

of Gorey's creative process. However, in several chapters Whyte's explorations end just as he touches on an exciting possibility (such as his exceedingly brief but stimulating look at the motif of grapes in *The Curious Sofa*, 1961), abandoning his investigation at precisely the point where the reader might expect further scrutiny.

Despite such frustrations, Whyte's book urges Gorey's admirers to engage in new readings of familiar titles while equipped with fresh insights, reminding us that much of Gorey's power resides in that most "mildly unsettling" aspect of his work: the sense that there is always more to uncover in his books. Whyte is effective in fulfilling his goal of exploring the "luminous originality and profound creativity of Edward Gorey" while simultaneously revealing "sources on which [Gorey's] ideas are built" and thus sharing "his creative processes with the reader" (4), but he is especially successful in conveying the pleasure of navigating the labyrinths of Gorey's allusions. And for those who have yet to delve deeper into Gorey's mystifying worlds and their many and varied influences, Whyte's book should offer a good introduction to his endlessly stimulating elusiveness.

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Gaming as Textual Expansion

Paul Booth. 2015. *Game Play: Paratextuality in Contemporary Board Games*. New York, London, New Delhi, Sidney: Bloomsbury Academic. 252 pp. ISBN 978-1-6289-2744-3.

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As the opening statement of Paul Booth's introduction to his analysis of paratextuality in modern board games informs us, "We are in the midst of a board game renaissance" (1). And Booth is indeed correct in his assessment. The market is booming, with thousands of new titles published every year and where annual board game sales increased by \$60 million

in 2013 (ibid.). Quite often, these titles are attached to well-known and popular intellectual property (IP), a marketing strategy beneficial to both board game publishers and owners of the IP in question. However, rather than examining such games within the context of their IPs, Booth explores them as paratexts, texts that are separated from a related text but which inform our understanding of it (3). The games analysed in this book are shown to provide additions to the text they are based on, creating new elements and storylines. The games and IPs chosen as examples are parts of cult narratives, as they are chosen because they are based on media franchises with extensive fandoms.

Paratextual analysis of board games presents a unique approach, since it has previously been applied mostly to video games. Existing research on paratextual board games merely described them as trivial, mind numbing and worthless, or completely disregarded them as a form (6). Yet Booth takes an extensive approach to the topic, investigating several very popular IPs which were combined with creative modern game mechanics in order to produce games which were very well accepted in the gaming community. Booth employs an autoethnographic approach in his analysis, not only focusing on the gameplay-paratext comparison, but player experience as well.

In the first chapter, Booth examines *Arkham Horror* (2005), a board game based on the works of H.P. Lovecraft, more specifically his Cthulhu mythos. Booth points out that the game involves two sets of rules, one coming from the game itself and the other from the rules built into the world the game is based on. This forms the basis of his first principle, with the addition that the rule sets do not have to match and can even work well together when in conflict. According to Booth's second principle, the rules governing paratextual board games work algorithmically, and, in conjunction with uncertainty represented by randomness and player action, create "unstructure" (23). Forming the focus of this chapter, unstructure as a concept is defined not as the absence of structure, but as the inability to define or recognise the underlying basis for a structure within a system. Booth clarifies that unstructure appears as elements which seem random, but we simply do not know enough about the system to see the organisational pattern. Lovecraft's works take place in a world which is familiar to us, but supernatural elements contribute unstructure to the rules we are familiar with, elements which are in themselves governed by rules we know nothing about. In *Arkham Horror*, unstructure emerges from multiple complex rule sets. Even though the rules have a clear structure, there is a feeling of randomness in the game. Therefore, players who are familiar with Lovecraft's stories can play the game and encounter familiar elements in new combinations provided by the game's unstructure.

Chapter two focuses on two games based on *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien: *The Lord of the Rings: The Complete Trilogy Adventure Board Game* (2012), and *The Lord of the Rings* (2000) by the acclaimed board game designer Reiner Knizia. The former was inspired by the film series directed by Peter Jackson, while the latter took inspiration from the novels. Booth introduces his third principle here: "Paratextual board games create meaning from the tension between an authorial presence and audience play; this meaning is created between player, designer, and original text" (46). Both games are collaborative in the sense that players need to work together in order to succeed. However, the game design differs in such a way that in the game based on the film trilogy one player will be the victor, regardless

of cooperation, while in Knizia's game all players win or lose together. Booth continues the idea of players expanding the original narrative and creating their own through play, calling this approach "media convergence", "the spread of media content between both producers and audience" (47). This idea forms the basis of Booth's fourth principle: "Paratextual board games use play as a specific mechanism by which players inhabit and make media their own" (ibid.). In both games, the players are set in a predefined world with a predefined linear narrative, yet the gameplay allows them to take paths not taken by the Fellowship in the original media iterations, use characters not present in some events (like Boromir or Fatty Bolger), and even change the outcome of the story if they fail their game goals.

In chapter three, Booth once again compares two games to their dual source material. In this case, the sources are *The Walking Dead* (2003–2019) graphic novel and its television adaptation, and the games in question are *The Walking Dead: The Board Game* (2011) and *The Walking Dead Boardgame* (2011), respectively. Booth focuses on the affective aspect of pathos transmediation in paratextuality, which is emphasised by his fifth principle: "Through player/text interaction, paratextual boardgames can transmediate pathos and affect better than they can transmediate narrative" (69). Since the board game contains familiar and well-developed characters, the players are more invested in them than in the limited narrative possibilities of the game, which directly relates to the sixth principle: "Paratextual boardgames rely on mixing familiar characters and unfamiliar characteristics to facilitate player investment" (70). Booth continues by showing how transmedia pathos is developed in the games and how it affects gameplay.

Battlestar Galactica was a short-lived science fiction series that originally aired in 1978 but is much better known by its 2003 remake. Booth covers both shows in chapter four by analysing two board games, each based on one of the iterations. *Battlestar Galactica* (1978) is based on the 1978 series, while *Battlestar Galactica: The Board Game* (2008), designed by the famed board game designer Cory Konieczka, is based on the 2003 remake. In this chapter, Booth introduces the seventh principle: "Just as a media text takes place within a specific spatial-temporal environment, paratextual board games mirror this space/time amalgam via the board and the pacing of the game play" (94). Booth's principle indicates that a particular game copies the visual identity and the gameplay of the media it was based on, as well as the cultural and historical context in which it was created. Booth also introduces the concept of "spime", originally formulated by Bruce Sterling, and defines it as "a digital and physical trace of an object through both time and space" (95). Therefore, when discussing a spimatic object, we consider "the temporal structure that guides the object's development as well as its physical presence in the world" (ibid.). The chapter also takes into account the fact that in many such games players play as certain characters, which leads Booth to the eighth principle: "Paratextual board games can offer players the opportunity to mirror characteristics of particular characters within the specific spatial-temporal environment of the media text" (ibid.).

Continuing his exploration of popular science fiction franchises, in the following chapter Booth examines board games based on *Star Trek*. Considering that it is a long-running franchise, consisting of several iterations, Booth again selects two examples which cover a wide range of source material. The first one is *Star Trek: Expeditions* (2011), based on

the 2011 film directed by J.J. Abrams, while *Star Trek: Fleet Captains* (2011) covers the so-called Prime Universe created by Gene Roddenberry and integrating all the original televised iterations of the franchise (*Star Trek*, *The Next Generation*, *Deep Space Nine*, *Voyager*, and *Enterprise*). Since both games contain specific components (the WizKids HeroClix system) which greatly influence gameplay, Booth introduces his ninth principle: “The materiality of the game pieces in paratextual board games facilitates fan interaction with the game as a system while also externalizing the game as an additional episode within the media franchise” (118). In addition to such material components, the two *Star Trek* games also have elements that provide randomisation, thus increasing their replay value, a quality summed up in Booth’s tenth principle: “Mutable elements randomize gameplay while also reinforcing the paratextual game structure” (ibid.).

The variety of media that paratextual games use as a source when adapting an IP is once again noted in chapter six. The board games *The Hunger Games: District 12* (2012) and *The Hunger Games: Training Days* (2010) are based on the movie and the book, respectively. Since the gameplay in both games focuses on secondary narrative elements of the source material (day-to-day life in District 12 and training for the Games, rather than participating in them), Booth uses them as examples of expanding the source material’s boundaries through fan participation. The connection between gaming and fandom is stated in the eleventh principle: “Paratextual boardgames harness the affective power of fandom to help generate player interaction within the game” (136). This is then further developed by examining whether board games encourage or prohibit expansion of the narrative by fans, as stated in the twelfth principle: “Paratextual boardgames can either allow players to create their own stories or discourage players from doing so within the larger narrative framework of the text, depending on the structure of the game’s narrative elements” (137).

Chapter seven looks at two games based on George R.R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire* book series and the HBO adaptation, *Game of Thrones*. In *A Game of Thrones: The Board Game* (2003), players take charge of one among several prominent dynasties of Westeros and use their military might and political influence to gain control of the map. In *Game of Thrones: The Card Game* (2012) players use cards depicting characters, locations, and events from the HBO series in order to achieve their goals. All such elements from the source material influence the position of the player: in the case of the board game, the player is “above” the board, moving pieces, adding new ones, and networking with other players in order to achieve their goal, while in the case of the card game the players start with nothing in front of them and need to create their own network by playing cards. This difference is highlighted in the thirteenth principle: “Paratextual boardgames expose the database and the serial at the heart of licensed gaming, revealing connections between players, texts and actions through the mechanisms of play, algorithmic procedure, narrative and player interaction” (159). The fourteenth principle emerges from this difference: “Paratextuality can be achieved in multiple ways through differing emphases on simulating thematic content” (ibid.).

In the final chapter, Booth discusses the relationship between ludic interaction and the original media text, exemplified by two games based on the *Doctor Who* science fiction series: *Doctor Who: The Interactive Electronic Board Game* (2005) and *Doctor Who: The Time Travelling Action Game* (2007). Both games contain elements which randomise gameplay,

while at the same time such randomising elements are devised in a way that relates the player to the original *Doctor Who* text. From this, Booth extrapolates the fifteenth and final principle: “When seen as strict adaptations, paratextual boardgames close off interpretation of the media text; when seen as ludic interaction, they open up player dialogue with the media text” (176).

When thinking of adaptation, the media of board games may not initially come to mind. However, they are a growing medium, and it is refreshing to see them examined through the lens of literary theory. Booth’s research is extensive, covering several popular media franchises, both literary and visual, and comparing them to games with varying modes of gameplay. His analyses are well developed, presented using clear examples, and accompanied by photographs. The glossary of terms at the end of the book is especially helpful in guiding the reader towards an understanding of the numerous concepts presented here. Anyone interested in literary theory and adaptation studies, as well as narrative transposition, will find something new and unique in this book. One minor criticism might be directed at the fact that many of the examples Booth selects come from the field of science fiction, while there exist many games based on other genres. This is, however, understandable, as science fiction is widely popular in the board-game community and may therefore make the book particularly appealing to its members. The book may also interest board-game enthusiasts and ludologists, especially since some of the games Booth selects are quite obscure and might be difficult or even impossible to obtain. To conclude, Booth’s *Paratextuality in Contemporary Board Games* is a valuable addition to the field of adaptation studies and will hopefully inspire more research on the fascinating subject of board games.

Rediscovered Gems of Bengali Children’s Literature

Abanindranath Tagore, Gaganendranath Tagore, Sanjay Sircar. 2018. *Fantasy Fictions from the Bengal Renaissance: Abanindranath Tagore’s The Make-Believe Prince (Kheerer Putul); Gaganendranath Tagore’s Toddy-Cat the Bold (Bhondar Bahadur)*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press India. 372 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-948675-5.

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Fantasy Fictions from the Bengal Renaissance presents Sanjay Sircar’s English translations of two landmark works of Bengali children’s literature, *The Make-Believe Prince (Kheerer Putul)* by Abanindranath Tagore (1871–1951), an Indian author and artist, and *Toddy-Cat the Bold (Bhondar Bahadur)* by Gaganendranath Tagore (1867–1938), a Bengali painter and cartoonist. The two authors were brothers and co-founders of the Indian Society of Oriental Art. Sanjay Sircar is a scholar in children’s literature and fantasy fiction, and his translation of *Toddy-Cat the Bold* is the first translation of this work into English. Importantly, *Fantasy Fictions* boasts a large critical apparatus which includes extremely detailed introductions to the stories, as well as extensive footnotes providing everything from insights into the characteristics of the original Bengali texts to clarifications of the translator’s interventions and useful explanations of various linguistic, social, geographic, intertextual, and cultural matters. The book also comes with beautiful illustrations by Abanindranath Tagore.