

**The Functions of Paratext in Farhad Hasanzadeh’s Young
Adult Novel *This Blog Is for Sale***

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Introduction

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the text of a book was considered important and external elements were considered merely tools for presenting the text. Prior to the post-structuralist era, what was important to critics was solely the text itself. The text was a self-sufficient entity that was independent of the outside world. With the emergence of post-structuralism, critics began to pay attention to the external elements surrounding the text, and one example of this outward-looking approach was the focus on the paratextual elements of a narrative. Paratextuality is one of the five types of transtextuality proposed by Gérard Genette. Genette introduced the theory of transtextuality to examine the relationship between one text and other texts and categorized it in five types: paratextuality, intertextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, and architextuality. Intertextuality refers to the explicit, implicit, or hidden co-presence of one text within

another text; metatextuality is a text that belongs to the same genre or type as another text; hypertextuality is any type of text that interprets, explains, and criticizes another text and either confirms or rejects it. The relationship in architextuality is based on intertextual dependence, such that if there was no pre-text, a new text would not be created. The type of transtextuality that is of interest in this study is paratextuality.

Review of Literature

Numerous studies have examined literary texts in terms of transtextuality. Among them, studies that have solely focused on paratextuality as their theoretical basis are much less common and often fall under the topic of transtextual analysis. In the article "Transtextuality in Maghamat-e-Hamidi" (2013), Fatemeh Arab Yousefabadi and others devoted a small portion of their research to examining the paratexts of this work, including its title, sub-titles, preface, and conclusion. In the study "Ferdowsi's Influence on Saadi Based on the Theory of Transtextuality" (2014), Zeinab Noroozi and Vahid Ali Beigi Sarhali extensively examine the paratexts of *Shahnameh* and Saadi's works. However, it seems that in the above-mentioned article, the issue of paratextuality has been mixed up with intertextuality, and the examples mentioned under paratextuality, such as common words, common characters such as Qobad and Anushirvan, and Rostam and Sohrab, or the mention of *Shahnameh* anecdotes in Saadi's works, are examples of co-presence and intertextuality, not paratextuality. Among the studies found, transtextuality is often used to examine ancient works, as in those days the printing industry did not exist, and therefore, they did not have many effective paratexts like

today. Therefore, in these studies, the role of paratextuality is often overlooked or very weak. Also, it is rare to find an independent study on the subject of paratextuality, and of course, no study has been found that examines young adult novels through the lens of paratextuality.

Discussion

Paratext refers to all the elements present either directly or indirectly, occupying the complete textual space of a text. According to Gérard Genette, texts rarely appear without presenting a number of linguistic and non-linguistic elements that reinforce and accompany the text. These elements promote and advertise the text and make the reader curious about and attracted to the text. Paratext guides and directs the reader's understanding and perception even before starting to read the text, and any changes or deletions of these elements can change the reader's interpretation. Paratexts are divided into two categories, intratextual and extratextual. Intratextual paratexts are elements that are in the closest proximity to the text and are observed before, during, and after the text. The name of the author, author's pen name, the names of the contributors, the title of the work, introduction, preface, criticism, dedication, publishing information, font type, font size, book size, text images, cover design, page layout, index, footnotes, lists, tables, charts, chapter titles, subtitles, and all other elements within the text are all intratextual paratext elements. These kinds of paratexts are related to the text but are not directly connected to it and promote and accompany the text through media. Interviews, book launches, posters, correspondence, movie trailers, and audio trailers of a book are examples of extratextual paratext elements.

In the novel *This Blog Is for Sale* paratextuality plays a central role because the form and the narration are like a weblog storytelling. The design of the pages has influenced the narrative and turned it into a nested narrative. The functions that paratexts in this book have brought about include completing the main narrative, referring to the metatextual aspects of the work, indicating the intertextual relationships and pre-texts of the work, explaining historical events for young readers, and expressing opinions about the story. The font size of the text is also effective in reading this narrative. The font sizes of the narrator and the main character are different, and thus the narrative of these two actants is distinguished.

Conclusion

Paratext plays a fundamental role in the novel *This Blog Is for Sale* as it creates motivation and curiosity in the readers and accompanies them step by step in reading the text. The design of the pages in the form of a blog creates a unique paratext. This has also affected the narrative style of the story and turned it into a story within a story. In fact, the text and paratext have worked together in a coordinated manner to create and complete each other, and this is one of the most significant advantages of using this format. The storytelling style, in the form of a blog, has created a specific type of narrative in the work, and the design of the pages in the form of a blog has made it easier for young readers to understand this type of storytelling. Additionally, since today's youth are more familiar with the virtual world than books, this has led to more significant engagement with this work.

Furthermore, the author provides essential information to the reader through some of the paratexts, including making a significant portion of the pre-texts of the work explicit, revealing the extensive intertextual relationships in this work that have been influential in the storytelling and character development. In this way, the novel introduces young people to some literary masterpieces, especially ancient ones. Also, this method explains some of the features of the metatext that may confuse young readers.

Keywords: *This Blog Is for Sale*, paratextuality, transtextuality; Gérard Genette, Farhad Hasanzadeh

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