



## **Pausing at the Threshold: Peritextual Images in Young Adult Nonfiction Award Winners**

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### **Abstract**

Gerard Genette defines the “peritext” as those parts of a book that wrap around the book but are not part of the book proper. Such elements include the book jacket, title page, table of contents, foreword, glossary, index, and so on. These elements can serve various functions, and giving careful attention to these framing elements can enhance the reading experience. Sometimes these elements contain, or consist wholly of, images that help to promote reading of the book or provide supplemental information to that contained within the book proper. In this essay, we use Gross and Latham’s peritextual literacy framework (PLF) as a means for investigating how peritextual images serve the promotional and supplemental functions as defined by the PLF of winners of the Young Adult Library Services Association’s Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults. We also employ Serafini’s categories of representational, interpersonal, and compositional structures in examining how these images serve to arouse curiosity and to provide additional information that enhances the reading experience and invites readers to cross the threshold and enter the text proper.

### **Introduction**

In *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Gerard Genette describes paratext as “a *threshold*, . . . a vestibule that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back.” As such, it “constitutes a zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*: a privileged place . . . at the service of a better reception for the text and a more

pertinent reading of it.”<sup>1</sup> The paratext, Genette explains, is made up of the peritext, those elements within a book that are not part of the text proper, and the epitext, those elements that are outside of a book but that closely relate to it. Examples of the peritext include such things as the front and back covers, the title page, the table of contents, the foreword, the afterword, the index, and so on. Examples of the epitext include such things as reviews of the book, correspondence between the author and the editor, interviews with the author, the author’s website, et cetera.

The analysis offered here focuses on the peritextual elements, and specifically peritextual elements expressed as images, and how they function to promote the work and to provide supplemental information to readers and potential readers. Images for analysis are located within peritextual elements such as the book jacket (including front and back flaps and spine), endpapers, title page, half-title page, as well as additional materials—such as maps, documents, photographs, and so on—that appear before or after the main text.

This approach follows the peritextual literacy framework (PLF), which groups the various peritextual elements based on function.<sup>2</sup> This is in keeping with Genette’s own view of the true value of his concept of the paratext: “Whatever aesthetic intention may come into play as well, the main issue for the paratext is not to ‘look nice’ around the text but rather to ensure for the text a destiny consistent with the author’s purpose.”<sup>3</sup> In that spirit, the PLF consists of six groups of peritextual elements representing specific relationships to the text: production (e.g., title, author, publisher), promotional (e.g., cover, review excerpts printed on or within the book), navigational (e.g., table of contents, index), intratextual (e.g., foreword, afterword), supplemental (e.g., timeline, glossary), and documentary (e.g., source notes, bibliography).<sup>4</sup> Some of these peritextual elements often employ images, notably the front and back covers, while some are presented as stand-alone images (photographs, drawings, maps) that are supplemental to, but not included within, the text proper.

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<sup>1</sup> Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2; emphasis in original.

<sup>2</sup> Melissa Gross and Don Latham, “The Peritextual Literacy Framework: Using the Functions of Peritext to Support Critical Thinking,” *Library & Information Science Research* 39 (2017): 116–23.

<sup>3</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, 407.

<sup>4</sup> Gross and Latham, “The Peritextual Literacy Framework,” 119.

In using the term “image,” we are invoking the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition of an image as “an artificial imitation or representation of something, esp. of a person or the bust of a person.” Our analysis of how these peritextual images work is informed by Serafini’s conceptualization of “visual grammar.” Based on ideas developed by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen and then reinterpreted by others (including himself), Serafini defines three categories of structures evident in visual images—representational, interpersonal, and compositional.<sup>5</sup> Representational structures are of two basic types: narrative, which relate participants in terms of what is happening, and conceptual, which represent how participants are classified (e.g., in relation to one another).<sup>6</sup> Interpersonal structures reflect the relationship between participants in the image and the viewer. Such structures include contact-gaze, whether participants are looking at or away from the viewer; interpersonal distance, the apparent distance of the participants from the viewer; and point of view, where the participants appear in relation to the viewer—above, straight on, or below.<sup>7</sup> And compositional structures reflect the relationship of the participants in the image to one another. Compositional structures include information zones, the spatial location of various elements in an image; framing, the borders or negative space around an image; modality, the degree to which an image appears realistic; and salience, the use of various techniques to make a particular element in an image stand out.<sup>8</sup> Using the PLF and the structures of visual grammar can help us understand how these images serve to arouse curiosity and provide additional information that enhances the reading experience and invites readers to cross the threshold and enter the text proper.

## Literature Review

The concept of peritext has been employed by a number of scholars in analyzing works for young people. However, historically, far less critical attention has been given to nonfiction books for children and young adults than to other genres, and even less to peritextual elements and

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<sup>5</sup> Frank Serafini, *Reading the Visual: An Introduction to Teaching Multimodal Literacy* (New York: Teachers College, 2014), 62. Serafini bases part of his framework on ideas presented in Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (London: Routledge, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> Serafini, *Reading the Visual*, 62–63.

<sup>7</sup> Serafini, *Reading the Visual*, 63–65.

<sup>8</sup> Serafini, *Reading the Visual*, 65–66.

visual elements within those books. One exception is Sanders, who, in his book-length study of children's nonfiction, devotes one chapter to peritext. There he argues that a close reading of peritextual elements "can illuminate the genre and, because the specific way of reading that they encourage is fundamentally dialogic, tell us something exactly relevant to critical engagement."<sup>9</sup> Aside from Sanders, in terms of children's and young adult literature, the concept of the peritext has been investigated mostly in relation to children's picture books. More than a quarter century ago, Higonet argued for the importance of considering the peritext in children's toy books and picture books.<sup>10</sup> Since then, a number of scholars have done just that. Nikolajeva and Scott, for example, provide a thorough discussion of the role of the peritext in picture books and note that often peritextual elements convey "a substantial percentage of the book's verbal and visual information."<sup>11</sup> In a study of teachers reading picture books aloud to K–2nd grade students, Sipe reports that, indeed, "children often made predictions about the plot, characters, setting, tone, and theme of the picturebook by peritextual analysis."<sup>12</sup>

Other scholars have focused on particular peritextual elements and how they work. Sipe and McGuire offer a typology of picture book endpapers: front and back that are unillustrated and identical; unillustrated and dissimilar; illustrated and identical; and illustrated and dissimilar.<sup>13</sup> Duran and Bosch offer a different typology of endpapers based on the content of the endpapers and their relationship to the story: endpapers with epitextual content (such as information about the series, dedications, etc.) and endpapers with peritextual content (such as characters, location, theme, etc.).<sup>14</sup> In their examination of Pop Art picture books, Kümmerling-

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<sup>9</sup> Joe Sutliff Sanders, *A Literature of Questions: Nonfiction for the Critical Child* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 108.

<sup>10</sup> Margaret R. Higonet, "The Playground of the Peritext," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 15 (Summer 1990): 47.

<sup>11</sup> Maria Nikolajeva and Carole Scott, *How Picturebooks Work* (New York: Garland, 2001), 256.

<sup>12</sup> Lawrence R. Sipe, *Storytime: Young Children's Literary Understanding in the Classroom* (New York: Teachers College, 2008), 92.

<sup>13</sup> Lawrence R. Sipe and Caroline E. McGuire, "Picturebook Endpapers: Resources for Literary and Aesthetic Interpretation," *Children's Literature in Education* 37 (December 2006): 291–304.

<sup>14</sup> Teresa Duran and Emma Bosch, "Before and After the Picturebook Frame: A Typology of Endpapers," *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship* 17 (November 2011): 122–43.

Meibauer and Meibauer focus on how the titles, notes to parents, and notes to child readers reflect the “strangeness” of the Pop Art movement in its transgression of cognitive, social, aesthetic, and/or emotional boundaries.<sup>15</sup> Taking a more comprehensive approach, Martinez, Stier, and Falcon analyze the peritextual elements of Caldecott Award books from 1938 to 2013 and discuss the changes and developments of the various elements over time.<sup>16</sup>

Studies of book covers have been especially popular, including studies of young adult fiction covers. Yampbell, for example, discusses the importance of the “grabability” factor for YA fiction covers, noting that publishers see the cover as a powerful marketing tool. By the same token, some covers, perhaps designed by people with only a vague sense of the books’ content, actually misrepresent the books they are intended to promote.<sup>17</sup> The predictive value of covers is a theme that emerges in a number of studies. In their analysis of the cover of Adele Minchin’s *The Beat Goes On*, Goldsmith, Gross, and Carruth describe how the book jacket reflects the centrality of HIV/AIDS to the plot of the novel. The images, they conclude, “signify intimacy, vulnerability, and danger, but also hope through education and activism.”<sup>18</sup> Slay describes using book covers as a kind of “speed dating” activity with high school students in order to facilitate their book selection process.<sup>19</sup> And Hill describes how one high school English class compared and contrasted the function of the covers of Gene Luen Yang’s two-volume graphic novel,

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<sup>15</sup> Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer and Jörg Meibauer, “On the Strangeness of Pop Art Picturebooks: Pictures, Texts, Paratexts,” *New Review of Children’s Literature and Librarianship* 17 (November 2011): 103–21.

<sup>16</sup> Miriam Martinez, Catherine Stier, and Lori Falcon, “Judging a Book by Its Cover: An Investigation of Peritextual Features in Caldecott Award Books,” *Children’s Literature in Education* 47 (September 2016): 225–41.

<sup>17</sup> Cat Yampbell, “Judging a Book by Its Cover: Publishing Trends in Young Adult Literature,” *The Lion and the Unicorn* 29 (September 2005): 348–72.

<sup>18</sup> Annette Y. Goldsmith, Melissa Gross, and Debi Carruth, “The Cover Story: What the Book Jacket of Adele Minchin’s Young Adult Novel, *The Beat Goes On*, Communicates about HIV/AIDS,” *Journal of Research on Libraries and Young Adults* 2 (April 2012), <http://www.yalsa.ala.org/jrlya/2012/04/the-cover-story-what-the-book-jacket-of-adele-minchins-young-adult-novel-the-beat-goes-on-communicates-about-hiv-aids/>.

<sup>19</sup> Jill Slay, “When to Judge a Book by Its Cover,” in *Literacy Engagement through Peritextual Analysis*, ed. Shelbie Witte, Don Latham, and Melissa Gross (Chicago: ALA Editions, 2018).

*Boxers & Saints*, as a way of predicting the content of the books.<sup>20</sup> Going a step further, Connors and Daugherty worked with young adults to help them evaluate book covers using the lens of critical literacy to question dominant representations of race, class, gender, et cetera.<sup>21</sup> Other studies of book covers have examined the ways that the covers of a particular work change through various editions. Rybakova has her college-level students analyze how existential themes are reflected in the covers of various editions of Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*.<sup>22</sup> And Richards examines the permutations of covers through the different editions of Francesca Lia Block's Weetzie Bat books, describing how the various covers reflect the publisher's attempt to reposition the books in the YA market.<sup>23</sup>

Serafini explains that “the visual images we encounter are most often experienced as *multimodal ensembles*, a type of text that combines written language, design elements, and visual images.” As such, “visual images, written language, and design elements work individually and in concert with one another to represent meanings and convey information.”<sup>24</sup> Given the growing emphasis on reading nonfiction and reading images as crucial to developing multimodal literacy skills, it is useful to examine peritextual images in nonfiction books for young people to understand how they engage readers and serve as “thresholds of interpretation.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Crag Hill, “Peritextual Bridges: Predicting Plot and Theme in *Boxers & Saints*,” in *Literacy Engagement through Peritextual Analysis*, ed. Witte, Latham, and Gross.

<sup>21</sup> Sean P. Connors and Erin Daugherty, “Critiquing, Resisting, and Remixing Promotional Peritextual Elements of YA Nonfiction,” in *Literacy Engagement through Peritextual Analysis*, ed. Witte, Latham, and Gross.

<sup>22</sup> Katie Rybakova, “Navigating Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* Using Visual Peritextual Elements,” in *Literacy Engagement through Peritextual Analysis*, ed. Witte, Latham, and Gross.

<sup>23</sup> Chris Richards, “Addressing ‘Young Adults’? The Case of Francesca Lia Block,” in *Judging a Book by Its Cover: Fans, Publishers, Designers, and the Marketing of Fiction*, ed. Nicole Matthews and Nickianne Moody (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 147–60.

<sup>24</sup> Serafini, *Reading the Visual*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, the Common Core State Standards Initiative, especially the “English Language Arts Standards” (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>), the National Council of Teachers of English / International Reading Association, “Standards for the English Language Arts”

(<http://www2.ncte.org/resources/standards/ncte-ira-standards-for-the-english-language-arts/>), and the

## Peritextual Images in Award-Winning Nonfiction Books

In considering how peritextual images invite readers into the text, we examined the YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association) Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults award winners as exemplars of books that use peritextual images for promotional and supplemental purposes. The YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults was established for the purpose of recognizing “the best nonfiction title published for young adults between Nov. 1 and Oct. 31 of the current year, available in English in the United States and, if desired, to also select honor titles.”<sup>26</sup> The first award was given in 2010, and the recipient was Deborah Heiligman’s *Charles and Emma: The Darwins’ Leap of Faith*.<sup>27</sup> Subsequent winners include Ann Angel’s *Janis Joplin: Rise Up Singing*; Steve Sheinkin’s *The Notorious Benedict Arnold: A True Story of Adventure, Heroism, & Treachery*; Neal Bascomb’s *The Nazi Hunters: How a Team of Spies and Survivors Captured the World’s Most Notorious Nazi*; Sheinkin’s *Bomb: The Race To Build—and Steal—the World’s Most Dangerous Weapon*; Maya Van Wagenen’s *Popular, a Memoir: Vintage Wisdom for a Modern Geek*; Sheinkin’s *Most Dangerous: Daniel Ellsberg and the Secret History of the Vietnam War*; John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell’s *March: Book Three*; and Heiligman’s *Vincent and Theo: The Van Gogh Brothers*.<sup>28</sup>

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Association of College and Research Libraries, “ACRL Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education” (<http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/visualliteracy>).

<sup>26</sup> Young Adult Library Services Association, “YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults,” American Library Association.

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklistsawards/bookawards/nonfiction/policies>.

<sup>27</sup> Deborah Heiligman, *Charles and Emma: The Darwins’ Leap of Faith* (New York: Henry Holt, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> Ann Angel, *Janis Joplin: Rise Up Singing* (New York: Amulet, 2010); Steve Sheinkin, *The Notorious Benedict Arnold: A True Story of Adventure, Heroism, & Treachery* (New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2010); Neal Bascomb, *The Nazi Hunters: How a Team of Spies and Survivors Captured the World’s Most Notorious Nazi* (New York: Arthur A. Levine, 2013); Steve Sheinkin, *Bomb: The Race to Build—and Steal—the World’s Most Dangerous Weapon* (New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2012); Maya Van Wagenen, *Popular: A Memoir: Vintage Wisdom for a Modern Geek* (New York: Dutton, 2014); Steve Sheinkin, *Most Dangerous: Daniel Ellsberg and the Secret History of the Vietnam War* (New York: Roaring Brook Press, 2015); John Lewis, Andrew Aydin, and Nate Powell, *March: Book Three* (Marietta, GA: Top Shelf, 2016); Deborah Heiligman, *Vincent and Theo: The Van Gogh Brothers* (New York: Henry Holt, 2017).

### ***Promotional Images***

Promotional elements mediate between the text and the reader and are often explicitly intended to sell the work. Primary among promotional peritextual elements is the content of the book jacket, including the front and back covers, the spine, and the front and back flaps. The images found on these parts of the jackets of all nine books in our study are promotional in the sense that they announce the content within the books and are intended to stimulate interest among potential readers.<sup>29</sup>

### ***Images on the Spines***

Depending on how a book is shelved or displayed, the spine is the first part of a book many potential readers encounter. Two of the books in our analysis (*Charles and Emma* and *The Notorious Benedict Arnold*) have images somewhat different from the front cover. *Charles and Emma* includes individual (and very small) cameos of the two subjects, while *The Notorious Benedict Arnold* contains a close-up of Arnold's head from the cover image. The spine of *Vincent and Theo* repeats the hats from the front cover. Two others (*Bomb* and *Most Dangerous*) continue a background image from the front cover. In the case of *Bomb*, it is a photograph of the bomb exploding over Hiroshima; in the case of *Most Dangerous*, it is an image of the stars from the United States flag. *Janis Joplin* features a colorful decorative pattern that echoes a border from the front and back covers. *The Nazi Hunters*, *Popular*, and *March: Book Three* contain no images on the spine.

### ***Images on the Covers***

By taking a closer look at the images on the front and back covers of each book, we can see how they work together to promote the reading of the book. As noted above, Serafini describes two types of representational structures used in images and multimodal ensembles: narrative and conceptual.<sup>30</sup> Most of the pictures—whether photographs, drawings, or paintings—on the covers of the books in our analysis are narrative structures, showing participants doing something and/or something happening, and they serve to point to the stories contained within the books.

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<sup>29</sup> The front covers of all nine books may be viewed on the YALSA website (<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/nonfiction-award>), the publishers' websites, and on bookseller websites such as Amazon and Barnes & Noble. The editions used in our analysis are the hardback versions of the books.

<sup>30</sup> Serafini, *Reading the Visual*, 62–63.



Let us consider the case of *Janis Joplin* as an extended example. The front cover and back covers essentially echo each other in that both feature images of the subject of the book and, specifically, images of her in her role as performer. The front cover contains three images of Janis, all monochromatic photographs taken during various performances. The largest image appears at the top half of the cover, and it is washed with a light blue tint. The other two, which are much smaller images, appear in the lower left and lower right corners of the front cover. Both are set against a black background. The title separates the top image from the lower two. In terms of contact-gaze, Janis, while facing the viewer, is looking down and not directly at the viewer, thus creating an effect that makes the relationship between the viewer and Janis less intimate. In terms of interpersonal distance, though, the top image is a close-up, which makes the relationship between the viewer and Janis more intimate. Serafini explains that, as far as information zones are concerned, the pictures at the top of a page are in a “ideal” position (i.e., more spiritual than earthly), while pictures at the bottom are in a “real” position.<sup>31</sup> Because of its placement, the picture of Janis at the top of the front cover lends her a spiritual aura, an effect that is complemented by the light blue wash of the photograph. In contrast, the two pictures in the lower part of the cover, showing her clutching a microphone and singing, are in the “real” position—that is, more connected to the physical realm. The entire front cover is framed with a decorative border in a curlicue pattern, serving to draw the viewer’s attention to the subject of the photographs (and of the book).

The back cover features a single black-and-white photograph of Janis onstage, looking wistfully to her right, perhaps toward someone who is just out of the frame. This is a full-length view of Janis and is placed so that she dominates the center of the page, which, according to Serafini, is the most prominent position on a page.<sup>32</sup> The curlicue frame is repeated on the back cover, helping connect the images on the front and back. The images on both covers emphasize Janis as a star and suggest that the book will reveal much about Janis the performer. And, as we shall see later, a full-page image in the front matter promises that the book also will provide a more intimate portrait of Janis.

Two of the books have images on the front cover that announce the content of the book and images on the back cover that promote other books the author has written. The front cover of

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<sup>31</sup> Serafini, *Reading the Visual*, 65.

<sup>32</sup> Serafini, *Reading the Visual*, 65.

*The Notorious Benedict Arnold* features a full-length color image of a man in the foreground dominating the left side of the cover; the man's back is to the viewer, and he is looking over his shoulder as if wary of being seen by someone else. In the distance a ship is visible, engulfed in flames. Since the title of the book appears directly to the right of the man, we are led to believe that the man is Benedict Arnold, and his posture, rather than establishing a connection with the viewer, implies that the man has something to hide, that he may somehow be responsible for the burning ship. The illustration looks very much like those one often sees on the covers of historical fiction novels, suggesting perhaps that the publisher is hoping to attract that particular audience. There are no images, only text, on the back cover of the book.

*Most Dangerous* also contains an image of its subject on the front cover. A close-up photograph of a fairly young Daniel Ellsberg appears in the prominent center position, its size dominating the cover. In the photograph, Ellsberg is facing toward the viewer, although he is looking to his left, so there is no direct eye contact with the viewer. Behind him is a portion of the American flag, with both stars and stripes visible. The blue background of the stars bleeds onto the image of Ellsberg, which also has a blue tone. The image clearly connects Ellsberg with the flag and all it symbolizes. It also implicitly raises questions: In what sense was this man a danger to America? Or was he? Did the real danger lie elsewhere? The cover suggests that the content of the book will deal with these questions. The back cover of the book contains thumbnails of the front covers of three previous Sheinkin books, set against the white stars and blue background of the flag from the front cover. This background image visually connects all four books and promotes the reading not just of *Most Dangerous*, but of the author's three other books as well.

The other books in this study have front and back covers that work in tandem to introduce the subject, but in more complex or nuanced ways than the three books already discussed. Essentially, the front cover presents one way of looking at the subject, while the back cover presents a different way. The sum of the two is greater than the parts. The front cover of *Popular*, for example, features the color illustration of a young female, presumably a teenager, wearing a pink-and-white polka dot top and pink shorts, and surrounded by clothes, accessories, and a book with tabs, like those that might be used with a paper doll. In this case, the "paper doll" at the center of the cover is, we assume, the author herself, and we infer that her book is going to tell its audience how to dress and accessorize in order to achieve popularity. The image

on the back cover is a photograph of the author, also wearing a polka dot top, although of a different color, along with a pink sweater and blue jeans. The image of the author on the front cover, because it is an almost cartoon-like illustration, has a lower modality than the highly realistic photograph on the back cover. If the front cover implies that popularity is largely a matter of appearance, the back suggests the issue may actually be more complicated. The two covers work together to entice the viewer to read the book and get to know the real teenager behind the façade.

Two of the books feature more than one person on the front cover. *Charles and Emma* has full-length black silhouettes of a man (on the left) and a woman (on the right) facing each other. The proximity of these figures to the title imply that the image depicts Charles and Emma. The woman can be seen holding a crucifix in her hand. On the far left, moving into the frame behind the man, is the silhouette of an ape. The approaching ape associates the man with the theory of evolution, while the crucifix associates the woman with a devout Christian faith. These rather iconographic illustrations hint at the content of the book, and perhaps cause the viewer to wonder whether Charles's scientific theory will drive a wedge between him and Emma. The black silhouettes against a background that looks like aged paper seem as though they might be from the Victorian era and thus serve to announce the time period dealt with in the book. The way the people are dressed (he is in coattails, she in a long dress) reinforces this notion. Also, the intimacy in the image is between the two people, not between the people and the viewer. They are looking at each other; the viewer is looking at them, from the side, looking at each other. The back cover, in contrast, achieves some level of intimacy between the subjects and the viewer. In the top portion of the back cover are two framed painted portraits. Now Emma appears on the left, while Charles appears on the right. In both portraits, the subjects are looking directly toward the viewer. The portraits, like the silhouettes, have a Victorian "look," but the higher modality (i.e., more realistic nature) of the paintings as well as the positions of the two subjects (i.e., making eye contact with the viewer) humanize the couple and suggest that a very personal story is going to be told within the pages of the book.

The front and back covers of *Vincent and Theo* work in a similar way. On the front are images, obviously paintings, not of people, but of two hats, one above the other, against a swirling background in various shades of blue. On the back are two portraits: Vincent's, a self-portrait, on the left and Theo's (also by Vincent) on the right. Both are set against the same

swirling blue background as seen on the front cover, and the men are wearing the hats depicted on the front cover. These images on the back serve to complete and provide context for the two somewhat enigmatic images of the hats on the front.

Two of the books depict groups of people. The front cover of *The Nazi Hunters* is dominated by the colors red, black, and white, the colors of the Nazi flag, and contains a photograph of Nazi officers in uniform, not facing the viewer, but all facing to the left. Superimposed over the photograph in the lower half of the cover is a black swastika. A silver knife with a black handle pierces the center of the swastika. The title appears (in white) directly under the downward-pointing knife. These stunning images announce the subject of the book but in a somewhat oblique way. The front cover images reflect the terrifying power of the Third Reich, evident in the colors, the uniformed officers, and the swastika. The knife plunged into the swastika implies a fatal wound and the death of Nazism. The book itself recounts the effort to track down and capture Adolf Eichmann, the most notorious Nazi leader to have escaped Germany at the end of World War II. The image on the back cover, while much simpler than those on the front cover, is more chilling. The background is black, but emerging from the blackness is a gray photograph of a Nazi officer looking directly at the viewer. The fact that the image seems to be emerging from the shadows gives it a ghostly, sinister look. The implication is that the book will tell the story of how “the world’s most notorious Nazi,” of the subtitle, was drawn out of the shadows and brought to justice.

Similarly, the front and back covers of *March: Book Three* work together to allude to and bookend, as it were, the story told within the book. The front cover depicts unarmed marchers, awash in light, approaching armed police officers emerging from the shadows. The people in the image are positioned in such a way that suggests the power structures of the time: the marchers are approaching from the lower left, while the police officers are confronting them from the top right. The image on the back cover is not of a person, but rather of a building—specifically, a portion of the back of the White House. The portico of the building looms on the left and is awash in light much like the marchers on the front cover. Though there is no mention or representation of Barack Obama, the implication is clear: the efforts and sacrifices of people like those depicted on the front cover eventually paved the way for an African American to be elected president.

As noted above, the only cover that does not include the image of at least one person is *Bomb*. Instead, it depicts a large plane, presumably a bomber, flying at a slight angle toward the reader. In the background is a sepia-toned photograph of a mushroom cloud. The implication is that the plane has just dropped the atomic bomb and is now flying back to base. The word “BOMB” is printed in large all-capital letters vertically on the front cover. The plane is positioned so that the “O” is directly behind it. The astute viewer may be reminded of the sun that appears at the center of the Japanese flag (both the current flag and the Imperial flag). The image credits, which appear on the back flap, identify the plane as an artist’s rendering of a B-29 and the background image as the mushroom cloud over Nagasaki. The image on the back cover, also in sepia tone, is of a building, which the back-flap credits identify as the gate to Los Alamos, the laboratory where the atomic bomb was built. The effect of looking at the front cover is to see the result of the work that occurred in that laboratory; the effect of looking at the back cover is to be invited to enter that space, via the book, where that work took place. In other words, the back cover depicts the threshold to the Los Alamos Laboratory and also serves as a threshold to the book, in which more will be revealed about what happened that lab. (The back cover also contains the image of the front cover of a previous Sheinkin book, *The Notorious Benedict Arnold*, and serves to promote the reading of that book as well as *Bomb*).

### *Images on the Flaps*

Other promotional peritextual images contained on book jackets can be found on the front and back flaps. Only three of the books in our analysis contain images on the front flap of the book jacket. *The Nazi Hunters* includes a gray swastika on a black background, echoing the swastika on the front cover; while *Popular* has an illustration of a pearl necklace, echoing the pearl necklace the teenager is wearing on the front cover. The front flap of *March: Book Three* includes a photograph of John Lewis, implying that while the story told in the book is larger than Lewis himself, it will be told through his perspective.

As is the case with the images on the covers, images on the front and back flaps promote reading of the book by reflecting, subtly or not so subtly, the content of the book. The back flaps of book jackets often also include a photograph of the author. Author photographs that appear with a biographical blurb about the author often promote the book (and the author) by attaching a human face to the production of the book. That is the case with four of these books, but interestingly *Janis Joplin*, *The Notorious Benedict Arnold*, *Most Dangerous*, and *Vincent and*

*Theo* do not include author photographs. As noted above, *March: Book Three* departs from convention by providing a photograph of John Lewis on the *front* flap (there is no image on the back flap). *Popular* contains a color photograph of Van Wagenen, sitting on the floor looking up at the reader. The pose is an interesting choice because, as Serafini points out, a subject who is positioned below the viewer appears to have less standing or power. Is the image intended to be a reflection, conscious or otherwise, of the social standing many teenagers feel they possess? *Vincent and Theo* provides no photograph of the author on the back flap, but does include a thumbnail image of the front cover of her previous award winner, *Charles and Emma*, thus serving to inform (or remind) readers of Heiligman's established success as a biographer.

### ***Supplemental Images***

The supplemental function refers to peritextual elements that expand on the text in order to enhance understanding of the content. Images can play an important role in providing additional context and information and can take the form of pictures, photographs, maps, tables, charts, and so on, which are provided as supplements to the main text. Images can also be used to embellish peritextual elements that otherwise would not be categorized as supplemental in nature. For example, the title page is primarily associated with the production function, in that it provides title, author, publisher, and other information that helps to uniquely identify the work. However, images provided on or adjacent to the title page are almost always used to enhance comprehension of the work.

None of the books in our study have endpapers that contain images, though some do have colored endpapers that help set the tone of the book (*The Nazi Hunters*, for example, has blood-red endpapers, the same shade of red as that found on the front cover). Instead, among the books in our study, the images that reflect the supplemental function are contained in the front matter, the back matter, or both. By far, the most prevalent among the supplemental peritextual images are narrative structure images. Indeed, only two of the books contain supplemental images that can be considered conceptual: *Charles and Emma* features a family tree, while *The Notorious Benedict Arnold* provides a map.

### *Images in the Front Matter*

Of the books that contain images in the front matter, some merely repeat images from the front cover.<sup>33</sup> This is the case with *Charles and Emma*, where the full-length silhouettes of the Darwins are repeated on the title page, directly under the title and above the author's name. Here the silhouette of the ape is missing, but one need only turn the page to find it on the reverse of the title page. Interestingly, the image of the ape appears directly under the author's dedication "To my constant companion." Whether the juxtaposition is intentional or not is impossible to say, but the implication works anyway—and on two levels: as the researcher and writer of this book, Heiligman has had the ape as her constant companion throughout the process. In a larger sense, as Darwin argued, we are all descended from apes and that heritage is constantly with us.

*Popular* is another book where an image from the front cover, in this case the image of the author as a paper doll, is repeated in the front matter, specifically on the title page. The difference is that the cover image is in color, while the image on the title page is basically black-and-white, but with a blue-tone wash. Another image from the cover, the 1950s book by Betty Cornell that inspired *Popular*, is also repeated in the front matter, appropriately at the top of the "Introduction by Betty Cornell." One difference (aside from the color image on the cover versus a blue-washed image on the title page) is that the image on the cover is small and tilted at an angle that obscures identification of the book, whereas the image of Cornell's book is upright in the heading of the introduction so that the title and other cover details are clearly visible. The front cover version of this image is largely designed to arouse curiosity (i.e., serve a promotional function) by making the viewer wonder what the book is that is pictured on the front cover. The image of Cornell's book in the introduction is designed to provide additional information (i.e.,

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<sup>33</sup> *March: Book Three* is an interesting case in that it begins *in medias res*, opening with the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, in September 1963, then fast-forwarding to John Lewis attending Barack Obama's first inauguration in January 2009. These events are recounted over twenty-three pages, with the final two-page spread showing Lewis leaving the podium after the inauguration and glancing back over his shoulder for one last look at the spectacle. The title and the authors' names appear at the top of the right-hand page, just above Lewis's head. It might be argued that these pages constitute protracted front matter, but it seems more reasonable to suggest that they are actually an integral part of the main text, serving to both distill and recapitulate the themes of the first two books.

serve a supplemental function) by making the title and author of the book visible—in other words, supplementing the less visible image of the book on the front cover. The effect of both images is to invite the reader to cross the threshold and learn even more by reading Van Wagenen's book.

*Janis Joplin* repeats an image from the front cover (the one in the lower left), but also includes an additional image that does not appear on the front cover. The first image that appears in the front matter is at the bottom of the half-title page, and it is one of the images of Janis performing that also appears on the front cover. With her right hand on her right hip, her left hand clutching the microphone, and her head tilted at a slight angle, Janis conveys a sense of energy and confidence in this image. In contrast, the image on the following page, just opposite the title page, is a full-page up-close photograph of Janis at rest. She is taking a cigarette out of a pack and looking slightly to her left, such that she is not making eye contact with the viewer. Here she seems younger than in the performance images, and more vulnerable. This photograph, which is in black-and-white, is bordered by the same colorful decorative curlicue border that appears on the front and back covers. The fact that this photograph is provided as a full-page image, just opposite the title page, implies that the book intends to show not just the public performer side, but also the private side of Janis as well. Being photographs, both of the images in the front matter have a high degree of modality, suggesting that the portrait of Janis presented in the text will be equally realistic.

The remaining books that contain images in the front matter do not repeat cover images inside the book. In the case of *Benedict Arnold*, the sole image that appears in the front matter is a conceptual structure image: a two-page drawing of a map entitled “Arnold Country 1741–1781” is inserted between the Contents (which consists of three full pages) and the first chapter, and it depicts the area from Pennsylvania to Maine and includes parts of Canada. Key places in Arnold's life, such as West Point, Fort Ticonderoga, and major cities and towns are marked with a dot and labeled. In the upper left of the drawing is a drawing of a ship at sea and in the foreground muskets, balls, and a drum are on the shore. This scene echoes that on the front cover in terms of perspective, but there is no person depicted and the ship does not appear to be on fire. The two images taken together perhaps imply that the book will take us from point A, the ship not on fire, to point B, the ship engulfed in flames, but also defines the time frame and



geographical scope of the work. It is appropriate then that the starting point, so to speak, appears at the top of a map.

*The Nazi Hunters* features the reproduction of an historical document, perhaps a letter, on the page preceding the title page. The document appears to be typewritten in Hebrew except for some handwriting at the bottom that has been scratched out and handwritten characters at the bottom left of the page, which may be initials. At the top of the two-page title page is a series of four overlapping photographs pasted together to show two brick buildings, perhaps under surveillance. The images are later identified as Eichmann's house. Together these images convey information about the topic of the book, which is the discovery and apprehension of a notorious Nazi. Both the document and the photographs are clearly archival, suggesting that this book is based on meticulous historical research.

*Bomb* contains a close-up photograph of the atomic bomb immediately preceding the one-page title page; the photograph is on the left page and the title page is on the right. While the front cover depicts the effects of the bomb, the photograph in the front matter depicts the contraption itself. Here the size of the bomb and the intricacy of the wires running around it indicate the complexity of the device—and, by extension, the complexity of the process that led to its creation. Both with *Bomb* and *The Nazi Hunters*, the images in the front matter supplement information found on the covers of the books as well as the content within.

Like *The Nazi Hunters*, *Vincent and Theo* also contains a historical document in the front matter, in this case a reproduction of a letter Vincent wrote to Theo. The letter, which is reproduced over four pages, begins on and serves as the background to the half-title page, continues on the following pages, serves as the background to the title page, and concludes on the page following that. The letter, handwritten in French, supplements the material in the text proper by reproducing one of the key sources for Heiligman, the letters Vincent wrote to Theo, which served quite literally as the background for the book.

### ***Images in the Back Matter***

In terms of back matter, two of the books, *Janis Joplin* and *Most Dangerous*, contain no images there at all. *Janis Joplin* does employ the decorative curlicue page borders that are used throughout the book, and the pages of the back matter are in different colors—hot pink, black, yellow, and blue—but there are no images per se.

In *Charles and Emma*, two images are included in the back matter: a small oval portrait of Charles appears at the top of the left-side page showing “The Darwin Family” tree, and a small oval portrait of Emma appears at the top of the opposite page showing “The Wedgwood Family” tree. These portraits, in black-and-white, are “head shots” taken from the two waist-length color portraits that appear on the back cover (and also appear, in black-and-white reproductions, on the second and third plates among the series of plates within the book). Thus, these images recapitulate visual information that has already been provided elsewhere. The family tree is a type of conceptual structure image that displays family relationships using a tree structure. The Darwin family tree and the Wedgwood family tree supplement the story by providing additional information about Charles’s and Emma’s lineage.

*Benedict Arnold* contains a single image in the back matter. The sole image, which appears after the final chapter and before the “Source Notes,” is a painting of Benedict Arnold, in profile wearing a military uniform. The copyright page explains that this image is a reproduction by Ed Frossard of a painting by John Trumbull. This and the image on the cover are the only depictions of Arnold in the book. In this image, the subject is posed in a very formal way—in profile, at a ninety-degree angle from the viewer. Obviously, there is no eye contact between Arnold and the viewer, and the effect distances the viewer from the subject and gives Arnold the air of a haughty individual. Though very different images, the one here and the one on the cover have similar effects, in part because of the way the subject is positioned in relation to the viewer.

*The Nazi Hunters* also contains a single image in the back matter: a painting in gray and white of Fruma Malkin, done by her brother, Peter Malkin, who helped capture Adolf Eichmann. Within the book, the author explains that Fruma, her husband, and their three children perished in the Holocaust. It is his sister’s death in particular that spurred Malkin to go to great lengths to bring Eichmann to justice, and, according to the caption on the page opposite the image, Malkin completed the painting while guarding Eichmann. In the portrait, Fruma has a forlorn expression on her face and is looking down and to her left. Both the caption page and the painting have solid black backgrounds, appropriately somber for a memorial. The painting itself is in an expressionist style, which lends it a lower modality but also seems highly appropriate for an image painted from memory and colored by deep emotions. Prior to reading the book, a viewer may find that the painting arouses both pity and curiosity. After reading the book, a viewer may discover that it puts a human face on the horror of the Holocaust.

*Popular* contains an image in the back matter that recapitulates visual information found elsewhere but is included here to provide additional information. On the final page of the back matter, after the “Photograph Credits” and the “Source Notes,” is a large straight-on view of the blue-washed front cover of *Betty Cornell’s Teen-Age Popularity Guide*, the 1950s book that inspired *Popular*. This image is a variation of the one we see on the front cover of *Popular* and again at the top of Cornell’s “Introduction” to *Popular*. That image is larger and easier to read than the one on the front cover, but the image on the last page is the largest and clearest of all three. Viewing the three images in succession provides an accretion of information about Cornell’s book. Moreover, the cover of her book also contains images—photographs of three women (all of whom may be Cornell) holding up a cardboard poster with the title of the book, a blurb describing the contents, and in the lower left corner two cartoon drawings of men holding up their own cardboard poster featuring a stylishly dressed woman (also Cornell?) in a sundress and hat. Symbolically, Van Wagenen’s book ends where her journey began—with *Betty Cornell’s Teen-Age Popularity Guide*. The placement of this prominent image on the final page is promotional in nature, inviting readers to investigate Cornell’s book further and embark on their own journey with it.

*March: Book Three* also provides author- and book-focused supplemental information in its back matter. The black-and-white photograph of Lewis that appears on the front flap is repeated, along with a photograph of Lewis with his co-author, Andrew Aydin, and illustrator, Nate Powell. On the following page are thumbnail covers of each of the three books in the trilogy along with the cover of the Trilogy Slipcase Set.

By far, the most complex use of images in the back matter of any of the books occurs in *Bomb*. Between the “Epilogue” and the “Source Notes,” an entire section, entitled “Race to Trinity,” is inserted. This section consists mostly of images with extensive captions provided in small print at the bottom of two of the five pages. The first image is a two-page spread facsimile of the letter Albert Einstein wrote to President Roosevelt in 1939, warning that the Germans might be developing an atomic weapon. This letter proved to be a key factor in Roosevelt’s commitment to develop an atomic weapon first. The other images that follow over three pages are eleven black-and-white photographs that capture the key events in the development of the bomb, from an early “atomic pile” to test whether a nuclear reaction could be initiated and controlled to the mushroom cloud that formed over the Trinity test site and the lead scientists

examining the resulting crater a month after the test. These images, presented in chronological order, convey in a short space the events that are described extensively in the book. In effect, the sequence recapitulates the story told in the book, from the excitement of the race to the frightening power of the ultimate outcome. A viewer encountering these images before reading the book is given a preview of the key events to come. After reading the book, a person can easily review these events once more.

## **Conclusion**

A close examination of the peritextual images in these nonfiction books reveals how these images are used in service of the promotional and supplemental functions of peritext. Of course, it must be acknowledged that some readers, perhaps many readers, pay little attention to the peritextual elements in a book, let alone the images within these peritextual elements. It should also be acknowledged that readers do not necessarily encounter or engage with these images in the order in which they appear in any given book. A reader may, for instance, flip from the front cover to the back cover, leaf through the front matter and/or back matter, and may do any of these things at any point during the reading process. An image that may provoke curiosity during the pre-reading stage may serve to provide additional information during the reading or post-reading stages. A reader's perception of the meaning of an image as well as the emotions it arouses may change during the process of reading the book.

What these peritextual images offer is a chance to pause at the threshold, examine the visual elements in the peritext carefully and thoughtfully, and consider how they work, both individually and together, to provide information and to produce an aesthetic effect. Doing so can assist the reader in making the decision to cross the threshold and engage with a work with a greater understanding of what a particular book is about and has to offer. As these award-winning nonfiction books demonstrate, doing so can provide rich rewards.