone could edit or delete anyone else's words, many of its collaborating authors appeared to embrace a sense of chaos and radically edited and deleted sections of text. There was also a sense of deliberate sabotage from some authors who inserted nonsensical sections into the narrative. Such behaviours led to the development of an incoherent and fragmented text. This writing of a specific type of incoherent, nonsensical narrative is a new form of narrative made possible through the multiple authorship of mass collaboration. It does not adhere to the conventions of the novel, of which *A Million Penguins* aimed to be, but it was a form of experimental text that played with the boundaries of what a novel could be.

Although the product of the collaborative writing process may not be an obviously coherent narrative it does hold evidence of the process of its creation. This can be read as part of the narrative which, although it may be incoherent, provides an understanding of mass collaboration.

h) The networked book is a social reading experience.

The networked book potentially offers a different reading experience from a printed book. Readers are often asked to collaborate in textual production as they change or

annotate existing text or contribute text themselves. The reading process becomes social as readers are able to become authors of the book they are reading. They are encouraged to communicate with other collaborators and leave a textual trace of themselves behind, which then becomes part of the book. Through this process, the networked book becomes layer upon layer of pieces of text left by its readers and authors.

This way for readers to engage with a text has connections with the wider history of reading. Collaborative reading is an outward, social process, which is no longer private, as readers gather around a text and their interactions are documented. Readers read one another through the annotations they leave behind and this leads to a plural reading experience. This continues the understanding of reader-response theorists, (Fish, 1967, 1980; Holland, 1968; Bleich, 1975; Iser, 1980; Jauss, 1982), that the reader is an active agent in the reading process.

Emphasis in the networked book is less on the private, solitary reading experience and more on the potential for mass collaboration. The reading process is often public and the reader is surrounded by a reading, as well as an authoring, community. However, looking at the history of reading, we can see that it has not always been concerned with the private experience and individual interpretation of a text. With its roots in the oral tradition and a long history of collaborative reading, the networked book can be seen, to some extent, as a return to these oral and collaborative roots.

i) The networked book is a spatial construct.

Stein (2008b) claims that, 'a book is a place (where readers, sometimes with authors, congregate)' and this thesis concludes that the networked book is a spatial construct

where interactions and conversations between authors and readers are recorded as a part of the book. The text of the networked book is a virtual space made up of formal and informal spaces. These spaces, within the process of collaboration, become sites of encounter and experience for readers and authors. This is a shift away from the book being seen primarily as a physical object. Instead, it is an opportunity for experience and a place where people can congregate. Readers are able to share their reading experience in a public space and authors are able to share their ideas.

This thesis has used Bolter's (1991) view of the book as 'conceptual space' and Ulises Carrión claim that 'a book is a series of spaces' (Carrión, 1975) as well as metaphors of early modern textual thresholds (Sherman, 2007) to reflect on space within a networked book. Each illustrate that the text is seen as something to be entered with a form of threshold that must be passed through to enter the text. In the networked book, these are initially marked out and controlled by the project authors. However, authors can extend the thresholds of the project text through the addition of hyperlinks. These links may take a reader beyond the project text to encounter textual material that was not originally designed to be part of the project text, a space that Genette called 'beyond-text' (Genette, 1997, p.407).

In a networked book, such entry points into the text are both used and expanded. There are multiple entry points into the text, through a multitude of links. For example, in *Paddlesworth Press*, it can difficult to see where the interior and exterior of the text begins and ends. Readers are encouraged to take part in the text in such a way that interaction differs from a printed book. They are 'invited' to engage directly with the text and are given a variety of entry points. For example, through links on the fictional editors' profiles on social networking platforms.

j) The networked book contains elements of the oral tradition.

Through the collaborative authoring process, the networked book takes on elements of orality or what Ong calls 'secondary orality' (1982). The specific orality evident in the networked book does not take the form of the uttered spoken word but instead it operates in a virtual network. The dialogue between readers and authors recorded in the peripheries of the text can be read as conversations. Both readers and authors gather around a text to share their ideas and reading experiences as well as, in some instances, to provoke conflict and start debates. For example, *A Million Penguins* contains certain elements of storytelling traditions. With its multiple competing versions, motifs and plot lines transmitted over time and the relationship between performers and texts, it displays many features of oral folklore traditions.

Bolter (1991) claims that the position between author and reader becomes established in a hypertextual narrative and individuals taking on either, or both, roles become responsible for their part in the dialogue. However, whereas in oral, as well as print, cultures, authors and readers know how to behave according to set and established roles, in the networked book they do not. This leads both to a sense of uncertainty and tensions between the expectations of the roles and the reality of their experiences.

k) The text of the networked book is a form of performance.

The networked book is a form of performance in which both readers and authors take part. The project text becomes the site of this performance and its documentation. This performance is time-specific, lasting for the duration of the collaborative writing

process, and when the performance is over the networked book is archived. *Paddlesworth Press* has been read in this thesis as form of digital performance. A reader is drawn into the text, possibly through the network within which it exists, and is prompted to engage and participate with not only the text of the newspaper but also with the premise of the project as a whole. The reader's experience is curated by the author through the text as documentation of a staged performance.

During the collaborative writing process *A Million Penguins,* appeared more like a performance than a print novel. The text of the wiki novel can be read alongside discussions documented in the periphery of the text, where authors communicated and argued about how the wiki novel was taking shape. The authors of the wiki novel can be seen as characters within the text who perform the novel rather than write it for a reader.

Once the collaborative writing process was over the text still remained on the project website. Although readers could still leave comments, this can be seen as an archive of the project, *Paddlesworth Press,* in its archived stage, is documentation of the project. The text remains, including the links and the readers' comments. It is no longer actively being written by the project authors but readers are able to engage with the text. The project is no longer a two-way process and in many ways becomes as static as a printed text. The performance is over but the stage remains.

l) Social networks and hyperlinks extend the narrative.

The networked book is a form of hypertext. Links within the text to locations outside the text expand the narrative of the book. They form the threshold of the text. A reader or author is able to cross the boundary between what is inside and what is outside the book and the line between the two becomes clouded. The narrative of the networked

book expands to include these elements located outside the book. Such links are a form of intertextuality and broaden both the reading and authoring experience. The networked book makes the process of intertextuality visible. Landow and Delany (1994) claim that hypertext emphasises intertextuality in a way that page bound text in books can not. Instead of alluding to something, direct links can be made. Authors are able to contribute links to the text, which connect readers both to locations within and outside the text. These extend the boundaries of the networked book as it comes to include all linked text. The link takes the reader away from the main text but in the networked book the link draws the linked material into the text (Landow, 2006).

The *Paddlesworth Press* project authors use social media as a fundamental part of their project and the project text is firmly embedded in online social networks. Readers are able to connect with the fictional newspaper editors in numerous ways. This creates an immersive environment and extends the narrative. This can be seen as what Higgins (1966) terms 'intermedia' and describes as using existing media to create new art forms. This use of intermedia to describe visual art can be applied to the networked book. Through its position within a network, the networked book contains elements that would not otherwise be considered part of a book. Conversations between authors and readers, recorded in the periphery of the text, become part of the book. As do the links which lead reader away from the book. The boundaries of what is included inside the book and what is considered outside are expanded to create a new form.

m) The networked book challenges the definition of the book.

The networked book possesses characteristics of the book and draws on earlier traditions and conventions of print culture but at the same time it challenges the form of

a printed work. It is book is no longer confined to an artefact but, instead, it becomes a space and a social construct.

This thesis has considered whether the networked book is a book at all. A book is commonly viewed as a physical, material object. The materiality of the digital object at first appears paradoxical. The networked book, as a concept, is given many features and functions of the book, not least its name. Its authors often ignore other predominate features of the book, such linearity and the perception of the text having a single author. Calling a digital object a 'book' causes it to be viewed through the weight of book history and positions it as a culturally and historically situated object. The networked book uses the concept of the book as a metaphor and then re-constructs this recognisable form into something both at-once recognisable and different.

The networked book provides a form of digital experience for its readers. The experience does not have to be one of consuming the text, they can also take part as an author and write the book they are reading.

4.3 Further Research

Using the findings that conclude this thesis, we can propose several areas for further research:

- Further research can be conducted into the specifics of spatiality in the networked book. For example, this could address the nature of reading in the networked environment and examine how readers navigate online space. Connections could be drawn with the history of book groups.

- The nature of collaborative authorship can be compared to participatory art practices. It can be questioned whether they are part of the same process.

- Connections can be made between collaborative authorship in the networked book and independent forms of online publishing. The issue of boundaries, freedoms and thresholds can be re-examined in this form.

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Notes on references to collaboratively authored texts:

A Million Penguins

References attributed to '*A Million Penguins'* refer to contributions to the collaborative text of *A Million Penguins*, as well as elements of project information not attributed to a specific author.

Editors from Penguin and De Montfort University contributing to the blogs 'A Million Penguins', 'A Million Penguins Blog', 'Team Blog' and 'Penguin Blog' are referenced using their names.

The Golden Notebook Project.

References attributed to '*The Golden Notebook Project*' refer to collaborative contributions to the forums as well as elements of project information not attributed to a specific author. References to posts in forums include dates.

Project authors and featured readers are referenced using their names. This includes contributions to the blog and the margins of the novel *The Golden Notebook.*

Paddlesworth Press

References attributed to '*Paddlesworth Press'* refer to contributions contributed to the project text. This may include contributions attributed to fictional authors.