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Ziltoid the Peritextual

Constructing Science Fiction in Music Albums through Peritexts

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SAMMANFATTNING

Den här avhandlingen studerar peritexter på musikalbumen *Ziltoid the Omniscient* och uppföljaren *Z²* av Devin Townsend respektive The Devin Townsend Project. Syftet med studien är att ta reda på hur temat science fiction kan skapas genom peritextuella komponenter så som bilder, färger, typsnitt, troper och genom eventuella intertextuella drag hos dessa komponenter. Albumen innehåller progressiv metallmusik och science fiction är ett ofta återkommande tema i genren. Jag använder mig av Gérard Genettes definition av peritexter och i stor utsträckning av Julia Kristevas grundläggande definition av intertextualitet. Science fiction-temat är påtagligt på albumen i både handlingen och peritexterna. Jag uppmärksammar på vilket sätt dessa peritexter hänsyftar till science fiction och vad detta innebär för albumen i fråga.

Många allusioner till populära science fiction-filmer och -romaner förekommer i materialet och dessa bidrar till att stärka temat. Allusioner till väldigt prominenta filmer som exempelvis *Star Wars* och *E.T.* är relativt uppenbara, men allusioner till andra mindre kända science fiction-historier är svårare att identifiera. Åtskilliga science fiction-troper förekommer i albumens peritexter, som exempelvis flygande tefat, meteorer, stjärnor, planeter, hologram samt i textform i låttitlar på albumens bakre omslag. Dessutom förekommer troper i form av vad som händer i bilderna, till exempel en sammandrabbning mellan utomjordingar och människor.

Utomjordingen Ziltoid är protagonisten i båda historierna och han är därmed även den mest frekvent förekommande karaktären i albumens peritexter. Det framkommer tydligt på bilderna av Ziltoid att han är en utomjording, vilket indikerar att albumen är knutna till science fiction. Ziltoid är en väldigt intertextuell figur som exempelvis alluderar till Darth Vader, E.T., Zorro och Indiana Jones. Analysen visar att albumens peritexter utnyttjas till att tydligt indikera science fiction-temat. Troper och andra visuella element som är kännetecknande för genren i allmänhet förekommer i stor utsträckning på båda albumen i studien och antyder därmed vad albumen handlar om.

KEYWORDS: peritexts, science fiction, intertextuality, progressive metal, Ziltoid

1 INTRODUCTION

Music is nowadays to a large extent acquired through different online music streaming services, which means that the sales of music in physical format have dropped considerably. International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (2015) states that the proceeds of digitally released music reached the same level as the proceeds of the physical format for the first time in history in 2014, and the value of the physical format sales declined as much as 8.1 percent globally. Thus, many do not care greatly about the complete physical music product that includes artwork, booklet and the like, and this evokes a question of their importance. Personally, I enjoy having music in the form of a tangible record because I like the idea of actually owning it, but also because I want to have the booklet with the lyrics and possible pictures among other things. Can these parts of the product say something about the album through connotations and allusions, and in what way could this happen in that case?

Covers, labels, booklets and all smaller units that appear on or in these are paratextual elements. The term *paratext* in literary studies is coined by the French Professor Gérard Genette and it includes everything that in some way presents or produces the main text in a book, for example the title, the name of the author, the preface and possible illustrations (Genette 1987: 1). Furthermore, Genette (ibid. 1–2) claims that paratext functions as a threshold, rather than a boundary, to the actual text. If the actual music and sung lyrics of a music album is defined as the 'main text', all textual, graphical and pictorial elements that appear in connection to a music album are to be considered different types of paratexts. Moreover, a music album usually shares several of the paratextual features of a book, and Genette's theories about paratexts are thus also fully applicable when focus is shifted to tangible music products. To my knowledge, this is a subject that has not yet been studied, which is the reason why I want to explore paratexts in the context of music albums.

The aim of this study is to find out how peritexts may indicate and strengthen a theme of a music album and what they may reveal about the music of the album. Peritexts are the type of paratexts that appear in close connection to the main text, that is on or in the

actual tangible product (Genette 1987: 4–5), for instance on the covers of a book. In this thesis, I focus on how the theme of science fiction is constructed in two music albums through peritexts, and I will take the covers, disc labels and booklets of the two albums into consideration. Genette (ibid. 5, 7) points out that paratexts may be manifested in other ways, such as through interviews, discussions or simply through a fact that may influence the way in which a book is read by the public. It would be far too extensive for this study to take every possible type of paratextual element into consideration since very large numbers of interviews, reviews and discussions can be found on the internet and in magazines.

In this study I will take into consideration visual aspects of the tangible products, that is peritexts. The signification of the lyrics is not solely peritextual since the lyrics are also heard in the music, so an analysis of the lyrics is then partly redundant in this context. However, the signification of the song titles that appear on the products will be dealt with from the viewpoint of science fiction since they are distinct peritextual elements. Moreover, I will consider the intertextual aspects of peritexts. This is because certain peritextual elements may contain allusions in a textual form, but also in the form of solely visual aspects such as fonts, colours and pictures, and these may in turn reveal more about the peritextual elements and possibly even the reasons for their existence. Consequently, peritextuality and intertextuality overlap, and it is therefore important to shed light on both phenomena. Because emphasis is on the science fiction theme in this thesis, a great many of the intertextual instances that I point out will allude to films and novels within the genre.

Peritexts cannot appear beyond the actual tangible product, which consequently limits their scope of existence. Furthermore and more importantly, peritexts cannot be completely overlooked by the consumer of a tangible music product, which implies that the peritexts most likely affect the consumer of the product on which they appear. I will use two CD albums by the Canadian progressive metal musician Devin Townsend for the purpose of this study. The two albums are called *Ziltoid the Omniscient* (2007) and *Z²* (2014), and both have a very salient science fiction theme in that they tell a story about an alien whose name is Ziltoid.

1.1 Material

The peritexts of the albums *Ziltoid the Omniscient* and the sequel *Z²* are the primary material in this study. Both albums tell a story about an alien who first comes to earth in pursuit of the universe's ultimate cup of coffee, so the science fiction theme is certainly present on the albums. The fact that the albums tell coherent stories implies that science fiction is present throughout the whole of the albums, and not, for example, in only one or a couple of songs. Still, what is more important in this case is that the theme is also clearly evident in the peritexts of both albums. The textual and graphical elements of the albums involve science fiction to a very large extent, which accordingly implies that they are apt for an analysis from the point of view of peritextuality.

The front and back covers, the booklets and other textual and graphical elements found within the products represent the science fiction story in different ways. I will present the peritextual elements that are relevant in the context of science fiction, that is the elements that in some way connect the albums to the genre, and the peritexts that may reveal something about the stories or music of the albums in general. Thus, I will take the front covers, back covers, booklets, the labels of the discs and the pages of the inside of the digipaks into consideration. The two albums and the music genre progressive metal will be introduced briefly below.

1.1.1 *Ziltoid the Omniscient*

Ziltoid the Omniscient was released in 2007 and it is a solo album by Devin Townsend. It tells the story about an alien called Ziltoid who comes to earth in search for black coffee that he needs for the perfect fuel mix required for time travelling. The reason why Ziltoid is eager to be able to travel in time is that he wants to go back in time to pursue his dream of becoming the greatest rock star in history. Because of the plot, it is relatively obvious that the album has a humorous touch.

The copy of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* that I refer to in this thesis is a digipak, that is a cardboard case with plastic trays which hold the main disc and a bonus disc. Thus, this

is not a classic plastic jewel case. The digipak is composed of three pages of which two hold a disc. The front cover opens up to the left and does not hold a disc, but instead it has the function of a pocket and it holds the booklet of the product. The underlying page opens up to the right and holds a disc, and the middle page also holds a disc. When the digipak is fully spread, the pocket page to the left shows a picture of Ziltoid while the middle page and the page to the right naturally show the labels of the two discs.

1.1.2 *Z²*

Z² was released in 2014 and it is a double album. Townsend did not make this album as a solo project, but with his band called Devin Townsend Project. Only one of the CDs is about Ziltoid. This disc is called *Dark Matters* and it is a sequel to the previous album about him. This time Ziltoid comes back to Earth to conquer it because his own planet is dying, but he draws another war to earth by mistake because he has kidnapped a creature called a Poozer. The mother of all the Poozers, Queen Blattaria, therefore comes to Earth with her mighty army.

The other CD of *Z²* is called *Sky Blue*, but this record is not related to the stories about Ziltoid. The booklet of the album *Z²* is also divided into two halves; a half for each CD. Since *Sky Blue* is not a CD with a science fiction theme, I will not consider that part of the booklet at all. Nevertheless, most of the peritextual elements of the digipak relate to the science fiction theme, which means that only a few elements of the album will be excluded in the study.

The physical product of *Z²* that I have at hand is different from its predecessor in terms of physical structure. Firstly, the actual digipak that contains the CDs is found in a slipcase. The slipcase and the exterior of the digipak are practically similar to each other, with the exception of some additional but minor textual details on the slipcase. Secondly, this digipak has five pages, which means that it is flipped twice both to the left and to the right before it is fully spread. When the digipak is completely spread, two large pictures cover two pages each. One picture is located on the two pages furthest to

the left and the other picture is located on the two pages furthest to the right. The middle page has a small pocket that holds the booklet of the album.

The two pages to the right function as pockets and hold one CD each. These two CDs are connected to the Ziltoid story. One is the main disc with the entire story, while the other one is a raw version that does not include all spoken parts. The spoken parts add a more detailed account to the story. *The Sky Blue*-CD is located in a pocket on the second page from the left, while the page furthest to the left is the only page that does not function as some type of pocket.

It also needs to be mentioned that both *Dark Matters* and *Sky Blue* can be purchased as single records, which consequently implies that the features of these tangible products are different from the double album that I use in this study. An alternative would have been to use the single record version *Dark Matters* in order to focus solely on Ziltoid and the science fiction theme, but, as already mentioned, most of the visual features of the double album product are in fact dedicated to the science fiction theme. For instance, the slipcase and the front cover of the double album both clearly involve elements that are frequently associated with science fiction, and these would have been lost if I had chosen to study the single record version. Furthermore, the front cover of the single record album *Dark Matters* is in fact the same as the front cover of the booklet that is included in the double album that I use here. Thus, the double album contains more elements that are of interest from a peritextual point of view than the single record version.

1.2 Progressive Metal Music

The music on both the albums that are studied in this thesis can be considered progressive metal and the music genre needs a short introduction since it is of relevance in terms of both peritextuality and intertextuality in this study. To exactly define a genre is a difficult task, but I will here try to bring forward some frequently mentioned characteristics of the progressive metal genre. Firstly, Robert Freedman (2014: 137)

states that the song *2112* by the Canadian band Rush generally is considered to be one of the first progressive metal classics. From the beginning, which was in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the band incorporated the theme of science fiction and fantasy in the lyrics through stories of the individual versus society (Freedman 2014: 3). The science fiction theme is frequent within the genre of progressive metal and can for example be found in Between the Buried and Me's EP *The Parrallax: Hypersleep Dialogues* (2011) and the album *The Parrallax II: Future Sequence* (2012), Ayreon's *The Final Experiment* (1995) and Evergrey's *In Search of Truth* (2001). This fascination with science fiction in progressive metal seems to originate from the earlier developed progressive rock genre, which is indicated by Edward Macan's (1996: 3) statement that a recurrent characteristic of progressive rock has been the incorporation of subjects from science fiction.

Robert Freeborn (2010: 843) claims that frequent features of progressive metal are its technical complexity, the concentration on the traditional instruments of the metal genre in general and the occasional inclusion of influences from jazz and jazz-rock fusion in a similar manner to progressive rock. This again suggests that progressive metal shares features of progressive rock. An example of technical complexity in progressive metal music is noted by Matt Dean (2011: 217) who mentions the drummer Mike Portnoy of the American band Dream Theater as the genre's pioneer of difficult and diverse changes in rhythm in addition to complex drum fills using both hands and feet. Technical instrumental complexity is certainly found on both *Ziltoid the Omniscient* and *Z²*.

Another common feature of the progressive metal genre is identified by Søren R. Frimodt-Møller (2013: 83) who points out that lengthy and diverse songs with variations between melodic and heavy sections, accompanied by influences from other genres of music, are one of the characteristics of progressive metal. Highly diverse songs and elements from other music genres are also found on both the albums about Ziltoid, so categorizing the albums as progressive metal music is convincing. In relation to the lengthy and diverse songs that are common in progressive metal, Macan (1996: 58) points out that the concept album traditionally was more frequent in the genre of

progressive rock music than in any other popular genre. Both the albums analysed in this study are concept albums, which consequently again shows that progressive rock and progressive metal have fairly many similarities. This is vital because of the lack of studies that deal with progressive metal, and I will for this reason in some instances draw parallels to the more frequently approached progressive rock genre because it includes many similar features.

2 PERITEXTS

As mentioned in the Introduction, I will rely on Gérard Genette's (1987) definitions of peritexts in this study. In his very thorough book *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, Genette deals with a great number of different types of paratexts, that is types of both epitext and peritext, which may exist in relation to a book. I will introduce the peritextual types that are also present when focus is shifted from books to tangible music products, which in this case are music albums. However, the more extensive term *paratext* first needs a coherent explanation.

2.1 Definition of Paratext

Gérard Genette (1987: 1) states that paratexts are what reinforce, adorn and accompany the actual text of a book, and he also claims that paratexts do not necessarily have to be textual, but can exist in a verbal form as well. Valerie Pellatt (2013: 2) remarks that non-verbal paratexts can for instance appear in the form of illustrations such as photos, charts and other components of visual presentation. The core definition of paratexts, according to Genette (1987: 1), is that they surround and extend the main text of a book. Furthermore, he suggests that the functional aspect of the paratext is the central point because the paratext is a discourse that is always essentially subordinate, supplementary, and even completely devoted to being of assistance to something other than itself, a main text that is. This in turn is what originally establishes the reason for the paratexts' existence. No matter what the intended function of the paratext is, the functionality regulates the nature of the paratext. (ibid. 12.)

Another important aspect of paratexts is who their senders are. Genette (1987: 8) argues that the producer of a paratext is not necessarily the same as the sender, but it is often the case that the identity of the sender is not of great relevance for the reader. The sender is, naturally, often the author of the book to which the paratexts relate, but the sender can also be the publisher or possibly even a third part. In this third scenario the author and publisher, that is the two parts that are responsible for both the actual text

and the paratext, have decided to assign responsibility to someone else. (Genette 1987: 8–9). Genette (ibid. 3) asserts that it is precisely this "[...] authorial intention and assumption of responsibility" that characterises the most frequently used definition of paratexts. The paratexts in the material of this study are consequently all the textual, graphical and pictorial elements that are found within the tangible products, the music albums that is.

2.2 Definition of Peritext

Genette (1987: 4–5) makes a distinction between *peritext* and *epitext*. Epitexts are the types of elements that are located outside the actual book, for example interviews or conversations created by the media, but also letters, diaries and the like that are produced in private conversations. All of these are distanced elements (ibid. 5). I will not consider epitexts here since it is too extensive a mission for this thesis. I will instead focus on peritextual elements, which are the paratextual elements that appear in close connection to the actual text, for example in the same volume in the case of a book (Genette 1987: 4–5). Peritexts are also present in the case of music albums because albums have fairly similar physical features to books and even other types of literature. Furthermore, the peritextual elements of a music album may share a great deal of functions and purposes with those of a book.

3 PERITEXTS IN PHYSICAL MUSIC PRODUCTS

Several types of the peritextual elements that Genette defines are present in the context of music albums as well as in books. For example, front covers of music albums have fairly similar features to front covers of books, such as the name of the product, the names of originators and usually some type of artwork. This section of the study presents types of peritexts that frequently appear on music albums, in what ways these peritexts may be significant for the construction of a theme or an indication of the genre of an album and what information the peritexts may reveal about the music of the album in general. Accordingly, small elements such as bar codes, logotypes of the record label and other specific information about licenses and the like will not be considered in this study because they rarely possess connotations concerning the theme or the genre of an album.

3.1 Front Cover and Back Cover

The front cover of a music album has some similarities to the cover of most types of books. Genette (1987: 24) lists the basic elements of the cover page of a book, and some of these elements are generally found on the cover of an album as well. Firstly, the cover of an album usually has the name of the artist or band as well as the title of the album. This is comparable to the author's name and the title of the work on the front cover of a book. Furthermore, specific illustrations or pictures are almost exclusively found on the cover of both an album and a book. Of course, exceptions to this can be found, but these three elements are in general the only ones to be completely essential to the cover of a music album. However, both textual elements can contain more information than solely names and titles, sheer information as Genette (ibid. 10–11) calls it, and illustrations may possibly convey a great deal of meaning in some instances.

According to Genette (1987: 94), some type of genre indication is frequently more or less present on the front cover of a book. The genre indication is most frequently

located on the cover or title page of a book, often simply in the form of text such as *autobiography*, *history* or *memoir* (Genette 1987: 11, 99). This is rarely the case on the cover of an album to my knowledge. However, it is arguable that a genre indication may appear on the cover, but it is then manifested in a different way than by explicitly labelling it in text. So, I suggest that the genre can be indicated by all the three peritextual elements that are usually vital on the front cover of an album. For example, the name of the artist or band, the title of the album and possible illustrations may convey a message about the genre in numerous instances. Obviously, those who are already familiar with the name of the artist or the band probably make direct associations since they know approximately what type of music the record will contain. According to Genette (ibid. 11), sheer information, such as the name of the author, can disclose an intention or an interpretation, and this may be especially true in the context of music albums.

As I see it, a genre indication on the cover of an album may manifest itself in either a literary or graphical way or in both at the same time. For example, the name of a band can very well indicate what music genre the band plays. Robert Walser (1993: 2) points out that heavy metal bands frequently elicit power and intensity by naming the band after something electric (AC/DC), mechanical (Motörhead) or an unpleasant animal (Scorpions, Ratt) and the like. Thus, it is fairly evident that band names can function as genre indications. Artist's names may sometimes have a similar function if they are fictional, but solo artists may use their real names which do not hold the same type of connotation.

Moreover, the typographic design of the letters in the name of an artist or a band may give an idea about what type of music is concerned. Genette (1987: 34) argues that typographical choices in a book sometimes may have an influence on the actual text. However, he does not mention this in relation to the front cover, but only in relation to the typographic design within the book itself, such as disposition of poems and the like (ibid. 34). I propose that typography may function in a slightly different way on the front cover of an album compared to the front cover of a book. The band name or the name of an artist on the front cover of a music album is to my knowledge frequently

more visually lavish than the name of an author on the front cover of a book. For instance, the band name that customarily appears on the front cover of a band's albums presumably has some fairly consistent graphical design, which frequently distinguishes it from the name of an author on most books from a peritextual point of view.

Examples of typographical elements are found in band names such as Motörhead and Mötley Crüe. The tremata, that is the two dots, originally served merely to demonstrate an idea of connection to the medieval and mythological, which are regarded as popular themes for the genre of heavy metal. The tremata in these cases have no phonological purposes and the usage of them has subsequently developed into a genre specific element of metal music. (Spitzmüller 2012: 270–271). Consequently, it is arguable that the typographic aspect of the name of an artist or a band as well as the title of the album may function as a genre indication to some extent. Still, as Genette (1987: 13) points out, paratexts must really be analysed individually for every single work due to their very complex nature. In relation to this, it is vital to keep in mind that typography may frequently not function as a source for genre indication, but it always has an opportunity to do so. On the other hand, the typographic aspect may also indicate something that is ambiguous in different ways, whether coincidental or on purpose.

An illustration of some sort usually appears on the front cover of both a book and a music album, and Genette (1987: 28) mentions that the main role of a book cover is to somehow attract attention. The front cover of an album aims at the exact same function, and an illustration of some sort is often efficient for this purpose. An illustration may very well imply what genre is concerned, but this peritextual message may of course be vague or even completely impossible to draw any conclusions from. Whether the message is clear, vague or non-existent, the illustration on the cover always carries some meaning or indication of something. Furthermore, an illustration may regularly correlate with the title of the album or with the name of the artist or band in some way, which presumably assists in creating an intelligible impression of the product. Accordingly, the front cover is supposed to evoke emotions which in turn make the product desirable.

In their investigation of peritextual features in picture books, Miriam Martinez, Catherine Stier and Lori Falcon (2016: 230–231, 237–238) use the term *key element* about peritextual objects that play an important part in a story, and they suggest that these objects may display certain aspects that are of importance for the story before the reader has even began reading the main text. Key elements may appear on the front cover of an album as well, even though it is probably not a very frequent feature. The main reason to this is simply that most music albums do not tell a coherent story, and a story is basically a requirement for the existence of key elements. It is arguable that there can be key elements for separate songs, but the idea of key elements presented above is not fully relevant if it concerns only a part of the album since the importance of the element is then slight in proportion to the full album. The notion of key elements is applicable in this study since both the albums that I study visually display objects that are of importance for the stories. An example of this is a coffee mug that appears in the main character Ziltoid's hand on the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*. Since the story revolves around Ziltoid's search for the perfect cup of black coffee which he needs in order to be able to travel through time, the mug is undoubtedly a key element.

Martinez et al. (2016: 234–235) also discuss the ways in which the setting can be expressed through peritextual features, and they distinguish place, era, season and time of day or night. Such information can also be found on the front cover of a music album in some instances. As an illustration, if the front cover of an album shows a picture where it is evident that the season is autumn, the observer may assume that the music is at least somewhat melancholic. According to Rosina Neginsky (2010: 417), autumn is frequently connected to melancholia in poetry, and poetry and lyrics in music may very well have similar themes and are therefore comparable to some extent. Moreover, the music in a song frequently corresponds with the theme of the lyrics, which implies that the lyrics in combination with the music produce a uniform impression. Hence, the setting of the front cover may give the reader an idea about what type of music an album contains.

Another example where setting can contribute to the perception of what type of music an album may contain is found on the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*. It is here

fairly obvious that the front cover depicts a place somewhere in space and it is thus possible that the observer could associate this with progressive rock music because science fiction has been a frequent theme since the music genre emerged (Macan 1996: 3). The album is not really considered to be progressive rock but rather progressive metal, but the genres are not very different from each other. Thus, the association to science fiction functions as a reference to both progressive rock and progressive metal.

Yet another peritextual feature that Martinez et al. (2016: 235–236) mention is character information, which most of the picture books they studied were rich with. To my knowledge, the appearances of any characters on the front covers of music albums are relatively rare in general, which again naturally correlates with the fact that many albums do not tell a coherent story. Furthermore, even though an album has a coherent story, a more frequent subject is still some type of landscape, symbols or graphically produced environments, at least concerning metal music. However, one of the albums in this study, *Ziltoid the Omniscient*, depicts the main character Ziltoid on its front cover, so character information is certainly found in this case. It is possible to draw some conclusions about Ziltoid when observing this front cover, for example that he is an alien, which reveals some information about the theme of the album.

The back cover of an album is considerably different from that of book. Generally, the most prominent elements of the back cover of an album are the titles of the songs. Colour schemes and other graphical elements naturally correlate with the front cover, but the back cover is usually more discrete since it is not in the same way designed to draw attention. The main function of the back cover is in most cases to display the song titles, their order and sometimes their length. Here again, the song titles may possibly reveal something about the music genre or what the individual songs sound like. Still, it is probably fairly rare to successfully draw conclusions based solely on the titles. On the other hand, the genre may sometimes be quite obvious when seeing titles including words such as *rock*, *blues*, *metal* or *symphony*, but such words can also be very misleading or ambiguous in some instances.

The song titles of a music album are similar to intertitles which Genette (1987: 103) calls titles of parts, chapters, sections and the like within a book. Genette (ibid. 294) argues that intertitles are different from general titles in that they are frequently only seen by the actual reader and that they are normally not obligatory elements in a book. The song titles of an album are slightly different since they are generally written on the back cover in addition to within the booklet, which means that anyone can see them without opening the album or the booklet. Genette (1987: 297) states that intertitles may be necessary in books with compilations of novellas, and since a music album most often can be said to contain a compilation of songs, intertitles in the form of song titles are frequently needed somewhere on or in the music product. However, Edge of Sanity's *Crimson* (1996), Green Carnation's *Light of Day, Day of Darkness* (2001) and Insomnium's *Winter's Gate* (2016) are examples of albums that consist of only one prolonged song, which means that these products have no intertitles even though the one song is still marked on the records.

3.2 The Label of the Disc

The label of the disc is what is printed on the actual disc itself. According to Richard Osborne (2014: 205), the label of a record resembles the title page of a book in many regards since both usually carry the names of the originators, titles, the name of the manufacturer and copyright details. However, this is not always the case with CDs. In a number of instances neither the name of the band or artist nor the title of the album is printed on the label. This is the case on the discs of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*, while the discs of *Z²* include the title of the record but not the name of the band. This implies that no strict rules restrict the appearance of a record's label to a large extent, while the structure of the title page of a book is more or less fixed in terms of which elements should appear on it. Genette (1987: 33) mentions that the title page of a book normally includes the title of the book and its possible appendages, both the name and the address of the publisher as well as the name of the author.

The manufacturer, that is a band's or artist's record label or the publisher of a book, is then the only element that always appear on both the title page of book and on the label of a music disc. Information such as year and country of production, licenser, prohibition against unauthorized duplication and what type of disc is concerned always appear on the disc label as well, but these textual elements rarely convey any information about the theme of an album and will therefore not be discussed in this study. However, the disc label may frequently include other visual elements that may reveal something about the theme, which is the subject that is of interest in this study. The label of a CD may in some instances be similar to the front cover of an album regarding colour schemes and other graphic elements, so the visual aspects of disc labels may overlap with those of the front cover. On the other hand, the labels can also be very different from the front cover and then add something more to the theme of the album.

3.3 Booklet

The booklet that comes with an album is obviously the most extensive peritextual component, if seen as entity, since it has several pages. A great deal of different types of peritextual elements appear inside the booklet. I will in this study mainly consider the visual aspects of the printed word, the typographic aspects of the lyrics that is, in addition to pictures and other graphical elements, in order to try to reveal how they may possibly influence the impression of the music album product.

Concerning the booklet, it is important to address the fact that listening to a music album does not necessarily require the listener to even glance through the booklet, so the influence of the booklet may of course be arbitrary to some extent. The peritextual elements of a book are generally more prominent in that they are actually physically connected to the main text to which they refer. It is always possible that the booklet that comes with a music album is overlooked because one can remove a CD from its case without seeing the booklet at all. However, it is likely that the buyer of music in physical format will some time at least glance through the booklet, so it is still an

important part of the product. Furthermore, as already mentioned, the booklet is in any case interesting from the point of view of peritextuality because of its extensiveness.

3.3.1 Lyrics

The lyrics of all the songs of an album are normally printed in the booklet. From a peritextual point of view, the printed lyrics are of an interesting nature. If the booklet is considered a separate product, the printed lyrics should not be seen as peritextual elements, but rather as the actual text. However, the booklet is not a separate product, but it is instead an attribute to the music on a record, which in turn implies that the printed lyrics are peritexts. It is not always easy to actually hear the exact words and phrases of song, but the lyrics in the booklet make it possible to follow what is sung word for word. The lyrics of a song do of course have an impact on how the song is perceived as a whole, but since the aim of this thesis does not cover an analysis of lyrics, I will not go further into detail on this.

Typography is again a vital aspect from a peritextual point of view concerning the lyrics. Firstly, as Genette (1987: 34) mentions, the choice of typeface and arrangement of the text in a book have an impact on how the text is perceived, at least to some extent. Different fonts may for example have some differences in connotation, which consequently may result in different overall impressions of the product. For instance, Theo van Leeuwen (2006: 149) suggests that a typeface with letters of round forms may be associated with smoothness, softness, motherliness, naturalness and organicness, while angular forms may represent masculinity, technicality, harshness and the like. However, van Leeuwen (ibid. 149) also points out that the range of possibilities concerning typeface is extensive and that an important aspect of the font is the genre in which it occurs and the expectations that follow with that particular genre. A clear and simple example of typographic meaning is given by Nina Nørgaard (2009: 150) who states that capital letters can signify a type of auditory lucidity in a text.

3.3.2 Pictures and Graphical Elements

As far as I am aware, it is prevalent that at least one picture of the artist or the band is found in the booklet. It is not very unusual that a small picture of the author appears on the back cover of a book, and the purpose in both these instances is simply to show what the originators look like. This may in many instances be a more influential peritextual element in the context of music than in literature because the name of an artist or a band does not necessarily reveal any actual information about the musicians since proper names may not be revealed at all. On the other hand, this is also true if an author of a book does not use his or her real name but a pseudonym. Aspects such as age, gender and ethnicity, even though this information can be completely irrelevant, may be uncovered by the help of pictures.

Pictures with other subjects than artists or band members may also appear in the booklet. For instance, the character Ziltoid appears in several pictures in the booklet of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*, while Devin Townsend does not appear in any of the pictures of the product. Pictures with scenic landscapes or other environments that in some ways can be connected to the music can strengthen the atmosphere that the music is intended to create. Thus, if the music is gloomy or melancholic, possible pictures may well be in dark or grey colours, for example a rainy or foggy landscape.

To analyse pictures in detail is beyond the scope of this thesis, but some aspects of visual semiotics will be mentioned. For example, the impression of a character or an object in a picture is not only influenced by facial expression, colours, garments, shapes and the like, but also by how the character or object is angled or where a character's gaze is set. For instance, Claire Harrison (2003: 53) lists aspects such as social distance and intimacy, that is how far away or close a character appears in a picture, and vertical and horizontal angles of perspective as important features of how a character is perceived in a picture. Thus, the impression of some peritexts may well be influenced by these aspects, and I will return briefly to a few of them when it is relevant for the aim of this thesis.

In addition to pictures, other graphical elements may appear in the booklet. Different visual patterns and colour schemes are a vital part of the overall impression of the booklet, and in the same manner as possible pictures I suggest that the function of colour schemes and the like is to assist in creating the atmosphere that the music and the rest of the product are intended to do. For example, many associate metal music with colours such as grey and black, and classical music with brighter colours like yellow (Tsiounta, Staniland & Patera 2013). Furthermore, the music industry started colour coding record labels according to genre at an early stage (Osborne 2014: 206), which may have influenced the relation between music and colours to some extent.

4 SCIENCE FICTION AND INTERTEXTUALITY

The genre science fiction and the notion of intertextuality are vital aspects of the peritexts of both *Ziltoid the Omniscient* and *Z²*. The theme of the albums is science fiction, and the peritexts' references to other work within the genre imply that intertextuality contribute to strengthen the theme. Thus, both terms will be briefly introduced below.

4.1 Science Fiction

Science fiction as a genre is without a doubt very popular in literature and film, but the genre may also appear in a musical context. The genre may seem simple to explain, but an exact definition is in fact fairly difficult to produce. *OED Online* ("science fiction, n.") offers a plain definition of science fiction as "Fiction in which the setting and story feature hypothetical scientific or technological advances, the existence of alien life, space or time travel, etc., *esp.* such fiction set in the future, or an imagined alternative universe." The two stories about Ziltoid included in this study are certainly fictive and feature both alien life and space travel, so the plots of the albums can clearly be categorized as science fiction according to the definition above. Even so, some definitions of science fiction are a great deal more complex than the one mentioned above.

Darko Suvin (1979: 7–8) argues that science fiction in literature is dependent on estrangement and cognition, and that these aspects occur within a framework that is imagined and thus different from the surroundings of the author. Suvin (ibid. 8) claims that estrangement is what discerns science fiction from realistic literature, while cognition is what discerns it from myth, folk/fairy tale and fantasy. Adam Roberts (2000: 8) clarifies cognition as the facet of science fiction which induces the receiver of a story to try to comprehend the unfamiliar environment of the story, and estrangement as the component that is perceived as different in a science fiction story. Thus, science fiction is in this sense a story where the environment is different from the reality of the

reader or viewer, but familiar elements that help the reader to understand the entirety of the story can still found.

Roberts (2000: 28) argues that a common denominator in many definitions of science fiction is some type of confrontation with difference. Furthermore, Roberts (ibid. 28) claims that science fiction is often seen as a popular and fictional vehicle in which it is possible to investigate otherness, even though some critics do not fully agree with this suggestion. The confrontation with difference is one of the main features of science fiction that is evident in this study since the protagonist of both the albums included is an alien, in addition to several other characters from outer space, and aliens are a very frequent means to portrait otherness in the genre in general. Roberts (2000: 132) points out that the feature that frequently separates an alien from a human in science fiction is its skin colour, which is then a symbolic representation for race, perhaps particularly in American science fiction. This type of symbolism is called a trope.

The notion of science fiction tropes is of importance since many frequent features of the genre are symbolic. Roberts (2000: 194) defines the term trope as "a figure of speech or particular strategy in using language" and then gives an example from the genre of science fiction where the journey in the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) is a metaphor for the life of human beings. The journey in the film is then a trope. Another example that Roberts (2000: 118) mentions is the trope of the alien, which may frequently allude to racial topics in different ways. The term trope will be used frequently in this thesis because many of the typical science fiction features that appear in the two products included are essentially tropes.

As the definition by *OED Online* ("science fiction, n.") states, space is a common place for science fiction stories to take place in, and space itself is consequently often associated with science fiction. Space is very evident in *Ziltoid the Omniscient* and *Z²* in many different ways since visual presentations of planets, stars, space ships and the like are seen in the pictures and backgrounds of both products. In relation to tropes, then, different space vehicles are seen in several instances in *Z²*, and Roberts (2000: 154) argues that space ships can be seen as a symbol for technology. Thus, spaceships are

science fiction tropes in that they possess a symbolic value in addition to being a vehicle for transportation in space.

Colour plays an important role in this thesis since it deals with the visual aspects of the products. In her analysis of film posters, Cecilia Fagerholm (2009: 18–19) argues that dark colours, often in nuances of blue, are frequent in posters that advertise films in the science fiction genre, but she also mentions that warmer colours may appear in order to keep the posters attractive. Fagerholm (ibid. 15, 19) states that blue is currently strongly associated with technology, which in turn naturally connects the colour to science fiction because technology is an important element in the genre. Thus, colour is an important factor of a product within the science fiction genre. The frequently used colours in science fiction are also evident in *Ziltoid the Omniscient* and *Z²* since the products clearly favour fairly dark colour schemes but also include brighter colours to some extent.

The *Star Wars* (1977) franchise is one of the most influential series of science fiction films. Roberts (2000: 84) points out that *Star Wars* were the films that really started the expansion of the genre in cinema. A great deal of allusions to the franchise are found in the visual aspects of both *Ziltoid the Omniscient* and *Z²*, so *Star Wars* will be mentioned frequently in the analysis of this study. The reason to why it is convenient to draw parallels to the franchise in this context is because it is so extensive in terms of characters, environments, technology and a number of other typical science fiction features. In other words, *Star Wars* offers such a vast amount of science fiction elements that it is possible to find many similar features in both the albums that are dealt with in this study.

4.2 Intertextuality

The term intertextuality was first introduced by Julia Kristeva (1984: 59–60) who defines it as the "[…] transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another", and she states that this transposition requires a new affiliation and signification to the

original prescriptive purport. In other words, intertextuality can be described as the transfer and incorporation of, for example, an item of text into another text, and when this transfer and incorporation occur, a new junction of form and meaning develops. A central idea by Kristeva (1980: 36) is that every text is in fact a combination of other texts in that utterances from other texts intersect and counteract each other within the framework of a text.

Graham Allen (2000: 1) states that reading is actually an operation that implies proceeding between different texts, and this means that meaning is created through the relations between a particular text and all other possible texts to which it relates and refers in some way. This implies that other texts that a reader has read affect the way in which he or she perceives another text that he or she reads. In this sense, the perception of a text may be very subjective since everyone does not read the same texts. This will also be evident in this thesis because the instances of intertextuality that I present are such that every reader would not necessarily observe all of them in the same manner as I do. Thus, the intertextual elements that are presented in the analysis are personal in that I perceive their intertextuality while someone else may not perceive the same connections. Furthermore, Allen (ibid. 1) also mentions that modern theorists claim that texts do not possess independent meaning because aspects such as systems, codes and culture have essential roles to the meaning of a text.

Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus ("intertextuality, n." 2009) defines the term intertextuality as "the relationship between pieces of writing". However, Graham Allen (2000: 174) points out that the term intertextuality is not limited to literature, but can be used in other cultural or artistic productions, for instance in music, film and painting. Allen (ibid. 174–175) argues that all forms of art invariably communicate with each other both within the same art form and with other forms of art because we interpret the works through former languages or systems of particular art forms. This implies that the concept of intertextuality is present in this study since the peritextual features of the two music albums studied in this thesis contain references to other works of art. An example of this is the protagonist Ziltoid's logotype, which appears several times in both the albums. The main element of this logotype is the letter zed, which could be a reference

to the masked, fictional character Zorro who has appeared in several books and films, for example in *The Mask of Zorro* (1998). One of his characteristics is that he leaves a zed-shaped mark which he makes with a rapier.

Gérard Genette (1997: 3) distinguishes quotation, plagiarism and allusion as three different types of intertextuality. I am here not interested in quotations or plagiarism, so allusion is the type that I will focus on in this thesis. *Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus* ("allusion, n." 2009) defines allusion as "an indirect reference to something", and it is precisely these indirect references that can be found in the peritextual elements of both the music albums that are included in this study. Paul Williams (2015: 178) claims that allusions are supposed to be minute reverberations which may frequently be unconscious, but they may also be obscured on purpose in order to delude.

The allusions presented in the analysis of this thesis revolve to a great extent around science fiction. Since both the albums included in this study have an obvious science fiction theme, many of the allusions refer to other pieces of work within the genre. This is fairly lucid because works within the boundaries of the same genre generally have at least some similar features, which implies that similar elements can be found in different stories. This in turn suggests that intertextuality frequently may be more distinct between works within the same or a similar genre. However, it is also probable that it is easier for the reader to identify intertextual elements that allude to something within the same genre because such elements are generally more prominent than elements that allude to something in a completely different genre or even in another art form. For example, several of the intertextual elements in the two albums included in this study clearly allude to popular science fiction films such as the *Star Wars* (1977) franchise and *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982).

5 PERITEXTS OF *ZILTOID THE OMNISCIENT* AND *Z²*

This section of the study presents and analyses the peritexts of the albums *Ziltoid the Omniscient* and *Z².* The findings will not be presented in the same order as the theory chapter because a more thematic arrangement is needed in order to avoid repetition.

5.1 Ziltoid

Ziltoid first appears on the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*. He is in the middle of the picture and stretches from the bottom almost all the way to the top of the cover. He is presented from the front and he wears a large cloak which covers most of his body, and he also seems to have a very long scarf that hangs so far down that it is not completely visible in the picture. The cloak is a fairly obvious intertextual element that is an allusion to a great deal of different characters, for example a number of super heroes. However, because of the prominent collar of the cloak that Ziltoid wears, one may very well first think of the vampire in the film *Dracula* (1931). Ziltoid's legs are not visible in the picture, but he seems to be in motion since a great amount of coffee splashes from the mug that he holds in his left hand far to the right side of the cover. The coffee mug has a logotype with a zed on a round background, and this logotype will be separately dealt with in the following subsection.

Ziltoid's right arm is raised and he holds the index finger up, which can be interpreted as sounding a note of caution. An intertextual interpretation of Ziltoid's held-up index finger is found in a scene in Steven Spielberg's classic science fiction film *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982) where the alien E.T. points to the sky and says that he wants to call home. It is thus possible that Ziltoid with his finger up on the front cover is an intentional reference to Spielberg's film. Consequently, this allusion to a science fiction film strengthens the science fiction theme of the album, and the reference is probably conscious since both Ziltoid and E.T. are aliens. Furthermore, Ziltoid seems to have black gloves, at least on his right hand which he is holding up. The left hand is in the shade of the coffee mug, so it is difficult to see whether or not he has a glove on it. The

character Darth Vader of the popular *Star Wars* (1977) franchise is always seen with black gloves in addition to his otherwise completely black suit, so Ziltoid's gloves are also an allusion to this science fiction film.

The most prominent feature of Ziltoid on the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* is his head because it is what really shows that he is an alien. Ziltoid's head is green and he has a large mouth where two large front teeth are clearly visible in his upper jaw. The idea of the green alien was introduced already in the 1800s (Thomas 2013: 23), so the presentation of Ziltoid as green is a classic science fiction trope. Furthermore, Ziltoid's green colour alludes to other green creatures that have been seen in science fiction films, for example the small but very powerful Yoda in the *Star Wars* (1977) franchise. The pair of large teeth can likewise again be seen as an allusion to Dracula whose canine teeth reveal that he is a vampire. However, Ziltoid's visible teeth are the front teeth, but can still be seen as an allusion to Dracula with a humorous touch. Furthermore, large front teeth also allude to rabbits, for example Bugs Bunny who first appeared in the animated short film *A Wild Hare* (1940). Again, this indicates the humorous element of the album.

Ziltoid does not look particularly happy in the picture, but rather slightly annoyed since a faint frown can be discerned in his face. His neck looks nothing like a human's but instead has a great deal of fairly thick puckers which makes the neck look like the one of some type of lizard. Ziltoid's eyes are brown and the eyeballs protrude somewhat out of his head. The irises and the pupils of his eyes seem small in proportion to the large eyeballs, which makes him look rather funny even though he does not look happy. Protruding eyes are a fairly distinct feature of the Martians in Tim Burton's comedic science fiction film *Mars Attacks* (1996), so Ziltoid's eyes can be read as an allusion to the film. In addition, Ziltoid's somewhat comic exterior in general also bears resemblances with Burton's farcical Martians. Furthermore, Ziltoid's eyes allude to the aliens Kang and Kodos who occasionally appear in the animated comedy series *The Simpsons* (1989). Kang and Kodos only have one eye each, but these eyes protrude out of their heads in a similar manner to Ziltoid's eyes. So, these allusions include aspects of both science fiction and comedy simultaneously, and this is compatible with the

comical science fiction story about Ziltoid. Furthermore, aliens' frequently protruding eyes in comical presentations can be seen as a trope.

Ziltoid does not have any hair on the top of his head, but one can see some dreadlocks hanging down from the back of it. These dreadlocks hold several interesting allusions. Firstly, the dreadlocks allude to yet another science fiction film, *Predator* (1987), in which a terrifying alien that hunts down a team of commandos in a jungle appears to have some type of dreadlocks on its head. Ziltoid's dreadlocks are also an allusion to Rastafarianism since the hairstyle is a significant part of the religion (Chitando & Chitando 2004: 9). Moreover, Devin Townsend had dreadlocks at the time that he was making the album, so the dreadlocks of Ziltoid are even an allusion to Townsend himself. A further and more obvious sign of this is the fact that Townsend had a hairstyle commonly referred to as a *skullet*, which according to *Urban Dictionary* ("skullet." 2002) basically implies bald on the top of the head but long hair on the back of the head. This is strikingly similar to Ziltoid's hairstyle, so this allusion is without a doubt conscious.

The dreadlock allusion to Townsend has further implications. Ziltoid is a type of alter ego of Townsend, which is a suggestion that is strengthened by the fact that Townsend does the voice of Ziltoid on both the albums included in this study. Ziltoid's quest for the perfect cup of black coffee could be compared to Townsend's aspiration for the perfect sound. In an interview he says that he has been searching for it for 25 years, but he is constantly slightly annoyed because he states that is an impracticability to achieve the perfect sound (Bansal 2016). Thus, Devin Townsend and Ziltoid have several features that connect them in a way that indicates that Ziltoid is Townsend's alter ego in this context.

As already mentioned, the front cover is intended to attract attention, and since the visual presentation of Ziltoid is the most prominent object on the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*, he is what should attract main attention. As has been discussed above, a fair amount of character information is revealed about Ziltoid on the front cover. The most prominent aspect of Ziltoid is that he is an alien, which in turn provides the reader

with a vital piece of information about the album. However, this information is difficult to interpret since it is ambiguous. The fact that Ziltoid is an alien can possibly suggest that the album contains progressive rock or metal because science fiction, and thus space, has been a frequent theme in the genre, but the goofy appearance of Ziltoid could also indicate that the album is intended for children.

When the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* is first flipped up to the left, one is confronted with two pictures of Ziltoid. One picture is on the back of the front cover, while the other picture is located on the front of the page which is flipped to the right secondary to the front cover. The two pictures of Ziltoid are very similar to each other, except that the one to the left is considerably more zoomed in. Both pictures show Ziltoid in close-up, but Ziltoid is in extreme close-up so that his head fills most of the space of the page in the picture to the left, and only Ziltoid's head is visible in this picture. Claire Harrison (2003: 53, 56) categorizes this type of close-up pictures as indications of intimate distance, and this can function as an aspect that implies a type of personal connection between the viewer and the object or person in the picture. Furthermore, in this picture Ziltoid stares directly at the reader, which according to Harrison (ibid. 53) can be interpreted as a demand that, for the viewer, frequently results in emotions of strong involvement towards the object or person in the picture.

In the picture to the right, Ziltoid's hands are visible since they are held up in an almost surprised manner in front of him. In this picture Ziltoid appears to be looking slightly upwards and thus outside the picture. This does not create the same type of engagement as when the character is looking at the reader, and the fact that he is looking upwards indicates that he has less power than in the previous picture where his gaze was set horizontally, according to Harrison (2003: 53). Thus, even though these two pictures are fairly similar, they still offer slightly different impressions of Ziltoid, which can be interpreted as Ziltoid being dynamic and not static. In relation to this, a very important piece of character information about Ziltoid is revealed when the reader sees these two pictures of him, and that is the fact that he is actually a puppet. Thus, he is not simply a painted or otherwise graphically reproduced character in these pictures since this is rather a type of photography.

The two pictures of Ziltoid discussed above show him in the same manner as the front cover, but it is possible to distinguish some more details since these are close-up pictures. The puckers on his throat are here clearly visible, and the fact that Ziltoid actually only seems to have two teeth is also apparent. The puckers are a science fiction feature since it is not unusual that various alien creatures in science fiction films have wrinkly skin or larger puckers. Examples of creatures with apparent puckers are E.T. and the fat Jabba the Hutt who is seen in several of the *Star Wars* (1977) films. Thus, Ziltoid again demonstrates allusions to several films in the science fiction genre because of his physical features.

The back cover of the booklet of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* is again embellished with a picture of Ziltoid. This time it is framed with a large circle in the centre of the page. This may be seen as an allusion to animated series such as *Looney Tunes* (1948), where the characters appear inside a circle in the beginning of the show. Another allusion is the lion which is seen inside a circle in the logotype of the film production company Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and the circle frame has of course been used in a number of other occasions as well. Thus, a character appearing from within a circle is nothing new, which speaks in favour for an intentional allusion in this case. Ziltoid is again framed by a circle in the same manner as on the front cover of the booklet in *Z²*, so the circle frame is used on both albums. The circle from which Ziltoid appears is an intertextual element because of these fairly palpable allusions to several prelusive features of various films and series. This intertextual element is somewhat humorous because of the allusions to several animated series intended for children, so these elements suggest that the stories are not very dreary or serious, which undoubtedly is true.

The coffee mug that is present on the back cover of the booklet is now considerably enlarged and Ziltoid seems to be sitting or standing in it, if he is not simply behind it. It may of course be Ziltoid who is suddenly a great deal smaller as well. Ziltoid is only visible from the neck up, but he holds his hands above the brim of the mug. This picture may represent that Ziltoid's undertakings are greater than he can manage since the coffee mug is so much larger here than on the front cover. Another interpretation that partly overlaps with the previous one is that the picture displays the smallness of Ziltoid

in the universe. Both interpretations go well with the story as Ziltoid does not succeed in his mission and instead realizes that he is only a puppet.

However, it appears that Ziltoid shows thumbs up with both of his hands in the picture, so he seems to be happy here in contrast to the front cover of the digipak and the booklet. Even though this version of Ziltoid is a puppet whose expression is more or less fixed, he does not seem to be frowning in this picture, but rather appears to be fairly pleased or even happy. This difference may be because this picture of Ziltoid shows him from a slightly different angle than the front cover. Ziltoid's expression in this picture does not match the two interpretations mentioned above because Ziltoid should not be happy at all after his failed mission and realization of his true nature. On the other hand, the appearance of Ziltoid in this picture again shows some of the humour that otherwise imbues both of the albums since he gives an impression that the story is not so serious.

A large picture with Ziltoid appears in the booklet of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* and stretches over both pages of the centrespread. This picture again shows Ziltoid's head from the front, but this time only from the upper jaw and up. His eyes stare straight ahead at the person who opens the middle spread and the large eyes again contribute to Ziltoid's rather comical appearance. Below Ziltoid's head, and covering the lower jaw, is Earth. Not much of it is visible, but it is enough to discern that it is Earth since the atmosphere and clouds are seen above its surface. This picture represents Ziltoid's quest to Earth in search for the greatest cup of coffee, but it also represents Ziltoid's evil attack on the planet when the humans do not give him their finest coffee. Aliens attacking Earth is a frequent feature of science fiction stories, so Ziltoid's attack is a distinctive trait for the theme in general. Examples on alien attacks are seen in the films *Independence Day* (1996) and *Cowboys & Aliens* (2011), and far earlier in the novel *The War of the Worlds* (1898). An alien attack is always an encounter with the unknown, which implies that it is a science fiction trope.

Two pictures with similar subjects appear in *Z²*. Ziltoid is on the front cover of the booklet and his left arm is here raised slightly upwards and forwards, and in the palm of his hand is Earth in a small form. It is obvious that the planet is Earth because of the

clouds that surround it and the fact that it is possible to discern parts of North America on it. It glows where Ziltoid's hand and the surface of the planet touch, and it seems to be so hot that matter is melting and flowing between Ziltoid's fingers. This shows Ziltoid as the destroyer of Earth, which is a frequently occurring theme considering aliens in science fiction stories in general. The film *Cloverfield* (2008) and the novel *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979) are examples of stories where aliens intend to destroy Earth.

Earth is also visually present inside the digipak of *Z²*. When the front cover of the digipak is flipped to the left, Ziltoid appears from the front in a window in the picture of the right page and he stands behind what seems to be a hologram of planet Earth. Almost half of the planet is visible above the bottom window frame and Ziltoid is visible from about breast height up. This picture represents Ziltoid's new plan to invade Earth. The picture corresponds well with Ziltoid's intentions to conquer Earth because he appears to be staring down at the hologram of the planet with a stern facial expression that makes him look focused and evil.

To the left of the hologram one can see a little more of Ziltoid's right side. His shoulders are covered with a dark-coloured cloak which is seen hanging far down to the left side of the hologram. A little of the inside of the cloak is visible here, and it is in a clear purple colour, which is again an allusion to Dracula because of the frequently bright red inside of his cloak in various visual representations of him. It is difficult to see what type of garment Ziltoid wears on his upper body since it is very dark and slightly blurred, but both hands are clearly visible and it is obvious that he wears black gloves here as well. However, this picture gives a first indication that Ziltoid has changed since the previous album.

It is clear that the visual presentation of Ziltoid in this picture in *Z²* is not a photograph of a puppet. His head is here again greenish but the eyeballs are not as large and protruding as in the previous album. His forehead is large and has a peculiar wavelike form with a wave crest in the middle of the forehead. The top of his head is not completely visible, but it seems to be rather large in proportion to the rest of the head.

Dreadlocks are seen coming from the back of Ziltoid's head and the hair is a great deal thicker than it appears to be on the first album. Two teeth of different length are seen below his upper jaw and further down one can see the puckers of his throat. Behind Ziltoid's head is the cloak's very large and stiff collar that almost looks like two large horns that appear on each side of his head.

What really differentiates this picture of Ziltoid from those of the previous album is that he is here displayed in a considerably darker manner. Not only is the whole picture darker, but Ziltoid himself looks more spiteful. In addition to the other updates of Ziltoid, the fact that he appears as a more malevolent figure in this picture indicates that he has changed since the previous album. This is similar to the change of Anakin Skywalker in the *Star Wars* (1977) franchise since he is good in the two first films but starts to turn towards the dark side in the third, after which he becomes Darth Vader. Thus, this is yet another resemblance to a prominent science fiction story. However, Ziltoid does not change considerably in the actual stories of the albums, but the visual aspects of him are different in the sequel so that he seems more evil from a visual point of view.

Ziltoid also looks really evil in the picture of the front cover of the booklet of *Z²*. He is narrowing his eyes while he is looking at the planet in his left hand, and his open mouth indicates that he is laughing viciously. Aliens are frequently portrayed as evil and hostile in the science fiction genre, and aggression is a vital aspect of the presentation of frightening alien creatures. For instance, the Xenomorph in the film *Alien* (1979) is a very aggressive type of alien that wants to harm human beings, and it shows no signs of mercy or compassion. The large Arachnids in the film *Starship Troopers* (1997) are other prominent examples of hostile aliens since these creatures kill human beings and suck out the brain from their heads.

Ziltoid's arms stretch out from the circle in the picture on the front cover of the booklet of *Z²*, and while his left hand holds Earth in a small form, his right hand holds the coffee mug with the zed-logotype. Ziltoid seems to be in motion here again since a fair amount of coffee splashes from the mug. Ziltoid wears the same garments as in the already dealt

with window picture, but this picture is brighter so the colours are clearer. It is here evident that he wears a black jacket or perhaps a type of space suit or the like, and a long scarf hangs around his neck down his breast and outside the circle, and thus out of visibility. It is possible that it is again a puppet version of Ziltoid in this picture. His head does not really look painted of graphically reproduced, but rather a great deal like the Ziltoid that appears in online videos that were uploaded before the release of the album. Ziltoid is in these videos clearly a puppet, which consequently proves that a puppet exists for this album as well. His skin appears to be made of rubber or plastic in the picture, which indicates that this is probably a photograph of the existing puppet.

A further indication of Ziltoid's change is a very aggressive presentation of him that appears in a large picture to the right when the *Z²*-digipak is fully spread. Ziltoid stands behind the war princess Queen Blattaria and Devin Townsend Project's bassist Brian Waddell in this picture. Ziltoid's chest is turned towards the reader but his head is facing forwards to the right in the same manner as the other characters in the picture. Ziltoid seems to be roaring since his jaw is wide open so that the inside and all the teeth in it are visible. It looks as if he were in motion because his dreadlocks swing behind him. Only his left eye is visible and it seems that he is screwing up his eyes to see what is in front of him. He wears the same garments as in the already mentioned pictures in *Z²*.

A picture of Ziltoid on the eighth page in the booklet of *Z²* is a close-up where only his head, the collar and a little of his shoulders are visible. This is again the puppet version of Ziltoid, and he glares up towards space. His mouth is partly open and the two front teeth of the upper jaw are again clearly visible. Ziltoid looks focused and evil as is always the case with this version of the puppet. This picture is very similar to the close-up picture in the digipak of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* where Ziltoid looks slightly upwards, so this is an updated version of that picture. If compared, these two pictures certainly highlight the changes of Ziltoid between the two albums, and it confirms the already dealt with development of him because he looks a great deal more evil in this picture than the corresponding one in the previous album.

The appearances of Ziltoid in the pictures of *Z²* are fairly different from the ones in the previous album. Firstly, he is more vivid because he has different expressions in this product. In *Ziltoid the Omniscient* Ziltoid is clearly seen as a puppet, which consequently means that he has a very similar expression in every picture. In *Z²* he is, instead, frequently painted or graphically reproduced so that he looks different in the different pictures of the product. Secondly, he seems to be a great deal bigger in *Z²* than in the previous album. This is evident in the large picture to the right in the fully spread digipak since Ziltoid appears to be taller than everyone else who appear in it, and his right arm seems to be very long. He is pointing forwards and the arm stretches far past Queen Blattaria even though she stands in front of him to the left. Ziltoid's right hand is also very large in proportion to the other characters, and in fact even in proportion to the rest of Ziltoid himself. The aggressive appearance and increase in size indicate Ziltoid's change towards a more evil and powerful figure, which is again compatible with Darth Vader.

Lastly, Ziltoid's name is also of interest. The *-oid* noun suffix may very well bring to mind a number of words associated with space, for instance asteroid, meteoroid and planetoid. Another word with the same suffix frequently connected to science fiction is android, so the last three letters of Ziltoid's name allude to both space and science fiction. According to *Merriam-Webster* ("-oid." 2017), the noun suffix signifies a similarity to an object or the possession of a certain attribute. Consequently, an asteroid is something that resemblances a star since *aster* is Greek for star according to *Online Etymology Dictionary* ("asteroid, n."). However, *zilt* is not a word, but a word that is fairly similar is the informal *zilch*, which according to *Oxford American Dictionary and Thesaurus* ("zilch, n." 2009) means nothing. This word combined with the *-oid* suffix could then mean something similar to nothing, or perhaps rather a looser, and this makes sense in the earlier story because Ziltoid realizes that he is only a puppet.

It is, however, probable that the first part of Ziltoid's name has no intended underlying meaning since *zilch* could have been used as the first part of the name if the intention was to allude to *looser*. Still, the suffix is most likely conscious because of its connection to space and science fiction. Thus, the suffix is probably the part of the name

that possibly can provide the reader with some type of information about the character. As already mentioned, the *-oid* suffix may with great probability be associated with science fiction and space, which implies that the reader can anticipate that Ziltoid is an alien from outer space even without seeing the visual presentation of him on the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*. Consequently, the appearance of Ziltoid and his name in the albums strongly suggests that he cannot really be anything else than an alien, which in turn again strengthens the science fiction theme of the albums and reveals vital character information about the protagonist.

5.2 The Zed-Logotype

The zed-logotype appears frequently in both *Ziltoid the Omniscient* and *Z²*. This logotype allows a closer examination from the viewpoint of intertextuality because it holds several intertextual interpretations. It appears two times already on the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*. In the upper right corner is a rectangle with the zed-logotype and in a square below the logotype are the letters "HDR" and "10¢". "HDR" is short for Townsend's own record label called HevyDevy Records, from which the record was licensed. This element whose central object is the zed-logotype, is arguably meant to look like an old postage stamp because of the unit that shows the value ten cents. Ziltoid's ambition in the story is to be a famous rock star, so a postage stamp with his own logotype corresponds well with this high ambition. Again, this is an allusion with an element of humour since it mirrors Ziltoid's rather silly megalomania. It is silly because Ziltoid's aim to become the greatest rock star in history seems vain, and also because he is not at all as powerful as he believes.

Furthermore, the zed-logotype appears on the coffee mug in Ziltoid's hand in several pictures. The mug is seen in four pictures in total in the peritexts of the two albums. As mentioned above, the coffee mug appears in Ziltoid's hand on the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*, and Ziltoid sits in a large coffee mug in the picture of the back cover of the booklet of the album. Ziltoid also has a mug in his hand on the front cover of the booklet as well as in the window picture in the digipak of *Z²*. The logotype appears on

the coffee mug in all these cases, so it is an integral part of the mug. As mentioned earlier, the coffee mug is as a key element of the story since the reason to why Ziltoid comes to Earth is to find the perfect cup of black coffee. However, it is of course very difficult to know what role the coffee mug plays in the story, but the frequent appearance of it does suggest that it is a vital aspect of the story.

However, the mug is fairly small in the pictures and it is difficult to see exactly what the logotype on it depicts, apart from the letter zed. The back cover of the digipak of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* provides the most distinct image since it has a large version of the logotype that makes it possible to discern what its components are. The colours of the zed shift from purple to red and orange, and most of the round ground on which the letter is located is in a brown colour. The outer part of the ground is grey and shines like some type of metal. The round ground on which the zed is located is probably a loudspeaker seen from above since it corresponds with the story about Ziltoid. This becomes evident on the front cover of both the slipcase and the digipak of *Z²* since the logotype is so large here that the round ground cannot be mistaken for anything else than a speaker that is countersunk into a metal surface. The loudspeaker is a reference to Ziltoid's ambition of becoming a great rock star since loudness naturally is a frequent feature of rock and metal music in general.

The appearance of the zed-logotype is slightly different in *Z²*. Firstly, the zed-logotype is accompanied by the number two on the front cover and the spine of both the slipcase and the digipak, above the lyrics of the album's title song in the booklet as well as on the record labels of both discs of *Dark Matters*. The number two is of considerably smaller size than the zed and it is a little higher up, and it thus appears like the mathematical zed squared. Naturally, mathematics is regularly part of science fiction, for example calculations of routes for spaceships, so the logotype adds another element to the already evident science fiction theme of the album. The *Z²*-logotype that appears on the spines and on the disc labels is a smaller and simplified version since it is merely a white zed on a hollow circle with a white outer brim, while the large logotype of the front covers naturally is more detailed.

The zed on the front covers is in shiny grey and silver colours and its edges seem very sharp, which makes it look like it is made of metal. The ground is a black grating that covers the actual speaker, and the outer brim of the speaker also seems to be in shining metal. However, one detail separates the front cover of the slipcase from the front cover of the digipak. The *Z²*-logotype of the loudspeaker on the cover of the case is slightly protrusive from the rest of the metal plates in the background, and this adds a concrete three-dimensional effect to the front of the case. One can feel a small elevation at the verge of the loudspeaker and the parts of the letter zed and the number two that reach outside the ground that is the loudspeaker. This elevation is not found on the front cover of the digipak. Thus, this version of the logotype is more advanced and refined than the one found on the previous album. This renewal implies that Ziltoid returns more powerful in *Z²* than in *Ziltoid the Omniscient.*

In *Z²* the logotype obviously functions as a reference to the previous album about Ziltoid, and it is interesting that the logotype covers most of the front cover of the slipcase and the digipak. The fact that the covers can rely completely on the logotype implies that the intertextual aspect of the zed, and thus Ziltoid and the previous album, is so strong that not even the band name is thought to be needed on the covers. Thus, the target audience is expected to know what band the album is made by as based only on the reference to Ziltoid and the first album about him. This in turn implies that the intended target audience is fairly specific as those who are not acquainted with Ziltoid will not gather much information about the album as based solely on the appearance of the front cover of the slipcase and the digipak. This is a crucial point since the front cover is the part of the album that is almost exclusively seen first by a possible consumer.

The zed-logotype appears more frequently in *Z²* than in *Ziltoid the Omniscient*. The logotype is seen on five more occasions apart from the already mentioned appearances on the covers, spines, record labels, in the booklet and on the coffee mug. Firstly, a very large and three-dimensional zed-logotype appears in the digipak in the background of the large two-page picture where the aggressive Ziltoid is seen in an attacking motion with several of the band members and other characters of the story. In this case it simply

displays that these characters are on Ziltoid's team in the picture, even though this is not the case in the actual story. The rest of the characters in this picture will be further dealt with later in this thesis.

When the digipak is fully spread, the middle section of the digipak is revealed. This middle page holds the booklet of the album in a small pocket that is merely a small fold down on the page. However, an interesting picture appears behind the booklet when it is taken out of the pocket. It is a large and light blue object that is fairly difficult to understand what it is at first sight, but on a closer examination the object turns out to be a merger of Ziltoid's zed-logotype and the logotype of Devin Townsend Project. The zed is simply incorporated into the letters d, t and p and the result is a uniform but rather complicated three-dimensional symbol. Because of the three-dimensionality, it is possible to see that the letters go through one another, so the zed is not simply put on top of the d, t and p or vice versa.

This merged symbol, then, represents the fact that the *Z²*-product includes two records of which *Sky Blue* is seen as the Devin Townsend Project record, while *Dark Matters* is seen as the Ziltoid record. The inside of the digipak is also based on this theme since it places two teams who represent one record each against each other in the large picture which covers all the five pages of the inside of the fully spread digipak. So, in the left part of the picture, where the band members of Devin Townsend Project appear, is the logotype of the band while the logotype of Ziltoid is in the right part of the picture with Ziltoid's team. Accordingly, the merger of the symbols appears in the centre of the picture between the two teams, and it thus represents the encounter of the two different parties.

As mentioned above, the logotype for *Z²* is also found on both the discs that belong to *Dark Matters*, that is the regular version and the raw version. The logotype is located on the lower half of the discs, and it is again the simplified version of it. The colour is here different from the other appearances of the simplified version since it is grey or silver and not white. Because of the colour, this version is a little more similar to the metallic logotype on the front cover of the digipak. Furthermore, the zed-logotype appears in the

booklet above the lyrics of the first song of the album since the name of the song is Z^2, and it is in this case identical to the one found on the labels of discs.

The zed-logotype is also seen as a minor detail in two pictures. Ziltoid has a clasp which holds his cloak in place around his neck, and this clasp has the shape of the logotype and appears to be made of metal. The clasp is visible in both the picture of the front cover of the booklet and in the large picture inside the digipak where Ziltoid is in an attacking motion. The zed-clasp is not seen anywhere in *Ziltoid the Omniscient*, so it is a new feature that is in line with the otherwise updated Ziltoid that appears in Z^2. The clasp is similar to the zed-logotype that appears as a postage stamp on the front cover of the previous album in that it suits Ziltoid and his large ego to wear his own logotype.

As has already been mentioned in relation to intertextuality, the most obvious reference of the zed-logotype is to the fictional character Zorro who leaves his zed-shaped trademark made with a rapier on the villains that he catches. This reference is most likely conscious since Zorro and his trademark are relatively well known. Of course, the fact that Ziltoid's logotype is made up by the letter zed is natural because of his name, but it is still probably not a coincidence that Zorro has a very similar logotype. The logotype of Ziltoid and its reference to Zorro is a humorous element since Ziltoid is nothing like the heroic Zorro, but rather in many ways almost the opposite.

The zed-logotype holds another fairly direct reference. A company called Zcafe Canada (2016) imports and distributes espresso machines and other equipment related to coffee, and a distinct zed appears in the logotype of this company. This zed resembles Ziltoid's logotype because it is sprawling in a similar manner. Furthermore, the story of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* revolves around Ziltoid's quest for the perfect cup of black coffee, which implies that this is a strong allusion. This reference may not have been created on purpose, but it is still possible for anyone to make this particular connection. It is in this case an unconscious allusion, which is not an unusual intertextual feature according to Paul Williams (2015: 178).

Other allusions of the letter zed in the context of rock music are to the band ZZ Top and the artist and composer Frank Zappa. In a science fiction context one can see allusions to the evil character Jean-Baptiste Emanuel Zorg in the film *The Fifth Element* (1997) and an alien race called the Zerg in the computer game *StarCraft* (1998). In conclusion, a great deal of characters in various science fiction films and series have names that begin with the letter zed, so the initial letter of Ziltoid can even be seen as a science fiction feature in this sense. The logotype with the zed is thus an element that suggests that both albums contain a science fiction-themed story.

The logotype of Ziltoid appears so frequently in the albums that it is impossible to miss it. This implies that it is a vital visual aspect of the products, and as discussed above, it holds a great deal of intertextual significance. The most important reference is probably not to any other film, series or book, but rather the reference between the two albums included in this study. The very large logotype on the front cover of the digipak and slipcase of *Z²* is completely dependent on the logotype that appears in the first album, since the front cover is intended to attract attention. Without the reference to the previous album, the logotype on *Z²* would be very difficult to interpret for anyone. However, those who are familiar with *Ziltoid the Omniscient* are likely to recognize the logotype on *Z²*, which in turn may be what attracts the desired interest of possible consumers.

5.3 Fonts

The visual aspect of the textual elements of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* and *Z²* is another factor that influences the appearances of the albums. The following text is seen on the bottom half of the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*: "Devin Townsend presents Ziltoid the Omniscient". All the letters are capitalized and the style of the font is a slightly goofy, in the spirit of Comic Sans and the like. From the top downwards, "Ziltoid" stands on its own line between the other text and it is in considerably larger letters. The letters are red for the most part but turn more to orange lower down. The text resembles the classic Indiana Jones typeface which is used on the front cover of

every film about him since the first *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981). The typeface of "Ziltoid" is very similar in terms of colour, font and general appearance.

The typeface is an allusion even though the letters are not necessarily deliberately made to resemble those of the logotype of the films about Indiana Jones. However, the resemblance is in this case prominent, so it is plausible to assume that this allusion is conscious. If the reader associates the typeface of the album with Indiana Jones, it opens up to further interpretations of the rest of the product as well. For instance, Ziltoid's quest for the greatest cup of coffee in the story can be seen as a reference to Indiana Jones' hunt for the crystal skull in *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* (2008). This in turn signifies Ziltoid as an explorer of space in pursuit of the ultimate treasure. This is a type of allusion that connects the album to other items of popular culture, and a great deal of people may accordingly perceive such references.

Furthermore, the close points of similarity to the logotype of Indiana Jones may give the observer an idea that the album tells an adventure story, which possibly may suggest something about the music genre. If the visual aspects of an album indicate that it has an adventure theme, the reader may possibly discern that the album tells some type of coherent story, which in turn implies that it is a concept album. As mentioned above about progressive rock music, Edward Macan (1996: 58) points out that concept albums occur frequently in the genre, and it could thus be fully possible to make a connection to progressive music based on the visual aspects of the letters, but naturally along with the rest of the front cover.

The rest of the words on the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* are in orange but very close to mustard yellow. The titles of all the songs and the bonus material of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* are found on the back cover. These appear in the same font that is used on the front cover and the colours are also in the same mustard yellow. However, the track numbers are in red instead of orange, which also applies to the markers "Disc 1" and "Disc 2". The numbers are probably red in order to delimit the song titles clearly from each other and thus facilitate reading. Furthermore, it is natural that the back cover is fairly similar to the front cover in terms of style and colours both in text and general

appearance since the product should be somewhat visually uniform in the same manner as a book.

The lyrics of the songs start immediately on the first spread of the booklet of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*. All letters are capitalized and the font seems to be the same as the one on the front and back cover of the album. This font is exclusively used throughout the whole booklet. The font is fairly large and plain, which is not always the case in booklets that come with a music album. This plainness may be because the album tells a story, and it is thus very important that the text is not difficult to read. The lyrics appear in white colour but some sections of text are in yellow, which means that they are additional text. All of the text is not sung or spoken out, but the sections of yellow text rather function as a means to facilitate the comprehension of the story of the album. An interesting aspect of the lyrics in the booklet is that the different songs are not marked in any way, which means that neither the track numbers nor the song titles appear in the booklet. The lack of song markers again suggests that the record delivers a coherent story. Consequently, the only way to distinguish the lyrics of the songs in the booklet from each other is to follow them while listening to the album.

The textual "Ziltoid" appears in large, three-dimensional and capital letters at the top of the front cover of the booklet of *Z²*. The letters' grey or silver colour with very faint and fine stripes indicates that the material is brushed steel or something very similar to it. The zed is considerably larger than the other letters, and these letters stand on the lower horizontal part of the zed. Under the verge of the circle where Ziltoid appears is the text "Dark Matters" in capital letters. The text is slightly curved so that it follows the lower part of the circle frame to some extent. The colour of the letters is similar to "Ziltoid" at the top of the cover, but the letters of "Dark Matters" are brighter high up while they are somewhat dim lower down.

The metallic style of the letters alludes to several science fiction films. Letters that appear to be made out of metal is seen in *X-Men* (2000), and similar types of letters have been used in several of the film's sequels and spin-offs as well. *The Avengers* (2012) is another film where the title appears in letters that seem to be in metal, and

both *Iron Man* (2008) and *Transformers* (2007) have letters of similar styles in the titles. Accordingly, letters with a metallic style are fairly frequent in science fiction films, so the letters on the front cover of the booklet can certainly be seen as an indication of the theme of the album. Furthermore, the metallic appearance of the letters obviously alludes to the music genre of metal, so the visual aspect of the textual elements are very intertextual in this case.

The titles of the two records and all the song titles appear on the back cover of both the slipcase and the digipak of *Z²*. At the top one finds the logotype of Devin Townsend Project. This logotype is a visual merger of the letters d, t and p, which form a symmetric figure. The name of the first record of the product, *Sky Blue*, appears below this logotype in a fairly small font. Below this are the song titles of the record. The songs are not numbered and three titles appear on the first and the second line, four on the third line and the two remaining titles are on the fourth line. The titles are separated with dots on each line. The letters are in white colour and all are capitalized, including the title of the record. Under these song titles is the zed-logotype again, and below it are the song titles of *Dark* Matters in the same font as the other ones. The letters of the font used on the back cover are fairly tall, which implies that they are oriented towards the vertical direction. Theo van Leeuwen (2006: 149) argues that this can be seen as an ambition to ascend, which in this context corresponds with the science fiction theme in general because of elements such as space travel and flying devices.

The textual elements that are found on the labels of the two discs that concern the Ziltoid story are in a grey or possibly silver colour, so the metallic style appears here as well. However, no faint and fine stripes appear on these letters, so the metal reference is not as clear as on the cover of the booklet. "Ziltoid" in large capital letters is located high up on the discs: that is when they are in such a position that the textual elements are horizontal. The font of "Ziltoid" seems to be the same as on the front cover of the booklet, but the text is here not presented in a way that makes it appear as three-dimensional. In the same manner as on the front cover of the booklet, the zed is considerably larger than the other letters and the other letters stand on the lower horizontal part of the zed.

The title of these records, "Dark Matters", is also in the exactly same colour and the font is fairly similar to Verdana, but the letters are slightly more curved. The font is wide, which means that it takes up a great deal of space, and van Leeuwen (2006: 149) argues that this can indicate breathing-space or simply room to move. The latter option correlates with the science fiction theme because the vastness of space certainly offers room to move. On the disc without extra dialogue the marker "raw" appears in the same font and colour as the rest of the text. The light grey or sliver textual objects are really brought out against the dark background of the disc labels.

The songs titles and lyrics appear on five pages in the half of the booklet that concerns *Dark Matters*. The font of the lyrics is not a goofy one such as in the previous album, but rather a more conventional in the spirit of Arial or Calibri. This possibly indicates a more serious approach to the story, even though that is not the case in reality since the type of humour on *Dark Matters* is very similar to *Ziltoid the Omniscient*. The font of the lyrics is small, so the reader needs to look closely to be able to read the text. Furthermore, the font is slightly condensed and flattened, which means that the letters stand close to each other and that they are fairly compressed from a vertical perspective. According to van Leeuwen (2006: 148, 149), these factors may suggest a sense of precision and weight or inertia, but these associations do not clearly correlate with the science fiction genre or any aspects of the story in general.

The lyrics appear in different colours according to whether the text is sung or spoken by the different characters. All the sung text is in grey, the narrator's spoken parts are in purple, Ziltoid's in green, Captain Spectacular's in red and Queen Blattaria's in orange. A few additional spoken parts also appear in several different colours. Since the narrator and several characters frequently have lines in the same song, some of the songs' lyrics give a very colourful impression. The purpose of the different colours in this case is simply to clearly show what is sung and who says what, and thus make the story easier to understand. All of the text is centred below the song titles.

Unlike the lyrics and spoken parts, the song titles appear in a variety of shapes in the booklet. These will not be introduced in detail due to their comprehensiveness, but it

needs to be said that the font and general form of the song titles correlate visually with what the songs are about. For example, the first song named *Z²* has the same zed-logotype that appears on the front cover of both the slipcase and the front cover of the digipak, while the glaring colour of the song *Deathray* together with a sparkling electric field below it contributes to a sprawling and almost eerie appearance. Yet another example is when a creature called a Poozer appears in contact with the song title *March of the Poozers*. Furthermore, the science fiction theme is clearly illustrated in some of the titles, for example in *Ziltoid Goes Home* where a flying saucer is seen in connection to the song title. As a general observation, the song titles in the booklet are largely manifested in a graphical manner rather than in only a textual, which implies that some of the titles appear as separate pictures instead of merely being composed of letters.

5.4 Backgrounds and Colours

Behind Ziltoid on the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* is what appears to be a type of environment that one can believe is found in outer space if aliens inhabit a planet somewhere. In the background are constructions that look like towers with ladders on the outside. The towers stand in a purple and red haze that could possibly be rocket smoke or smoke that arises as a result of some other industrial activity. Two planets, one may even be a moon, can also be seen in the sky behind Ziltoid. They seem to be very close to where Ziltoid is standing, which implies that this picture depicts another galaxy or solar system and thus not the Milky Way. The colours on the front cover are fairly dark for the most part, but shades of dark red, purple and blue are also evident. The colourful industrial haze and planets in space are certainly objects that can be considered typical for the science fiction genre. Furthermore, as already mentioned about setting, the background of the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* strongly suggests that the story takes place in space, which in turn again corresponds with the other peritextual aspects of the front cover.

The background of the back cover is very similar to the one of the front cover in its colours, but it is far less detailed. The background seems to depict space with a great

deal of purple and red colours. The outlines of a planet appear in the upper right corner and stars are scattered all over the back cover. Thus, this seems to show the vastness of the universe with colours that are frequently associated with space in different illustrations. The backgrounds of the two close-up pictures of Ziltoid within the digipak are also mostly in purple nuances and a great deal of stars are seen here as well. Ziltoid covers most of the pictures, but it is still evident that the backgrounds are very similar to those of the front and back cover.

The same background is seen in every spread of the booklet of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*. This background is in fairly dark purple or blue colour to the left, but gradually turns to dark red towards the right side of the spread. The outline of a large planet is seen in the upper right-hand corner and another smaller planet appears in the middle of the left side of the background. Thus, this is evidently a portrayal of space in line with the rest of the visual aspects of the product. The background of the picture where half of Ziltoid's head is visible behind Earth in the booklet is slightly different because the colours are a little brighter. This adds a somewhat different effect to the picture and highlights Ziltoid's head. The background within the circle where Ziltoid and the large coffee mug appear on the back cover of the booklet is also the same as the rest of the booklet, with the exception of four white dots of different size. All the dots are located to the right upper half side of the mug and Ziltoid. These dots are not stars since they are a great deal larger, but it is very difficult see what they depict.

In *Z²*, the front covers of the slipcase and the actual digipak are nearly identical. The whole picture is in gleaming grey, or possibly a little silver, with some black colour that add outlines. Everything in the picture seems to be in metal. It appears to be a floor or a wall that is made up of a great deal of small metal plates that are screwed together without any certain pattern. The back covers of the slipcase and the digipak are identical to each other in terms of the backgrounds. The background of the back cover is in the same metallic design as the front cover and spine, but a large hatch covers most of the background. This hatch looks very robust with a large handle and screws all the way along the edge of the right and left side as well as the bottom side. The hatch appears to be made of one large piece of metal, which means that the surface is unruffled unlike

the rest of the background. The titles of the songs appear on this surface, which is probably because it is easier to read them on the plain background than on the rest where joins between different metal plates disturb. The whole exterior appearance of the product is based on the allusions of metal, which in this case can be both to science fiction and to the music genre of metal.

In addition to the metallic letters in film titles discussed above, metal alludes to several other aspects of science fiction. Metal can be connected to technology, which is another very prominent part of science fiction in general. For instance, space ships and other types of space vehicles are always built out of metal. Furthermore, robots and androids are frequently occurring in science fiction, and these robots cannot really be made out of anything else than metal. Some examples of renowned characters are the robots R2D2 and C3PO in the *Star Wars* (1977) franchise, many robots in the already mentioned *Transformers* (2007) and the liquid metal android T-1000 that first appeared in *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991).

The two pictures that appear when the front cover of the *Z²*-digipak is first opened up to the left are created in such a way that a window is seen in a wall of metal plates and the main picture appears in the window. Ziltoid appears in the window to the right, and to the left are three creatures that are called Poozers, and they will be discussed below. When the page to the right is turned, a third picture with the same window design appears. In this window the Planet Smasher is seen, and it will also be dealt with below. The three windows are oval-shaped and they cover approximately half of the pages with the window frames included, and the rest of the background is similar to the exterior of the product. The backgrounds in the windows with the Poozers and the Planet Smasher respectively look identical except from that they seem to be inverted from each other.

The backgrounds of the window pictures are made up by walls with some metallic constructions, some tubes and cables or something similar to that. The background behind Ziltoid is not identical to the ones in the two other pictures mentioned above, but some tubes and walls with peculiar patterns are visible here as well. The backgrounds are all very dark, so it is very difficult to discern many details. The backgrounds seem to

depict environments that could be found aboard an alien spaceship in science fiction films because the inside of these ships are frequently portrayed as very dark. Examples of this are seen in the films *Cowboys & Aliens* (2011) and *Prometheus* (2012), where the environments aboard the alien spaceships are very dusky.

A large picture of the band members and contributors to the records appears on the two pages that are furthest to the left when the digipak is fully spread. The right page functions as a pocket for the *Sky Blue*-CD, which implies that the picture is directly interconnected with this CD that I earlier mentioned will not be a part of this study. However, this picture has some significance to the left part of the fully spread digipak that concerns *Dark Matters*, so it should at least be said that the five band members and two other contributors appear to be in an attacking motion forwards, to the right for the reader. The colours are fairly bright and in the background is the sky and clouds. A vague but large logotype of Devin Townsend Project appears in the background of the page to the right.

As already partly touched upon, Ziltoid is seen in an attacking motion with several of the band members and other characters that appear in the story in the large two-page picture to the right of the fully spread digipak. The background has considerably darker colours than the picture to the left. Thus, the pictures are set to oppose each other, and this feature will be further dealt with below. The colours of the background of this picture are mostly shades of dark blue and some slightly brighter blue, so this again corresponds with Fagerholm's (2009: 18–19) observation of blue colours as frequent in science fiction film posters. The background has a great deal of stars and a bluish haze is seen along the bottom of the picture. Two planets are in the upper right-hand corner, and these could possibly be Earth and the Moon considering their proportions in the picture.

The background in the middle page behind the merged symbol that has been dealt with earlier is a sky with stars and the colours shift from fairly dark blue to purple and almost beige. Thus, this page is where the background colours of the two large pictures meet and blend, which is the overall purpose of the page since the same happens with the two

logotypes. The dark colours of Ziltoid's evil team and the brighter colours of the *Sky Blue* team, that is the band members, merge in a way that makes the background appear as the night sky at the break of dawn. This can also be seen as a bad situation turning better or possibly even vice versa.

The background of the front cover of the half of the booklet that concerns *Dark Matters* is in dark colours with really dark blue and some hints of purple. Stars and some planets are found here, and low down in the left corner is a large amount of rocks, which could possibly be an asteroid belt. Furthermore, two meteors are seen descending in the upper part of the background, and this is an indication of danger. This indication corresponds well with the story of the album since Earth is invaded by the war princess Blattaria and her army. Moreover, Ziltoid's plan is to conquer the planet, so danger is undoubtedly present in the story for the humans on Earth. Meteors and the like strengthen the space and science fiction theme of the album since such features are frequent in science fiction stories in general. For example, the story in the film *Armageddon* (1998) revolves around an enormous asteroid that is coming towards Earth.

The background of the close-up picture of Ziltoid in the booklet of *Z²* contains several science fiction tropes. Firstly, a planet appears in the upper right-hand corner and two meteors are seen in middle of the upper part of the picture. These elements clearly indicate that the picture depicts a space environment. A flying saucer appears on the left side of Ziltoid's head, and this represents the presence of aliens. Below the flying saucer is again what looks like an asteroid belt, and the outlines of two planets are visible in the bottom left-hand corner, but these are much further away than the one in the opposite corner. The rest of the background is dark but a number of stars procreate some lighter spots behind Ziltoid. Thus, everything in the background of this picture is a clear manifestation of space, which in turn connects to science fiction.

5.5 Other Science Fiction Features and Tropes

Apart from Ziltoid, the zed-logotype, the visual aspects of the textual elements, the backgrounds and the colours, a number of other peritextual elements that are strongly associated with the science fiction theme and the stories in general appear in *Ziltoid the Omniscient* and *Z²*. On the back cover of the booklet of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*, the bottom of the large coffee mug is shrouded in red smoke or haze, and this smoke rises about half way up the picture behind Ziltoid and the mug. In addition to rocket smoke or similar science fiction elements, the red smoke can also be seen as reference to the fact that Ziltoid wants to become a great rock star since smoke combined with different illumination is a frequent feature in rock and metal concerts.

The labels of the two discs of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* are black from the centre and outwards, but change to a dusky orange colour in the outer part. Even further out the colour changes to a clearer orange, but the outermost brim is black except for a really small part that is orange. The borders between the different colours are not completely distinct, but rather slightly blurred. The orange brim is somewhat irregular in terms of its form, which makes it look like the disc wobbles when it spins. The brim could possibly be planetary rings such as those of Saturn, which then adds a strong space theme to the discs. It is also possible that the labels portray a planet in cross-section, but the core of the planet is in this case black and therefore appears to be hollow. The labels of the discs of *Z²* are black with a great deal of stars, so these also depict space but in a slightly more subtle manner.

On the front cover of the part of the booklet that concerns *Dark Matters*, a flying saucer and a rocket circle around Ziltoid, and these two crafts seem to fly towards each other. This may represent a clash between humans and aliens, which is undoubtedly a frequent theme in science fiction in general. Furthermore, both the rocket and the flying saucer are clear science fiction tropes in themselves. As already mentioned, spaceships in science fiction represent technology, and in this case the technology of human beings faces the technology of aliens. A flying saucer always represents aliens, while a space rocket represents space travel of human beings. Five flying saucers are floating in the

air in the very upper part of the large picture with Ziltoid and other characters in the digipak as well, so the presence of aliens in the story is evident in the peritexts.

The hologram of Earth in the window picture with Ziltoid inside the digipak of *Z²* is another prominent science fiction feature. The perhaps most obvious allusion of this hologram is again to *Star Wars* (1977), where holograms are used to communicate and leave messages. *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987–1994) is a series where holograms appear several times, and *Total Recall* (1990), *Lost in Space* (1998) and *Resident Evil* (2002) are other examples of science fiction films that include the use of holography. Thus, the hologram seen in *Z²* is again an element that connects the album to popular stories within the science fiction genre.

A large picture on the centrespread of the booklet of *Z²* puts the two records of the album against each other in a similar manner to the picture found within the fully spread digipak. At the top of the picture is a very large alien spacecraft, but only the bottom part of it is visible. Under this spacecraft is what appears to be a window where Ziltoid's face is seen. The window is possibly a projection that seems to be produced by a bright beam that comes from the large spacecraft above. Thus, it seems that Ziltoid is the leader of the spacecraft and its possible crew, and he looks down on the ground from the window. In the air below the large spacecraft are a great deal of flying saucers again, and these shoot red laser beams down on a city on the ground. Explosions arise where the laser beams hit skyscrapers and other buildings to both sides of the picture. Incidentally, several red laser beams can also be seen coming from behind Ziltoid and the other characters in the large picture that concerns *Dark Matters* in the digipak.

In the middle part of the bottom of the picture in the booklet is a street where the band members of Devin Townsends Project are. The asphalt of the street is cracking because of the alien's violent attack. The band members are looking up towards the large spacecraft, the window with Ziltoid's face and the flying saucers. They look desperate because of all the destruction around them. They wear the same clothes as in the large picture that concerns *Sky Blue* within the digipak, so it is fairly obvious that this is again a portrayal of the good team of human beings facing an evil alien invasion. The sky is

dark high up where the alien spaceships are hovering, but lower down behind the band members, the sun seems to be rising since it appears to be just before it reaches above the horizon. Undoubtedly, this picture is full of science fiction tropes. Flying saucers, laser beams, a projection and an invasion of Earth are very clear and typical references to the science fiction genre.

Lastly, the song titles on the back covers of the albums contain a great many features that are frequent in the science fiction genre. On the back cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* are the song titles *Solar Winds*, *Hyperdrive*, *Planet Smasher* and *Omnidimensional Creator*. All these titles include words or parts of words that connect the album to science fiction because of the references to space and alien creatures. On the back cover of *Z²* the titles *Deathray*, *Through the Wormhole* and *Dimension Z* appear, and these possess similar types of connotations to the ones on the first album. For instance, Arthur B. Evans (2014: 286) mentions that the heat ray was introduced in science fiction already in H.G. Wells' novel *War of the Worlds* (1898), so the idea of a deadly ray is indeed even a very early feature of science fiction. Furthermore, words such as dimension and wormhole are probable to be associated with science fiction and space. Thus, the titles of the songs provide the reader with the information that the albums have something to do with space, and it is even possible that the reader can connect this to the music genre of the records.

5.6 Other Characters

The Planet Smasher is an important character in the stories about Ziltoid. However, it does not appear visually in *Ziltoid the Omniscient* at all, and it is rather surprising to see how little it is when it appears in *Z²* since the name implies that it should be a very large creature. The Planet Smasher appears in three different pictures in the product. As already mentioned, the Planet Smasher is first seen in one of the window pictures of the digipak. The head of a small being is seen in the right bottom corner of the window and it looks like a combination of a skunk and some type of a small dog. It is black and white and it seems to be fluffy. From the back of its head comes an antenna or

something of the like, and it is bent forward so that it hangs in front of the Planet Smasher's forehead. On the extremity of the antenna is a small, round and gold-coloured object. The Planet Smasher has small, black eyes and a small black nose. Under the nose is fur that looks like a white moustache, and a small tongue sticks out below it. A very small paw is pressed against the window pane just above the frame.

The Planet Smasher also appears in front of Ziltoid just above the verge of the circle frame on the front cover of the booklet. Furthermore, the little and fluffy Planet Smasher is seen sitting in Ziltoid's left hand in the large picture in the digipak where the characters are in an attacking motion towards the left. However, the Planet Smasher does not seem to be in an attacking motion at all, but is instead sitting calmly in Ziltoid's hand with its two paws in the air. Thus, the Planet Smasher seems very static and its appearance does not suggest any particular intentions or thoughts. The Planet Smasher is visually fairly similar to the strange mogwai creature with the name Gizmo in the film *Gremlins* (1984) in terms of both size and form. The Planet Smasher also offers allusions to S*tar Wars* (1977) since it is Ziltoid's companion in *Z²*, and it resembles the robot R2D2 in this sense. Moreover, The Planet Smasher has the power to destroy whole planets, which alludes to the extraordinary space station called Death Star since it can do the same. The Planet Smasher is a key element in *Z²* since it plays an important role towards the end of the story. It is the only character who can stop Queen Blattaria from invading Earth.

In the window picture to the left in the digipak when the front cover is flipped, one can see three peculiar creatures clearly, but only their heads seem to be visible. As already mentioned, these creatures are called Poozers, and they are light beige in colour. The form of the top of their heads bears a striking resemblance to the human rump. Thus, humour is again evident because of the form of the creatures, and their name is also an obvious reference to faeces. The Poozers seem to be sad since their lips droop a great deal and their round greenish eyes also have a sad expression. Their eyes and mouths are close to each other and their noses are very small. Their faces are slightly wrinkled and on the sides of their heads are what look like ears.

Poozers also appear in the large picture with the attacking characters in the digipak. Several Poozers are here fully visible and one can see that they have no legs or arms, but the creature is simply a head and has neither limbs nor other body parts. One of the Poozers in the picture is in the left hand of the bassist Brian Waddell. In his right hand Waddell holds a lighter which seems to be in the process of lighting up since a spark is seen. Smoke, or rather probably flatus, comes from the Poozer, which explains why Waddell is holding a lighter in front of it. The Poozer seems to be used as a weapon because the lighter is probably intended to light the flatus so that the Poozer would function as a flamethrower. Several other Poozers appear behind Waddell in the bottom right corner of the picture, and some appear considerably further away. This implies that a great many Poozers are present in the story, which is true because a whole army of them comes to invade Earth. One Poozer is also seen in front of the bass player with a line of flatus behind it. Thus, it seems that the creature is expelling gas in order to move forward.

As already mentioned, the large two-page picture to the right of the fully spread digipak shows several characters in an attacking motion towards the left. At the very front of the group is Devin Townsend in profile in a black leather jacket. Black leather is frequently associated with metal music (Kahn-Harris 2006: 1), so Townsend's jacket corresponds well with the music genre of the album. His mouth is fully open and his face looks strained, so he seems to be screaming at the top of his lungs. His left arm is held behind him with the hand open and the fingers extended in a large grasping position downwards. The hand is slightly bent towards Townsend's left while the right arm is not visible at all. His guitar is on the right side of his left leg that is set in front of him with a slightly bent knee, and the guitar hangs in a strap on Townsend's left shoulder.

Behind Townsend to his right is the character Queen Blattaria. She is a war princess and the mother of all Poozers, and in the story she attacks Earth when she finds out that Ziltoid has kidnapped one of her Poozers. Queen Blattaria is also seen in profile and some of her upper body is visible in the picture. Her mouth is also open, but she does not seem to be screaming quite like Devin Townsend in this picture. She wears a black or very dark blue dress and her left hand is placed on her hip even though most of the

arm is not visible. Her right arm is not fully visible either, but her right hand appears above Townsend's arm. The palm of her hand is held upwards and the hand is half clenched with the fingers bent towards her. However, one finger, which is supposedly the index finger, points slightly forwards and could thus be interpreted as the sign for exhorting someone to come closer. Queen Blattaria wears black fingerless gloves and she has black nail varnish on all her finger nails.

Queen Blattaria has fairly short and black hair. She wears a dark coloured tiara with what seems to be a metallic adornment. In addition, she has a black necklace that sits fairly tight around her neck and looks slightly leafy, but also a thinner one with an adornment that hangs on her chest. Furthermore, she has dark colour around her eyes and on her eyelids. Thus, Queen Blattaria wears almost exclusively black and really dark colours and she looks angry. The colour black is frequently associated with metal music (Holm, Aaltonen & Siirtola 2009), so Queen Blattaria's garments, make-up and accessories indicate metal music to a large extent. Furthermore, black has frequently been the colour that signals bad characters in films in the Western world (Dilloway 2006: 27), which is compatible with Queen Blattaria since she brings a war to Earth. Furthermore, the dark woman as an emblem of destruction and evil occurs as a trope in popular culture, and Queen Blattaria is certainly an implementation of this trope.

Behind Townsend to the right, and thus closer to the observer, is the band's bassist Brian Waddell who has already been briefly mentioned. Waddell is also seen in profile and he is dressed in dark colours. His upper body is fully visible in the picture, and he has a black or dark blue jacket with metal clasps on the front. He also wears black gloves. His facial expression is angry, but still both strained and focused on a target ahead. Unlike Townsend and Queen Blattaria, Waddell's mouth is not open so he is not screaming. He seems to lean slightly backwards on one leg in order to maintain balance when the methane gas of the Poozer in his hand is lit.

When the digipak is fully spread, the two large two-page pictures that are located to the left and right respectively are set to face each other. The musicians and characters in the pictures are, except for the Planet Smasher, in an attacking motion, but the ones in the

picture to the left attack towards the right, and the ones in the picture to the right attack towards the left. Thus, one team is on the left picture and another team is on the right one, and the two teams seem to attack each other. It is here interesting that the logotype of Devin Townsend Project that appear on the picture to the left and the logotype of Ziltoid on the picture to the right are merged into each other on the centre page. This centre page acts as a demarcation between the two large pictures as long as the booklet is in its pocket. However, if the booklet is removed from the pocket, the centre page connects the two pictures together and all of the inside of the fully spread digipak can be considered one unitary picture.

Since the individuals in the two large pictures seem to be set to fight each other, the theme could be seen as Devin Townsend Project versus Ziltoid's team. This makes sense in the context because Townsend said in an interview that the process of making the double album was so exacting that it felt like it was he against Ziltoid (Holmes 2015). Furthermore, an encounter with aliens is perhaps the most frequent trope of science fiction since it occurs every time when aliens are involved in a story. Ziltoid's team is obviously the evil one due to the dark colours and aggression displayed in the characters. Devin Townsend Project's team is much brighter in colours and the individuals do not seem to be aggressive in the same manner as their opponents. Thus, the team to the left is clearly portrayed as the good team of human beings, which then corresponds well with the science fiction genre in general.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to find out how the peritexts of the two progressive metal albums *Ziltoid the Omniscient* and the sequel *Z²* may indicate and strengthen the science fiction theme of the albums and what the peritexts may reveal about the music of the albums. I focused on how the theme of science fiction can be created through peritexts and possible intertextual aspects of the peritextual elements. I paid special attention to the protagonist Ziltoid, his zed-logotype, fonts of the textual elements, backgrounds, colours, science fiction features and tropes, and other characters that appear in the peritexts of the products.

Ziltoid appears frequently in both the products and a great deal of character information is revealed based only on the pictures of him. The appearance of Ziltoid on the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* clearly suggests that he is an alien, and this fact is strengthened by the colours and the background of the picture since they indicate that the setting is space. Pictures in the digipak uncover the fact that Ziltoid is a puppet, and this circumstance also emerges towards the end of the actual story of the album. Furthermore, the goofy and colourful fonts used in the albums suggest that humour is involved, and the font and general style of the text on the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* is very similar to the logotype seen in the films about Indiana Jones, which indicates that the album presents an adventure story. This correlates with progressive rock and metal since coherent stories are fairly frequent in the genres in general, and this allusion therefore vaguely indicates what genre of music the album contains.

A great many allusions to other work within the genre of science fiction can be identified in both albums included in the study. It is here important to remember that the perception of intertextual elements is personal in that individuals do not necessarily recognize the same intertextual features, and the same features may also be connected to different sources by different individuals. Thus, how one recognize intertextual elements is highly influenced by what films, novels or other stories one is familiar with. The *Star Wars* (1977) franchise is a very prominent series of science fiction films, and I found several features in the albums that are allusions to the franchise. For instance,

Ziltoid wears black gloves in every picture where he appears, and this is an allusion to Darth Vader of the dark side in *Star Wars* since he always has black gloves in addition to the rest of his black suit. Another aspect that alludes to Darth Vader is Ziltoid's visual development into a darker figure from the first album to the sequel, which is in line with Anakin Skywalker's change into Darth Vader.

A number of science fiction tropes are found in the peritexts of the albums, but particularly in *Z²* because the visual aspects of this album are more lavish than in the previous. For example, the pictures of *Z²* offer objects such as flying saucers, space rockets, meteors and a hologram of Earth. Furthermore, tropes in textual shape appear on the back cover of both albums in the form of song titles such as *Solar Winds*, *Planet Smasher*, *Deathray* and *Through the Wormhole*. Tropes also appear in the form of the events portrayed in the pictures, which for instance is seen in a very large picture that occupies all the pages inside the fully spread digipak of *Z²*. Two groups of characters that represent the team of humans and the team of aliens respectively are here seen in an attacking motion towards each other, which is a portrayal of a clash between the familiar good and the unknown evil.

The findings in the analysis suggest that the peritexts of the products convey a fair amount of information about the theme of the albums. The involvement of science fiction is clearly indicated in many occasions in the peritexts of the products and the reader may possibly even associate this with progressive rock or metal music since the theme is frequent in the music genre. However, the somewhat silly appearance of Ziltoid on the front cover of *Ziltoid the Omniscient* could also indicate that the album is intended for children, so the indication of the music genre is rather ambiguous in this case. *Z²* is interesting in that the front cover only displays the zed-logotype of Ziltoid, which implies that this album relies to a large extent on the reference to the previous album where the logotype first appeared. Furthermore, the exterior of *Z²* is produced to appear as it is made from metal, which functions as an allusion to the metal music that the album contains.

In conclusion, the peritexts of the albums reveal genre specific information about the music, but this information is fairly cryptic for many since recognizing and understanding it presupposes that the reader or viewer has some knowledge about the genre or the band concerned. Thus, the peritexts of the albums have a fairly small and limited target group in terms of recognition of the genre and originators of the music, but this obviously correlates with the fact that the audience of the genre is a far smaller than many other more popular music genres. On the other hand, obvious intertextual elements can attract interest in individuals that are familiar with neither the genre nor the band, and the allusion to Indiana Jones is an example of such an element. The clear indication of science fiction in the peritexs in general may have a similar effect. Consequently, the peritexts have a very important function in attracting attention both within the already established group of listeners and possible new consumers. Every peritextual element plays a role in this function because the overall impression determines the attraction of the product.

A suggestion for further studies is an actual interview or questionnaire on how people interprets various visual aspects of tangible music products and if it is possible that the peritexts could entail some type of added value to the product. Another angle for this would be to compare digitally released music and music in physical format in order to see if the features that differentiate them from each other may have an influence on how the actual music is perceived. Furthermore, other themes can of course be studied in a similar manner to science fiction in this study, and it is also possible to study differences and similarities between peritexts in different music genres.

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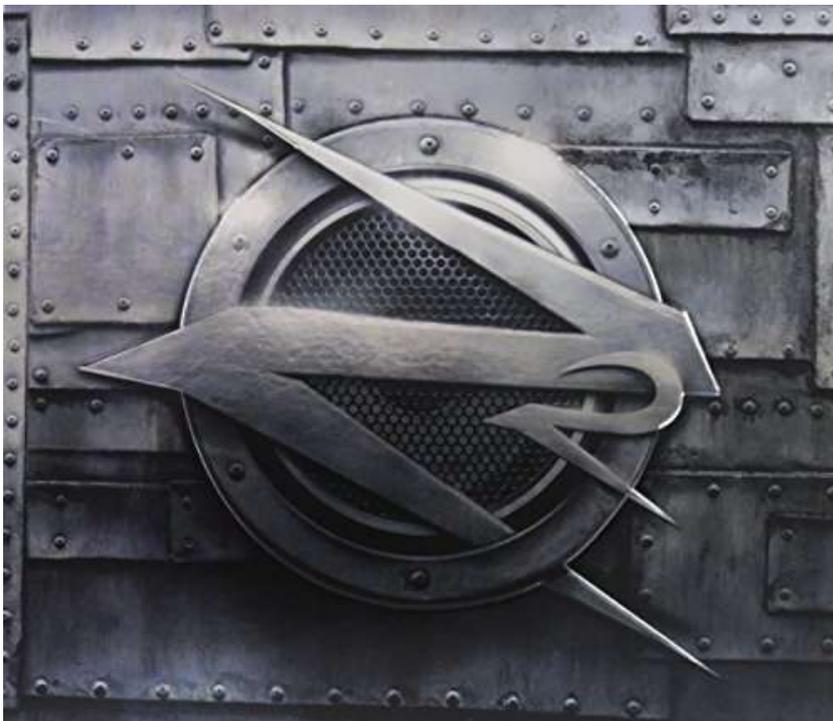*Transformers*. Dir. Michael Bay. Di Bonaventura Pictures. [Motion Picture] Paramount Pictures (2007).

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Appendix 1. Front Covert of *Ziltoid the Omniscient*
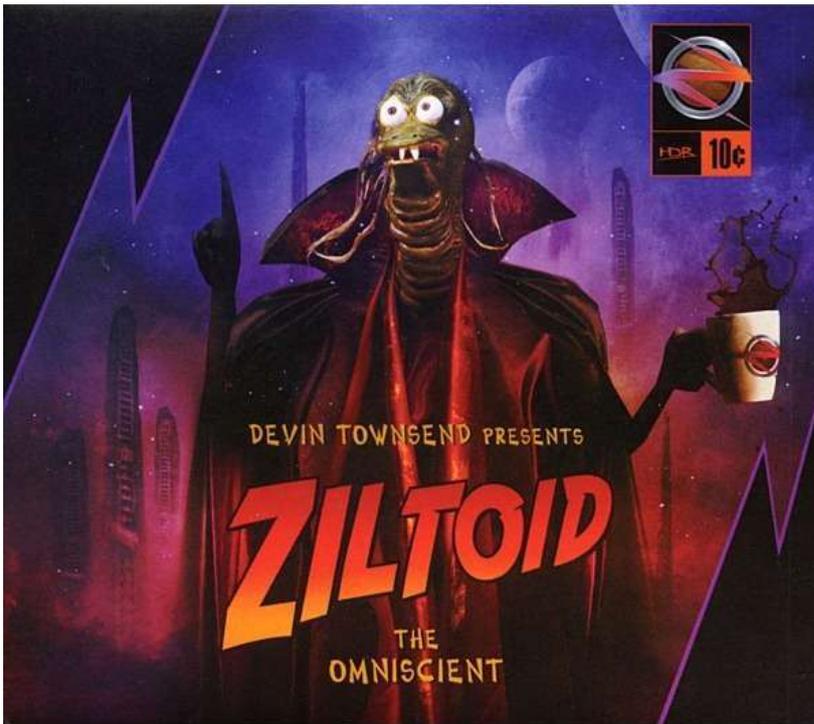
Appendix 2. Front Cover of *Z²*

Appendix 3. Front Cover of the Booklet of *Z²: Dark Matters*