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*"There's no good excuse for the kind of shit I've made up"*

A Narratological-empiric investigation into actual readers' perceptions of unreliability in

digital app-novella *Pry* (2014/2016)

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract

Tässä empiiristä tutkimusotetta ja kirjallisuustieteellistä teoriaa yhdistävässä tutkielmassa tarkastellaan epäluotettavan kerronnan toteutumista Samantha Gormanin ja Danny Cannizzaron digitaalisessa iOS-kirjasovelluksessa *Pry*. Tutkielmassa argumentoidaan, että puhtaasti teoreettinen kirjallisuustiede tarvitsee välttämättä tuekseen empiiristä lukijatutkimusta, mikäli tavoitteena on tuottaa tietoa kerronnallisten rakenteiden todellisista toteutuvista toiminnan muodoista. Tutkielman kolme päätavoitetta ovat (1) kerronnallisen epäluotettavuuden tarkastelu teoksessa, (2) empiirisen lukijatutkimuksen merkittävyyden osoittaminen sekä (3) tutkielmassa käytettyjen menetelmien kriittinen arviointi ja kehittäminen.

Tutkielman teoreettisena viitekehyksenä käytetään kertomusten rakenteiden systemaattiseen tarkasteluun perustuvaa narratologiaa. Tutkielmassa hyödynnetään erityisesti Wayne C. Boothin ja James Phelanin kerronnan epäluotettavuutta kuvaavia teorioita, joita kehitetään edelleen empiiriseen tarkasteluun sopiviksi. Lisäksi tutkielmassa tarkastellaan 64 kirjoittajan tuottamia analyyseja multimodaalisesta *Prysta* sekä laadullisin että määrällisin menetelmin. Suuri osa aineistosta koostuu yhdysvaltalaisten, kanadalaisten ja uusiseelantilaisten yliopisto-opiskelijoiden kurssisuorituksina julkaistuista blogiteksteistä, mutta aineistoon kuuluu myös ammattimaisten kirjoittajien sekä harrastajien tuottamia analyyseja. Lukijatulkintojen rinnalle tarjotaan tutkielman kirjoittajan oma luenta, jossa *Pry* tulkitaan kriittisenä, moniäänisyyden mahdollistavana tarkasteluna erinäisten kollektiivien suhteista erityisesti Persianlahden sodassa ja Irakin sodassa, joihin teos kerronnassaan viittaa. Kirjoittajan oman luennan ja muiden lukijatulkintojen väliin muodostuvan jännitteen kautta tutkielma pyrkii osoittamaan, että yksittäisen lukijan valitsema tulkintakehys voi muokata voimakkaasti luennan pohjalta kehitettävää analyysia ja siten kirjallisuustieteellistä teoretisointia.

Tutkielmassa havaitaan, että *Pryn* kerronnalliset elementit voivat tuottaa toisistaan poikkeavia luentoja, minkä vuoksi kerronnan epäluotettavuus näyttäytyy eri lukijoille eri muodossa. Tulkinnat eivät kuitenkaan ole sattumanvaraisia, vaan ne vaikuttavat asettuvan tiettyjen raamien sisään. Tutkielman lopputulema on, että näihin tulkinnallisiin rajapisteisiin tulisi kiinnittää huomiota jatkotutkimuksessa sekä kerronnallisten rakenteiden tarkastelussa ylipäätään.

Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords
Pry, kirjasovellus, narratologia, lukijatutkimus, digitaalinen, narratology, reception, digital, app-novella, Tender Claws, Samantha Gorman, Danny Cannizzaro

Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited
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Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information

# Contents

# 1. Introduction

The tape burns. This burn is the new memory. Keep me, it orders. But, it is a loud, loud thing that smells of burnt hair when it heaves up. In the back of my throat. I spit out the taste I can't coat. No matter how many times I tell myself this story. Luke carries me, dodges. The exit flickers, flattens before us. We're out. A shot of cold air reveals the question, Why are we out? *Go back, tell this as a version where you go back through the pale door.* (*Pry* 2014/2016, chapter 6; emphasis added.)

Unreliable narrators – who may sometimes tell multiple versions of the same story, as seen in the quotation above – have received a great deal of interest in narratological studies (see e. g. Booth 1961/1983; Chatman 1978; Nünning 2004; Phelan 2005; Hansen 2007; Bareis 2013; Xu Yun 2017). From Mister Stevens to Humbert Humbert, unreliable narrators have intrigued and puzzled even professional readers who, although armed with the most sophisticated of textual taxonomies and narratological tools, often end up disagreeing about "proper" or "refined" interpretations. Artistic duo Tender Claws, comprising of Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro, introduce yet another fascinating case of unreliability in their interactive app-novella *Pry* (2014/2016). *Pry*'s narrator-protagonist James participated in the First Gulf War. Six years later, James having returned back home to the United States, the young man is haunted by memories from the past. James's admonition to "go back" and narrate "a version where you go through the pale door" is only one of the symptoms hinting towards unreliable narration: James experiences hallucinations, his subconscious often conflicts with his cognizant narration, and he admits to being untruthful at times. Furthermore, James occasionally narrates contradicting versions of the events in the storyworld.

It could be argued that the heterogeneity of different readers' interpretations signals unsatisfactory theoretical models and this argument indeed seems to have fuelled many a narratological investigation. The logic goes as follows: earlier analysts have developed theoretical models based on those narrative devices that were available to them. However, as they have been able to test them only on so many actual texts, more theorizing is needed. Therefore, in order to challenge the existing models, one should find as innovative, structurally challenging, or otherwise exceptional texts as possible. Indeed, as Maria Mäkelä (2011, p. 22) points out, many narrative theorists have used interpretively ambiguous texts when developing their models, amidst them e. g. Gérard Genette (1972/1980), Slomith Rimmon-Kenan (1983), and Mieke Bal (1985/1997/2009/2017).

Similar eager hunt for a peculiar form drove me to approach the interactive iOS book-app *Pry* with the analyst's scalpel in hand. Gorman and Cannizzaro's artwork is a formally oriented narratologist's luscious dream-come-true: it is multimodal, interactive, thematically complex, and characterised by various spatiotemporal peculiarities. The work represents bodily perception in novel [sic] ways, and contains a multi-layered protagonist whose subconscious, sight, and inner thoughts the reader can access. The list goes on: *Pry* contains a rich set of allusions from digital literature to *Bible*, actual television footage, and news articles. *Pry*'s narrator-protagonist James, a returning First Gulf War soldier with his failing sight, hallucinations, intrusive thoughts, and secretive versions of what happened during the war, offers almost unbearably delicious instances of unreliable narrating. Thus, *Pry* provides material for numerous approaches even within the field of narratology.

*Pry* has received some interest inside academia. In his article "Multimodality, Interactivity and Embodiment: Representation of Consciousness in Digital Narratives," Grzegorz Maziarczyk examines *Pry*'s multimodal and interactive representation as a medium through which a fictional mind is represented and experienced "from within" (Maziarczyk 2017, p. 208). Maziarczyk, whose analysis arises from the field of cognitive narratology, explores how the artwork on the one hand enables the reader to identify with James "by giving him or her control over his perception of the external world" and how, on the other hand, the dynamics of the representation suggest "the position of an observer or even explorer who is invited to 'dig into' the subconscious aspects of another human being's psyche" (id. p. 218–219). *Pry*'s narrative devices have also been studied academically by Diogo Marques in his doctoral dissertation *Reading Digits: Haptic Reading Processes in the Experience of Digital Literary Works* (2018). In his semiotic-philosophically oriented analysis, Marques examines *Pry* in a subsection of his dissertation and explores the different semantical dualisms *Pry*'s narrative devices give rise to. Both Maziarczyk and Marques discuss other digital artworks in addition to *Pry* which further encouraged me to choose this particular artwork: surely, there must be more to learn about the artwork's narrative devices.

As one might expect when letting a narratology enthusiast tinker with an enthralling narrative, the abundance of possible directions initially made me greedy and adventurous. All these wondrous paths with their specific narratological problems lay in front of me and I wanted to tackle them all. Amongst them was one particularly complex and problematic, one that I chose not to include in this final version: the analysis of immersion.

Immersion, perhaps more so than any other hypothetical path that I initially lingered on, exposes some of the problems of the text-centeredness that is typical to

theoretical narratology. Immersion, first of all, refers to a complex phenomenon, and secondly, is a complex term used differently in different contexts. As Marie-Laure Ryan (2001, p. 14) puts it, "[t]he term immersion has become so popular in contemporary culture that people tend to use it to describe any kind of intensely pleasurable artistic experience or any absorbing activity." The problem prevails in the scientific discourse: whereas some researchers use the term to describe the incident of "becoming one with the experience," the experience thus conveying "the idea of a total elimination of the distance between consumers and the situation, the former being plunged in a thematised and secure spatial enclave where they can let themselves go" (Carù & Cova 2006, p. 5), others refer to "the objective level of fidelity of the sensory stimuli produced by a virtual reality system," (Stevens, Kincaid & Sottilare 2015, chapter 5.3, para. 3). Thus, in the latter sense the term highlights the corporeal and technological aspects of the phenomenon whereas the former stresses the experiencer's subjective experience.

        In narratology, the most comprehensive theorisation of immersion has been offered by Marie-Laure Ryan in her book *Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media* (2001). Ryan aims "to transfer the two concepts of immersion and interactivity from the technological to the literary domain and to develop them into the cornerstones of a phenomenology of reading, or, more broadly, of art experiencing" (Ryan 2001, p. 2). The concept thus intertwines with readerly reactions, the narrative media, and the representation's phenomenological properties. In Ryan's terms, "immersion is the experience through which a fictional world acquires the presence of an autonomous, language-independent reality populated with live human beings" (ead. p. 14). She proposes four different types of immersion: (1) spatial immersion which is the readers' "response to setting," (2) temporal immersion which means "the response to plot," (3) emotional immersion which stands for "the response to character," and (4) spatio-temporal immersion in which "the imaginative distance between the position of narrator and addressee and the time and place of the narrated events […] is reduced to near zero" (ead. p. 121, 130).

        As inspiring as Ryan's thoughtful argumentation is, when it comes to analytical precision, the conceptualisations of different immersion types remain vague. For instance, although Ryan comprehensively discusses various analytical schools' attitudes toward emotions' role in analysis ever since Aristotle and provides interesting insights into readers' emotional responses to some narrative instances, the only definition she offers for emotional immersion is the aforementioned "response to character." Furthermore, Ryan has a tendency to focus on the pleasurable aspects of reading. She argues, for instance, that in "the most

complete forms of spatial immersion, the reader's private landscapes blend with the textual geography" and that "[i]n those moments of sheer delight, the reader develops an intimate relation to the setting as well as a sense of being present on the scene of the represented events." (ead. p. 122.) How much "sheer delight" spatial immersion in *Pry* produces, however, remains dubious; if the reader's "private landscapes" are primed by personal experiences of war, scenes of missiles may evoke unpleasant feelings and even traumatic flashbacks. That, of course, depends on the reader's personal experiences.

In addition to the previous categories, Ryan differentiates between varying levels of readerly absorption into the fictional world: (1) concentration, (2) imaginative involvement, (3) entrancement, and (4) addiction (Ryan 2001, p. 98). The order of the categories implies the intensity of the experience: in the first type, for instance, the artwork's properties constrain the reader from being absorbed into the fictional world. The other end and the most intense type, addiction, describes "[t]he attitude of the reader who seeks escape from reality but cannot find a home in the textual world because she traverses it too fast and too compulsively to enjoy the landscape" or "[t]he loss of the capacity to distinguish textual worlds, especially those of fiction, from the actual world." (ead. p. 98–99.) Thus, two contradictory phenomena are captured under one category, addiction.

A fundamental question arises: how shall one pinpoint the textual elements that produce flow-like absorption into the fictional world in *Pry*? How does one know which narrative elements encourage immersion and which ones are designed to estrange the reader? Which types of immersion (spatial, temporal, emotional, or spatio-temporal) are likely to produce and strengthen the effect of absorption?

One possible answer, arguably one that many a theoretically oriented narratologist would choose, would be to simply read the text and observe one's own reading process. One could then construct an imaginary Reader and treat her as an analytical tool, predicting and formulating hypothetical reactions that all readers would give *most likely* or *in average*. After all, to believe that texts have structures functioning in certain ways is to believe that these functions have stable meanings and the meanings are not arbitrary (see e. g. Phelan 2005, p. 18; Shen 2011/2013, para. 17). The idea is articulated in the common models of narrative communication: a human agent (author) delivers information via narrative means (e. g. a novel) to another human agent (reader). Encode a message, decode the message – and there you have the most basic model in a stripped, simplified form (for more elaborate ones see e. g. Chatman 1978, 151; Phelan 2005, p. 40).

What is neat and tidy in theory is often complex and messy in practice, especially when ethics are considered – of which *Pry* offers a telling example. *Pry* tells the story of American soldier James who, as mentioned, took part in the First Gulf War. Some of the cinematic scenes are located in Saudi-Arabia and others in the United States; some represent events in the war camp, others happen in James' home, some at demolition sites where James works after the war, and so on. Something traumatic happened during the war, and it is left for the reader to figure out what that was exactly. The presence of several ethically complex topics and themes – international conflict, trauma, mental health, romance, and jealousy, to mention a few – complicate the analysis even if the researcher proposes an "objective" or "neutral" reading of the artwork's narrative devices.

The very simple yet most profound question arises: where does the Reader come from? Is she American or Saudi-Arabian – or perhaps Finnish, similarly to the person writing this dissertation? Perhaps, if I may be bold enough to suggest, Utopian – thus not having her feelings or the immersive experience affected in any way by the very context of the storyworld? How does she perceive irony in the book-app? Does she consider the narrator-protagonist James morally unreliable? Does she consider the actual flesh-and-blood creators trustworthy or does she find the treatment of the narrative emotionally distancing? Might she be a war-supporting nationalist? Might she be a pacifist who finds irony oozing between the lines? Might she be an Iraqi civilian whose relatives were among the tens of thousands of Iraqis killed during the First Gulf War? To squeeze these questions in a nutshell: would the "textual structures," so easily and neatly defined in theory, truly produce similar immersive experiences to all readers, no matter what the reader's background is? Does "an average" or "most likely" reaction to *Pry*'s storyworld exist, and if it indeed does, how to make sure that the analyser will be able to catch that very reaction?

Turns out, at least as far as I can tell, that Everyreader's analysis of immersion in *Pry* would be problematic, and at its worst, possibly even colonial. Even in a hypothetical situation it seems more likely that different readers with varying backgrounds will have conflicting interpretations of the artwork. What will that say of the narrative devices that theoretically oriented narratologists, myself included, are so keen to capture? This realisation prompts more questions: where does the Reader's unreliability stop? If studying immersion proves problematic, what are the textual phenomena that one can study without having to consider real flesh-and-blood readers' interpretive acts?

I am by no means the first narratologically oriented analyst to suggest that narratological analysis needs the support of empirical evidence. One of the most notable and

compelling argumentations has been provided by Marisa Bortolussi and Peter Dixon in their truly inspiring book *Psychonarratology: Foundations for the Empirical Study of Literature* (2002) in which the two authors comprehensively discuss the limitations of the text-centeredness typical to purely theoretical narratology. Similar critique, however, has also been presented amongst more traditionally form-oriented narratologists. In her article "Unreliable Narration and the Historical Variability of Values and Norms: *The Vicar of Wakefield* as a Test Case of a Cultural-Historical Narratology" (2004), Vera Nünning demonstrates compellingly how historically situated readers' value systems and knowledge of the world affect their perception of unreliability. Nünning showcases how the reception of Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) has varied in different historical contexts, the 18th and 19th century readers considering the narration reliable but the majority of later critics deeming it unreliable (see Nünning 2004, p. 238). A complementary approach to Nünning's cultural-historical frame has been offered in diachronic narratology that aims to investigate the historical evolution of narratives. The approach was presented by Monika Fludernik in her article "The Diachronization of Narratology: Dedicated to F. K. Stanzel on His 80th Birthday" (2003). However, in contrast to Nünning, Fludernik does not exploit actual contemporary reception documentation in her analysis; thus, her approach remains text-oriented and the Reader synthetic. Maria Mäkelä argues that "this methodological unnaturalness within Natural Narratology is not a shortcoming but a productive innovation that makes it one of the cornerstones of postclassical narratology" (Mäkelä 2018, p. 271). I remain unconvinced.

This path led me address three main goals in this dissertation. Firstly, I will investigate unreliable narration in *Pry*. Secondly, and as importantly, I will aim to demonstrate that actual flesh-and-blood readers' interpretations are a crucial source of information when studying narrative structures. I will argue that flesh-and-blood readers' interpretations not only offer important information on the subject of the study – of unreliability in *Pry* in this particular case – but they also help the researcher to critically evaluate the narratological models they are developing. This, in turn, (1) will provide the researcher with tools to evaluate the ethical dimensions of the model, (2) will force narratologists to operationalise[1] the phenomena they are researching, and thus (3) will provide a framework for systematising the methods. Thirdly, I will critically examine the

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[1] Operationalising means that the aspects under study are translated into a measurable form.

methodology that I have applied and discuss the methodological issues that arise in relation with the empirical set-up. The approach is not strictly rhetorical nor constructivist as defined by Dan Shen (2011/2013), although it comes closer to the latter. According to Shen, rhetorically oriented analysts treat "unreliability as a textual property encoded by the implied author for the implied reader to decode" whereas constructivists deem "unreliability as being dependent on actual readers' divergent readings for its very existence" (Shen 2011/2013, para. 5). I hold that both textual properties as well as actual readers' engagements play part in the emergence of any narrative phenomena, unreliability included. However, where my approach diverges from both rhetorical and constructivist approaches is the appliance of actual readers' interpretations in the analysis. The difference is critical. For instance, when discussing constructivism-oriented Tamar Yacobi's (1981) integration mechanisms, Shen argues that "[t]he rhetorical approach tries to reveal how the *implied reader* (a critic who tries to enter into that reading position) deals with *one type* of textual incongruity—the gap between narrator and implied author—while Yacobi's constructivist approach tries to show how *different actual readers* deal with textual incongruities *in general*." (Shen 2011/2013, para. 17; emphases in the original). Strictly speaking, that is not the case, however. Yacobi does propose integration mechanisms readers may exploit when encountering textual incongruities; however, she does not study actual readers. Yacobi's readers remain theoretical and synthetic.

I have approached *Pry* in a somewhat (narratologically speaking) unconventional manner. I gathered a dataset of 64 texts that discuss the artwork and will use them as the material for investigating unreliability in the work. The dataset contains articles, blog posts, and reviews that are written by literary professionals, students, and hobbyists. In order to explore the texts in a systematic manner, I created a checklist that contains various factors relating to narrative unreliability in *Pry*. I read through each text and checked if they contained the variables I was looking for; the final results are represented in Appendix 1. The table provides information of the prevalence of each variable. The instances were then collected in verbal form on another document (see Appendix 2). The approach has significant consequences for the nature of the information this dissertation will produce. Therefore, in the next chapter I will present and critically discuss the material, the methods, and the theories as well as the ethical implications that need to be taken into account. I will start by discussing Wayne C. Booth's (1961/1983) and James Phelan's (2005) elegant theories of unreliability in chapter 2.1. As I myself am an advocate of cognitive narratology, I will evaluate the models in light of what is currently understood about human cognition. I will support the discussion by examining the narrative communication model and pinpointing possible sources for

unreliability. I chose to focus on Booth's and Phelan's theorisations because, first of all, "[m]ost narrative theorists follow Booth's 'canonized' rhetorical definition of fictional unreliability" (Shen 2011/2013, para. 6). Secondly, Phelan's elaborated taxonomy of different types of unreliability is by far, as far as I can tell, the most sophisticated and comprehensive one. Phelan examines issues discussed by multiple other theorists inside one model: he addresses ethical, communicational, and epistemological dimensions of unreliable narration. Instead of scrutinising miniscule conceptual differences between different theorists, I aim to introduce a method that can capture different aspects of narrative sense-making concretely. In chapter 2.2. I will present the methods and in chapter 2.3 the material, and in both chapters I will discuss their implications. In chapter 2.4. I will discuss the research ethics that the methodology necessitates.

In the third chapter I will take a closer look at the results that the readers' interpretations yield. In chapter 3.1. I will give an overview of the artwork's narrative structure chapter by chapter. The aim of the overview is to provide this dissertation's reader with an understanding of the textual elements in *Pry* as the artwork exploits multimodality and interactivity in unique ways and, presumably, is not familiar to many readers. The detailed overview will also make it easier to follow the readers' accounts of the narrative in the following chapters. Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge that digital artworks are "fragile and susceptible to technological change" (Innocenti 2012, p. 472). Although the artwork may be easily accessed at the time of this dissertation's publication date, the situation may change due to the rapid evolution of digital media. Therefore, I deem it important to describe the artwork in detail so that the future reader may have an understanding of the artwork's narrative structure even if she or he is not able to access the artwork. In chapter 3.2. I will discuss the reader constructions relating to James's perceived intentionality, the three different levels of James's cognition, James's physiological and psychological ailments, and their conceiving of the authors.

In the fourth chapter I will introduce a case of ellipsis and offer my own reading of *Pry*. I will read *Pry*'s narrative structure as a metaphorical reflection of the complex nature of the international conflicts in the First Gulf War and the Iraq War. I will argue that James's unreliability widens to represent the experiences of opposing collectives. I will begin by giving a short overview of the two wars in chapter 4.1. In chapter 4.2., I will discuss *Pry*'s representation as a critical examination of the conflicts. On the one hand, the aim of this chapter is to illustrate potential interpretation paths that for reason or another may be neglected in my dataset; none of the 64 readers offer a similar reading of the artwork. On the

other hand, I must admit, the aim is rhetorical. I hope to convince my reader that *Pry* can be read as a critical examination of the wars but, simultaneously, my aim is to argue that if I had focused merely on my own reading, the analysis would yield more modest results.

A few words about multimodality in *Pry* are in place before moving on to analysing the work's unreliability. Although *Pry*'s multimodal and digital aspects will be discussed in the dissertation, the treatment will not focus on them or deal with them in depth; I will not, for instance, situate *Pry*'s representational elements inside a taxonomy in the spirit of the grand authority of ergodic literature, Espen J. Aarseth. To those readers who might feel suspicious towards this formal decision, I would quote the rather polemic yet convincing words of Aarseth:

> [D]iscussions of the "literariness" of this and that verbal medium are ever in danger of deteriorating into a battle of apologetic claims and chauvinistic counterclaims. When much energy is spent on showing that *P* is a perfectly deserving type of *Q*, the more fundamental question of what *P* is will often be neglected. These nonproductive (and non-academic) campaigns in favor of marginal media or aesthetic forms of expression are pathetic signs of a larger problem, however: they illustrate only too well the partial and conservative state of the human sciences, in which nothing can be studied that is not already within a field; in which the type rather than the individual qualities of an object determines its value as an accepted member of some canon or other. Where humanistic study used to be genre chauvinistic, it is now medium chauvinistic, organized into empirical fields (literature, art history, theater, mass communication) with not enough concern for general or intermediary perspectives. (Aarseth 1997, p. 16.)

Following this logic, there is no *a priori* reason to delimit the analysis of *Pry* to the taxonomisation of its multimodal devices or arguing lengthily for its distinctiveness compared to printed literature. Rather than convincing that *Pry* is worthy of *Q*, I will focus on studying the varied reactions it has generated. Indeed, the important element connecting both printed literature and digital literature is that they both generate reactions. That very element makes the research presented in this dissertation possible.

## 2. Peeking into *Pry* through multiple eyes – Theory, methods, materials, and ethics

In this chapter I will present and discuss narratological theories of unreliability, the data, the methods, and some crucial ethical considerations. In chapter 2.1. I will discuss Booth's and Phelan's theories. I will then offer my own reconstruction of the narrative communication model first presented by Chatman (1978) and discuss how different types of unreliability are realised between different actors. In chapter 2.2. I will present the variables that I chose to analyse in the readers' interpretations. In chapter 2.3. I will discuss the dataset and the implications it carries. Finally, in chapter 2.4. I will discuss the research ethics.

### 2.1. Occam meet Phelan – From six to two different types of unreliability

The notion of narrative unreliability was first introduced by Wayne C. Booth in his seminal work *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961/1983). Booth highlights the distance between the author and the narrator as the determining factor for unreliability; according to Booth, a narrator is reliable "when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms), *unreliable* when he does not" (Booth 1961/1983, 158–159; italics in the original). It follows, in Booth's conception, that

> The author is present in every speech given by any character who has had conferred upon him, in whatever manner, the badge of reliability. Once we know that God is God in Job, once we know that Monna speaks only truth in "The Falcon," the authors speak whenever God and Monna speak. (Booth 1961/1983, p. 18.)

When it comes to Booth's conceptualisation, attention should be paid to the implied coherence of intentionality. If a narrator is to follow or violate the norms of the work, the work has to contain some sort of coherent authorial frame of norms. It follows that the reader must be able to recognise both the norms of the author as well as those of the narrator.

Similarly to Booth, James Phelan (2005) considers the distance between the implied author and the narrator significant in his rhetorical approach (see e. g. Phelan 2005, p. 8, p. 11–12). Phelan aims to broaden Booth's theorising, although the core of the definition remains the same; according to Phelan, "a character narrator is 'unreliable' when he or she offers an account of some event, person, thought, thing, or other object in the narrative world that deviates from the account the implied author would offer" (id. p. 49). Phelan differentiates six different types of unreliability: misreporting, misreading, misevaluating/misregarding, underreporting, underreading, and underregarding (id. p. 51). He

positions misreporting and underreporting on "the axis of characters, facts, and events;" misreading and underreading on "the axis of knowledge and perception;" and misregarding and underregarding on "the axis of ethics and evaluation" (id. p. 50–52).

Symptomatically, misreporting "almost always occurs with misreading or misevaluating" and misreading and misevaluating "may occur either by themselves or in combination with other kinds of unreliability" (id. p. 51); the categories come to overlap and intertwine. Phelan himself acknowledges the fact and states that "in many cases the border between types […] will be soft and blurry rather than hard and firm." He suggests that "debates about whether a particular instance of unreliable narration is of one type rather than another are likely to be far less productive than debates about whether a particular instance of narration is reliable or unreliable." (id. p. 53.) Of course, anyone familiar enough with humanistic research will understand that drawing definitive borders around phenomena is oftentimes an impossible task.

Whilst I cherish the fact that Phelan's model treats narratives as complex objects that are difficult to categorise definitely, I find the overlapping of the categories rather telling. That is due to the nature of human cognition and how it treats perceptual stimuli. Namely, it will be difficult to separate facts and events from perception because comprehending facts and events necessarily entails perceptive action. Furthermore, it will be a complex task to separate values and ethics from perception because perception necessarily includes some sort of evaluation. Even when a person is not aware of it, she or he constantly scans the surroundings and designates values, both amoral and moral, on the different aspects of her or his environment. Humans' perceptive tendencies have evolved over evolution and prepared us for acting in different situations; if one is allowed to put it bluntly, humans are prepared to fight or flight when in danger and to love and approach when feeling safe. Social and cultural evolution have complicated the nature of evaluation. Furthermore, the act is constantly modified by our interactions with the surrounding world. Pragmatist philosopher Pentti Määttänen, elaborating on Charles Peirce's semiotic theorising, offers intriguing insights into meanings' and values' connectedness to our habits, that is, possible actions in the world (see e. g. Määttänen 2015; 2017).

It is evident that Phelan's model certainly can bring important insights into unreliability in various contexts. However, in my treatment the blurriness between different categories makes the model too heavy and too complex to be of practical use. Therefore, a closer look at the basic model of narratological communication is needed in order to define what occurrences of communicating information falsely are the most relevant and which

categories can be combined in a meaningful manner. Following Chatman and Phelan, I have reconstructed a slightly modified version of the narrative communication model. The communication situation is represented in figure 1.

Fundamentally, unreliable narration concerns the transmittance of false information between two or more parties. Therefore, in order to pinpoint the possible points of disturbance in narrative communication chain, it is important to explicate how and between which actors information can be transferred in the first place and how the information may become flawed. I marked the directions of different kinds of "communication flows" with various arrows (see fig. 1). Three different types of information movement are presented: actual, quasi-, and reconstructive communication flows. It is self-evident, yet also worth pointing out, that the only actual communication takes place between the real author(s) and the real reader(s), and the reason for that is quite simple: they are the only actors that exist as corporeal beings in the real world and are thus capable of communicating and comprehending information. This aspect is represented in two ways in the model: by contrasting the colour of the real actors' squares with the purely abstract actors' squares and with the one strong arrow that depicts the actual communication flow.

The middle-sized, dotted-line arrows represent *quasi-communication flow*, that is, communication that does not exist but feigns to take place. There are four different
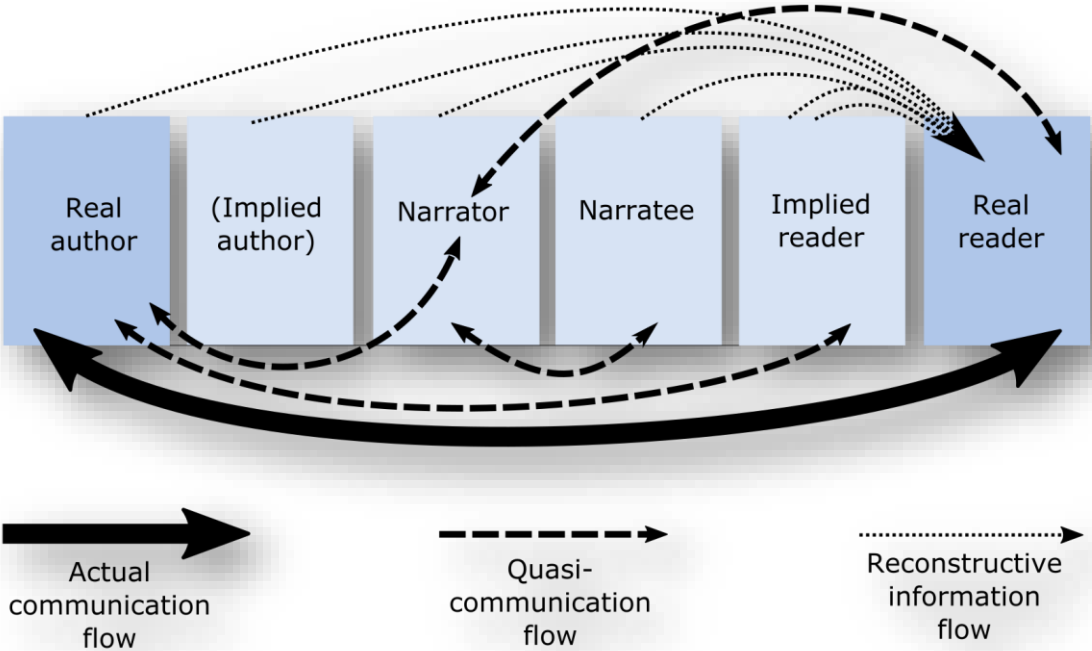


*Figure 1. The model shows three different types of information flows that are present in the event of narrative communication. The actual communication flow represents the interaction between the actual author(s) and the actual reader(s). The quasi-communication flow symbolizes the non-actual communication. The reconstructive information flow presents the information that the receiver infers about different narrative agents acting on various diegetic levels and positions.*

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versions of it: between the real author and the narrator, the real author and the implied reader, the narrator and the real reader, and the narrator and the narratee. The first one concerns the Boothian unreliability and depicts the distance between the author and the narrator. However, as I will later argue, this communication chain should also include the real reader which is why the arrow continues through the narrator towards the real reader. Communication between the author and the implied reader concerns the potential audience the author addresses. This type will also be discussed in more detail later. Finally, communication between the narrator and the narratee is in Genettian terms "intradiegetic," that is, it happens inside the fictional world; the narratee is the actor to whom the narrator directs his or her words. The narratee's role in the communication chain may become visible e. g. through the narrator's choice of words; the narrator may adjust his or her language according to the intradiegetic receiver. The same is true for all instances of quasi-communication: even if the recipient's presence is merely implied, his or her presence may become expressed through the speaker's rhetorical devices; hence the two-way arrows.

The *reconstructive information flow* represents the knowledge the real reader infers about different actors by engaging with the narrative. Although I hold that readers actively participate in constructing the narrative through their cognitive and at times, ergodic (i. e. non-trivial interaction, e. g. pressing the screen in order to proceed; see Aarseth 1997, p. 1) effort, the direction of the information flow is represented as moving towards the real reader; in other words, the arrows do not depict the direction of the action but, instead, the direction of the information accumulation. After all, the reader is the only one who receives information; the real reader cannot pass information to, say, the narrator, because as a fictitious, representational entity the narrator is incapable of actual communication.

There is one actor to whom the real reader can sometimes communicate to: the real author. The nature of this type of communication varies in different settings; the receiver may e. g. ask questions if the storyteller is present in the same space and time. In *Pry*, the communication chain between the real author and the real reader is reciprocated but asymmetrical. The communication from author to reader is similar to that of any novel: the authors communicate via their artwork. However, it is very likely that the readers will also convey information to the authors, be it deliberately or unintentionally. First of all, as traversing *Pry* necessitates using digital iOS devices, the reader's interaction will likely provide information to the authors of how she or he interacted with the app-novella although *Pry*'s providers do not explicitly mention this possibility anywhere. However, it is likely that the reader will leave a digital trace, only visible to the producers; many app-providers collect

information of the readers' interactions. In fact, the app has been updated four times since the initial release: in the first update, for instance, the "[r]estart chapter button" was made to work "from all states," "miscellaneous chapter 3 audio bugs" were fixed and "chapter resume functionality" was improved (*Pry*'s version history on Apple's App Store). These improvements imply that the authors indeed monitor the users' interactions. Another way of interacting, one visible to the reader, the authors, as well as other potential readers, is to rate the artwork on Apple's App Store where the app-novella can be purchased from. The readers can give the app up to five stars and also write a short review. At the moment, *Pry* has received two ratings, having earned 4.5 stars.

       As I suggested earlier, unreliability concerns the transmittance of false information. Figure 1 can be used to locate points of disturbance. The main sources for unreliability can be divided into *essentialist* and *dynamic* sources. In other words, unreliability may be caused by (1) the sender perceiving falsely and passing on the falsely perceived information or (2) disturbed information flow between two actors. As I will demonstrate, Phelan's categories can be incorporated under these categories.

       Now that we have a model for the flow of information in narrative communication situation, let us analyse it step by step and consider what unreliability would mean at each point. Let us consider both essentialist and dynamic causes. Firstly, there is the real author who may be unreliable. A possible scenario could entail the reader considering the author morally flawed which could then result in the artwork's imprinted moral code to be perceived as unreliable. Another scenario, one in which the author is reliable but the communication chain between the author and the reader gets disturbed, could include an author using irony but the reader not realising that; this would most likely lead the reader to consider the artwork or the author unreliable. When it comes to the relation between the real author and the implied reader, a possible scenario could include a morally flawed author shaping the narrative in a manner that would persuade a potential audience to approve of his or her morally compromised views as in *The Turner Diaries* (1978). The novel contains anti-Semitic and racist narration and has led many to view William Luther Pierce as a morally compromised author (perhaps even himself, as he published the work under pseudonym Andrew Macdonald; an ironical turn, indeed). A third possible scenario could include a case of writer's block: the implied audience acting so demanding and critical that the poor author would feel overwhelmed.

       I agree with Mieke Bal (1981) and feel suspicious towards the concept of implied author. In my opinion, it risks complicating narrative models unnecessarily. The

concept seems symptomatic of what I would call "a referential bias"; it is sometimes assumed in theoretical discussions that if one cannot know definitely what the actual author had in mind, the reader's assumptions about the author's intentions cannot refer to the actual author's intentions and thus an additional entity is needed; according to Booth, for instance, "regardless of how sincere an author may try to be, his different works will imply different versions, different ideal combinations of norms (Booth 1961/1983, p. 71; see also Shen 2011/2013, para. 18). Booth's argument holds only if one is to maintain a view in which human beings are immutable, unambiguous, and capable of embedding coherent sets of norms in their works. One does not, however, need to take this for granted; human actors are not necessarily unequivocal and unchangeable; an author's views may fluctuate throughout his or her life. This need not be a problem. I argue that there are more convenient ways of conceptualising the communication chain. Let us, for instance, imagine an everyday situation in which a person misunderstands her partner's message. In order to represent the event in an abstract form, should an extraneous agent be introduced in the communication chain? It most certainly would be possible. It is quite another matter, frankly, if that would be the best way of conceptualising. Instead of introducing an extraneous agent, one might just note that a person misunderstood her partner's words. In a similar manner, real readers may infer authorial messages from narratives, and their discernments may be more or less close to what the author actually had in mind. What remains in both conceptualisations is intentionality: the readers seem to search for coherent intention.

The concept of implied author may still prove useful when studying texts in which the actual author pretends to be someone else or belong to a group that he or she does not belong to. One such example Phelan brings up is Forrest Carter's *The Education of Little Tree* (1976), a novel that "purports to be the autobiography of a Cherokee growing up within American Indian culture, whereas the real Forrest Carter is probably not a Cherokee and definitely someone who has espoused white supremacist doctrines" (Phelan 2005, p. 45). Whereas Phelan (ibid.) considers the implied author "not a product of the text but rather the agent responsible for bringing the text into existence," I would treat the concept as a representational product of the text, a kind of pseudo-agent that can be critically examined. Treating it as such would enable one to analyse the kinds of narrative and rhetorical devices the author has chosen when pretending to be someone else, and the kinds of cultural assumptions imprinted in the pseudo-agent. What follows from my definition is that the implied author is inevitably unreliable.

Following from my manner of conceptualising the actors, that what Booth would call the ironical relation between the implied author and the narrator, I will locate between the real author, the narrator, and the real reader. The stance is not far from that of Booth's, even if he does not mention the reader in the essential definition of unreliable narration (see p. 11 of this dissertation); according to Booth, "[t]here can be no dramatic irony, by definition, unless the author and audience can somehow share knowledge which the characters do not hold" (Booth 1961/1983, p. 175). Thus, it is not only the distance between the narrator and the author but the three-dimensional distance between the author, the narrator, and the real reader that constitutes this particular type of unreliability; as James Phelan puts it, the "trajectory of our feelings is itself linked to the psychological, thematic, and [...] ethical dimensions of the narrative" (Phelan 2005, p. 19). In order to observe the ironical distance, the reader has to (1) share sufficiently similar ethical views with the author, and/or (2) realise that the author's ethical stance remains at an ironical distance in relation to the narrator's stance, and/or (3) share sufficiently dissimilar ethical views with the narrator. [2] To dress the abstract rule into a form of a concrete example, one could, for instance, imagine someone with paedophilic tendencies reading Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955). If he or she does not condemn paedophilia (see points 1 & 3) and does not have a reason to believe that Nabokov himself condemns it (see point 2), the reader might not consider Humbert Humbert unreliable. Another example could concern a novel that examines political topics in recent history or in a contemporary context. It is likely that the reader's own political leanings would affect the way she or he treats the narrative. This is crucial when it comes to *Pry* as I already pointed out in the introduction and will later argue in more detail.

When it comes to the narrator, it is yet again possible to consider the essential as well as dynamic sources for unreliability. At least four of Phelan's categories – misreading, underreading, misregarding, and underregarding – would fall inside the category of essential unreliability. Let us take a look at how Phelan defines two of the categories – namely, what he says of underreading and underregarding:

> Underreading [...] occurs when the narrator's *lack of knowledge*, *perceptiveness*, or *sophistication* yields an *insufficient interpretation* of an event, character, or situation. Underregarding occurs when a narrator's *ethical judgement* is moving along *the right track* but simply *does not go far enough*. (Phelan 2005, 52; emphases added.)

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[2] In addition to the ethical stance, this might concern epistemological and other factors as well. However, including all these various aspects in the treatment would complicate the text unnecessarily.

There are two things that I want to point out about the italicised parts of Phelan's definition. First of all, all of the aspects in italics exist in relation to something. Knowledge can only be lacked if there is a threshold for sufficient knowledge and the boundaries for that threshold have to be defined by someone. The same applies to, say, sophistication: a polite gesture in some cultures might be perceived as rude and distasteful in others. These factors' inherent relativity does not yield Phelan's model useless, however: Phelan's categories are undoubtedly useful when categorising readers' cognitive evaluations and interpretative acts. In other words, although it may be impossible to say that one particular text is definitely, say, a case of underreading, it could be said that readers A, B, and C consider it as such and readers D and E consider it as a case of underregarding. Phelan himself acknowledges this, as I stated earlier (see p. 12 of this dissertation), but there is a reason for the elaboration here: I want to stress that all of the four aforementioned categories (misreading, misregarding, underreading, and underregarding) have a common denominator: they are linked to perceiving. To put it differently, all of the aspects that Phelan describes relate to the perceiver processing information. Therefore, I will combine the categories under one umbrella in my classification: they will be treated as "misperceiving." Collecting the types under one umbrella term will make tabulating them more convenient and spare me from unnecessarily complex classification structures.

Inaccurate or insufficient perceiving may be caused by many different factors, some of them being the perceiver's age (see Phelan 2005, p. 7–8) or racial attitudes (see Brax 2013, p. 259–261). In *Pry*, the standards for what is sufficient need to be discussed thoroughly. I already mentioned the cultural codes that affect the requirements for sufficiency, but there are also other factors that should be acknowledged. *Pry*'s narrator-protagonist James has a vision impairment that manifests in various ways. When positioning James's vision condition inside the theoretical model, one needs to be wary of in-building discriminatory structures; namely, if a researcher decides that vision impairment will inevitably result in unreliability, ableist social structures will come as imprinted by-products in the model. The same applies to James's post-traumatic stress disorder. Assumptions about mental health conditions should not be made lightly, and when assumptions are made, their implications should be discussed.

Theoretical models should not contain imprinted ableist structures. However, it is likely – and the analysis of my dataset will support this hypothesis – that non-disabled readers sometimes do consider vision impairment and PTSD as symptoms of unreliability.

My solution is to separate James's vision impairment and PTSD as their own categories in the classification (see section 2.2.). This conduct will allow me to analyse the readers' accounts of these subjects without necessarily having to count them as symptoms of unreliability.

Although perceiving is inherently a dynamic process, I would count a narrator's limited perceiving abilities as an essentialist source for unreliability in my model, simply because the agents are represented as coherent entities in it. This, like many other choices I have made in this dissertation, is fundamentally a question of conceptualisation. It should be kept in mind in narratological discussions that there are always more ways than one to represent phenomena in an abstract form (see e. g. Lakoff & Johnson 1980/2003). Therefore, I would like to ask my reader to consider my conceptualisations as one way of tapping into information. The object of fig. 1 is not to offer an exhaustive representation of narrative communication situation but to provide a simplified skeleton that can support the analysis.

A reliably perceiving narrator may be unreliable if she or he reports deceptively. Phelan's "misreporting" and "underreporting" would belong in this category: the narrator may communicate false information or reveal less than she or he actually knows (see Phelan 2005, p. 51–52). The narrator may communicate untrue information to the narratee for various reasons which then shapes the nature of unreliability. In *Pry*, there are instances where James's subconscious will try to prevent the reader from obtaining information of the events in the war camp. Sometimes the effect works in the opposite direction: the subconscious will reveal more than James intentionally narrates in his inner thoughts. The different tiers of James's consciousness thus at least partially have their own motivations.

A narrator may break the illusion of fiction and address the reader instead of the narratee. A narrator's *tristramshandian* metatextual comments can be considered as one kind of unreliability. I mark this type of unreliability with the quasi-communication arrow between the narrator and the implied reader. Although the actual reader is the one who in reality ends up receiving the pseudo-communication, I deemed this manner of representation as a convenient way to distinguish meta-textual comments from the Boothian unreliability.

Finally, there is the actual reader. It is left for the researchers interested in narrative devices and mechanisms to study just how unreliable the readers are. It is left for the researchers to study which elements of narratives are emphasized and which elements are ignored. Human beings conceive only some parts of the reality whilst others remain invisible to us. A very concrete example is provided by our sight as humans only perceive certain wavelengths of light. Furthermore, humans express certain cognitive biases in their reasoning. Having paid attention to human readers' erring tendencies, however, I want to highlight that

when real readers' interpretations are applied as part of the research, there comes a responsibility that is not always so well-established in text-oriented approaches. I myself am interested in descriptive rather than prescriptive analysis; literary scholars should, in my opinion, be wary of introducing too many "oughts" in their analysis. Having too strong opinions on how readers *should* interpret narratives may obscure the ways they actually and naturally *do*. Furthermore, overt "oughts" may lead to discriminating readers on the basis of their "competence" or education level; after all, education and competence are privileges socio-geographically concentrated in some areas more than others. Overly prescriptive approaches may yield biased results and may risk treating the readers unethically.

Based on both essentialist and dynamic sources for unreliability in the communication chain, I conclude that at least the following factors should be taken into account when analysing unreliability in *Pry*: the narrator's unreliable reporting (transmitting false information), the narrator's unreliable perceiving (attaining false information), the degree of authors' perceived (un)reliability, the (ironical) relationship between the authors and the narrator, the (ironical) relationship between the narrator and the reader, and mechanisms to avoid non-discriminatory structures.

## 2.2. Towards close-reading and beyond – Methods

I began my investigation with a thorough examination of *Pry*. I then collected other readers' interpretations and created a list of qualities that I looked for in the texts. The results were marked on an Excel sheet; the outcome is represented in Appendix 1. If the item was found in the text, it was marked with "1," and if it was inexistent, it was marked with "0." This manner of recording the instances makes it possible to compare different variables and see how prevalent they are in this particular set of texts.

In addition to collecting the instances on an Excel sheet in a numeric form, I collected each instance on a Word document under the correlating categories' headings (see Appendix 2). The standard practice was to record the sentence in which the defining feature appeared; however, if the previous or subsequent sentences provided essential information, they were also included in the quotations. Appendix 2 serves two purposes: first of all, it made it easier for me to investigate and compare different instances in more detail. For example, when all misperception instances are gathered together, it is easier to seek out similarities and differences between different writers' interpretations. Secondly, I wanted to make the methods and the materials as transparent as possible. It should be possible for this dissertation's reader to be able to access and evaluate the materials I am discussing. In the

best possible scenario, a reader will notice a crucial point that I missed and perhaps come up with an improved version. Transparency is crucial in scientific research.

Before moving on to describing the different categories in more detail, some words about their formation are in place. Namely, some of the categories are based on existing narratological models (see chapter 2.1.), some of them are inspired by *Pry*'s narrative devices, some of them arise from the interpretations themselves, and some of them were inspired by my own reading that I will offer in chapter 4. It is important to acknowledge that even when a method aims for systematicity and objectivity, the categories are shaped by the researcher's motivation of interest. Therefore, I will not claim to present the reader with a holistic or exhaustive analysis of my dataset. That is not to say that the categories in this dissertation are random; rather, I want to emphasise that there are a variety of factors that should be considered when studying the results my research yields.

I will now move on to presenting the different categories A–Z that contain the different variables. As was stated earlier, all of the instances included in these categories can be found on Appendix 1 in a numeric form and Appendix 2 in a verbal form.

*A. Misreporting.* This section contains explicit notions of unreliable reporting, i. e. notions of the narrator/text/some character communicating information falsely. The instances either contain explicit analysis of unreliability or discuss the obscuring of reality or truth in *Pry*'s narration. This category is an application of Phelan's (2005) categories that concern unreliable reporting and has been modified based on the discussion in chapter 2.1. The reason for not limiting the cases purely for the narrator's unreliability is that actual readers may not be as well-informed about narrative communication models as narratologists are. Therefore, it is not self-evident that they would locate unreliability in the narrator; some readers, for instance, discuss the text's unreliability rather than the narrator's.

*B. Misperceiving.* This section contains notions of unreliable perception, i. e. explicit notions of the narrator/some character perceiving information falsely. Like the previous one, this category is an application of Phelan's (2005) categories that concern unreliable perceiving, and has been created based on discussion in chapter 2.1. The category contains notions of e. g. obscuring of temporality (what happened when), false memories, hallucinations, et cetera. Although hallucinations can be symptomatic of defective mental functioning and thus could be excluded in order to avoid in-building ableist structures in the model, these instances were included in this category because the term refers to "perception of objects with no reality" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*); the notions thus concern unreliable perceiving.

*C. Mentions of real authors.* This section contains notions of *Pry*'s authors. The instances must include the word(s) "author(s)," "creator(s)," the authors' names Danny Cannizzaro and/or Samantha Gorman, the author duo's artistic name Tender Claws, or some other explicit reference to the authors.

*D. Implicit and explicit notions of authors' goals.* This section contains notions of the authors' goals and intentions. Unlike in the previous section, these instances are not presupposed to explicitly mention the authors although they well might. These instances might include items such as "*Pry* is about x" or "the main theme in *Pry* is y." In other words, there may be sentences in which the authority is implied rather than explicated. To say that a literary work is about something is to state that whoever crafted the narrative had some intentions that can be extrapolated from the artwork.

*E. Mentions of James's interactive inner thoughts.* This section contains notions of James's inner thoughts. The category is motivated by *Pry*'s narrative devices, for three different dimensions of James's consciousness are presented in the first chapter, one of them being James's inner speech. The logic of these three dimensions varies in different chapters; however, the inner narration appears in most chapters when the reader does not touch the screen. More detailed description of the narrative logic will follow in chapter 3.

*F. Mentions of James's interactive subconscious.* This sections contains notions of James's subconscious which can be most often accessed by pinching the screen. Like the previous category, this one too is motivated by *Pry*'s narrative devices.

*G. Mentions of James's interactive sight.* This section contains notions of James's sight which can be most often accessed by prying the screen open. This category is motivated by *Pry*'s narrative devices.

*H. Braille and chapter 3*. This section contains notions of *Pry*'s chapter 3 in which the reader encounters virtual braille writing. It is inspired by *Pry*'s narrative devices as well as my own motivation of interest. In addition to chapter 3, there are other chapters where the initial pinch-the-screen-closed-and-pry-open-logic is modified; however, I find chapter 3 of specific interest because of the narrative devices that are implemented.

*I. Sense of closure.* This category was inspired by two things: first of all, by the fact that some digital literary works are infinite and, secondly, by the conceptions of *fabula* and *syuzhet* that belong in the toolkit of classical narratology. In digital literature, plot resolution is often less certain than in traditional novels. I was interested to see how *Pry*'s readers conceived the (in)finiteness of the artwork. Furthermore, I was interested to see what

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readers made of *Pry*'s plot and if they felt there was a resolution or a catharsis. I deemed it likely that the sense of closure might have some effect on the perceived unreliability.

J. *Sense of incompleteness.* This category is a counterpart for the previous one and thus includes readers' notions of incompleteness. The readers' notions concern narrative incompleteness, the lack of plot resolution as well as lack of all chapters; as I will later elaborate, *Pry* was released in two parts and thus all chapters were not available to all readers.

K. *References to other interpretations.* This category contains readers' explicit references to other interpretations or discussions of *Pry*. Some of the references were executed by embedding the link to the referenced internet article. I limited the reference count to only those texts that discuss *Pry* although many also cited narrative theory, other digital literature, et cetera. Although it would be interesting to take a look at all webs of references in a future setting, they are out of the scope of this research. I deemed it more important to investigate whether references to other readers' interpretations had a noticeable impact.

L. *Distance between the real authors and the narrator.* This category is inspired by Booth's (1961/1983) theorizing on the distance between the implied author and the narrator. According to Booth, the implied author creates an ironical distance between the unreliable narrator and him/herself. This category contains notions of the ironical distance between the actors.

M. *Difficult read.* This category contains instances in which the readers discuss *Pry*'s difficulty. I was interested to see if the narrative's perceived difficulty had an impact on the perceived unreliability.

N. *Mentions of PTSD and trauma.* This category contains notions of post-traumatic stress disorder and trauma. Most of the instances contain the word(s) "PTSD," "post-traumatic stress disorder," or "trauma," but there are also cases in which the physical and psychological symptoms of PTSD are described without mentioning any of the aforementioned words explicitly.

O. *Mentions of war and military.* As the name indicates, this category contains readers' notions of war and military. Words such as "war," "bombing," "soldier," and "military base" are examples of the instances. I had no preliminary word list for this category; if the expression was semantically close enough, it sufficed. This category was inspired by my own reading that I will offer in chapter 4.

P. *Naming the war.* This category contains the instances in which the readers name the war *Pry* represents.

*Q. Mentions of James's vision impairment.* This category contains notions of James's vision impairment. I deemed it important to have this as its own category instead of ableistically counting these instances as misperceiving (see p. 18–19 of this dissertation).

*R. Mentions of Jessie.* This category contains mentions of a character called Jessie. She is usually referred to by her first name but there are also instances where she is called e. g. "a female soldier."

*S. Mentions of Luke.* This category contains notions of a character named Luke.

*T. Luke as brother.* Some of the readers interpret Luke as James's brother. The instances appear in this category.

*U. Luke as friend.* Most of the readers who mention Luke treat him as James's friend or other non-relative. These instances belong in this category.

*V. Mentions of the United States*. This category contains explicit mentions of the United States. Geographical locations form the bulk of this section; however, mentions of George Bush Senior and George Bush Junior are also included as the presidents are strong and explicit references to the country.

*W. Mentions of the Middle East*. This category contains explicit mentions of the Middle East. The instances are mainly mentions of geographical locations.

*X. Relations between the reader and James.* This heterogeneous category contains notions about the relationship between James and the reader. The more I gathered these instances, the more complex the task became; it seemed like an impossible task to separate the instances where the readers describe the artwork's interactive functionality from those where the readers describe their personal experiences in relation to James. Thus, the category contains some remarks from each interpretation and, as noted, is heterogeneous.

*Y. Key words*. This category contains the tags and key words that the readers identified their texts with. The instances are presented in figure 2.

As there is a relatively large amount of categories and the length of the dissertation is limited, some categories will receive less attention than others. Therefore, I will not discuss "I. Sense of closure," "J. Sense of incompleteness," "K. References to other interpretations," and "M. Difficult read." However, I decided to include the categories in the appendixes for the sake of transparency. It is worthwhile not only to gather information about significant factors but also those that yield more moderate results. The conduct will aid in the planning of future experimental settings.

## 2.3. Turning the implicit into explicit – Readers and materials

The 64 interpretations of *Pry* were searched via University of Helsinki's online library services (helka.finna.fi) and via Google. Genre-wise, a large majority (53 out of 64) of the interpretations are reviews written by university students from Washington State University, University of Alaska Fairbanks, University of Otago, and University of Mary Washington. The student reviews have been published on course blogs. The data also include professional reviews by John Cayley (2015), Clara Chetcuti (2016), digital poet David "Jhave" Johnston
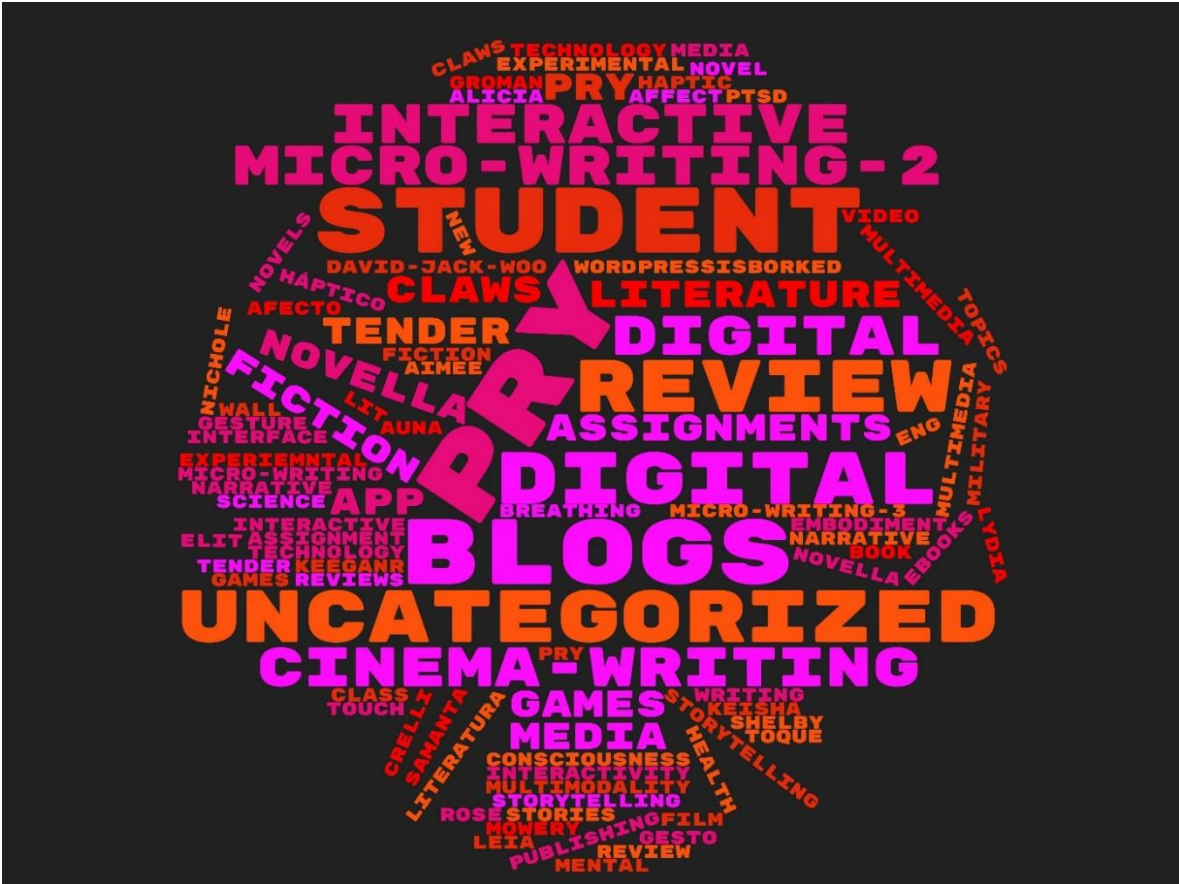


*Figure 2. This word cloud presents the tag words the readers have used to categorise their texts. The size of the word indicates the frequency of the word: the larger the word appears, the more frequently the readers have used it. The figure provides some insights into the topics the readers have deemed pivotal. The word cloud was created using a tool on www.wordclouds.com.*

(2014) as well as an academic article by Maziarczyk Grzegorz (2017) and Diogo Marques's doctoral dissertation (2018). Furthermore, some of the reviews were published on personal or collaborative blogs. One of the reviews was published as a blog post on *Medium* by Future of StoryTelling, a collaborative network self-identifying as "a creative community of people from the worlds of media, technology, and communications who are exploring how storytelling is evolving in the digital age" (Future of StoryTelling 2016, description). The community awards the Future of Storytelling Prize annually. The prize "aims to celebrate the talents of those pushing the boundaries of what it means to be a storyteller in the digital age" (Future of StoryTelling 2018, para. 3). It is noteworthy that *Pry* was one of the finalists in 2014. The prize is notable both in terms of money and notoriety: in 2018, for instance, two winners "each received $10,000 and had their work promoted through PR and social media" (id. para. 5).

What can be said about these interpretations as one set of data? First of all, the dataset is not controlled in the sense of which issues or aspects of the artwork were addressed in the texts. As the majority of the reviews were submitted as coursework by students, their interpretations had some preliminary frameworks set by their professors which will have affected the form and the content of their analysis. However, one should not be tricked into thinking that a preliminary framework would be exceptional; arguably any review or analysis is shaped to an extent by its genre, the page count defined by the publisher, et cetera. These shaping frameworks should be acknowledged without exaggerating their significance; they affect the readings but do not render the dataset unusable for the purposes of this study. Yet, there are some interesting, possibly even revealing, notions to make in relation to the variables in the checklist: when I counted the instances per writer (the 1s and 0s only, not each individual instance although a writer may have mentioned a variable more than once), professional writers by and large "scored" the highest numbers: Maziarczyk 20, Marques 19, and Chetcuti 17. University of Alaska Fairbanks student Shelby also scored high with number 19, the average score of all writers being 9. This effect may result from the length of the analyses as Maziarczyk's, Marques's, and Chetcuti's texts are lengthy compared to the students' reviews; it makes sense that when one has more space, she or he can discuss many more aspects of the source text. That is not straightforwardly self-evident, however, as student Shelby's review is around 570 words, her score being 19, whereas digital poet's Johnston's article is around 3100 words, his score being 11. Another possibility is that I, coming from the field of literature and familiar enough with narrative theory to be writing my dissertation, have learned to seek for certain things – and the professionals, familiar with the conventions

and accentuations of the same field, will include similar things in their analyses. In other words, it is possible that writers familiar with the current academic understanding of narratives will focus on certain aspects of narratives. This issue should be addressed in future research: how to investigate narratives and interpretation processes as objectively as possible. Third option, of course, is that the numbers and distributions are coincidental.

The lack of prior control has major implications on the results that the analysis yields. When discussing the results, no causal explanations can be inferred. Introducing causal explanations would require a different experimental set-up, one in which the researcher would be able to control the factors under scrutiny. Such experiment could, for instance, include two slightly modified texts that groups A and B would encounter, respectively. If there was a statistically significant difference between the groups in the imaginary setting, one could argue having pinpointed a causal effect. Of course, other relevant factors, such as the sample size, should be sufficient to produce generalizable information. Furthermore, as Bortolussi and Dixon (2002, p. 13) point out, a large body of empirical experiments is needed in order to truly establish how different narrative "variables operate, how they interact, and how they combine to determine readers' processing."

18 of the texts were written before the second part of *Pry* was published in 2016. It follows that all chapters were not available to all readers. Publication dates offer some information of which writers could use which versions of *Pry*; however, as I was going through the texts, it turned out that even if all *Pry*'s chapters were published by the time the review was published, some writers still focused on the initial publication (chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, and "Prologue"). One of them was Maziarczyk whose reading was "based on the multimodal data provided in this initial release" (2017, p. 219). Furthermore, the students at Washington State University wrote two posts each, the first posts discussing the initial publication and the second ones discussing the rest of the chapters or the work as a whole. All in all, of 64 interpretations 46 were published after *Pry*'s both parts were available, and of those 20 focused on the initial release.

When gathering the dataset, I intentionally excluded some texts. The texts were excluded if they were too short, say, only some dozens of words in total, or if the writer had interviewed Gorman and Cannizzaro and combined their comments with his or her own notions. Although the interviews surely would bring interesting insights into the topic of narrative sense-making, I wanted to keep the emphasis on the readers' interpretations rather than on the authors' ideas. However, citing the authors from some external source did not affect whether or not the text was included in the dataset.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that all of the texts included in the dataset have been written by WEIRD writers which is partly explained by the fact that *Pry* is an artwork mainly available to WEIRD readers – readers who live in Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic (Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan 2010) countries and have access to pricey iOS devices. Researchers in psychology have started to address the question with concern (see e. g. Schulz et al. 2018). Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan, who all come from the field of psychology, direct potent criticism towards the current research paradigm that aims to make estimations about humans as a species but is overtly fixated on WEIRD subjects:

> Researchers – often implicitly – assume that either there is little variation across human populations, or that these "standard subjects" are as representative of the species as any other population. Are these assumptions justified? Here, our review of the comparative database from across the behavioral sciences suggests both that there is substantial variability in experimental results across populations and that WEIRD subjects are particularly unusual compared with the rest of the species – frequent outliers. *The domains reviewed include visual perception, fairness, cooperation, spatial reasoning, categorization and inferential induction, moral reasoning, reasoning styles, self-concepts and related motivations, and the heritability of IQ.* The findings suggest that members of WEIRD societies, including young children, are among the least representative populations one could find for generalizing about humans. Many of these findings involve domains that are associated with fundamental aspects of psychology, motivation, and behavior – hence, there are no obvious *a priori* grounds for claiming that a particular behavioral phenomenon is universal based on sampling from a single subpopulation. (Henrich, Heine & Norenzayan 2010, p. 61; first emphasis added.)

There is no doubt that this criticism also concerns the field of narratology which often incorporates notions of "visual perception, fairness, cooperation, spatial reasoning, categorization and inferential induction, moral reasoning, reasoning styles, self-concepts and related motivations" either implicitly or explicitly in the analytical reasoning. It is pressing that these domains, indeed, are a central focus point especially in cognitive narratology. Furthermore, narratologists themselves more often than not are representatives of WEIRD populations. This issue should be addressed in future research.


### 2.4. Researcher's responsibilities – Ethical considerations

When narratology takes steps towards psychology, cognitive sciences, and other social-empirical fields, discussions about research ethics should take place. If and when narratologists begin to work with actual readers' accounts of narratives, they accept certain

kinds of responsibilities. Acquiring new methods and "external" sources of information necessitate ethically sustainable ways of conduct.

In addition to literary theory's more conventional ethical principles (principles that concern honesty, non-discrimination, respect for intellectual property, and so forth), issues such as the subjects' informed consent and confidentiality will have to be considered. Confidentiality means treating private individuals' identities with respect and taking steps to keep the individuals' identities anonymous when necessary. Informed consent means informing the individuals prior to research and obtaining their consent to participate in the study. What complicates research ethics is that some principles may have conflicting implications. For instance, the principle of openness requires being as transparent as possible, whereas the principle of respect for confidentiality requires limiting the openness.

There are various ways of collecting and analysing data. Naturally, the way the research is carried out affects the way that consent and confidentiality are realised. The data in this dissertation, as I have already mentioned, consists of texts published in different media. Therefore, I have deemed that the act of publishing is a sufficient signal of consent; by distributing the texts on a public platform the writers express their understanding of the fact that anyone can access and study their writings. Furthermore, the topic of the study is not sensitive as it does not deal with the individuals' medical, monetary, personal, or other socially sensitive information. When it comes to confidentiality, the authors have been able to determine the extent to which they publish personal information. For instance, several writers have published their texts under an anonymous username. I will use those usernames when referencing their writings. Some writers had chosen to write under a username but still announced their names somewhere on the web page. To those writers I will refer to by their names because I want to respect their rights to their intellectual property.

A designated consent does not equal an intellectual Wild West in which the researcher is free to trudge and rampage in whatever manner. It is important to treat the writings with integrity, honesty, and carefulness, especially when handling writings that were not written by public or professional figures, e. g. politicians, scientists, philosophers, journalists, or celebrities. The researcher should make sure that the focus of the study does not turn unnecessarily towards private individuals. Acknowledging this is all the more important when considering the conventional form of literary research: arguments are often introduced by contrasting them with other researchers' arguments. However, unprofessional individuals are not as prepared for that as, say, literary scholars, who expect even harsh debates when they publish their articles.

To avoid unfair treatment, it is crucial that the researcher understands the nature of his or her dataset. I have already analysed my dataset above, but some further remarks should be made. First of all, I want to remind my reader that I conducted no prior control or framing whatsoever. In other words, I have not defined the topics and narrative phenomena the writers discuss; I have only been able to pinpoint my points of interest on already published texts. Therefore, one should not deduct too boldly from the absence or the presence of certain variables. Although, as I will demonstrate in chapter 4, some significant topics indeed seem to be absent from the dataset, I cannot make strong inferences e. g. about the readers' political leanings, moral views, or WEIRDness, even when the absent topics concern politics or ethics. The readers may or may not have considered the topics, and they may have left out some information for a variety of reasons.

The principle of respect plays an important role when collecting data. In the context of this dissertation, for instance, I decided to exclude a few texts because during the process I came to realise they were copied directly from other sources. Unquestionably, plagiarism in itself demonstrates grave misconduct by the plagiarist. Furthermore, including plagiarised texts in the dataset, especially when the dataset is relatively small, risks biasing the results since the same occasions will be counted many times. However, it is not only a question of collecting reliable information or condemning the act of plagiarising: the researcher should also endorse the rights of the private individual who, for whatever reason, carried out the misconduct. Although his or her action cannot be praised, it would be unreasonable to present their names in relation to suspected plagiarism. The researcher must ask herself two questions. What would including the names add to this research? What are my responsibilities towards private individuals? In the context of this dissertation the answers are clear: naming the individuals would not add any relevant information to the topic, and as the researcher I have the responsibility to treat the individuals with respect.

Responsibility towards the writers' intellectual property in this dissertation has to be discussed, too, especially since Appendix 2 consists almost entirely of other writers' quotations. I have ensured that the writers' rights are not violated by following scientific referencing rules and citing each instance in relevant detail. When a page number was not available, I referenced the texts at the precision of the paragraph. In order to express why a particular citation was included in the dataset, the decisive part of the citation was **bolded**. This, I believe, makes it easier for the reader to examine the instances and will also present a justification for the inclusion; after all, according to good scientific conduct, a text should only be cited when it provides a relevant addition.

### 3. "We both know you don't trust me" – The many forms of unreliability

In this chapter I will present an overview of *Pry* in more detail and analyse how the readers' perceptions of narrator-protagonist James's unreliability are realised. I will start by giving an overview of *Pry* in chapter 3.1. For reasons of convenience, I will be talking about "the reader" and will propose my notions of the narrative as if I were Everyreader, formerly critiqued by me. At this stage I will describe the artwork rather mechanically, merely occasionally offering elaborations on the possible interpretation paths. I hope to provide the reader with a summary, a kind of a backbone, around which different readers' interpretations will form a multi-layered, complex, intertwining, and, at times, contradicting narrative fabric. As was stated earlier (see p. 9 of the dissertation), the overview also functions as a conservation mechanism as it is not self-evident that the artwork will be available in the future due to the rapid development of digital technologies.

       Due to *Pry*'s narrative structure, I will have to concentrate on some of James's cognitive levels more than others because advancing on one level means ignoring others in one reading. This logic is especially true for James's vision and subconscious. This narrative logic encourages the reader to traverse the chapters multiple times; however, it would complicate the overview, so I will be offering one reading of the work. In chapter 3.2. I will discuss the reader constructions concerning unreliability.

       The characters are referred to by their forenames in the app-novella. However, their surnames can be found in the paratextual "Credits" section. The characters who are named are James Augar, Luke Hayes, Jessie Salehi-Spence, Rick Augar (assumedly James's father), Arlene Augar (assumedly James's mother), and Emily the dog.

### 3.1. Creating a backbone for the narrative fabric – *Pry*'s summary

*Pry* tells the story of former soldier James who participated in the First Gulf War. Six years after the war, James lives in the United States and works as a demolition consultant under the supervision of his former squad leader Luke. James occasionally loses his vision which causes him to worry whether or not he will be able to secure his position as a demolition consultant.

       The chapters can be accessed in any order the reader chooses. Multiple traverses are rewarded by a diamond-system: chapters 1–6 award the reader diamonds that indicate how thoroughly the reader has traversed the chapter. The maximum amount for each chapter is four diamonds, and collecting them will unlock more material in the "Appendix" section. "Prologue," chapter 7, "Appendix," and "Epilogue" do not add to diamonds. The artwork can

be traversed horizontally or vertically depending on the position of the device; horizontal and vertical positions portray slightly different views.

The artwork begins with cinematic "Prologue" in which the reader first encounters the exterior of a house in a middle-class American neighbourhood. The motionless video scene moves from depicting the facade of the house inside to a room that seems to be a kitchen, then shifts to a bedroom where a young man is packing. The man, James, has placed his belongings neatly on his bed. A middle-aged man, supposedly James's father Rick Augar, drives a pickup truck and stops in front of the house, honking the car's horn. In the midst of the honking sound, the camera moves from depicting the driver to a close-up of James who, having been distracted by the noise, moves towards the window. At the window, the camera angle shifts to depict the events from James's point of view, showing James's hands as he peeks between Venetian blinds and discovers his father; the impression of a first-person point of view reinforced by the previously static camerawork moving as if it motioned in sync with James's head movements (see pictures 1 and 2). James hurriedly packs his belongings in a green bag and heads for the door. Before leaving the house, James hesitates at the door and is engulfed by a recollection; suddenly the reader encounters what seems to be a self-filmed old home video depicting two dogs and a toddler playing, and in another part the toddler approaching his mother. Before leaving the house, James seeks the family dog and cuts some of its fur, supposedly to keep as a memoir as he places it inside a plastic pocket in an album.



*Picture 1. Screenshot of "Prologue." In the beginning of the chapter the camera angle remains distant, static, and objective. In these shots James can be seen from outside.*



*Picture 2. Screenshot of "Prologue." The camera angle moves to depict the events as though focalised through James's eyes. The effect is reinforced by the moving, faltering camera.*

Rick, having waited some time, honks again. When James comes out of the house, his father reminds him of the time, implying that they are in a hurry. James hops on in the car and the two drive through the neighbourhood chitchatting about the dog. They pass neighbours' houses, some trees and the U.S. flags being the sole decorative elements on the yards. The prologue ends with a scene of a military plane taking off, after which appear scenes of James, another man (who turns out to be Luke) and a woman (who is later revealed to be Jessie) in a desert and inside a military camp. The scenes start flashing ever more quickly until the prologue ends.

When the chapters change from one to the next, the heading of the new chapter is displayed on the screen. Chapter 1, called "Below and above," begins with the words "6 YEARS LATER" (*Pry*, chapter 1). The screen zooms in on a picture of Jessie, then on James who is lying on a bed, zooming closer and closer to his face, finally depicting only his eye. After that the screen turns black, white letters on the screen reading: "Awake, but not fully. What time is it?" and below them a didactic guiding the reader to "[s]pread and hold open to see through James' eyes" (*Pry*, chapter 1). The only way to move forward is to follow the artwork's instructions and to physically pry James's eyes open with an outward zooming motion. Opening James's eyes indicates that he must be lying on his back, staring at a ceiling. A mysterious black fume rises upwards and evaporates at the ceiling, turning into a stain mark. Soft humming, assumedly caused by air flow and distant traffic, fills the soundscape.

After the reader releases the screen by lifting her or his fingers off the screen, the screen returns to James's inner thoughts, stating this time: "Right, can't move," the didactic guiding the reader to "[p]inch and hold closed to enter James' subconscious" (*Pry*, chapter 1). The reader can opt to open James's eyes again, but that will not change his inner narration or remove the didactic; thus, again, the only way to proceed is to follow the artwork's instructions. When the reader pinches the screen shut and enters James's subconscious, she or he will encounter flashing words and images, the words stating: "patient/exhibits/intermittent/muscle/atonia/episodes/at/sleep/or/in/onset/of/waking/typical/for /subjects/to/experience/visions/of/intruders/imparting/violent/and/sudden/damage" (*Pry*, chapter 1).[3] After the words and images have flashed, James's subconscious shuts itself even if the reader continues to keep her fingers pinched, indicating, perhaps, that the subconscious

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[3] The slashes between words indicate shifts in screen scenes. In other words, all the words between the slashes appear for a short time and disappear before the next word(s) appear. I will apply this form of representation throughout the dissertation.

has its own motivations and opinions of what to reveal and what to hide. The screen then moves to depict James's inner narration:

> Water damage on the ceiling is spreading. Stain shaped like coffee Tom spilled on the demolition docs. That's right, think of the job. Tomorrow, I'll arrive and…can't sleep. So, tomorrow I'll arrive and coordinate the pre-blast perimeter, report in, see Luke. (*Pry*, chapter 1.)

The reader will proceed by accessing the three different levels of James's consciousness. In his inner thoughts he narrates, for instance, about *Velveteen Rabbit*, a children's story his mother used to read to him when he was a child. The subconscious presents flashing images and words that sometimes appear simultaneously and sometimes independently. The images portray e. g. flashing images of Luke and Jessie in their military costumes. The subconscious words refer to both future and past; the reader, for instance, encounters James's subconscious asking "will/he/come/tonight?" (*Pry*, chapter 1) as well as a recollection from the past, assumedly from a hunting trip:

> red/ryder/gun/on a montana evening/wet/dark/feathers/caught in brush/you were ten then/dad tracked it/all pride and blood/blood it reminds/the hunt/imagine them/don't imagine them/either way/you/call/them/up/the gouging knife/within you/however tenderly/you imagine them/below and above/ringing you in the lone pipe (*Pry*, chapter 1).

James's vision does not move, consistent with the idea that James lies still on his bed. It does, however, provide information about James's physical present and other entities' movements. At one moment, a car's lights shift through James's window blinds and the reader can hear the car driving past, the sound of the engine first approaching and then fading away in the distance. A moment later, the door to James's room opens which causes James's inner narration to state: "The door" (*Pry*, chapter 1). When the reader opens his eyes, the room looks empty although the door remains ajar. In his inner thoughts, James makes guesses of the person approaching:

> 50/50 it's her. I'd rather see Luke because he will be real tomorrow. Tomorrow we will talk about the job and he will speak like a boss or a concerned sibling. I can't tell him about these visits. 50/50 it's her. (*Pry*, chapter 1.)

Opening James's eyes will reveal information of the visitor: a young woman approaches James, climbs on the bed, looks him in the eyes, and rests her head on James's stomach, James's inner narration stating merely: "Jessie" (*Pry*, chapter 1). The serene atmosphere will

not last long, however, for the next time James opens his eyes Jessie stares down at him, raises her hand and strikes a knife into his eye. This turn of events will then lead to a set of quickly flashing images of explosions, a pack of cards, and James's cracked eyeglasses floating towards the ceiling. The chapter ends.

Chapter 2, "South Bay Implosion," starts with James's inner narration that seems less clear-cut and more "contaminated" by his vision and his subconscious compared to chapter 1; the black screen underlying the text in his inner narration glimmers with fuzzy lights at the top and the bottom of the screen and an aurally mediated announcement states: "Five minute warning. Five minute warning" (*Pry*, chapter 2). James establishes the time and the location of the scene in his inner narration:

> 10:15 am. Demolition of the Hartman Plant. Five more minutes. 6 months since I started on this project. Luke's coming to supervise. (*Pry*, chapter 2.)

If the reader pries James's eyes open, she or he will find James indeed being at a demolition site. James ticks boxes in a document he holds in his hands, supposedly marking points on a safety instructions form. The cinematic scenes move to represent different views from the demolition site, the effect resembling some outer point of view as the camerawork is static and the shifts between different scenes abrupt. Eventually, Luke walks in the picture, bearded, wearing a safety helmet and a light blue dress shirt, smiling when noticing James. When Luke approaches James, James's vision blurs, a picture of Jessie in a military uniform flashes before his eyes, and Luke's speech becomes incomprehensible. If the reader continues to keep James's vision open, the symptoms will pass when Luke moves away from James; another option is to return to James's inner narration or his subconscious. It is then time for the demolition to take place; James sees a crowd of workers count from ten to one and the Hartman Plant collapses as the explosions activate. During and after the demolition James's sight blurs again, the screen turning light red as if James was staring at a bright light with his eyes closed. Along with the scenes from the demolition site appear some that represent explosions on *Gameboy* screen as well as documentary footage depicting missiles hitting targets, implying, perhaps, that traumatic memories vividly overwhelm James. When the reader releases the screen, James's inner thoughts depict Luke approaching him but in a desert, without a beard and wearing a military costume, touching him on his shoulder and saying "hey"; it seems like James encounters a memory from the past. If the reader opens James's eyes, his sight depicts the demolition site, Luke standing in front of James and saying "hey," then asking if James was even watching (*Pry*, chapter 2). James mumbles some words

apologetically but Luke tells him off; it appears that Luke noticed James's bout of illness or bout of confusion. James's vision blurs again as if a bright light was dazzling him, intensifying to a point where the whole screen turns white. The chapter ends.

Chapter 3, "Jacob and Esau," begins with a short cinematic shot of a hand leafing through pages of a worn out braille book with holes ripped in on some of the pages. The screen then fills with white braille text on a dark screen, braille words appearing one by one; fuzzy, nearly inconceivable visuals are pulsing in the dark background. A dot mimicking a fingerprint guides the reader to touch the braille text and move her or his finger over it (see picture 3). The motion will only work if the movement goes from left to right in the way the didactic fingerprint encourages the reader to do; the inverse direction will have no effect. As the reader slides her or his finger through the text, James's voice reads the words aloud and the didactic finger will disappear. As the heading of the chapter suggests, the text is biblical and tells of Jacob and Esau.

Simultaneously as James reads the words, videos appear behind the text. The first line is of *Genesis* (25:24): "There were indeed twins in her womb" (*Pry*, chapter 3). The narration will react to the speed of the reader's sliding movement. If the reader slides her or his finger relatively fast, at the similar pace as the didactic finger guides him or her to do,
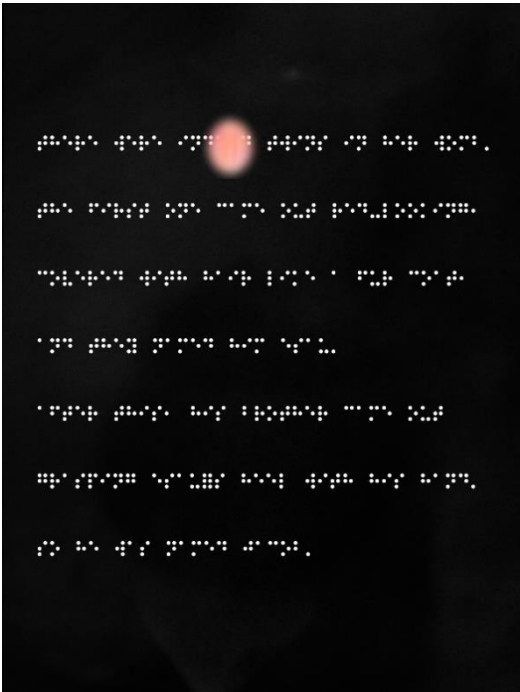


*Picture 3. Screenshot of the didactic finger guiding the reader to move their finger over the braille writing in chapter 3. When the reader follows the instructions, various cinematic scenes will appear behind the text. Simultaneously, James will read a biblical tale of Jacob and Esau aurally. The pace of the interaction determines which scenes are visualized behind the text.*



*Picture 4. Screenshot of chapter 4. The mirror on the left depicts Luke walking towards James through whose viewpoint the events are focalised. Moments later, the projection disappears from the mirror and actual Luke gets up. The representation implies that James's cognition processes perceptual information in an unusual manner, perhaps due to illness or drugs.*

James will read as if he was not hesitating and could read the words fluently. The videos behind the text will present old home recordings of a mother and two toddlers. The reader can, however, opt to read the text slowly, a word at a time, which will cause James to voice the words tentatively, his intonation indicating that he has to make significant effort to make sense of the dots and understand the writing. The videos appearing behind the text will be different this time. For instance, the words and the videos combine in the following way in the first line: "There [dark pulsing screen] were [two male toddlers approaching the person recording, one of them laughing and the other one carrying a balloon in his hands; this scene also appears when sliding the fingers in a faster pace] indeed [white blurry marks buzzing on a black background] twins [James and Luke walking in a desert in military costumes] in [home video recording of a dark-haired woman smiling; the woman, assumedly James's mother, also appears in the fast-paced scenes] her [close-up of Jessie dressed in a military uniform, raising her eyes and smiling] womb [close-up of a hand touching naked skin tenderly]" (*Pry*, chapter 3). The rest of the chapter can be traversed in these two speeds, the fast pace revealing old home video recordings of the toddlers, the mother, and their pet dogs, and the slow pace revealing cinematic scenes from the military camp, James's home, as well as the home video recordings. There are some details I want to highlight, although I will not describe the whole chapter in detail. Throughout the chapter, the word "Esau" depicts scenes of Luke and "Jacob" of James. This conspicuous assigning of intertextual roles – Luke as Esau the wronged man and James as Jacob the wrongdoer – perhaps indicates how James interprets his relationship with Luke and may also point to wrongdoings in the past. Furthermore, when the text mentions the man who wrestles Jacob in the *Bible*, the cinematic scenes depict a middle-aged man in a military uniform, supposedly James and Luke's superior in the army. The last lines of the interactive braille end with a threatening tone: "Now Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming toward him with 400 men" (*Pry*, chapter 3; originally in *Genesis* 33:1). In the *Bible*, Esau forgives Jacob, but for some reason James does not continue reading further, perhaps indicating that he awaits Luke's revenge. The chapter ends with a cinematic representation of James closing the braille book, fingering gently what seem to be bullet holes in the book's cover. The chapter ends.

Chapter 4, "Super 8," begins with James's inner narration asking "[w]hen will the attack happen?" (*Pry*, chapter 4). Entering James's subconscious will result in a black screen and a sound of a scrunching paper; a dim visual of a crumpled paper appears and vanishes quickly when the reader releases the screen. In his inner narration, James reveals to be waiting for Luke to either arrive or finish something: "Luke's taking forever tonight. He's

usually quick." (*Pry*, chapter 4.) If the reader opens James's eyes, she or he will first encounter a bright light shining through a peeking hole of some kind. The representation will then turn to depict James and Luke in a room; the furnishing does not provide much information of the country in which the room is located. Similarly to chapter 1, James is lying on a bed. Luke is sitting by a table, shuffling a pack of cards and speaking to James. The scene is dominated by a surreal feeling, giving the feeling as though James was under the influence of drugs of some kind: the screen is tilted, an ominous sound hums in the background, Luke's movements are blurry and delayed and his speech unclear and machine-like as if it was modified through a voice changer. Suddenly, when Luke still sits by the table, a mirror hanging on a wall projects him walking towards James, after which Luke does stand up and walk towards James; clearly, James's cognition processes perceptual information in an unusual manner (see picture 4). Luke approaches James, abruptly turns James's head in another direction and tells him to "look" (*Pry*, chapter 4). A flickering light emanates from another room. Luke's shadow shows him repairing the light that – whether or not Luke intends it to – goes off. In his inner narration, James thinks about "[t]he attack" (*Pry*, chapter 4). Luke comes out of the room, points to James with a flashlight and says "all good" (*Pry*, chapter 4). James agrees, in his inner narration thinking that "[i]t's all good" (*Pry*, chapter 4). If the reader opens James's eyes, she or he will now find Luke plunging into James's eye with a weapon, the scene resembling Jessie's attack in chapter 1. After that James's vision depicts a view of a television with a static screen. The chapter ends. This traversal only amounts to one diamond in the chapter's diamond system which means that a significant amount of information remains hidden. However, as the pages in this dissertation are limited, I will now move on to the next chapter.

In chapter 5, called "The Red Bridge," James wakes up in the room where he was with Luke in the previous chapter. Daylight shining through the window creates a contrast to the blurry dimness of the previous night. Furthermore, James's drug-or-illness-induced symptoms have disappeared as his sight is clear and sharp again. James suspects that he imagined Luke's presence: at first he says that "Luke is gone now" but later narrates that he "was never here. We haven't spoken in a week" (*Pry*, chapter 5); James himself acknowledges that he may experience hallucinations or vivid imaginations. When the reader opens James's eyes, James is now in a car, travelling on a motorway supposedly towards a new demolition location as, according to James's inner narration, Luke gave him "one last job" but "[i]t's just until my vision gets better" (*Pry*, chapter 5). In his subconscious flash

words "he/doesn't/trust/you" (*Pry*, chapter 5). In addition to the upcoming job, James narrates about his experiences in the Middle East:

> The sandstorm hit while we were working on a road outside Khafji, salt swept into wet concrete. It fractured as it dried. I made shelter from waste, hauled concrete into makeshift windbreaks around the pre-pour station. (*Pry*, chapter 5.)

James arrives at a rusty old bridge where a worker wearing a safety west walks across it towards him. James's vision blurs but he manages to heal it with eye drops. The worker is identified as Jeff whom James seems to dislike; in his mind, James narrates how Jeff got his nickname "coffee maker" from "brown-nosing Luke's old man" (*Pry*, chapter 5). James goes on to check the bridge, and whilst walking on it, makes notions of its structure and condition. However, other things, too, seem to take hold on James's thoughts as he recalls an event from the past with Luke. In his inner thoughts, James narrates about how they "were drinking" (*Pry*, chapter 5). The storyline proceeds in the inner thoughts in a written verbal form and in in his subconscious as cinematic scenes, the levels complementing each other and highlighting different aspects of the same narrative. It turns out that Luke found James's mother's braille *Bible*. For some reason James was reluctant to admit the book's significance, instead pretending that he was going to dispose of it along with other objects that were kept in the same box. Luke takes the book and a plaster sculpture, places them on top of the box and asks James to shoot the statue with an airsoft rifle, the braille book functioning as a cover so that the wall behind them will not be damaged. James feels that Luke "was baiting" him in order to show how bad James's vision was: "I thought/it was/an invitation/it/was/a/ test" running in his subconscious (*Pry*, chapter 5). James tries to distract Luke with questions but it does not work; James shoots and misses the target. Next, in his inner narration, utterances both from James and Luke appear, the dialogical form and the presence of an external speaker emphasized with quotation marks:

> "What the hell is wrong with you!"
> "I know your vision is shit James!" (*Pry*, chapter 5.)

James admits that his vision is "mostly gone" but claims that it does not bother him (*Pry*, chapter 5). Luke is not convinced:

> The wrong thing to say. Luke's eyes snap towards me. He is even more pissed. "Mostly gone. That's it? Really? Look James, you're a liability and I can't keep

covering for you at work." "Come on, We both know you don't trust me." "It's not you. It's the odds I don't trust." (*Pry*, chapter 5.)

Opening James's subconscious at this point will depict a pulsing darkness, his inner narration stating merely "…"; the reader has to open James's eyes to proceed. The sight depicts James walking on the bridge, his vision blurring occasionally. Returning to his inner narration reveals that Luke promises to give James another task if he manages to hit another target. James succeeds which is "how I ended up here." (*Pry*, chapter 5.) In his subconscious, James tidies up the scraps of the sculpture and tenderly touches the holes on his mother's braille *Bible*. When the reader opens James's eyes, his vision keeps blurring but in his inner narration James encourages himself (or the reader?) to "[k]eep going" (*Pry*, chapter 5). James manages to reach the end of the bridge where he encounters a vision defying physical reality: flowing in the air is the braille book, burning in flames. The chapter ends.

Before moving on to describing the next chapter, some extra words about chapter 5 are in place. In most chapters, the events of the story are not as dependent on the reader's choices as they are in this chapter. If the reader opts to forcefully keep James's eyes open when his sight blurs at the bridge, James will lose his balance and fall in the water below. Cinematic representation will depict him sinking deeper in the water and then suddenly appearing in a desert, walking along a railway; his inner narration and subconscious being accessible at these times, too, the subconscious depicting scenes from underwater and his inner narration urging to "[g]o back" to different times (*Pry*, chapter 5). There is also a third possible outcome: James manages to reach the other end of the bridge, but instead of encountering the burning braille book, he will move towards the lower structures and investigate their condition. This possibility also ends with James suddenly appearing in a desert, this time at the ruins of a demolished building. I managed to achieve the third option by avoiding James's subconscious whilst walking at the bridge and focusing on the two other level of his consciousness. It is noteworthy that the different outcomes of the chapter will not affect the storyline in the other chapters – and yet, mimetically speaking, it is not possible that James experiences all of them. The reader is able to read all of chapter 5's storylines as many times he or she likes. The chapter thus creates a loop, resisting definitive narrative outcome.

Chapter 6, "Dhahran, Saudi Arabia," modifies the form of the narration yet again. Initially, the following text appears, presented as if appearing in the inner narration:

> During downtime, we met to smoke in secret. The ash in my teeth as I breathed their names, Luke saw and froze. His face blank, washed out in the impact right before it all came apart. (*Pry*, chapter 6.)

Pinching into James's subconscious will avail to no effect and prying his eyes open will not reveal a cinematic representation of James's whereabouts; instead, more lines of text appear between the lines that the reader pries open:

> During downtime, we met to smoke in secret. The ash in my teeth as I breathed their names, Jessie, Luke. I never meant to watch. It was a wrong turn or a shortcut on the way somewhere else. We had claimed an old janitor's closet as ours. The only sane place, small inside the chaos. Luke saw and froze. His face blank, washed out in the impact right before it all came apart. (*Pry*, chapter 6.)

New lines cannot be pried open infinitely, however: when the reader has revealed all the new lines of text, cinematic scenes or flashing words appear between the lines, the peeked lines themselves turning grey to indicate that they cannot be pried further. The flashing words that resemble the visuals seen in James's subconscious blame James for dishonesty, stating, for instance, that "you/made/it/all/up/again" and "you/are/a/liar" (*Pry*, chapter 6). Furthermore, the new lines of text not only change the context of the event (as seen in the two previous quotations) but also often contradict what James has just stated:

> During downtime, we met to smoke in secret. The ash in my teeth as I breathed their names, Jessie, Luke. *I never meant to watch. It was a wrong turn or a shortcut on the way somewhere else. I followed them purposely*. Her hand on his knee. If I can't have. I can have this. closer, quicker and vicarious. Relief both bitter and needed. I'm always on. Mine littered land, all this damn sand going to do me in. They get me off. But I can't have this. I should probably go and pretend nothing compromising happened. But it's definitely prohibited. Alone, I'm not sure where I fit in. (*Pry*, chapter 6; emphasis added.)

James narrates of his inner conflict caused by Jessie and Luke's relationship. James has romantic feelings towards Jessie but the feelings are not reciprocated; Jessie and James end up having an argument when Jessie finds out about his affection. What exactly happens between the two remains unclear, however, as James's fragmentary narration jumps between different points in time and space and James explicitly states that "[t]here's no good excuse for the kind of shit I've made up" (*Pry*, chapter 6). Furthermore, the recollections of Jessie's last moments are contradicting. At one point a cinematic representation depicts Jessie and James having a heated argument and James violently pushing her, after which Jessie will lie on the floor, eyes open, motionless, looking as if she is unconscious or possibly even dead. The screen will then turn white, depicting a dialogue between the two; Jessie has found out that James told the superiors about her and Luke's relationship and angrily confronts him. What made matters worse was that James had shown Jessie his the scrap book in which he had collected

mementos of Jessie next to the mementos of his mother. Jessie is not amused: she calls James's actions "some/grade/A/ stalker/shit" and threatens to tell Luke (*Pry*, chapter 6). Although the dialogue appears after Jessie is represented cinematically lying on the ground, the verbal form as well as the background that has turned white during the row –resembling, possibly, the light that is often described in near death experiences– suggest that the dialogue may be narrated after the fight which means that Jessie may have already died. The last utterances suggest a narrative ellipsis, James intentionally leaving out the part where Jessie dies: when they fight over the scrap book, James "tear[s] back and then" – "I repeat this story/again/and again" (*Pry*, chapter 6). During the previous utterance, the screen is white, but in between it turns black, possibly symbolising Jessie's death and/or James's shifting stories.

Whether or not that really happened remains unclear, however. In another scenario James narrates how he had a "[r]ed fear that I forgot my mask" at a moment when a bomb hits the barracks (*Pry*, chapter 6). He manages to find one but it may have belonged to Jessie. James describes a dissociative episode in which he feels as though he does not control his own body, sensing as if he was watching his own actions from outside:

> Except when it's her mask. She would've reached it first. You would not have begrudged her this. *Except someone's arm moves in place of my arm*. It reaches out into the unusually silent calm. What was I doing? (*Pry*, chapter 6; emphasis added.)

Peeking in between these lines will further obscure the events: flashing words will state "[e]xcept/it/didn't/happen/like/this" and "you/know/it's/her/arm" (*Pry*, chapter 6). It is not clear whether James's guilt is caused by him actually having taken Jessie's mask or if it is "survivor's guilt" James is feeling; dissociative experiences are quite common at times of serious distress as are soldier's feelings of guilt if they have survived when others have not. Whatever the case, Jessie has suffered serious injuries; James describes how a woman, whom he assumes to be Jessie, "strains toward me" and how the "[r]emains of a body reach for my hand" (*Pry*, chapter 6). In this scenario, the explosion has wounded Jessie badly: when James reaches for her, "[h]er face gurgles where I touch it" which causes James to "retch into my mask when her skin separates in my palm" (*Pry*, chapter 6). Luke appears at the scene and gets James to leave the building; Jessie is left behind.

Chapter 7, "Camp," yet again modifies the forms of narration. In this chapter, most of the communication is mediated audio-visually via cinematic scenes. Pinching the screen and prying the screen open will reveal new scenes. If the reader opts to pinch the screen in the direction of the subconscious, episodes from the desert (assumedly in the Middle

East) appear first, scenes seen in James's subconscious and sight in previous chapters following them; there are some fragments from the red bridge, for instance, and from the night when James and Luke shot the statue and braille book with an airsoft rifle as well as scenes of Jessie and Luke making up. The last three ones contain home video quality material of the toddlers seen earlier, then the mother with one of the toddlers, and, finally, a static screen of a television. None of the scenes in this direction contain any spoken dialogue. If the reader pries the screen open in the opposite direction, the audio-visual narration will depict James and Luke, dressed up in military uniforms, setting up a camp at a desert, supposedly in the Middle East, chatting, for instance, about what they will do when they return home. There are also scenes of Jessie offering James water and inviting him to join her and some other soldiers in a game. A new version of what happened to Jessie is offered when written narration appears on the screen: "Alright,/let's speak of her/let's speak of her" (*Pry*, chapter 7). In this scenario, Jessie was upset because James had told the superiors of her and Luke's relationship which is the reason why there was to be a fraternization hearing. Jessie decides not to join the card game others are playing as a pastime, possibly the one James attends because Jessie invited him to. Instead, during the game she stays at another building which gets bombarded. James blames himself, stating that "she wasn't at the game because of me" (*Pry*, chapter 7). Written narration consoles James: "Jessie was her own person James/we all make our own choices" (*Pry*, chapter 7). The visual form of the text does not suggest an external speaker as it does not contain quotation marks or offer any other visual signs of an extraneous agent. However, it is possible that someone other than James – perhaps Luke, as following these utterances the scenes depict James and Luke at a campfire – may have uttered these words; a person might not refer to themselves by their own first name. It should be remembered, of course, that James narrates the story to the reader which means that James may indeed try and play down his role. In any case, the speaker's identity remains ambiguous.

In the "Appendix," also called "Album," the reader first encounters the braille book, burning in flames, floating and rotating horizontally in the air. Prying or pinching will produce intense burning sounds, a dim reflection of a burning paper crumpling in the background. The screen is then completely filled with text. If the reader does a quick sliding motion, objects – at this point, a teddy bear, eye glasses, postcards, and a pack of letters – appear and quickly fade in front of the text. By collecting more diamonds in the other chapters, the reader will be able to reveal more objects and new lines of text. Sliding the screen quickly will also reveal different points in time that appear and disappear in front of the text: at this point "October 1984", "May 1975", "June 1980", and "November 1985" (*Pry*,

"Appendix"). The sentences continue in the background over the screen; by sliding the screen slowly the reader will be able to read them. In this chapter, the reader learns that James's mother was a journalist who went to write a story in Lebanon but never came back. James's own narration mixes with external voices, for instance, news articles:

> NEW YORK, April 19, 1984 – The Journalist's Protection committee has recorded a troubling increase in attacks on international journalists covering Lebanon's polarizing relationship with the Syrian regime. Seven journalists have been attacked just this past month. Drugstore ice cream was my favorite. Today the chocolate drips down the cone into my fist. (*Pry*, "Appendix.")

Sudden changes between different topics and voices are symptomatic of James's reluctance to narrate about painful memories; instead of elaborating or commenting on the news article and his mother's disappearance, James shifts the focus – intentionally or unintentionally – to his own persona. The narration's fragmentary style also adds to the flow-like tone of the narration; it feels as though the reader is encountered with James's thoughts rather than with a posteriorly perfected text, although the effect becomes ironized due to the immaculately detailed and documentary style of the news article. The fragmentary style can also be read as a reflection of his experiences as a child: chaotic, grave incidents mix with everyday life and drops of joy a child encounters in his life.

The bulk of the narration deals with James's childhood memories, especially those where his mother is present; James's mother is represented as an affectionate, tender, and loving carer who, however, spends much of her time working which James, as a child, is not too content about. The reader learns that James's mother taught his son to read the braille *Bible* which – although she had inherited the book from her father who was a Baptist preacher – could imply that James was destined to lose his sight one day; why else teach a child to read braille? Furthermore, new lines that become accessible with more diamonds reveal that James only left for war to find out more about his mother's disappearance. This revelation places the core of the story under new light: perhaps the gravest trauma links to James's mother's fate rather than Jessie and Luke's romance; perhaps James is really telling the story of his mother through his narration of Jessie. The revelation can be read as a critical examination of the act of narrating, the complexity of James's traumas and his reluctance to share them demonstrating how a person's life consists of various episodes that are difficult to compress inside a coherent, comprehensive narrative

*Pry*'s last chapter, "Epilogue," begins with a cinematic representation of George Bush. Jr. announcing war on Iraq in 2003. The narrative structure is three-fold again: the

released screen depicts a square filled with text, prying the screen open will reveal actual documentary footage of George Bush Jr. announcing the Iraq War and pinching the screen closed will show actual documentary footage of George Bush Senior announcing war on Iraq in 1991. The text in the square functions similarly to the text seen in "Appendix": sentences continue over the edges and can be read by sliding the screen. Sliding the screen quickly will result in sentences in capital letters, stating:

> OPENING/STAGES/OF/WHAT/WILL/BE/A/BROAD/AND/CONCERTED/ CAMPAIGN
>
> I,/JAMES,/DO/SOLEMNLY/SWEAR/THAT/I/WILL/SUPPORT/AND/ DEFEND
>
> FAMILIES/OF/OUR/MILITARY/ARE/PRAYING/THAT/ALL/THOSE/WHO/ SERVE/WILL/RETURN/SAFELY
>
> THE/HONOR/TO/BEAR/THE/DUTY/AND/SHARE/THE/HONOR
> (*Pry*, "Epilogue.")

The sentences above are fragments that appear in Bush Junior's announcement and in the US oath of enlistment for military service. After some time, the pinched screen will turn to depict James and Rick driving the car seen in epilogue; the pried-open screen will depict Bush Junior. Both depictions terminate when James's phone rings in his present existence; at this point the reader's actions no longer affect the representation. James answers the phone and greets Luke. The chapter ends.


## 3.2. "He is not lying, rather he is just forgetting" – Readers' notions of unreliability

*Pry* posits an interesting narratological question: could there be an external narrator in the story? A reader might be compelled to assume so, the external speaker remaining intradiegetic as *Pry*'s narration could be considered as having been posteriorly represented by James, the externality of the speaker thus resulting from temporal rather than ontological-diegetic relations. Even though the reader may be able to access different levels of James's consciousness, it could be argued that James himself decides the occasions and times when the reader will be able to do so; after all, there are years of James's life that remain mysterious. The numerous spatiotemporal shifts as well as varied multimodal modes of representation in different chapters support this reading as well: the form of the artwork resists mimetic experiential continuity that is characteristic of typical human experience. Keisha acknowledges this frame of interpretation: "In order to understand the novel, the

reader must figure out all the little puzzle pieces *that James allows us to see* through his eyes and subconscious" (Keisha 2015, para. 2; emphasis added).

As logical as this line of thought may seem, it is not self-evident that all readers would follow it in their readings and, indeed, many have not. This, I argue, posits yet another challenge to narrative theory. Narratological readings are often driven by reasoning that aims towards theoretical and/or interpretive coherence; even when researchers study fragmentary narratives that resist the very act of narrating, they seek to identify a logic, the means, by which the artwork carries out the effect. Thus, the analysers seek to reveal the logic deductively, often stating that a textual feature leads almost causally to the interpretative frame to turn in a particular way. I applied this logic when suggesting that James has narrated the story posteriorly and possesses significant control over the narrative. Logically speaking, I would argue, the argument is coherent, and Keisha's reading provides supportive evidence. Yet, many readers in my dataset assume that the reader has direct access to James's emergent cognition in his present existence. Grzegorz Maziarczyk, for instance, suggests the following:

> Yet another crucial aspect of the reader's engagement with *Pry* is the absence of an omniscient narrative voice that would gently usher him or her into James's world and/or explain his situation […]. In Cannizzaro and Gorman's work *the reader is confronted with "raw", fragmented and indeterminate cognitive data* that he or she has to process on his or her own. (Maziarczyk 2017, p. 219; emphasis added.)

The way the reader interprets the diegetic structure will likely affect how James's unreliability is perceived – although, yet again, the effects may be many. Similarly to Maziarczyk, Aimee Bushnell believes that the reader has direct access to James's cognition. Particularly interesting in her reading are the notions of emerging knowledge and information:

> What is apparent is also that James is not being completely honest with his story. *He is not lying, rather he is just forgetting*. By pulling the lines away from each other and prying into the story and his mind, more and more gets revealed. *Prying reveals information to the readers as much as to James himself*. (Bushnell 2015, para. 4; emphases added.)

Bushnell's prosocial reading is forgiving of the inconsistencies in James's narration. Instead of intentionally fabricating and modifying the story, James is interpreted here as a defenceless individual who is incapable of sharing certain aspects of the story – he merely has to follow along. James encounters the same difficulties as the reader when they seek to make sense of the events in James's life.

Not all readers support as innocent an interpretation, however. Clara Chetcuti identifies dishonesty at several levels: she mentions how "James admits to being untruthful to Luke about his impending blindness and unreliability on the job" and notes how "James lies to the reader-user who suspects but continues to read his thoughts" (Chetcuti 2016, p. 261). Chetcuti also compares different modes of representation and evaluates their degrees of reliability. She analyses James's narration in chapter 6, an instance where James recounts a romantic encounter with Jessie. Chetcuti (2016, p. 260–261) reads the "heaping of jarring details" and shifting textual elements as symptomatic of James's unreliability. Furthermore, she analyses how a cinematic scene of James and Jessie arguing adds to the narrator's suspiciousness:

> Exacerbating this suspicion is the video which surges from James's subconscious and which indeed depicts Jessie sweeping supplies off shelves in a store cupboard, except in a fit of rage not passion. Even though the video is itself carefully chosen, muted, clipped, and shut off before the episode comes to a natural close, the reader-user is infinitely more inclined to believe it over the unstable and clearly romanticised textual account. (Chetcuti 2016, p. 261.)

Chetcuti finds the text thoroughly suspicious. Similarly to her, Shelby identifies intradiegetic unreliability that invites the reader to doubt James:

> James is the narrator of Pry; he is suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and is loosing his sight. In chapter two he says his doctor says it is psychosomatic but James believes its all real making him not a very reliable narrator. The reader has to figure out what is true and what is just made up in his head to get the full story. (Shelby 2015, para. 1.)

Interestingly, an intradiegetic disagreement between two characters is enough to make James seem unreliable. Although Shelby mentions James's physical and mental symptoms and they undoubtedly play part in her interpretation, the decisive part seems to be James's tendency to believe his symptoms are "all real" which makes "him not a very reliable narrator." James's view on reality becomes contrasted with that of the doctor's and when it comes to reliability, James seems not to be on the winning side. However, like many other readers, Shelby does not consider the unreliability intentional; rather, James is merely unable to evaluate his true condition.

The perceived intentionality of James's dishonesty remains ambiguous in some reviews. Joel Cummings (2019b, para. 1) notes how "the story is structured so that you never know fully what is and isn't real" and Kathleen Zoller (2019b, para. 1) states that "James is

constantly modifying his memories and remixing the events in his head." It cannot be stated with confidence whether or not Cummings and Zoller consider the unreliability intentional.

The interplay between the different levels of James's consciousness becomes of major interest. There are interesting consistencies to how the readers have interpreted the (un)reliability of the three levels, especially when considering that all tiers, in principle, could be interpreted as unreliable. Most striking is the treatment of James's sight as it is usually deemed the most reliable – and sometimes even *objectively* reliable – source of information. Readers describe, for instance, how opening James's eyes will able the reader to "witness the real world in front of James" (Alexander's argument 2017, para. 3), "see the world around him" (Katechiz8 2015, para. 4), see "what James is seeing" (Markle 2015, para. 1), see "the visual stimuli that enter James's mind" (Maziarczyk 2017, p. 218), witness "the reality" (Schoenlein 2019a, para. 1), see "objective reality" (Short 2015, para. 3), and create a sense "as if you are opening your eyes from a dream" (Jackson, Joshua 2019, para. 1).

The sight is sometimes deemed unreliable but not often *per se* in the sense that James misrepresents the events intentionally or depicts a premeditated false visual representation of the happenings; rather, the unreliability is deemed as resulting from James's physiological or psychological ailments. John Cayley, for instance, notes that the reader "must pry open his failing eyes" (Cayley 2015, para. 1) and Shawn Sims describes a moment when "you open his eyes you see a hallucination of Jessie stab him" (Sims 2019a, para. 1). It is likely that James's sight is perceived as relatively reliable due to multiple factors. First of all, the readers are given an interpretative frame when the artwork asks them to "[s]pread and hold open to see through James' eyes" (*Pry*, chapter 1), the neutral tone of the didactic combined with the interactive functionality indicating that the reader does have direct access to his vision. Secondly, although there are some spatiotemporal anomalies – like James walking on a bridge and then suddenly appearing in a desert in chapter 5 – the sight, overall, is noticeably continuous: although the narration in James's thoughts and subconscious often jumps between different points in time and space, the sight usually remains in one distinct setting inside a chapter. This representational feature possibly attaches James's present existence, as many readers would argue, in his visual perspective. As human beings' sensory experience is linked to the sensory perceptions that can be experienced in the present, it is quite natural for readers to locate James's present in his perceptual – that is, visual – existence; this may make the sight seem as more "real" than his thoughts and subconscious. Indeed, as Kirsty's argument puts it, "[w]hen the eyes are not being pinched closed by the reader/user, filmography of the story in 'real time' can be viewed, and it is able to be gauged

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what is physically happening to the character" (Kirsty's argument 2017, para. 2). Thirdly, the effect is likely to be caused by the readers' mental frames that are linked to their own experience. As James's sight is depicted as if arising from actual intramental visual perception, it would be natural to assume that it is impossible for James to narrate the events unreliably through his sight; even if one wants to see imaginary things through his or her eyes, it is normally impossible. It is also likely that the multimodal means of representation affect the interpretation as well: as James's inner speech, for instance, is communicated via written language, it is less experientially mimetic compared to his vision. It would be interesting to study just how much the modality affects the interpretations by creating a story in which all of the levels were communicated via written text. Hypothetically speaking, one could assume that the sight might be deemed as less reliable.

Not all readers, however, consider that it is real time that can be viewed through James's eyes. Johnston states the following: "There are only two unrequested didactic panels displayed in *Pry* (*pinch open to see outside/memories*; and *pinch closed to see inside/subconscious*)" (Johnston 2014, para. 7). Whilst Johnston suggests that the reader has access to the "outside" through James's sight, he also introduces another possibility: that the visual representation contains – or, perhaps, consists of – "memories." Another reader, Julie's argument, who does not mention sight in her review, states that "[t]he reader has only access to the thoughts and memories of the main character" (Julie's argument 2017, para. 3). Again, James is interpreted here as narrating and representing the events posteriorly. The exact temporal relations remain ambiguous in *Pry* which allows various valid interpretation frames to be applied to the artwork's narrative structure.

When it comes to James's inner thoughts, some readers consider they are the "main thread which guides the reader along the story" (Marques 2018, p. 151) and call the tier "the thrust of the story" (Sundwall 2019a, para. 1). Overall, the readers' descriptions of James's inner speech are quite neutral and only few mention some type of unreliability in relation to it. There are a couple of exceptions, however. Deborah Dolphin states that by looking "at the inner thoughts of the character we see his thoughts of his past, present, and future, and with each a level of uncertainty" (Dolphin 2019, para. 3). Mariah Gwin pays attention to the deviations in the artworks narrative functionality: "There will be times when his vision will blur and his ears will ring, or when he sees the face of a girl even when his eyes are closed" (Gwin 2019a, para. 4). Jessie's face in the inners thoughts may seem surprising as the inner speech has been communicated via written language until the moment Gwin describes.

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Other mentions of James's inner speech are mainly descriptive, detailing the functionality of the three-tiered consciousness and the inner narration's location in between the two other levels. What is interesting, however, are the many words used to describe it; it is called, for instance, "the narration within his mind" (Alexander's argument 2017, para. 3), "text narration" (Clapp 2019, para. 2), "inner thoughts" (Dolphin 2019, para. 3), "lucid thoughts" (Hobson 2019, para. 1), "conscious mind" (Lwfuson 2015, para. 3), "inner voice and thoughts" (Maziarczyk 2017, p. 220), "active thoughts" (Mowery 2015, para. 4), "current thoughts" (Packard 2019a, para. 2), and "immediate thoughts" (Redman 2019a, para. 1). Some readers, thus, seem to highlight the narrative action James conducts whilst others describe the inner speech as James's mental processing.

Descriptions of James's subconscious coincide, by and large, with the Freudian conception of the human subconscious suppressing forbidden desires, past trauma, and hidden fears, although many a reader merely describe its physical functionality; it is worth noting that a pre-Freudian reader, say, a reader from the Middle Ages or the 17th century, might find *Pry*'s narrative structure, especially the subconscious layer, utterly incomprehensible. The subconscious layer is said to, for example, "indicate our fears, our memories, our connections with the present" (Short 2015, para. 3), "convey the protagonist's ambivalence or fear" (Short 2015, para. 6), reveal "the traumatic memories being repressed into the unconscious" (Maziarczyk 2017, p. 222), and represent "war flashbacks via avant-garde sequences" (Jackson, Jazz 2019a, para 2). Some readers mention James's feelings of guilt, noting how the subconscious presents "the thoughts that constantly gnaw away at him" (Alexander's argument 2017, para. 3) and how it expresses "the guilt he feels about Jessie's death" (Jackson, Jazz 2019b, para. 1). The subconscious is also described as "being riddled with possible murder weapons and different deaths" (Bina 2019a, para. 2), "expressing the hurriedness and chaos of his inner thoughts" through flashing words and images (Gwin 2019a, para. 4) and containing "memories and intrusive thoughts" (Hobson 2019, para. 1). According to Deborah Dolphin, "[b]eing able to pinch the screen and peer into the characters thoughts is a great way to show the inner struggle of the protagonist" (Dolphin 2019, para. 5). Courtney Packard reads the action of pinching as mimicking the functionality of the human body: "The pinch and hold actions initiate memories or flashbacks. I would compare this action similar to when people squint or squeeze their eyes closed when they are trying to remember something or trying to not see something" (Packard 2019a, para. 1).

The subconscious flees its way out of the pinched-closed mode in one of the reviews. Christine Kimsey has an interesting take on James's subconscious:

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If you adjust the pinch of your fingers on the screen, you get different levels of his subconscious. He has one that is on the surface level and is meant to distract his mind from not remembering the horrific things that he has seen. The other levels are hallucinations and memories of his subconscious. Jessie killing him, the coffee stain messing around on the ceiling. Those are all hallucinations that never actually happen. The memories are the GameBoy, hanging with Jessie, and possibly even the night vision video of a missile launch. This tells me that by the next chapter he might actually go blind and may even go crazy. (Kimsey 2019, para. 3.)

Instead of assuming one, clear-cut subconscious, Kimsey claims that there are actually several ones. Interestingly, the hallucinations that Kimsey describes are represented through James's sight and yet, Kimsey places them in James's subconscious. Although many a reader describe the three levels of James's cognition as clearly distinct tiers, Kimsey's reading implies that they may blend and become realised through the other levels. Furthermore, Kimsey makes elaborations on how the mixing of different levels evokes interpretative clues for the possibility that James may "even go crazy" in the following chapters.

One aspect of unreliability in *Pry* concerns the dynamics between the sight, the inner thoughts, and the subconscious. Some readers note how focusing on one level of James's consciousness leads inevitably to some parts remaining unseen; Kirsty's argument, for instance, notes how "[t]he reader/viewer has to make decisions between the real world and the subconscious" (Kirsty's argument 2017, para. 4) and Diogo Marques states that "if the reader opts to see through James' eyes (often a virtual emulation of an eye opening and closing), s/he most certainly will miss parts of the story which are kept in James' subconscious" (Marques 2018, p. 151). This aspect of *Pry*'s narration could be labelled as Phelan's underreporting as, clearly, parts of the story inevitably remain hidden. However, it differs from more conventional examples of underreporting by its optionality: the reader can choose which levels of James's cognition she or he wants to enter and examine the neglected tiers by reading the chapter multiple times.

Not only does *Pry* present instances of underreporting, chapter 3 introduces a novel type of unreliability that could be named extra-reporting. In this chapter, the reader is expected to trace their finger over braille writing which none of the readers in my dataset are able to read; neither am I. The dynamics of the representation enable the reader to understand the text as James reads the words aloud. However, if one is not familiar with the braille alphabetic, she or he can never be certain whether what James says is actually written in the text. In this case, then, James's knowledge exceeds the reader's knowledge which evokes

potential for unreliability. Interestingly, none of the readers – even those who acknowledge that James is unreliable at times – suspect the possibility that there might actually read something other than what James narrates. Even if James's narration is reliable, I find it interesting that none of the readers discuss the possibility. What some readers pay attention to, however, is the "unreliability" of the medium. As Maziarczyk notes, "[t]he reader performs the gesture the protagonist is supposed to perform on the level of the storyworld, though obviously his or her experience of the text in Braille lacks the crucial tactile element: the screen is flat and his or her engagement with Braille remains virtual" (Maziarczyk 2017, p. 221). Furthermore, the chapter's representational elements prompt some readers to analyse the depiction critically. Emily Short, for instance, after having discussed how the braille chapter "put me in a position of temporary and uncomfortable illiteracy […] that suggested helplessness" (Short 2015, para. 4) notes the following: "Ironically, I suspect that this would be a very difficult game to make accessible to visually impaired players, but I'm not sure" (ead. para. 5). Rasan Dulay pays attention to the same issue and further elaborates on its implications: "Though it makes sense why this feature is implemented into the app, it can be hurtful to individuals who have that disability and are viewing the story. In some ways, it may seem as if the story is mocking them." (Dulay 2017, para. 1.) Dulay's notions concern the possibly problematic relation between one potential audience and the authors' narrative choices; the representation of braille text implicitly refers to an actual group of people.

To take a closer look at *Pry*'s narrative choices, some words about its creators are in place. As was discussed earlier, the Boothian tradition emphasises the significance of the ironical relation between the author and the narrator in the emergence of narrative unreliability. Analysing my dataset provides some interesting information of how the readers have conceived the authors in *Pry*. I want to start by discussing my model's failure to capture the Boothian instances; as one can see by looking at the appendixes 1 or 2, category "L" contains zero instances. This failing is due to the fact that none of the readers explicitly discuss the ironical relation between the authors and James. The number does not mean that the readers would not have conceived any ironical distance between the actors as one might argue, for instance, that James's mental problems or failing eyesight are symptomatic of it. The notion closest to this category was made by Julie's argument who argues that "[t]he reader is more often trying to understand what he has to do to continue and go forward, than really trying to understand how the characters feel. He is often under the impression that the creators concentrated more on how to be original and interactive than telling a story." (Julie's argument 2017, para. 2.) Similarly to Julie's argument, David Jhave Johnston, who bases his

review on the initial publication, pays attention to the fragmentary nature of the characters that he views as symptomatic of the artwork's incompleteness:

> Imbuing the story with an implacable psychological specificity, bringing the characters to life as fleshy, intricate, paradoxical people (with histories and habits and not just pockets of phrases that pour disordered into blocks), and then guiding the reader to live with or within the characters as they experience clear, irrevocable, precisely temporalized events is the challenge that the Tender Claws duo face as they complete this potentially breakthrough novella-app. (Johnston 2014, para. 30.)

However, as the Boothian tradition considers the distance between the author and the characters intentional rather than unintended or accidental, these instances could not be fitted smoothly into the traditional Boothian category. For me, the zero-instance outcome was surprising and gives rise to intriguing paths in future experimental settings which I will further discuss in the conclusion part. If I were to offer some hypothetical reasons for the outcome, some explanations spring to mind. First of all, if the texts were written in narratology-oriented classes, the number could be different. Secondly, the Boothian unreliability may be a challenging phenomenon to capture empirically at least in the setting I have used. If one agrees to consider notions of James's PTSD, failing eyesight, misreporting, and misreading as tell-tale signs of the ironical relation between the authors and the narrator, the numbers look very different: 42 readers mention James's vision impairment, 32 mention his PTSD symptoms, 17 make notions of misreporting, and 19 discuss symptoms of misreading.

Whereas traditional novels are often attributed to one author – although they are usually edited by one or multiple editors and assistants may help authors with the gathering of information during the writing process – the question of authority is even more complex in *Pry*. The artwork's main authors are Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro or, as their artistic duo name goes, Tender Claws. However, many more people have contributed to the creation of *Pry*, some of them in multiple roles. The "Credits" section of the artwork presents the different agents who participated in the project. The cast consists of Ren Ebel (James Augar), Timothy Driscoll (Luke Hayes), Cindy Mersten (Jessie Salehi-Spence), Darren Gann (Rick Augar), Kathy Cadigan (Arlene Augar), John Cannizzaro (surveyor), Aaron Kovalchik (bridge worker), Emily the dog (as herself), Tanner Cook (demolition worker), Curt Miller (demolition worker), J Noland (demolition worker), Ben Palacios (James POV), Joey Cannizzaro (underwater POV), Brett Zeldow (swimming POV), and Danny Cannizzaro himself (James POV). Mike Ashton, Tanner Cook, Benny Lichtner, and J Nolan formed the

crew and Peter Bussigel contributed to sounds. The production team included Tanner Cook (additional photography), J Noland (lighting, scouting, and set construction), Diana Cannizzaro (dog handling), Devin Zwick (scouting), Jeanne Jo (casting assistant), Aitor Lajarin (set construction), and David Emanuel (copy editor). Mary Sweeney, J. P. Gorin, Michael Trigilio, Richard Lemarchand, and Lev Manovich operated as project advisors. Furthermore, special thanks are given to Benjamin Bratton, John Cayley (who wrote one of the reviews!), Robert Coover, Brian Cross, Kelly Gates, Janalyn Guo, Jim Hollan, Henry Kaplan, Tara McPheron, Patryk Mrozek, Jessica Pressman, Emily Pudalov, Jordan Weisman, and Holly Willis, their exact contributions remaining mysterious. (*Pry*, "Credits".)

33 readers mention the authors explicitly in their reviews and 32 readers discuss topics concerning authorial intentions. *Pry* is most often attributed to Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro but the perceived authorial agency remains ambiguous in many of the reviews. Some of the readers attribute the work to a singular creator, discussing e. g. the choices of "the author" (Hobson 2019, para. 3). Furthermore, Gorman and Cannizzaro's studio name Tender Claws causes the authorial agency to obscure at times. One of the readers, for instance, links the name of the studio to the art piece, calling the authors the "creators of this interactive 'tender claws'" (Cummings 2019a, para. 1). According to two other readers, "*Pry* is a novella app created by Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman and *edited by* Tender Claws" (Julie's argument 2017, para. 1; emphasis added) and "*Pry* is a multimedia reading experience created by Samantha Gorman and *published by* Tender Claws" (Katechiz8 2015, para. 1; emphasis added). Whilst the perceived agential relations do not always correspond to the actual, existing ones, even the erred perceptions often contain notions of multifaceted authorial actions; in other words, some readers acknowledge that publishing a digital work often requires multiple agents. Most often, as I stated earlier, however, Gorman and Cannizzaro are perceived as the Authors. The tendency to attribute the authorship to Gorman and Cannizzaro is expectable for various reasons: not only is it conventional to attribute artworks to individual authors, Gorman and Cannizzaro are the ones who have given interviews of the artwork, they signed the "About" section and, most importantly, they are the main designers who decided how the artistic whole would come together and the readers seem to know that. Although this might seem like a truism, I deem it important to note that *Pry* seems to be approached as a coherent whole from which intentional authorial messages can be extrapolated from.

Many of the readers who discuss authorial intentions pay attention to the multimodal toolkit that *Pry* applies in order to "explore the many possibilities that the

technology age has to offer" (Bushnell 2015, para. 5). Similarly to Aimee Bushnell, Alexander's argument (2017, para. 2) notes "how modern technology opens the door for innovative methods of storytelling" and O'Toole (2016, "Conclusion") discusses how the authors succeed in "blur[ring] the boundaries of design, publishing, cinema, installation and virtual reality." Some readers further discuss how the multimodal means of communicating are intertwined with the narrative content and themes, noting, for instance, how the "way that text montage segments were used to illustrate his subconscious are a perfect way to describe how erratic memories can be triggered" (Packard 2019a, para. 1) or how the "creators of PRY utilize the touch screen of iPads and iPhones in order for readers to experience what the main character of the story is doing" (Markle 2015, para. 1). Some readers also discuss the relation between the authors and the readers in a multimodal novel. The readers mention, for instance, how *Pry* "forces the reader to interact and follow along with the story" (Dulay 2017, para. 1) and how "the reader ultimately guides himself through the piece, but the director's hand is just out of sight, curating the read" (Keisha 2015, para. 3). Rose Crelli places the shifting narrative dynamics inside a longer historical timeframe:

> Samantha Gorman, the other half of the Tender Claws team, says "Reading is experienced at the reader's pace… video is experienced at the director's pace." Shifts in power between reader and writer are more flexible and ambiguous in mixed media novels. The relationship between reader, text and writer is open to so many more possibilities than before. Oftentimes, many people associate nonlinear literature as a new-fangled modern invention. However, non linear literature dates all the way back to temples in Ancient Egypt where wall inscriptions on religious text were two or three-dimensional. This is the perfect historical example of a more open and less traditional relationship between reader, text and writer. (Crelli 2015, para. 5.)

Another popular interpretation amongst those who discuss authorial intentions is to read *Pry* as an immersive representation of James's mental health problems. Readers note, for instance, how "Pry takes a non-linear look at how someone might deal with emotions and try to understand themself while dealing with several nearly debilitating issues (anxiety, PTSD, loss of eyesight, etc.)" (Bina 2019b, para. 5), how "*Pry* gives a feeling of chaos and fear that aims to artistically represent the effects of PTSD on its victims" (Jackson, Jazz 2019a, para. 2), how the artwork is "a single-example look at how war affects soldiers" (Mowery 2015, para. 3), and how the main theme of *Pry* is "the main character dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder or something to that effect" (Niehaus 2019, para. 3). Future of StoryTelling places the artwork on a wider field of video games, noting how "*Pry* is part of a growing movement of video games that address tough-to-understand topics by allowing players to explore the

emotional realities of living through trauma" and further elaborating that "[n]ot only does *Pry*'s imaginative design provide a platform and a language to depict a character who struggles with PTSD, the interactive components allow the role-player to live these realities as well" (Future of StoryTelling 2016, para. 4). Meghan Bina discusses how the main theme, manifested through *Pry*'s narrative devices, contributes to James's unreliability:

> I think that this work is about a person with PTSD and/or schizophrenia. I believe this because the way the narrative plays out and provides us with both reality and subconscious fears is very similar and accurate how it feels to have real-life anxiety. It becomes hard to distinguish between what's actually happening and what is a fear, and I think the constant switching between conscious and subconscious helps to blur the separation and make the truth even more indistinguishable. The flashbacks and worst-case-scenario subconscious beliefs definitely hint towards this work focusing on a character that has some sort of mental illness. (Bina 2019a, para. 5.)

Bina explicitly mentions how James's mental health problems affect his reliability, making it "hard to distinguish between what's actually happening and what is a fear." Similarly to Bina, Julie's argument states that because "the narrator seem to suffer from a few mental disorders, he is absolutely not reliable (Julie's argument 2017, para. 3) and Marques notes how "nothing in this story is what it seems, it being, after all, told through a person who is experiencing a series of mental and physical disorders" (Marques 2018, p. 150). Interestingly, only few readers explicitly associate James's vision impairment as a contributing factor to his unreliability. According to Maziarczyk, James's "limited grasp of reality" manifests, for instance, through his "problems seeing the world around him" (Maziarczyk 2017, p. 220). Laura's argument states that "James is slowly going blind and so the story of pry is narrated in an unreliable and sometimes confusing way" (Laura's argument 2017, para. 1). Most of the readers who mention James's PTSD symptoms or vision impairment, however, do not explicitly mention unreliability in connection with these topics.

The readers' tendency not to explicitly associate James's PTSD symptoms to his unreliability evokes a set of questions worth future research. One possible reason is that they might consider his PTSD in itself as a marker for unreliability. If that is true, they may not discuss his unreliability due to finding iteration unnecessary. Another possible reason might be related to the readers' feelings of empathy and sympathy towards James: if the story is conceived as an examination of "how war can have lasting effects on an individual" (Sims 2019a, para. 3), the readers may find it socially inappropriate to discuss how the condition might affect his reliability, be it cognitive, emotional, or otherwise. In this scenario, James is

already a victim of his circumstances and should not be victimised any further. Once again, there are various possible explanations. Furthermore, there are likely various factors behind the effect and it is only through further experimental research that the implicit factors can be studied comprehensively.

As has been argued, different readers' conceptions of various narrative elements vary to an extent. The data reveal further instances where the readers' interpretations diverge. One of them is the perceived cause for James's weakening eyesight. Several readers who speculate the cause attribute it to the events during the war, stating, for instance, that the impairment "was likely caused by the attack" (Jackson, Jazz 2019b, para. 3). Maziarczyk argues that "[i]t was also the attack that led to his visual impairment" (Maziarczyk 2017, p. 222) and Short states that James "is suffering from vision impairment thanks to wounds sustained" in the war (Short 2015, para. 1). However, differing interpretations also appear. Des Smith8 holds that "we do not know what cause the ailment" (Smith8 2019, para. 1). Bina suggests that Pry tells of "a man who enlisted in the military at a young age, *although his eyesight was destined to deteriorate rapidly throughout the years*" (Bina 2019b, para. 4; emphasis added). Clara Chetcuti attributes the cause "to Jessie taking the plug from a sink and, in a fit of rage, plunging it into his eye" (Chetcuti 2016, p. 258). Kathleen Zoller argues that there are various possible causes: she states that "we can theorize the causes for his failing sight (a fire, a disorder inherited from his mother, and Jessie's violent outburst are only a few of these.)" (Zoller 2019b, para. 2).

Another interesting point of divergence concerns Luke. Out of the 30 readers who mention Luke, 5 treat him as James's brother and 18 consider him James's friend or acquaintance; the rest do not specify his relation to James. The divergence may result from the disparate information the readers have obtained as different readers will encounter different versions of the story based on their interactions. However, the authorially ascribed role is that of a friend or of a former squad leader as it is explicated in the artwork, and the construction company James works at is owned by Luke's father. Furthermore, as one can learn in the "Credits" section, James and Luke have different surnames.

A third point of divergence concerns Jessie's death. As *Pry* offers multiple explanations for the event, the outcome is not surprising. Most of the readers who discuss Jessie's death attribute it to the attack on the barracks carried out by hostile forces (see Chetcuti 2016, p. 258; Cummings 2019b, para. 1; Jackson, Jazz 2019b, para. 2; Marques 2018, p. 154; Martin 2019b, para. 3; Maziarczyk 2017, p. 222; Packard 2019b, para. 4). A couple of the readers also discuss the possibility that James killed Jessie. Mariah Gwin notes

how the narrative cues seem "to imply that James and Jessie got into a fight in the janitorial closet at which point he may have accidentally killed her" but later states that "[w]hether it truly was his fault, or he killed her, or it was simply an accident, he blames himself for what happened to her" (Gwin 2019b, para. 2, para. 5). Another reader, Noelle Tadeo, notes that Jessie and James "have an altercation in a supply closet which is followed by an image of her still, on the ground, and it made me think at first that he killed her, but then they're all playing poker and he says she was alive, so that part was a little confusing to me" (Tadeo 2019b, para. 3). The narrated events' order facilitates confusion, possibly because the narrated order does not seem to correspond to the chronology of the actual events in a logical way; it seems that the relation between the *fabula* and the *syuzhet* remains blurred in this particular reading.

One might question how the varied readerly reactions are linked to the narrative unreliability in *Pry*. Although my suggestion of studying the unreliability of the readers was partly made in jest (see p. 19 of this dissertation), a part of the argument still holds true. Narratology should seek to understand the large readerly patterns more rigorously. Readerly reactions are divergent but they are not random; they vary but only to an extent. There is much to study about the limits of interpretation. Assumedly, studying large bodies of data would reveal patterns that shape the overall interpretation. It is possible that variables such as the level of absorption or the empathy felt towards James affect the ways other narrative elements are interpreted and experienced. The process of interpretation can be metaphorically described as a wide network in which certain paths may encourage the reader to "choose" some of the following paths and ignore other possible paths. Thus, both the artwork's formal elements as well as the reader's active participation and his or her culturally shaped cognitive frames play part in the outcome. The idea is not new to narratology (see Shen 2011/2013); however, the issue has not been addressed as rigorously as one might expect.

## 4. "I cannot help but to think that Tarzan has a meaning" – *Pry* as a metaphor for the First Gulf War and the Iraq War

> One of the things that really stood out to me was at the very end where you see George W. Bush on the television talking about war, and when you pinch James' eyes shut, it shows a flashback of George Bush Sr. also talking about war. I found it to be an interesting way to connect how life was for James pre and post-war. (Packard 2019b, para. 6.)

War is one of the main themes in *Pry*. 48 readers mention war in their reviews and of those 25 writers name the war *Pry* touches upon. The only readers who mention both the First Gulf War as well as the Iraq War are Diogo Marques and Jarid Schoenlein; the rest of those who name the war only mention the First Gulf War. This tendency may result from the fact that only the latter is mentioned both in the Apple App Store as well as *Pry*'s "About" section; the context of the Iraq War is only implied via the documentary footage of Bush Jr.

Similarly to Courtney Packard, who views the presidents' war announcements as indicative of "how life was for James pre and post-war" (see above), some other readers also suggest that the artwork examines "the inner and outer worlds of a veteran who is still struggling to process his experiences in the war" (Short 2015, para. 1). Whilst I do not deny the validity of any of the interpretations contained in my dataset, I will now offer an interpretive frame that is astonishingly extinct amongst the readings. I will argue that *Pry* is first and foremost not a comment on an individual but, rather, a critical examination of the complexities between different collectives in the First Gulf War and the Iraq War. In my reading, James's personal struggle and his reluctant narration parallels metonymically with the experiences of larger collectives. I suggest that some of the key elements in the artwork become connected with various spatiotemporal contexts and thus both highlight the complexity of the international conflicts as well as critically examine the power hierarchies that were at play.

I will begin by offering a short overview of the First Gulf War and the Iraq War. Discussing the historical context of the conflicts is crucial in order to understand why I have interpreted the textual elements as an examination of the wars. Naturally, the short overview is not exhaustive. For more comprehensive accounts, see e. g. Gause 2010; Inbar, Bacevich & Besa le-meḥḳarim asṭraṭegiyim 2003; Matthews 1993; Hallenberg & Karlsson 2005.

**4.1. Evoking a critical context – The First Gulf War, 9/11 attacks, and the Iraq War**

The Middle East's history of conflicts is complex, shaped by both international as well as internal controversies. The population consists of various transnational identities which increases the area's vulnerability to conflicts. Gregory F. Gause argues that the "most important and distinctive factor in the Gulf regional security complex is not power imbalances [between different regional states] but the salience of transnational identities" (Gause 2010, p. 9). Gause holds that the presence of various transnationally identifying groups "increase[s] the likelihood of war, because leaders can come to believe that important constituencies in target states will rally to support invading army" and, therefore, the groups "are seen as threats by leaders to their own regime's stability" (id. p. 10).

Although the United States had different incentives in the First Gulf War and the Iraq War, the two wars are interconnected. Several aspects link the two wars: not only were the two US presidents who declared the wars a father and a son, Iraq was governed by Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath party at both instances. However, there are some decisive differences that should be discussed further. Although multiple countries participated in the conflicts, I will mainly focus on the dynamics between the United States and Iraq for two main reasons. First of all, *Pry* is narrated by a US veteran. Secondly, the United States was one of the main parties and the country with the largest troops in both wars.

Iraq occupied Kuwait on the second of August in 1990. Before the occupation, Saddam Hussein had blamed Kuwait, amongst other OPEC countries, of having exceeded the limits of oil-selling agreed between the OPEC members (Gause 2010, p. 96). Iraq's administration held that Kuwait's actions of violating the terms of the agreement decreased the price of oil which then had caused Iraq's economy to deteriorate (id. p. 98). Before Hussein and his troops invaded Kuwait, the international community – including Kuwait – did not expect Hussein to occupy the whole country; rather, they expected him to take control of some tactical regions near the Iraq border (id. p. 101–102).

After the invasion, Hussein controlled 20 per cent of the world's oil resources "with the possibility of indirect control over 25% of reserves in Saudi Arabia" (Gause 2010, p. 103). Furthermore, it was feared that Hussein might not settle for Kuwait but might continue his conquest over to Saudi-Arabia although there is no proof that Hussein intended to do so (id. p. 105). It is estimated that Iraq possessed the fourth largest army and the sixth largest air force in the world at the time (Shimko 2010, p. 55).

The international community condemned the occupation. The first US troops arrived at Saudi Arabia on the 9th of August; the initial deployment was called Operation

Desert Shield (Shimko 2010, p. 54). The US Senate approved of the use of "all necessary means" on the 12th of January, but the "political class and the American public were seriously divided as war approached" (Gause 2010, p. 110–111); Americans were not looking eagerly to the possibility that "thousands of young American [might be] returning from the Persian Gulf in body bags" (Shimko 2010, p. 56). The attacks against the Iraqi forces began on the 17th of January and continued for over a month (Gause 2010, p. 111); at this point, Operation Desert Shield changed into Operation Desert Storm (Shimko 2010, p. 56). In order to avoid the most men-costly phase, the ground war, the US wanted to focus on using air force (id. p. 56–57); however, although the air campaign had a decisive role in the war's progression, ground war was needed in order to drive the Iraqi forces out of Kuwait (id. p. 74). As Keith L. Shimko (2010, p. 67–68) argues, the US did not have to use a strategy that contains several distinct states; instead, they could bomb Iraqi targets from above as they pleased. Iraq was considered a formidable opponent but its true powers may not have been as mighty as was suggested at the time. In the *Gulf War Air Power Survey* (1993), Thomas A. Keaney and Eliot A. Cohen (1993, p. 251) argue that "[d]espite the talk of Iraq possessing the fourth largest army in the world, the fact remains that in this war a minor power found itself confronted by the full weight of the world's sole superpower, amply and ably aided by the forces of its key allies." The over-powering success of the coalition victory is reflected on the numbers of the war time casualties: approximately 211 coalition soldiers were killed (148 US soldiers) and 646 injured (458 US soldiers) (Matthews 1993, p. 313). The exact number of Iraq casualties remains uncertain. According to one estimate, 35 000 Iraqi troops died during the war (Gause 2010, p. 114). According to another, the total number of the dead and injured Iraqi military personnel lies somewhere between 60 000 and 100 000 (Matthews 1993, p. 315).

After Iraq lost the war, the United Nations ordered heavy sanctions upon Iraq. Hans-Kristof von Sponeck argues that during "the most comprehensive economic sanctions ever imposed by the United Nations, the Iraqi civilian population's life changed from a high level of well-being to an abject level of ill-being" (Sponeck 2017, p. 278). During the war, civilian infrastructure such as "electricity, water and sanitation facilities, bridges and roads" had been "deliberately targeted and destroyed" which hindered the delivering of humanitarian aid (id. p. 279). Iraq exaggerated the consequences of the sanctions in order to pressure their lifting; however, the "sanctions caused tens of thousands of preventable deaths in the country" (Gause 2010, p. 122). The sanctions were lifted in 2003, "two months after the United States/United Kingdom invaded Iraq on March 19, 2003" (Sponeck 2017, p. 278).

The incentives for the Iraq war were crucially different although the seeds of the conflict had been planted in earlier power struggles in Afghanistan and the Middle East. The Iraq War was announced following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre towers. The attacks, carried out by al-Qaeda, were planned by the group's Saudi leader Osama bin Laden. Although "fifteen of the 9/11 hijackers were Saudis and two were from the UAE [United Arab Emirates]" (Gause 2010, p. 136) and bin Laden himself was a Saudi, the US denounced Iraq and claimed that Iraq administration had connections to al-Qaeda. Furthermore, the US claimed to have evidence of Iraq possessing weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein promoted the assumption by pretending that the country indeed possessed biological and chemical weapons. Hussein's conduct seems illogical but, according to Gause, Hussein misevaluated the real threat: he was mainly concerned of Middle East's internal power struggles and did not consider the US a real threat (id. p. 152). He expected that by pretending to have access to biological and chemical weapons he could prevent coups inside Iraq (ibid.). Iraq had used chemical weapons against domestic opponents during the Iran-Iraq war that predated the First Gulf War and during the unrests following the First Gulf War (id. p. 153).

As the 9/11 attacks were decisive at the ignition of the Iraq War, a few words of al-Qaeda's development and Osama bin Laden's role in it are in place. The relations between the US and jihad movements are complex and extend back to the Cold War:

> The Soviet Union sent forces into Afghanistan in December 1979, at the request of the communist government it had helped install in Kabul. *The Afghan jihad against the Soviet occupiers was quickly taken up as a cause by both the United States and Saudi Arabia.* […] Saudi society was mobilized, from the top down and the bottom up, to support the Afghan jihad with money and volunteers. It was in this atmosphere that Usama bin Laden became involved in the issue. He was a religiously devout young man and interested in politics. As one of the numerous sons of Muhammad bin Laden, founder of what is now the largest construction company in the Middle East, he had an entrée into the top levels of Saudi society. The Afghan jihad fired his imagination. (Gause 2010, p. 137; emphasis added.)

The jihadists succeeded in evicting the Soviet forces from Afghanistan, the last troops leaving the country in February 1989 (ibid). However, for Osama bin Laden the jihad was not over. Gause discusses many crucial things that had changed during the war in Afghanistan: firstly, Osama bin Laden had assumed a more radical interpretation of Islam and critiqued many of the governments in the Islam world as too secular or religiously misguided. Secondly, as volunteers came to join the course not only from the Arab countries but also from Pakistan, India, Chechnya, Central Asia, and Southern Asia, communicating their experiences of how

Muslims were mistreated in other parts of the world, bin Laden's view of jihad shifted to encompass the need for a global jihad, not merely a local one. Thirdly, bin Laden developed his organizational networks during the war, gaining supporters, followers and funding resources. (id. p. 139.) Furthermore, the success in Afghanistan had changed bin Laden's view of what the jihad could accomplish:

> In his mind and in the minds of his followers, they had not merely defeated a superpower. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 they could say that they had *destroyed* a superpower. Heavily outmanned and outgunned, but armed with faith in God, the *mujahidin* had performed a miracle. In that light, it is not so strange that bin Laden could think that he could take on the United States. The success of the Afghan jihad was an object lesson to many in the Arab world who had been disappointed by the political and military failures of other Arab ideologies. It was the most important recruiting tool bin Laden had. (id. p. 139.)

The functional basis for al-Qaeda was thus formed in Afghanistan. However, the First Gulf War and its handling also had ramifications that led to the 9/11 attacks. According to Gause, if the US troops were not present in the Gulf, "it is possible (though we will never know) that Usama bin Laden would not have plotted against the United States" (Gause 2010, p. 135). Gause argues that bin Laden was deeply disappointed of the Saudi administration's decision to allow American and other foreign troops to enter the country and offered to drive the Iraqi forces from Kuwait himself with the jihadist recruits he would gather as an army. Although his proposal was received with respect, the Saudi administration did not believe in bin Laden's chances against the massive Iraqi forces and declined his offer. These events further alienated bin Laden's sympathies away from his own nation and created resentment towards the US: "[t]he presence of American forces in Saudi Arabia turned him against his own regime and the United States." (id. p. 139–140.)

The US succeeded in overthrowing Saddam Hussein's regime which, sadly, led to a power vacuum that gave footing to radical terrorist movements. Hussein contributed to the instability inside Iraq in many ways: by his dictatorial rule, harsh measures taken to suppress his opponents, and making Iraq's economy plummet by thrusting the country into war with Iran and by invading Kuwait (Aghayev 2017, p. 65). However, Hussein's authoritarian ruling, one that, despite its dictatorialness, "has been considered a secular regime" (ibid.), enabled him to keep radical religious groups under control. One of the groups which benefited the most from the unstable situation was the Islamic State of Iraq aka IS. Although the rise of IS benefited from the power vacuum, it did not emerge out of void:

> This development of events [concerning the rise of IS] was due to objective reasons, the key ones are associated with activities of foreign policy actors, who traditionally, beginning from the second half of XX century, played a "card" of their own interests in the Middle East, using authoritarian political regimes whose policies brought the population of most countries actually to poverty (Aghayev 2017, p. 67).

Thus, the conflict that has lasted for several generations can be viewed as still on-going, although the nature of the conflict as well the parties have changed; the First Gulf War and the Iraq War were fought between established regimes whereas the IS is not a regional actor. Although independent wars can be viewed as distinct sequences of events, it is equally valid to view the conflicts inside one longer time-frame. In the context of *Pry*'s publication date, the ramifications of the conflicts are ever-topical.

### 4.2. Collectives fighting collectives – *Pry* as a reflection of international conflicts

The demolition scenes and James's role as a demolition consultant seem as no coincidence knowing the context of the First Gulf War and the Iraq War. The crumbling building seen in chapter 2 evokes visual imagery well known to a Western reader: the collapse of the World Trade Centre towers that, at the time, used to be the tallest buildings in the world. I find it interesting, even surprising, that none of the readers in my dataset considered the Twin Towers in connection with the scene even when acknowledging the underlying context of the wars. Although I can only speak hypothetically, there are likely various reasons at play. First of all, not once does *Pry* depict any foreign forces or persons which may partly explain why the story is so often interpreted as a representation of James's personal struggle. The lack of the opposite party may obscure the events' interpersonal and intercommunal nature. This effect may be further strengthened by the use of a first-person point of view that is applied throughout the story as almost everything seems to be focalised through James's cognition. Secondly, although James's mind and subconscious depict explosions on a *Gameboy* screen and of a missile hitting a target in a remote location simultaneously while the demolition happens, the narration does not explicitly show footage of the Twin Towers. Thirdly, the social dynamics in the scene do not parallel with the attacks on the WTC Towers: when the Twin Towers were brought down, the actions were carried out by foreign forces who aimed to destroy buildings still in use and, more significantly, filled with people. In *Pry*, James and the other workers decimate an abandoned, derelict building; the setting lacks the dynamics of hostile interaction seen in the 9/11 attacks.

However, having Americans demolish the building in *Pry* does not prevent the reader from interpreting the scene as symbolising the fate of the WTC towers; rather, the dynamics connect the representation to an interpretive framework that was discussed widely after the events. Many were suspicious after the attacks and claimed that personnel inside the Bush administration took part in the planning of the attacks in order to gain justification for military actions in the oil-rich Middle East. Although conspiracy theories rarely take root in the academic world, this interpretation of the events gained followers even inside academia. "Scholars for 9/11 Truth" is a group consisting of academics who aim to prove that the US administration had a role in the attacks. According to Gatehouse (2006), many of the members were "tenured faculty at post-secondary institutions in the U.S. and Canada." In an interview that appeared on *Guardian*, Steven Jones, a physics professor at the Brigham Young University located in Utah, claimed that the group had "amassed a wealth of scientific data to prove" that the Bush administration participated in the actions. Jones claimed that the aeroplanes could not have amounted to the destruction seen when the towers collapsed as they could not have melted the iron structures of the building; indeed, as Jones puts it in the interview, the "horizontal puffs of smoke - squibs - emitted during the collapse of the towers are indicative of controlled implosions on lower floors" and, according to him, the towers thus must have been "brought down by explosives." (*Guardian*, 5.9.2006.)

The demolition scene in *Pry* evokes a metaphorical connection between the United States and Iraq. Both the First Gulf War as well as the Iraq War were combatted on the Middle Eastern soil. The US used their massive air force not only to combat the Iraqi forces but also to demolish large parts of Iraq's infrastructure during the First Gulf War. Although the demolition scene takes place in Montana, the barren, sandy landscape connects the representation with the desert scenes that are located in the Middle East. Furthermore, the landscapes can be read as a reference to the operation names during the First Gulf War, Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm. Further complicating the representation's referential connections is the fact that, as was pointed out earlier, Osama bin Laden's father owned a significant construction company in the Middle East and it was his status that enabled Osama to gain influential social networks and access high social levels in Saudi society (see p. 62); it may be no coincidence that the construction company James works at is owned by Luke's father. Demolition, being the antithesis of construction, evokes a critical frame through which the complexities of the conflict are set under new light. Both the US as well as al-Qaeda demonstrated their power and aggression through bringing down the

(perceived)[4] opponent's buildings. Destroying infrastructure is not only a grave physical act that affects the physical reality but also a metaphorical statement that undermines the opposing party's collective achievements, development, and growth.

It is the suffering of the collectives that is inconspicuous in *Pry*'s narration. In both wars, a large number of people were killed. If many died during the First Gulf War, the figures are even more depressing for the Iraq War: according to Sebastian Kaempf, "3,482 US soldiers had been killed, another 32,222 wounded, and estimates of Iraqi civilian casualties resulting from direct and indirect violence ranging between 109,000 and five hundred thousand" by the time the US withdrew its forces, eight years since the beginning of the war (Kaempf 2018, p. 199). The grief that the deaths and injuries brought upon the relatives and close ones of those affected cannot be calculated by any means; war generates indescribable suffering. *Pry*'s narration, however, encompasses the paradoxical nature of collective suffering as the collective pain consists of innumerable instances of subjective experiences. Even when grief, pain, anger, and loss concern a group, they are experienced by distinct individuals. It is those experiences *Pry* addresses in "Epilogue" in which the collective pain is represented in a written verbal form as fragments picked from President Bush Jr's speech: "FAMILIES/OF/OUR/MILITARY/ARE/PRAYING/THAT/ALL/THOSE/WHO/SERVE/ WILL/RETURN/SAFELY" and "TO/BEAR/THE/DUTY/AND/SHARE/THE/HONOR" (*Pry*, "Epilogue"). Symptomatically, the sentences only appear when the reader increases his or her physical effort and slides his or her finger over the screen in succession. Similarly, in the real world the suffering of the collectives often remains at the periphery of the official accounts of war and requires heightened effort to be made conceivable, hearable. The individual words are formed of many smaller words and letters, metaphorically corresponding to the discrete experiences inside a collective. The clichéd form of the sentences, their seeming infinity and invariability – each sentence keeps looping unchangeable on the screen as long as the reader keeps on sliding – as well as the fact that they are fragments from Bush Jr.'s war announcement, highlight the narrative limits that people face in wartime: personal pain has to be expressed against the official narrative; personal losses become part of collective losses. However, in a written, loopable form the sentences evoke ironical meanings. For instance, in the original announcement Bush Jr. states that "every nation in this coalition has chosen to bear the duty and share the honour of serving in our common defence" which,

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[4] Iraq's connections to al-Qaeda remain unproven to this day.

in *Pry*'s written representation, becomes "THE/HONOR/TO/BEAR/THE/DUTY/AND/ SHARE/THE/HONOR," looping and looping over; thus, the logic of the sentence implies that the soldiers are honoured to share the honour, ironically deconstructing the relation between duty and honour used as rhetorical devices in the president's war announcement (ibid.).

        *Pry*'s first chapter's name – "Below and above" – guides the reader to interpret the chapter through the dynamics seen in the First Gulf War where the US forces dominated the air space. James's inability to move and protect himself from Jessie's attack compares to the Iraqi forces' powerlessness under the United States' technological and combative dominance. The complex relationship between Jessie and James – as the reader learns in the following chapters, James may have killed or wounded Jessie who now, perhaps, appears as a hallucination – complicates the metaphorical representation of the conflict and further links it to the dynamics seen in the First Gulf War: although the US used overpowering forces that have been critiqued later, it was Saddam Hussein who first violated a foreign country's sovereignty and invaded Kuwait. James, who lies in his home, unarmed, can also be interpreted as metaphorically representing the civilians who had little control over their own fates in the conflict. The various metaphorical roles that *Pry* offers to the characters resist definitive, rigid narrativization which, then, serves as a mean to read, re-read, analyse and deconstruct the roles from various critical perspectives. There is no sole villain, no sole victim; yet, there are wrongdoings and sufferings, wrongdoers and sufferers.

        The many alternative outcomes in *Pry*'s plot can be read as a symptom of the artwork's aim to represent the collectives' experiences. Both Jessie and James experience multiple different deaths which, mimetically speaking, is impossible. However, the multiple outcomes can be read as signifying the fates of the thousands of individuals who, willingly and unwillingly, took part in the wars. Jessie and James can be interpreted as Everywoman and Everyman through whom multiple individuals' fates are artistically problematized and examined. Furthermore, Jessie's action of targeting James's eye out of all possible body parts evokes an intertextual connection to a widely known aphorism, commonly attributed to Mohandas Gandhi: "an eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind." The depiction thus critically comments the appliance of violence as a mean to solve violent conflicts.

        It is symptomatic that two out of three characters who die or disappear in *Pry* are women: Jessie and James's mother. Furthermore, although James "dies" in chapter 4 when he sinks under water, his death is less finite as there are multiple possible outcomes; James's death can be undone by traversing the chapter differently. I argue that this artistic choice is not coincidental; women's role in war has been under ideological negotiation both in

the official narratives as well as amongst the media and the public. Even when the negotiations have been seemingly emancipatory, they have sometimes proven problematic. According to Al-Ali, Enloe, and Pratt:

> [T]he Western media's obsession with women's oppression and symbols of Islam, such as different forms of veiling, and pronouncements of Western governments, most notably the U.S. administration, that make the liberation of Muslim women and women's rights a central focus of their justification for military intervention have created a situation where these markers of difference have become much more significant than they were historically (Al-Ali, Enloe & Pratt 2008, p. 13).

Al-Ali, Enloe and Pratt argue that choosing the liberation of Muslim women as one of the central points for the Iraq War's justification is problematic and not as emancipatory as Bush Junior promised, and possibly himself believed: "[t]he more Bush talks about women's rights, the more it creates backlash as Bush is seen as the enemy" (ead. p. 14).

Women were not merely victims as they fought alongside men in the US troops both during the First Gulf War as well as the Iraq War. In *Pry*, Jessie targets James's eye violently with a knife. Since Jessie appears to be merely a hallucination when attacking James, the representation makes a metareflective call to pay attention to the representation itself. When it comes to the representation of the wars, one instance in particular comes to mind, especially since one of the main themes in *Pry* is the concealing of information: the torture in Abu Ghraib. In 2004, pictures of US military personnel torturing and dehumanising Iraqi detainees sadistically in Abu Ghraib became public (Abel 2018, p. 47). Notoriously, some of the pictures contained women soldiers humiliating the detainees. Kelly Oliver (2007) argues that "[a]lthough the deaths of women soldiers receive little attention, the reports of women soldiers' violence and abuse captured the public imagination" (Oliver 2007, p. 2). Furthermore, she states that "the sexual nature of the abuse is used by some to argue that women shouldn't be in the military, that their very presence unleashed sexual violence" (ibid.). Women's roles were varied and complex, both at the war field as well as in the war-related representations and discourses.

One of *Pry*'s main themes is the reluctance to share information. Similarly, different parties had their own motivations to manipulate the information according to their needs. Jeff Zorn (1991) discusses the archetypal roles that were assigned to the opponents during the First Gulf War. Zorn, who is American, examines the rhetorical devices used to dehumanise and criminalise the opponent:

We talked of Saddam Hussein as the "madman on the loose," an irrational aggressor out to conquer the region if not the world. His victim was Kuwait, the wealthy but innocent socialite. And we were its protector, nobly prepared to sacrifice the highest principles: freedom, the integrity of established borders, the security of the economic order. Our job was like Dirty Harry's: to take on, or better yet, to "take out," the street scum of the world.

The other script featured the United States as "the Great Satan," the Western Imperialist infidel out to humiliate and dominate; Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt as quisling traitor-states, betraying Arab and Islamic brotherhood; and Saddam Hussein as the Nasser of his era, boldly stepping forward to challenge the status quo, uniting Arabs and Muslims world-wide. (Zorn 1991, p. 44.)

The significance of stereotypical roles is acknowledged in *Pry*; in chapter 6, for instance, the subconscious accuses James for "making/him/a/bad/stereotype" (*Pry*, chapter 6). Although the narration concerns the representation of Luke, it widens to represent a larger group as James has called Luke's chatter a "smart ass comment aimed at multiple targets like a good pool shot" a little before the subconscious's accusation (ibid.).

Not only was the public perception of the First Gulf War manipulated through archetypal characterisations but also by assessing the information the war reporters intended to communicate to the public. In the US, the Pentagon "held a strong rein on any and all substantive information about the war" which led to dissensions between journalists and military (Burch 1995, p. 4). The US used a press pool, a "system that was conceived to allow a designated number of reporters access to military fronts during surprise missions" (ead. p. 15). During Operation Desert Storm, many members of the press were excluded from the battle sites as the military hand-picked the journalists in the press pool (ibid.). Eliza Burch notes that "[a]mong those especially hurt were publications that the government might characterize as 'alternative' media" (ibid.). The Pentagon held that the restrictions on media coverage were necessary due to national and operational security (ead. p. 4) and due to the large amount of reporters that the military personnel had to deal with (ead. p. 7). Steven L. Katz (1992) discusses how the state's restrictions' affected the news outlets' attitudes:

There will always be a deeply felt need by the military to err on the side of protecting operational security; and few Americans, including correspondents during war, would argue with that principle. There will also be the desire of the President and the military to maintain the support of the public during war, and the news media are important allies in achieving that goal.

However, in the Persian Gulf War, President Bush, General Schwartzkopf, and the Pentagon went one step further. They sought to win the public from the media, and once they did so, through endless nightly briefings, chalk talks, and specially released film footage, used that power to control the press. Its subtlety

began to effect the extent to which the U.S. news media, especially the television networks, would critically assess the war effort, or scrutinize the information which the Pentagon was giving the American people.
(Katz 1992, p. 401.)

The media coverage in the US was not unilateral, however. CNN, the only American news outlet that had a stable two-way phone connection to Iraq, was excoriated for "airing 'propaganda' from Hussein" (Burch 1995, p. 8). Another interesting issue, especially in the case of multimodal *Pry*, is the difference not only between different news outlets but also between different media formats. Limor Peer and Beatrice Chestnut (1995) have analysed the coverage of the First Gulf War in television and in newspapers. Their research indicates that the two formats indeed did differ in the tone and the content of the coverage. Peer and Chestnut argue that "[t]he fact that the two media formats responded differently to the same events within a given time period points to underlying differences between the media themselves in their structure and their attraction to particular kinds of content" (Peer & Chestnut 1995, p. 89). Overall, the newspapers were more critical towards the Bush administration (ibid. p. 90).

To sum up, negotiations of the nature of the wars occurred both during the First Gulf War and the Iraq War, and this process of negotiation, renegotiation, manipulation, and re-manipulation becomes visible in *Pry*. Similarly to multiple parties at the actual wars, James hides and modifies meaningful information according to his own needs. However, some of the hidden information oozes through to the reader; grave secrets become visible. It is symptomatic that it is often a part of James himself – be it his subconscious or his inner narration – that commits the acts of undermining the prior narration and revealing additional knowledge. This logic parallels, for instance, with the case of Abu Ghraib that was revealed by US Sgt. Joseph Darby. After the case reached the public knowledge, Darby started receiving death threats; he "never returned to his small western Maryland town" because "neighbors and even family members viewed him as a 'traitor' and stopped talking to him" (Abel 2018, p. 46). Darby himself, although admitting that whistleblowing was not easy to do, told that he wanted to act morally right (ibid.). It was difficult for Darby's own collective to accept his actions because, in their eyes, he had turned against his owns.

There is one particularly interesting hint in *Pry* that calls for a critical frame. The cue and its significance is acknowledged by Des Smith8: "I cannot help but to think that Tarzan has a meaning. I assume the book could be some sort of foreshadowing for events [happening later]" (Smith8 2019, para. 1). Smith8 refers to the *Tarzan* novel James packs in

his bag in the prologue. Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan* series was hugely popular at the time of its publication. Later critics, however, have criticised the series for its colonialist tendencies. One of them is Jeff Berglund (1999) who examines imperialist, colonialist, and "enlightening" West-centred attitudes in Burroughs's *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912). Berglund criticises the representation of Africans: "If the Africans speak at all, neither Burroughs' narrator nor Tarzan makes specific note of it: instead, we see them wailing, screaming, or waving their arms or spears" (Berglund 1999, p. 60). In the contemporary context *Tarzan* has become a symbol of Western colonialism; its appearance in *Pry* is unlikely to be a coincidence. It is even possible that *Pry* makes a statement by not depicting any Iraqis: the authors may rebel against the Western tradition of compressing foreign nationalities inside narrative frames that enable "othering" the other.

In my dataset, most of the readers who name the war(s) that *Pry* examines, mention the First Gulf War when introducing James to the reader. Only two readers mention both the First Gulf War and the Iraq War explicitly: Jarid Schoenlein (2019b, para. 3) and Diogo Marques (2018, p. 155). Marques discusses the relation between the two wars. His account evokes a potential for critical inquiry; however, the potential remains ambiguous:

> And eventually, a moment of self-redemption: "Jessie was her own person James,/we all make our own choices." This affirmation comes as a possible way of saying to readers that we all are responsible for our choices, especially if we are to take into account the content of the Epilogue, in which the two main gestures of spreading open and pinching closed will unleash two TV speeches that completely changed the world: one being the announcement of war against Iraq, in 1990, by George Bush; the other being the announcement of the invasion of Iraq, in 2003, by George W. Bush. But again, even here, one is always contaminating the other, so that, even if the reader opts for one of these two speeches, the other one will always be present as a background sound. A touch of the hand that leaves the reader with a final question: Free will or Determinism? (Marques 2018, p. 154–155.)

On the one hand, Marques highlights the responsibility of the individual. On the other hand, his account of free will versus determinism indicates a critical perception of the wars' interrelatedness and, thus, undermines the individual's capability to truly make decisions of his or her own fate; surely, when nations go into war, an individual citizen cannot be held accountable for what role she or he is expected to fill during that time. It remains ambiguous, however, whether Marques attributes the "determinism" to refer to Jessie's fate – maybe he implies that Jessie's fate was inevitable because she was "destined" to be deployed – or if he critically refers to the inevitability of the Iraq War after the First Gulf War.

The presidents' announcements are also discussed by Joe Redman:

> I think the author made a creative connection between having the presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush in the same chapter *to illustrate that the world conflict represented in the story lasted several generations*. I think the general theme of the story is redemption. The protagonist is trying to save himself from his own PTSD of war, but also clear up and make light of his understanding with his friend. (Redman 2019b, para. 1; emphasis added.)

Although Redman acknowledges that the wars can be seen as one long continuum, I find it interesting that even then his interpretation of *Pry*'s main theme turns towards the individual: he reads the artwork as a representation of James's personal redemption. Redman's interpretation is shared by multiple readers: Courtney Packard, for instance, notes how the announcements are "an interesting way to connect how life was for James pre and post-war" (Packard 2019b, para. 6). Jarid Schoenlein reads the announcements as "indicative of the fact that there is a perspective from James from both before and after he goes to war" because "[t]he reader can infer that James is watching the television at both moments in time, and there is a video of James going off in the truck that was seen in the Prologue" (Schoenlein 2019b, para. 3). The thematic component of a suffering individual's experience may be one of the reasons why the readers often interpret *Pry* as a medium that aims to "artistically represent the effects of PTSD on its victims" (Jackson, Jazz 2019a, para. 2), the artwork thus providing "new and exciting ways for people to understand each other and build empathy toward unique circumstances and conflicts" (Future of StoryTelling 2016, para. 4).

One interesting future path would be to consider competing interpretive frameworks. It would be interesting to see, for example, if empathy-towards-individuals-with-perceived-disabilities-approach hinders or weakens the socially-and-historically-critical-framework; in other words, perceiving one intentional goal inside the artwork may hypothetically lead to neglecting others. Studying readers' reactions statistically would aid in revealing these kind of patterns. The effect of the readers' social and cultural backgrounds should also be considered. It may be possible that Asian readers, for instance, would pay more attention to the collective dynamics in *Pry*'s representation; Asians tend to perceive actions more holistically while Westerns tend to be more analytic (see e. g. Schulz et al. 2018, p. 55). Culturally transmitted attitudes are also a point in question. For instance, Christine Kimsey notes that "the main character [is] suffering from PTSD (*which also tells us he was a soldier at one point* which is supported by flashbacks and the prologue)" (Kimsey 2019, para. 1; emphasis added). Thus, for Kimsey James's PTSD symptoms are causal evidence of his

military past. It is possible that (Western) readers encounter proportionally high numbers of domestic approaches to the war – for instance, how wars have affected the soldiers deployed from one's own country – which affects the reading of fictional works.

In addition to these factors, it is possible that something inherent in *Pry*'s narrative structure prompts the readers to approach it from the perspective of an individual. For instance, Rasan Dulay argues that *Pry*'s "form of digital media is beneficial because it puts the reader in the shoes of the character" which "allows for a more realistic experience since there is access to the thoughts and feelings of the character" (Dulay 2017, para. 1). Jessica's argument states that *Pry*'s narrative devices enable "us to relate to James by seeing ourselves in his position, inspiring stronger empathy than what is felt in other traditional texts" (Jessica's argument 2017, para. 2). Katechiz8 notes how the artworks interactivity and multimodal features allow "the reader to become one with James and follow through his life as if it was their own personal experience" (Katechiz8 2015, para. 4). Not only are feelings of empathy mentioned; Kathleen Zoller describes how *Pry* absorbed her inside the storyworld:

> One of the moments that intrigued me was the moment that James falls off of the bridge and into the water below. For a moment, I had tricked myself into thinking that I was actually falling off the bridge. I think that after playing the story for a long period of time, I began to feel like I was the main character. (Zoller 2019a, para. 2.)

It is likely that *Pry*'s narrative devices prompt – at least Western readers or the readers in my dataset – to attach the interpretations at the level of individuals. However, how universal this type of frame is remains ambiguous as long as further research is carried out.

To conclude, critical questions of *Pry*'s narrative devices' functions remain open. Although I read *Pry* as a critical comment of the two wars as soon as I first encountered the artwork, my interpretation evolved and crystallised the deeper I delved into the historical context. By discussing the story's referential context, I aimed to critically examine optional interpretation paths and argue for the importance of concrete readerly analysis; although I did not include Middle Eastern readers' interpretations in the dataset, I intentionally brought critical frames into the discussion. I also aimed to demonstrate how varying understanding and knowledge of the historical context potentially affect the act of interpretation. It is very likely that a set of 64 Iraqi readers would, at least to a degree, offer different readings than the ones presented in this dissertation. Thus, in order to truly understand narratives, a vast set of concrete, multisource evidence is needed.

## 5. Conclusions

The aim of this dissertation has been three-fold: to analyse narrative unreliability in *Pry*, to argue for the importance of flesh-and-blood readers' accounts, and to critically develop a framework for experimental analysis. The conduct of studying already published texts entails several advantages but also some weaknesses. One of the pros is the method's flexibility: more varying narrative interpretation frames may arise when the framework is not controlled for. For instance, 5 out of 30 readers who mention Luke treat him as James's brother whereas 18 treat him as James's friend, the rest not discussing his relation to James in detail. In a controlled experiment, it would be challenging to predict all the possible interpretation frames that will arise. Thus, the method used in this dissertation would function well as a mean for pre-analysis when developing more refined controlled experimental settings. Controlled experiments are crucial if one wants to study narrative elements' causal functionalities.

Another merit to my model is its exploitation of both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative dimension will provide insights into narrative phenomena's prevalence. Significantly, for instance, over a fifth of the readers who discuss Luke's role interpret him as James's brother. Clearly, there are some narrative devices in *Pry* that entice the readers to do so. However, it is promising that the method displays a stronger pattern on the "correct" interpretation, that is, the meaning inscribed by the authors: the majority of the readers read Luke as James's friend. Thus, the method can reveal patterns of authorial, "conventional," or "typical" interpretation frames as well as probable points of deviation. The setting necessitates some manner of operationalising the methods; in other words, the readerly reactions need to be made quantifiable. Someone would perhaps argue that quantifying human phenomena results in neglecting the complexity of the subject under scrutiny. I tend to disagree: quantitative and qualitative methods reveal different aspects of textual phenomena and both of them are needed in order to truly understand narratives in depth.

Although the lack of prior control provides some advantages, it is also problematic: the researcher is on the mercy of pure luck when it comes to the topics the readers discuss. Thus, the method lacks precision. As has already been mentioned, the readers may have pondered on different aspects of the narrative but still excluded those subjects from their written analyses.

Another problem of the model concerns the act of gathering the dataset. First of all, searching, reading, including, excluding, and analysing texts require a fair amount of work. Although that should not prevent a researcher from conducting research, one needs to evaluate if this is the most efficient way to study narratives or if other experimental settings

would yield similar results more efficiently. Critical attention should also be paid to the question of literary canon. Well-known, already canonised or canonised-to-be artworks are likely to have received more attention and thus generated more reviews, articles, and essays. As I have been arguing, generating reliable results necessitates sufficiently large amounts of data. However, if researchers settle for analysing popular and distinguished artworks, there is a real danger that marginal literature will be neglected.

Digital humanities are trying to tackle the problems concerned with datasets by making the datasets open access whenever possible. Having access to the datasets provides opportunities for testing the same data with multiple approaches and methods. I believe it would not be too far-fetched, for instance, to establish a web site where readers could write their reviews, knowing that the reviews would aid in research. Although sites such as Goodreads.com already exist, a specifically created web site would enable the researcher to collect information of variables such as the participant's age, sex, education level, and cultural background. Such database would enable researchers from different universities and organisations to cross-examine the results obtained in earlier research. It would also provide a cumulative space of information.

I offered my own reading of *Pry* in this dissertation for the sake of argument: I aimed to demonstrate how a researcher's orientation will produce a thematically cumulative reading that twirls around a tight hermeneutical centre. If I were to base the analysis of *Pry*'s narrative devices merely around my own reading, I believe that the results would have been less rigorous. It is not to say that thematic readings or my own reading are false; indeed, I hope to have convinced my reader that *Pry* can be understood as a critical examination of the First Gulf War and the Iraq War. However, it is noteworthy that none of 64 readers in my dataset produced a similar reading. Therefore, in order to truly understand narrative devices' functions, a large number of readerly reactions are required. Theory-oriented narratological inquiries are already empirical in the sense that the theorisations are based on actual novels and other artworks – empirical evidence, that is. However, in order to move beyond *descartesian* deduction where *post factum* subjective reasoning suffices as evidence of the phenomena under scrutiny, narratology crucially needs firm experimental ground.

To sum up the results concerning narrative unreliability in *Pry*, the following notions can be stated. (1) There seem to be relatively coherent patterns to how the readers approached James's cognitive levels. Overall, the sight was deemed the most reliable whereas the subconscious was deemed the least reliable. Most of the readers seemed to approach the different tiers as distinct levels; however, the pattern was not unequivocal. (2) The perceived

intentionality of James's unreliability varied between different readers. (3) The narrative structure of *Pry* enables the appliance of various interpretive frames, concerning e. g. temporal and intentional relations. (4) The readers highlighted different aspects of James's inner narration; whereas other readers highlighted the inner thoughts' role as mental action, others stressed the communicative aspect of narration. (5) The unreliability of the medium was brought up by multiple readers; the readers noted how the braille text remained virtual although real braille writing is tactual. (6) Boothian unreliability i. e. the ironical relation between the author(s) and the narrator(s) may be difficult to capture using this type of empirical setting. None of the readers explicitly discussed this aspect of narrative unreliability. (7) When the readers discussed the unreliability of the authors, the notions concerned either the fragmentary nature of the characters or the representation of blindness. In the latter case, some readers critically examined the representation's relation to a potential group of actual readers. (8) Explicitly considering James's PTSD as a signal of unreliability was relatively rare. Considering his vision impairment as such was even rarer.

There are various complementary research paths to be taken in the future. One consideration would concern the appliance of computational methods. Ideally, at least in the initial phase, the same dataset could be studied both computationally as well as qualitatively to see how well the computational methods capture the same phenomena as more traditional qualitative analysis. If one applied computational methods in the analysis of my dataset, there are some problematic issues that would arise. For instance, as I pointed out earlier (see p. 50 of this dissertation), the readers have used various words for describing James's inner narration. If one applied, say, word counting to these instances, the analyser would have to do a considerable amount of qualitative analysis before knowing which words to look for. It is possible that less precise computational analysis would yield similar results with less effort; especially when the datasets are large, the significance of individual instances is less significant. Furthermore, computational methods could prove helpful at identifying points of interest and could thus make the initial phase of the analysis easier. Even in this case, however, it is difficult to see how narratological investigations could be conducted without a considerable amount of qualitative analysis.

Computational narrative analysis does already exist. Matthew L. Jockers has presented a particularly interesting case in his analysis of plot shapes. Jockers has created a tool for extracting and representing narratives' shapes based on their emotional valence. To present the method in a nutcase, Jockers utilises a lexicon in which words have been assigned positive and negative values. Novels' vocabularies are then compared with the lexicon and the

results are presented as a curve which curves downwards in the presence of negative valence and upwards in the presence of positive valence. Jockers has argued that he has found six or seven basic plot types (see Jockers 2015a). Furthermore, he has compared the computational results with actual readers' interpretations and found that the patterns are significantly similar (see Jockers 2015b). Why I want to bring up Jockers's innovative and inspiring methodology here, however, are the problems his methods would encounter with a digital work such as *Pry*. First of all, *Pry* cannot be condensed into individual words due to its interactivity and appliance of multimodal representational features. It follows that the fundamental elements Jockers's code needs in order to perform are not sufficiently present; Jockers's code is not capable of assigning values to, say, pinching and prying. Secondly, although Jockers's methods may be able to capture a statistically satisfactory level of precision when it comes to emotional valence – arguably, few of us would find, say, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* cheery – the caveat lies in the model's potential to compress different readerly reactions inside one prescribed block of meanings.

Narratological investigations should pursue deeper understanding of how abstract social dynamics effect narrative understanding. One future path could concern tit-for-tat (TFT), an effective game strategy introduced in Robert Axelrod's prisoner's dilemma tournament (see Axelrod 1984). Tit-for-tat, a strategy sent to the competition by Anatol Rapoport from the University of Toronto, won both rounds and has since affected not only game theory but also fields such as evolutionary psychology and biology. Tit-for-tat is a strategy where agent A cooperates as long as agent B cooperates. If agent B does not cooperate, agent A punishes the other agent by not cooperating on the next round. If agent B cooperates again on the next round, agent A resumes back to cooperating and continues to do so as long as the other agent cooperates. Evolutionary psychologists and biologists have studied biological organisms' cooperation dynamics and found that the strategy is likely to underlie phenomena such as moral reasoning, intuitive cooperation, and punishing behaviours (see e. g. Hoffman, Yoeli & Nowak 2015). Under some conditions, another version of TFT – generous-tit-for-tat (GTFT) – has proven even more successful. GTFT is a strategy where agent A does not always punish agent B for not cooperating. This strategy functions well under conditions of uncertainty; biological organisms may sometimes misread clues about the other agents' behaviour which makes TFT prone to excessive punishment under certain conditions. Reasonable amount of forgiving may reduce the effect of "noise" such as misperceived intentionality or erroneous decision-making in social interactions (see e. g. Grim 1996). The takeaway point is that TFT and GTFT can be conceived as abstract

evolutionary rules underlying social behaviours that become manifested in various forms in the complex reality. TFT and GTFT explain why it is often more profitable to cooperate than to maximise one's individual gain. A large part of human thriving is due to humans' ability to cooperate – the ability to exchange information, build inventions on cumulative knowledge, share the effort required to achieve a goal, and so forth. This aspect of the human evolution has huge ramifications: in a way it seems that the physical reality is structured so that a social species such as humans profit from mutual effort, not only as a collective but also as individuals. Therefore, humans are equipped with sophisticated means to evaluate other entities' intentions, motivations, and willingness to cooperate. Humans can, for instance, make estimations about other individuals' trustworthiness and truthfulness.

When it comes to narrative unreliability and other narrative phenomena, TFT and GTFT could bring very enlightening insights. The core question becomes: how do readers perceive justifications for actions at different diegetic levels? In this dissertation, for instance, I have examined how the readers have conceived *Pry*'s authors' actions of representing a character with a vision impairment (see p. 52). TFT and GTFT urge the analyser to address further questions: which parties are conceived as part of the interactions and why? Why have the readers discussed the treatment of blind people critically but not the treatment of Iraqis? Is James's unreliability rarely mentioned in connection to his PTSD because of TFT dynamics – because James is already perceived as a victim who should not be victimised any further (see p. 56–57)? How are readers positioned in relation to the First Gulf War and the Iraq War; do they find the wars justified? How do different parties manipulate information according to the underlying rules of TFT and GTFT (see e. g. p. 68–69)? How do the representation's TFT dynamics affect the interpretation frames that are implemented by the reader (see p. 64)?

Fundamentally, narratives concern the transmittance of complex multidimensional information. As narratologists have successfully demonstrated over the years, narratives not only contain information of *syuzhet* and *fabula* or of the entities in the storyworld but also of the communicators and of the acts of perceiving and evaluating phenomena at different diegetic levels. Temporal, social, causal, diegetic, emotional, logical, and other information structures become intertwined into a more or less coherent whole. What narratology crucially needs, however, is the metaphor of the observer effect in quantum mechanics: when one measures a quantum particle, the act of measuring affects the state of that particle. Similarly, when one narratologist analyses textual structures, she or he can identify representational properties of the artwork but when further elaborating on the functions of these representational variables, empirical evidence from multiple readers is

crucially needed. Although one analyser's thematic or function-related elaborations are not false *per se* – they are interpretations made by a human actor – the readings only capture one interpretation among many possible interpretation paths. This is crucial when one wants to move beyond description and towards textual *functions*. As Bortolussi and Dixon put it:

> How readers process narrative is essentially an empirical question that can only be answered by systematic observation of actual readers reading actual texts; it cannot be answered solely on the basis of intuition, anecdotal evidence, or even sophisticated models of human experience (Bortolussi & Dixon 2002, p. 13).

Studying the psychological, evolutionary, and cultural aspects of narrative interpretation processes would be best conducted by forming interdisciplinary research groups in which experts from various fields would assess the process of acquiring and interpreting the results. Psychologists, social psychologists, evolutionary scientists, and statisticians could bring important insights into the narratological studies. Statistical evidence is needed in order to corroborate narratological theorising, and truly interdisciplinary research groups would enhance the dialogue between different scientific fields that are interested in the humane interpretation processes. It is true that no empirical field can exist without a firmly established theoretical universe, and to that universe narratology has contributed invaluably. However, it is as much true that no theoretical universe can ever exist anywhere else than within itself – in theory, that is – without empirical evidence.

In a truly interdisciplinary spirit, I will conclude this dissertation by quoting ever-so fascinating Stephen Hawking. Although reception studies are not as ground-breaking as Galileo Galilei's advances in physics were back in the day, the following lines hit a chord even among the narratological studies, still largely stepping in the footsteps of Aristotle:

> The Aristotelian tradition also held that one could work out all the laws that govern the universe by pure thought: it was not necessary to check by observation. So no one until Galileo bothered to see whether bodies of different weighs did in fact fall at different speeds. (Hawking 1988/1996/2016, p. 17.)

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**Appendix 1.**

The table presents the prevalence of the variables in the dataset. The information concerning each category is presented on p. 21–24 of the dissertation.

| Variable | Counts |
| --- | --- |
| All chapters available | 46 |
| Chapters available yet based on the initial release | 20 |
| Student review | 53 |
| Other than student review | 11 |
| A. Misreporting | 17 |
| B. Misperceiving | 19 |
| C. Mentions of real authors | 33 |
| D. Implicit and explicit notions of authors' goals | 32 |
| E. Mentions of James's interactive inner thoughts | 38 |
| F. Mentions of James's interactive subconscious | 46 |
| G. Mentions of James's interactive sight | 48 |
| H. Braille and chapter 3 | 29 |
| I. Sense of closure | 27 |
| J. Sense of incompleteness | 19 |
| K. References to other interpretations | 14 |
| L. Distance between the real authors and the narrator | 0 |
| M. Difficult read | 15 |
| N. Mentions of PTSD and trauma | 32 |
| O. Mentions of war and military | 48 |
| P. Naming the war | 25 |
| Q. Mentions of James's vision impairment | 42 |
| R. Mentions of Jessie | 29 |
| S. Mentions of Luke | 30 |
| T. Luke as brother | 5 |
| U. Luke as friend | 18 |
| V. Mentions of the United States | 6 |
| W. Mentions of the Middle East | 6 |
| X. Relations between the reader and James | 64 |

**Appendix 2.**

The appendix contains the variables in a verbal form. The information concerning each category is presented on p. 21–24 of the dissertation.

**A. MISREPORTING**

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 5): "I think that this work is about a person with PTSD and/or schizophrenia. I believe this because the way the narrative plays out and provides us with both reality and subconscious fears is very similar and accurate how it feels to have real-life anxiety. **It becomes hard to distinguish between what's actually happening and what is a fear, and I think the constant switching between conscious and subconscious helps to blur the separation and make the truth even more indistinguishable.** The flashbacks and worst-case-scenario subconscious beliefs definitely hint towards this work focusing on a character that has some sort of mental illness."

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 4): "**What is apparent is also that James is not being completely honest with his story. He is not lying, rather he is just forgetting.** By pulling the lines away from each other and prying into the story and his mind, more and more gets revealed. **Prying reveals information to the readers as much as to James himself.**"

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 260–261): "Chapter Six is an exercise in classic, **self-erasing textuality**. When the initial folds are smoother out, it feels as though this additional text is intended to expand the reader-user's sightlines with different perspectives on the same memories. **It soon becomes clear, however, that what is actually afoot is the heaping of jarring details onto episodes which become more and more unreal as a result**. Take, for instance, the first and second iterations of what appears to be an account of James and Jessie making love:

[W]e fall through the door and she's suddenly near her hand smells like lilac as she rips into me shelves fall cleaning supplies shatter blue slides around her body stains my fingers on her pulse I'm counting, calculating

Jessie's already gone when we fall through the door she is supposed to be close her hair smells sweet as she hits shelves fall cleaning supplies break at an odd angle blue slides around her body stains my nails near her pulse (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6).

Although the sensory information remains the same (the floral smell, the bright blue of cleaning fluid, the feel of a pulse), **the detail shifts to suggest that this encounter is being falsified** ('already gone', 'supposed to be'). Exacerbating this suspicion is the video which surges from James's subconscious and which indeed depicts Jessie sweeping supplies off shelves in a store cupboard, except in a fit of rage not passion. **Even though the video is itself carefully chosen, muted, clipped, and shut off before the episode comes to a natural close, the reader-user is infinitely more inclined to believe it over the unstable and clearly romanticised textual account**."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 261): "This is in turn due to **the text's admission to fabricating more than one detail**, including that of James's sexual encounter with Jessie: 'Most details imagined. A product of what did, and what I wished happened / did not happen' (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6). **James admits to being untruthful to Luke** about his impending blindness and unreliability on the job: 'I lie to him. A need to know basis and he doesn't need to know….I lie to him. He suspects, but still hires me. Quietly, I conduct inspections as the world erases' (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6). Likewise, **James lies to the reader-user who suspects but continues to read his thoughts**, patiently inspecting his world of TAVITs as they contradict, discompose, and erase each other. Even the diagnosis of his glaucoma betrays mental instability: 'Patient exhibits intermittent symptoms of optic hypertension indicative of abnormal aqueous humor. Optic neuropathy may trigger visions. Inconstant episodes suggest *psychosomatic* origin' (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6; emphasis added)."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 261–262): "**As the reader-user is on the brink of unfolding a climactic and unequivocal account of the camp bombing, James's subconscious becomes strewn with warnings such as: 'Stop while you're ahead' and 'Go back to better times'** (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6). Disregarding these feeble exhortations and accessing the earnest kernel of **an otherwise fraught and fraudulent text**, the user-reader is met with the scornful rebuke: '[you]'ve been playing too long…you've always already known' (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2016: chapter 6)."

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019b, para. 1): "SPOILER DONE: overall it was an interesting experience the use of the gestures makes it all the more realistic, but **the story is structured so that you never know fully what is and isn't real**. Though it might seem counter intuitive

I think that **the confusing nature of Pry as a whole makes it seem all the more real**. Since you never know what will happen in life and there are many decisions to be made with little to no extra information provided."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 3): "When it begins, it brings forth questions of what's going on, quickly followed by questions of time–what is past or present in these sequence of events? The reader is given the task of unraveling that, while also determining **what is true and what is not**. **There seem to be these sort of 'false memories' incorporated where he imagines his own murder by both a female character by the name of Jessie, as well as the protagonist's brother**."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 1): "**It is still difficult to discern which memories are true and which memories are in James' head**. He imagined Luke being there when he really was not."

HOBSON, MALLORY (2019, para. 1): "From the beginning, I liked how it seemed to be divided into clear sections of narrative–reality, lucid thoughts, and intrusive thoughts–but that quickly became blurred with the imagined Jessie appearing and looming over his bed, and continued bleeding into each other as the story progressed…**until even you, the reader, is uncertain as to what exactly is James' memories or imagination and what is actually happening (or has happened)**."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 15): "Strobe flashing words hypnotically lock the mind's focus and **position the reader as a psychoanalytic surgeon, an emotional archaeologist, uncovering events buried by seismic circumstance**. If novels encourage empathetic voyeurism, *Pry* **is a forced confessional, a space where the text reveals more than it intends to**, ruptures when touched, words flickering beneath its skin."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "Pry is not meant to be easily understandable. The reader has only access to the thoughts and memories of the main character. Those thoughts or as disjointed and rambling as thoughts can be. Especially since the character seem traumatized by the events. The memories cannot be flowing. Moreover, **as the narrator seem to suffer from a few mental disorders, he is absolutely not reliable. The reader keeps wandering whether or not what he just saw did actually happened**."

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 3): "I find these images to be the most interesting because it tells me that the main character has more than one subconscious. If you adjust the pinch of your fingers on the screen, you get different levels of his subconscious. **He has one that is on the surface level and is meant to distract his mind from not remembering the horrific things that he has seen**. The other levels are hallucinations and memories of his subconscious. **Jessie killing him, the coffee stain messing around on the ceiling. Those are all hallucinations that never actually happen**. The memories are the GameBoy, hanging with Jessie, and possibly even the night vision video of a missile launch. This tells me that by the next chapter he might actually go blind and may even go crazy."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "James is slowly going blind and so **the story of pry is narrated in an unreliable and sometimes confusing way**. The consistent flashbacks as well as the struggle of which finger-motion is required really creates a disjointed storyline for the reader to follow."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150): "Notwithstanding, as the reader soon finds out, **nothing in this story is what it seems, it being, after all, told through a person who is experiencing a series of mental and physical disorders**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): "In their construction of this chapter [chapter 6] Cannizzaro and Gorman appear to rely on the idea of consciousness as containing just a fraction of the information stored in one's memory, with the traumatic memories being repressed into the unconscious. Fragmented and associative as the text representing James's memory is, it allows the reader to reconstruct the key characteristics of the events from his past that shed light on his present condition and on the memories haunting him. **Whether what James remembers is what 'really' happened remains unclear as his narration bears marks of unreliability, including a self-addressed admonition to come up with another version of the story – 'Go back, tell this as a version where you go back through the pale door.'**"

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 4): "You start to question **what is real and what is in his head**."

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 3): "Through these unique interactions, **unravel the past and discover a story shaped by the lies we tell ourselves: lies revealed when you pull apart the narrative and read between the lines."**

[– NB: Direct quote from *Pry*'s section "About."]

SHELBY (2015, para. 1): "James is the narrator of Pry; he is suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and is loosing his sight. **In chapter two he says his doctor says it is psychosomatic but James believes its all real making him not a very reliable narrator. The reader has to figure out what is true and what is just made up in his head to get the full story.**"

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 4): "Chapter 4 also shows **the blurring of reality and fiction**. Luke is sitting at the table in the hotel room shuffling cards. Chapter 7 explores this more so, with **conversations that are clearly happening outside of the war zone being portrayed as if they were happening in that setting. Chapter 7 really shows how James seems to have lost ability to percieve what is real and what isn't real, at the start it was less extreme but by Chapter 7 what is happening in the present versus what happened in the past becomes muddied**."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 1): "What exactly happens between these three key characters is not all that clear, especially since **James is constantly modifying his memories and remixing the events in his head**."

## B. MISPERCEIVING

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 5): "I think that this work is about a person with PTSD and/or schizophrenia. I believe this because the way the narrative plays out and provides us with both reality and subconscious fears is very similar and accurate how it feels to have real-life anxiety. **It becomes hard to distinguish between what's actually happening and what is a fear, and I think the constant switching between conscious and subconscious helps to blur the separation and make the truth even more indistinguishable**. The flashbacks and worst-case-scenario subconscious beliefs definitely hint towards this work focusing on a character that has some sort of mental illness."

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 4): "What is apparent is also that James is not being completely honest with his story. **He is not lying, rather he is just forgetting**. By pulling the lines away from each other and prying into the story and his mind, more and more gets revealed. **Prying reveals information to the readers as much as to James himself."**

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, 260–261): "Chapter Six is an exercise in classic, self-erasing textuality. When the initial folds are smoother out, **it feels as though this additional text is intended to expand the reader-user's sightlines with different perspectives on the same memories**. **It soon becomes clear, however, that what is actually afoot is the heaping of jarring details onto episodes which become more and more unreal as a result**. Take, for instance, the first and second iterations of what appears to be an account of James and Jessie making love:
[W]e fall through the door and she's suddenly near her hand smells like lilac as she rips into me shelves fall cleaning supplies shatter blue slides around her body stains my fingers on her pulse I'm counting, calculating

Jessie's already gone when we fall through the door she is supposed to be close her hair smells sweet as she hits shelves fall cleaning supplies break at an odd angle blue slides around her body stains my nails near her pulse (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6).
**Although the sensory information remains the same (the floral smell, the bright blue of cleaning fluid, the feel of a pulse), the detail shifts to suggest that this encounter is being falsified ('already gone', 'supposed to be')**. Exacerbating this suspicion is the video which surges from James's subconscious and which indeed depicts Jessie sweeping supplies off

shelves in a store cupboard, except in a fit of rage not passion. **Even though the video is itself carefully chosen, muted, clipped, and shut off before the episode comes to a natural close, the reader-user is infinitely more inclined to believe it over the unstable and clearly romanticised textual account.**"

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019b, para. 1): "In experiencing the second half of this piece I am both amazed by how smooth it is and more confused on what all went on. **Like did he fall off the bridge or did James just imagine it?**"

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 3): "When it begins, it brings forth questions of what's going on, quickly followed by questions of time–what is past or present in these sequence of events? The reader is given the task of unraveling that, while **also determining what is true and what is not**. **There seem to be these sort of 'false memories' incorporated where he imagines his own murder by both a female character by the name of Jessie, as well as the protagonist's brother**."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 5): "He has moments, increasingly frequent the further into the story the reader travels, where he overlaps memories. **His past and present collide as though he's struggling to tell the difference**."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 1): "**It is still difficult to discern which memories are true and which memories are in James' head. He imagined Luke being there when he really was not**."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 5): "**Everything is relatively unclear and it is incredibly difficult to know for sure which is the truth between the images that are shown and the text that appears**. All that is truly clear in the end is that Jessie died and James, one way or the other, blames himself for her death. Whether it truly was his fault, or he killed her, or it was simply an accident, he blames himself for what happened to her."

HOBSON, MALLORY (2019, para. 1): "From the beginning, I liked how it seemed to be divided into clear sections of narrative–reality, lucid thoughts, and intrusive thoughts–but **that quickly became blurred with the imagined Jessie appearing and looming over his bed, and continued bleeding into each other as the story progressed…until even you, the**

**reader, is uncertain as to what exactly is James' memories or imagination and what is actually happening (or has happened)**."

HOBSON, MALLORY (2019, para. 3): "The cinematography helped to portray James' mental state as well, from the clear, steady camerawork of the prologue, to later scenes with **off coloring or tilted cameras as James' view of the world around him grows more skewed and distorted**."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "Moreover, **as the narrator seem to suffer from a few mental disorders, he is absolutely not reliable. The reader keeps wandering whether or not what he just saw did actually happened**."

KARAMJOT (2016, para. 1): "As the chapters progress the user is brought into various levels of James' consciousness and subconsciousness to experience **his damaged view on reality**."

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 3): "I find these images to be the most interesting because it tells me that the main character has more than one subconscious. If you adjust the pinch of your fingers on the screen, you get different levels of his subconscious. He has one that is on the surface level and is meant to distract his mind from not remembering the horrific things that he has seen. **The other levels are hallucinations and memories of his subconscious. Jessie killing him, the coffee stain messing around on the ceiling. Those are all hallucinations that never actually happen.** The memories are the GameBoy, hanging with Jessie, and possibly even the night vision video of a missile launch. This tells me that by the next chapter he might actually go blind and may even go crazy."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 3): "James is suffering from what seems to be PTSD and is losing his eyesight,his doctor claims it's psychosomatic, but **he believes it's real and is affecting his ability to decipher what is real and what isn't**."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150): "Notwithstanding, as the reader soon finds out, **nothing in this story is what it seems, it being, after all, told through a person who is experiencing a series of mental and physical disorders**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 219): "The words that the reader sees when he or she accesses James's subconscious appear to be fragments of medical or scientific discourse – "patient experiences intermediate muscle atonia in sleep or in onset of waking typical for subjects to experience visions of intruders impairing violent and sudden damage" – which suggests that James is undergoing some medical treatment or has perhaps read some texts on his own condition. **The reference to "visions of intruders" and "violence" turns out to be a prefiguration of the hallucination James experiences at the end of the first chapter**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "What comes to the foreground in this section is **James's limited grasp of reality: not only does he have problems seeing the world around him, as indicated by the occasional blurring of his vision; he has recurrent visions of the female soldier and Luke in military uniform, visions the reader cannot easily dispel by making James open his eyes**. At the moment of actual demolition his thoughts take the form of a short film showing him chatting with the female soldier and then playing some game on his Gameboy, while on the subconscious level we see satellite footage of some military camp being struck by a missile."

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 3): "Through these unique interactions, unravel the past and discover a story shaped by **the lies we tell ourselves**: lies revealed when you pull apart the narrative and read between the lines."

    [– NB: Direct quote from *Pry*'s section "About."]

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 4): "You start to question **what is real and what is in his head**."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019a, para. 2): "Moving into the main part of the story, **we can see that James is constantly struggling with both his reality and his perception of reality, both in regards to his thoughts and his hallucinations**. In chapter 1, we noticed that **as James is attempting to wake up, he is experiencing a hallucination/sleep paralysis** of a woman from his past who is appearing to be trying to harm him."

SHELBY (2015, para. 1): "James is the narrator of Pry; he is suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and is loosing his sight. In chapter **two he says his doctor says it is psychosomatic but James believes its all real making him not a very reliable narrator**.

**The reader has to figure out what is true and what is just made up in his head** to get the full story."

SHELBY (2015, para. 2): "**But he cannot keep his past from colliding with the present** making it hard for him to function in everyday life. **James wants to forget what happened in the desert during war but can't, causing him strange thoughts and hallucinations**."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 4): "**Chapter 4 also shows the blurring of reality and fiction**. Luke is sitting at the table in the hotel room shuffling cards. Chapter 7 explores this more so, with conversations that are clearly happening outside of the war zone being portrayed as if they were happening in that setting. **Chapter 7 really shows how James seems to have lost ability to percieve what is real and what isn't real**, at the start it was less extreme but by Chapter 7 what is happening in the present versus what happened in the past becomes muddied."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019b, para. 2): "At this point two things can happen. Either you keep James' eyes open to the point where his vision blurs and he falls off the railway track, or you open and close periodically and make it all the way to the end, only to transition into his thoughts. In both instances, his subconscious is brought to the forefront, while reality is placed where the subconscious has been since the start of the story. **I think it represents his continual descent into his own mind, and how he is starting to lose his grasp on what is real and what isn't. Chapter 7 really brings this home with the constant back and forth between different moments in time, blurring the line between reality and memory**."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 1): "What exactly happens between these three key characters is not all that clear, especially since **James is constantly modifying his memories and remixing the events in his head**."

## C. MENTIONS OF REAL AUTHORS

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017): "Released by **art collective Tender Claws** in June 2017, *Pry* is a digital novella that showcases the unique features of a fictional story told through a touchscreen interface" (para. 2).

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "With his eyesight slowly failing, and his mind plagued by harrowing memories, the story is largely presented from James' own perspective through a unique amalgamation of text, video and audio. The way in which **Tender Claws' Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman** blend these different elements is nothing short of captivating."

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 1): "It is written by **Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro who collectively call themselves Tender Claws**."

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 5): "By not conforming to the traditional page turning, paper bound practice, **the authors** can explore the many possibilities that the technology age has to offer."

CAYLEY, JOHN (2015, para. 1): "In the case of **Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro's** gorgeous audiovisual, multipart book—acquired as an app and loaded onto an iPad or iPhone—*Pry* is also the title of a specific story, the narrative of a young demolition consultant, James, whose life has been shattered and reconfigured by the 1991 Gulf War."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 256): "**Samantha Gorman, Danny Cannizzaro**: *Pry* 1. 1. 0 (iTunes: **Tender Claws LLC**, 2014)."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 256): "**Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro's** *Pry* declares its default gestural mode in its single-word imperative title."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 259): "**Gorman and Cannizzaro** cede the textual powers of surveilling and tapping the outward and inward temporalities of a single character at will to the reader-user who may react in real-time to the diegetic environment external to the

character, or hijack the character's thoughts with small, intensive gestures that quickly imprint on muscle memory."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 259): "Before prying for a second time, the reader-user must entertain a series of questions: is **Gorman and Cannizzaro's** work mischievously opaque to invite suspicious reading or is it mischievously transparent to invite innocent reading?"

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 262): "The text itself does not deny that this is **Gorman and Cannizzaro's** intention, suggesting that 'the edge of our want has an outlet in play', or that the reader-user's thirst for interpretation is best quenched by mischievous manipulation of the distractingly virtuosic interaction design (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6)."

CRELLI, ROSE (2015, para. 5): "**Samantha Gorman, the other half of the Tender Claws team**, says 'Reading is experienced at the reader's pace… video is experienced at the director's pace'"

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019a, para. 1): "**The creators of this interactive "tender claws"** have made a piece that I have seen nothing like and it is amazing to see the creativity and thought put into this piece."

DULAY, RASAN (2017, para. 1): "The digital reading "Pry" by **Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro**, is an app based novella that forces the reader to interact and follow along with the story."

HOBSON, MALLORY (2019, para. 3): "I thought **the author** did a great job of crafting a realistic world and characters, immersing the reader into James' state of mind and being."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 1): "From the prior research that we have done on **Tender Claws'** piece *Pry*, it is an extremely intense representation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder."

JESSICA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "Pry is an intricately designed interactive text created by **Danny Cannizzaro & Samantha Gorman for Tender Claws**."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 1): "*PRY* IS AN INTERACTIVE multimedia fiction created and launched as an iOS app by **Tender Claws, the duo Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman**, in 2014."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 21): "Apps on iOS utilize a proprietary language called Objective-C; for *Pry*, **Danny Cannizzaro** taught himself the language."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 30): "Imbuing the story with an implacable psychological specificity, bringing the characters to life as fleshy, intricate, paradoxical people (with histories and habits and not just pockets of phrases that pour disordered into blocks), and then guiding the reader to live with or within the characters as they experience clear, irrevocable, precisely temporalized events is the challenge that **the Tender Claws duo** face as they complete this potentially breakthrough novella-app."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 31): **Tender Claws** are well situated as they finish *Pry* to create a true hypermedia literature, specific to multi-touch devices, with a density of character and plot sufficient to satisfy reader-viewers raised on novels and films."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "*Pry* is a novella app created by **Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman and edited by Tender Claws**."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "He [the reader] is often under the impression that **the creators** concentrated more on how to be original and interactive than telling a story."

KARAMJOT (2016, para. 1): "**Tender Claw's** Pry (Part 1) is a touchscreen fiction narrative iOS app that explores the mind of James, a demolitions expert and Gulf War veteran, who 6 years later suffers from PTSD involving flashbacks and nightmares."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 1): "*Pry* is a multimedia reading experience **created by Samantha Gorman and published by Tender Claws**."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 5): "I believe that **Gorman** does an excellent job not only creating a entertaining piece of literature, but writing an informative commentary about several topics we like to overlook."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 5): "**She** [Samantha Gorman] also addresses, maybe more in passing, of the effects of PTSD has on veterans."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 5): "The biggest topic **Gorman** touches upon though it the differences in realities. The reality we tell ourselves and the reality that actually takes place around us, and which we decided to deal with and live within."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 6): "**Gorman's** combination of various mediums creates a layered work that introduces a new version of electronic literature to the recently formed literary cannon."

KEISHA (2015, para. 1): "Pry was created by **Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman** and it is an interactive multimedia story that allows the reader to, in a way, choose the path of how one reads the content."

KEISHA (2015, para. 3): "As stated by **one of the creators**, "Reading is experienced at the reader's pace," **Gorman** notes, while "video is experienced at the director's pace." *Pry* blends the two; the reader ultimately guides himself through the piece, but **the director's hand is just out of sight, curating the read**: video expertly placed at key junctures, timed to play back at just the right moment if you toggle back to the text."

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "Touch screens have elevated the effectiveness of interaction seen in digital literature. This is evident in the iPad fiction *Pry* created by **Danny Cannizzaro & Samantha Gorman**."

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "**The creators of *Pry*** have created an interface in which the reader/user controls the narrative."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "'The form is the function" said *Pry* **(2014) creator Samantha Gorman.**'"

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "The simple idea of a digital novel and pushing a button is simply not enough. There needed to be more interaction and more simulation, which is what **Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman** did."

LYDIA (2015, para. 3): "**Samantha Gorman, one of *Pry's* creators**, said that "the form is the function", I couldn't agree more."

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015, para. 1): "**The creators of PRY** utilize the touch screen of iPads and iPhones in order for readers to experience what the main character of the story is doing, whether it be prying open their eyes and seeing what James is seeing or delving deeper into his subconscious."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150): "All of these multiple synesthetic meanings seem like plausible reason for the title of *Pry* (2014), a digital literary artwork by **Tender Claws (Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro)**, specifically designed given the affordances (and constraints) of multi-touch devices running on an iOS operating system."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150): "Described by **its authors** as an "App novella that re-imagines the form of the book," *Pry* tells the story of James, a young man returned from the Gulf War suffering from post-traumatic disorder in his current life (loss of vision, bad job performance, and strained relationships with his brother Luke and their best friend Jessie)."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 156): "Recalling some of the main arguments in this thesis, namely, that in digital literary artworks, *the reader* (not the user, nor any other similar convention) may experience specific haptic reading processes (with its own specificities), **Gorman and Cannizzaro** sustain that, in *Pry*, reading is a "cohesion of haptic and cognitive processes," since *the reader* "literally touches the thoughts of the main protagonist" (2014, project statement)."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 3): "Overall, I think this app does everything right. It's really just an amazing work of art and I can tell **the people who made this** put a lot of work and thought into it."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 208): "This contribution seeks to extend the scope of cognitive narratological studies into consciousness by discussing two multimodal digital narratives: *The Breathing Wall* by Kate Pullinger, Stefan Schemat and babel, and *Pry* by **Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 209): "It [the present chapter] also seeks to extend the scope of narrative studies by focusing on two experimental digital narratives – *The Breathing Wall* by Kate Pullinger, Stefan Schemat and babel, and *Pry* by **Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro** – whose explicit mobilisation of the multimodal potential of the digital medium and embodiment of the reader/user can be construed as an intensification of earlier print-bound attempts to go beyond conventional, purely verbal strategies for representing consciousness in fiction and an augmentation of these innovative ventures with the element of interactivity, peculiar to digital forms of communication."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 217): "In the "About" section **Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman** self-consciously emphasise that *Pry* is "a fiction created exclusively for digital, touchscreen *reading*" (emphasis added) and that its innovative interface has been designed "to evoke the associative and slippery aspects of thought and memory." They also use this section to introduce the protagonist of *Pry* – 'Six years, ago, James – a demolition consultant – returned from the 1991 Gulf War' – and to invite the reader to 'explore James's mind.'"

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 219): "In **Cannizzaro and Gorman's** work the reader is confronted with "raw", fragmented and indeterminate cognitive data that he or she has to process on his or her own."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "At the moment of actual demolition his thoughts take the form of a short film showing him chatting with the female soldier and then playing some game on his Gameboy, while on the subconscious level we see satellite footage of some military camp being struck by a missile. By providing the same soundtrack to all the streams of cognitive data, **Cannizzaro and Gorman** reveal their being interrelated via the principle of association. The sounds of actual explosion become the sounds of virtual explosions in the game and then again the actual one in the case of the bombing of the camp. Again, it is the reader's task to infer that Jessie from Chapter 1 and the woman in Chapter 2

are the same person and that the scenes connected with the military must come from James's unconscious perhaps, as there are no direct references to the past in the verbal track representing his conscious thoughts."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 221–222): "**Cannizzaro and Gorman** have generously encoded into Chapter 6 the signal of finality well-known to anyone familiar with digital textuality: the lines that cannot be pinched open any further change their colour from white to grey."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): "In their construction of this chapter [chapter 6] **Cannizzaro and Gorman** appear to rely on the idea of consciousness as containing just a fraction of the information stored in one's memory, with the traumatic memories being repressed into the unconscious."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 1–2): "When you think of a, "novella," what comes to mind? A short story? A leaflet of pages, stapled or glued together into the form of a small book, ready to page through? Or do you picture an interactive app on a technological device? Pry, the brainchild of **the Tender Claws studio**, is just that."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 5): "You don't have to know how to code or even like to play video games to appreciate the story woven by **Tender Claws**."

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, "Conclusion"): "PRY is the creation of **a company called Tender Claws set up by Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman who started collaborating together 10 years ago**. **Their** motto is to blur the boundaries of design, publishing, cinema, installation and virtual reality. With PRY, **they** have succeeded in blurring these boundaries. I cannot wait to see what **they** have lined up for us next."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 1): "**The author's** use of all the different multimedia elements are what I think make this work so intriguing."

RAGAN, KEEGAN (2015, para. 1): "*Pry* **by Danny Camnizzaro and Samantha Gorman** isn't what you would expect from a typical e-book. Instead of what is simply a book copied onto your device, *Pry* is a much more dynamic approach towards the emerging e-literature

genre. It expects the reader not only to read, as is expected in most literature, but to also dig for what isn't immediately apparent. From the beginning, the story in pry isn't immediately apparent, so the reader is forced to search for the answers themselves."

REDMAN, JOE (2019b, para. 1): "I think **the author** made a creative connection between having the presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush in the same chapter to illustrate that the world conflict represented in the story lasted several generations."

SARAH'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "**Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman's** 2014 I-pad novella *Pry* is an innovative fiction based around the possible movements of the touchscreen medium unlocking various video and audio input, making it a narrative that the reader interacts with by touch."

SDHUTCHERSON (2015, para. 1): "As **the two creators of the Tender Claws company,Gorman and Cannizzaro**, say Pry is "a book to watch and a film to touch" they almost mean these words literally."

SHELBY (2015, para. 1): "Pry is an interactive novella app made by **Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman**."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 3): "In an interview with LA Weekly **one of the writers of Pry Samantha Gorman** "As a conceptual writer … I want to be made to think through, not just think about ". I do believe that **Gorman** has accomplished just that."

STAPLES, LILY (2016, quoted before body text): "'Pry open a troubled mind and hold its thoughts in your hands'" – **Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman**."
        [–NB: Staples cites *Pry*'s description on Apple app store.]

STAPLES, LILY (2016, para. 1): "Interactive literature was not often associated with the gaming industry, being that it's stories were often linear with drastic different changes from player to player. To answer that demand **the Tender Claws studio, comprised of Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro**, created *Pry,* a self proclaimed ' hybrid of cinema, gaming, and text.'"

STAPLES, LILY (2016, para. 7): "**Tender Claws is a comprised of two media artists, Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro**, who have been collaborating for 10 years. **Their** most recognizable novella Pry has been a forerunner in both the hybrid literature and eLiterature world – creating interactive experiences you can carry in your pocket. *Pry* was selected by Apple as one of the top 25 Apps of 2015. Click **their** picture above to see what **their** doing now."

WOO, DAVID JACK (2015, para. 3): "On the forefront of this revolution are **Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizarro** with their novella *Pry*."

## D. IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT NOTIONS OF AUTHORS GOALS

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "Released by **art collective Tender Claws in June 2017, *Pry* is a digital novella that showcases the unique features of a fictional story told through a touchscreen interface. This ambitious literary project stands as the perfect example of how modern technology opens the door for innovative methods of storytelling.**"

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 5): "**I think that this work is about a person with PTSD and/or schizophrenia.** I believe this because the way the narrative plays out and provides us with both reality and subconscious fears is very similar and accurate how it feels to have real-life anxiety."

BINA, MEGAN (2019b, para. 5): "**Pry takes a non-linear look at how someone might deal with emotions and try to understand themself while dealing with several nearly debilitating issues (anxiety, PTSD, loss of eyesight, etc.)**"

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 5): "By not conforming to the traditional page turning, paper bound practice, **the authors can explore the many possibilities that the technology age has to offer**."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 259): "**Gorman and Cannizzaro cede the textual powers of surveilling and tapping the outward and inward temporalities of a single character at will to the reader-user who may react in real-time to the diegetic environment external to the character, or hijack the character's thoughts with small, intensive gestures that quickly imprint on muscle memory**."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 259): "Before prying for a second time, the reader-user must entertain a series of questions: **is Gorman and Cannizzaro's work mischievously opaque to invite suspicious reading or is it mischievously transparent to invite innocent reading?** Do I textualize / interpret, or do I detextualize / acquiesce in a kind of suspended disbelief when I interact with *Pry*? What is the significance of the fusion of form and gesture in conducting one, both, or neither of these readings?"

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 262): "It is precisely this intense enjoyment of the interface which Jhave suspects during his own first reading, as it obfuscates the poignancy of the content, limiting not only appropriate affect but also access to deeper meaning (Johnson 2014: para. 2). **The text itself does not deny that this is Gorman and Cannizzaro's intention, suggesting that 'the edge of our want has an outlet in play', or that the reader-user's thirst for interpretation is best quenched by mischievous manipulation of the distractingly virtuosic interaction design** (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6)."

CRELLI, ROSE (2015, para. 5): "**Samantha Gorman,  the other half of the Tender Claws team, says "Reading is experienced at the reader's pace… video is experienced at the director's pace." Shifts in power between reader and writer are more flexible and ambiguous in mixed media novels. The relationship between reader, text and writer is open to so many more possibilities than before**.  Oftentimes, many people associate nonlinear literature as a new-fangled modern invention. However, non linear literature dates all the way back to temples in Ancient Egypt where wall inscriptions on religious text were two or three-dimensional.  This is the perfect historical example of a more open and less traditional relationship between reader, text and writer."

DULAY, RASAN (2017, para. 1): "The digital reading "Pry" by **Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro, is an app based novella that forces the reader to interact and follow along with the story**."

FUTURE OF STORYTELLING (2016, para. 2): "Available on both the iPhone and iPad, *Pry* **pushes the conventions of digital storytelling to explore the emotional and psychological impacts of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)."**

FUTURE OF STORYTELLING (2016, para. 4): "*Pry* **is part of a growing movement of video games that address tough-to-understand topics by allowing players to explore the emotional realities of living through trauma. Not only does *Pry*'s imaginative design provide a platform and a language to depict a character who struggles with PTSD, the interactive components allow the role-player to live these realities as well**. The social implications for games like *Pry*express [sic] new and exciting ways for people to understand each other and build empathy toward unique circumstances and conflicts. The power of

sharing these stories is hidden between the lines of the novella: It's the transformative experience itself."

HOBSON, MALLORY (2019, para. 3): "I thought **the author did a great job of crafting a realistic world and characters, immersing the reader into James' state of mind and being**."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 1): "From the prior research that we have done on **Tender Claws' piece *Pry*, it is an extremely intense representation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder**. This concept becomes much more clear by the end of the first chapter, continuing into the second chapter, with surreal imagery of death and war. The protagonist visiting his friend at a construction site, for example, triggers memories of explosions while serving in the military."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 2): "Within *Pry,* the interactor flips through three stages of the protagonist: eyes closed, eyes open, and subconscious. The lines between the three often become blurred, but primarily the eyes closed represents thoughts via text, the eyes open represents reality via video, and the subconscious represents war flashbacks via avant-garde sequences. **By constantly flipping through these three stages, *Pry* gives a feeling of chaos and fear that aims to artistically represent the effects of PTSD on its victims**."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 4): "*Pry* **is a powerful piece of electronic literature that attempts to shine light on mental illness through the advantages of technology and interaction.** To say that the piece succeeds in doing so is an understatement."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 5): "*Pry* **is a commentary on a multitude of things: war, PTSD, love and jealousy, coming to terms with blindness, and more. It feels overwhelming, which is the point**. James is overwhelmed by everything that is crashing down around his life."

JACKSON, JOSHUA (2019, para. 2): "**The goal of the piece I think is to give the reader through, and touchscreen gestures a new way to feel the story's content instead of just reading and imagining. Touching and tilting the screen gives us the feeling that we are the main character**."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "He [the reader] is often under the impression that **the creators concentrated more on how to be original and interactive than telling a story**."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 5): "**I believe that Gorman does an excellent job not only creating a entertaining piece of literature, but writing an informative commentary about several topics we like to overlook. The first being knowing and understanding what people go through when faced with new physical challenges and how the adapt or cope with them**. In the beginning of the novella James ,and thus the reader, has almost perfect vision. As the novella progresses sight begins to become blurry and we are forced to open and close James' eyes as if we were blinking for him. We must learn to adapt to this new obstacle right along with James."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 5): "**She [Gorman] also addresses, maybe more in passing, of the effects of PTSD has on veterans**. Especially during the scenes on the work site do we realize that the loud noises of demolition bothers James. These also trigger memories of his time deployed."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 5): "**The biggest topic Gorman touches upon though it the differences in realities**. The reality we tell ourselves and the reality that actually takes place around us, and which we decided to deal with and live within."

KEISHA (2015, para. 3): "**As stated by one of the creators, "Reading is experienced at the reader's pace," Gorman notes, while "video is experienced at the director's pace." *Pry* blends the two; the reader ultimately guides himself through the piece, but the director's hand is just out of sight, curating the read**: video expertly placed at key junctures, timed to play back at just the right moment if you toggle back to the text."

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "**The creators of *Pry* have created an interface in which the reader/user controls the narrative. This level of interactivity adds to both the meaning and overall appeal of the text**."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "The simple idea of a digital novel and pushing a button is simply not enough. **There needed to be more interaction and more simulation, which is what Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman did.**"

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015, para. 1): "**The creators of PRY utilize the touch screen of iPads and iPhones in order for readers to experience what the main character of the story is doing, whether it be prying open their eyes and seeing what James is seeing or delving deeper into his subconscious**."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150–151): "Like the tale of Esau and Jacob in the *Book of Genesis*, in which Jacob deceives his older twin brother Esau in order to attain the latter's birthright (in passage 25:6 of *Book of Genesis* we are told that Jacob tries to pull Esau back into the womb, by grasping his brother's heel, in order to be the firstborn, a gesture of the hand that can be read as a premonitory symbol of Jacob's deceptive behaviour), James constantly sees himself as having a secondary role in his relationship with Luke. Examples of this are the several insinuations that James might be tremendously in love with Jessie, his best friend but also Luke's girlfriend, or James' constant feeling of being surpassed by Luke in the management of their father's demolition company, two distinct situations, which in turn, make James' feelings towards Luke a constant blur and chaos, to the point where he does not even recognize him as a brother. **Designed as a thread that guides the whole story, this tension between brothers is emulated in *Pry*'s use of function and form, in order to illustrate other possible dualisms, like the ones between conscious and unconscious, body and mind, "external vs. internal world," seemingly opposing scenarios – in which the desert gives way to water and vice-versa, or a comfortable room with a view gives way to a window with prison bars–, perceptive and cognitive processes, vision and touch, and, last but not least, text and gesture.**"

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 213): "Both *The Breathing Wall* and *Pry* **interrogate on the one hand the way consciousness can be represented in literature and on the other the reader's experience of works which are multimodal in form**"

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 217): "In the 'About' section **Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman self-consciously emphasise that *Pry* is "a fiction created exclusively for digital, touchscreen *reading*"** (emphasis added) and that **its innovative**

**interface has been designed "to evoke the associative and slippery aspects of thought and memory**." They also use this section to introduce the protagonist of *Pry* – 'Six years, ago, James – a demolition consultant – returned from the 1991 Gulf War' – and to invite the reader to 'explore James's mind.'"

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): "James thus appears to be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and a sense of guilt connected with Jessie's death, **the originality of *Pry* lying more in its multimodal representation of his condition than in the subject matter itself**."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 3): "If you broke the story down into a traditional sense, **it's a single-example look at how war affects soldiers**."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 5): "It is a game that is a novella and a novella that is a game, **showing the pain of a soldier trying to re-assimilate into regular society and the past that is haunting him to this day**."

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019, para. 3): "**If I had to see what the main theme of the story was, it would be the main character dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder or something to that effect.**"

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, "Conclusion"): "PRY is the creation of a company called Tender Claws set up by Danny Cannizzaro and Samantha Gorman who started collaborating together 10 years ago. **Their motto is to blur the boundaries of design, publishing, cinema, installation and virtual reality. With PRY, they have succeeded in blurring these boundaries**. I cannot wait to see what they have lined up for us next."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 1): "The author's use of all the different multimedia elements are what I think make this work so intriguing. The way that **text montage segments were used to illustrate his subconscious are a perfect way to describe how erratic memories can be triggered.** The use of video gives the user a first-hand look of what James sees in both present time as well as events that are parts of his memory or subconscious. There is also a lot of kinetic interaction used in Pry. This helps to tap into the user's sensory modalities, which helps tell the story and influence the way that the user experiences the

work. These kinetic interactions also give the user the feeling of a first-person point of view. The use of sound in Pry helps the story to unfold as well. It aides the user's feelings of being immersed in the story."

RAGAN, KEEGAN (2015, para. 1): "***Pry* by Danny Camnizzaro and Samantha Gorman** isn't what you would expect from a typical e-book. Instead of what is simply a book copied onto your device, ***Pry* is a much more dynamic approach towards the emerging e-literature genre**. **It expects the reader not only to read, as is expected in most literature, but to also dig for what isn't immediately apparent**. From the beginning, the story in pry isn't immediately apparent, so the reader is forced to search for the answers themselves."

REDMAN, JOE (2019b, para. 1): "**I think the author made a creative connection between having the presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush in the same chapter to illustrate that the world conflict represented in the story lasted several generations. I think the general theme of the story is redemption.** The protagonist is trying to save himself from his own PTSD of war, but also clear up and make light of his understanding with his friend."

SHORT, EMILY (2015, para. 1): "PRY is an iOS story that combines video segments and text **to explore the inner and outer worlds of a veteran** who is still struggling to process his experiences in the war, who is suffering from vision impairment thanks to wounds sustained there, and who is now trying to hold down a job in demolitions."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 3): "**The story shows how war can have lasting effects on an individual**. There are moments like in Chapter 2 where as the Hartman Plant was being demolished, if you go into his mind you see images of people being killed from the perspective of an AC-130 Gunship; and how sound of those explosions can trigger those memories."

SMITH8, DES (2019, para. 1): "**Ultimately, I think the story is about James dealing with PTSD**."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 3): "**There are many things that the developers of pry did that can be seen as an amazing job such as the way they formatted the**

**programming. The app alone is more than just a book, it is filled with deeper layers of texts and videos that add to the story**. The work is sheer genius. It is no longer just simply turning pages to read, it is blinking, expanding, watching, and scrolling over braille to 'read'. It is quite exceptional work. As the reader goes through the story the chapters change without the readers control taking them deeper into James' story. **Another thing that Pry did well was creating a story that is not only captivating, but also mysterious**. Pry leaves the reader with all sorts of questions. **The work is not only a work of art but also a thought piece, which it was meant to be. In an interview with LA Weekly one of the writers of Pry Samantha Gorman 'As a conceptual writer … I want to be made to think through, not just think about '. I do believe that Gorman has accomplished just that.**"

STAPLES, LILY (2016, para. 1): "Interactive literature was not often associated with the gaming industry, being that it's stories were often linear with drastic different changes from player to player. **To answer that demand** the Tender Claws studio, comprised of Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro, created *Pry,* a self proclaimed ' hybrid of cinema, gaming, and text.'"

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a, para. 1): "**The separation of thoughts, sight, and the subconscious are used in Pry to illustrate the experience of PTSD**."

**E. MENTIONS OF JAMES'S INTERACTIVE INNER THOUGHTS**

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "This gives the reader freedom to witness the real world in front of James; **to close his eyes and read the narration within his mind**; and to delve even deeper into his subconscious and observe the thoughts that constantly gnaw away at him. A good example of this three-tiered perspective representing some poignant psychoanalysis occurs in chapter two, as James oversees a controlled demolition. Closing his eyes, the reader can see that the explosions trigger in James a significant memory from the Gulf War."

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 5): "I believe this because the way the narrative plays out and provides us with both reality and subconscious fears is very similar and accurate how it feels to have real-life anxiety. It becomes hard to distinguish between what's actually happening and what is a fear, and I think **the constant switching between conscious and subconscious** helps to blur the separation and make the truth even more indistinguishable."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 258–259): "*Pry* showcases these gestures as formal metaphors for seeing (spreading), thinking (pinching), and **narrating (releasing)**, as well as canny substitutes for omniscient narration."

CLAPP, JOEL (2019, para. 2): "**Releasing** their digits from the touch screen **causes the eyelids to close once again, and the text narration reflects on the world in the narrative space**."

CLAPP, JOEL (2019, para. 2): "Again**, releasing the gesture causes the scene to return to the narrative text.**"

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019a, para. 1): "As the reader looks at the real world and **back to his thoughts** it shows that time is moving, and you can either spend your time looking out to the world around you or miss it to see what is going through his mind."

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019a, para. 1): "With his vision failing you **look into his mind** and try to understand what is going on as his past collides with his present. With every action you can **dive deeper into James's thoughts** or try and ignore the idea that you are losing sight. "

DOLPHIN, DEBORAH (2019, para. 3): "As we look at **the inner thoughts** of the character **we see his thoughts of past, present, and future**, and with each a level of uncertainty."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 4): "There will be times when his vision will blur and his ears will ring, or when he sees the face of a girl **even when his eyes are closed**."

       [–NB: Existence of inner thoughts implied as they appear when closing James's eyes.]

HOBSON, MALLORY (2019, para. 1): "From the beginning, I liked how it seemed to be divided into clear sections of narrative–reality, **lucid thoughts**, and intrusive thoughts–but that quickly became blurred with the imagined Jessie appearing and looming over his bed, and continued bleeding into each other as the story progressed…until even you, the reader, is uncertain as to what exactly is James' memories or imagination and what is actually happening (or has happened)."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 2): "Within *Pry,* the interactor flips through three stages of the protagonist: **eyes closed**, eyes open, and subconscious. The lines between the three often become blurred, but primarily **the eyes closed represents thoughts via text**, the eyes open represents reality via video, and the subconscious represents war flashbacks via avant-garde sequences. By constantly flipping through these three stages, *Pry* gives a feeling of chaos and fear that aims to artistically represent the effects of PTSD on its victims."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 1): "By navigating through the three stages, the struggle that James faces both with Luke and Jessie is explained, with James' eyes open by talking to Luke, **his eyes closed by thinking of Jessie**, and in his subconscious with the guilt he feels about Jessie's death."

JACKSON, JOSHUA (2019, para. 2): "Readers can decide how long to focus on **the character's thoughts**."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 10): "Pinch-open-eye (see), Pinch-close-eye (think or dream), **release (narrate)**."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "The reader has only access to **the thoughts** and memories of the main character. Those thoughts or as disjointed and rambling as thoughts can be. Especially since the character seem traumatized by the events. The memories cannot be flowing."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 2): "*Pry* is highly interactive because at any moment within the novella you can discover **what James is thinking** and even dive into the depths of his subconscious mind."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 3): "The reader meets James, unable to move from his bed and begins their journey through **his thoughts** and memories."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 4): "The multimedia aspects of *Pry* really gives a powerful effect on the reader and the experience. Videos in the form of flashbacks and current events give the reader a firsthand experience. This coupled with the ability to choose when to open and close James' eyes and **knowing James' thoughts** allows the reader to become one with James and follow through his life as if it was their own personal experience."

KEISHA (2015, para. 5): "Reading and going through Pry allows you to feel like you are in **the mind** and body of James and that is only part of the beauty of what digital literature has to offer to the world."

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 3): "We will most likely see more of his memories and illusions of his memories as well while the real world might only be represented with sound and **inner monologue**."

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "The literature encourages the reader to enter the levels of James' mind, pulling apart memories and **inner thoughts.**"

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "This process becomes in itself a symbol for post-traumatic stress disorder, as throughout many of the chapters, the reader is torn between **closing the eyes and analyzing the thoughts the character is having**, or opening the eyes and seeing what is happening in the real world. It becomes a constant struggle between reality and the mind."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "In Pry, you fade between **James' conscious** and subconscious worlds, also while experiencing what he is experiencing."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 3): "Pinching the screen allows the reader to look deep into James' subconscious while prying it open allows us to see what's currently happening in **his conscious mind** and in the outside world. You must pry and pinch through the app in order to get the entire story."

LYDIA (2015, para. 1): "In this digital story you are able to see from three different perspectives with just a move of a finger. The story's main character is a young man named James who served in the Golf War only six years earlier. In *Pry*, It is the reader's job to interact with James' surroundings, subconscious, and **thoughts** to reveal secrets about the past."

LYDIA (2015, para. 3): "Allowing the reader to navigate from **James' thoughts** by pinching to see  his subconscious, and pulling apart to open his eyes to his surroundings, reveals answers and clues that the reader would not have been able to obtain otherwise."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151): "Instead, I will attempt to structure my description of this artwork through its interface, which responds to two main gestures; "Spread and hold open to see through James' eyes," and, "pinch and hold closed to enter James' subconscious" – as well as **a third neutral perspective, made possible by the reader's inaction, a main thread which guides the reader along the story**."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151): "Keys to the whole picture of the story involving James, Luke and Jessie come in fragments enclosed within chapters, which can only be accessed through a full reading of both **conscious** and unconscious layers (not to mention bits of significant information which only became accessible with the second installment of chapters in 2016)."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019b, para. 1): "Chapter 5 starts with James taking another job that leads him to a bridge where he eventually falls off into the water after his vision fails him, he then appears in a desert where the text just keeps saying "Go back" with various other phrases**. I**

**think this is him trying to go back into his mind to the time he was at a base**, since that was also mentioned. If you try to pinch into his mind, it's just videos of him still sinking into the water from when he fell on the bridge."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019b, para. 2): "Almost like while he's sinking into the water, **his mind is thinking about his past**, somewhere else completely."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 218): "By employing three data streams that the reader can switch among, *Pry* provides him or her with access to three aspects of James' consciousness. **The text on the screen with its fragmentary, disjointed sentences represents James's inner voice and thoughts**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "This time, the reader witnesses or rather participates via James in the demolition of an old factory, and meets Luke in person, that is in filmic sections presenting external reality. **James's thoughts** and his dialogues with Luke indicate that James is working for Luke as a safety inspector at demolition sites and is well aware that his failing eyesight might lead to his losing the job. What comes to the foreground in this section is James's limited grasp of reality: not only does he have problems seeing the world around him, as indicated by the occasional blurring of his vision; he has recurrent visions of the female soldier and Luke in military uniform, visions the reader cannot easily dispel by making James open his eyes. At the moment of actual demolition **his thoughts take the form of a short film showing him chatting with the female soldier and then playing some game on his Gameboy**, while on the subconscious level we see satellite footage of some military camp being struck by a missile." (p. 220.)

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "Again, it is the reader's task to infer that Jessie from Chapter 1 and the woman in Chapter 2 are the same person and that the scenes connected with the military must come from James's unconscious perhaps, as there are no direct references to the past in **the verbal track representing his conscious thoughts**."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 4): "If you do nothing you see **the active thoughts going on in his head**."

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019, para. 3): "This can mainly be noticed during the characters subconscious flashbacks to explosions in a warlike setting when doing demolition work in chapter 2. I feel that this lends to my idea that the story being told in a confusing manner was intentional, because **the main character's mind** is always racing and never at ease since the dramatic events that he had to go through."

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 3): "Open or shut James' eyes, pull apart his memories, or read **his thoughts** infinitely scrolling in every direction."
    – [NB: Direct quote from *Pry*'s section "About".]

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 2): "One of my favorite parts of chapter two was when the building was being demolished. This moment connects James' present vision, **current thoughts**, and memories of his subconscious. It was at this moment for some reason that it really clicked with me how I am meant to understand each of the three spaces (eyes open, **closed**, and pinched to reveal his subconscious)."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 3): "At one particular moment, what is seen when his eyes are opened, **when they are closed**, and when we are peeking into his subconscious all display same type of event, but in different settings."

REDMAN, JOE (2019a, para. 1): "**There are his immediate thoughts which are usually shown as white text in front of a black background**."

REDMAN, JOE (2019b, para. 1): "During this the moment, the user can't see what is going on either, so they have no choice but to look at **one of the other two perspectives** until he puts in eye drops."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019a, para. 1): "This grants the reader the opportunity to explore not only what James experiences in reality, but **his thoughts** as well. This creates a story that is linear in the sense that it moves from chapter to chapter, yet can be engaged with and explored in a plethora of ways, as the reader gets to choose whether to explore **James' thoughts** or the reality in front of him."

SHELBY (2015, para. 3): "**The text showing his thoughts** can be pinched or pried. Pinching the text close leads the reader deep to his subconscious and prying it open leads to his consciousness and what is going on around him. Every time you pinch, pry, read, or run you figure over the braille you get more information whether it be his real life around him or what is going on in his head, both can be confusing and strange."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 1): "In the first chapter, James is lying in bed staring up at the ceiling, **thinking about the job** and the stain up on the ceiling."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019b, para. 2): "Either you keep James' eyes open to the point where his vision blurs and he falls off the railway track, or you **open and close periodicall**y and make it all the way to the end, only to transition into **his thoughts**. In both instances, his subconscious is brought to the forefront, while reality is placed where the subconscious has been since the start of the story. I think it represents his continual descent into his own mind, and how he is starting to lose his grasp on what is real and what isn't. Chapter 7 really brings this home with the constant back and forth between different moments in time, blurring the line between reality and memory."

STAPLES, LILY (2016, para. 6): "The story in Pry benefits when played as a game because it allows the sensory and plot details to fully emerge from the depths of **James' mind** through the physical forcefulness of the reader prying into narrative."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a, para. 1): "The basic structure, zoom out to see subconscious, zoom in to see sight, and **the base level being the conscious thoughts, the text that is the thrust of the story**, could be a structure that other electronic works could use."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a, para. 1): "**The separation of thoughts**, sight, and the subconscious are used in Pry to illustrate the experience of PTSD. I could see this traversal method translating to other mental health disorders in interesting ways, such as making the sight and thoughts more difficult to access over time and the subconscious become overpowering or taking control from the traverser and switching between perspectives rapidly."

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SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a, para. 2): "**The three perspectives** combine to create a constant montage, that the traverser controls. During my first traversal through the first four chapters, I tried to switch perspectives as thoroughly and regularly as possible, cycling through **conscious**, subconscious, **conscious**, sight, repeatedly in the same order. **The conscious is between the subconscious and sight and by opening the subconscious or looking at what the character sees you progress the conscious text, so it is presumably impossible to see both the sight and subconscious that corresponds to one conscious thought, unless the visuals and subconscious last longer than a single conscious thought**. It was difficult to traverse this way though, and I found myself switching between just the **conscious thought** and sight during the demolition chapter and switching mostly between the **conscious thought** and the subconscious during the first chapter, as the main characters sight is of his perspective in bed."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019b, para. 1): "The pinching and opening motion to progress the story mimics open one's eyes and pinching or **pulling back into ones mind** to access the subconscious."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019b, para. 1): "While he does this job, **James narrates** about how he and Luke grew up together, and Luke's realization of James' failing eyesight."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 2): "Like him, we are sometimes forced to withdraw from the present world and reside in the realm of memories and his subconscious. **His innermost thoughts are communicated with us in text, sometimes in full paragraphs or in fast-paced fragments flashing across the screen**. Through these, we can theorize the causes for his failing sight (a fire, a disorder inherited from his mother, and Jessie's violent outburst are only a few of these.) **By constantly going back and forth from what James' sees in the real world versus what he sees in his mind**, blindness becomes one of the more prominent themes in the story (though it is certainly not the only one.)"

**F. MENTIONS OF JAMES'S INTERACTIVE SUBCONSCIOUS**

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "This gives the reader freedom to witness the real world in front of James; to close his eyes and read the narration within his mind; and **to delve even deeper into his subconscious and observe the thoughts that constantly gnaw away at him**. A good example of this **three-tiered perspective** representing some poignant psychoanalysis occurs in chapter two, as James oversees a controlled demolition. Closing his eyes, the reader can see that the explosions trigger in James a significant memory from the Gulf War. **Prying further into his subconscious, the reader witnesses a series of military strikes accompanied by the sound of explosions as the demolition continues before him**."

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 5): "I believe this because the way the narrative plays out and provides us with both reality and **subconscious fears** is very similar and accurate how it feels to have real-life anxiety. It becomes hard to distinguish between what's actually happening and what is a fear, and I think the **constant switching between conscious and subconscious helps to blur the separation and make the truth even more indistinguishable**."

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 2): "I liked how Pry shows this paranoia by blurring the main characters normal vision, thus **encouraging the user to see his subconscious, which ends up being riddled with possible murder weapons and different deaths**."

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 2): "Reading through the text, **it prompts the reader to pinch the screen and see into James's subconscious**, and also open his eyes open to see what is around him."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 256): "Even before loading the app, the reader-user is sent to 'peer inquisitively or intrusively' into the work; to prise out 'private or secret information' regarding the inter-related lives of the characters; **to 'force up' the narrator's (James's) subconscious through the bar created by spreading the onscreen eye open with the fingers** (*Oxford English Dictionary* n. d.: *pry*)."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 257): "**Entering James's subconscious by pinching the fingers closed** at the start of Chapter Two reveals a montage of Jessie, James's love interest,

recumbent and looking seductively up at him; a hand of playing cards; and a pair of spectacles falling to the ground with the right lens already shattered (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 2)."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 257–258): "In a direct parallelism, **relaxing the pinch and lifting one's fingers off the screen shuts off the playback of James's subconscious**, severing the reader-user's contact with the objects – unless the Chapter is restarted whereupon the objects may be rolled out in a significantly different order."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 258–259): "*Pry* showcases these gestures as formal metaphors for seeing (spreading), **thinking (pinching)**, and narrating (releasing), as well as canny substitutes for omniscient narration."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, 261): "Exacerbating this suspicion is **the video which surges from James's subconscious** and which indeed depicts Jessie sweeping supplies off shelves in a store cupboard, except in a fit of rage not passion. Even though the video is itself carefully chosen, muted, clipped, and shut off before the episode comes to a natural close, the reader-user is infinitely more inclined to believe it over the unstable and clearly romanticised textual account."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 261–262): "As the reader-user is on the brink of unfolding a climactic and unequivocal account of the camp bombing, **James's subconscious becomes strewn with warnings such as: 'Stop while you're ahead' and 'Go back to better times'** (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6)."

CLAPP, JOEL (2019, para. 2): "Likewise, **the user is prompted to use thumb and finger in an opposite "pinching" motion to invert the narrative**: rather than taking in the external surroundings of the protagonist, **the user gets a visual glimpse into the protagonist's mind**."

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019a, para. 1): "As the reader looks at the real world and back to his thoughts it shows that time is moving, and you can either spend your time looking out to the world around you or **miss it to see what is going through his mind**."

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019a, para. 1): "With his vision failing you look into his mind and try to understand what is going on as his past collides with his present. **With every action you can dive deeper into James's thoughts** or try and ignore the idea that you are losing sight. "

DOLPHIN, DEBORAH (2019, para. 5): "**Being able to pinch the screen and peer into the characters thoughts is a great way to show the inner struggle of the protagonist**."

DULAY, RASAN (2017, para. 1): "**When you pinch close, it seems as if you have entered the character's subconscious**."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 4): "**If the reader pinches the screen together, words or images will flash by, expressing the hurriedness and chaos of his inner thoughts, perhaps.**"

HOBSON, MALLORY (2019, para. 1): "The mechanics of opening James' eyes, or **'pinching' them further shut and retreating into memories and intrusive thoughts**, was both visually compelling as well as helped to build James as a character."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 2): "Within *Pry,* the interactor flips through three stages of the protagonist: eyes closed, eyes open, and **subconscious**. The lines between the three often become blurred, but primarily the eyes closed represents thoughts via text, the eyes open represents reality via video, and **the subconscious represents war flashbacks via avant-garde sequences**. By constantly flipping through these three stages, *Pry* gives a feeling of chaos and fear that aims to artistically represent the effects of PTSD on its victims."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 3): "This allows the protagonist to freely flip between the three stages while moving through the piece, while putting the interactor in a place of physical connection with the events taking place in the protagonist's mind. **By pinching the screen shut, the interactor is taken into the protagonist's mind, similar to film reel, that is constantly racing with text and war footage**."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 1): "By navigating through the three stages, the struggle that James faces both with Luke and Jessie is explained, with James' eyes open by talking to

Luke, his eyes closed by thinking of Jessie, and **in his subconscious with the guilt he feels about Jessie's death**."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 4): "Above all, the second half continues to be about PTSD, with James becoming even more distraught internally, **his subconscious turning into an obscure collection of words**."

JESSICA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "By literally prying his eyes open, we are admitted a sense of a body functioning under our control, from **the subconscious** to the physical."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 6): "The screen has sealed itself and in its place the second written phrase of the novella appears, and beneath it the second didactic: '**Pinch and hold closed to enter James' subconscious**.'"

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 7): "There are only two unrequested didactic panels displayed in *Pry* (*pinch open to see outside/memories*; and *pinch closed to see inside/subconscious*), and on release the screen returns to its previous state."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 10): "Pinch-open-eye (see), **Pinch-close-eye (think or dream)**, release (narrate)."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 14): "But while the RSVP [rapid serial visual presentation] text style is not new, in the case of *Pry*, where **the subconscious text sometimes loops several times like an obsessive ode**, it is (as far as I know) the first use of the technique interactively in fiction to reflect and reinforce the psychology of internal refrains or litanies, psychic pleas or pronouncements, thoughts that erupt into consciousness then subsist, trauma that is silent, lingering, or dormant until touched."

KARAMJOT (2016, para. 1): "As the chapters progress the user is brought into various levels of James' consciousness and **subconsciousness** to experience his damaged view on reality."
KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 2): "*Pry* is highly interactive because at any moment within the novella you can discover what James is thinking and even **dive into the depths of his subconscious mind**."

KEISHA (2015, para. 2): "In order to understand the novel, the reader must figure out all the little puzzle pieces that James allows us to see through his eyes and **subconscious** manner that helps us figure out his past."

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 3): "I find these images to be the most interesting because it tells me that **the main character has more than one subconscious. If you adjust the pinch of your fingers on the screen, you get different levels of his subconscious. He has one that is on the surface level and is meant to distract his mind from not remembering the horrific things that he has seen. The other levels are hallucinations and memories of his subconscious.** Jessie killing him, the coffee stain messing around on the ceiling. Those are all hallucinations that never actually happen. The memories are the GameBoy, hanging with Jessie, and possibly even the night vision video of a missile launch. This tells me that by the next chapter he might actually go blind and may even go crazy."

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "The interface works with the reader/user instructing them to pinch open to see through the character's eyes and **pinch inward to see his subconscious or thoughts. When pinched and held closed the user is offered a swift flashing set of diagnostic words.** Sometimes with these words, montages of black and white images also to do with eyes are also visible."

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 4): "The reader/viewer has to make decisions between the real world and **the subconscious** . While this decision could be adapted to other forms of digital literature, there is a certain effect generated from the touch screen which would be hard to parallel. By physically opening the character's eyes with a hand motion, the interaction becomes more realistic and meaningful to the participant."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "In Pry, you fade between James' conscious and **subconscious worlds**, also while experiencing what he is experiencing."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 3): "**Pinching the screen allows the reader to look deep into James' subconscious** while prying it open allows us to see what's currently happening in his conscious mind and in the outside world. You must pry and pinch through the app in order to get the entire story."

LYDIA (2015, para. 3): "Allowing the reader to navigate from James' thoughts **by pinching to see  his subconscious**, and pulling apart to open his eyes to his surroundings, reveals answers and clues that the reader would not have been able to obtain otherwise."

LYDIA (2015, para. 1): "In this digital story you are able to see from three different perspectives with just a move of a finger. The story's main character is a young man named James who served in the Golf War only six years earlier. In *Pry*, It is the reader's job to interact with James' surroundings, **subconscious**, and thoughts to reveal secrets about the past."

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015, para. 1): "The creators of PRY utilize the touch screen of iPads and iPhones in order for readers to experience what the main character of the story is doing, whether it be prying open their eyes and seeing what James is seeing or **delving deeper into his subconscious**."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151): "Instead, I will attempt to structure my description of this artwork through its interface, which responds to two main gestures; "Spread and hold open to see through James' eyes," and, "**pinch and hold closed to enter James' subconscious**" – as well as a third neutral perspective, made possible by the reader's inaction, a main thread which guides the reader along the story."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151): "*Pry*'s most visible dualism, however, concerns its interface, in which two perspectives are constantly in a process of contaminated communication, one constantly affecting the other: if the reader opts to see through James' eyes (often a virtual emulation of an eye opening and closing), s/he most certainly will miss parts of the story which are kept in **James' subconscious (pinching and holding closed comes associated with images and sounds of (un)crumpling paper, perhaps simulating thoughts that appear just as fast as they vanish into the recesses of memory)** – and vice-versa."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151): "Keys to the whole picture of the story involving James, Luke and Jessie come in fragments enclosed within chapters, which can only be accessed through a full reading of both conscious and **unconscious layers** (not to mention bits of

significant information which only became accessible with the second instalment of chapters in 2016).”

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 153): “For instance, James’ movement constraints (Chapter 1) are an example of that intrinsicality between text and gesture, as well as form and function: or as James puts it, “Right, can’t move,” **the reader is struck with the impossibility of advancing without entering James’ subconscious through a pinch and hold closed gesture**.”

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 154): “In order not to fall into the water (an option that will dramatically change the course of reading), **the reader needs to be aware of James’ constraints, made evident, in this case, by closing James’ eyes and entering his subconscious. In other words, only through entering James’ subconscious will the character be able to properly evaluate the structural problems of this bridge and consequently, its future demolition, a necessary dialectics between reason and emotion in order to enable James reaching the end of that bridge (both literally and metaphorically speaking)**. This means that there has to be a proper balance between what is visualized and what is touched by the reader, in order to unravel all the possible endings to this chapter.”

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 1): “The way you “open” the characters eyes to see the world around him and **“pinch” the screen to go further back into his mind** is such a unique way if viewing the story that adds so much to the storytelling.”

MARTIN, JAKE (2019b, para. 1): “Chapter 5 starts with James taking another job that leads him to a bridge where he eventually falls off into the water after his vision fails him, he then appears in a desert where the text just keeps saying “Go back” with various other phrases. I think this is him trying to go back into his mind to the time he was at a base, since that was also mentioned. **If you try to pinch into his mind, it’s just videos of him still sinking into the water from when he fell on the bridge**.”

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 218): “**(2) Pinch and hold closed to enter James’ subconscious**.”

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 218): "Finally, **when he or she pinches his eyes closed, he or she sees images, short video clips and disjointed phrases flashing quickly across a white square and representing, as stated in the paratextual explanation, James's subconscious mental processes, the way they are presented foregrounding their elusiveness**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 218–219): "The interactive, multimodal set-up of *Pry* puts the reader in a peculiar position in relation to James's consciousness. On the one hand, it encourages his or her identification with James by giving him or her control over his perception of the external world: he or she not only sees through his eyes but also decides when to open or close them. On the other hand**, the way the reader can gain and control access to James's subconscious suggests the position of an observer or even explorer who is invited to "dig into" the subconscious aspects of another human being's psyche** and analyse the significance of what he or she sees in relation to the stream of the same person's verbalised thoughts."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 219): "**The words that the reader sees when he or she accesses James's subconscious appear to be fragments of medical or scientific discourse** – "patient experiences intermediate muscle atonia in sleep or in onset of waking typical for subjects to experience visions of intruders impairing violent and sudden damage" – which suggests that James is undergoing some medical treatment or has perhaps read some texts on his own condition."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "At the moment of actual demolition his thoughts take the form of a short film showing him chatting with the female soldier and then playing some game on his Gameboy, while **on the subconscious level we see satellite footage of some military camp being struck by a missile**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "Again, it is the reader's task to infer that Jessie from Chapter 1 and the woman in Chapter 2 are the same person and that **the scenes connected with the military must come from James's unconscious perhaps**, as there are no direct references to the past in the verbal track representing his conscious thoughts."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): "In their construction of this chapter [chapter 6] Cannizzaro and Gorman appear to rely on the idea of consciousness as containing just a fraction of the information stored in one's memory, with **the traumatic memories being repressed into the unconscious**."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 2): "Like the human mind, the story is disjointed, jumping chapter by chapter through memories and current events. Videos supplement the story as you use the pinch-zoom motion to open his eyes to see what's going on around him. **By reversing that motion you delve into his sub-concious and as you, "pry," open his thoughts and memories you learn more about him, his past and how they've affected him**."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 4): "As you start you learn the basics of the pinch and zoom functions, **peering into James' subconscious** and watching what he sees through his eyes."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, caption under an image): "Sometimes you'll find **James' subconscious forming pictures or disconnected thoughts as you read**".

> – [NB: in the image a screenshot from *Pry*'s chapter 6; in the middle of the screen is an image of a bird sitting on a metal wire, and below and above it are lines of text.]

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, caption under an image): "**subconscious thoughts show James' troubled mind**"

> – [NB: in the image a screenshot from *Pry*'s chapter 6; the image shows the word "disobedience."]

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019, para. 3): "This can mainly be noticed during **the characters subconscious flashbacks to explosions in a warlike setting** when doing demolition work in chapter 2. I feel that this lends to my idea that the story being told in a confusing manner was intentional, because the main character's mind is always racing and never at ease since the dramatic events that he had to go through."

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019, para. 4): "I enjoyed opening the character's eyes and **diving into his subconscious** at a moment's notice."

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 5): "As well as opening and closing his eyes, that you use to switch between the real and **the subconscious worlds**."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 1): "The way that **text montage segments were used to illustrate his subconscious are a perfect way to describe how erratic memories can be triggered**. The use of video gives the user a first-hand look of what James sees in both present time as well as **events that are parts of his memory or subconscious**."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 1): "Spread and hold, pinch and hold, touch and drag are some of the actions that are required by the user in order to experience this work. The spread and hold action simulates the opening of the eyes. It is almost as if you, the user, are "prying" the eyes open. **The pinch and hold actions initiate memories or flashbacks. I would compare this action similar to when people squint or squeeze their eyes closed when they are trying to remember something or trying to not see something**."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 2): "One of my favorite parts of chapter two was when the building was being demolished. This moment connects James' present vision, current thoughts, and **memories of his subconscious**. It was at this moment for some reason that it really clicked with me how I am meant to understand each of the three spaces (eyes open, closed, and **pinched to reveal his subconscious**)."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 3): "At one particular moment, what is seen when his eyes are opened, when they are closed, and **when we are peeking into his subconscious** all display same type of event, but in different settings."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, caption under an image): "This is from the scene from **his subconscious**. Video montage of explosions are occurring in this scene."
– [NB: above: an screenshot of a luminous explosion in *Pry.*]

RAGAN, KEEGAN (2015, para. 4): "In chapters two and three, pinching open has the character open his eyes to the world, while **pinching closed looks into the characters**

**subconsciousness**. This works very well, and even more interesting is the fact that the story is presented differently depending on when the reader decides to open or close the character's eyes."

REDMAN, JOE (2019a, para. 1): "Then there is his **deep consciousness. Here the viewer sees all sorts of abstract things that tend to loosely connect to what he is looking at or thinking about**. These three perspectives can be looked at anytime by using two fingers to simulate prying open or closing his eyes. Most of the experience is this process of prying eyes, but in one chapter, the user holds their device horizontally and simulates the experience of reading braille as they slide their finger over the screen."

REDMAN, JOE (2019b, para. 1): "During this the moment, the user can't see what is going on either, so they have no choice but to look at **one of the other two perspectives until he puts in eye drops**."

SARAH'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "In this tactile narrative, **the reader can choose to immerse herself deeper into the psyche of the narrator by pinching the screen**, or to look through the narrator's eyes or unveil more text by 'prying' to advance the narrative."

SARAH'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "**When the reader pinches the screen, she also closes the protagonist's eyes and stirs up a refrain of compulsive words and thoughts that present themselves on a loop,** effectively invoking "trauma…dormant until touched" (Jhave, *Prying*, 2014). These refrains take a form both as a "forced confessional" (Jhave), intrusive into the reader's own psyche, but also something the reader has searched for."
        – [NB: writer refers to David Jhave Johnston's (2014) review.]

SDHUTCHERSON (2015, para. 1): "Whether that interactivity is through opening and closing the characters, James', eyes either seeing what the character sees or **going deeper and deeper into what seems to be his subconscious**, or moving your finger over braille on the screen and having the story come to life as though you were really reading through the dots and dimples in the pages themselves on the screen."

SHELBY (2015, para. 3): "The text showing his thoughts can be pinched or pried. Pinching the text close leads the reader **deep to his subconscious** and prying it open leads to his

consciousness and what is going on around him. Every time you pinch, pry, read, or run you figure over the braille you get more information whether it be his real life around him or what is going on in his head, both can be confusing and strange."

SHORT, EMILY (2015, para. 3): "Or, again, if we pinch the page closed on itself, we're **retreating into the subconscious, where flickering surreal images and rapidly cycling single words of text indicate our fears, our memories, our connections with the present. The subconscious recollection of childhood, or of an incident in war, might underlie our uncomfortable reaction to what is happening on the job site**."

SHORT, EMILY (2015, para. 6): "And when there's no more detail text to be read [between the text lines in chapter 6], **sometimes peeking between the lines will instead reveal the subconscious response, flickering words that convey the protagonist's ambivalence or fear**."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 1): "**When you peer into his mind, you see flashes of Luke and Jessie**, and then when you open his eyes you see a hallucination of Jessie stab him."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019b, para 2): "Either you keep James' eyes open to the point where his vision blurs and he falls off the railway track, or you open and close periodically and make it all the way to the end, only to transition into his thoughts. **In both instances, his subconscious is brought to the forefront, while reality is placed where the subconscious has been since the start of the story**. I think it represents his continual descent into his own mind, and how he is starting to lose his grasp on what is real and what isn't. Chapter 7 really brings this home with the constant back and forth between different moments in time, blurring the line between reality and memory."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 1): "It allows the reader to either open the eyes or **go deeper into the subconscious of the main character**."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 2): "As you **pry into the subconscious of James you learn more about his history and past**."

STAPLES, LILY (2016, para. 6): "The story in Pry benefits when played as a game because it allows the sensory and plot details to fully emerge from **the depths of James' mind** through the physical forcefulness of the reader prying into narrative."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a, para. 1): "Zooming in and out on a touch screen is already natural enough for a traverser, so **zooming out to see the subconscious** and zooming in to see what the main character sees is easy to understand and easy to figure out if the traverser misses the instructions."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a, para. 1): "The basic structure, **zoom out to see subconscious**, zoom in to see sight, and the base level being the conscious thoughts, the text that is the thrust of the story, could be a structure that other electronic works could use."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a, para. 1): "The separation of thoughts, sight, and **the subconscious** are used in Pry to illustrate the experience of PTSD. I could see this traversal method translating to other mental health disorders in interesting ways, such as making the sight and thoughts more difficult to access over time and **the subconscious become overpowering** or taking control from the traverser and switching between perspectives rapidly."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a, para. 2): "The three perspectives combine to create a constant montage, that the traverser controls. During my first traversal through the first four chapters, I tried to switch perspectives as thoroughly and regularly as possible, cycling through conscious, **subconscious**, conscious, sight, repeatedly in the same order. The conscious is between **the subconscious and sight and by opening the subconscious or looking at what the character sees you progress the conscious text, so it is presumably impossible to see both the sight and subconscious that corresponds to one conscious thought, unless the visuals and subconscious last longer than a single conscious thought**. It was difficult to traverse this way though, and I found myself switching between just the conscious thought and sight during the demolition chapter and switching mostly between **the conscious thought and the subconscious** during the first chapter, as the main characters sight is of his perspective in bed."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019b, para. 1): "The pinching and opening motion to progress the story mimics open one's eyes and pinching or **pulling back into ones mind to access the subconscious**."

WOO, DAVID JACK (2015, para. 4): "**The reader is able to "pry" into his subconscious to learn about his past**, while also being able to open his eyes to experience the current story by interacting with the touch screen."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 2): "Like him, we are sometimes forced to withdraw from the present world and reside in the realm of memories and **his subconscious. His innermost thoughts** are communicated with us in text, sometimes in full paragraphs or in fast-paced fragments flashing across the screen. Through these, we can theorize the causes for his failing sight (a fire, a disorder inherited from his mother, and Jessie's violent outburst are only a few of these.) By constantly going back and forth from what James' sees in the real world versus **what he sees in his mind**, blindness becomes one of the more prominent themes in the story (though it is certainly not the only one.)"

**G. MENTIONS OF JAMES'S INTERACTIVE SIGHT**

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "The main interaction that the reader has with this story is to pinch the screen in order **to open or close the main character's eyes. This gives the reader freedom to witness the real world in front of James**; to close his eyes and read the narration within his mind; and to delve even deeper into his subconscious and observe the thoughts that constantly gnaw away at him. A good example of this three-tiered perspective representing some poignant psychoanalysis occurs in chapter two, as James oversees a controlled demolition. Closing his eyes, the reader can see that the explosions trigger in James a significant memory from the Gulf War."

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 5): "I believe this because the way the narrative plays out and provides us with both reality and subconscious fears is very similar and accurate how it feels to have real-life anxiety. It becomes hard to distinguish between what's actually happening and what is a fear, and I think **the constant switching between conscious and subconscious** helps to blur the separation and make the truth even more indistinguishable."

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 2): "Reading through the text, it prompts the reader to pinch the screen and see into James's subconscious, and also **open his eyes open to see what is around him**."

CAYLEY, JOHN (2015, para. 1): "**We must pry open his failing eyes**, or some other conduit for visual experience and memory, so as to help complete his story for us."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 258–259): "*Pry* showcases these gestures as formal metaphors for **seeing (spreading)**, thinking (pinching), and narrating (releasing), as well as canny substitutes for omniscient narration.

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 260): "One layer up is the computerized inner eyelid which, **once prised open or shut, reveals footage of the world outside (be it the demolition site, the desert, the military barracks, or the objects and characters directly in front of James)** or of the internal world of memory (generally represented by fragments of home movies). **Analogous in Chapter Six to the inner eyelid is the rip which develops when the text memories are torn apart**: when open, it is a window onto the same looping footage, and

when shut it sometimes lingers, backlit in red as if mimicking a bleeding gash in the fabric of memory. This rip causes and marks the literalised act of 'looking through the language at the referent' (Berger 2003: 25), not only promoting reading *as if* visualizing but actually proffering material to watch."

> [– NB: Chetcuti cites: Berger, Harry (2003): "Archimago: Between Text and Countertext", *Studies in English Literature*, 43: 1, 19–64.]

CLAPP, JOEL (2019, para. 2): "**By dragging a thumb and a finger away from each other with a "prying" gesture, the user forces the protagonist's eyes open**, staring at the water stain on their bedroom ceiling as shadows pass by."

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019a, para. 1): "**As the reader looks at the real world** and back to his thoughts it shows that time is moving, and **you can either spend your time looking out to the world around you** or miss it to see what is going through his mind."

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019a, para. 1): "But mostly you will either pinch or pry to look at his thoughts or to **open his eyes to the world around him**."

DULAY, RASAN (2017, para. 1): "**When pinching open, it shows you being the character, because of the screen changing to its point of view**."

FUTURE OF STORYTELLING (2016, para. 2): "Within the story, **the role-player sees through James's eyes. His failing vision calls for your finger to pry open his eyes and delve into his perspective**."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 4): "**The protagonist whom the reader seems to peer through the eyes of, and often times *Pry* open**, is introduced as James."

HOBSON, MALLORY (2019, para. 1): "**The mechanics of opening James' eyes**, or 'pinching' them further shut and retreating into memories and intrusive thoughts, **was both visually compelling as well as helped to build James as a character**."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 2): "Within *Pry,* the interactor flips through three stages of the protagonist: eyes closed, **eyes open,** and subconscious. The lines between the three often

become blurred, but primarily the eyes closed represents thoughts via text, **the eyes open represents reality via video**, and the subconscious represents war flashbacks via avant-garde sequences. By constantly flipping through these three stages, *Pry* gives a feeling of chaos and fear that aims to artistically represent the effects of PTSD on its victims."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 3): "The navigation of the piece is extremely simple, only requiring the interactor to advance by **"prying" the protagonist's eyes open** and closed by pinching the screen."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 1): "By navigating through the three stages, the struggle that James faces both with Luke and Jessie is explained, with **James' eyes open by talking to Luke**, his eyes closed by thinking of Jessie, and in his subconscious with the guilt he feels about Jessie's death."

JACKSON, JOSHUA (2019, para. 1): "Pry provides the reader with the feelings of the main character's thoughts through **literally pinching the screen as if you are opening your eyes from a dream** and haptics that give you a sense of being in the story."

JESSICA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "**By literally prying his eyes open**, we are admitted a sense of a body functioning under our control, from the subconscious to the physical."

JESSICA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 4): "**By literally opening the James' eyes**, then his memories, we become connected to his story and experience a control that is not communicated with traditional paper books."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 6): "**A pinch-open gesture flicks the screen open like an eye**, a brief shot of ceiling — ink jelly blooming stain — and then it's gone."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 7): "There are only two unrequested didactic panels displayed in *Pry* (*pinch open to see outside/memories*; and *pinch closed to see inside/subconscious*), and on release the screen returns to its previous state."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 10): "**Pinch-open-eye (see),** Pinch-close-eye (think or dream), release (narrate)."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 3): "**The reader is also able to open James' eyes and see the world around him** and gather his feelings and thoughts about the world around him."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 4): "The multimedia aspects of *Pry* really gives a powerful effect on the reader and the experience. Videos in the form of flashbacks and current events give the reader a firsthand experience. This coupled with **the ability to choose when to open and close James' eyes** and knowing James' thoughts allows the reader to become one with James and follow through his life as if it was their own personal experience."

KEISHA (2015, para. 2): "In order to understand the novel, **the reader must figure out all the little puzzle pieces that James allows us to see through his eyes** and subconscious manner that helps us figure out his past."

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 1): "We see this when Josh, in the second chapter, to **gets blurry and closing his eyes simply doesn't cut it anymore**."
   – [NB: below: a blurry image of Luke seen through James's eyes.]

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "There is a large focus primarily on eye sight and eyes. The interface works with the reader/user instructing them to **pinch open to see through the character's eyes** and pinch inward to see his subconscious or thoughts. When pinched and held closed the user is offered a swift flashing set of diagnostic words. Sometimes with these words, montages of black and white images also to do with eyes are also visible. **When the eyes are not being pinched closed by the reader/user, filmography of the story in 'real time' can be viewed, and it is able to be gauged what is physically happening to the character**."

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "This process becomes in itself a symbol for post-traumatic stress disorder, as throughout many of the chapters, the reader is torn between closing the eyes and analyzing the thoughts the character is having, or **opening the eyes and seeing what is happening in the real world. It becomes a constant struggle between reality and the mind**."

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 4): "**The reader/viewer has to make decisions between the real world and the subconscious** . While this decision could be adapted to other forms of digital literature, there is a certain effect generated from the touch screen which would be hard to parallel. **By physically opening the character's eyes with a hand motion, the interaction becomes more realistic and meaningful to the participant**."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 3): "Pinching the screen allows the reader to look deep into James' subconscious while **prying it open allows us to see what's currently happening in his conscious mind and in the outside world. You must pry and pinch through the app in order to get the entire story**."

LYDIA (2015, para. 3): "Allowing the reader to navigate from James' thoughts by pinching to see  his subconscious, and **pulling apart to open his eyes to his surroundings**, reveals answers and clues that the reader would not have been able to obtain otherwise."

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015, para. 1): "The creators of PRY utilize the touch screen of iPads and iPhones in order for readers to experience what the main character of the story is doing, whether it be **prying open their eyes and seeing what James is seeing** or delving deeper into his subconscious."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151): "Instead, I will attempt to structure my description of this artwork through its interface, which responds to two main gestures; "**Spread and hold open to see through James' eyes**," and, "pinch and hold closed to enter James' subconscious" – as well as a third neutral perspective, made possible by the reader's inaction, a main thread which guides the reader along the story."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151): "*Pry*'s most visible dualism, however, concerns its interface, in which two perspectives are constantly in a process of contaminated communication, one constantly affecting the other: **if the reader opts to see through James' eyes (often a virtual emulation of an eye opening and closing), s/he most certainly will miss parts of the story which are kept in James' subconscious** (pinching and holding closed comes associated with images and sounds of (un)crumpling paper, perhaps simulating

thoughts that appear just as fast as they vanish into the recesses of memory) – and vice-versa."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 1): "**The way you "open" the characters eyes to see the world around him** and "pinch" the screen to go further back into his mind is such a unique way if viewing the story that adds so much to the storytelling."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 218): "**(1) Spread and hold open to see through James' eyes**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 218): "**When the reader spreads and holds open the text, he or she can see the visual stimuli that enter James's mind** and that initially take the form of the ceiling he is staring at."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 218–219): "The interactive, multimodal set-up of *Pry* puts the reader in a peculiar position in relation to James's consciousness. On the one hand, **it encourages his or her identification with James by giving him or her control over his perception of the external world: he or she not only sees through his eyes but also decides when to open or close them**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "Unexpectedly, a woman, who is identified in the verbal track as Jessie, enters the room, climbs onto James and then suddenly stabs him in the eye, **all these actions being presented through the filmic subjective camera, making the reader see them "through" James's eyes**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "What comes to the foreground in this section is James's limited grasp of reality: not only does he have problems seeing the world around him, as indicated by the occasional blurring of his vision; he has recurrent visions of the female soldier and Luke in military uniform, **visions the reader cannot easily dispel by making James open his eyes**."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 2): "Instead of turning pages from left to right and passively viewing type, **the reader sees what the protagonist, James, sees**. Like the human mind, the story is disjointed, jumping chapter by chapter through memories and current

events. **Videos supplement the story as you use the pinch-zoom motion to open his eyes to see what's going on around him**. By reversing that motion you delve into his sub-concious and as you, "pry," open his thoughts and memories you learn more about him, his past and how they've affected him."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 4): "As you start you learn the basics of the pinch and zoom functions, peering into James' subconscious and **watching what he sees through his eyes**."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, caption between two images): "**Pry doesn't just give the reader the options to open James' eyes** and see into his head."
[In the image on the left: a hand touching braille text on a book in *Pry*; in the image on the right: braille text in *Pry*'s chapter 3.]

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019, para. 4): "**I enjoyed opening the character's eyes** and diving into his subconscious at a moment's notice."

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 2): "All I was told about it was that **you could interact through opening and closing his eyes, moving between the real world and a dream world**."

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 3): "**Open or shut James' eyes**, pull apart his memories, or read his thoughts infinitely scrolling in every direction."

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 5): "**As well as opening and closing his eyes**, that you use to switch between **the real** and the subconscious worlds."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 1): "The use of video gives the user a first-hand look of **what James sees in both present time** as well as events that are parts of his memory or subconscious."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 1): "**Spread and hold**, pinch and hold, touch and drag are some of the actions that are required by the user in order to experience this work. **The spread and hold action simulates the opening of the eyes. It is almost as if you, the**

**user, are "prying" the eyes open**. The pinch and hold actions initiate memories or flashbacks. I would compare this action similar to when people squint or squeeze their eyes closed when they are trying to remember something or trying to not see something."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 2): "One of my favorite parts of chapter two was when the building was being demolished. This moment connects **James' present vision**, current thoughts, and memories of his subconscious. It was at this moment for some reason that it really clicked with me how I am meant to understand each of the three spaces (**eyes open**, closed, and pinched to reveal his subconscious)."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 3): "At one particular moment, **what is seen when his eyes are opened**, when they are closed, and when we are peeking into his subconscious all display same type of event, but in different settings."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, caption under an image): "**This is from the scene when his eyes are open** and he is viewing the building is being demolished and an explosion occurs."

– [NB: above: an image of a building collapsing in *Pry*'s chapter 2.]

RAGAN, KEEGAN (2015, para. 4): "In chapters two and three, **pinching open has the character open his eyes to the world**, while pinching closed looks into the characters subconsciousness. This works very well, and even more interesting is the fact that **the story is presented differently depending on when the reader decides to open or close the character's eyes**."

REDMAN, JOE (2019a, para. 1): "It is all within the first-person perspective starting with chapter 1 however, there are three perspectives within the main character. **There is what he sees in the real world. These are usually shown through video**. There are his immediate thoughts which are usually shown as white text in front of a black background. Then there is his deep consciousness. Here the viewer sees all sorts of abstract things that tend to loosely connect to what he is looking at or thinking about. These three perspectives can be looked at anytime by using two fingers to simulate **prying open** or closing his eyes. Most of the experience is this process of prying eyes, but in one chapter, the user holds their device

horizontally and simulates the experience of reading braille as they slide their finger over the screen."

REDMAN, JOE (2019b, para. 1): "During this the moment, **the user can't see what is going on either**, so they have no choice but to look at one of the other two perspectives until he puts in eye drops."

SARAH'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "In this tactile narrative, the reader can choose to immerse herself deeper into the psyche of the narrator by pinching the screen, or **to look through the narrator's eyes** or unveil more text by 'prying' to advance the narrative. These movements have semantic relevance to the storyline and what element of it they reveal. Through this necessary tactile interaction, *Pry* **is guided by the metaphor of the reader's touch as sight**."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019a, para. 1): "This grants the reader the opportunity to explore not only what James experiences in reality, but his thoughts as well. This creates a story that is linear in the sense that it moves from chapter to chapter, yet can be engaged with and explored in a plethora of ways, as the reader gets to choose whether to explore James' thoughts or **the reality in front of him**."

SDHUTCHERSON (2015, para. 1): "Whether that interactivity is through **opening and closing the characters, James', eyes either seeing what the character sees** or going deeper and deeper into what seems to be his subconscious, or moving your finger over braille on the screen and having the story come to life as though you were really reading through the dots and dimples in the pages themselves on the screen."

SHELBY (2015, para. 3): "The text showing his thoughts can be pinched or pried. Pinching the text close leads the reader deep to his subconscious and **prying it open leads to his consciousness and what is going on around him**. Every time you pinch, pry, read, or run you figure over the braille you get more information **whether it be his real life around him** or what is going on in his head, both can be confusing and strange."

SHORT, EMILY (2015, para. 3): "The conceit is that there are several layers of reality happening at a time. Though this is handled in different ways in different chapters, **the**

**general rule is that if we spread the page open, we're opening the protagonist's eyes, looking outwards, and seeing objective reality**. Sometimes that objective reality takes the form of video about what is happening around us; sometimes it's different text."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 1): "When you peer into his mind, you see flashes of Luke and Jessie, and then **when you open his eyes you see a hallucination of Jessie stab him**."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019b, para. 2): "**Either you keep James' eyes open to the point where his vision blurs and he falls off the railway track, or you open and close periodically** and make it all the way to the end, only to transition into his thoughts."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 1): "It isn't anything like I have ever read before, the novella starts off with having to use two fingers to make the main character blink. **It allows the reader to either open the eyes** or go deeper into the subconscious of the main character."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 3): "It is no longer just simply turning pages to read, **it is blinking, expanding, watching**, and scrolling over braille to 'read.'"

STANDISH, SYDNEY (2019, para. 2): "**Sliding your fingers on the screen to "open your eyes" or "close your eyes", drives the story**."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a, para. 1): "Zooming in and out on a touch screen is already natural enough for a traverser, so zooming out to see the subconscious and **zooming in to see what the main character sees** is easy to understand and easy to figure out if the traverser misses the instructions."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a, para. 1): "The basic structure, zoom out to see subconscious, **zoom in to see sight**, and the base level being the conscious thoughts, the text that is the thrust of the story, could be a structure that other electronic works could use."

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overpowering or taking control from the traverser and switching between perspectives rapidly."

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SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019b, para. 1): "**The pinching and opening motion to progress the story mimics open one's eyes** and pinching or pulling back into ones mind to access the subconscious."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019a, para. 1): "For my first read-through of PRY, I took quite a bit of time with the first two chapters alone, then realized that I was trying to explore everything the first time around. So then I went back and tried to explore just one linear level at a time, specifically, **the storyline with his eyes open**."

WOO, DAVID JACK (2015, para. 4): "The reader is able to "pry" into his subconscious to learn about his past, while also **being able to open his eyes to experience the current story** by interacting with the touch screen."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019a, para. 2): "I could relate to the protagonist's struggle by having to trudge through the work: to progress the story, I had to physically pull text apart, **fight to keep the character's eyes open**, and try to mentally piece the story together."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 2): "**As we fight to keep James' eyes open, we are constantly reminded of his failing sight**."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 2): "By constantly going back and forth from **what James' sees in the real world** versus what he sees in his mind, blindness becomes one of the more prominent themes in the story (though it is certainly not the only one.)"

## H. BRAILLE AND CHAPTER 3

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 1): "**One of the main sections of Pry that intrigued me would be Chapter 3 with the read-aloud braille**. I found this intriguing because **in a digital-screen setting, braille seems to be essentially useless. However, I feel that this portion worked well with the main character reading aloud as the user ran their finger across the screen**."

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 3): "**Another is read like braille, the reader traces their finger over the dots and the words are read aloud trough the speakers**. The style and format of the chapter focuses on James losing his vision."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 256): "The reader-user is from the get-go converted into a spying mischief-maker who looks with a surrogate eye and **sight-reads with the fingertips**."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 261): "When James eventually loses his sight, the reader-user is likewise blindsided. **Faced with onscreen braille and in the absence of a didactic, the reader-user is left groping for a sign** (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 3). **The enactment of tactile reading on this surface is inauthentic as the texture of the embossed braille dots cannot and need not be remediated since tablets have the facility of screen readers. Eventually, the reader-user discovers that tracing over the braille with the index finger triggers a voice-over of James learning to read the dot configurations on the screen. Each read syllable associates with memories in James's mind, launching playbacks of footage automatically and independently of the usual pinching gesture. Deprived therefore of autonomous reading of alphabetic words and of the more complex prying gestures, the reader-user is reduced to a mere auditor.** Consequently, this Chapter drastically reduces the reader-user's options for textualising *Pry* and completely blocks the possibility of employing the third of Berger's 'fictions of reading', that of 'reading as if perusing – that is producing and constructing – a text […] perform[ing] as a suspicious or resistant reader' (Berger 2003: 27). Like Chapter Six before it, *Jacob and Esau* instead invites the reader-user to listen/visualise and behave normatively 'as an innocent reader who accepts what is told at face value' (Berger 2003: 27)."

> – [NB: Chetcuti cites: Berger, Harry (2003): "Archimago: Between Text and Countertext", *Studies in English Literature*, 43: 1, 19–64.]

DULAY, RASAN (2017, para. 1): "**Sliding across the screen allows you to view stories within a story. This represents what the character must go through because of his disability**. It allows for the reader to understand the difficulty of someone with that disability, which will make it frustrating for them to follow along. Though it makes sense why this feature is implemented into the app, it can be hurtful to individuals who have that disability and are viewing the story. In some ways, it may seem as if the story is mocking them."

FARINSKY, KATYA (2019, caption under an image): "A screenshot of Pry by Tender Claws where **the reader must trace braille characters to make the story progress similarly to a blind person reading**."

– [NB: Above: a screenshot from chapter 3.]

FARINSKY, KATYA (2019, para. 2): "**My personal favorite part was the braille chapter**. I thoroughly appreciated the mechanics of using fingers on the touch screen of an iPad **in the same way blind individuals use raised braille characters and fingers to trace each line. I immediately felt like I was learning to read- mirroring the narrative where the main character's mother is teaching her son to read the braille characters**."

FARINSKY, KATYA (2019, para. 3): "**The video playing on screen (similar to the image above) behind the braille characters and one's finger is often the same quality/style of a home-movie or "found footage" which makes the scene incredibly intimate**. During my experience I found having part of my hand covering the screen unobtrusive compared to other sections "prying" open the main character's eyes."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 6): "The screen itself forces the reader into a landscape reading mode for chapter 3, horizontal instead of vertical. **Braille begins to populate the screen, and as the reader runs their finger over it, the protagonist speaks and images appear like old home videos. Depending on the speed the reader goes over the braille, they may see one quick clip or a different clip of video for each word or key term in the sentence. The braille is an interesting feature, and certainly the most notable in my opinion, that again takes full advantage of touch screen's built-in features**."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 3): "In chapter 5, he explains the process of how he ended up on the bridge. His conversation with Luke, the shooting of the airsoft rifle at the statue and **braille bible**, his vision almost gone, and their fight."

HOBSON, MALLORY (2019, para. 2): "**The braille motif was very interesting as well. I liked the mechanics behind it, running your finger over the images of the dots to see what it means to James, as well as the symbolic nature of the motif. I took it as foreshadowing concerning his vision:** as James' mental health deteriorates, he is unable to 'see' what is actually happening in his life and what is his own intrusive thoughts and flashbacks…and so **he's becoming literally unable to see as well, relying on braille and memories to find his way through the world**."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 4): "Above all, the second half continues to be about PTSD, with James becoming even more distraught internally, his subconscious turning into an obscure collection of words. James' depiction of PTSD becomes much more personal, however, with the addition of the guilt he feels towards Jessie and betraying his brother, which was hinted at in **Chapter 3 with James reading about Jacob and Esau**."

JESSICA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "James' gradual degeneration into blindness is visually expressed through various effects. These include blurred images, blackness swallowing up the screen, and **most notably the use of brail. Symbols appear on the screen in the form of brail marks, and when we drag our finger over them horizontally, James' voice translates the text aloud**. This is not only a way to communicate the protagonist's situation, but also a feature that forces us to participate in the text, and physically move the narrative forward. The awareness of developing blindness is, therefor, ever present in our minds, and we are not only informed of it, but are giving the chance to experience it."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 8): "Yet this simplicity is a ruse, in fact. In chapters 1, 2, and 6, the pinch gesture works (with mildly different effects in each), then **for chapter 3 there is a new (unannounced!) gesture to learn**; and this is part of the joy and trouble with *Pry*. The gestures are so elegant that experiencing them generates a pleasure that eclipses the story."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 4): "Thus the narration of Pry does not consist in telling a story as classical novels do, but in transmitting the feelings and unease of the narrator. This is why many images appear and disappear to fast to understand what is presented. The reader cannot analysis, but he may feel surprised, maybe afraid, and mostly lost, just as the narrator. **The third chapter on contrary may seem more peaceful. The narrator reads the braille, slowly as we touch it. It does not come from the narrator's life, so it is not as stifling as other chapters. Though, he does not seem able to perfectly concentrate on the text as images from his memory appears through the text**."

KEISHA (2015, para. 4): "There is a uniqueness in every chapter. **One in particular reads like Braille and has you drag your finger on the words in order to hear a voice read the content aloud**."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "Some of the chapters require pinching, some dragging, **with one in braille**, reflecting James' current situation of slowly going blind but still needing to work and live his life."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151–152): "Keys to the whole picture of the story involving James, Luke and Jessie come in fragments enclosed within chapters, which can only be accessed through a full reading of both conscious and unconscious layers (not to mention bits of significant information which only became accessible with the second installment of chapters in 2016). Examples of this are the fact that only further ahead does the reader come to know the real reason for James' progressive lack of vision – "Patient exhibits intermittent symptoms of optic hypertension indicative of abnormal aqueous humor. Optic neuropathy may trigger visions. Inconstant episodes suggest psychosomatic origin." (Chapter 6) –; as well as the revelation of a brotherly link between James and Luke, a fact which begins to be unveiled in **episodes like the one of Esau and Jacob (Chapter 3), in which the reader is faced with an excerpt of the biblical tale of these two brothers, twin sons of Isaac and Rebecca**."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 154): "This structural mechanism is a constant in almost every chapter: in Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5, the necessary balance between James' actual and virtual vision(s); **in Chapter 3, the need to read the story of Jacob and Esau in Braille, which, in**

**a digital device, and for a non-blind reader, is always a combination of vision and touch**."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 2): "**One of the coolest parts**, which I've already seen a couple people comment on as well **was the Braille chapter. The idea that as you scroll your finger across the Braille on the screen it actually reads it to you was absolutely genius. I love the effect that has, not only does it contribute to the story and the characters vision loss, but it helps you relate and further pulls you into the story making you feel like you are the character in the story**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220–221): "**Chapter 3 puts the events presented so far into yet another context**. Just as in the previous two chapters, the opening filmic shot establishes the point of view. **This time the subjective camera is used to show James hands holding a massive volume in Braille and then some text in Braille appears on the screen. As the reader moves his or her finger over it, he or she hears the voice of James reading the biblical story of Jacob and Esau and starts seeing some home video footage showing two young boys as well as some short clips of Luke as a soldier and a demolition engineer, familiar from the previous parts of *Pry***. This section is an even more interesting instance of how the reader's embodiment can be employed via his or her interaction with the touch screen to create a recursive relationship between the reader and the protagonist, the body and the mind, the actual and the virtual. **The reader performs the gesture the protagonist is supposed to perform on the level of the storyworld, though obviously his or her experience of the text in Braille lacks the crucial tactile element: the screen is flat and his or her engagement with Braille remains virtual. And yet, by embodying the protagonist he or she gains access to his consciousness, as the voice the reader can hear can be interpreted as James's subvocalisation, actualized as audible sounds on the level of the reader's interaction with *Pry* as a touch-screen-based narrative. The visuals add another layer to this complex setup, as they seem to represent James's memories and associations brought about by the passage he is reading**. Again, the link between this section and the previous ones is left for the reader to infer: it seems to suggest some brotherly rivalry between James and Luke or perhaps even some shared childhood, though the fact that each of them has a different surname would indicate that they are friends rather than brothers."

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019, para. 1): "**I found chapter three to be memorable with its use of reading braille interactively**."

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 5): "**There is a really cool part where you use your finger to scroll through some braille and the words are spoken out**."

REDMAN, JOE (2019a, para. 1): "Most of the experience is this process of prying eyes, but **in one chapter, the user holds their device horizontally and simulates the experience of reading braille as they slide their finger over the screen. The braille is even read out loud in real time**."

SARAH'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "**Pry includes a chapter where Braille dots are displayed on the screen and in order to understand and progress through the chapter, the reader must swipe their finger along the screen to follow the dots**. There is symmetry between action, words and images, as this movement emulates the real-life interaction that a Braille reader would have with the page when reading. Swiping along the text rewards the reader with a revelation of clips of flashback images with audio, presenting these as memories of the protagonist. Touch is also presented as sight in a revelatory sense here, as a blind reader can see and understand with touch, and the reader is now placed in this position–not only opening and closing eyes, but using the tactile sense to uncover a narrative in a new way. In the realisation that the Braille text presented is also biblical, the repeated swiping of the lines of text becomes mantra-like in hope of reaching revelation, in this case memories of childhood. There is some disconnect in this concept as the Braille is clearly smooth and digital as the screen itself, and not raised and actually legible to someone who could not see**. However, the reader still needs to touch the screen in order to elicit meaning, and this gives each movement semantic relevance."

SDHUTCHERSON (2015, para. 1): "Whether that interactivity is through opening and closing the characters, James', eyes either seeing what the character sees or going deeper and deeper into what seems to be his subconscious, or **moving your finger over braille on the screen and having the story come to life as though you were really reading through the dots and dimples in the pages themselves on the screen**."

SHELBY (2015, para. 3): "Every time you pinch, pry, read, or **run you figure over the braille** you get more information whether it be his real life around him or what is going on in his head, both can be confusing and strange. Not only does is have text to read but **there is video with sound, and James reading to you**."

SHORT, EMILY (2015, para. 4): "Themes of sight and the ability to see are crucial. **In one chapter, we can read a braille passage about Jacob and Esau by swiping over the braille text**; this functions as an audio scrub, moving the voiceover forwards and backwards. **One can read tentatively, a single word at a time, or fast, fast enough to turn the words into semi-gibberish**. This appealed to me on several levels: because **it recapitulated the physical experience of the protagonist**, and that is **a level of involvement that iOS games are very rarely able to offer**; because it **put me in a position of temporary and uncomfortable illiteracy (I can't read braille and the string of dots meant nothing to me on their own)** that suggested helplessness; because **I felt relieved when I was able to get the translation after all**, via unconventional means."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 1): "It is no longer just simply turning pages to read, it is blinking, expanding, watching, and **scrolling over braille to 'read.'**"

STANDISH, SYDNEY (2019, para. 2): "**I also found the use of braille interesting in this piece**. I think that eyesight will become a very important theme in this piece. I also think **the use of braille really pairs well with the mechanic that drives the piece**. Sliding your fingers on the screen to "open your eyes" or "close your eyes", drives the story."

STAPLES, LILY (2016, para. 3–4): "**In chapter three, titled Jacob and Esau, the player gets to learn about the story of brothers through the use of braille. Being on a tablet format though, the braille is flattened and does not protrude off of the page. The player can run their finger over the braille line, or each individual word, and receive an image or video pertaining to said word(s).** Jacob and Esau, biblically, are always in a state of struggle with one another. Within the images of that chapter, the player gets to learn of how James and his brother (as a child) as well as James and Luke (his brother in arms) mimic the story of Jacob and Esau. *Pry* **demonstrates that a character, though written in braille, does not need to be touched to know their story.**"

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019b, para. 1): "I had been thinking of this piece in visual terms and had missed some of the kinetic aspects that make the work so subversive. **The braille chapter is an obvious example of this that I had not missed. Chapter 3 was the most immersive chapter for me, as dragging my fingers across the screen forced me to remain engaged**, almost like the conscious thoughts of the app with text."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019a, para. 3): "**Chapter 3 I found fascinating. The story is told through a simulated braille reading where the reader has to actually touch the screen, moving their finger over white dots while the main character reads the story of Jacob and Esau. In the background plays a slideshow of pictures of video of his childhood, where his mother is featured frequently**. This serves to give the reader a real insight into what his life growing up was like, as he previously mentions that **he and his mother would play braille reading games**."

WOO, DAVID JACK (2015, para. 4): "In other chapters **the reader is required to feel their way through a brail bible passage as the narrator reads it out loud** and try to navigate through a sea of ever-expanding text and videos to learn more about the characters and story."

**I. SENSE OF CLOSURE**

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 4): "*Pry* is like a human mind. It is not clear almost any aspect, and it does not follow a straight line. Instead, it starts on a path, and will slowly add more and more details, often going on related tangents, but **will pull itself back around again to the main point**, much like any normal conversation between two people."

CAYLEY, JOHN (2015, para. 1): "We must pry open his failing eyes, or some other conduit for visual experience and memory, so as to **help complete his story for us**."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 260): "*Pry* succeeds in supplanting close reading with cinematic illustrations primarily by leveraging the reader-user's sense of doubt 'about the givenness and closure of the sign / referent linkage but also about the innocence of the documentary standpoint that privileges them' (Berger 2003: 24). First the app exploits the sense of disbelief when **faced with apparent closure** and fuels paranoid interpretations, before foreclosing the possibility of textualizing by systematically chipping away at the reader-user's faith in the veracity of the text."

> – [NB: Chetcuti cites: Berger, Harry (2003): "Archimago: Between Text and Countertext", *Studies in English Literature*, 43: 1, 19–64.]

CLAPP, JOEL (2019, para. 3): "With that control, the experience of the user can vary, as in multi-linear narratives, with **some media objects theoretically being missed, which encourages multiple go-throughs**."

> – [NB: The writer implies that it is possible to discover all the media objects with multiple traverses.]

CRELLI, ROSE (2015, para. 4): "**The system of achieving diamonds as a reward for having thoroughly explored each individual chapter is really the only way to measure how much is possible to discover**. It encourages, and entices readers to delve even deeper into the chapters."

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019b, para. 1): "But jumping to the end SPOILER ALERT: **it was nice to have a little explanation of what happened whether it was the relationship between Jesse and Luke or if it was the attack on the base leading to the death off Jesse**.

These details help the player understand James's mental state. As well as adding the confusion of losing your sight."

FUTURE OF STORYTELLING (2016, para. 3): "*Pry* was released in 2014, and ***Pry Part II was recently released on June 9th.***"

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 4): "In a way, **this chapter [chapter 7] and chapter 6 both clarify a lot and also add to much of the confusion in what is going on, or at least, what actually happened to Jessie**."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 1): "As the second half goes on, however, **Jessie becomes less of a mystery and more of a tragedy. By navigating through the three stages, the struggle that James faces both with Luke and Jessie is explained**, with James' eyes open by talking to Luke, his eyes closed by thinking of Jessie, and in his subconscious with the guilt he feels about Jessie's death."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 2): "**Chapter 6 marks the point in *Pry* where everything begins to come together**. The expanding wall of text allows the reader to pry through the sentences to reveal that Luke and Jessie developed a relationship, which James reported after his love for Jessie grew into jealousy. Jessie found out and lashed out at James. Still upset, Jessie sat out of the poker game happening later. As a result, Jessie was outside during the game, when their base was attacked. Jessie died in the attack, and James blames himself for her death."

JESSICA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 6): "**By showing our progress in the form of stars, we are able to see how thoroughly we have explored the text**, a feature that is not available in traditional paper texts. **This makes the reading process easier, and we may feel more confident about our understanding of the story as a result**."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 5): "In just the 6th chapter, the reader has to pry and pry and pry and just when they think they're done, there's more. **So much of the story is hidden that the reader has to really want to figure out what's going on, they will likely spend hours doing so**."

– [NB: The writer implies that it is possible to discover the 'hidden parts.']

LYDIA (2015, para. 1): "In this digital story you are able to see from three different perspectives with just a move of a finger. The story's main character is a young man named James who served in the Golf War only six years earlier. **In *Pry*, It is the reader's job to interact with James' surroundings, subconscious, and thoughts to reveal secrets about the past**."

> – [NB: The writer implies that it is possible to reveal James's secrets.]

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015, para. 2): "**They have to seek out answers and reread chapters to make sure they gleaned everything available to them**. While this option doesn't sound like the easiest way to go about reading a story, the creators of PRY highly recommend going through chapters multiple times **in order to receive all the information available to them**. I found that despite the creators encouragement to go through the chapters again, **the plot was intriguing enough for me to want to discover all of James' secretes**."

> – [NB: The writer implies that it is possible to learn all of James' secrets.]

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151): "**Keys to the whole picture of the story** involving James, Luke and Jessie come in fragments enclosed within chapters, which can only be accessed through a full reading of both conscious and unconscious layers (not to mention bits of significant information which only became accessible with the second instalment of chapters in 2016)."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019b, para. 1): "The second part of Pry is just as immersive, while **revealing more of the actual story**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 221–222): "Cannizzaro and Gorman have generously encoded into Chapter 6 **the signal of finality well-known to anyone familiar with digital textuality**: the lines that cannot be pinched open any further change their colour from white to grey."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): "In their construction of this chapter [chapter 6] Cannizzaro and Gorman appear to rely on the idea of consciousness as containing just a fraction of the information stored in one's memory, with the traumatic memories being repressed into the unconscious. **Fragmented and associative as the text representing**

**James's memory is, it allows the reader to reconstruct the key characteristics of the events from his past that shed light on his present condition and on the memories haunting him**. Whether what James remembers is what 'really' happened remains unclear as his narration bears marks of unreliability, including a self-addressed admonition to come up with another version of the story – 'Go back, tell this as a version where you go back through the pale door.'"

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 1): "Instead of just jumping in and finishing from where I left off, I chose to start from the beginning and read all the way through. I also took my time on each section and let each video play through its entirety. **This really helped me fill in some missing pieces and helped me understand more of the story**."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 4): "**This story about a man who joins the military and becomes friends with a woman named Jessie.**It is apparent in the story that James begins to have feelings for Jessie (and borderline becomes obsessed with her), however, she and James' buddy Luke enter into a secret relationship while they are all serving together. James becomes jealous of Jessie and Luke's relationship and exposes it, which causes Jessie to be re-assigned. James brought an album from home with him and he puts pictures of Jessie alongside his mother's photos, thinking that she would be flattered. However, when he shows her the album, she is not amused. James and Jessie end up having an argument about him revealing her secret relationship and as a result, Jessie does not show up for a scheduled poker game the three friends had scheduled that night. Their camp was bombarded that night, and Jessie died during the attack. James blames himself for Jessie not being at the poker game, and ultimately blames himself for her death. 6 years after serving, James and Luke return home and Luke hires James to work for him as a demolition consultant. James' eyesight begins to worsen and it affects his performance on the job. This creates conflict and tension between the friends."

RAGAN, KEEGAN (2015, para. 1): "It expects the reader not only to read, as is expected in most literature, but **to also dig for what isn't immediately apparent. From the beginning, the story in pry isn't immediately apparent, so the reader is forced to search for the answers themselves**."

RAGAN, KEEGAN (2015, para. 3): "This is the hook that brings you into *Pry*, and I believe it is a rather effective one. From then on you are transported to a construction site, to the middle east, to a night alone in bed, and then all the way back to the character's childhood. **Sounds confusing right? That's because it is at first, but the confusion only encourages you as the reader to dive deeper into the story**, and that's where I believe *Pry* succeeds as a piece of e-literature."

RAGAN, KEEGAN (2015, para. 6): "So, I highly recommend to *Pry* to anyone who's interested in a reading experience that they have never come across before. You will spend hours diving into a story that is complex, tying in the past, present, and future of the character who's shoes you are put in. Every time I came back to *Pry,* which was often, I craved to discover more about the story. **It's a story that drives your curiosity and begs you to continue uncovering what previously wasn't understood**."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019b, para. 1): "**In the second half of Pry, there are many details that come to light that are kept under wraps in the first half of the story**. In chapter 5, there is more information regarding James' eyesight, when Luke gives him another job after initially firing him because of the issues revolving around his eyesight. **We also gain more insight into Luke's character, as he is trying his best to give James as many opportunities as possible despite his challenges**."

SDHUTCHERSON (2015, para. 3): "All in all the novella has a very puzzling story line, reading from chapter one through six with the exceptions of a few chapters that have not been released yet. **Although once reading through the chapters for second time one can see a bigger picture forming and that the chapters reveal more a second time around**. In the LA Weekly they mention "Pry is greater than the sum of its parts", this becomes very apparent after the first read through of the chapters available and starting over."

SHELBY (2015, para. 3): "**You must reveal everything to get the full story** and even then it can be confusing and unfinished."

SHORT, EMILY (2015, para. 7): "**There are no choices available that will change what happens in the story, or even how the protagonist feels about them; our decisions are**

**entirely about how deep we will go into the protagonist's understanding, and what aspect of his experience we want to look at when**."

SMITH8, DES (2019, para. 2): "**I can not wait to finish** this interactive fiction."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 2): "**At first it all seems confusing but the deeper into the story the reader goes than the more everything seems to make sense. The story line, the characters and the drama involved all become more clear**."

STANDISH, SYDNEY (2019, para. 4): "I can't wait to continue to delve into the piece, and **really unlock the mystery of it**."

STILLER, MASON (2019, para. 2): "**I think to fully understand this piece I would have to do several re-readings**. The text always takes a backseat to the interactive elements in my exploration of the piece. I keep wanting to discover more about the piece than stay in one spot. The fact that you are able to collect items for the albums folder did not help. The album became a thing of very high interest to me as i tried to initially understand how it worked."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 1): "**After replaying Pry, I think I've formed a more solid (if not yet complete) understanding of what the work is about**."

**J. SENSE OF INCOMPLETENESS**

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 1): "So far **the work is not completed yet and part two is 'coming soon'**."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 260): "*Pry* succeeds in supplanting close reading with cinematic illustrations primarily by **leveraging the reader-user's sense of doubt 'about the givenness and closure of the sign / referent linkage but also about the innocence of the documentary standpoint that privileges them'** (Berger 2003: 24). First the app exploits the sense of disbelief when faced with apparent closure and **fuels paranoid interpretations, before foreclosing the possibility of textualizing by systematically chipping away at the reader-user's faith in the veracity of the text**."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 260–261): "**Chapter Six is an exercise in classic, self-erasing textuality**. When the initial folds are smoother out, it feels as though this additional text is intended to expand the reader-user's sightlines with different perspectives on the same memories. **It soon becomes clear, however, that what is actually afoot is the heaping of jarring details onto episodes which become more and more unreal as a result**. Take, for instance, the first and second iterations of what appears to be an account of James and Jessie making love:

[W]e fall through the door and she's suddenly near her hand smells like lilac as she rips into me shelves fall cleaning supplies shatter blue slides around her body stains my fingers on her pulse I'm counting, calculating

Jessie's already gone when we fall through the door she is supposed to be close her hair smells sweet as she hits shelves fall cleaning supplies break at an odd angle blue slides around her body stains my nails near her pulse (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6). Although the sensory information remains the same (the floral smell, the bright blue of cleaning fluid, the feel of a pulse), the detail shifts to suggest that this encounter is being falsified ('already gone', 'supposed to be'). Exacerbating this suspicion is the video which surges from James's subconscious and which indeed depicts Jessie sweeping supplies off shelves in a store cupboard, except in a fit of rage not passion. Even though the video is itself carefully chosen, muted, clipped, and shut off before the episode comes to a natural close, the

reader-user is infinitely more inclined to believe it over the unstable and clearly romanticised textual account." (p. 260–261.)

CRELLI, ROSE (2015, para. 4): "**The system of achieving diamonds as a reward for having thoroughly explored each individual chapter is really the only way to measure how much is possible to discover**. It encourages, and entices readers to delve even deeper into the chapters."

> – [NB: The writer implies that *Pry*'s syuzhet *per se* does not provide enough information as to how comprehensively the reader has studied the plot.]

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019b, para. 1): "In experiencing the second half of this piece I am both amazed by how smooth it is and **more confused on what all went on**. Like did he fall off the bridge or did James just imagine it?"

FARINSKY, KATYA (2019, para. 4): "My only complaint for the beginning half **is the gem system which makes little sense to me in context of narrative or function- but is driving my completionist tenancies absolutely bananas**."

> – [NB: The writer implies that *Pry*'s syuzhet *per se* does not provide enough information as to how comprehensively the reader has studied the plot.]

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 5): "**Everything is relatively unclear and it is incredibly difficult to know for sure which is the truth between the images that are shown and the text that appears**. All that is truly clear in the end is that Jessie died and James, one way or the other, blames himself for her death. Whether it truly was his fault, or he killed her, or it was simply an accident, he blames himself for what happened to her."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 3): "There are caveats: interactivity eclipses both narrative and characterization. **Plot resolution and catharsis are minimal (unsurprising since many chapters are yet to be released)**."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 27): "Still, **at a literary level, simply as storytelling, *Pry* is low on narrative cohesion**. I was engaged and intrigued and led inexorably on, but more by curiosity and wonder at the transitions and forms than by suspense or need for resolution of the content. ***Pry* is a fetus, a structure in the process of emerging**.

**Chronology remains mysterious**. How do the demolition sequences fit in? Who's who? Who did what? How?"

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 28): "In spite of overt references to intimate trauma and loss, exposure to interior thoughts, and a limited number of main protagonists (three), **characterization seems sketchy**. And I do not think this blur is consciously intended by the authors as a reflection on the postmodern deflection of stable identity; it does not feel like, as in Marguerite Duras, an exploration of enigmatic archetypes. *Pry* **feels as if it is intended to be a real story with real people, the kind of story that has events, chronologies, consequences, catharsis, tension, crying**. Instead, **character is implicit, suggested, partial, drowned in disjunction, and uncertain**. And again this lack occurs partially because *Pry* **is unfinished**, partially due to **a paucity of concrete chronological details**, and partially as a by-product of the app **interactivity that constantly invites flickering, attenuated attention**, eclipsing the reverie that savors cadence, coincidence, and the uncanny."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 29): "Instead of contemplation, there is effervescent ricochet. Often, caught up in playful momentum, I couldn't help hitting the screen quickly just to see the intriguing changes accumulate; and then it was impossible to read back sentences that were lost; to retrace was impossible, I had to restart the chapter. When I reread the work a second time, I found myself encountering videos and sentences that I had totally missed before. **It is a topological space with plenty of room for exploration, but how does one get a full sense of a being? Characters diffuse behind a glaze of transitioning text and never (for me) fully coalesce into differentiable entities. The novelty of the (essential, innovative, and lovely at a psychological level) interactive interface trumped the quiet absorption of subtle narrative threads. The written language (which is accomplished technically, and resonates when viewed independently) arises elliptically in aperiodic fragments, outlining neither depth nor volume**."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 30): "**Imbuing the story with an implacable psychological specificity, bringing the characters to life as fleshy, intricate, paradoxical people (with histories and habits and not just pockets of phrases that pour disordered into blocks), and then guiding the reader to live with or within the characters as they experience clear, irrevocable, precisely temporalized events is the challenge that the**

**Tender Claws duo face as they complete this potentially breakthrough novella-app. It is the dilemma of any impregnated creature: how to carry it to term, to nurture it beyond the crib, so it can stagger forward and convince others it exists**. It is a problem compounded by the freedom that branching media offers narratives; books are linear, stoic, certain in sequence, and this has offered authors the clear capacity to calibrate and define psychological portraits."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 2): "*Pry* is broken into parts, the first of which is the initial download and **the second part will be available as an update upon completion**."

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015, para. 2): "**It can be frustrating for some to not have the full story once they go through the app**, but for others, like myself, the process of approaching the chapters a different way to gain new information is one that can be very appealing. **The story presented isn't a full story for many reasons. The first being that PRY is not complete and that the rest of the chapters will come as an update later on. The second being that it's a mystery**. Readers aren't spoon fed information on what is going on or what happened in the past."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 1): "In the prologue, I didn't really understand what was going on and **even after going through the first four chapters, I'm still not sure I understand it**. However, Pry was so immersive for me I found myself sucked into the story and it really feels like you're actually there."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 3): "**I'm still not completely sure of the whole story**, from what I can tell it's about someone who used to serve and he's dealing with life after."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 219): "**When *Pry* was released in 2015, the reader was provided only with fragments of the work: only four chapters were made available and the remaining three were described in the table of contents as 'coming soon.' The following analysis** of the major motifs of *Pry* and the strategies whereby it seeks to represent James's consciousness via multimodal means **is based on the multimodal data provided in the initial release**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): "In their construction of this chapter [chapter 6] Cannizzaro and Gorman appear to rely on the idea of consciousness as containing just a fraction of the information stored in one's memory, with the traumatic memories being repressed into the unconscious. Fragmented and associative as the text representing James's memory is, it allows the reader to reconstruct the key characteristics of the events from his past that shed light on his present condition and on the memories haunting him. **Whether what James remembers is what 'really' happened remains unclear as his narration bears marks of unreliability, including a self-addressed admonition to come up with another version of the story – 'Go back, tell this as a version where you go back through the pale door**.'"

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 4): "**Not all the chapters are released yet**, but each chapter is cleverly programmed to be approached differently."

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019, para. 1): "I thought that Pry was an incredibly engaging piece of electronic literature, even despite the fact that it had me feeling confused quite a few times. **I honestly can not summarize the storyline with any confidence as it all felt like a blur to me**, but I feel like this was the intention of the piece. Everything throughout Pry seems to be told in an incredibly disjointed and unique manner for each chapter."

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019, para. 3): "I definitely found myself engaged, but also **confused at the storyline and sequence of events**. If I had to see what the main theme of the story was, it would be the main character dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder or something to that effect."

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019, para. 4): "Overall, **I found this piece to be confusing** but also engaging at the same time. I think this is because of its highly immersive interface."

SDHUTCHERSON (2015, para. 3): "All in all the novella has a very puzzling story line, reading from chapter one through six with **the exceptions of a few chapters that have not been released yet**. Although once reading through the chapters for second time one can see a bigger picture forming and that the chapters reveal more a second time around. In the LA Weekly they mention "Pry is greater than the sum of its parts", this becomes very apparent after the first read through of the chapters available and starting over."

SHELBY (2015, para. 3): "You must reveal everything to get the full story and **even then it can be confusing and unfinished**."

SHORT, EMILY (2015, para. 8): "**PRY was released without all of its chapters**, but even as it stands it is appealing and evocative, and very unlike most other interactive story interfaces I've encountered."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 3): "Another thing that Pry did well was creating a story that is not only captivating, but also mysterious. **Pry leaves the reader with all sorts of questions**."

STILLER, MASON (2019, para. 2): "**I think to fully understand this piece I would have to do several re-readings. The text always takes a backseat to the interactive elements in my exploration of the piece**. I keep wanting to discover more about the piece than stay in one spot. The fact that you are able to collect items for the albums folder did not help. The album became a thing of very high interest to me as i tried to initially understand how it worked."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 1): "After replaying Pry, I think I've formed a more solid (**if not yet complete**) understanding of what the work is about."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 3): "It presents us with **seemingly endless seas of text and layers of video that create a sense of mystery**, as well as a desire to investigate further."

## K. REFERENCES TO OTHER INTERPRETATIONS

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, Introduction before the body text): "A Book to Watch and a Film to Touch At least that is **what the LA Review of Books** is calling *Pry, A Novella*."

> – Referenced: JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "Prying: Jhave on Tender Claws' New App." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 29 December 2014. No page numbers. [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/prying-jhave-on-tender-claws-new-app/]]

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 228): "Spreading the fingers outward in **what John Cayley (2015: para. 1), describes** as the 'opposite-of-pinch' gesture expands the text in valley folds, as with paper fan."

> – Referenced: CAYLEY, JOHN (2015): "Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro's *Pry*." *Bomb*, 6 July 2015.
> [https://bombmagazine.org/articles/samantha-gorman-and-danny-cannizzaros-pry/]

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 258): "If we accept that reading, like memory, is an embodied experience which increasingly requires an ethos of touch to externalise it; and, further, that there are as yet no conventions for engagement with interactive literature on multi-touch devices, then *Pry* heralds the indispensability of a gestural syntax 'as reading changes for all of us' (**Cayley 2015: para. 1**).

> – Referenced: CAYLEY, JOHN (2015): "Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro's *Pry*." *Bomb*, 6 July 2015.
> [https://bombmagazine.org/articles/samantha-gorman-and-danny-cannizzaros-pry/]

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 258): "The work proffers 'strong candidates to consider for general adoption' as new conventions for interaction and data-touching (**Johnson 2014: para. 9**). Primary among these is the pinch and spread routine for navigating text-audio-video-interactive media pages, now increasingly labelled 'TAVITs' (**Johnson 2014: para. 10**)."

> – Referenced: JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "Prying: Jhave on Tender Claws' New App." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 29 December 2014. No page

numbers. [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/prying-jhave-on-tender-claws-new-app/]

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 259): "In ushering this new gestural syntax and asking the reader to learn it, first by means of a series of pop-up instruction or 'didactics' and later by sheer trial and error, *Pry* seems to be asking the reader-user to unlearn some of the grammar of print reading (**Johnson 2014: para. 5**)."

> – Referenced: JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "Prying: Jhave on Tender Claws' New App." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 29 December 2014. No page numbers. [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/prying-jhave-on-tender-claws-new-app/]

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 259): "To confirm this suspicion and determine whether the app's 'suturing' of the disparate surfaces of text, audio, and video together results in opaque signs, a suspicious (re-)reading of *Pry* is necessary (**Johnson 2014: para. 1; Angel and Gibbs 2013: para. 23**)."

> – Referenced: JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "Prying: Jhave on Tender Claws' New App." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 29 December 2014. No page numbers. [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/prying-jhave-on-tender-claws-new-app/]
>
> (– Also referenced: ANGEL, MARIA & ANNA GIBBS (2013): "At the Time of Writing: Digital Media, Gesture, and Handwriting." *Electronic Book Review*. [http://electronicbookreview.com/thread/electropoetics/gesture].)

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 260): "The most basic interfaces consist of white text in a uniform serif font against a black screen, but even here the text pulses, tipping the wink to the visual animations pioneered by Young Hae Chang Heavy Industries and referencing a thematically apt practice known in ophthalmology as Rapid Serial Visual Presentation (**Johnson 2014: para. 12**)."

> – Referenced: JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "Prying: Jhave on Tender Claws' New App." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 29 December 2014. No page numbers. [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/prying-jhave-on-tender-claws-new-app/]

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 261): "**David (Jhave) Johnson furthers the case** on behalf of those chapters that purport to promote reading-as-perusing. He claims that the purpose of the didactics presented therein is to deflect reader-users to the 'correct choices', by which is meant the least satisfying narrative choices (**Johnson 2015: para. 5**)."

> – Referenced: JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "Prying: Jhave on Tender Claws' New App." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 29 December 2014. No page numbers. [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/prying-jhave-on-tender-claws-new-app/]

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 262): "It is precisely this intense enjoyment of the interface which Jhave suspects during his own first reading, as it obfuscates the poignancy of the content, limiting not only appropriate affect but also access to deeper meaning (**Johnson 2014: para. 2**)."

> – Referenced: JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "Prying: Jhave on Tender Claws' New App." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 29 December 2014. No page numbers. [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/prying-jhave-on-tender-claws-new-app/]

CRELLI, ROSE (2015, para. 6): "However, **Jhave, a digital poet writing for the Los Angels Review of Books** has an interesting point to consider, 'The dilemma for the e-lit hybrid media writing discipline is that the kind of clever custom transitions Pry and other projects use might become next season's stock filters. Eventually the novelty wears off. '"

> – Referenced: JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "Prying: Jhave on Tender Claws' New App." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 29 December 2014. No page numbers. [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/prying-jhave-on-tender-claws-new-app/]

CRELLI, ROSE (2015, para. 7): "I challenge you to go the extra mile, and not only receive all sixteen diamonds, but also experience for yourself, as the **LA Review of Books says**, 'the seeds of future lit..'"

> – Referenced: JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "Prying: Jhave on Tender Claws' New App." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 29 December 2014. No page numbers. [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/prying-jhave-on-tender-claws-new-app/]

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019a, para. 1): "I will say that **I have already traversed pry in an earlier class this year**, but it was still interesting to go through it again and find more details that I had missed on my first playthrough."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "**Pry is hard to understand.**"
> – Referenced: ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017): "Why Interactivity is Pry's Greatest Strength… and Weakness". Blog post on University of Otago's class blog *ENGL342 Final Web Project 2017*. No page numbers. [https://blogs.otago.ac.nz/digital-lit2017/alexanders-argument/]

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 6): "**But Pry is not meant to be an easy or comfortable experience.**"
> – Referenced: LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017): "Digital Novels need to be more than words upon a digital face and the press of a button". Blog post on University of Otago's class blog *ENGL342 Final Web Project 2017*. No page numbers. [https://blogs.otago.ac.nz/digital-lit2017/lauras-argument/]

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "The "well established tradition" (**Jhave, 2014**) of RSVP (rapid serial visual presentation) is consistently used through-out Pry, with flashing and blinking and blurring a constant mode of reading."
> – Referenced: JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "Prying: Jhave on Tender Claws' New App." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 29 December 2014. No page numbers. [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/prying-jhave-on-tender-claws-new-app/]

LWFUSON (2015, para. 4): "'This novella grabs the reader and makes them want to dig for more. It even makes people who do not like to read (like myself) to want to read and stays interested wanting the whole story.' (**Shelby**)"
> – Referenced: SHELBY (2015): "Pry into the Mind of a Soldier." Blog post on University of Alaska Fairbanks's class blog *Academic Writing about Literature: When Literature is Digital*, 17 February 2015. [https://diglit.community.uaf.edu/2015/02/17/pry-review-shelby/]

LWFUSON (2015): "'*Pry* reaches out to religious book readers, and those who haven't picked up a book in their life. It broadens the perspective of literature and may put to question your idea of what literature is.'(**Lydia**)" (para. 5.)

> – Referenced: LYDIA (2015): "Why YOU Should Read Pry." Blog post on University of Alaska Fairbanks's class blog *Academic Writing about Literature: When Literature is Digital*, 17 February 2015.
> [https://diglit.community.uaf.edu/2015/02/17/why-you-should-read-pry/]

LYDIA (2015, para. 3): "'So many of the internal references and resonances within Pry arise in the interplay between the specifics of its technology, audiovisual media, and text. As an intermedial cultural object, Pry can't simply exist without its ecosystem, it requires the formal qualities of the device.' **–LA Review of Books**"

> – Referenced: JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "Prying: Jhave on Tender Claws' New App." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 29 December 2014. No page numbers. [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/prying-jhave-on-tender-claws-new-app/]

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 2): "One of the coolest parts, which **I've already seen a couple people comment on** as well was the Braille chapter."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 1): "**I have had the pleasure of viewing this work last semester in another class** and I think it is absolutely brilliant."

SARAH'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "When the reader pinches the screen, she also closes the protagonist's eyes and stirs up a refrain of compulsive words and thoughts that present themselves on a loop, effectively invoking "trauma…dormant until touched" (**Jhave, *Prying*, 2014**). These refrains take a form both as a "forced confessional" (**Jhave**), intrusive into the reader's own psyche, but also something the reader has searched for."

> – Referenced: JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "Prying: Jhave on Tender Claws' New App." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 29 December 2014. No page numbers. [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/prying-jhave-on-tender-claws-new-app/]

SHELBY (2015, para. 4): "The more you pry into a chapter the more you will get out of the story and maybe answer some of your questions, "Dig deeper and you're rewarded" (**Cannizzaro**)."

> – Referenced: HERSTIK, LAUREN (2014): "Pry Is a Novella-Meets–iPad App That You Touch." *LA Weekly*, 28.11.2014. No page numbers.
> [https://www.laweekly.com/pry-is-a-novella-meets-ipad-app-that-you-touch/]

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019b, para. 1): "It was not until **I read my classmates entries** on the first half of the app that I realized how many details it was possible to miss just by nature of how the work is traversed, or pieces of significance that I had missed."

WOO, DAVID JACK (2015, para. 5): "*Pry's* unique approach to literature has helped expand Espen Aarseth's world of egrotic literature; what **LA Weekly** describes as 'text that requires more of readers than simply moving the eye from left to right between page turns.'"

> – Referenced: HERSTIK, LAUREN (2014): "Pry Is a Novella-Meets–iPad App That You Touch." *LA Weekly*, 28.11.2014. No page numbers.
> [https://www.laweekly.com/pry-is-a-novella-meets-ipad-app-that-you-touch/]

WOO, DAVID JACK (2015, para. 8): "Everyone interested in the contemporary state or future of literature as a hybrid tactile mediated experience should experience Pry. **Los Angeles Review of Books**"

> – Referenced: JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "Prying: Jhave on Tender Claws' New App." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 29 December 2014. No page numbers. [https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/prying-jhave-on-tender-claws-new-app/]

WOO, DAVID JACK (2015, para. 9): "'The narrative is fragmented, the visuals atmospheric: Charlie Kaufman by way of an acid trip.' **LA Weekly**"

> – Referenced: HERSTIK, LAUREN (2014): "Pry Is a Novella-Meets–iPad App That You Touch." *LA Weekly*, 28.11.2014. No page numbers.
> [https://www.laweekly.com/pry-is-a-novella-meets-ipad-app-that-you-touch/]

**L. DISTANCE BETWEEN THE REAL AUTHORS AND THE NARRATOR**

**M. DIFFICULT READ**

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 4): "Interestingly, text generally takes a back seat throughout this novella, with interactive gestures being the main focus for the reader. For this reason, **it can be difficult to remain invested in the narrative of *Pry***, as: "the more interactive, the less immersive the text" (Ryan, *Immersion vs. Interactivity*, 1994). The interactivity of *Pry* is, in itself, an effective metaphor for exploring the mind. However, such a mechanical interface demands subsequent readings in order to fully appreciate the story."

DULAY, RASAN (2017, para. 1): "**You really need to pay close attention to details** so you can fully grasp the concept of what's going on."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 5): "**Everything is relatively unclear and it is incredibly difficult to know for sure which is the truth between the images that are shown and the text that appears**. All that is truly clear in the end is that Jessie died and James, one way or the other, blames himself for her death. Whether it truly was his fault, or he killed her, or it was simply an accident, he blames himself for what happened to her."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 3): "Ironically, ***Pry*'s interactive gestures advance plot psychology in a way that is so clever, sophisticated, impressive, and prescient, this virtuosity overshadows simple engagement, even erodes it**. Or at least it did for this particular reader: **having never seen gesture used in quite this way before, it was hard to concentrate on the content (serious) while enjoying the interface (fun)**."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 8): "**And if you fail to understand the gestures (as I did on first entering the third chapter), the effect is frustrating**, a bit like wandering into a TV store in search of coffee."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 19): "The one dilemma of the active-replacement technique is that it requires the reader to read sentences that are modulations of previous ones; as new phrases are inserted between sentences already read, continuity issues arise. Formally it has merit, but for populist engagement it's problematic. Sent back to read again, I often ask: "Why?" It takes a rare writer to operate like a linguistic Philip Glass, looping phrases.

Humans are relentless and remorseless in rejecting narratives that do not reward our time. ***Pry risks alienating readers who lack a taste for variational disclosure***."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "**Pry is hard to understand. The reader is more often trying to understand what he has to do to continue and go forward, than really trying to understand how the characters feel**. He is often under the impression that the creators concentrated more on how to be original and interactive than telling a story."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "**Pry is not meant to be easily understandable**. The reader has only access to the thoughts and memories of the main character. Those thoughts or as disjointed and rambling as thoughts can be. Especially since the character seem traumatized by the events. The memories cannot be flowing. Moreover, as the narrator seem to suffer from a few mental disorders, he is absolutely not reliable. The reader keeps wandering whether or not what he just saw did actually happened."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 6): "**But Pry is not meant to be an easy or comfortable experience. The reader is supposed to feel as stressed and oppressed as the narrator**."

KEISHA (2015, para. 5): "**Digital literature can be difficult to read, especially for those of us who are not use to anything but chronological readings** that you can physically hold and flip through the pages of like a regular book. **Pry is a type of reading that requires the audience to really think deeply into what they have just read, saw, and even heard**."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "Although **you are terribly frustrated about the lack of guidance in the novel, you continue to stumble forward** in the hope it will begin to make sense."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 5): "**For myself, Pry was a fairly difficult read and I'm one of those people who read 9 different books at once. *Pry*, I feel, is a difficult read because of how in depth the story gets**. In just the 6th chapter, the reader has to pry and pry and pry and just when they think they're done, there's more. **So much of the story is hidden that the reader has to really want to figure out what's going on, they will likely spend hours doing so**."

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015, para. 2): "It can be frustrating for some to not have the full story once they go through the app, but for others, like myself, the process of approaching the chapters a different way to gain new information is one that can be very appealing. The story presented isn't a full story for many reasons. The first being that PRY is not complete and that the rest of the chapters will come as an update later on. The second being that it's a mystery. **Readers aren't spoon fed information on what is going on or what happened in the past. They have to seek out answers and reread chapters to make sure they gleaned everything available to them. While this option doesn't sound like the easiest way to go about reading a story, the creators of PRY highly recommend going through chapters multiple times in order to receive all the information available to them**."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 1): "**In the prologue, I didn't really understand what was going on and even after going through the first four chapters, I'm still not sure I understand it**."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 3): "**I'm still not completely sure of the whole story**, from what I can tell it's about someone who used to serve and he's dealing with life after."

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019, para. 4): "**I just wish I was better at following the general storylines in these pieces of electronic literature. I feel that it is something that will come more naturally to me with practice**."

REDMAN, JOE (2019b, para. 1): "In chapter 7 the story takes on an entirely different form. Only a paragraph appears on the screen and the user can continually stretch it out, revealing more text. **I found this one of the most difficult parts of the story to follow. Having to jump back and forth to different lines and figuring out how they are connected made the experience a bit frustrating**. This exemplifies how involved the form is when it comes to the content."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 4): "Not everyone may know what digital literature is and **wrapping ones mind around Pry isn't as easy as it may sound**, but the novella is making headway into the digital world. Personally when I first started to read Pry I didn't really know what to make of it. Having to figure out how to even get through the book was like going on an adventure. It wasn't like anything that I had veer read before. As I read the book I was

learning as I went along such as how to navigate and that there are more layers to the story. At the bottom of each chapter in the table of contents it shows diamonds to let the reader know how far they have made it in the abyss of a book that is Pry. **I wouldn't recommend Pry to just anyone, it is meant to be an experience and isn't a walk in the park**, but to those I would recommend it to it is definitely highly recommended on my part."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019a, para. 4): "**Chapter 4 was where it became a little confusing for me**, as the main character is in a room with a military buddy and they are about to play poker but for a while all that happens is the main character watching his buddy shuffle the cards while he questions an attack in his mind. Then comes the slightly alarming part where it appears his buddy stabs him, implicitly in the eye."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019b, para. 3): "But a wrench is thrown in when James reports her relationship with Luke, and Jessie is VERY upset. They have an altercation in a supply closet which is followed by an image of her still, on the ground, and it made me think at first that he killed her, but then they're all playing poker and he says she was alive, so **that part was a little confusing to me**."

**M. MENTIONS OF PTSD AND TRAUMA**

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 4): "**The demolition sequence is one of the more vivid scenes of PTSD affecting the main character**, and it does not involve any text."

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 5): "**I think that this work is about a person with PTSD and/or schizophrenia. I believe this because the way the narrative plays out and provides us with both reality and subconscious fears is very similar and accurate how it feels to have real-life anxiety**. It becomes hard to distinguish between what's actually happening and what is a fear, and I think the constant switching between conscious and subconscious helps to blur the separation and make the truth even more indistinguishable. **The flashbacks and worst-case-scenario subconscious beliefs definitely hint towards this work focusing on a character that has some sort of mental illness**."

BINA, MEGAN (2019b, para. 5): "**Throughout Pry, there are themes of grief, guilt, deceit, PTSD, etc. most of the narrative is the main character trying to comprehend his thoughts caused by anxiety disorders from his real thoughts. Pry takes a non-linear look at how someone might deal with emotions and try to understand themself while dealing with several nearly debilitating issues (anxiety, PTSD, loss of eyesight, etc.)**."

DOLPHIN, DEBORAH (2019, para. 2): "Through rapid video, it seems as though **the character is struggling with a war in his mind. Flashbacks of fighting and a romance are seen in rapid succession**."

FUTURE OF STORYTELLING (2016, para. 2): "Available on both the iPhone and iPad, *Pry* **pushes the conventions of digital storytelling to explore the emotional and psychological impacts of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**."

FUTURE OF STORYTELLING (2016, para. 4): "*Pry* **is part of a growing movement of video games that address tough-to-understand topics by allowing players to explore the emotional realities of living through trauma. Not only does *Pry*'s imaginative design provide a platform and a language to depict a character who struggles with PTSD, the interactive components allow the role-player to live these realities as well**. The social implications for games like *Pry* express new and exciting ways for people to understand each

other and build empathy toward unique circumstances and conflicts. The power of sharing these stories is hidden between the lines of the novella: It's the transformative experience itself."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 4): "**He appears to be suffering from PTSD due to his time in the military, as is indicated both by flashbacks to when he was in uniform, as well as his difficult focusing**. There will be times when his vision will blur and his ears will ring, or when he sees the face of a girl even when his eyes are closed. If the reader pinches the screen together, words or images will flash by, expressing the hurriedness and chaos of his inner thoughts, perhaps."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 1): "From the prior research that we have done on Tender Claws' piece *Pry*, **it is an extremely intense representation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This concept becomes much more clear by the end of the first chapter, continuing into the second chapter, with surreal imagery of death and war**. The protagonist visiting his friend at a construction site, for example, triggers memories of explosions while serving in the military."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 2): "Within *Pry*, the interactor flips through three stages of the protagonist: eyes closed, eyes open, and subconscious. The lines between the three often become blurred, but primarily the eyes closed represents thoughts via text, the eyes open represents reality via video, and the subconscious represents war flashbacks via avant-garde sequences. **By constantly flipping through these three stages, *Pry* gives a feeling of chaos and fear that aims to artistically represent the effects of PTSD on its victims**."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 5): "***Pry* is a commentary on a multitude of things: war, PTSD, love and jealousy, coming to terms with blindness, and more**. It feels overwhelming, which is the point. James is overwhelmed by everything that is crashing down around his life."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 1): "The second half of *Pry* continues the themes of the first half with **James struggling with poor eyesight, PTSD, and his internal struggle with the mysterious character Jessie**. As the second half goes on, however, Jessie becomes less of a mystery and more of a tragedy. By navigating through the three stages, the struggle that

James faces both with Luke and Jessie is explained, with James' eyes open by talking to Luke, his eyes closed by thinking of Jessie, and in his subconscious with the guilt he feels about Jessie's death."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 4): "Above all, **the second half continues to be about PTSD, with James becoming even more distraught internally, his subconscious turning into an obscure collection of words. James' depiction of PTSD becomes much more personal, however, with the addition of the guilt he feels towards Jessie and betraying his brother**, which was hinted at in Chapter 3 with James reading about Jacob and Esau."

JACKSON, JOSHUA (2019, para. 1): "**Pry is a story about a war veteran struggling with PTSD**, on the iOS App store that rethinks the way an eBook is created."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 4): "My initial qualms concerned the military storyline — it's not my thing, and **I'm tired of soldier tales, khaki, PTSD**."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "Those thoughts or as disjointed and rambling as thoughts can be. **Especially since the character seem traumatized by the events.**"

KARAMJOT (2016, para. 1): "Tender Claw's Pry (Part 1) is a touchscreen fiction narrative iOS app that explores the mind of James, a demolitions expert and Gulf War veteran, **who 6 years later suffers from PTSD involving flashbacks and nightmares**."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 5): "She also addresses, maybe more in passing, of **the effects of PTSD has on veterans**."

KEISHA (2015, para. 2): "Unfortunately, **James suffers from post traumatic stress disorder** and is slowly losing his eyesight."

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 1): "In the beginning, Pry rapidly tells us something about "symptoms", "common", and "violence" when we close the protagonists' eyes. **This led me to believe that he is probably suffering from PTSD**. If that's true what is this image doing in Pry? [above: an image of a Snellen chart in *Pry*] I believe it is hinting at **not only is the main character suffering from PTSD (which also tells us he was a soldier at one**

**point which is supported by flashbacks and the prologue)** but also that he is starting to go blind."

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "**This process becomes in itself a symbol for post-traumatic stress disorder, as throughout many of the chapters, the reader is torn between closing the eyes and analyzing the thoughts the character is having, or opening the eyes and seeing what is happening in the real world**. It becomes a constant struggle between reality and the mind."

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 4): "**The thematic expression of post-traumatic-stress disorder would not be possible in any other medium**. More specifically it would not be as easy for the reader/user to connect on a personal level if they were not controlling James' mind with their fingertips. While previous forms of digital literature have allowed for interactivity, no other forms can get inside of a character's head as *Pry* does."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "The novel plays heavily on emotions of not only the reader but the character as well, heart-breaking flashbacks of a lost lover and friend, as well as **the lack of sight continuously causing trauma for James and reminding him of the Gulf War**."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "Whether you prefer a basic paperback novel or do in fact enjoy the idea of reading on a digital face, Pry will allow you to experience and cultivate a story within a story and feel the same frustrations and confusions that James does **as he recovers from the trauma's he has experienced from the war** and as he tries to deal with his eyesight slipping away from him."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 3): "**James is suffering from what seems to be PTSD** and is losing his eyesight,his doctor claims it's psychosomatic, but he believes it's real and is affecting his ability to decipher what is real and what isn't."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150): "Described by its authors as an "App novella that re-imagines the form of the book," ***Pry* tells the story of James, a young man returned from the Gulf War suffering from post-traumatic disorder in his current life (loss of vision,**

**bad job performance, and strained relationships with his brother Luke and their best friend Jessie**).”

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 3): “Some of the things **he's struggling from are his PTSD**, and like mentioned before, vision loss.”

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): “**James thus appears to be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and a sense of guilt connected with Jessie's death, the originality of *Pry* lying more in its multimodal representation of his condition than in the subject matter itself**.”

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019, para. 3): “**If I had to see what the main theme of the story was, it would be the main character dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder or something to that effect. This can mainly be noticed during the characters subconscious flashbacks to explosions in a warlike setting when doing demolition work in chapter 2**. I feel that this lends to my idea that the story being told in a confusing manner was intentional, because **the main character's mind is always racing and never at ease since the dramatic events that he had to go through**.”

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 1): “James is going blind and **also likely suffers from PTSD**.”

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 3): “Some of the themes of this work were made even more obvious the more I explored it. Unrequited love, jealousy, coping with a medical condition, **PTSD**, friendship, guilt, anxiety, OCD, loss, the struggle of re-acclimating to life post-war to name a few.”

REDMAN, JOE (2019b, para. 1): “**The protagonist is trying to save himself from his own PTSD of war**, but also clear up and make light of his understanding with his friend.”

SARAH'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): “When the reader pinches the screen, she also closes the protagonist's eyes and stirs up a refrain of compulsive words and thoughts that present themselves on a loop, **effectively invoking "trauma…dormant until touched**” (Jhave, *Prying*, 2014).”

SHELBY (2015, para. 1): "James is the narrator of Pry; **he is suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** and is loosing his sight."

SHELBY (2015, para. 5): "**James suffers from PTSD and probably some other disorders in result from the war** and maybe even from loosing his sight."

SHORT, EMILY (2015, para. 1): "**PRY is an iOS story that combines video segments and text to explore the inner and outer worlds of a veteran who is still struggling to process his experiences in the war,** who is suffering from vision impairment thanks to wounds sustained there, and who is now trying to hold down a job in demolitions."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 3): "**The story shows how war can have lasting effects on an individual**. There are moments like in Chapter 2 where as the Hartman Plant was being demolished, if you go into his mind you see images of people being killed from the perspective of an AC-130 Gunship; and **how sound of those explosions can trigger those memories**."

SMITH8, DES (2019, para. 1): "I am also trying to figure out if Luke and Jessie tried to murder James, or **if these visions related to James's PTSD**."

SMITH8, DES (2019, para. 1): "**Ultimately, I think the story is about James dealing with PTSD**."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a, para. 1): "**The separation of thoughts, sight, and the subconscious are used in Pry to illustrate the experience of PTSD**."

WOO, DAVID JACK (2015, para. 4): "**Throughout the story he seems to be suffering from PTSD** while at the same time going blind."

**N. MENTIONS OF WAR AND MILITARY**

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "Set six years after his return from **the Gulf War**, *Pry* is narrated by the main character James as he struggles to adjust to life after **service**."

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "Closing his eyes, the reader can see that the **explosions trigger in James a significant memory from the Gulf War**. Prying further into his subconscious, the reader witnesses **a series of military strikes accompanied by the sound of explosions** as the demolition continues before him."

BINA, MEGAN (2019b, para. 4): "My interpretation of Pry is that it is about a man who **enlisted in the military at a young age**, although his eyesight was destined to deteriorate rapidly throughout the years."

CAYLEY, JOHN (2015, para. 1): "In the case of Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro's gorgeous audiovisual, multipart book—acquired as an app and loaded onto an iPad or iPhone—*Pry* is also the title of a specific story, the narrative of a young demolition consultant, James, whose life has been shattered and reconfigured by **the 1991 Gulf War**."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 257): "Reacting to the reader-user's prying, a videoed scene refers almost intertextually to level 1 of *Mario Pinball Land* for Gameboy where the pixelated explosions act as a foil for the next shot which shows **the enemy targeting systems used to bomb James's camp**."

CRELLI, ROSE (2015, para. 3): "The storyline transitions back and forth from the perspective of the main character, James, **a veteran from the Gulf War** six years later, and the perspective of the reader."

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019a, para. 1): "This work follows the story of James a demolition consultant after he returns from **1991 Gulf War**."

DOLPHIN, DEBORAH (2019, para. 2): "Chapter one then takes a shift to **a soldier**, I was unclear if this is supposed to be the same man in the prologue, or if the story was shifting

gears. Through rapid video, it seems as though the character is struggling with **a war in his mind**. Flashbacks of fighting and a romance are seen in rapid succession."

FARINSKY, KATYA (2019, para. 1): "Pry is an incredibly engaging work about a young man returning stateside after serving in **the Gulf War**."

FUTURE OF STORYTELLING (2016, para. 2): "The story follows James, a demolition expert and **veteran of the Gulf War**."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 4): "He appears to be suffering from PTSD due to **his time in the military**, as is indicated both by **flashbacks to when he was in uniform**, as well as his difficult focusing."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 1): "From the prior research that we have done on Tender Claws' piece *Pry*, it is an extremely intense representation of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This concept becomes much more clear by the end of the first chapter, continuing into the second chapter, with **surreal imagery of death and war**. The protagonist visiting his friend at a construction site, for example, **triggers memories of explosions while serving in the military**."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 2): "The lines between the three often become blurred, but primarily the eyes closed represents thoughts via text, the eyes open represents reality via video, and the subconscious represents **war flashbacks via avant-garde sequences**."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 2): "As a result, **Jessie was outside during the game, when their base was attacked**. Jessie died in the attack, and James blames himself for her death."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 3): "**The second half of the story also goes into further detail about James' deteriorating eyesight, which was likely caused by the attack**. He's afraid to tell Luke that his eyesight is poor, causing even more internal conflict."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 5): "*Pry* is a commentary on a multitude of things: **war**, PTSD, love and jealousy, coming to terms with blindness, and more. It feels overwhelming,

which is the point. James is overwhelmed by everything that is crashing down around his life.”

JACKSON, JOSHUA (2019, para. 1): “Pry is a story about **a war veteran** struggling with PTSD, on the iOS App store that rethinks the way an eBook is created.”

JESSICA’S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): “The text is detailed and layered, following the journey of James, a demolition expert who has recurring memories of his time in **the First Gulf War**.”

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 4): “The *Pry* splash page and prologue video is a savvy casual intro intercut with retro flashbacks set in an overall tone that suggests a micro-drama, the story of **a young soldier shipping out, but more nostalgia than guns. My initial qualms concerned the military storyline — it’s not my thing, and I’m tired of soldier tales, khaki, PTSD**.”

KARAMJOT (2016, para. 1): “Tender Claw’s Pry (Part 1) is a touchscreen fiction narrative iOS app that explores the mind of James, a demolitions expert and **Gulf War veteran**, who 6 years later suffers from PTSD involving flashbacks and nightmares.”

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 2): “Six years before *Pry* takes place James retires for being a demolition expert and returns home from **the Gulf War**.”

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 6): “The novella contains themes within its plot that almost every reader can find entertainment in from romance to action and **military**.”

KEISHA (2015, para. 2): “He [James] returned from **the Gulf War** six years prior to becoming a demolition consultant where he works with his friend, Luke.”

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 1): “I believe it is hinting at not only is the main character suffering from PTSD (which also tells us **he was a soldier at one point which is supported by flashbacks and the prologue**) but also that he is starting to go blind. We see this when Josh, in the second chapter, to gets blurry and closing his eyes simply doesn’t cut it anymore.”

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "The story centers around a character named James whom 6 years' prior returned from **the first Gulf War**."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "Pry follows the story of James, a construction worker who fought in **the first Gulf War** six years prior."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "The novel plays heavily on emotions of not only the reader but the character as well, heart-breaking flashbacks of a lost lover and friend, as well as the lack of sight continuously causing trauma for James and **reminding him of the Gulf War**."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "Whether you prefer a basic paperback novel or do in fact enjoy the idea of reading on a digital face, Pry will allow you to experience and cultivate a story within a story and feel the same frustrations and confusions that James does as **he recovers from the trauma's he has experienced from the war** and as he tries to deal with his eyesight slipping away from him."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 2): "Pry is an interactive novella about a guy named **James who was in the Gulf War with his friends, Luke and Jesse**."

LYDIA (2015, para. 1): "The story's main character is a young man named **James who served in the Golf War only six years earlier**."

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015, para. 2): "**PRY is about a Gulf War vet**, James."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150): "Described by its authors as an "App novella that re-imagines the form of the book," *Pry* tells the story of James, **a young man returned from the Gulf War** suffering from post-traumatic disorder in his current life (loss of vision, bad job performance, and strained relationships with his brother Luke and their best friend Jessie)."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150): "**More than just another war story told in a technological fashion, *Pry*'s main concerns are far more complex**, since *Pry*'s story

intermingles with the reader's own experience, enhancing a dialectic tension between a series of dualisms, starting with the one between characters."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 154–155): "This affirmation comes as a possible way of saying to readers that we all are responsible for our choices, especially if we are to take into account the content of the Epilogue, in which the two main gestures of spreading open and pinching closed will unleash **two TV speeches that completely changed the world: one being the announcement of war against Iraq, in 1990, by George Bush; the other being the announcement of the invasion of Iraq, in 2003, by George W. Bush**. But again, even here, one is always contaminating the other, so that, even if the reader opts for one of these two speeches, the other one will always be present as a background sound. A touch of the hand that leaves the reader with a final question: Free will or Determinism?"

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 3): "I'm still not completely sure of the whole story, from what I can tell it's about **someone who used to serve** and he's dealing with life after."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019b, para. 3): "It's apparent that James blames himself for Jessie's death, even though **she died because of an attack in a building**."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019b, para. 3): "It's revealed through more videos that James and Jessie got into a fight, **which caused her not to go to the poker game and end up in the building that was attacked, causing her death**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 217): "They [Gorman & Cannizzaro] also use this section to introduce the protagonist of *Pry* – 'Six years, ago, James – a demolition consultant – **returned from the 1991 Gulf War**' – and to invite the reader to 'explore James's mind.'"

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 218): "After the filmic prologue, in which the reader sees a young man whose **journey from the USA to the war camp is presented in a series of quick shots**, he or she is informed at the beginning of Chapter 1 that six years have passed and sees a man lying on a bed and staring at the ceiling, the introduction in the "About" section having provided him or her with the clue to the man's identity."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "At the moment of actual demolition his thoughts take the form of a short film showing him chatting with **the female soldier** and then playing some game on his Gameboy, while **on the subconscious level we see satellite footage of some military camp being struck by a missile**. By providing the same soundtrack to all the streams of cognitive data, **Cannizzaro and Gorman reveal their being interrelated via the principle of association. The sounds of actual explosion become the sounds of virtual explosions in the game and then again the actual one in the case of the bombing of the camp**. Again, it is the reader's task to infer that Jessie from Chapter 1 and the woman in Chapter 2 are the same person and that **the scenes connected with the military must come from James's unconscious perhaps**, as there are no direct references to the past in the verbal track representing his conscious thoughts."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "As the reader moves his or her finger over it [the Braille text in chapter 3], he or she hears the voice of James reading the biblical story of Jacob and Esau and starts seeing some home video footage showing two young boys as well as some short clips of **Luke as a soldier** and a demolition engineer, familiar from the previous parts of *Pry*."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): "**Chapter 6 reveals that James, Luke and Jessie served together during the Gulf War**."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 3): "**A military transport plane takes off** and then many images flash by, giving you a glimpse of what's coming ahead in subsequent chapters."

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019, para. 2): "Expanding my fingers seemed to move forward in time to **the character's time spent in the war**."

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 3): "Six years ago, James returned from **the first Gulf War**."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 1): "This work is about a guy named James, **a former soldier of the Gulf War**, who works as a demolition consultant."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, caption under an image): "This is from the scene when his eyes are closed and he is having flashbacks of his time playing video games during **his down time while he served in the war**. Explosions are occurring in the game."

    – [NB: above: an image of a Gameboy in *Pry*].

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 3): "Some of the themes of this work were made even more obvious the more I explored it. Unrequited love, jealousy, coping with a medical condition, PTSD, friendship, guilt, anxiety, OCD, loss, **the struggle of re-acclimating to life post-war** to name a few."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 4): "This story about **a man who joins the military** and becomes friends with a woman named Jessie.It is apparent in the story that James begins to have feelings for Jessie (and borderline becomes obsessed with her), however, she and James' buddy Luke enter into a secret relationship **while they are all serving together**. James becomes jealous of Jessie and Luke's relationship and exposes it, which **causes Jessie to be re-assigned**. James brought an album from home with him and he puts pictures of Jessie alongside his mother's photos, thinking that she would be flattered. However, when he shows her the album, she is not amused. James and Jessie end up having an argument about him revealing her secret relationship and as a result, Jessie does not show up for a scheduled poker game the three friends had scheduled that night. **Their camp was bombarded that night, and Jessie died during the attack**."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 6): "One of the things that really stood out to me was **at the very end where you see George W. Bush on the television talking about war, and when you pinch James' eyes shut, it shows a flashback of George Bush Sr. also talking about war. I found it to be an interesting way to connect how life was for James pre and post-war**."

REDMAN, JOE (2019a, para. 1): "The story isn't super clear, but from what I understand it starts with **the protagonist leaving to join the military. The story jumps past all of that and his experience in the military is told through flashbacks. They are flashbacks because you see them in his head**. These flashbacks were so vivid that I was sometimes caught off guard in which of the three perspectives I was looking at."

REDMAN, JOE (2019b, para. 1): "**I think the author made a creative connection between having the presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush in the same chapter to illustrate that the world conflict represented in the story lasted several generations**. I think the general theme of the story is redemption. The protagonist is trying to save himself from his own PTSD of war, but also clear up and make light of his understanding with his friend."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019a, para. 1): "Pry is an engaging story about a man named James who is a demolition consultant that **comes back from the gulf war** and experiences vision failure throughout the story."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019a, para. 2): "The prologue is not interactive like the remainder of the story; it is simply a video **of a young man who goes off to what is apparently the beginning of his military career. We are also introduced with some brief imagery of some individuals from his military past that appear throughout the rest of the story**."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019b, para. 3): "**The Epilogue shows visuals of both George H.W. Bush, as well as George W. Bush on the television, describing what appears to be both the Gulf War and the Iraq War, respectively**. The reader can infer that James is watching the television at both moments in time, and there is a video of James going off in the truck that was seen in the Prologue; indicative of the fact that **there is a perspective from James from both before and after he goes to war**."

SHELBY (2015, headline): "Pry into the Mind of **a Soldier**."

SHELBY (2015, para. 1): "It is about a man named James who was in **the Gulf War stationed in I believe Dharan, and is now a veteran who works in demolition with his buddy Luke who was stationed with James in the war**."

SHELBY (2015, para. 5): "James suffers from PTSD and probably **some other disorders in result from the war** and maybe even from loosing his sight."

SHELBY (2015, para. 4): "The reader will find information on Jame's past as a child, **his time in the war** and his current state, the more the reader digs the more they will find."

SHORT, EMILY (2015, para. 1): "PRY is an iOS story that combines video segments and text **to explore the inner and outer worlds of a veteran who is still struggling to process his experiences in the war, who is suffering from vision impairment thanks to wounds sustained there**, and who is now trying to hold down a job in demolitions."

SHORT, EMILY (2015, para. 3): "The subconscious recollection of childhood, or of **an incident in war**, might underlie our uncomfortable reaction to what is happening on the job site."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 1): "PRY tells the story of **a Gulf War veteran** who took a job as a demolition consultant, which he got from **Luke who was his squad leader**."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 3): "**The story shows how war can have lasting effects on an individual**. There are moments like in Chapter 2 where as the Hartman Plant was being demolished, **if you go into his mind you see images of people being killed from the perspective of an AC-130 Gunship**; and how sound of those explosions can trigger those memories."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 4): "Chapter 7 explores this more so, with **conversations that are clearly happening outside of the war zone being portrayed as if they were happening in that setting**."

SMITH8, DES (2019, para. 1): "**I knew James was going to enlist in the military because of the things he put in his pack**. In addition, he took a piece of dog hair with him to keep as a memento."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 2): "**James spent some time in the military and was over seas in the middle east**."

STAPLES, LILY (2016, para. 1): "*Pry* is categorized as an interactive novella exploring the life and memories of James, and expert demolitioner and **returning soldier from the Gulf War**."

STILLER, MASON (2019, para. 1): "The chapter [6] tells the story of the protagonist having **a falling out with some of his fellow soldiers** and the regret he still feels for his actions."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019a, para. 2): "Through this path, the reader discovers that **the main character is a veteran, perhaps recently returned, who works in construction for a former soldier buddy**. Something happened that is causing the main character to lose his eyesight, and **the surrounding narration implies that it occurred during his deployment**."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019b, para. 2): "This section [chapter 6] spoke a lot about Jessie, and **her role in James' and Luke's life in the military**."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019b, para. 3): "Chapter 7 shows a progression of **what appears to be his life in the military, settling on a few moments**, particularly when he and Luke build a camp and are talking in the middle of a desert."

WOO, DAVID JACK (2015, para. 4): "The novella documents the story of a man named James, a man who works for a demolition company, and is also **a Gulf War veteran**."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 1): "From what I can see, **the protagonist is a soldier** named James who becomes jealous of his brother because of his relationship with a woman named Jessie."

**O. NAMING THE WAR**

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "Set six years after his return from **the Gulf War**, *Pry* is narrated by the main character James as he struggles to adjust to life after service."

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "Closing his eyes, the reader can see that the explosions trigger in James a significant memory from **the Gulf War**."

CAYLEY, JOHN (2015, para. 1): "In the case of Samantha Gorman and Danny Cannizzaro's gorgeous audiovisual, multipart book—acquired as an app and loaded onto an iPad or iPhone—*Pry* is also the title of a specific story, the narrative of a young demolition consultant, James, whose life has been shattered and reconfigured by **the 1991 Gulf War**."

CRELLI, ROSE (2015, para. 3): "The storyline transitions back and forth from the perspective of the main character, James, a veteran from **the Gulf War** six years later, and the perspective of the reader."

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019a, para. 1): "This work follows the story of James a demolition consultant after he returns from **1991 Gulf War**."

FARINSKY, KATYA (2019, para. 1): "Pry is an incredibly engaging work about a young man returning stateside after serving in **the Gulf War**."

FUTURE OF STORYTELLING (2016, para. 2): "The story follows James, a demolition expert and veteran of **the Gulf War**."

JESSICA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "The text is detailed and layered, following the journey of James, a demolition expert who has recurring memories of his time in **the First Gulf War**."

KARAMJOT (2016, para. 1): "Tender Claw's Pry (Part 1) is a touchscreen fiction narrative iOS app that explores the mind of James, a demolitions expert and **Gulf War** veteran, who 6 years later suffers from PTSD involving flashbacks and nightmares."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 2): "Six years before *Pry* takes place James retires for being a demolition expert and returns home from **the Gulf War**."

KEISHA (2015, para. 2): "He returned from **the Gulf War** six years prior to becoming a demolition consultant where he works with his friend, Luke."

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "The story centers around a character named James whom 6 years' prior returned from **the first Gulf War**."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "Pry follows the story of James, a construction worker who fought in **the first Gulf War** six years prior."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "The novel plays heavily on emotions of not only the reader but the character as well, heart-breaking flashbacks of a lost lover and friend, as well as the lack of sight continuously causing trauma for James and reminding him of **the Gulf War**."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 2): "Pry is an interactive novella about a guy named James who was in **the Gulf War** with his friends, Luke and Jesse."

LYDIA (2015, para. 1): "The story's main character is a young man named James who served in **the Golf War** only six years earlier."

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015, para. 2): "PRY is about a **Gulf War** vet, James."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150): "Described by its authors as an "App novella that re-imagines the form of the book," *Pry* tells the story of James, a young man returned from **the Gulf War** suffering from post-traumatic disorder in his current life (loss of vision, bad job performance, and strained relationships with his brother Luke and their best friend Jessie)."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 154–155): "This affirmation comes as a possible way of saying to readers that we all are responsible for our choices, especially if we are to take into account the content of the Epilogue, in which the two main gestures of spreading open and

pinching closed will unleash two TV speeches that completely changed the world: one being the announcement of **war against Iraq**, in 1990, by George Bush; the other being the announcement of the **invasion of Iraq**, in 2003, by George W. Bush. But again, even here, one is always contaminating the other, so that, even if the reader opts for one of these two speeches, the other one will always be present as a background sound. A touch of the hand that leaves the reader with a final question: Free will or Determinism?"

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 217): "They [Gorman & Cannizzaro] also use this section to introduce the protagonist of *Pry* – 'Six years, ago, James – a demolition consultant – returned from **the 1991 Gulf War**' – and to invite the reader to 'explore James's mind.'"

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): "Chapter 6 reveals that James, Luke and Jessie served together during **the Gulf War**."

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 3): "Six years ago, James returned from **the first Gulf War**."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 1): "This work is about a guy named James, a former soldier of **the Gulf War**, who works as a demolition consultant."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019a, para. 1): "Pry is an engaging story about a man named James who is a demolition consultant that comes back from **the gulf war** and experiences vision failure throughout the story."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019b, para. 3): "The Epilogue shows visuals of both George H.W. Bush, as well as George W. Bush on the television, describing what appears to be both **the Gulf War and the Iraq War**, respectively. The reader can infer that James is watching the television at both moments in time, and there is a video of James going off in the truck that was seen in the Prologue; indicative of the fact that there is a perspective from James from both before and after he goes to war."

SHELBY (2015, para. 1): "It is about a man named James who was in **the Gulf War** stationed in I believe Dharan, and is now a veteran who works in demolition with his buddy Luke who was stationed with James in the war."

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SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 1): "PRY tells the story of a **Gulf War** veteran who took a job as a demolition consultant, which he got from Luke who was his squad leader."

STAPLES, LILY (2016, para. 1): "*Pry* is categorized as an interactive novella exploring the life and memories of James, and expert demolitioner and returning soldier from **the Gulf War**."

WOO, DAVID JACK (2015, para. 4): "The novella documents the story of a man named James, a man who works for a demolition company, and is also a **Gulf War** veteran."

**P. MENTIONS OF JAMES'S VISION IMPAIRMENT**

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "With **his eyesight slowly failing**, and his mind plagued by harrowing memories, the story is largely presented from James' own perspective through a unique amalgamation of text, video and audio."

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 2): "**I liked how Pry shows this paranoia by blurring the main characters normal vision**, thus encouraging the user to see his subconscious, which ends up being riddled with possible murder weapons and different deaths."

BINA, MEGAN (2019b, para. 4): "My interpretation of Pry is that it is about a man who enlisted in the military at a young age, although **his eyesight was destined to deteriorate rapidly throughout the years**."

BINA, MEGAN (2019b, para. 5): "Pry takes a non-linear look at how someone might deal with emotions and try to understand themself while dealing with several nearly debilitating issues (anxiety, PTSD, **loss of eyesight**, etc.)"

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 2): "After purchasing the novella and that first chapter is clicked, the reader is pulled into the life of James, **a young man going blind** and trying to cope with his past."

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 2): "Another is read like braille, the reader traces their finger over the dots and the words are read aloud trough the speakers. **The style and format of the chapter focuses on James losing his vision**."

CAYLEY, JOHN (2015, para. 1): "**James is losing his sight. We must pry open his failing eyes**, or some other conduit for visual experience and memory, so as to help complete his story for us."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 257): "In the context of a chapter which revolves around the **onset of James's blindness**, it follows that **the shattered spectacles symbolise the loss of sight**; the playing cards the loss of a faceoff between himself and his best friend Luke; and the ultimate loss of Jessie for one or both of them."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 261): "James admits to being untruthful to Luke about **his impending blindness** and unreliability on the job: 'I lie to him. A need to know basis and he doesn't need to know….I lie to him. He suspects, but still hires me. **Quietly, I conduct inspections as the world erases**' (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6)."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 261): "Even **the diagnosis of his glaucoma** betrays mental instability: 'Patient exhibits intermittent symptoms of optic hypertension indicative of abnormal aqueous humor. Optic neuropathy may trigger visions. Inconstant episodes suggest *psychosomatic* origin' (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6; emphasis added).

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 261): "When **James eventually loses his sight, the reader-user is likewise blindsided**. Faced with onscreen braille and in the absence of a didactic, the reader-user is left groping for a sign (Gorman and Cannizzaro, chapter 3)."

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019a, para. 1): "With **his vision failing** you look into his mind and try to understand what is going on as his past collides with his present. With every action you can dive deeper into James's thoughts or **try and ignore the idea that you are losing sight**."

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019b, para. 1): "As well as adding **the confusion of losing your sight**."

DULAY, RASAN (2017, para. 1): "Sliding across the screen allows you to view stories within a story. **This represents what the character must go through because of his disability**. It allows for the reader to understand the difficulty of someone with that disability, which will make it frustrating for them to follow along. Though it makes sense why this feature is implemented into the app, it can be hurtful to individuals who have that disability and are viewing the story. In some ways, it may seem as if the story is mocking them."

> – [NB: Although the writer does not state it explicitly, the chapter they seem to refer to as far as I can tell is chapter 3, in which the reader encounters braille text. In other words, vision impairment is implied here.]

FUTURE OF STORYTELLING (2016, para. 2): "Within the story, the role-player sees through James's eyes. **His failing vision** calls for your finger to pry open his eyes and delve into his perspective."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 4): "He appears to be suffering from PTSD due to his time in the military, as is indicated both by flashbacks to when he was in uniform, as well as his difficult focusing. **There will be times when his vision will blur** and his ears will ring, or when he sees the face of a girl even when his eyes are closed. If the reader pinches the screen together, words or images will flash by, expressing the hurriedness and chaos of his inner thoughts, perhaps."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 3): "His conversation with Luke, the shooting of the airsoft rifle at the statue and braille bible, **his vision almost gone**, and their fight."

HOBSON, MALLORY (2019, para. 2): "The braille motif was very interesting as well. I liked the mechanics behind it, running your finger over the images of the dots to see what it means to James, as well as the symbolic nature of the motif. I took it as foreshadowing concerning his vision: as James' mental health deteriorates, he is unable to 'see' what is actually happening in his life and what is his own intrusive thoughts and flashbacks…and **so he's becoming literally unable to see as well, relying on braille and memories to find his way through the world**."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 1): "The second half of *Pry* continues the themes of the first half with **James struggling with poor eyesight**, PTSD, and his internal struggle with the mysterious character Jessie."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 3): "The second half of the story also goes into further detail about **James' deteriorating eyesight, which was likely caused by the attack. He's afraid to tell Luke that his eyesight is poor**, causing even more internal conflict."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 5): "*Pry* is a commentary on a multitude of things: war, PTSD, love and jealousy, **coming to terms with blindness**, and more. It feels overwhelming, which is the point. James is overwhelmed by everything that is crashing down around his life."

JESSICA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "**James' gradual degeneration into blindness is visually expressed through various effects. These include blurred images, blackness swallowing up the screen, and most notably the use of brail**. Symbols appear on the screen in the form of brail marks, and when we drag our finger over them horizontally, James' voice translates the text aloud. This is not only a way to communicate the protagonist's situation, but also a feature that forces us to participate in the text, and physically move the narrative forward. **The awareness of developing blindness is, therefor, ever present in our minds, and we are not only informed of it, but are giving the chance to experience it**."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 2): "Once he returns home **he realizes his vision is starting to fail him** and it is here that the story begins. The reader embarks on the journey with James as **he learns to deal with his failing sight**."

KEISHA (2015, para. 2): "Unfortunately, James suffers from post traumatic stress disorder and **is slowly losing his eyesight**."

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 1): "I believe it is hinting at not only is the main character suffering from PTSD (which also tells us he was a soldier at one point which is supported by flashbacks and the prologue) but also that **he is starting to go blind. We see this when Josh, in the second chapter, to gets blurry and closing his eyes simply doesn't cut it anymore**."

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 3): "**This tells me that by the next chapter he might actually go blind** and may even go crazy. In the second chapter, he spoke about how he depends on his job and Josh. **With his sight gone it may be impossible for him to keep going**. We will most likely see more of his memories and illusions of his memories as well while the real world might only be represented with sound and inner monologue."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "**James is slowly going blind** and so the story of pry is narrated in an unreliable and sometimes confusing way."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "Some of the chapters require pinching, some dragging, with one in braille, **reflecting James' current situation of slowly going blind** but still needing to work and live his life."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "The novel plays heavily on emotions of not only the reader but the character as well, heart-breaking flashbacks of a lost lover and friend, as well as **the lack of sight continuously causing trauma for James and reminding him of the Gulf War**."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "Whether you prefer a basic paperback novel or do in fact enjoy the idea of reading on a digital face, Pry will allow you to experience and cultivate a story within a story and feel the same frustrations and confusions that James does as he recovers from the trauma's he has experienced from the war and as **he tries to deal with his eyesight slipping away from him**."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 3): "James is suffering from what seems to be PTSD and **is losing his eyesight**,his doctor claims it's psychosomatic, but he believes it's real and is affecting his ability to decipher what is real and what isn't."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150): "Described by its authors as an "App novella that re-imagines the form of the book," *Pry* tells the story of James, a young man returned from the Gulf War suffering from post-traumatic disorder in his current life (**loss of vision**, bad job performance, and strained relationships with his brother Luke and their best friend Jessie)."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151–152): "Examples of this are the fact that only further ahead does the reader come to know the real reason for **James' progressive lack of vision** − "Patient exhibits intermittent symptoms of optic hypertension indicative of abnormal aqueous humor. Optic neuropathy may trigger visions. Inconstant episodes suggest psychosomatic origin." (Chapter 6) −; as well as the revelation of a brotherly link between James and Luke, a fact which begins to be unveiled in episodes like the one of Esau and Jacob (Chapter 3), in which the reader is faced with an excerpt of the biblical tale of these two brothers, twin sons of Isaac and Rebecca."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 153): "Like James' memory and perception (along with his **deteriorating vision**, James also experiences neurotic episodes and difficulty in moving), fragments of the story have to be solved by the reader in order to complete the puzzle (or to use another common trope, in order to reach the end of the labyrinth)" (p. 153).

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 154): "As James moves across the bridge, **he starts experiencing some problems with his vision**."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 2): "I love the effect that has, not only does it contribute to the story and **the characters vision loss**, but it helps you relate and further pulls you into the story making you feel like you are the character in the story."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 3): "Some of the things he's struggling from are his PTSD, and like mentioned before, **vision loss**."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019b, para. 1): "Chapter 5 starts with James taking another job that leads him to a bridge where **he eventually falls off into the water after his vision fails him**, he then appears in a desert where the text just keeps saying "Go back" with various other phrases."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "What comes to the foreground in this section is James's limited grasp of reality: **not only does he have problems seeing the world around him, as indicated by the occasional blurring of his vision**; he has recurrent visions of the female soldier and Luke in military uniform, visions the reader cannot easily dispel by making James open his eyes."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): "**It was also the attack that led to his visual impairment**: 'Sweatpants medic jotted something down. His hands were brillo when he turned my head to meet my eye. He examined my eye. He told me to focus. The room was softer than I first thought. No harsh hospital lights. The room was night.'"

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 3): "Explore James' mind as **his vision fails** and his past collides with his present."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 1): "**James is going blind** and also likely suffers from PTSD."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 4): "**James' eyesight begins to worsen and it affects his performance on the job**. This creates conflict and tension between the friends."

REDMAN, JOE (2019b, para. 1): "Something that happened earlier but occurred again during chapter 5 was **the protagonist's eyesight briefly going numb. During this the moment, the user can't see what is going on either**, so they have no choice but to look at one of the other two perspectives **until he puts in eye drops**."

REDMAN, JOE (2019b, para. 1): "**Him going blind gives him more anxiety**."

SARAH'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "**Touch is also presented as sight in a revelatory sense here, as a blind reader can see and understand with touch, and the reader is now placed in this position**–not only opening and closing eyes, but using the tactile sense to uncover a narrative in a new way."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019a, para. 1): "Pry is an engaging story about a man named James who is a demolition consultant that comes back from the gulf war and experiences **vision failure** throughout the story."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019b, para. 1): "In chapter 5, there is more information regarding James' eyesight, when Luke gives him another job after initially firing him because of the **issues revolving around his eyesight**."

SHELBY (2015, para. 1): "James is the narrator of Pry; he is suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and **is loosing his sight**."

SHELBY (2015, para. 5): "James suffers from PTSD and probably some other disorders in result from the war and maybe even from **loosing his sight**."

SHORT, EMILY (2015, para. 1): "PRY is an iOS story that combines video segments and text to explore the inner and outer worlds of a veteran who is still struggling to process his

experiences in the war, **who is suffering from vision impairment thanks to wounds sustained there**, and who is now trying to hold down a job in demolitions."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 1): "It becomes apparent that **James has vision problems as exhibited by what I assume is intended to be eye floaters**."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019b, para. 2): "Either you keep James' eyes open **to the point where his vision blurs** and he falls off the railway track, or you open and close periodically and make it all the way to the end, only to transition into his thoughts."

SMITH8, DES (2019, para. 1): "**It's hinted that James is losing his sight**. This is interesting because **we do not know what cause the ailment**."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 2): "The main character is James, **who as the reader learns is having problems with his sight and is going blind**."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019b, para. 1): "Chapter 5, in which it is confirmed that **the protagonist is losing his sight, includes a part where the protagonist uses eyedrops**. It's funny to think about how this might have been filmed, but to a traverser this element increases the immersion and is **a very concrete real life example of going blind**."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019a, para. 2): "Something happened that is causing the main character to **lose his eyesight**, and the surrounding narration implies that it occurred during his deployment."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019b, para. 1): "While he does this job, James narrates about how he and Luke grew up together, and Luke's realization of **James' failing eyesight**."

WOO, DAVID JACK (2015, para. 4): "Throughout the story he seems to be suffering from PTSD while **at the same time going blind**."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 2): "**I would argue that one of the stronger themes in this piece is blindness. As we fight to keep James' eyes open, we are constantly reminded of his failing sight. Like him, we are sometimes forced to withdraw from the**

**present world and reside in the realm of memories and his subconscious**. His innermost thoughts are communicated with us in text, sometimes in full paragraphs or in fast-paced fragments flashing across the screen. Through these, **we can theorize the causes for his failing sight (a fire, a disorder inherited from his mother, and Jessie's violent outburst are only a few of these.)** By constantly going back and forth from what James' sees in the real world versus what he sees in his mind, **blindness becomes one of the more prominent themes in the story (though it is certainly not the only one.)**"

**R. MENTIONS OF JESSIE**

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 2): "Another section that I found intriguing was Chapter 4, where the main character is paranoid that his friend is going to try to kill him. I liked how Pry shows this paranoia by blurring the main characters normal vision, thus encouraging the user to see his subconscious, which ends up being riddled with possible murder weapons and different deaths. I feel like this connected well with the introductory portion of the app, where **the main characters girlfriend attempts to kill him in a jump-scare as well**."

BINA, MEGAN (2019b, para. 4): "He developed many relationships with several people, **one of which was a girl named Jessie. She died in an accident of some sort, and the main character continues to blame himself for her death**."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 257): "Entering James's subconscious by pinching the fingers closed at the start of Chapter Two reveals **a montage of Jessie, James's love interest, recumbent and looking seductively up at him**; a hand of playing cards; and a pair of spectacles falling to the ground with the right lens already shattered (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 2)."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 257): "In the context of a chapter which revolves around the onset of James's blindness, it follows that the shattered spectacles symbolise the loss of sight; the playing cards the loss of a faceoff between himself and his best friend Luke; and **the ultimate loss of Jessie for one or both of them**."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 258): "Through one of these tears, **the reader-user sees an already familiar clip of Jessie sitting astride James in bed and suddenly lunging to stab James in the eye with an army issue knife**. When more text appears several sequences later, **the cause of James's blindness is amended to Jessie taking the plug from a sink and, in a fit of rage, plunging it into his eye**. The final modification comes with the account of the bombing that devastates the camp and **wrecks the tent James is in with Luke and Jessie**: 'A wet, red pain in my eye. A spade, slicing like a knife' (chapter 6)."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 260–261): "Take, for instance, the first and second iterations of what appears to be **an account of James and Jessie making love**:

[W]e fall through the door and s**he's suddenly near her hand smells like lilac as she rips into me shelves fall cleaning supplies shatter blue slides around her body stains my fingers on her pulse I'm counting, calculating**

**Jessie's already gone when we fall through the door she is supposed to be close her hair smells sweet as she hits shelves fall cleaning supplies break at an odd angle blue slides around her body stains my nails near her pulse** (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6). Although the sensory information remains the same (the floral smell, the bright blue of cleaning fluid, the feel of a pulse), the detail shifts to suggest that this encounter is being falsified ('already gone', 'supposed to be'). **Exacerbating this suspicion is the video which surges from James's subconscious and which indeed depicts Jessie sweeping supplies off shelves in a store cupboard, except in a fit of rage not passion**."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 261): "This is in turn due to the text's admission to fabricating more than one detail, including **that of James's sexual encounter with Jessie**: 'Most details imagined. A product of what did, and what I wished happened / did not happen' (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6)."

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019b, para. 1): "But jumping to the end SPOILER ALERT: it was nice to have a little explanation of what happened whether it was the relationship between **Jesse and Luke or if it was the attack on the base leading to the death off Jesse**. These details help the player understand James's mental state."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 3): "There seem to be these sort of 'false memories' incorporated where **he imagines his own murder by both a female character by the name of Jessie**, as well as the protagonist's brother."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 2): "**He says one thing where he saw Jessie before they went to play poker, but the story also seems to imply that James and Jessie got into a fight in the janitorial closet at which point he may have accidentally killed her**?"

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 5): "Everything is relatively unclear and it is incredibly difficult to know for sure which is the truth between the images that are shown and the text that appears. **All that is truly clear in the end is that Jessie died and James, one way or**

the other, blames himself for her death. Whether it truly was his fault, or he killed her, or it was simply an accident, he blames himself for what happened to her**."

HOBSON, MALLORY (2019, para. 1): "From the beginning, I liked how it seemed to be divided into clear sections of narrative–reality, lucid thoughts, and intrusive thoughts–but that quickly became blurred with **the imagined Jessie appearing and looming over his bed**, and continued bleeding into each other as the story progressed…until even you, the reader, is uncertain as to what exactly is James' memories or imagination and what is actually happening (or has happened)."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 1): "The second half of *Pry* continues the themes of the first half with James struggling with poor eyesight, PTSD, and **his internal struggle with the mysterious character Jessie. As the second half goes on, however, Jessie becomes less of a mystery and more of a tragedy. By navigating through the three stages, the struggle that James faces both with Luke and Jessie is explained, with James' eyes open by talking to Luke, his eyes closed by thinking of Jessie, and in his subconscious with the guilt he feels about Jessie's death**."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 2): "Chapter 6 marks the point in *Pry* where everything begins to come together. The expanding wall of text allows the reader to pry through the sentences to reveal that **Luke and Jessie developed a relationship, which James reported after his love for Jessie grew into jealousy. Jessie found out and lashed out at James. Still upset, Jessie sat out of the poker game happening later. As a result, Jessie was outside during the game, when their base was attacked. Jessie died in the attack, and James blames himself for her death**."

KARAMJOT (2016, para. 1): "The thoughts are realistic as they materialize at random and cause a chain reaction with one thought leading to another; such as, James' thoughts home, his family, and Montana eventually **leading to thoughts about a woman from his past named Jessie**."

KEISHA (2015, para. 2): "**Jesse is also another character in Pry who was stationed with the two males during the war**."

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 3): "**Jessie killing him**, the coffee stain messing around on the ceiling. Those are all hallucinations that never actually happen. The memories are the GameBoy, **hanging with Jessie**, and possibly even the night vision video of a missile launch."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "The novel plays heavily on emotions of not only the reader but the character as well, **heart-breaking flashbacks of a lost lover** and friend, as well as the lack of sight continuously causing trauma for James and reminding him of the Gulf War."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 2): "Pry is an interactive novella about a guy named James who was in the Gulf War **with his friends, Luke and Jesse**."

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015, para. 2): "**PRY explores James' past with his friends Jessie** and Luke while also giving glimpse of James' childhood and family."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150): "Described by its authors as an "App novella that re-imagines the form of the book," *Pry* tells the story of James, a young man returned from the Gulf War suffering from post-traumatic disorder in his current life (loss of vision, bad job performance, and **strained relationships with his brother Luke and their best friend Jessie**)."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150): "**Examples of this are the several insinuations that James might be tremendously in love with Jessie, his best friend but also Luke's girlfriend**, or James' constant feeling of being surpassed by Luke in the management of their father's demolition company, two distinct situations, which in turn, make James' feelings towards Luke a constant blur and chaos, to the point where he does not even recognize him as a brother."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151): "Moreover, this two plus one structure is also emulated by the relationship dynamics between characters, since **Jessie can also be seen as a thread between James and Luke, and a crucial one at that, given that the story involves a mystery around her presence/absence**."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151): "Keys to the whole picture of the story involving James, **Luke and Jessie come in fragments enclosed within chapters**, which can only be accessed through a full reading of both conscious and unconscious layers (not to mention bits of significant information which only became accessible with the second instalment of chapters in 2016)."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 154–155): "In addition, chapter 7 is also where James decides to open himself up a little bit more to the reader, revealing facts which were only suppositions up until that moment: "**Alright,/let's speak of her./We were playing poker across the street/when the scud hit./ I saw her before the game./Said she didn't feel like playing./She seemed pissed. /(...)/ We started the game without her./Twenty minutes in, hit the barracks and/we ran outside/and just watched/until we heard the names./Hers was one of the last**.", a series of confidences which end with the sound of James' voice saying, "**she wasn't at the game because of me**." (**In a previous animation the reader is informed of Jessie confronting James because of a decision he made against her will**). And eventually, a moment of self-redemption: "**Jessie was her own person James**,/we all make our own choices." This affirmation comes as a possible way of saying to readers that we all are responsible for our choices, especially if we are to take into account the content of the Epilogue, in which the two main gestures of spreading open and pinching closed will unleash two TV speeches that completely changed the world: one being the announcement of war against Iraq, in 1990, by George Bush; the other being the announcement of the invasion of Iraq, in 2003, by George W. Bush. But again, even here, one is always contaminating the other, so that, even if the reader opts for one of these two speeches, the other one will always be present as a background sound. A touch of the hand that leaves the reader with a final question: Free will or Determinism?"

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 3): "I also really want to know **who the girl in the beginning was that (I think?) killed him**."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019b, para. 3): "Chapter 7 also starts to reveal more of **the story between James and Jessie**. **It's apparent that James blames himself for Jessie's death, even though she died because of an attack in a building. James says that it was his fault, and that she called to him but he ran away, leaving her to die**. However the text, and presumably Luke, say that he wasn't there at all, and he was in a different building across the

street playing poker. **It's revealed through more videos that James and Jessie got into a fight, which caused her not to go to the poker game and end up in the building that was attacked, causing her death. James says that she wasn't at the game because of him, and if she was there she would have lived, making her death his fault**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "**Unexpectedly, a woman, who is identified in the verbal track as Jessie, enters the room, climbs onto James and then suddenly stabs him in the eye**, all these actions being presented through the filmic subjective camera, making the reader see them 'through' James's eyes."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "What comes to the foreground in this section is James's limited grasp of reality: not only does he have problems seeing the world around him, as indicated by the occasional blurring of his vision; **he has recurrent visions of the female soldier** and Luke in military uniform, visions the reader cannot easily dispel by making James open his eyes. At the moment of actual demolition his thoughts take the form of **a short film showing him chatting with the female soldier** and then playing some game on his Gameboy, while on the subconscious level we see satellite footage of some military camp being struck by a missile."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "Again, it is the reader's task to infer that **Jessie from Chapter 1 and the woman in Chapter 2 are the same person** and that the scenes connected with the military must come from James's unconscious perhaps, as there are no direct references to the past in the verbal track representing his conscious thoughts."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): "Chapter 6 reveals that **James, Luke and Jessie served together during the Gulf War. Both men, who had been friends for some time, were attracted to the woman and the three of them spent a lot of time together. Jessie chose Luke, though she also flirted with James**. Jealous and frustrated, he reported their relationship to their superior, as it was against army regulations. **Jessie was to be transferred to another unit, but before this happened their base was hit by a missile. Luke saved James's life but they apparently did not manage to save Jessie. At some point James seems to admit that he was responsible for her death, as he took her mask and they were attacked with some gas**: 'Survive, the urge a filter between you and death. Except when **it's her mask. She would've reached it first. You would not have begrudged**

**her this**. Except someone's arm moves in place of my arm. It reaches out into the unusually silent calm.'"

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): "James thus appears to be suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and **a sense of guilt connected with Jessie's death**, the originality of *Pry* lying more in its multimodal representation of his condition than in the subject matter itself."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 4): "The fourth chapter is a large block of text. As you zoom out to read it, the text folds into new paragraphs and information, building the story that is **James and his two teammates** stationed in the Middle East."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 4): "This story about a man who joins the military and **becomes friends with a woman named Jessie.**It is apparent in the story that **James begins to have feelings for Jessie (and borderline becomes obsessed with her), however, she and James' buddy Luke enter into a secret relationship while they are all serving together. James becomes jealous of Jessie and Luke's relationship and exposes it, which causes Jessie to be re-assigned. James brought an album from home with him and he puts pictures of Jessie alongside his mother's photos, thinking that she would be flattered. However, when he shows her the album, she is not amused. James and Jessie end up having an argument about him revealing her secret relationship and as a result, Jessie does not show up for a scheduled poker game the three friends had scheduled that night. Their camp was bombarded that night, and Jessie died during the attack. James blames himself for Jessie not being at the poker game, and ultimately blames himself for her death**. 6 years after serving, James and Luke return home and Luke hires James to work for him as a demolition consultant. James' eyesight begins to worsen and it affects his performance on the job. This creates conflict and tension between the friends.

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 5): "While reading this story, **there is a moment where you can clearly understand how James is processing Jessie's death. He reminds himself that she was her own person, who made her own choices**."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019a, para. 3): "In chapter 1, we noticed that as James is attempting to wake up, he is experiencing **a hallucination/sleep paralysis of a woman from his past who is appearing to be trying to harm him**."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019b, para. 2): "However, by prying the screen between two lines of text, different visuals appear that **show James' relationships with different people, most notably with Jessie**. In this chapter [chapter 6], **we begin to pick up on the close relationship James and Jessie had at one point**."

SHELBY (2015, para. 1): "**Another character seen is Jesse; she was also stationed with them in the war. James and Jesse were friends while Luke and Jesse were lovers**."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 1): "When you peer into his mind, **you see flashes of Luke and Jessie, and then when you open his eyes you see a hallucination of Jessie stab him**."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 2): "The quick succession of shots in the first chapter tells so much information, especially when you go through the story for a second time; **showing how much affection he had for her and how all of it was blown away in an instant. He feels as though it was his fault for what happened as he reported to his superior officer what was going on between Luke and Jessie**."

SMITH8, DES (2019, para. 1): "**Luke and Jessie are important characters in this interactive fiction. It's unfortunate that we see so little of Jessie in the first for chapters; I really want to know more about her. It's interesting that we see a vision of her stabbing James**. I did not see that part coming. **I am also trying to figure out if Luke and Jessie tried to murder James, or if these visions related to James's PTSD**."

STANDISH, SYDNEY (2019, para. 1): "The scenes I found the most interesting, were the stabbing scenes. There were two scenes like this in chapters 1-4. **One scene contains what I believe to be the main character's love interest**, and the other what I believe to be his brother. I found it incredibly interesting how these scenes were used almost as a climax, and a breaking point that led into the next chapter. I'm not sure what the symbolism and meaning behind these scenes are, but I think that the violence and rushing of images, is a wonderfully striking end to these chapters."

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STILLER, MASON (2019, para. 1): "The chapter tells the story of **the protagonist having a falling out with some of his fellow soldiers and the regret he still feels for his actions**."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019b, para. 2): "This section [chapter 6] **spoke a lot about Jessie, and her role in James' and Luke's life in the military. James had a crush on her but she gravitated towards Luke, which James seemed to accept**."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019b, para. 3): "Chapter 7 shows a progression of what appears to be his life in the military, settling on a few moments, particularly when he and Luke build a camp and are talking in the middle of a desert. **Jessie also has a part here where you discover how her friendship with Jessie grew. But a wrench is thrown in when James reports her relationship with Luke, and Jessie is VERY upset. They have an altercation in a supply closet which is followed by an image of her still, on the ground, and it made me think at first that he killed her, but then they're all playing poker and he says she was alive, so that part was a little confusing to me**."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 1): "From what I can see, the protagonist is a soldier named **James who becomes jealous of his brother because of his relationship with a woman named Jessie**."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 4): "One of the sections I found intriguing yet puzzling was when **Jessie begins accusing James and tears apart his photo album. Though James said she didn't find it very flattering to have her picture next to his mother's, I get the impression that the wound goes much deeper than that. During this scene, she blames him for being deported, possibly because James told on her relationship with his brother** (the story makes a point that relationships in the military were not allowed). The fact that this scene was shown numerous times throughout the second half of the story also implies its importance, and I am curious to hear other people's takes on this particular scene."

**S. MENTIONS OF LUKE**

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 2): "Another section that I found intriguing was Chapter 4, where **the main character is paranoid that his friend is going to try to kill him**. I liked how Pry shows this paranoia by blurring the main characters normal vision, thus encouraging the user to see his subconscious, which ends up being riddled with possible murder weapons and different deaths."

BINA, MEGAN (2019b, para. 4): "He works with **his friend named Luke, who he does not trust because of the way he encourages reckless behavior if the main character and others**."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 257): "In the context of a chapter which revolves around the onset of James's blindness, it follows that the shattered spectacles symbolise the loss of sight; **the playing cards the loss of a faceoff between himself and his best friend Luke; and the ultimate loss of Jessie for one or both of them**.

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 258): "The final modification comes with the account of the bombing that devastates the camp and wrecks **the tent James is in with Luke and Jessie**: 'A wet, red pain in my eye. A spade, slicing like a knife' (chapter 6)."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 261): "**James admits to being untruthful to Luke about his impending blindness and unreliability on the job: 'I lie to him. A need to know basis and he doesn't need to know….I lie to him. He suspects, but still hires me**. Quietly, I conduct inspections as the world erases' (Gorman and Cannizzaro 2014: chapter 6)."

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019b, para. 1): "But jumping to the end SPOILER ALERT: it was nice to have a little explanation of what happened whether it was **the relationship between Jesse and Luke** or if it was the attack on the base leading to the death off Jesse. These details help the player understand James's mental state."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 3): "There seem to be these sort of 'false memories' incorporated where he imagines **his own murder by both a female character by the name of Jessie, as well as the protagonist's brother**."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 5): "He also takes some time to **delve into his past which is when we learn of his brother**."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 1): "It is still difficult to discern which memories are true and which memories are in James' head. **He imagined Luke being there when he really was not**."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 3): "In chapter 5, he explains the process of how he ended up on the bridge. **His conversation with Luke**, the shooting of the airsoft rifle at the statue and braille bible, his vision almost gone, and their fight."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 4): "Then in chapter 7, there is almost a seemingly unending loop and wormhole of video clips, **until the reader reaches an 'inner' clip where James and Luke are building a fire together and talking. At this point, it will shift perspectives by featuring either Luke, James, or the two of them together when the screen is pinched or expanded**, before continuing further on."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 1): "**The protagonist visiting his friend at a construction site**, for example, triggers memories of explosions while serving in the military."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 1): "By navigating through the three stages, **the struggle that James faces both with Luke and Jessie is explained, with James' eyes open by talking to Luke**, his eyes closed by thinking of Jessie, and in his subconscious with the guilt he feels about Jessie's death."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 2): "Chapter 6 marks the point in *Pry* where everything begins to come together. The expanding wall of text allows the reader to pry through the sentences to reveal that **Luke and Jessie developed a relationship**, which James reported after his love for Jessie grew into jealousy."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 4): "James' depiction of PTSD becomes much more personal, however, with the addition of the guilt he feels towards Jessie and **betraying his brother**, which was hinted at in Chapter 3 with James reading about Jacob and Esau."

KEISHA (2015, para. 2): "He [James] returned from the Gulf War six years prior to becoming a demolition consultant where **he works with his friend, Luke**."

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 1): "We see this when **Josh, in the second chapter, to gets blurry and closing his eyes simply doesn't cut it anymore**."

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 2): "**Here is an image of Josh, our protagonist's friend**, when his blindness was at it's worst."
> – [NB: above: a blurry picture of Luke].

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 3): "In the second chapter, he spoke about how he depends on his job and **Josh**."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "The novel plays heavily on emotions of not only the reader but the character as well, heart-breaking flashbacks of a lost lover and **friend**, as well as the lack of sight continuously causing trauma for James and reminding him of the Gulf War."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 2): "Pry is an interactive novella about a guy named James who was in the Gulf War with **his friends, Luke and Jesse**."

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015, para. 2): "PRY explores James' past with **his friends Jessie and Luke** while also giving glimpse of James' childhood and family."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150): "Described by its authors as an "App novella that re-imagines the form of the book," *Pry* tells the story of James, a young man returned from the Gulf War suffering from post-traumatic disorder in his current life (loss of vision, bad job performance, and **strained relationships with his brother Luke** and their best friend Jessie)."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150–151): "Like the tale of Esau and Jacob in the *Book of Genesis*, in which Jacob deceives his older twin brother Esau in order to attain the latter's birthright (in passage 25:6 of *Book of Genesis* we are told that Jacob tries to pull Esau back

into the womb, by grasping his brother's heel, in order to be the firstborn, a gesture of the hand that can be read as a premonitory symbol of Jacob's deceptive behaviour), **James constantly sees himself as having a secondary role in his relationship with Luke. Examples of this are the several insinuations that James might be tremendously in love with Jessie, his best friend but also Luke's girlfriend, or James' constant feeling of being surpassed by Luke in the management of their father's demolition company, two distinct situations, which in turn, make James' feelings towards Luke a constant blur and chaos, to the point where he does not even recognize him as a brother. Designed as a thread that guides the whole story, this tension between brothers is emulated in *Pry*'s use of function and form, in order to illustrate other possible dualisms**, like the ones between conscious and unconscious, body and mind, "external vs. internal world," seemingly opposing scenarios – in which the desert gives way to water and vice-versa, or a comfortable room with a view gives way to a window with prison bars–, perceptive and cognitive processes, vision and touch, and, last but not least, text and gesture."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151): "Moreover, this two plus one structure is also emulated by the relationship dynamics between characters, since **Jessie can also be seen as a thread between James and Luke**, and a crucial one at that, given that the story involves a mystery around her presence/absence. The dualistic nature of this piece seems to be analogously based on Brunian/Cusian theories on the *coincidence of contraries*, with one perspective constantly contradicting the other, for example, the relationship between brothers, namely **James' contradictory feelings towards Luke**, or even word associations produced by his mind (which are able to be read when accessing his subconscious), such as 'pity/money,' 'leering/laughing,' 'anchor/release,' 'conveys/covers,' 'vague/vivid.'"

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151): "Keys to the whole picture of **the story involving James, Luke and Jessie come in fragments enclosed within chapters**, which can only be accessed through a full reading of both conscious and unconscious layers (not to mention bits of significant information which only became accessible with the second instalment of chapters in 2016)."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 154): "Another example of how form is embodied in the interactive functionality of the reading interface can be found in Chapter 5, in which **James is given another job opportunity by Luke, when sent to inspect an old rusty bridge**."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019b, para. 2): "Chapter 7 then begins with **James and Luke sitting in the desert by a fire they built, and as you pry, you can switch between multiple videos while their voices talk in the background**."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019b, para. 3): "James says that it [Jessie's death] was his fault, and that she called to him but he ran away, leaving her to die. **However the text, and presumably Luke, say that he wasn't there at all, and he was in a different building across the street playing poker**. It's revealed through more videos that James and Jessie got into a fight, which caused her not to go to the poker game and end up in the building that was attacked, causing her death. James says that she wasn't at the game because of him, and if she was there she would have lived, making her death his fault."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "This time, the reader witnesses or rather participates via James in the demolition of an old factory, and **meets Luke in person, that is in filmic sections presenting external reality. James's thoughts and his dialogues with Luke indicate that James is working for Luke as a safety inspector at demolition sites** and is well aware that his failing eyesight might lead to his losing the job. What comes to the foreground in this section is James's limited grasp of reality: not only does he have problems seeing the world around him, as indicated by the occasional blurring of his vision; **he has recurrent visions of the female soldier and Luke in military uniform**, visions the reader cannot easily dispel by making James open his eyes."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220): "As the reader moves his or her finger over it [the Braille text in chapter 3], he or she hears the voice of James reading the biblical story of Jacob and Esau and starts seeing some home video footage showing two young boys as well as some **short clips of Luke as a soldier and a demolition engineer, familiar from the previous parts of *Pry***."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 221): "Again, the link between this section and the previous one is left for the reader to infer: **it seems to suggest some brotherly rivalry between James and Luke or perhaps even some shared childhood, though the fact that each of them has a different surname would indicate that they are friends rather than brothers**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 221): "Entitled "Dhahran, Saudi Arabia," this chapter initially appears to contain only two lines of text: Back in Schwetzingen, I saw her eye him during PT. My chances were pretty much screwed. The world moves like a video game. **Luke carries me, dodges**. The exit flickers, flattens before us. CANNIZZARO and GORMAN."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): "Chapter 6 reveals that **James, Luke and Jessie served together during the Gulf War. Both men, who had been friends for some time, were attracted to the woman and the three of them spent a lot of time together. Jessie chose Luke, though she also flirted with James**. Jealous and frustrated, he reported their relationship to their superior, as it was against army regulations. Jessie was to be transferred to another unit, but before this happened their base was hit by a missile. **Luke saved James's life but they apparently did not manage to save Jessie**."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 4): "The fourth chapter is a large block of text. As you zoom out to read it, the text folds into new paragraphs and information, building the story that is James and **his two teammates** stationed in the Middle East."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 2): "One of the things that I wasn't completely sure about when I first experienced this work was **whether or not Luke as James' brother or his friend, but it was confirmed after going through and re-reading this story. In one of the sections, James mentions that Luke was Squad Leader and that he saw him as an older brother. There is also mention of how the demolition company that Luke hired James' to work for is his dad's company**."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 4): "This story about a man who joins the military and becomes friends with a woman named Jessie.It is apparent in the story that James begins to have feelings for Jessie (and borderline becomes obsessed with her), however, **she and James' buddy Luke enter into a secret relationship while they are all serving together. James becomes jealous of Jessie and Luke's relationship and exposes it**, which causes Jessie to be re-assigned. James brought an album from home with him and he puts pictures of Jessie alongside his mother's photos, thinking that she would be flattered. However, when he shows her the album, she is not amused. James and Jessie end up having an argument about

him revealing her secret relationship and as a result, Jessie does not show up for **a scheduled poker game the three friends had scheduled that night**. Their camp was bombarded that night, and Jessie died during the attack. James blames himself for Jessie not being at the poker game, and ultimately blames himself for her death. **6 years after serving, James and Luke return home and Luke hires James to work for him as a demolition consultant.** James' eyesight begins to worsen and it affects his performance on the job. **This creates conflict and tension between the friends**.

REDMAN, JOE (2019b, para. 1): "The protagonist is trying to save himself from his own PTSD of war, but also **clear up and make light of his understanding with his friend**."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019b, para. 1): "In chapter 5, there is more information regarding James' eyesight, when **Luke gives him another job after initially firing him because of the issues revolving around his eyesight. We also gain more insight into Luke's character, as he is trying his best to give James as many opportunities as possible despite his challenges**."

SHELBY (2015, para. 1): "It is about a man named James who was in the Gulf War stationed in I believe Dharan, and is now a veteran who **works in demolition with his buddy Luke who was stationed with James in the war**. Another character seen is Jesse; she was also stationed with them in the war. James and Jesse were friends while **Luke and Jesse were lovers**."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 1): "PRY tells the story of a Gulf War veteran who took a job as a demolition consultant, **which he got from Luke who was his squad leader**."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 1): "When you peer into his mind, **you see flashes of Luke and Jessie**, and then when you open his eyes you see a hallucination of Jessie stab him."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 2): "He feels as though it was his fault for what happened as he reported to his superior officer **what was going on between Luke and Jessie**."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 4): "Chapter 4 also shows the blurring of reality and fiction. **Luke is sitting at the table in the hotel room shuffling cards**. Chapter 7 explores this more

so, with conversations that are clearly happening outside of the war zone being portrayed as if they were happening in that setting."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019b, para. 2): "Chapter 5 opens up where Chapter 4 left off. James gets up to go to a new job, **Luke was fired from the last one**. During the drive to the new job, he continues to have self-hating thoughts that he isn't good enough, **that Luke doesn't trust James,** etc."

SMITH8, DES (2019, para. 1): "**Luke and Jessie are important characters in this interactive fiction**."

SMITH8, DES (2019, para. 1): "**I am also trying to figure out if Luke and Jessie tried to murder James, or if these visions related to James's PTSD**."

STANDISH, SYDNEY (2019, para. 1): "The scenes I found the most interesting, were the stabbing scenes. There were two scenes like this in chapters 1-4. One scene contains what I believe to be the main character's love interest, and **the other what I believe to be his brother**. I found it incredibly interesting how these scenes were used almost as a climax, and a breaking point that led into the next chapter. I'm not sure what the symbolism and meaning behind these scenes are, but I think that the violence and rushing of images, is a wonderfully striking end to these chapters."

STAPLES, LILY (2016, para. 4): "Jacob and Esau, biblically, are always in a state of struggle with one another. Within the images of that chapter, **the player gets to learn of how James and his brother (as a child) as well as James and Luke (his brother in arms) mimic the story of Jacob and Esau**. *Pry* demonstrates that a character, though written in braille, does not need to be touched to know their story."

STILLER, MASON (2019, para. 1): "**The chapter tells the story of the protagonist having a falling out with some of his fellow soldiers** and the regret he still feels for his actions."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019a, para. 2): "Through this path, the reader discovers that the main character is a veteran, perhaps recently returned, **who works in construction for a former soldier buddy**."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019a, para. 4): "Chapter 4 was where it became a little confusing for me, as **the main character is in a room with a military buddy and they are about to play poker but for a while all that happens is the main character watching his buddy shuffle the cards while he questions an attack in his mind. Then comes the slightly alarming part where it appears his buddy stabs him, implicitly in the eye**."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019b, para. 1): "While he does this job, James narrates about how **he and Luke grew up together, and Luke's realization of James' failing eyesight**."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019b, para. 2): "This section [chapter 6] spoke a lot about Jessie, and **her role in James' and Luke's life in the military. James had a crush on her but she gravitated towards Luke, which James seemed to accept**."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019b, para. 3): "Chapter 7 shows a progression of what appears to be his life in the military, settling on a few moments, **particularly when he and Luke build a camp and are talking in the middle of a desert**. Jessie also has a part here where you discover how her friendship with Jessie grew. **But a wrench is thrown in when James reports her relationship with Luke**, and Jessie is VERY upset. They have an altercation in a supply closet which is followed by an image of her still, on the ground, and it made me think at first that he killed her, but **then they're all playing poker** and he says she was alive, so that part was a little confusing to me."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 1): "From what I can see, the protagonist is a soldier named **James who becomes jealous of his brother because of his relationship with a woman named Jessie**."

**T. LUKE AS BROTHER**

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 3): "There seem to be these sort of 'false memories' incorporated where he imagines his own murder by both a female character by the name of Jessie, as well as **the protagonist's brother**."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 5): "He also takes some time to delve into his past which is when **we learn of his brother**."

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MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 150): "Described by its authors as an "App novella that re-imagines the form of the book," *Pry* tells the story of James, a young man returned from the Gulf War suffering from post-traumatic disorder in his current life (loss of vision, bad job performance, and strained relationships with **his brother Luke** and their best friend Jessie)."

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prison bars–, perceptive and cognitive processes, vision and touch, and, last but not least, text and gesture."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 151): "Moreover, this two plus one structure is also emulated by the relationship dynamics between characters, since Jessie can also be seen as a thread between James and Luke, and a crucial one at that, given that the story involves a mystery around her presence/absence. The dualistic nature of this piece seems to be analogously based on Brunian/Cusian theories on the *coincidence of contraries*, with one perspective constantly contradicting the other, for example, **the relationship between brothers**, namely James' contradictory feelings towards Luke, or even word associations produced by his mind (which are able to be read when accessing his subconscious), such as 'pity/money,' 'leering/laughing,' 'anchor/release,' 'conveys/covers,' 'vague/vivid.'"

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ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 1): "From what I can see, the protagonist is a soldier named James who becomes **jealous of his brother** because of his relationship with a woman named Jessie."

**U. LUKE AS FRIEND**

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 2): "Another section that I found intriguing was Chapter 4, where the main character is paranoid that **his friend** is going to try to kill him. I liked how Pry shows this paranoia by blurring the main characters normal vision, thus encouraging the user to see his subconscious, which ends up being riddled with possible murder weapons and different deaths."

BINA, MEGAN (2019b, para. 4): "He works with **his friend named Luke**, who he does not trust because of the way he encourages reckless behavior if the main character and others."

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 257): "In the context of a chapter which revolves around the onset of James's blindness, it follows that the shattered spectacles symbolise the loss of sight; the playing cards the loss of a faceoff between himself and **his best friend Luke**; and the ultimate loss of Jessie for one or both of them."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 1): "The protagonist visiting **his friend** at a construction site, for example, triggers memories of explosions while serving in the military."

KEISHA (2015, para. 2): "He [James] returned from the Gulf War six years prior to becoming a demolition consultant where he works with **his friend, Luke**."

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 2): "Here is an image of **Josh, our protagonist's friend**, when his blindness was at it's worst."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "The novel plays heavily on emotions of not only the reader but the character as well, heart-breaking flashbacks of a lost lover and **friend**, as well as the lack of sight continuously causing trauma for James and reminding him of the Gulf War."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 2): "Pry is an interactive novella about a guy named James who was in the Gulf War with **his friends, Luke** and Jesse."

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015, para. 2): "PRY explores James' past with **his friends Jessie and Luke** while also giving glimpse of James' childhood and family."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 221): "Again, the link between this section and the previous one is left for the reader to infer: it seems to suggest some brotherly rivalry between James and Luke or perhaps even some shared childhood, though the fact that **each of them has a different surname would indicate that they are friends rather than brothers**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 222): "Chapter 6 reveals that James, Luke and Jessie served together during the Gulf War. **Both men, who had been friends for some time**, were attracted to the woman and the three of them spent a lot of time together."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 4): "The fourth chapter is a large block of text. As you zoom out to read it, the text folds into new paragraphs and information, building the story that is James and **his two teammates** stationed in the Middle East."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 2): "One of the things that I wasn't completely sure about when I first experienced this work was whether or not Luke as James' brother or his friend, but it was confirmed after going through and re-reading this story. In one of the sections, **James mentions that Luke was Squad Leader and that he saw him as an older brother**. There is also mention of how the demolition company that Luke hired James' to work for is his dad's company."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 4): "This story about a man who joins the military and becomes friends with a woman named Jessie.It is apparent in the story that James begins to have feelings for Jessie (and borderline becomes obsessed with her), however, she and **James' buddy Luke** enter into a secret relationship while they are all serving together."

REDMAN, JOE (2019b, para. 1): "The protagonist is trying to save himself from his own PTSD of war, but also clear up and make light of his understanding with **his friend**."

SHELBY (2015, para. 1): "It is about a man named James who was in the Gulf War stationed in I believe Dharan, and is now a veteran who works in demolition with **his buddy Luke** who

was stationed with James in the war. Another character seen is Jesse; she was also stationed with them in the war. James and Jesse were friends while Luke and Jesse were lovers."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 1): "PRY tells the story of a Gulf War veteran who took a job as a demolition consultant, which he got from **Luke who was his squad leader**."

STAPLES, LILY (2016, para. 4): "Jacob and Esau, biblically, are always in a state of struggle with one another. Within the images of that chapter, the player gets to learn of how James and his brother (as a child) as well as **James and Luke (his brother in arms)** mimic the story of Jacob and Esau. *Pry* demonstrates that a character, though written in braille, does not need to be touched to know their story."

STILLER, MASON (2019, para. 1): "The chapter tells the story of the protagonist having a falling out with some of **his fellow soldiers** and the regret he still feels for his actions."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019a, para. 2): "Through this path, the reader discovers that the main character is a veteran, perhaps recently returned, who works in construction for **a former soldier buddy**."

**V. MENTIONS OF THE UNITED STATES**

FARINSKY, KATYA (2019, para. 1): "Pry is an incredibly engaging work about a young man returning **stateside** after serving in the Gulf War."

KARAMJOT (2016, para. 1): "The thoughts are realistic as they materialize at random and cause a chain reaction with one thought leading to another; such as, James' thoughts home, his family, and **Montana** eventually leading to thoughts about a woman from his past named Jessie."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 154–155): "This affirmation comes as a possible way of saying to readers that we all are responsible for our choices, especially if we are to take into account the content of the Epilogue, in which the two main gestures of spreading open and pinching closed will unleash two TV speeches that completely changed the world: one being the announcement of war against Iraq, in 1990, by **George Bush**; the other being the announcement of the invasion of Iraq, in 2003, by **George W. Bush**. But again, even here, one is always contaminating the other, so that, even if the reader opts for one of these two speeches, the other one will always be present as a background sound. A touch of the hand that leaves the reader with a final question: Free will or Determinism?"

> – [NB: Although the US is not mentioned here geographically, the presidents represent the country.]

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 218): "After the filmic prologue, in which the reader sees a young man whose journey from **the USA** to the war camp is presented in a series of quick shots, he or she is informed at the beginning of Chapter 1 that six years have passed and sees a man lying on a bed and staring at the ceiling, the introduction in the "About" section having provided him or her with the clue to the man's identity."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b): "One of the things that really stood out to me was at the very end where you see **George W. Bush** on the television talking about war, and when you pinch James' eyes shut, it shows a flashback of **George Bush Sr**. also talking about war. I found it to be an interesting way to connect how life was for James pre and post-war."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019b, para. 3): "The Epilogue shows **visuals of both George H.W. Bush, as well as George W. Bush on the television**, describing what appears to be both the Gulf War and the Iraq War, respectively. The reader can infer that James is watching the television at both moments in time, and there is a video of James going off in the truck that was seen in the Prologue; indicative of the fact that there is a perspective from James from both before and after he goes to war."

**W. MENTIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST**

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 154–155): "This affirmation comes as a possible way of saying to readers that we all are responsible for our choices, especially if we are to take into account the content of the Epilogue, in which the two main gestures of spreading open and pinching closed will unleash two TV speeches that completely changed the world: one being the announcement of war against **Iraq**, in 1990, by George Bush; the other being the announcement of the invasion of **Iraq**, in 2003, by George W. Bush. But again, even here, one is always contaminating the other, so that, even if the reader opts for one of these two speeches, the other one will always be present as a background sound. A touch of the hand that leaves the reader with a final question: Free will or Determinism?"

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 221): "Entitled '**Dhahran, Saudi Arabia**,' this chapter initially appears to contain only two lines of text: Back in Schwetzingen, I saw her eye him during PT. My chances were pretty much screwed. The world moves like a video game. Luke carries me, dodges. The exit flickers, flattens before us. CANNIZZARO and GORMAN."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 3): "In the prologue you watch James pack his bags to go off to **the Middle East**."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 5): "While those who enjoy imagining characters and locations while reading will be disappointed when Pry plays its movies. I would hope they would be drawn in by the mystery surrounding the main character and what happened in **the Middle East**."

RAGAN, KEEGAN (2015, para. 3): "From then on you are transported to a construction site, **to the middle east**, to a night alone in bed, and then all the way back to the character's childhood."

SHELBY (2015, para. 1): "It is about a man named James who was in the Gulf War stationed in I believe **Dharan**, and is now a veteran who works in demolition with his buddy Luke who was stationed with James in the war. Another character seen is Jesse; she was also stationed with them in the war. James and Jesse were friends while Luke and Jesse were lovers."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 2): "James spent some time in the military and was over seas in **the middle east**."

**X. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE READER AND JAMES**

ALEXANDER'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "But what truly sets *Pry* apart from other forms of digital fiction is the touchscreen interface that **allows one to explore the different levels of James' psyche. The main interaction that the reader has with this story is to pinch the screen in order to open or close the main character's eyes. This gives the reader freedom to witness the real world in front of James; to close his eyes and read the narration within his mind; and to delve even deeper into his subconscious and observe the thoughts that constantly gnaw away at him**. A good example of this three-tiered perspective representing some poignant psychoanalysis occurs in chapter two, as James oversees a controlled demolition. Closing his eyes, the reader can see that the explosions trigger in James a significant memory from the Gulf War. Prying further into his subconscious, the reader witnesses a series of military strikes accompanied by the sound of explosions as the demolition continues before him."

BINA, MEGAN (2019a, para. 2): "Another section that I found intriguing was Chapter 4, where the main character is paranoid that his friend is going to try to kill him. **I liked how Pry shows this paranoia by blurring the main characters normal vision, thus encouraging the user to see his subconscious**, which ends up being riddled with possible murder weapons and different deaths."

BINA, MEGAN (2019b, para. 1): "The second half of Pry further expands on the previous user interaction method. This is done by **evolving the prying open and shut interactions to view through the main characters and thoughts, to being able to flip through different camera shots and make them last however long the user wishes**."

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 2): "After purchasing the novella and that first chapter is clicked, **the reader is pulled into the life of James**, a young man going blind and trying to cope with his past. **Reading through the text, it prompts the reader to pinch the screen and see into James's subconscious, and also open his eyes open to see what is around him**."

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015, para. 4): "What is apparent is also that James is not being completely honest with his story. He is not lying, rather he is just forgetting. By pulling the

lines away from each other and prying into the story and his mind, more and more gets revealed. **Prying reveals information to the readers as much as to James himself**.”

CAYLEY, JOHN (2015, para. 1): “James is losing his sight. **We must pry open his failing eyes, or some other conduit for visual experience and memory, so as to help complete his story for us**.”

CHETCUTI, CLARA (2016, p. 256): “**The reader-user is from the get-go converted into a spying mischief-maker who looks with a surrogate eye and sight-reads with the fingertips**.”

CLAPP, JOEL (2019, para. 1): “The prologue plays as a short video, establishing the protagonist and the narrative space as well as the tone for the rest of the piece. A young man packs for a trip with little explanation given. The prelude is short, but in the way the protagonist lays out all of his objects so meticulously, to shove them all into his bag when his ride arrives, the Tarzan novel mixed in with bare essential objects, the hesitant moment that leads them to stop and collect a lock of hair from the family dog… few words are spoken, but these little details shows the depth of the character and the world that they reside in. **It also prepares the reader for a narrative that won’t just be handed to them, but must be sorted out from the small details left unsaid**.”

CRELLI, ROSE (2015, para. 3): “**The storyline transitions back and forth from the perspective of the main character, James**, a veteran from the Gulf War six years later, **and the perspective of the reader**.”

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019a, para. 1): “**With his vision failing you look into his mind and try to understand what is going on as his past collides with his present. With every action you can dive deeper into James’s thoughts or try and ignore the idea that you are losing sight**.”

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019b, para. 1): “But jumping to the end SPOILER ALERT: it was nice to have a little explanation of what happened whether it was the relationship between Jesse and Luke or if it was the attack on the base leading to the death off Jesse. **These details help the player understand James’s mental state**.”

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DOLPHIN, DEBORAH (2019, para. 5): "**Being able to pinch the screen and peer into the characters thoughts is a great way to show the inner struggle of the protagonist**."

DULAY, RASAN (2017, para. 1): "**When pinching open, it shows you being the character, because of the screen changing to its point of view. As times passes, you are going through the character's memories. When you pinch close, it seems as if you have entered the character's subconscious. Sliding across the screen allows you to view stories within a story. This represents what the character must go through because of his disability**."

DULAY, RASAN (2017, para. 1): "Moreover, **this form of digital media is beneficial because it puts the reader in the shoes of the character. This allows for a more realistic experience since there is access to the thoughts and feelings of the character**."

FARINSKY, KATYA (2019, para. 2): "My personal favorite part was the braille chapter. I thoroughly appreciated the mechanics of using fingers on the touch screen of an iPad in the same way blind individuals use raised braille characters and fingers to trace each line. **I immediately felt like I was learning to read- mirroring the narrative where the main character's mother is teaching her son to read the braille characters**."

FUTURE OF STORYTELLING (2016, para. 2): "Within the story, the role-player sees through James's eyes. **His failing vision calls for your finger to pry open his eyes and delve into his perspective**."

FUTURE OF STORYTELLING (2016, para. 4): "Not only does *Pry*'s imaginative design provide a platform and a language to depict a character who struggles with PTSD, **the interactive components allow the role-player to live these realities as well. The social implications for games like *Pryexpress* new and exciting ways for people to understand each other and build empathy toward unique circumstances and conflicts**. The power of sharing these stories is hidden between the lines of the novella: It's the transformative experience itself."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a, para. 5): "**He [James] has moments, increasingly frequent the further into the story the reader travels, where he overlaps memories**. His past and

present collide as though he's struggling to tell the difference. He also takes some time to delve into his past which is when we learn of his brother."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 3): "Chapter 6 begins with the folding and unfolding of text until the reader unfolds it enough to split the screen open and see the video beneath. That video however, after reaching a certain climax forcefully shuts. Continuing to try and pry it open, it will force itself shut a number of times. **In this sense, it is almost as though James is trying to block out that memory, shutting it away, while the reader is trying instead to pry it open and uncover it**."

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b, para. 6): "**Only right at the end of the final chapter does the user not have to pry his eyes open**. His vision is clear, and the sun is shining as he pulled himself from the water and back onto the bridge."

HOBSON, MALLORY (2019, para. 1): "From the beginning, I liked how it seemed to be divided into clear sections of narrative–reality, lucid thoughts, and intrusive thoughts–but that quickly became blurred with the imagined Jessie appearing and looming over his bed, and continued bleeding into each other as the story progressed…until even you, the reader, is uncertain as to what exactly is James' memories or imagination and what is actually happening (or has happened). **The mechanics of opening James' eyes, or 'pinching' them further shut and retreating into memories and intrusive thoughts, was both visually compelling as well as helped to build James as a character**."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a, para. 3): "The navigation of the piece is extremely simple, only requiring the interactor to advance by "prying" the protagonist's eyes open and closed by pinching the screen. **This allows the protagonist to freely flip between the three stages while moving through the piece, while putting the interactor in a place of physical connection with the events taking place in the protagonist's mind**. By pinching the screen shut, the interactor is taken into the protagonist's mind, similar to film reel, that is constantly racing with text and war footage."

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b, para. 5): "*Pry* is a commentary on a multitude of things: war, PTSD, love and jealousy, coming to terms with blindness, and more. **It feels overwhelming,**

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**which is the point. James is overwhelmed by everything that is crashing down around his life**."

JACKSON, JOSHUA (2019, para. 2): "**Touching and tilting the screen gives us the feeling that we are the main character**."

JACKSON, JOSHUA (2019, para. 2): "**The thing that makes this story great is that we get to feel the inner world of the main character** through floating text, animations, and video flashbacks as well as experiencing the and the outer world of video that details the main character's day-to-day experiences."

JESSICA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "**We encounter the people in his life through video clips shot from his perspective, putting us in his place. This makes it easier for us to relate to James by seeing ourselves in his position, inspiring stronger empathy than what is felt in other traditional texts. By literally prying his eyes open, we are admitted a sense of a body functioning under our control, from the subconscious to the physical**. The narrative is fluid, and by immersing us visually as well as sonically, we as the reader become more invested in the story. Our attention never wanes because we don't want to miss anything."

JESSICA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "Symbols appear on the screen in the form of brail marks, and when we drag our finger over them horizontally, James' voice translates the text aloud. **This is not only a way to communicate the protagonist's situation, but also a feature that forces us to participate in the text, and physically move the narrative forward. The awareness of developing blindness is, therefor, ever present in our minds, and we are not only informed of it, but are giving the chance to experience it**."

JESSICA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 4): "**By literally opening the James' eyes, then his memories, we become connected to his story and experience a control that is not communicated with traditional paper books**."

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014, para. 30): "Imbuing the story with an implacable psychological specificity, bringing the characters to life as fleshy, intricate, paradoxical people (with histories and habits and not just pockets of phrases that pour disordered into

blocks), and **then guiding the reader to live with or within the characters as they experience clear, irrevocable, precisely temporalized events is the challenge that the Tender Claws duo face as they complete this potentially breakthrough novella-app**."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "Pry is hard to understand. **The reader is more often trying to understand what he has to do to continue and go forward, than really trying to understand how the characters feel. He is often under the impression that the creators concentrated more on how to be original and interactive than telling a story**."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 4): "**Thus the narration of Pry does not consist in telling a story as classical novels do, but in transmitting the feelings and unease of the narrator. This is why many images appear and disappear to fast to understand what is presented. The reader cannot analysis, but he may feel surprised, maybe afraid, and mostly lost, just as the narrator**. The third chapter on contrary may seem more peaceful. The narrator reads the braille, slowly as we touch it. It does not come from the narrator's life, so it is not as stifling as other chapters. Though, he does not seem able to perfectly concentrate on the text as images from his memory appears through the text."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 5): "**The acts of the reader are thought so he would feel as stressed or powerless, as the narrator. The narration of Pry aims to transmit a feeling, to emerge the reader in the narrator's mind, not to tell a story**."

JULIE'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 6): "**The reader is supposed to feel as stressed and oppressed as the narrator**."

KARAMJOT (2016, para. 1): "At the start of the story I found James' nightmare sequence to be the most important as **it is the first indication of the character's traumatic past and gives the user a taste of what random thoughts emerge within James' head**. These random thoughts are the most essential part of story telling in Pry. The thoughts are realistic as they materialize at random and cause a chain reaction with one thought leading to another; such as, James' thoughts home, his family, and Montana eventually leading to thoughts about a woman from his past named Jessie. **This allows for interpretation of James' metal state by the user as they are provided an unfiltered medium through which they can try to understand James' past**."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 4): "The multimedia aspects of *Pry* really gives a powerful effect on the reader and the experience. Videos in the form of flashbacks and current events give the reader a firsthand experience. **This coupled with the ability to choose when to open and close James' eyes and knowing James' thoughts allows the reader to become one with James and follow through his life as if it was their own personal experience**."

KATECHIZ8 (2015, para. 5): "**In the beginning of the novella James ,and thus the reader, has almost perfect vision**. As the novella progresses sight begins to become blurry and we are forced to open and close James' eyes as if we were blinking for him. **We must learn to adapt to this new obstacle right along with James**."

KEISHA (2015, para. 5): "**Pry is a very interactive digital literature filled with graphics that make you feel like you are actually there alongside with James going through all of his life changing experiences. One second you may feel sympathy towards him, which can then turn to you feeling scared for his life, to also feeling like you understand him better as a person. Reading and going through Pry allows you to feel like you are in the mind and body of James** and that is only part of the beauty of what digital literature has to offer to the world."

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019, para. 3): "**If you adjust the pinch of your fingers on the screen, you get different levels of his subconscious**. He has one that is on the surface level and is meant to distract his mind from not remembering the horrific things that he has seen. The other levels are hallucinations and memories of his subconscious. Jessie killing him, the coffee stain messing around on the ceiling. Those are all hallucinations that never actually happen. The memories are the GameBoy, hanging with Jessie, and possibly even the night vision video of a missile launch. This tells me that by the next chapter he might actually go blind and may even go crazy."

KIRSTY'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 4): "The thematic expression of post-traumatic-stress disorder would not be possible in any other medium. **More specifically it would not be as easy for the reader/user to connect on a personal level if they were not controlling James' mind with their fingertips**. While previous forms of digital literature have allowed for interactivity, no other forms can get inside of a character's head as *Pry* does."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 1): "**In Pry, you fade between James' conscious and subconscious worlds, also while experiencing what he is experiencing**. Some of the chapters require pinching, some dragging, with one in braille, reflecting James' current situation of slowly going blind but still needing to work and live his life."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "**The novel plays heavily on emotions of not only the reader but the character as well**, heart-breaking flashbacks of a lost lover and friend, as well as the lack of sight continuously causing trauma for James and reminding him of the Gulf War."

LAURA'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 3): "Whether you prefer a basic paperback novel or do in fact enjoy the idea of reading on a digital face, Pry will allow you to experience and cultivate a story within a story and **feel the same frustrations and confusions that James does as he recovers from the trauma's he has experienced from the war and as he tries to deal with his eyesight slipping away from him**."

LWFUSON (2015, para. 3): "**While moving through the story, readers have to help figure out what is correct**. Pinching the screen allows the reader to look deep into James' subconscious while prying it open allows us to see what's currently happening in his conscious mind and in the outside world. You must pry and pinch through the app in order to get the entire story."

LYDIA (2015, para. 1): "**In *Pry*, It is the reader's job to interact with James' surroundings, subconscious, and thoughts to reveal secrets about the past**."

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015, para. 1): "PRY explores James' past with his friends Jessie and Luke while also giving glimpse of James' childhood and family. **It's hard to describe what someone will learn about these characters. In order to learn the clear picture of what happened to James, the reader has to pry into the story**."

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018, p. 154): "**In order not to fall into the water (an option that will dramatically change the course of reading), the reader needs to be aware of James' constraints, made evident, in this case, by closing James' eyes and entering his**

**subconscious. In other words, only through entering James' subconscious will the character be able to properly evaluate the structural problems of this bridge** and consequently, its future demolition, a necessary dialectics between reason and emotion in order to enable James reaching the end of that bridge (both literally and metaphorically speaking). This means that **there has to be a proper balance between what is visualized and what is touched by the reader, in order to unravel all the possible endings to this chapter**."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a, para. 2): "I love the effect that has, not only does it contribute to the story and the characters vision loss, but **it helps you relate and further pulls you into the story making you feel like you are the character in the story**."

MARTIN, JAKE (2019b, para. 1): "**If you try to pinch into his mind, it's just videos of him still sinking into the water from when he fell on the bridge**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 208): "**They also use the reader's embodied interaction with the digital medium to encourage his or her identification with the protagonist and create the illusion of the fictional mind being experienced/explored from within**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 218–219): "**The interactive, multimodal set-up of *Pry* puts the reader in a peculiar position in relation to James's consciousness. On the one hand, it encourages his or her identification with James by giving him or her control over his perception of the external world: he or she not only sees through his eyes but also decides when to open or close them. On the other hand, the way the reader can gain and control access to James's subconscious suggests the position of an observer or even explorer who is invited to "dig into" the subconscious aspects of another human being's psyche and analyse the significance of what he or she sees in relation to the stream of the same person's verbalised thoughts**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 219): "**Yet another crucial aspect of the reader's engagement with *Pry* is the absence of an omniscient narrative voice that would gently usher him or her into James's world and/or explain his situation in a manner** comparable to the heterodiegetic narrator's presentation of Michael in *The Breathing Wall*. **In**

**Cannizzaro and Gorman's work the reader is confronted with "raw", fragmented and indeterminate cognitive data that he or she has to process on his or her own**."

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017, p. 220–221): "**This section [chapter 3] is an even more interesting instance of how the reader's embodiment can be employed via his or her interaction with the touch screen to create a recursive relationship between the reader and the protagonist**, the body and the mind, the actual and the virtual. **The reader performs the gesture the protagonist is supposed to perform on the level of the storyworld, though obviously his or her experience of the text in Braille lacks the crucial tactile element: the screen is flat and his or her engagement with Braille remains virtual. And yet, by embodying the protagonist he or she gains access to his consciousness, as the voice the reader can hear can be interpreted as James's subvocalisation, actualized as audible sounds on the level of the reader's interaction with *Pry* as a touch-screen-based narrative. The visuals add another layer to this complex setup, as they seem to represent James's memories and associations brought about by the passage he is reading**. Again, the link between this section and the previous one is left for the reader to infer: it seems to suggest some brotherly rivalry between James and Luke or perhaps even some shared childhood, though the fact that each of them has a different surname would indicate that they are friends rather than brothers."

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015, para. 1): "**Instead of turning pages from left to right and passively viewing type, the reader sees what the protagonist, James, sees**. Like the human mind, the story is disjointed, jumping chapter by chapter through memories and current events. Videos supplement the story as you use the pinch-zoom motion to open his eyes to see what's going on around him. By reversing that motion you delve into his sub-concious and as you, "pry," open his thoughts and memories you learn more about him, his past and how they've affected him."

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019, para. 2): "When it comes to engaging sequences, I enjoyed the chapter titled "camp" in which pinching or expanding your fingers either changes shots during a scene or goes from one scene to another based on the context. **At first, when I pinched my fingers, it appeared that the scenes were going back in time, back to when the main character was a child. Expanding my fingers seemed to move forward in time to the character's time spent in the war**."

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016, para. 5): "**As well as opening and closing his eyes, that you use to switch between the real and the subconscious worlds. There is a really cool part where you use your finger to scroll through some braille and the words are spoken out**. The different ways that are used to follow the narrative are unique and engaging."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a, para. 1): "**It is almost as if you, the user, are "prying" the eyes open**. The pinch and hold actions initiate memories or flashbacks. **I would compare this action similar to when people squint or squeeze their eyes closed when they are trying to remember something or trying to not see something**."

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b, para. 5): "**While reading this story, there is a moment where you can clearly understand how James is processing Jessie's death**. He reminds himself that she was her own person, who made her own choices."

RAGAN, KEEGAN (2015, para. 6): "So, I highly recommend to *Pry* to anyone who's interested in a reading experience that they have never come across before. You will spend hours diving into **a story that is complex, tying in the past, present, and future of the character who's shoes you are put in**. Every time I came back to *Pry,* which was often, I craved to discover more about the story. It's a story that drives your curiosity and begs you to continue uncovering what previously wasn't understood."

REDMAN, JOE (2019a, para. 1): "The story isn't super clear, but from what I understand it starts with the protagonist leaving to join the military. The story jumps past all of that and his experience in the military is told through flashbacks. They are flashbacks because you see them in his head. **These flashbacks were so vivid that I was sometimes caught off guard in which of the three perspectives I was looking at**. What drives the story forward is the user checking in on all three perspectives. You can't move on if you only look at one."

REDMAN, JOE (2019b, para. 1): "Something that happened earlier but occurred again during chapter 5 was the protagonist's eyesight briefly going numb. **During this the moment, the user can't see what is going on either, so they have no choice but to look at one of the other two perspectives until he puts in eye drops. This doesn't necessarily limit how the story is told, but only how some of it appears**."

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SARAH'S ARGUMENT (2017, para. 2): "**The 'pinch' and 'pry' actions, one of which gives the piece its name, are part of the daily interactions that I-pad users would be familiar with in interacting with the medium.** *Pry* **relies on these actions that have become mundane and have ceased to signify in their second nature to the user, and then decontextualizes the actions into something that throws the reader outside of herself and her familiar routine and instead into the routine and mind of the protagonist. Each movement becomes meaningful and intimate.** When the reader pinches the screen, she also closes the protagonist's eyes and stirs up a refrain of compulsive words and thoughts that present themselves on a loop, effectively invoking "trauma…dormant until touched" (Jhave, *Prying*, 2014). These refrains take a form both as a "forced confessional" (Jhave), **intrusive into the reader's own psyche, but also something the reader has searched for. This changes the familiar, neutral surface of the screen into something that reflects back the reader's everyday actions, creating a metaphor through touch**."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019a, para. 1): "Pry is an engaging story about a man named James who is a demolition consultant that comes back from the gulf war and experiences vision failure throughout the story. **This grants the reader the opportunity to explore not only what James experiences in reality, but his thoughts as well**. This creates a story that is linear in the sense that it moves from chapter to chapter, yet can be engaged with and explored in a plethora of ways, as **the reader gets to choose whether to explore James' thoughts or the reality in front of him**."

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019b, para. 3): "The Epilogue shows visuals of both George H.W. Bush, as well as George W. Bush on the television, describing what appears to be both the Gulf War and the Iraq War, respectively. **The reader can infer that James is watching the television at both moments in time, and there is a video of James going off in the truck that was seen in the Prologue; indicative of the fact that there is a perspective from James from both before and after he goes to war**."

SDHUTCHERSON (2015, para. 1): "**Whether that interactivity is through opening and closing the characters, James', eyes either seeing what the character sees or going deeper and deeper into what seems to be his subconscious, or moving your finger over**

**braille on the screen and having the story come to life as though you were really reading through the dots and dimples in the pages themselves on the screen**."

SHELBY (2015, para. 3): "**The text showing his thoughts can be pinched or pried. Pinching the text close leads the reader deep to his subconscious and prying it open leads to his consciousness and what is going on around him. Every time you pinch, pry, read, or run you figure over the braille you get more information whether it be his real life around him or what is going on in his head, both can be confusing and strange**. Not only does is have text to read but there is video with sound, and James reading to you. You must reveal everything to get the full story and even then it can be confusing and unfinished."

SHORT, EMILY (2015, para. 3): "The conceit is that there are several layers of reality happening at a time. Though this is handled in different ways in different chapters, **the general rule is that if we spread the page open, we're opening the protagonist's eyes, looking outwards, and seeing objective reality**. Sometimes that objective reality takes the form of video about what is happening around us; sometimes it's different text. Or, again, **if we pinch the page closed on itself, we're retreating into the subconscious, where flickering surreal images and rapidly cycling single words of text indicate our fears, our memories, our connections with the present. The subconscious recollection of childhood, or of an incident in war, might underlie our uncomfortable reaction to what is happening on the job site**."

SHORT, EMILY (2015, para. 5): "(**Ironically, I suspect that this would be a very difficult game to make accessible to visually impaired players, but I'm not sure**.)"

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a, para. 1): "**When you peer into his mind, you see flashes of Luke and Jessie, and then when you open his eyes you see a hallucination of Jessie stab him**."

SIMS, SHAWN (2019b, para. 2): "When he arrives on site he walks across a railroad. **At this point two things can happen. Either you keep James' eyes open to the point where his vision blurs and he falls off the railway track, or you open and close periodically and make it all the way to the end, only to transition into his thoughts.** In both instances, his subconscious is brought to the forefront, while reality is placed where the subconscious has been since the start of the story."

SMITH8, DES (2019, para. 1): "**I knew James was going to enlist in the military because of the things he put in his pack**."

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015, para. 1): "It isn't anything like I have ever read before, the novella starts off with having to use two fingers to make the main character blink. **It allows the reader to either open the eyes or go deeper into the subconscious of the main character**."

STANDISH, SYDNEY (2019, para. 2): "I also think the use of braille really pairs well with the mechanic that drives the piece. **Sliding your fingers on the screen to "open your eyes" or "close your eyes", drives the story**."

STAPLES, LILY (2016, para. 6): "**From building sensory and emotional relationships with the characters** to unlocking concealed content to discovering a new world where books and games can be one in the same, *Pry* **allows the reader to become a character within the novella. Without the touch, the sensitivity of the reader, Jame's world would not see the light**."

STILLER, MASON (2019, para. 1): "**Chapter 7 gives the user the ability to progress through the life time of the protagonist through a similar action**."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a, para. 1): "**Zooming in and out on a touch screen is already natural enough for a traverser, so zooming out to see the subconscious and zooming in to see what the main character sees is easy to understand and easy to figure out if the traverser misses the instructions**."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a, para. 2): "**The three perspectives combine to create a constant montage, that the traverser controls**."

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019b, para. 1): "Chapter 5, in which it is confirmed that the protagonist is losing his sight, includes a part where the protagonist uses eyedrops. **It's funny to think about how this might have been filmed, but to a traverser this element increases the immersion and is a very concrete real life example of going blind**."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019a, para. 2): "**Through this path, the reader discovers that the main character is a veteran, perhaps recently returned, who works in construction for a former soldier buddy**."

TADEO, NOELLE (2019b, para. 1): "**I distinctly remember a part where James falls off the bridge, but then the next morning I reread the chapter and I did not see it again. Am I dreaming in PRY now**?"

WOO, DAVID JACK (2015, para. 5): "**The player is able to immerse themselves into the world of James and explore it in a non-linear fashion**."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019a, para. 2): "**One of the moments that intrigued me was the moment that James falls off of the bridge and into the water below. For a moment, I had tricked myself into thinking that I was actually falling off the bridge. I think that after playing the story for a long period of time, I began to feel like I was the main character. I could relate to the protagonist's struggle by having to trudge through the work: to progress the story, I had to physically pull text apart, fight to keep the character's eyes open, and try to mentally piece the story together. These three factors created this sense of immersion that I have yet to experience in games that aren't VR, and I found it rather enjoyable to play**."

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b, para. 2): "**As we fight to keep James' eyes open, we are constantly reminded of his failing sight. Like him, we are sometimes forced to withdraw from the present world and reside in the realm of memories and his subconscious**. His innermost thoughts are communicated with us in text, sometimes in full paragraphs or in fast-paced fragments flashing across the screen. **Through these, we can theorize the causes for his failing sight** (a fire, a disorder inherited from his mother, and Jessie's violent outburst are only a few of these.) By constantly going back and forth from what James' sees in the real world versus what he sees in his mind, blindness becomes one of the more prominent themes in the story (though it is certainly not the only one.)."

**Y. KEY WORDS**

BINA, MEGAN (2019a): "CINEMA-WRITING, STUDENT BLOGS"

BINA, MEGAN (2019b): "STUDENT BLOGS"

BUSHNELL, AIMEE (2015): "Aimee, App, assignments, micro-writing-2, Pry, Pry A
        Novella, Review"

CAYLEY, JOHN (2015): "digital media, publishing, ebooks, novels, experimental writing"

CLAPP, JOEL (2019): "UNCATEGORIZED"

CRELLI, ROSE (2015): "micro-writing-2, Pry A Novella, Rose Crelli"

CUMMINGS, JOEL (2019a): "STUDENT BLOGS"

CUMMINGS, JOEL (20019b): "STUDENT BLOGS"

DOLPHIN, DEBORAH (2019): "STUDENT BLOGS"

FARINSKY, KATYA (2019): "CINEMA-WRITING, STUDENT BLOGS"

FUTURE OF STORY-TELLING (2016): "PTSD, Mental Health, Video Games, Storytelling"

GWIN, MARIAH (2019a): "CINEMA-WRITING"

GWIN, MARIAH (2019b): "CINEMA-WRITING"

HOBSON, MALLORY (2019): "CINEMA-WRITING, pry"

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019a): "UNCATEGORIZED"

JACKSON, JAZZ (2019b): "UNCATEGORIZED"

JACKSON, JOSHUA (2019): "UNCATEGORIZED"

JOHNSTON, DAVID JHAVE (2014): "FICTION, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY"

KATECHIZ8 (2015): "Military, multimedia, novella, Samanta Groman, Tender Claws"

KEISHA (2015): "Keisha, micro-writing-2, Pry"

KIMSEY, CHRISTINE (2019): "CINEMA-WRITING, STUDENT BLOGS"

LWFUSON (2015): "Leia, Pry, Review"

LYDIA (2015): "#Lydia, Pry"

MARKLE, ALICIA (2015): "Alicia, App, assignments, micro-writing-2, Pry, Review"

MARQUES, DIOGO (2018): "Haptic; Touch; Gesture; Affect; Interface; Digital
        Literature; Háptico; Toque; Gesto; Afecto; Digital Literature; Literatura digital"

MARTIN, JAKE (2019a): "UNCATEGORIZED"

MARTIN, JAKE (2019b): "CLASS TOPICS, IF AND GAMES, MULTIMEDIA FICTION,
        STUDENT BLOGS"

MAZIARCZYK, GRZEGORZ (2017): "multimodality, interactivity, embodiment, digital
        narrative, consciousness, The Breathing Wall, Pry"

MOWERY, NICHOLE (2015): "assignment, Eng 211, Micro-writing, Mowery, Nichole, Pry,
        Wordpressisborked"

NIEHAUS, DYLAN (2019): "STUDENT BLOGS"

O'TOOLE, PATRICK (2016): "Games, Interactive stories, Narrative, PRY, Technology,
        Tender Claws"

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019a): "UNCATEGORIZED"

PACKARD, COURTNEY (2019b): "UNCATEGORIZED"

RAGAN, KEEGAN (2015): "KeeganR, micro-writing-2"

REDMAN, JOE (2019a): "STUDENT BLOGS"

REDMAN, JOE (2019b): "CINEMA-WRITING, STUDENT BLOGS"

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019a): "CINEMA-WRITING"

SCHOENLEIN, JARID (2019b): "UNCATEGORIZED"

SDHUTCHERSON (2015): "Pry, Review"

SHELBY (2015): "micro-writing-2, Pry, Review, Shelby"

SHORT, EMILY (2015): "interactive fiction, interactive film, new media, Reviews"

SIMS, SHAWN (2019a): "UNCATEGORIZED"

SIMS, SHAWN (2019b): "UNCATEGORIZED"

SMITH8, DES (2019): "CINEMA-WRITING"

SPRINGER, AUNA (2015): "Auna, micro-writing-2, Pry"

STANDISH, SYDNEY (2019): "UNCATEGORIZED"

STAPLES, LILY (2016): "book review, Digital Lit, Digital Media, elit, Experiemntal Novel, interactive storytelling, Pry, tender claws"

STILLER, MASON (2019): "STUDENT BLOGS"

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019a): "CINEMA-WRITING, STUDENT BLOGS, pry"

SUNDWALL, ELAINA (2019b): "UNCATEGORIZED"

TADEO, NOELLE (2019a): "UNCATEGORIZED"

TADEO, NOELLE (2019b): "UNCATEGORIZED"

WOO, DAVID JACK (2015): "David-Jack-Woo, micro-writing-3, Pry"

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019a): "UNCATEGORIZED"

ZOLLER, KATHLEEN (2019b): "UNCATEGORIZED"

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into-narrative-space/]

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beautiful-cinematic-experience/]

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3-29-19/]

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