THE AUTHOR'S DOPPELGÄNGER: CELEBRITY, CANONICITY, AND THE ANXIETY OF THE LITERARY MARKETPLACE IN THE CONTEMPORARY NOVEL

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates how and why contemporary canonical authors such as Vladimir Nabokov, Philip Roth, J.M. Coetzee, and Salman Rushdie incorporate their celebrity and canonical status as authors into the fictional worlds of their novels. The contemporary celebrity author in general is at the mercy of a more globalized publication industry that depends on a circuit of international circulation, translation, and the diverse reactions of a transnational readership. More specifically, each of the authors I focus on in this dissertation have become notorious, both for their professional literary achievements as well as various political or sexual scandals running alongside their publication history. The decentralization of the author's power to control his own image as it becomes stratified across a multiplicity of competing discourses, audiences, and marketplaces is spurred on by a literary marketplace that favors world literature, international circulation, and the whims of readership response. Thus, the need to revise or challenge the public perception of their authorship is constantly at stake for these figures – so much so that they introduce doppelgänger versions of themselves into their fiction to negotiate this relationship. I argue that the hybrid-generic form of autobiographical-metafiction allows these authors to integrate this struggle for authority over their own authorship into both the form and content of their fictional worlds.

My entrance into the long standing discourse on authorship follows in the wake of contemporary critics such as Seán Burke and Benjamin Widiss who have attempted to revive the author as a relevant interpretive figure within literary scholarship. While much of the early scholarship on authorship, and the death of the author conceit specifically, has been primarily a philosophical inquiry or an opportunity to reorient the authority of

meaning making towards the reader, more recent scholarship has begun to study the author as a socio-historical phenomenon. I contribute to this discussion by focusing on how authorship has not receded in the face poststructuralism, but instead reasserted itself within the hybrid-generic gesture of autobiographical-metafiction. By joining the related by often bifurcated fields of life writing and narratology, I analyze how the conceit of authorship manifests itself within these author's fictional worlds. Vladimir Nabokov's last novel *Look at the Harlequins!* (1974) manifests the figure of Vadim Vadimovich N. to offer an alternative version of the author's publication history controversy over *Lolita*. Philip Roth uses the paratextual space in *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* (1988) to dramatize a dialogical encounter with his authorial doppelgänger of Nathan Zuckerman. J.M. Coetzee creates a graphic representation of the multiple interpretations of authorship for his doppelgänger protagonist in *A Diary of a Bad Year* (2007). Finally, Salman Rushdie's *Joseph Anton: A Memoir* (2012) forcefully demonstrates how the authorial doppelgänger operates as a divertive tool within a socio-historical context where the "death" of the author has shifted beyond theory to praxis. Ultimately, the project of tracing different iterations of the doppelgänger novelist across national and historical markers helps us formulate a contemporary theory of authorship that asserts how the "author" must always operate in a liminal space between the constructed fictional world and the real historical world.

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INTRODUCTION

THE DOPPELGÄNGER-AUTHOR BETWEEN GENRES

> This will be a new kind of autobiography, or rather a new hybrid between that and
> a novel. To the latter it will be affiliated by having a definite plot. Various strata
> of personal past will form as it were the banks between which will flow a torrent
> of physical and mental adventure. This will involve the picturing of many
> different lands and people and modes of living. I find it difficult to express its
> subject matter more precisely. As my approach will be quite new, I cannot affix to
> it one of those labels of which we spoke.
> – Vladimir Nabokov, *Selected Letters 1940-1977*

In 1951, Vladimir Nabokov published *Conclusive Evidence*, a text that he

willfully describes as a "new hybrid" between autobiography and the novel. Later

translated into Russian in 1954 and then revamped again for English readers to become

Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited in 1967, this text demonstrates that

Nabokov's effort to narrate his life was an ongoing process, encapsulating multiple

translations, decades, and apparently genres. While the content of *Speak, Memory*

consists of a variety of vignettes taken from significant moments from Nabokov's early

childhood and life before immigrating to America, perhaps the most provoking aspect of

the original text of *Conclusive Evidence* is what was left out of the manuscript – a final

chapter titled "On *Conclusive Evidence*." In this lost chapter, the narration dramatically

shifts from Nabokov's artful first-person recollections to introduce an analytical account

of the memoir at hand by a fictional reviewer, claiming that "the permanent importance

of *Conclusive Evidence* . . . lies in its being the meeting point of an impersonal art form

and a very personal life story" (*SM* 248). The reviewer suggests that Nabokov's "unique

freak as autobiographies go" (*SM* 247) bridges the space between the aesthetics of

literary fiction and autobiographical gestures that presume to present a truthful

representation life. But, what is perhaps more compelling is the question of how we are to react to a scenario where Nabokov's fictional reviewer openly responds to the Nabokov of the memoir and the author is one in the same.

This dissertation grapples with this question by accounting for the relevance of the doppelgänger-author as a pervasive narratological figure in contemporary literature between autobiographical and fictional genres. I argue that this figure emerges as a strategic effect when canonical and celebrity authors – such as Vladimir Nabokov, Philip Roth, J.M. Coetzee, and Salman Rushdie – jostle the stability of their fictional worlds in order to maintain control of their legacy within the literary marketplace. Within a literary marketplace stratified by different readership communities, global circulation, and increasingly digital distribution models, authors are more akin to fictional characters navigating the machinations of systems above and beyond their control. By inserting fictionalized versions of their authorship into hermeneutically complex genres, these authors both describe and contribute to an ongoing theorization about authorship as it shifts to satisfy the anxieties of a contemporary world characterized by mass circulation, intertextuality, and interactive and participatory approaches to reading.

Therefore, Nabokov's hybridization of life writing, contemporary criticism, and fiction within the unpublished chapter of *Conclusive Evidence* becomes an apropos example for how our contemporary understanding of authorship is often haunted by the presence of multiple forms of narrative authority. What results is the kind of brash self-reflexivity seen in *Conclusive Evidence* when Nabokov refers to Sirin as one of his literary contemporaries, rather than a penname for himself. The fictional reviewer of "Chapter 16" accounts for this as follows:

It is true that having practically stopped being a Russian writer, he is free to discuss Sirin's work as separate from his own. But one is inclined to think that his true purpose here is to project himself, or at least his most treasured self, into the picture he paints. One is reminded of those problems of 'objectivity' that the philosophy of science brings up. An observer makes a detailed picture of the whole universe but when he has finished he realizes that it still lacks something: his own self. So he puts himself in it too. But again a 'self' remains outside and so forth, in an endless sequence of projections, like those advertisements which depict a girl holding a picture of herself holding a picture of herself holding a picture that only coarse printing prevents one's eye from making out. (*SM* 254)

By referring to Sirin as a separate entity from himself within the memoir and having the fictional-reviewer comment on this violation, Nabokov fractures the boundaries of the memoir's ontological world and embraces an "endless sequence of projections" to create a paradox akin to *mise en abyme*. The Nabokov of the memoir is layered within the image of Nabokov framed by the fictional-reviewer which is in turn framed by the reader's awareness of an authorial Nabokov constructing these diegetic layers, and so on.

While the metafictional framing in 1951's *Conclusive Evidence* may seem like an odd place to open a discussion on the contemporary novel, I've chosen to begin here in order to emphasize that the kind of hybridized generic play that I discuss in this dissertation comes out of a long history of literary innovation. As Steven Padley points out, the "contemporary" is often characterized as an "open-ended period" such that attempts to definitively proclaim a beginning point are often structured around significant moments of change, such as the end of WWII in 1945, the social upheaval of the 1960s, or even the 1990s and the beginnings of the culture wars (Padley ix). This inconsistency when it comes to periodization has led Suman Gupta to suggest that focusing on genre can be an alternative tack when it comes to the problem of the contemporary since "*[t]esting the boundaries of existing genres in a self-conscious, referential way is a constant preoccupation in such new writing, and could be a useful way of understanding*

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what is contemporary in literature" (Gupta 42, emphasis in original). To combine

elements of both of these perspectives, my approach when it comes to the contemporary

is primarily focused around issues of genre, but it also takes seriously the way important

moments of literary history contribute to significant formalistic innovation.

Therefore, though my discussion of the phenomenon of hybridized genres is

organized chronologically – beginning with Nabokov in the late 1970s and ending with

Rushdie a decade in to the twenty-first-century – it is ultimately structured around what I

believe to be key figures and trigger points within literary history. While I will trace out

the specifics of this trajectory for the individual authors during my chapter outline below,

overall, the metafictional gesture I describe in this project has much to do with the

collision of two powerful but separate literary events that subsequently defined our

contemporary understanding of postmodernist reading after 1970 – the "death of the

author" phenomenon alongside the growth of the modern publishing conglomerate. Both

of these positions foster a situation that ultimately empowers the reader and challenges

the author's narrative authority. Since each of the primary novels I feature in this study

are published after or around the late 1970s, the next two sections will outline the

significance of these moments and describe how they contribute to the emergence of the

doppelgänger-author as a significant reactionary figure.

Doubling Down on "The Death of the Author"

Authorship theory is complex and comprehensive in a way that makes it difficult to review.[1] However, if there is a historical touchstone to help muddle through the interdisciplinary and century long discourse on this topic, it is certainly the year 1968 and the publication of Roland Barthes' English translation of the "Death of the Author." In this essay, Barthes takes a stance against the tyrannical model of the Romantic and Modernist author-genius and critiques the tendencies of scholars who sought to locate the originary meaning of a text in the pronouncements of its author.[2] This revolutionary claim is rooted in the poststructuralist idea that "writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin" and that it is the task of the reader to create meaning from the polysemious text (Barthes 49). Michel Foucault's "What is an Author?" essay, appeared just a year later and deconstructs authorship further, arguing that the author is merely a functional effect of discourse. Both of these theories destabilize the author as an effective repository of meaning in order to privilege the interpretive power of the reader.

In the wake of these initial theorizations, "the death of the author" has since become a kind of academic shorthand for how questions about authorship are often rooted in theories of reading or criticism. Séan Burke in *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (1998), demonstrates how the poststructuralist movement was motivated by the increased

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[1] However, the edited collection *What is an author?* (1993) by Maurice Biriotti and Nicola Miller and Sean Burke's *The Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault and Derrida* (1998) are wonderful attempts.

[2] In many ways, this is an extension of the 1946 conceit of Wimsatt's and Beardsley's "intentional fallacy" as adopted by the New Critics. Disenfranchising the author as a source of meaning was a way to encourage a new type of reading practice that focused on strictly formal properties of the text rather than the influences or intentions of the historical author. Barthes models a systematic and advanced method of this kind of scholarship in *S/Z*.

prestige of literary criticism such that "[t]he critic thus establishes a constant priority over the author" (Burke 142). Unlike Medieval conceptions of the author as a conduit to God and Romantic and Modernist models of the author as an individual genius, the modern author in the late twentieth-century suffered a "considerable decrease in social authority" (Donovan et al. 8). Essentially, as the prestige of the critic rises, the author's authority is eclipsed. And it is this specter of lost authority that foregrounds the legacy of the "death of the author" conceit.

However, ironically, to some contemporary scholars, the poststructuralist death sentence did not destroy the author's relevance, but contributed to his rebirth. Benjamin Widiss' *The Persistence of the Author in Twentieth-Century American Literature* (2011), for instance, claims that certain modernist and postmodernist texts invite the reader to participate in the author's revival, such that "the more hidden the author, the more fixated the reader becomes on finding him or her" (Widiss 6). Training in hermeneutic reading eventually led readers to see the author as another interpretive gap for the reader to fill in. Ironically, within this framework the author is recovered by the figure who initially replaced him – the reader.

Essentially, as the literary trend of poststructuralist reading developed, contemporary novelists began to react to the influence of the Anglo-American academy. According to Judith Ryan in *The Novel After Theory* (2012) novelists have since co-opted popular critical theory – such as the "death of the author" discourse – as important thematic components of their fiction (Ryan 35). Jeffrey Eugenides' *The Marriage Plot* (2011) and Teju Cole's *Open City* (2011), for instance, both explicitly co-opt critical theory – from Roland Barthes to Edward Said – into the worlds of their novels. This goes

to show that novelists are readers themselves – and often even scholars of literature. While it may have been self-serving for critics to forget this fact in the past, contemporary novelists have resuscitated the need to recognize this correlation. Thus, it is my contention that authors in the wake of literary poststructuralism began to not only incorporate their awareness of the "death of the author" approach to reading, but to challenge the very premises on which such assumptions stand.

My purpose is not to rehash the debate over how the image and symbol of the author has been executed and then reborn – rather, my goal is to analyze how some celebrity and canonical authors have not only reacted to this discourse, but contributed to it in their fiction. This dissertation explores how the four canonical and celebrity authors I highlight in this project use fiction to respond and react to the anxieties stemming from the perceived loss of their authorial agency. For this reason, the conceit of the "death of the author" will appear in varying degrees throughout this project. While Nabokov and Coetzee toy with the idea by placing their doppelgänger-authors in otherworldly positions, Roth and Rushdie engage with the author's death in very literal terms as they grapple with the punitive effects of controversial and political authorship. But what is commonly at stake for each of these authors is how the theoretical shift in narrative authority – from author to reader – motivates these figures to embrace an atmosphere of polysemious reading in order to reclaim discursive power. By creating hybridized forms of autobiographical fiction alongside doppelgängers of their authorship, these authors create a literary environment that allows for the fluidity of authorial selves in order to shift the anxieties of postmodern authorship onto the reader. By embracing the "death of the author" narrative in different degrees, these authors demonstrate an awareness of the

narrative in a way that outwardly challenges its interpretive power. In short, these authors react to the loss of their narrative authority by creating hermeneutic ambiguity for their readers.

Shadows Cast by the Literary Marketplace: Consumers, Celebrity, and Canon

While the legacy of discourse surrounding the "death of the author" has invited readers to revive the author as a relevant and important figure within contemporary literature, other approaches to authorship have capitalized on sociological methods within literature in order to explain the contemporary author's reemergence. At stake in this project is how the influence of the literary marketplace shapes academic canonicity and literary celebrity in a way that ultimately influences narration and genre. As I define it, the literary marketplace relies on a number of socio-economic factors related to infrastructural changes within the literary industry, the increased prestige of literary awards and celebrity, and the increased popularity of autobiographical and confessional genres. Underlying each of these factors is a significant shift in how literary taste and value is defined within contemporary literature.

To begin, the infrastructure of publishing, distribution, and reception within the literary marketplace has gone through a number of significant changes over the past few decades. Stephen Brown identifies the major shifts within the literary industry as stemming from "increased *competition*, rapid *consolidation*, changing *channels of distribution* and the perils of *celebritude*" (Brown 2). From the significant increase in the number of titles published each year, the growth of electronic literature and E-readers, the mergers of smaller publishing houses with their conglomerates both in the UK and

America, the rise and fall of the big-box literary superstores like Barnes and Noble and Borders, only for them to be replaced by on-line booksellers like Amazon.com (who in an ironic twist, as of 2016, is beginning to build their own brick and mortar stores), it is no wonder that the moving parts of the literary industry are constantly evolving to meet the demands of new kinds of readerships and business models.

The result of these infrastructural changes is a profound shift in how literary value has become integrated into popular culture. According to Jim Collins in *Bring on the Books for Everybody: How Literary Culture Became Popular Culture* (2010) the rise of popular literary culture has much to do with a significant change in how "taste hierarchies" are maintained, resulting in "the notion that refined taste, or the information needed to enjoy sophisticated cultural pleasures, is now easily accessible outside a formal education" (Collins 8). Rather, what has begun to hold the most sway within literary fields of value are the two poles of celebrity and canonicity. On the celebrity side of this dichotomy lies popular scandals and news within the media, wide scale marketability, and the engagement in public performance. Alternatively, canonicity is often thought to be shaped by the prestige of literary prizes, the influence of University syllabi, and the influence of cultural tastemakers.[3]

It is, of course, important to note that not all celebrity authors are canonical and vice versa. Dan Brown, Nicholas Sparks, and other genre fiction authors certainly demonstrate market and popular success; however, they are not regarded in the same way

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[3] This assumption that the canon is shaped by social and cultural institutions was first introduced by Pierre Bourdieu and later perpetuated by John Guillory in *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (1993). However, Willie van Peer contends that this kind of model is ultimately an illusion that fulfills the critic's desire to be in control of a system. New work on the canon within the digital humanities from Andrew Piper and Ted Underwood look to trace general patterns in literature over time using computational methods. Essentially, any attempt to define a canon is haunted by an inescapable bias of individual, nationalistic, or stylistic subjectivity.

within the academy as novelists Toni Morrison or David Mitchell. Joe Moran relates this model of literary celebrity to the divisions between high and middlebrow culture using Pierre Bourdieu's model of the field (Moran 4). To Bourdieu, the field can be characterized as a structured system with its own rules and internal logic when it comes to hierarchical classifications. Within cultural fields like literature, authors may occupy a purely symbolic restricted field – such as the literary canon – that is not explicitly marketed to a wide scale population or reliant on economic exchange. In this context, a successful author within a restricted field will successfully cultivate his own understanding of the kinds of cultural capital valued within this symbolic space, whether this is a talent within a particular literary style, awareness of publishable trends, or other cultural assets.[4] Typically the restricted field is characterized by high art that requires consecration from agents of value within the field, such as publishers or the academy, whereas middlebrow art is defined by mass culture.[5]

However, when it comes to literary celebrity's connection to canonicity, the divide between these two spaces becomes permeable. According to James F. English, literary prizes are key instruments in tracing how cultural exchange moves between the restricted and extended fields (English 12). Smack in the middle of the divide between high and middlebrow culture would be the Man Booker prize, or what Stephen Brown calls "the acme of today's media-celebrity-bookbiz imbroglio" since it "simultaneously

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[4] See Pierre Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (1993)

[5] Authors themselves can also be integrated into this process of value consecration. Carla Benedetti, in *The Empty Cage: Inquiry into the Mysterious Disappearance of the Author* (2005), attributes this effect to what she terms "authorialism," or the influence that the canonical author's function has on the overall valorization of the work within the literary marketplace (Benedetti 10). Authorialism makes it impossible for a work to be read as anything but the product of an author, therefore, an extreme case of authorialism cultivates certain expectations upon its reader (Benedetti 10).

epitomizes bibliocelebrity and sells titles to boot" (Brown 8). This combination of prestige alongside market success epitomizes how the Booker, along with other literary prizes such as the Nobel, demonstrates how literary celebrity is often ambiguous in regard to high and middlebrow culture (Moran 7).

This push and pull between two fields of literary writing – the economic and the aesthetic – characterizes the kind of canonical literary celebrity I describe here. Each of the authors I feature in this project resonate on these two levels, though in very different ways. While Nabokov published successfully as an Anglo-European modernist prior to his emigration to American in 1940, the literary fame he achieved with the publication *Lolita* in 1955 collided with the growing popularity of modernism within the United States in the middle of the century. The critical response to the novel wavered between aesthetic praise and ethical uproar over the relationship between Humbert Humbert and his nymphet. While the novel also demonstrated Nabokov's astute talent for tapping into the images and symbols of American popular culture in the 1950s, *Lolita* has itself become ingrained into popular culture – with the creation of two separate feature films based on the novel, not to mention the prolific integration of the young Lolita as a recognizable reference and image within popular culture at large. Roth's celebrity is also connected to a sexual scandal after the graphic descriptions of masturbation and crude confessions in his bestseller *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969) became well-known. However, Roth was not only commercially and financially successful, but he was also a critical success, winning multiple literary awards over the course of his career, including the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award twice. Rushdie is also no stranger to the literary awards circuit, even going as far as to win the Best of the

Booker, marking the 40th anniversary of the award, for *Midnight's Children* in 2008.

However, Rushdie's name is more colloquially associated with the *Satanic Verses*

scandal that took place in 1989 when the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran issued a fatwa

against the author that urged Muslims to end his life. Finally, though J.M. Coetzee lacks a

sexual or political scandal, his affinity for winning awards, including two Booker prizes

(1983 and 1999) and then the Nobel Prize in literature in 2003, makes him a dynamic

figure within the literary marketplace in spite of his personal reclusiveness and his

tendency to perform controversial public appearances under the guise of his fiction.

Significantly, these are celebrity figures "whose 'real-life' stories have become

objects of special fascination and intense scrutiny, effectively dominating the reception of

their work" (English and Frow 39). James L.W. West would further characterize this

group as "public" authors, meaning "serious literary artist[s] who meant also to reach a

large audience through the publishing apparatus of the time and who wanted to earn a

living by writing . . . simultaneously an artist and an impresario, an aesthete and an

entertained, a thinker and a businessman" (West 5). As "public" authors, these four

figures combine their talents of aesthetic representation alongside an awareness of the

sociological and economic effects of canonical and celebrity authorship. Essentially,

there is an astute awareness of the demands and effects of the literary marketplace

throughout the fictional works of each of these authors such that a closer analysis of the

narratological techniques and strategies accompanying this integration becomes

necessary.

One of the major ways in which the literary marketplace influences fictional

innovation is through an awareness of a consumer-centric reading population. According

to Stephen Brown, the rise of consumer-centric attitudes has inevitably led to the "the authorial 'confessions' sub-genre, where authors write about their experiences with the book-consuming public" (Brown 12). Stemming from the popularity of marketing strategies such as author-meet-ups and the rise of an active book club culture that shifted reading trends away from restricted literary gatekeepers, the metafictional gesture of writing about writing has found its specific niche. Whether it is Italo Calvino's innovative *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* (1979) which actively deconstructs the act of both reading and writing a novel or Richard Powers' *Generosity: An Enchantment* (2010), which creatively embraces the conceit of the creative writing class as both subject and narrative technique, these novels integrate the creative anxieties of authorship into the formal qualities of their work.

Alongside this rise in authorial confessional metafiction was an almost parallel rise in the prestige and popularity of life writing within contemporary literature. What has come to be known as the "memoir boom" by Julie Rak is characterized by a systematic push within the publishing industry to adopt mass-marketing strategies used by paperback publishers who sought after a more profit-driven business model. In the 1950s nonfiction and memoir were lumped alongside genre paperbacks, but after the rash of publishing mergers in the 1970s and 1980s this model began to shift as the desire to acquire and publish blockbusters and bestsellers began to see memoir as a popular boon to the publishing economy. The kind of publicity afforded to talk shows in the 1980s and 1990s also contributed to the memoir's success, since this kind of horizontal marketing campaign allowed authors to promote their work directly to the consumer. [6]

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[6] See Julie Rak's *Boom!: Manufacturing Memoir for the Popular Market* (2013) for a comprehensive history of the evolution of the contemporary publishing industry.

Not surprisingly, this rise in the memoir's popularity has also led to a renewed interest in life writing as a powerful field of academic study, with the creation of *a/b Auto/biographical Studies* the journal of the Autobiography Society in 1985 followed by the Division of Life Writing being officially added to the Modern Language Association in 1991. Scholars such as Sidonie Smith, Julia Watson, and Paul John Eakin, have used the field to broaden traditional and limiting conceptions of autobiography to recognize that the process of writing the self can manifest in a number of generic forms. In fact, in their instructional text, *Reading Autobiography: Interpreting Life Narratives* (2010), Smith and Watson include an appendix of sixty different genres of life writing, giving credence to the various neologisms and trends within the field. However, absent from this list is a satisfying description for the kind of hybridized autobiographical fiction I identify in this project. Essentially, when the confessional metafictional gestures within consumer-centric fiction combines with the popularity of life writing, a hybridized genre begins to emerge – what I term *autobiographical-metafiction*.

Defining a Hybrid Genre: Autobiographical-Metafiction in Literary History

In order to understand what I term *autobiographic-metafiction*, it is important to first review the various ways in which the genres of the novel and autobiography have been arbitrarily divided. One key moment of generic flux concerning these genres is the theoretical "rise" of the novel during the eighteenth-century, a stance precipitated by Ian Watt, Michael McKeon, and Lennard Davis.[7] While many of these critics place the novel in opposition to various other generic categories, such as the long history of French

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[7] See Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*, Lennard Davis' *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* and Michael McKeon's *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740*.

romance and more popular yet low-brow "news/novels" discourse, the most important

element of the rise of the novel for my purposes is how the realist novel of the

eighteenth-century essentially parodied the more established genre of life writing (diaries,

letters, biographies and so forth) in order to distinguish itself as a separate generic entity.

Many canonical eighteenth-century novels ultimately operate between the borders

of two or more life writing genres. *Pamela*, by Samuel Richardson, for instance, is

premised on the assumption that Pamela is the sole creator and author of the letters

depicting her capture, ushering in the sub-genre of the epistolary novel. Daniel Defoe's

authorship of *Robinson Crusoe* was initially concealed by a Preface which claims Crusoe

as the sole author of the enclosed diary, with Defoe taking the supplementary role of

editor. The conceit of the editor was used to both conceal authorship and to endow the

fictional-character with the "authentic report of human experience" necessary in order to

establish what Watt calls "formal realism" (Watt 32). These examples are significant for

the much acclaimed rise of the novel mostly because the eighteenth-century reader was

often unable to fully discern the borders between fictionality, authorship, and genre.[8]

These kinds of epistemological questions surrounding authorship and generic

form once again emerged during the advent of high modernism at the turn of the

twentieth-century. Many modernist novels, including the works of early Nabokov, are

well known for integrating aspects of biography into fiction in ways that muddle the

boundaries between genres. For example, Hemingway's *roman à clef The Sun Also Rises*

(1926) closely touches on the author's extensive travels in Spain. Likewise, George

Orwell's short story, "Shooting and Elephant" (1936) relies heavily on his experiences

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[8] As representative of this conflict, many eighteenth-century novels in England were embroiled in publication scandals. For example, Richardson's authorial disavowal of *Pamela* resulted in numerous authorship claims by noble ladies who averred to be the original writers of the letters (Davis 177).

while living in Burma. Gertrude Stein's *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933) is a text that both invites and eschews autobiographical reading. The protagonist of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (1913-1927) is blatantly named "Marcel" such that critics have struggled to separate from his author for decades. And, of course, the presence of Stephen Dedalus in both James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and *Ulysses* (1922) has also triggered biographically oriented criticism.

Essentially, because genres themselves suffer from subjective fluctuations over time, divining the generic boundaries between the novel and autobiography is not only a profoundly fraught task, but a pointless one, as poststructuralist scholars are keen to point out. Paul de Man's essay "Autobiography as De-facement" (1979) perhaps enumerates this unique kind of difficulty best, claiming that "[e]mpirically as well as theoretically, autobiography lends itself poorly to generic definition; each specific instance seems to be an exception to the norm; the works themselves always seem to shade off into neighboring or even incompatible genres (de Man 920). De Man goes on to argue that the sheer variety of autobiographical gestures generated across the entirety of the literary sphere stagnate generic discussions of other genres, such as the novel. While the "novelization" of other genres as proposed by Bakhtin rejuvenates the flexibility and freedom of all genre forms, the generic ambiguity of autobiography creates a black hole of endlessly deferred interpretation (Bakhtin 7). De Man proposes that instead of adopting specific generic qualities or canonical styles in order to define autobiography, it is more fruitful to embrace the multitudinous qualities of this elusive genre and approach it from a different tack entirely, ultimately claiming that, "Autobiography . . . is not a genre or a mode, but a figure of reading or of understanding that occurs, to some degree,

in all texts. The autobiographical moment happens as an alignment between the two subjects involved in the process of reading in which they determine each other by mutual reflexive substitution" (de Man 921). Rather than defining autobiography against certain *a priori* assumptions about form or style, de Man identifies the most integral component of autobiographical writing hinges on the dialogic relationship between the subjects of author and reader.

Following this point, the postmodern novel after WWII stems from innovations in form that are more focused toward challenging or questioning the very nature of reality, history, and the self. Brian McHale in *Postmodernist Fiction* (1987) equates the post-WWII novel's tendency to parody or disrupt convention as characteristic of an ontological approach to genre that demonstrates how "postmodernist fiction [holds] the mirror up to reality; but that reality, now more than ever before, is plural" (McHale 39). McHale claims that the dominant idea of the postmodern genre lies in the concept of a polyphonic ontology, or the idea that there are alternate and diverse universes operating simultaneously. This concept of doubling and obscuring the reality of the world, the self, history and other supposedly unitary perceptions correlates well with the aftermath of poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, and new historicism as perpetuated by the post-WWII Anglo-American academy. What results from these ontological and socio-critical concerns surrounding the poststructuralist moment in literary history are hybridized generic forms that are able to register within multiple realms of interpretation.

One of the ways in which writers during this era are able to call attention to the artificial nature of the borders separating formal genres is by highlighting the constructed nature of the text. As Patricia Waugh claims, many of the writers during this era adopt

forms of metafiction since it allows them to "explore a *theory* of fiction through the *practice* of writing fiction" (Waugh 2). Linda Hutcheon extends this tendency within postmodernist writing by claiming that "historiographic-metafiction" is characteristic of the desire for the literary to confront its relationship to history (Hutcheon 108). However, Hutcheon's conception, while applicable for postmodernist texts that challenge the authority of historical events and figures, does not fully address how genres of life writing are used in metafiction in an effort to formally disrupt conceptions of authorship. Thus, Max Saunders' revision of Hutcheon's terminology in regards to life writing is perhaps more appropriate: "Where historiographic metafiction represents a post-modernizing of the historical novel, auto/biographic metafiction represents a post-modernizing of auto/biography" (Saunders 494). Saunders' neologism of "auto/biographic metafiction" incorporates all forms of life writing, including biographical studies of notable figures. However, my main focus within this study is on the author's autobiographical relationship with the fictional text in which he constructs; therefore, I will restrict Saunders' term and adopt the label *autobiographical-metafiction* in order to describe the type of hybridized genre that the authors in this study construct.

Each of the texts under analysis in this project may be classified in some degree as autobiographical-metafiction, meaning that they draw from the conventions of autobiographical writing but also use fictional techniques to self-reflexivly challenge readerly expectations about genre. The texts I discuss in this project are narratives that

are reflexive of an already established archive of written work.[9] These are narratives that take the fictional archive of authorship seriously and attempt to widen the view while attempting to synthesize how the act of writing (and reading) can shape an individual's legacy. The problem is not the act of telling, but how the act of telling is read and interpreted after the immediacy of authorship recedes. Metafiction, as a formal technique, reveals the permeable boundaries between fictional and nonfictional genres. Rupturing generic categories in this way forces readers to revise and revisit both their interpretive assumptions and strategies about both the text at hand and the biographical author who looms beyond the page.

Reading the Doppelgänger-Author

So, how are readers meant to navigate the hybridized genre of autobiographical-metafiction? Genres, and other paratexts, function to help the reader's encounter with the text by providing a recognizable, or coherent framework for the act of reading.[10] However, within autobiographic-metafiction, this framework falters and other interpretive cues must be employed. I argue that it is in this generic limbo where the narratological figure of the doppelgänger-author emerges to function as both a guide and obstacle.

The symbol of the doppelgänger has a long and complex relationship with literary history and my use of the trope embraces aspects of this archive. Within folklore, the

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[9] I invoke the term "work" here in relation to Foucault's "author-function" and Barthes' essay "From Work to Text" in *Image-Music-Text* defines work as a collective encapsulation of any number of texts by an individual author.

[10] "Coherence" is Peter Rabinowitz's term in *Before Reading: Narrative Conventions and the Politics of Interpretation* (1987) for how genres suggest the text operates as a unified whole that the reader can decipher based on prior knowledge of how this system operates.

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doppelgänger figure is an otherworldly presence, often associated with death. The standard narrative behind this belief derives from the idea of a divided body and soul such that when one sees their double, death is imminent (Slethaug 10). For this reason folkloric versions of the doppelgänger are coupled with feelings of fear and anxiety stemming from the fragmentation of the self. More modern psychoanalytical approaches also conceive of the double as a negative effect. Freud, for instance, views literary doubles as "an image of the author's repressed, regressive, autoerotic unconscious" (Slethaug 13). Of course, as extensive scholars and readers, the authors within this study are certainly aware of these critical perspectives – some of them even explicitly so. Nabokov is famously critical of Freudians, parodying them throughout a number of his novels, and his novel *Despair* employs the conceit of the double explicitly. Roth also uses the conceit of the psychiatric analysis as the frame for *Portnoy's Complaint* and Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* relies on the doubling of Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta.

However, my methodology when it comes to the doppelgänger, and doubles in general, only engages with these psychological or philosophical perspectives tangentially. While I will periodically consider some of the motivations behind these constructions in my analysis, I am mostly concerned with how socio-historical and literary networks contribute to this discourse of doubling, motivating these authors to invoke the doppelgänger not as a fearful internal fragmentation, but a willing and conscious means of controlled narrative representation.

More than a literary motif, the doppelgänger-author aids readers in engaging in a contemporary discursive mode that vacillates between competing generic discourses – the

novel and autobiography. This connection has been touched on briefly by John McGill in

The Treacherous Imagination: Intimacy, Ethics, and Autobiographical Fiction (2013).

Here, McGill uses the doppelgänger to account for the "intimate violation" inherent in

autobiographical fiction when authors fictionalize the lives of independent individuals to

generate material (McGill 87). As my reading of Philip Roth's works in Chapter 3

demonstrates, there are certainly ethical questions at stake in a situation such as this. But

what McGill fails to fully consider are the moments when authors fictionalize their own

lives and careers. When the fictionalized double is the figure of the author himself,

another kind of intimate violation is at stake – the struggle for narrative authority between

the author and the reader.

This project argues that the doppelgänger-author is a narrative construction that

emerges when the narrative authority of an author is challenged or threatened by the

presence of another "otherworldly" claim on the narrative. In his study of fictional

character, John Frow associates this otherworldly figure with the reader – what he calls

the paredros or "familiar who accompanies a group, the non-human but figured absence

from which all narrative figuration emerges" (Frow x). This conception of the reader as a

"daemonic other" echoes my theorization of the doppelgänger-author as a liminal figure

operating between the dual subject positions of author and reader in their struggle for

narrative authority, a concept I take from Paul Dawson in his innovative study *The*

Return of the Omniscient Narrator: Authorship and Authority in Twenty-First Century

Fiction (2013). Dawson explains that

> Narrative authority . . . operates via a continuum between narrative voice,
> extrafictional voice and authorial voice, and establishes a dialogue with the public
> response. These voices have different textual forms and diegetic levels, but they
> co-exist as public statements in the same discursive field, and operate as

interrelated rhetorical strategies for asserting the cultural significance of the novel to public life which establish a dialogue with the public response. (Dawson 236)

Under the framework of discursive narratology, "a work of fiction is a public statement which circulates in the same discursive formation as its author's nonfictional statements" (Dawson 236). It this context, the doppelgänger-author requires a "double consciousness" of reading in a similar vein to the model that Peter Rabinowitz suggests for his approach to rhetorical narrative theory (Rabinowitz 20). This method of reading approaches narrative as ultimately a communicative act between authors and readers. Essentially, fiction and nonfiction by the same author create a "continuum" of narrative voices that forge a dialogue with public response and dramatize the institutions, readers, and authorial positions that participate in this feedback loop (Dawson 236).[11] Thus, doppelgänger-authors are used as catalysts in order to grapple with the interpretations of divergent reading communities and the author's simultaneous existence within multiple literary fields.

The doppelgänger-author is the representation of both the communion and battle forged between the author and reader of the text. As an actant, the doppelgänger-author accesses the threshold between multiple generic categories in order to both facilitate and challenge the communicative function of the narrative between author and reader.[12] The doppelgänger-author emerges during moments of *paratextual prolepsis*, meaning that the reader is often already aware of the story events surrounding an individual's authorship ahead of time due to the power of fame and canonicity. This sense of prolepsis, along

[11] Like Dawson and other proponents of rhetorical narrative theory, my approach also assumes a feedback-loop between "authorial agency, textual phenomena (including intertexual relations), and reader response" (Herman et al 5).

[12] This conception of actant deviates slightly from A.J. Griemas' primarily definition of the term in *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method* (1983) as it assumes not solely a binary relationship between Sender (Author)/Receiver (Reader) but includes a third space between these positions.

with the hybridized form of autobiographical-metafiction fosters an anxiety inducing

interpretive frame for the reader. There is the desire to use prior knowledge of an

individual's authorship to aid in the process of interpreting the text, but it is exactly this

impulse that muddies the waters. Accordingly, the presence of the doppelgänger-author

can either assist in bridging the gap dividing these reader and author and to assert a

common narratological ground, or it can intentionally disrupt this communication.

Meta-methodologies

I use each of the authors in this project to take on a large theoretical approach to

genre and authorship, namely fictional worlds in Chapter 2, the implied author in Chapter

3, postmodern allegory in Chapter 4, and digital self-fashioning in Chapter 5. Each

chapter provides contextual and historical background on each of the authors in this

study, an account of how each of their personas have been perceived and constructed by

various reading communities within the global literary marketplace, and close readings of

significant autobiographical and fictional selections of their works.

Additionally, in two of my chapters I employ techniques derived from digital

humanities methodologies such as stylometry, network scraping, and textual analysis so

that I can approach the abstract question of authorship not only qualitatively, but

quantitatively. Since the crux of my analysis relies on a mode of reading that embraces a

continuum of narrative representations of authorship, social network scraping allows me

access to narratives initially limited by traditional close reading in order to enhance my

archive of paratextual material and track moments of direct author-reader interaction.

Alternatively, stylometric analysis offers a compelling resource for thinking about

authorship as a product of purely textual representation. These methods effectively widen the scope of my consideration of authorship in an effort to anticipate how studies of authorship are continually evolving as our methods of access and analysis develop.

My next chapter, "Fiction's Passport: Vladimir Nabokov's *Look at the Harlequins!*" situates Nabokov as a key figure motivating autobiographical-metafiction by focusing on how the author's last published novel ups the ante on the kind of generic gameplay he has participated in since the 1930s. I use the theory of literary worlds developed by Lubomír Doležel alongside Eric Hayot's recent approach to world literature in light of "aesthetic worlds" to consider how the figure of the doppelgänger-author is characterized by narratological border crossing between the two genres of fiction and autobiography (Hayot 44). As Nabokov told Alfred Appel in a 1967 interview, "I have always maintained, even as a schoolboy in Russia, that the nationality of a worthwhile writer is of secondary importance…the Writer's art is his real passport. His identity should be immediately recognized by a special pattern or unique coloration" (Nabokov, *SO* 63). By focusing on the largely critically ignored novel, *Look at the Harlequins!* (1974), I argue that Nabokov's doppelgänger-author is located in the space between the two realms of fiction and reality in a similar way to how the Nansen passport, a document issued to stateless refugees of the Bolshevik Rebellion, allowed one to cross borders without any definitive state sanctioned national belonging. This chapter introduces the doppelgänger-author as a narratological effect dependent on both the primary text at hand and the authorial paratexts that surround and contribute to the reader's task of interpretation in a way that is taken up throughout the rest of the project.

While Nabokov intensified his use of autobiographical-metafiction to finish out his career in the late 1970s, Philip Roth adopted the form as a means to distinguish himself as an authorial force within the literary marketplace. The creation of Nathan Zuckerman in 1974 – Roth's most prolific fictional doppelgänger – vexed both Roth's readers and his critics for decades. However, two of Roth's novels in the 1980s – *The Counterlife* (1986) and *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* (1988) – double down on the gesture of autobiographical-metafiction in a way not previously seen. Therefore, "'*He not me'*: The Doubled Ownership of Fiction in Philip Roth" engages with the familiar but contentious debate over Wayne Booth's concept of the implied author in an effort to track the various ways the agency of narration moves between multiple authorial-subjects. It argues that the authorial agency of generically hybridized texts is ultimately split between readerly assumptions about autobiographical genres and the author's attempt to combat these preoccupations through imaginative fiction. *The Counterlife* depicts another iteration of Nathan Zuckerman within a narrative that shifts the details of the plot back and forth between Zuckerman and his brother Henry. *The Facts* builds on this narrative instability by framing a traditional autobiographical diegesis with letters from "Roth" to Zuckerman and vice versa. A stylometric comparison of both Roth and Zuckerman using coding in R-stylo helps to visualize and problematize this exchange of ownership further. I argue that these shifts in subjectivity mimic the kind of constant toggling of narrative ownership positions that readers struggle with in their attempts to differentiate Roth from Zuckerman.

My next two chapters move outside of a strictly Euro-American preoccupation of authorship as depicted in Nabokov and Roth to consider the role of autobiographical-

metafiction within the context of contemporary postcolonialism. Whereas Nabokov and Roth expressed anxieties over their specific literary legacies as canonical and celebrity figures at the center of the Euro-American marketplace, J.M. Coetzee and Salman Rushdie struggle with these problems in a more contentious global context where the politics of literary reading are structured around hierarchies of nationality and readership communities are increasingly more global. As what Timothy Brennan calls "Third World cosmopolitan celebrities" (Brennan 2), these public authors and intellectuals have become elite symbols for the growing push in the literary academy for a kind of world literature that embraces transnationalism, translation, and migration.[13]

"Duck or Duckoy?: Allegories of Authorship in J.M. Coetzee's Late Fiction," considers how the institutional pressures of an international literary marketplace and celebrity fame led to Coetzee's troubling and innovative forays in life writing. Since postmodernist allegory, according to Brian McHale, is characterized by the prolonged "hesitation" between literal and figurative registers, I argue that the doppelgänger-authors in Coetzee's late novels are the products of strategic genre staging, innovative stylistic design, and the dramatization of various events of reading and response (McHale 134). Beginning with the trio of pseudo-autobiographical novels written in the third-person (grouped as *Scenes from Provincial Life* in 2012), the novelization of public lectures in *Elizabeth Costello* (2003), and finally in the unique textual presentation of *A Diary of a Bad Year* (2007) – that skillfully layers the academic essay alongside multiple streams of diary reportage and confessional self-reflection – Coetzee demonstrates how authorship is stratified across multiple textual registers driven by both economic and cultural capital.

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[13] This new category of literature currently holds the problematic label of "Global Anglophone," as discussed during two heated the 2016 Modern Language Association Convention in Austin.

My final chapter, "*Joseph Anton*'s Digital Doppelgänger: Salman Rushdie and the Rhetoric of Self-fashioning," shifts gears from the explicitly hybridized texts of the previous chapters to consider Salman Rushdie's memoir *Joseph Anton* (2012). Rushdie has attempted to negotiate his significantly complex position after the Verses Affair in various ways, with the memoir being the most authoritative example of this project. However, since 2011 Rushdie has also engaged in a less conventional form of autobiographical self-fashioning via online social networking platform Twitter. Using a rhetorical approach to narrative theory alongside an empirical analysis of Rushdie's social media presence on Twitter using networking software from NodeXL and textual analysis by Voyant Tools, this chapter demonstrates how and why Rushdie employs a digital-doppelgänger in order to strategically curate the overall prestige, relevance, and legacy of his authorship post-fatwa. The doppelgängers of *Joseph Anton* and @salmanrushdie – in both the digital and fictional world – allows Rushdie to forcefully negotiate his complex position within postcolonial and global authorship after effects of the Verses Affair and his own literary celebrity.

Finally, it has not evaded me that women authors are absent from this project and I would like to make it clear that this is not an intentional omission, but a statement on the resonance of masculinity that continues to cloud our understanding of contemporary authorship. For both Loren Glass and Kathleen Fitzpatrick, authorship and literary celebrity are inherently tied to models of masculinity. To Glass, celebrity figures like Norman Mailer and Ernest Hemingway exerted forms of hypermasculinity as a means of combatting the modern male crisis as it was threatened by a feminized version of mass culture, often characterized by Nathaniel Hawthorne's well known adage about

"scribbling women" (Glass, *Authors* 17-8). Fitzpatrick extends this premise to apply to

contemporary postmodern authors like Don DeLillo and Johnathan Franzen – simplified

as "the New White Guys" – who lament a similar loss of masculinity in the face of

contemporary mass culture, this time characterized by black female television

spearheaded by public figures like Oprah Winfrey (Fitzpatrick 205-9). Within this

context, the anxieties of celebrity authorship and fame resonate very closely with the

anxieties of masculinity – specifically the latent threat that the celebrity and canonical

author will lose his authority to forces outside of his influence or control. This is a unique

kind of anxiety in that it relies on the assumption that narrative authority is not based on a

willful negotiation of diverse voices and perspectives, but an already established given.

And so it is my contention that the stakes of legacy, world building, and

autobiographical writing have not yet been grappled with by women authors in the same

way and within the same scope that it manifests in the four figures I feature here, frankly

because the threat of lost authority is simply not the same. This is not due to a lack of

awareness or self-reflexivity in women authors; rather, it is more likely that the dearth of

this kind of autobiographical gesture may be attributed to the woman writer's alternative

approach to narrative authority. Susan Lanser has argued that narrative voice for women

and minority writers can be extremely powerful in that it allows underrepresented groups

the authority often denied them within the Euro-American literary marketplace.[14] In this

case, narrative authority is something that must be gained, since society unfortunately

still struggles to recognize the authority of women writers as an *a priori* conclusion.

So, while this study does not provide a comprehensive account of major trends

within contemporary authorship, *The Author's Doppelgänger* introduces a new

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[14] See Susan Lanser's *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice* (1992).

framework for how to read generically hybridized texts in light of the socio-economic anxieties that shape celebrity and canonical authorship today. Overall, it is one thing to "write what you know" – the cringe-inducing adage of creating writing departments everywhere – and another thing to strategically use the powers of fictional representation to challenge what readers supposedly think they know. In each of the cases I highlight, the specter of canonical and celebrity authorship precedes the textual object itself and the doppelgänger-author emerges at these moments. This specter of lost authority haunts the four authors in this study in ways that have become increasingly more tangible as the narratives readers encounter continue to be stratified by multi-modal forms of interactivity, global circulation, and the immediacy of reader response. Thus, the hybridized texts I highlight in this dissertation are significant flashpoints in our ongoing theorization of authorship within a continually changing contemporary world.

CHAPTER 2

FICTION'S PASSPORT: VLADIMIR NABOKOV'S *LOOK AT THE HARLEQUINS!*

Introduction

Nestled within the final pages of *Speak, Memory* (1951, 1966) is a photograph of

Véra and Dimitri Nabokov as they appear on a Paris issued Nansen passport from April

1940 (Figure 1). The Nansen passport, a document issued to Vladimir Nabokov and his

family along with the multitudes of other exiled Russians across Western Europe in 1940,

demonstrates how the desire for stability is often thwarted in the face of national unrest.

While such documents were issued to solve the problem of identity papers for those

exiled Russians lacking a stable nation, the degree to which these papers were validated

or accepted as official by outside countries was ultimately at the discretion of individual

state bureaucracies. As such, the passport photo in *Speak, Memory* supports the thematics

of the autobiography's final chapters, bringing finality to the nomadic and unsettled

"spiral" of existence that the Nabokovs experienced in Europe by allowing passage to the

nation that would be their home for the next few decades (*SM* 215). However, as one of

the final images the reader encounters in *Speak, Memory*, the passport also operates as a

useful lens through which to pursue the question of how Nabokov positions himself as an

author.

Not only is the Nansen passport in *Speak, Memory* a representation of the

Nabokov family's lack of an official national affiliation prior to immigration to America,

but the document is centered on Véra and Dimitri, rather than the author himself. These

details gesture towards the absence of a stable identity for Nabokov at the close of the

memoir. This lacuna thus opens up the hermeneutic space for Nabokov to establish

alternative versions of his identity elsewhere. This chapter examines how another

document, Nabokov's final novel *Look at the Harlequins!*, functions as a intentionally

literary identity paper for Nabokov's authorship. Just as *Speak, Memory* skirts the line

between autobiographical reportage and literary aesthetics, *Look at the Harlequins!* also

advocates for a version of authorship that exceeds these generic boundaries. At stake in

this consideration is how Nabokov plays with generic forms and readerly assumptions

about his life and works in an effort to wield control over his authorial legacy.

Figure 1. Vladimir Nabokov. *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited.*

There is no question that Nabokov is an eminently celebrated and canonical author; his prolific and bi-lingual career has spanned continents and almost the entirety of the twentieth-century, making him a key relay figure between Anglo-European modernism at the turn-of-the-century and the embrace of this style in American literature after the 1950s.[15] To date there are at least two academic journals specifically dedicated to Nabokov, an international society devoted to the author (who sport an extremely active online listerv), and a seemingly countless archive of academic books and articles that continue to happily engage in Nabokophilia. However, while the coterie of Nabokov admirers is strong, the author has not been immune to scandal – mostly stemming from the author's most well-known work, *Lolita*.

To his credit, Nabokov was aware that *Lolita* would not only breed literary controversy, but affect his public image as an author since the sexual relationship between a middle aged man and a prepubescent girl contained within the novel's plot was a taboo subject likely to be misread. Writing to Katherine White of *The New Yorker* in 1953, in response to the prospect of publishing excerpts of *Lolita* in the periodical, Véra Nabokov explains that the main hazard lied in a deficiency of reading:

> I shall try to explain about the book. Its subject is such that V., as a college teacher, cannot very well publish it under his real name. Especially, since the book is written in the first person, and the "general" reader has the unfortunate inclination to identity the invented "I" of the story with its author. (This is, perhaps, particularly true of the American "general" reader). (Nabokov, *Letters* 142)

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[15] Nabokov is sometimes thought of as a "late modernist" following John Barth's classification of the author as such in *The Friday Book: Essays and other Nonfiction* (1984) (Barth 213). Maurice Couturier, instead, sees Nabokov as a transitional figure such that "his first exile made him a modernist his second a postmodernist" (Couturier 257). I also tend to favor a loose categorization of Nabokov's authorship, seeing him as someone influenced by high modernism, but also a key relay figure within postmodernism in the 1970s.

While Nabokov considered a number of contingency plans in order to partition his literary fame from his concurrent employment as a lecturer at Cornell University – such as recovering his old Russian penname, Sirin – the kind of misreading common in the American "general" reader that Véra cautions against is one of the major interpretive snags that has troubled the legacy of Nabokov's authorship.

Regardless of Véra's early cautions, Humbert Humbert's narration has clouded the public perception of *Lolita* and its author such that Nabokov felt it necessary to negotiate his authorship in relief of the novel. The essay "On a Book entitled *Lolita*," originally published in *The Anchor Review* in 1957, has since become canon to both publishers and readers who struggled to justify the amoral nature of the fictional Humbert Humbert's sexual proclivities with those of the novel's historical author.[16] Nabokov calls attention to the specific distinctions between character, commenter, reviewer, and author:

> After doing my impersonation of suave John Ray, the character in *Lolita* who pens the Foreword, any comments coming straight from me may strike me, in fact – as an impersonation of Vladimir Nabokov about his own book. A few points, however, have to be discussed; and the autobiographic device may induce mimic and model to blend. (Nabokov, *Lolita* 311)

This preamble invokes the existence of multiple narrative levels and generic assumptions that readers must negotiate. First, there is John Ray's psychological evaluation of Humbert that cautions readers to view the character-narrator through the lens of the criminally guilty. Next, the scholarly essay, later included as a kind of afterword to the novel, becomes another level of interpretation as readers encounter a version of Nabokov as an author. But even this position is destabilized by the suggestion that this too is an "impersonation of Vladimir Nabokov about his own book . . . induc[ing] mimic and

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[16] "On a Book entitled *Lolita*" was subsequently published as an Afterword to editions of *Lolita* after 1958.

model to blend" (Nabokov, *Lolita* 311). These different authorial positions, divided across multiple narrative levels, undermine any singular authority or narratological level. And it is in this way – through multiple narratological frames and references – that "On a Book Entitled *Lolita*" models the kind of complex narratological border crossing the reader must negotiate in Nabokov's last published novel, *Look at the Harlequins!*.

Early on in his account of his childhood and teenage years, the famous Russian-American author Vadim Vadimovich reflects on the practical use of his telling of his life story: "Indeed, the present memoir derives much of its value from its being a *catalogue raisonné* of the roots and origins and amusing birth canals of many images in my Russian and especially English fiction" (*LATH* 8). And much of this assessment is true; readers and scholars of literature often look to biographical accounts in order to supplement or challenge their own individual interpretations of a text. However, what is troubling about Vadim's observation is that to the readers of *Look at the Harlequins!* (1974), the figure they seek out is not its narrator, so much as its author – Vladimir Nabokov. Accordingly, the novel relies on certain knowledge of Nabokov's authorial legacy, since the content of *LATH* contains symbols, characters, and techniques derived from a number of the author's previous novels. For example, throughout Vadim's journey in the fictional memoir to plot out how he came to meet and marry his "three or four successive wives" (*LATH* 3), he encounters a number of established Nabokovian characters and situations, most significantly two different Lolita figures.

And so it is within this context, that *LATH* represents the culmination of Nabokov's half-century of game-play with both his devoted readers and his detractors when it comes to the relationship between fiction and biography. Nabokov first showed

his interest in this problem during the height of European and Anglo modernism with *The Gift* (1937), originally published in Russian as *Dar*. This puzzling novel offers two fictionalized auto/biographical gestures: Fyodor's composition of a mock-biography of Nikolay Chernyshevsky and the mingling of autobiographical details from Nabokov's life in Berlin with that of his protagonist. Nabokov took on this problem again in *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* (1941) where the narrator, V., attempts to recover the lost biography of his deceased half-brother, a famous Russian-English novelist. In dramatizing V's attempt to access the reality of his brother's life through his written works, Nabokov shows how such efforts to negotiate the relationship between an author's life and his works is an ultimately flawed enterprise. Nabokov then began to play more directly with textual form by using footnotes to highlight how literary analysis also contributes to the failures of biographical study in *Pale Fire* (1962). The novelization of Charles Kinbote's annotations of John Shade's 999-line poem do little to uncover the hidden biographical story of the tragic and supernatural loss of the Shade's daughter Hazel; rather, Kinbote's annotations reveal more about Kinbote's own suppressed biographical history, his deposed status as the exiled king of Zembla and the plot of the assassin sent to end his life. Thus, it is in the poststructuralist tendencies of *Pale Fire* where the distinct narratives of subject and scholar inevitably intertwine, indicating that for Nabokov attempts to write the life of another is often disrupted by the simultaneous attempt to write the self.

Nabokov's repeated playful engagement with the conventions of biographical and autobiographical writing within first his Russian and then his American fiction demonstrates how the borders between these two narrative conventions are ultimately

permeable within the Nabokovian universe. Hence, I am certainly not the first to analyze

how Nabokov embeds fragments of his biographical life into his fiction. Pekka Tammi's

narratological analysis of Nabokov's works in *Problems of Nabokov's Poetics* (1985)

relies on the assessment that "*the relationship between man's life and its literary

representations in the text becomes the dominant Nabokovian theme*" (Tammi 21, italics

in original). And, according to Herbert Graves, Nabokov's tendency to fictionalize

biographical forms across his oeuvre "demonstrate[s] the artificial, contrived nature of art

and the omnipotence of the author" (Grabes ix).

And yet, while *Look at the Harlequins!*, by nature of its parodic style and meta-

referential reliance on remixed details from Nabokov's life and work, seems to embody

an idealized version of this critical perspective, scholarship on the novel pales in

comparison to Nabokov's more canonical works. According to Brian Boyd, this critical

gap is likely due critics often regarding the novel as simply "a tired self-referential joke"

(Boyd 625). In contrast, others have sought to separate the novel from these biographical

concerns, such as D. Barton Johnson's reading of *LATH* as a representation of

schizophrenic narration (Johnson 205) or Brian Boyd's approach that views the novel as

a covert tribute to Nabokov's wife Véra (Boyd 641). However, I contend that to ignore or

write-off the connection between Vadim and Nabokov is to miss out on the subtle way in

which Nabokov uses the novel to negotiate the legacy of his authorship.

In the sections that follow, I demonstrate how Nabokov fabricates Vadim as a

doppelgänger-author – a narratological figure that experiences the transgression between

the fiction and nonfiction – in order to account for how the public perception of his

authorship is stratified by a literary marketplace based on global circulation, literary

capital, and the specific celebrity speculation and fascination surrounding the *Lolita*

scandal. Thus, *Look at the Harlequins!* constitutes a fictional world in response to the

various images of Nabokov as author within the historical world of the literary

marketplace. It is the space where Nabokov's authorship and Vadim's authorship cross

that disrupts the stability of both constructions that forces the reader to negotiate a

hybridized method of reading.

<p style="text-align:center">Reading Nabokov Reading Nabokov's Readers</p>

Part of what makes *Look at the Harlequins!* such a troubling novel for Nabokov's

authorial legacy is that, frankly, the novel was not critically successful. Richard Poirier's

1974 *New York Times* book review asserts that there are "few reasons to be surprised, and

many reasons to be disappointed, by the complicated interplay" between author and

character (Poirier 406). More scathingly, Gene Bell's 1976 review of the novel in

Commonweal also places no favor on Nabokov's self-referential motives: "This is jolly

old Nabokov winking at his followers, the devotees who like chuckling at that sort of

thing. It is also the crudest, most mechanical mirror-imaging, irony for beginners" (Bell

119). Bell's punitive assessment classifies the novel as an act of navel-gazing[17] and

satirizes the "devotees" who make up Nabokov's burgeoning academic readership,

implying a significant divide between readers, who will "run off and track down the hotel

allusions [and] the Slavic puns and quotes" and readers unwilling, or uninterested in such

self-congratulatory games (Bell 119). Bell's comment here, however, does more than just

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[17] Interestingly, Bell continues to adhere to his initial assessment of the novel, praising those readers of like mind for their ability to recognize that "Emperor Vladimir . . . has no clothes!" in Amazon reviews from 2011. See Bell, Gene. "Official Comment." Amazon.com: Gooch McCracken's Review of Look at the Harlequins! N.p., 19 Nov. 2011. Web. 21 Jan. 2014.

chide Nabokov for his postmodernist parody; rather, it ultimately calls attention to the divide between diverse narrative audiences.

Underlying Bell's critique is an important assumption about how Nabokov's celebrity and canonicity at the time of *LATH*'s publication cultivated a certain type of reader while possibly excluding others. The "devotees" constitute what James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz refer to as the authorial audience – the audience who "shares the knowledge, values, prejudices, fears, and experiences that the author expected in his or her readers" (Herman et al. 6).[18] To Nabokov, this class of readers would adhere to the principles he set out during his lectures at Cornell University, such as all good readers are essentially re-readers so that they may "establis[h] . . . an artistic harmonious balance between the reader's mind and the author's mind" (Nabokov, *Lectures* 4). *LATH*, with its metafictional and paratextual references to both Nabokov's biography and oeuvre, excels in this demand.

And yet, while Nabokov advocates for a utopic unity and "balance" between author and reader, Bell's scathing critique is ultimately antagonistic, calling for a type of readerly activism in opposition to the despotic whims of the author. Eric Naiman has expanded this approach to describe what he views as a uniquely sadomasochistic relationship between Nabokov and his readers: "A good reader of Nabokov reads queerly, warily, with a strange mixture of aggression and submission, lashing out at his colleagues while fearing and welcoming the attentions of an author who thinks the best

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[18] James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz identify three different audiences for literary texts: the actual, the authorial, and the narrative audiences. In adopting three different audience positions and reactions, Phelan and Rabinowitz conceive a more flexible and recognizable definition of reading that ultimately assumes a "feedback loop" between authors, texts, and readers that is not unilateral (Herman et al. 7).

readers allow themselves to be taken from behind" (Naiman 131). While Naiman's

description may at first appear extreme, it is also telling of the type of devoted Nabokov

reading community that continues to proliferate on the NABOKV-L listserv. This is a

community of readers who report weekly on their latest discoveries, bonding together in

their desire to rescue the author from criticism, track sightings of his work, and expand

his overall relevance (Naiman 181).[19]

But while the NABOKV-L listserv provides definitive proof of Nabokov's army

of dedicated readers as they exist today, this kind of immediate and tangible archive of

reader response was not necessarily available to Nabokov at the time he wrote *LATH*.

Rather, Nabokov felt it necessary to cultivate his legacy on his own terms, using the only

arsenal he had – his individual contributions to the literary marketplace. Hence, the

publication of his overtly curated interviews in *Strong Opinions* (1973) was not just

another volume to fulfill his contract with McGraw-Hill, but fodder to support the

author's budding legacy.[20] While *Speak, Memory* provided insight into Nabokov's early

life in Russia and writing career in Europe, an authoritative account of the author's life in

America and after his celebrity was ultimately absent.

Enter Andrew Field, one of the earliest scholarly critics of Nabokov, to offer to

write the author's biography. However, while Nabokov initially agreed to Field's

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[19] The following anecdote may help illustrate what Naiman means here. In his chapter contained in *Nabokov and His Fiction: New Perspectives* (1999) Gavriel Shapiro catalogues the various ways in which Nabokov asserts his authorship within the novels with profound detail, including tracing various anagrams, dates, and icons encoded throughout the text of his fiction. While this is certainly an impressive and thorough critical approach, it also signals a type of reading practice perhaps unable to look beyond the satisfaction of deductive recognition akin to solving puzzles for their correct solution, rather than a more inductive critical methodology. I do not want to discount the importance of such close critical reading, but to emphasize its limitations and how the critic's close attention to certain specific detail may distract from the ability to recognize a larger significance.

[20] See Gayla Diment's essay on *Strong Opinions* in *The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov* (1995) for more detail on the McGraw-Hill contract.

competency for the project based on the scholar's previous work in *Nabokov: His Life in Art* (1967), Field gradually lost the endorsement of his subject once he began submitting preliminary drafts with incorrect dates for historical events and an agenda revealing an underlying preoccupation for vulgar rumors about Nabokov's familial connection to Tsar Alexander II. What resulted from Field's failed foray into Nabokov's biography was a legal battle between biographer and subject, where Field was contractually required to include all of Nabokov's extensive corrections and notes within the final manuscript of *Nabokov: His Life in Part* (1977). What resulted was a pastiche, of sorts, with Field's biographer voice often interrupted by typographically bolded comments attributed to Nabokov. Susan Elizabeth Sweeney emphasizes the irony of Nabokov's authorship ultimately usurping that of Field's as the volume goes on: "The manifestations of this quarrel in the text . . . make *His Life in Part* resemble one of Nabokov's own mock biographies – with Field in the role of the ineffectual narrator and hapless scholar" (Sweeney 308). Furthermore, even though the biography was published just a month before the death of its subject, some reviewers go so far as to facetiously disavow the very existence of Field in favor of the claim that Nabokov authored the biography himself (Walkarput 72).[21] These comparisons demonstrate how the self-referential tendencies of Nabokov's fiction ultimately bleed into his non-fiction.

Thus, Nabokov's celebrity after *Lolita*, his growing critical readership, and the looming disaster of Field's biography stoked the flames that ultimately led to *Look at the Harlequins!*. In fictionalizing aspects of his authorship through Vadim, Nabokov engages

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[21] Not surprisingly, both Herbert Grabes and Brian Boyd also cite the Field affair as direct inspiration for *Look at the Harlequins!*.

in a growing critical dialogue that struggled to make claims upon him, as explained by

Stephen Jan Parker:

> Nabokov the writer often became entangled with Nabokov the celebrity, the
> object of numerous exquisite interviews and the espouser of strong opinions. With
> the passing of years and the simultaneous growth of his oeuvre from both ends -
> early works translated from Russian and new works written in English - his
> reputation grew, but not without difficulty. (Parker 69)

The public conflict between the two versions of authorship mentioned here is

extrapolated in Nabokov's decision to create a doppelgänger-author in *LATH*.

Though Vadim and Nabokov have similar biographical histories: attending

Cambridge University in England, achieving fame for a controversial novel, and teaching

at an American University, it is the *differences* between these two figures that foreground

important questions of both fictionality and genre. For instance, as even basic readers of

Nabokov know, the author had a profound love of lepidoptera, whereas Vadim has little

affection for the hobby. Likewise, those knowledgeable of Nabokov's idyllic depiction of

his early Russian childhood in *Speak, Memory* would note the stark contrast of Vadim's

account of his early days: "Atrocious, intolerable. There should be a natural, internatural,

law against such inhuman beginnings" (*LATH* 7). And finally, the basic plot of the novel

circulates around Vadim's graphic and intimate relationships with multiple wives – a

distant cry from Nabokov's long sustained relationship with Véra.

Within this context, Vadim's fictionalized memoir effectively collapses "popular

misconceptions of Nabokov the man and artist" (Boyd 623) in an effort to regain control

over the inconsistencies perpetuated by Field's biography. However, rather than mimic

the authorial interjections and corrections he imposed on Field's narrative, Nabokov

adopts a different tactic more in line with his talents as a fabulist. While Nabokov may

strike an impenetrable and assertive image in his nonfictional offerings, such as *Strong Opinions* and *Speak, Memory*, he is never far from being the kind of enchanter he describes in his Cornell lectures.[22] Fiction is not only Nabokov's playground, but his battleground. By incorporating, inverting, and ultimately fictionalizing the biographical details of not only his life, but of the scholarship and criticism of his life in *Look at the Harlequins!*, Nabokov is able to construct a response to the historical world through his fiction that challenges supposedly false or misguided claims about his authorship.

And it is this third-space, between fiction and autobiography, that Nabokov strategizes revising and building his authorial legacy. Though the novel is categorized by the Library of Congress as Fiction/Domestic Fiction, Suzanne Fraysee sees *LATH* as "a strikingly original way to writing an autobiography" (Fraysse 143). However, the autobiographical effect would not be as viable if Nabokov was not so publicly known. Rather, according to H. Porter Abbott, "[w]hen a novelist . . . leads a noteworthy life, it is sometimes hard to keep his or her novels from shifting toward autography and away from fiction" (Abbott 612). To Abbott, autobiography is located in the act of reading while keeping the author in sight – what he terms autography. So, the kinds of cues and references Nabokov integrates within *LATH* become permission for readers to move between both fictional and autobiographical reading practices.

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[22] To wit: "There are three points of view from which a writer can be considered: he may be considered as a storyteller, as a teacher, and as an enchanter. A major writer combines these three – storyteller, teacher, enchanter – but it is the enchanter in him that predominates and makes him a major writer" (Nabokov, *Lectures* 5).

Paratexts and Passports between Literary Worlds

One of the ways we can describe the kind of generic border crossing necessary in analyzing the unsettling relationship between Nabokov and his fictional doppelgänger in *Look at the Harlequins!* is through a theory of literary worldedness. In one of his lectures while teaching at Cornell University, Nabokov adopts the language of world-making in his description of how readers should approach a literary text:

> We should always remember that the work of art is invariably the creation of a new world, so that the first thing we should do is to study that new world as closely as possible, approaching it as something brand new, having no obvious connection with the worlds we already know. When this new world has been closely studied, then and only then let us examine its links with other worlds, other branches of knowledge. (Nabokov, *Lectures* 1)

There is always a relationship, or a link, which the reader must uncover between real and fictional worlds. And to Nabokov, the totality of a work of art must be acknowledged before it can be compared to other totalities, constructions, or worlds.

The theorization of literary worlds, hinted at by Nabokov here, is echoed by Eric Hayot in *On Literary Worlds* (2012) who suggests that "[a]esthetic worlds, no matter how they form themselves, are among other things always a relation to and theory of the lived world, whether as a largely preconscious normative construct, a rearticulation, or even as an active refusal of the world-norms of their age" (Hayot 45). In other words, the construction of a literary world always maintains a relationship – either reflective, antagonistic, or speculative – to the historical world. Essentially, Nabokov exists simultaneously in two literary worlds: 1) a fictional world of literary pursuits in which he constructs; and 2) the actual historical world in which his fictional world exists, draws upon, and proliferates. The Nabokovian fictional world constituted by his novels, memoir, and even Field's pastiche of a biography, are ultimately authorially controlled.

Pekka Tammi defines these gestures as part of the "author's metatext," or the "public image of an author which may be extracted solely from his writings" (Tammi 237). However, while the "author's metatext" asserts itself as a type of authority over a diversity of unauthorized readings, this fiction of authorial control breaks down in the actual historical world, causing Nabokov to become an authorial persona at the mercy of the readers, critics, and commentators who make up the literary marketplace at the second half of the twentieth-century.

Therefore, within the fictional world of the novel Vadim represents a kind of alt-Nabokov, or as Brian Richardson suggests, an "unactualized possibilit[y] in Nabokov's own existence" (Richardson, "Nabokov's" 75). Richardson's language here mimics Lobomír Doležel's in *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds* (1998) which describes how fictional worlds are structured around various semantic "possibles" (Doležel 145). According to this theory, different semiotic systems, such as genres, critical media, and so forth, generate various fictional worlds for a subject to occupy. In other words, Nabokov's authorship is continually at the mercy of the semiotic constructions of readers, critics, and media representations which generate fictional "possibles" of his brand of celebrity and canonical authorship.

In *LATH*, Vadim functions as one of these such possibilities, but what makes the character distinct is how Nabokov remains in control of this "possible" narrative. According to Hayot, "Aesthetic worldedness is the form of the relation a work establishes between the world inside and the world outside the work" (Hayot 45). In *LATH*, this kind of worldedness is established by the maintenance of differing narrative levels through strategic paratexts. So, if *LATH* represents a "possible" – fictionalized – version of the

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historical world in which Nabokov composes his novels, the paratext operates as a "threshold" through which the reader must negotiate these different interpretive spaces (Genette, *Paratexts* 2).

Thus, Vadim, as a doppelgänger-author, occupies this permeable boundary between constructed fictional worlds and the actual historical world. Paratexts rely on and contribute to the reader's knowledge of Nabokov, his life, and his works gleaned from both inside and outside the formal text of the novel.[23] By building the multiple perspectives, texts, and discourses on the history of Nabokov's literary works into the formal and thematic content of the novel, Nabokov foregrounds Vadim as a doppelgänger of his authorship and introduces movement between extradiegetic and intradiegetic narrative levels.

	Paratext	
	Peritext	Epitext
Intradiegetic	I. Other books by the Narrator (Figure 2)	Nabokovian figure as fictionalized author who usurps Vadim's authority as an I-narrator
Extradiegetic	BOOKS BY *Vladimir Nabokov* (Figure 3)	Nabokov's biographical and history as a literary author

Table 1. Paratextual Chart of Narrative Levels for *Look at the Harlequins!*

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[23] A paratext, according to Gérard Genette in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997), is the combination of two spatial categories connected to the primary text: the peritext and the epitext. The peritext is contained within the text itself (prefaces, titles, etc.), whereas the epitext consists of all of the information and messages located outside of the primary text but have a relationship to its meaning (diaries, interviews, etc.) (Genette, *Paratexts* 5). The unity of the peritext and epitext allows us to visualize the connection between two distinct levels within the story, or what Genette terms the intradiegetic and extradiegetic levels. I will return to this theory in Chapter 5 during my discussion of how Salman Rushdie's Twitter feed has an epitextual function.

For example, one of the major ways through which Nabokov establishes the metafictional qualities of the novel is through the peritextual list of "I. OTHER BOOKS BY THE NARRATOR" (Figure 2). In the 1990 Vintage International publication of the novel, this list is located directly after the title page and mimics the traditional list of "BOOKS BY *Vladimir Nabokov*" following the publisher's imprint (Figure 3). This catalogue of Vadim's works has a connection to both the extradiegetic and intradiegetic levels of the story since the fictionalized titles of Vadim's works resonate outward toward the presence of Nabokov's actual publications within the literary marketplace.[24] The chart in Table 1 helps clarify the distinctions between these textual spaces and narrative levels.

Reading this novel through the lens of these paratexts not only foregrounds two separate authorial positions – that of Nabokov as a marketable product of the literary marketplace and that of Vadim as and author-character within a fictional world – but also different genre signatures. According to Genette, lists "By the same author" emphasize genre distinctions since the reader is primed to interpret the text in relation to other similar works within the literary marketplace (Genette, *Paratexts* 99-100).[25] Within this context, Vadim and Nabokov scan slightly differently. For instance, the list for "OTHER BOOKS BY THE NARRATOR" solely includes works classified as novels. In contrast, "BOOKS BY *Vladimir Nabokov*" contains multiple generic categories: Novels, Short Fiction, Drama, Autobiography and Interviews, Biography and Criticism, Translations,

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[24] For instance, Vadim's *A Kingdom by the Sea* is a direct reference to one of the working titles of Nabokov's *Lolita*. The other titles are also easily equated with Nabokov's other works: Vadim's *Tamara* for Nabokov's *Mary* (1926), *Pawn Takes Queen* for Nabokov's *King, Queen, Knave* (1928), *Ardis* for *Ada or Ardor* (1969), and so forth.

[25] Lists such as these are generated not for the benefit of the author directly, but mediated through the marketable needs of the publishing house. Nor do these lists represent a complete catalogue; rather, they are a constructed representation of the author's value according to the publishing group.

Letters, and, oddly, Miscellaneous. Nabokov's multi-generic catalogue of works

demonstrates a lifetime of international success in both the literary, entertainment, and

academic worlds, indicating that his position within a global literary marketplace has

allowed him to become, according to Casanova, "denationalized and . . . universal"

(Casanova 127). In contrast, the catalogue of Vadim's authorship is filtered through a

singular genre and divided across two national languages, emphasizing that what

stratifies the public perception of Vadim's authorship is not genre but nationality.

I. OTHER BOOKS BY THE NARRATOR

IN RUSSIAN:

Tamara 1925
Pawn Takes Queen 1927
Plenilune 1929
Camera Lucida (Slaughter in the Sun) 1931
The Red Top Hat 1934
The Dare 1950

IN ENGLISH:

See under Real 1939
Esmeralda and Her Parandrus 1941
Dr. Olga Repnin 1946
Exile from Mayda 1947
A Kingdom by the Sea 1962
Ardis 1970

Figure 2. Vladimir Nabokov. "I. Other Books By The Narrator," *Look at the Harlequins!*

Vadim's catalogue alludes to the critical tendency to simplify authorship across national boundaries. As a refugee of the Russian aristocracy during the Bolshevik Revolution living first in Germany, France, and then the United States, Nabokov was well aware of the difficulty readers and critics had in classifying his bilingual and nomadic version of authorship. And it is within Nabokov's troubled negotiation across multiple national literatures where the concept of literary worlds becomes salient. If paratexts function as a threshold between separate but interconnected literary worlds, genres, and authorial positions, then the metaphor of border crossing is built into the hybridized text of *Look at the Harlequins!*. Paratexts, by nature of their referential dependence, operate as passports for readers to interpret the connections between two different literary worlds. And passports and other forms of identification are not only thematically significant for Nabokov, but integral to the identity he cultivates as an author as demonstrated by the following declaration from *Strong Opinions*: "The writer's art is his real passport. His identity should be immediately recognized by a special pattern or unique coloration" (Nabokov, *SO* 63). This conceit is parodied in *Look at the Harlequins!* in order to establish the novel's metafictional effect. Thus, I argue that as a fictionalized doppelgänger, Vadim accentuates the cross-space between the two realms of fiction and reality in a similar way to how the Nansen passport, a document issued to stateless refugees of the Bolshevik Rebellion, allowed one to cross borders without any definitive state sanctioned national belonging.

BOOKS BY *Vladimir Nabokov*

NOVELS
Mary
King, Queen, Knave
The Defense
The Eye
Glory
Laughter in the Dark
Despair
Invitation to a Beheading
The Gift
The Real Life of Sebastian Knight
Bend Sinister
Lolita
Pnin
Pale Fire
Ada or Ardor: A Family Chronicle
Transparent Things
Look at the Harlequins!

SHORT FICTION
Nabokov's Dozen
A Russian Beauty and Other Stories
Tyrants Destroyed and Other Stories
Details of a Sunset and Other Stories
The Enchanter

DRAMA
The Waltz Invention
Lolita: A Screenplay
The Man from the USSR and Other Plays

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND INTERVIEWS
Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited
Strong Opinions

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM
Nikolai Gogol
Lectures on Literature
Lectures on Russian Literature
Lectures on Don Quixote

TRANSLATIONS
Three Russian Poets: Translations of Pushkin,
Lermontov, and Tiutchev
A Hero of Our Time (Mikhail Lermontov)
The Song of Igor's Campaign (Anon.)
Eugene Onegin (Alexander Pushkin)

LETTERS
The Nabokov-Wilson Letters: Correspondence between
Vladimir Nabokov and Edmund Wilson, 1940-1971
Vladimir Nabokov: Selected Letters, 1940-1977

MISCELLANEOUS
Poems and Problems
The Annotated Lolita

Figure 3. Vladimir Nabokov. "BOOKS by Vladimir Nabokov," *Look at the Harlequins!*

"Inferior Documents": Mistaken Identities across Literary Borders

Historically, passports have been intriguing artifacts, rooted in the large collective affiliation of nationhood but remaining profoundly personal and individualized documents. Following concerns about the security of international travel during World War I, passports introduced governmental authority and regulation to questions of identity. As official government documents used to define an individual on the basis of

gender, nationality, date of birth, and so forth, passports became integral tools used to

negotiate complicated twentieth-century anxieties. As the authors of *"Passport, Please":*

Legal, Literary, and Critical Fictions of Identity describe,

> [t]he passport in Western industrialized countries exemplifies one of the many
> governmental tactics devised to cope with the consequences of nationalism,
> imperialism, and decolonization in the twentieth century - tactics often justified as
> measured responses to an unsettling shift from cultural homogeneity to
> heterogeneity. (Higgins and Leps 119)

Essentially, the passport, as a stable identification and travel document, only became

historically necessary in moments of international instability and global strife. Open and

unregulated access to and travel within a global world became problematic once the

socio-political implications of imperialism and world war began to conceive of

international relationships through structures of national difference. A similar kind of

anxiety dominates the discussion of genre when it comes to the novel. While the passport,

as an official and historical document, is contingent on a number of rules and

classifications dictated by a central authority, aesthetic forms are also subject to rules and

boundaries. Novels are partially defined in relation to their difference to other genres like

poems or dramatic plays; genre definitions are therefore a way to grapple with

heterogeneity within the literary marketplace. As such, authors draw on the long history

and tradition of generic conventions that precedes the composition and reception of a

work in order to guide readers through the process of reading (Rabinowitz 111). In other

words, genre conventions function as a paratext to how readers are meant to interpret the

text. When these signs are hybridized – as they are in *Look at the Harlequins!* – the

reader's ability to navigate the interpretive borders between genres becomes impaired and

interpretive access is denied.

Like the hybridized genre of the novel, the Nansen passport only offers a

destabilized way of reading that threatens the reader's capacity for interpretation.

Nabokov reflects on the symbolic implications of the Nansen passport for Russian

émigrés like himself within *Speak, Memory*:

> Our utter physical dependence on this or that nation, which had coldly granted us
> political refuge, became painfully evident when some trashy "visa," some
> diabolical "identity card" had to be obtained or prolonged, for then an avid
> bureaucratic hell would attempt to close upon the petitioner and he might wilt
> while his dossier waxed fatter and fatter in the desks of rat-whiskered consuls and
> policemen . . . The League of Nations equipped émigrés who had lost their
> Russian citizen ship with a so-called "Nansen" passport, a very inferior document
> of a sickly green hue. Its holder was a little better than a criminal on parole and
> had to go through most hideous ordeals every time he wished to travel from one
> country to another, and the smaller the countries the worse the fuss they made.
> (*SM* 216)

These tropes of criminality, of inferiority, and disingenuous bureaucracy from Nabokov's

autobiography are significantly replicated very early in *Look at the Harlequins!* when

Vadim attempts to cross over the Russian border and in the process encounters a Red

Army officer:

> I thought I had crossed the frontier when a bare-headed Red Army soldier with a
> Mongol face who was picking whortleberries near the trail challenged me: "And
> whither," he asked picking up his cap from a stump, "may you be rolling
> (*kotishsya*), little apple (*yablochko*)? *Pokazyvay-ka dokumentiki* (Let me see your
> papers) . . . I groped in my pockets, fished out what I needed, and shot him
> dead . . . (*LATH* 10)

While the Nansen passport to Nabokov makes him feel like a "criminal on parole" (*SM*

216), Vadim's rash act of violence and illegal border crossing brings this sentiment to

life. Luckily, Vadim later achieves citizenship though the machinations of his adopted

patron and guardian Count Starov and avoids the embarrassment of having to hold a

Nansen passport, what he deprecatingly refers to as a "pauper's permit, really" (*LATH*

52).

Surprisingly, though Vadim's *dokumenti* do not hold him back, his literary

pursuits significantly affect his travel abroad. Vadim is unwelcome in Russia since "no

more consistent critic of Bolshevist brutality and basic stupidity existed during all that

time at the literary level to which my output belonged" (*LATH* 204). The ban on Vadim's

person within the nation of Russia due to the anti-Soviet content of his literary works

shows how literature acts as a type of passport through the channels of a diverse global

readership. In a reversal of this scenario, Nabokov used his status and occupation as an

author as bargaining chip during his emigration to America. On his immigration

questionnaire to the United States, Nabokov willfully adopts the mantle of authorship,

referencing his successes in international publishing as a means to gain access and haven

from the dangers of pre-WWII Europe. In answer to Question 3 on the 1937 Immigration

Questionnaire concerning profession, Nabokov composed the following response:

> Author. I have been published by the following publishers: in France by Bernard
> Gasset, A. Fayard, Gallimand (N.R.F.); in Germany by Ullstein Verlag; in
> England by John Long; in Sweden by A. Bonnier and Holgerschieldts; in the
> United States by The Bobbs-Merrill Company
> I have written novels and plays, as well as short stories and articles. I write in
> English, French, and Russian. One of my plays has been staged in Paris this year,
> at the Theatre Russe.
> I have had 14 volumes published in Russian by émigré publishers. (*VVNP* Box
> 21, Reel 13)

Not only is Nabokov's authorship at the forefront in this description, but a special

emphasis is placed on the international nature of his publications and, implicitly,

translation. It is not his profession, per se, that makes Nabokov an appropriate candidate

for access to the United States, especially since his "employment" within the United

States has little to do with his authorship, as his response to a later question on the same

Immigration Questionnaire describes: "I have not taken any steps to obtain any

employment in the United States, as my profession is writing, and I intend to continue writing as a career" (*VVNP* Box 21, Reel 13).[26] Instead, it is Nabokov's consecration as an international writer that he asserts at this significant moment of national border-crossing that endows his authorship with global authority.

This model of the literary passport is repeated and reversed in *Look at the Harlequins!* when Vadim must obscure his identity and authorship in order to travel to Leningrad, where his books are banned. While most of the novel recounts Vadim's recollections of his life and relationships with his series of wives in tandem with the composition of his various literary achievements, the novel takes on a more dramatically plotted turn when Vadim attempts to seek out his daughter Isabel (so called Bel) after she has eloped with a twenty-five year old American expatriate and revolutionary to Russia and become destitute and ill. [27] Vadim travels from New York to London where he is able to make contact with British intelligence services who help him secure a passport under false name so that he can return to "the weird Wonderland of the Soviet Union" (*LATH* 203):

> My good British passport, which had been handled cursorily by so many courteous officers who had never opened my books (the only real identity papers of its accidental holder), remained, after a procedure . . . physically the same in many respects; but certain of its other features . . . were, let us say, 'modified' by a new method . . . In other words nobody, no forensic chemist not in the know, could suspect, let alone prove, that my passport was false. (*LATH* 204-5)

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[26] Of course, scholars of Nabokov know this assertion is untrue, since Nabokov's correspondence during the years before he immigrated to the United States reveals his requests and applications for various types of University employment. See *Vladimir Nabokov: Selected Letters 1940-1977* (1989).

[27] Bel, the product of Vadim's second marriage with his typist Annette Blagovo, functions as one of the two Lolita figures within the novel such that Vadim's haphazard tracking of Bel mimics Humbert's frantic search for Lolita after she absconds with Clare Quilty. The other Lolita figure in the novel is Dolly van Borg, granddaughter to the one of Vadim's émigré journalist friends. Though Vadim expressed interest in her when she was only just eleven, he later has an extramarital affair with her which contributes to the end of his second marriage with Annette. In many ways, from the play on names (Dolly for Dolores), this encounter fictionally fulfils many of the unsavory rumors about Nabokov's authorship following *Lolita*.

The implication of forgery of Vadim's official identity documentation is coupled with the assertion that his "real identity papers" are derived from a reader's recognition of his books. This assertion directly resonates with Nabokov's claim that a "writer's art is his real passport" but continues the theme of false identification and misreading (*SO* 63).

And Vadim encounters the threat of such authorial misrecognition while in the Orly airport waiting for his fight back to New York after his failure to find Bel. Serendipitously, Vadim picks up a discarded "Formosan (!) paperback" which turns out to be a pirated reproduction of his international success, *A Kingdom by the Sea* (*LATH* 215). While the forgery of Vadim's identity on his passport is treated as a necessary part of the scheme to cross international borders undetected, the forgery of Vadim's novel in the form of a pirated and misprinted copy disseminated through multiple international channels (and likely translations) takes the rough sketches of the novel's plot and deprives them of its art: "Although slovenly worded by a hack with no inkling of the book's art, the blurb on the back of the limp little volume rendered faithfully enough the factual plot of my *Kingdom*" (*LATH* 215). The plot description on the back of the paperback is a remixed version of Nabokov's *Lolita*, emphasizing a "*state of affairs that looks at first blush – and 'blush' is the right word – like a case of irresponsible perversion (described in brilliant detail never attempted before) develops . . . into a genuine dialogue of tender love*" (*LATH* 215-6).

However, while the connecting threads between Vadim's *Kingdom* and Nabokov's *Lolita* may be enjoyable for the devoted reader of Nabokov to tease out, this affiliation becomes dire within the narrative world of the novel. While still in the Orly airport, Vadim is approached and accosted by a man who has followed him through all

the legs of his international journey. Vadim recognizes him as Oleg Orlov, a Russian

writer "who decided to sell the bleak liberty of expatriation for the rosy mess of Soviet

pottage" (*LATH* 217). Oleg, seemingly at the behest of the head of the Russian Union of

Writers, accuses Vadim of "deceiving our great warm-hearted country" and reproaches

him for concocting the "obscene novelette about little Lola or Lotte, whom some

Austrian Jew or reformed pederast rapes after murdering her mother…" (*LATH* 218).

Vadim responds to this accusation with a "cloud of black fury": "You are mistaken. You

are a somber imbecile. The novel I wrote, the novel I am holding now, is *A Kingdom by

the Sea*. You are talking of some other book altogether" (*LATH* 218). Though Oleg refers

to the pirated novel Vadim holds in his hands, the plot he describes may be more

recognizable as Nabokov's *Lolita*.[28]

While Vadim's *A Kingdom by the Sea* is connected to *Lolita* through the authorial

paratext, Oleg's misreading here shatters the boundaries between the extratextual and

intratextual worlds that the novel constructs. This kind of transgression is peppered

throughout the whole of *Look at the Harlequins!* but to different degrees. For instance,

the émigré bookseller Oks conflates the title of Vadim's novel *Tamara* with another:

> "Look," he cried, "how many copies are out. All of *Princess Mary* is out, I mean
> *Mary* - damn it, I mean *Tamara*. I love *Tamara*, I mean your *Tamara*, not
> Lermontov's or Rubinstein's. Forgive me. One gets so confused among so many
> damned masterpieces." (*LATH* 94)

The reference to Nabokov's *Mary* (1926) alongside Vadim's parodic version of the

novel, *Tamara*, introduces extratextual knowledge into the diegetic level of the story.

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[28] Ironically, this scene also refers back Nabokov's failed attempts to conceal his authorship of
Lolita. As James Laughlin, publisher at New Directions responded to Nabokov's queries about publishing
under a pseudonym, "Your style is so individual that it seems to me absolutely certain that the real
authorship would quickly be recognized even if a pseudonym was used" (*Letters* 153). Laughlin's
assessment here is significant in that it foregrounds issue of form and style in regards to its ability to exceed
or replace the signatory pact of authorship.

And Oks' assertion that "[o]ne gets so confused among so many damned masterpieces" is telling of the consequences of authorial fame and consecration where the perceptions and misperceptions about an author stemming from a diversity of readerships are disseminated across the global literary marketplace. To Vadim, Oks' mistake fans an ongoing set of insecurities he has about his own relevance and identity:

> There might be nothing particularly upsetting about a well-meaning, essentially absurd and muddled old duffer mistaking me for some other writer. I myself have been known, in the lecture hall, to say Shelley when I meant Schiller. But that fool's slip of the tongue or error of memory should establish a sudden connection with another world, so soon after my imagining with especial dread that I might be permanently impersonating somebody living as a real being beyond the constellation of my tears and asterisks - *that* was unendurable, *that* dared not happen! (*LATH* 96)

What's unendurable to Vadim is the threat of his own displacement in the face of another author in "another world" – in this case Nabokov.

And so, Oks and Oleg function as conduits through which the presence of Nabokov's authorship imposes itself within the fictional world of Vadim's narration. This kind of narratological transgression is often referred to as metalepsis, Genette's term for an "act that consists precisely of introducing into one situation, by means of a discourse, the knowledge of another situation" (Genette, *Narrative* 234). Werner Wolf extends this definition to align the act of narration with the creation of literary worlds, asserting that metalepsis is "the paradoxical violation of the outer border of a represented world or of the border(s) between represented worlds…" (Wolf 117). Thus, it is primarily within the context of narrative metalepsis that Vadim fully functions as a doppelgänger-author within *Look at the Harlequins!*

As I have already established, the doppelgänger, as an otherworldly yet recognizable manifestation of the author as an individual, is able to negotiate the

boundaries between different narrative levels of the story. Vadim's description of this

kind of transgression contains elements of uncanniness and fear while wandering the

streets of Paris and mourning the loss of his first wife Iris:

> I now confess that I was bothered that night, and the next and some time before, by a dream feeling that my life was the nonidentical twin, a parody, an inferior variant of another man's life, somewhere on this or another earth. A demon, I felt, was forcing me to impersonate that other man, that other writer who was and would always be incomparably greater, healthier, and crueler than your obedient servant . . . I have never experienced the least urge to commit suicide, that silly waste of self-hood . . . And it is a particularly bad sign when a hatless person sobs as he walks, being moved not by lines he might have composed himself but by something he hideously mistakes for his own . . . (*LATH* 88-9)

Vadim's fear that he is the inferior product of another writer, possibly from "this or

another earth" refers to the unnaturalness and uncanny effect of border crossing between

literary worlds. Furthermore, the macabre references to death and demons in these

passages support folklore understandings of the doppelgänger which aligns an

individual's sighting of their doppelgänger with an omen of death and equate the figure

with an otherworldly and often menacing wraith.[29] They also support Genette's claim

that metalepsis is often considered "unnatural" in that it brings the distance between the

author, character, and reader closer together, resulting in "an effect of strangeness that is

either comical . . . or fantastic" (Genette, *Narrative* 235). In this way Vadim, as a

doppelgänger-author becomes a transgressive narratological entity able to move freely

between multiple narrative levels since traditional doppelgänger narratives are often

equated with the paranormal, or to adopt narratological terms, the "unnatural." At stake in

this model, for Vadim, is his self-effacement via the threat of artistic misrecognition. The

idea that Vadim would mistakenly attribute the written words of another as his own is the

more tragic since it signifies both a loss of self-hood and authority.

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[29] See "Doppelgänger" in the *Chambers Dictionary of the Unexplained*. (2007).

This crisis of polysemious authorship is further played out in the image of the passport and its failure to stabilize Vadim's fragmented and deteriorating sense of identity:

> To the best of my knowledge my Christian name was Vadim; so was my father's. The U.S.A. passport recently issued me – an elegant booklet with a golden design on its green cover perforated by the number 00678638 – did not mention my ancestral title; this had figured, though, on my British passport, throughout its several editions. Youth, Adulthood, Old Age, before the last one was mutilated beyond recognition by friendly forgers, practical jokers at heart. (*LATH* 248)

While forgeries of identity and documentation at one time were necessary for Vadim's unfettered movement internationally, the consequences of these diversions later in his life undermine Vadim's attempt to recover an uncompromised conception of identity while suffering from neuralgia. Though Nabokov has continually used fictional fabrications as defense or diversion for a number of critics and journalists who wish to pin him down within a catalogue – like one of his butterfly specimens – these kinds of diversions are more problematic for Vadim since he lacks control over these fabrications. Vadim's narration reflects this helplessness during his attempt to identify his own surname:

> …I just could not make out in that darker corner of my mind what surname came after my Russian patronymic. I felt it began with an *N* . . .Yes, I definitely felt my family name began with an *N* and bore an odious resemblance to the surname or pseudonym of a presumably notorious (Notorov? No) Bulgarian, or Babylonian, or, maybe, Betelgeusian writer with whom scatterbrained émigrés from some other galaxy constantly confused me; but whether it was something on the lines of Nebesnyy or Nabedrin or Nablidze (Nablidze? Funny) I simply could not tell. I preferred not to overtax my willpower, (go away, Naborcroft) and so gave up trying – or perhaps it began with a *B* and the *n* just clung to it like some desperate parasite? . . . Without a name I remained unreal in regained consciousness. Poor Vivian, poor Vadim Vadimovich, was but a figment of somebody's – not even my own – imagination. (*LATH* 248-9)

I quote at length here since Vadim's stream-of-consciousness struggle to uncover, or remember, his surname is a playful representation of a character realizing his loss of

agency in constructing his own identity. The phonetic wordplay that circulates but never

fully lands on "Nabokov" still operates to play off of the reader's previous knowledge of

the author as gleaned from the novel's paratext. Lastly, Vadim remains "unreal in

regained consciousness" and a "figment" of another's imagination, emphasizing the

voiding of authority within his narrative.

The gradual encroachment of a Navokovian author figure outside of Vadim's

level of diegesis threatens to displace his identity as an author and as a character. This is

an unsettling condition not only for Vadim, but for the coherency of *LATH*'s narrative as

the gradual eradication of Vadim connotes a moment of self-voiding, or self-disclosing,

narration. Doležel equates such moments with metafiction where "[f]iction making

procedures are overtly exposed, [. . .] flaunting [the] hidden, conventional foundations"

(Doležel 162). The idea of challenging conventional literary foundations is subtly

reinforced by Vadim's proclamation after suffering from a serious paralysis:

> There exists an old rule - so old and trite that I blush to mention it. Let me twist it
> into a jingle - to stylize the staleness:
> > The I of the book
> > Cannot die in the book. (*LATH* 239)

The implication contained within this "jingle" is that the death of the I-narrator cannot be

contained within the story level of the narrative since such an occurrence would both

challenge and disrupt the ontological unity of the story. Doležel explains,

> Text after death is more than non-natural, it is the product of a physically
> impossible act – of posthumous writing. Yet the text is accepted by readers as a
> medium of world construction. It reconfirms emphatically the fact that literary
> acts are not restricted to the acts of actual speaking and writing. (Doležel 159)

The language of "non-natural" here resonates with the effects of "unnatural" narrative theory[30] which proposes a conception of narrative that differentiates itself from mimetic or rhetorical narrative representation. Thus, the death of the narrator could only be explained by "unnatural" narrative since this approach is rooted in the strictly literary and fictional qualities of a work rather than the realistic representation of speech acts. And so, even though Vadim's attack of neuralgia does not result in his death, the allusion to self-voiding narration that would accompany his death calls attention to the overall constructed nature of the text and allows the figure of Nabokov, as author, to loom large. In displacing the authority of his doppelgänger-author through these narratological effects, Nabokov is able to participate in the poststructuralist impulse to efface the author – while simultaneously reasserting himself as the ultimate controller of the text.

Conclusion

As this chapter has demonstrated, the conceit of the literary passport allows us access into interpretive spaces restricted by binary models of genre. The hybrid-generic form of autobiographic-metafiction in *Look at the Harlequins!* allows Nabokov the terrain to construct a doppelgänger of his authorship that both challenges assumptions about his image within the literary marketplace and reinforces the bridgeable connection between fictional and the historical worlds. What makes Vadim function as a more direct doppelgänger of Nabokov than any of his other authorial-characters – such as Fyodor in *The Gift* or even Kinbote in *Pale Fire* – is the fact that he is composed out of more than

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[30] "Unnatural" (sometimes termed "antimimetic") approaches to narrative are a relatively recent addition to narratological scholarship, but have been gaining momentum in reaction to "extremely implausible, impossible, or logically contradictory scenarios or events" that proliferate in postmodernist fiction such as Nabokov's (Alber et al. 3).

just the biographical content of Nabokov's life and history. Rather, Vadim encompasses the fictional world of Nabokov's literary works *en toto* in an effort to extend the argument that an author's legacy has less to do with his historical biography, but everything to do with his literary biography. Thus, Nabokov's claim that "the writer's art is his real passport" provides a provocative a metaphor for how late twentieth-century authorship is a moving target filtered through global, generic, and narratological lenses (*SO* 63).

In the next chapter, I will put pressure on the concept of literary writing functioning as a narratological identity marker of authorship as I look at Philip Roth and his most notorious fictional double, Nathan Zuckerman. While Nabokov's skillful play in constructing his doppelgänger ultimately reinforces his authorial ownership of the narrative, Roth constructs a scenario where his literary creation not only operates on the same level as his own authorship, but threatens to usurp it.

CHAPTER 3

"*HE* NOT ME": THE DOUBLED OWNERSHIP OF FICTION IN PHILIP ROTH

Introduction

Both Philip Roth and Nathan Zuckerman have become ingrained into the fiber of

contemporary American literature. However, one of these contemporary American

authors is entirely fictional. (Spoiler – it's Zuckerman.) Regardless, some readers

collapse the boundaries between the author and his character, almost believing that

"Zuckerman leads his paper existence as human beings lead their flesh-and-blood ones"

(Maisero 6). Furthering this tendency was the flurry of creative responses to Zuckerman's

purported death in *Exit Ghost* (2007), which mourned the character by praising his

literary achievements.[31] These examples demonstrate the degree to which Zuckerman

seems to have supplanted his author. What is left unclear is the extent of Roth's

complicity in his own authorial effacement.

The tendency to conflate a novel's characters with their author is not a misreading

specifically unique to Roth, but there is something about Zuckerman – perhaps his

abundance within Roth's oeuvre[32] – that makes it increasingly easy to give in to the

fallacy of parallelism.[33] Understandably, Roth scholars and critics have applied theories

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[31] In a 2013 issue of the *New Yorker*, Max Ross pens a mock obituary for Zuckerman, detailing the events of the newly deceased author's life as outlined in his novels and prophetically ending with the assertion that "Zuckerman is survived by no one."

[32] While the other authors in this study also fictionalize their authorship in deliberate ways, these instances are mostly isolated within single works. In contrast, Zuckerman has been developed over the span of nine of Roth's novels.

[33] Critics, as well as Roth himself, often refer to the well-known anecdote of Jacqueline Susann on the *Tonight Show* – when she confessed that she wouldn't shake Roth's hand after reading the confessional account of masturbation in *Portnoy's Complaint* – as evidence of this trend.

of Freudian psychology, autobiography, and literary ethics to Zuckerman in an effort to come to terms with the character's connection to his author.[34] My approach in this chapter recovers portions of these threads in order to analyze how this troubled account of Zuckerman's narrative ownership affects how Roth chooses to frame and structure his multi-layered fictions. It is my contention that rather than intentionally distancing his characters from his biography in order to course correct this error, Roth chose to embrace the other extreme with the creation of Nathan Zuckerman.

Narrative ownership, for my purposes in this chapter, is the degree to which an individual takes control over the representation of a specific story – in this case, the narrative of Roth's authorship across his oeuvre. While narrative authority is a consistent thread throughout this project, the term "ownership" is used here to describe the specific kind of power struggle between Roth and his fictional doppelgängers. Though Roth remains the owner of all of the texts within his oeuvre due to his authorial signature, there are strategic moments when Zuckerman, or another doppelgänger figure, wrests control over the narrative. These shifts in ownership occur when readers are forced to negotiate multiple frames of reading simultaneously in their encounter with autobiographical-metafictions. By positioning these figures as formidable authorial presences across his body of work, the narrative ownership of Roth's authorship slips such that the reader is invited to question the singular Roth's dominion over the text at hand.

What makes Roth such a stimulating figure to dramatize the power struggle of narrative ownership is the fact that Roth has recognized himself as a successful author, and authorship as a respectable career, relatively early in his oeuvre such that he

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[34] See Josh Cohen's essay, "Roth's doubles" in *The Cambridge Companion to Philip Roth*. 2015.

struggled to defend this status publically. Loren Glass claims that though literary fame

was certainly one of Roth's goals, Zuckerman was a way for him to manage the kind of

"instantaneous, contemporaneous celebrity that characterized [his] . . . career" (Glass,

"Zuckerman" 224). It seems that as soon as Roth achieved popular fame, he also opened

himself up to serious critique.[35] Beginning in 1959 with *Goodbye, Columbus*, Roth

struggled to dismiss the critique that he was a self-hating Jew from his American readers.

Similarly, with the publication of *Portnoy's Complaint*, only his fourth novel, Roth

branded himself as an author who pushes the boundaries of both political humor and

sexual innuendo, alienating a number of critics who ended up labelling him as a

misogynist, a lech, or at worst, irrelevant to the evolution of canonical literary fiction.

This last critique is perhaps the most palpable for Roth in that it directly engages

with how literary value can be defined by the public perception of an individual's

authorship. One of the most canonical voices opposing Roth on this front was Irving

Howe's scarring appraisal of the author from the 1972 issue of *Commentary*. In his essay

Howe claims that Roth is unable to properly distance himself from imposing a

tendentious view over his fiction: "…[his] own authorial voice quickly takes over,

becomes all but indistinguishable from a first-person narrator, raucous, self-aggrandizing,

and damned sure that the denouement of his story will not escape the grip of his will"

(Howe 72). To Howe, the narration of Roth's novels was seemingly indistinguishable

from the forceful presence of their author. This critical perspective – of Roth's

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[35] See Derek Parker Royal's contribution in Aimee Pozorski's *Roth and Celebrity* (2012) for a
detailed account of the variety of ways Roth continues to be situated as a celebrity within contemporary
culture, including the 40th anniversary celebration of *Portnoy's Complaint*, a landmark preservation in
Newark, New Jersey, and even a mixed recording of Roth shouting that eventually went viral as a mobile
phone ringtone.

egocentrism getting in the way of his aestheticism – has apparently stuck. David Foster

Wallace famously described Roth as one of the "Great Male Narcissists" whose

solipsistic fiction characterized the postwar era (Wallace 51). Similarly, Carmen Callil

quit the proceedings for the Man Booker International Prize in 2011 in part due to her

opposition that the selection of Roth represented a dangerous lack of internationalism in

addition to her personal dislike of Roth's "self-involvement."[36] Each of these scandals

represents how Roth's literary fame has been propelled by a kind of "cheap notoriety,"

resulting in what Joe Moran equates to "the almost complete collapse of Roth's cultural

authority as an 'author'" (Moran 102).

　　While Moran's assessment is likely too extreme, Roth's authorial reputation tends

to be more associated with a punchline than the kind of respected literariness familiar to

the brand of Jamesian realism he admired in college. Thus, Roth – as a good reader of his

own criticism – chose to confront the perceived loss of his authority by integrating these

oppositional readerly positions into the content of his fiction. For example, the comically

self-defeating list of interview questions Zuckerman is presented with in *The Anatomy*

Lesson (1983) dramatizes this critique well:

> The editors [of the student paper] wanted to interview him about the future of his
> kind of fiction in the post-modernist era of John Barth and Thomas Pynchon . . .
> would he please answer, at whatever length he chose, the ten questions on the
> sheet attached…*1. Why do you continue to write? 2. What purpose does your*
> *work serve? 3. Do you feel yourself part of a rearguard action, in the service of a*
> *declining tradition? 4. Has your sense of vocation altered significantly because of*
> *the events of the last decade?* (*AL* 280, emphasis in the original)

Roth uses Zuckerman to skillfully balance the dual anxieties of being simultaneously

recognized for his celebrity by these students while also being reminded of his

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[36] See Carmen Callil, "Carmen Callil: Why I Quit the Man Booker International Panel" in *The Guardian*, May 20, 2011.

increasingly obsolete position as a postmodernist author. And so, Zuckerman emerged as a reaction – as a "*rearguard action*" – to the readers and critics who sought to displace Roth's command over his reputable literary image.

This example demonstrates how Zuckerman allows Roth, and his readers, to ruminate on the positive and negative consequences of authorial consecration. Roth himself supports this stance in his essay collection *Reading Myself and Others*: "Because recognition – and with it, opposition – came to me almost immediately, I seem (from the evidence here) to have felt called upon both to assert a literary position and to defend my moral flank the instant after I had managed to take my first steps" (*RMO* xi). Roth recognizes that his status as a celebrity author affected how he conceived of both himself and the structure of his fiction as his career moved forward.

One of the key trigger points for how Roth came to terms with the kind of stratification of his identity in response to these various assumptions about his authorship is through the theorization of the counterlife. Roth introduces this concept in the novel of the same name: "The construction of a counterlife that is one's own anti-myth was at its very core" (*CL* 147). While Zuckerman coins this term within the context of his brother Henry's shocking conversion to Zionism, the implications of this idea lies in the ideal of a personally constructed "anti-myth" and the relationship between contradictory selves. Debra Shostak explains this further:

> The counterlife embraces contradictions: that a person can invent many selves to accommodate both desire and the environment to which the person must or will answer; that such self-invention is at once both deeply conservative – conserving, one assumes, some fundamental moral and perceptual subjectivity – and deeply transformative, making the whole of the subject potentially open to change . . . (Shostak 19)

The counterlife makes space for an approach to authorship that embraces contradiction, transformation, and accommodation. But, there is also a reactionary component to the counterlife such that the construction of a self can stem from internal desire or external influences such as public opinion or assumption.

In this way, Roth's counterlife functions in line with my theorization of the doppelgänger-author – a narratological figure found in autobiographical-metafiction that embraces the multiplicity of authorship positions generated by a career-centric brand of authorship, such as Roth's. In other words, Roth's doppelgänger-authors represent the push and pull of agential power caused by the simultaneous embrace and effacement of authorship within a very public spotlight. This conceptual lens helps bridge the gap between contrasting narratives of Roth's authorship as they are constructed by diversity of readership positions. As a surrogate, the doppelgänger-author allows us to read Roth's counterlives as both singular and composite iterations of these narratives.

This chapter argues that Roth introduces doppelgänger-authors – such as Zuckerman, "Roth," and Pipik – in order to tease out a strained brand of narrative ownership resulting from the conditions of canonical and celebrity authorship. At stake for this consideration of authorial agency is how the broad concept of narrative ownership can be broken down into specific elemental conflicts related to canonical and celebrity authorship. First, there is the question of narration and authorial style in regards to how it may imply specific ownership positions. Is there a stylistical difference between Roth and his various doppelgänger-authors – especially Zuckerman? Revising the implied author concept through the quantitative lens of stylometry sheds new light on the borders between these two authorship positions. Then, there is the problem of hybridized

autobiographical writing. How does the act of fictionalizing personal narratives in *The Counterlife* (1986) and *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* (1988) simultaneously meet and frustrate the demands of a literary marketplace that increasingly capitalizes on celebrity confession, salacious memoirs, and taut explications of "true" stories? And finally, there is the ongoing ethical and juridical problem of authorial ownership when it comes to inflammatory ideas and character representation. Does fictionalizing autobiographical figures, details, and events allow one to stave off Foucault's punitive author-function? In the sections that follow I will suggest answers for these questions while moving between quantitative and qualitative levels of interpretation in an effort to model the kind of dialogic reading process that Roth's autobiographical-metafictions require.

Counterlives and Counterstyles

> But nonetheless this is still, by and large, what you get if you get Roth without Zuckerman—this is what you get in practically any artist without his imagination. Your medium for the really merciless self-evisceration, your medium for genuine self-confrontation, is me.
>
> — Nathan Zuckerman, *The Facts*

In the above epigraph, Nathan Zuckerman introduces one of the central problems motivating Roth's *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* – can Zuckerman claim authorial ownership over Roth? Zuckerman equates himself both with Roth's imagination and his capacity for "genuine" self-recognition – two supposedly opposite sides of the fiction/autobiography divide. This is the conceptual paradox that the *The Facts* asks of its readers, a problem foregrounded by the text's own epigraph:

> And as he spoke I was thinking, *the kind of stories that people turn life into, the kind of lives that people turn stories into.*
>
> Nathan Zuckerman, in *The Counterlife* (*TF* 1)

This quote is pulled from Roth's previous novel, *The Counterlife,* but it is directly attributed to Zuckerman, calling into question the degree to which Zuckerman truly functions as a "medium" for Roth in both his fictional and nonfictional writing. Zuckerman – as an epigraph, as a character, as a narrator – is Roth's *way in* to writing. Though Roth has used pseudo-autobiographical author figures in his early fiction, such as Peter Tarnopol, David Kepesh, and Alexander Portnoy, Nathan Zuckerman is the character most starkly associated with Roth's affinity for self-referential doubling since the character first emerged in *My Life as a Man*. And it is within this generic ambiguity that Zuckerman, as a constructed medium for Roth's writing, functions as a doppelgänger-author.

One significant change in how both Roth and the literary marketplace conceived of Roth's authorship in relation to Zuckerman occurred in 2000 when nine of Roth's novels were strategically grouped and marketed as the "Zuckerman Books" on the stock front matter of his novels. If we are to assume that this division was prompted by Roth himself, it signals a significant shift in how the author conceived of and marketed his works. According to Pia Maisero, this editorial division "signals [Roth's] desire to recast his writing in terms of voices and masks" and calls into question the rhetorical purpose of dividing his authorship along these lines (Masiero 2).

I contend that this editorial division between Zuckerman and Roth rekindles the contentious figure of the implied author. Essentially, categorizing the "Zuckerman books" as apart from the quartet of "Roth books" *implies* a difference in narrative

ownership. Though Zuckerman is often slotted into the implied author position, this categorization is often treated as a red herring. The difficulty in confidently classifying Zuckerman as Roth's implied author ultimately lies in the ambiguity of Wayne Booth's original coinage of this term. Debate over the implied author has given way to a sprawl of interpretations, celebrations, and reconfigurations. To wit, Marina Grishakova observes that "[d]ifferent readings [of the implied author] emphasize either part of Booth's concept: 'author' (the implied author as the real author's alter ego) or 'implied' (the author-image as constructed by the reader) . . . indeed, the modifier 'implied' always suggests reader involvement" (Grishakova 242-3). Hence, the implied author represents a struggle between two literary ownership positions: the author and the reader. And too often the critic is forced to concede to one side of the poststructuralist debate – either the agency of reading ultimately lies in the rhetorical intentions of the author figure, or the reader usurps this position to claim individual ownership over the polysemious text's interpretation.

However, I suggest that approaching the implied author dynamic from a quantitative perspective via stylometry provides more fruitful, though certainly not definitive, conclusions about the connection between Roth and his most substantial doppelgänger-author at the level of the text.[37] Though the implied author is often not conceived of as a textual effect, stylometric analysis offers a way to visualize how much of a "claim" stylistically Roth has over his works compared to Zuckerman. Stylometry is the study of authorship attribution that combines mathematical principles with literary style. As David Holmes explains, "At [stylometry's] heart lies an assumption that authors

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[37] Reading distantly through quantitative lenses such as this has become a trend in literary study as the field of digital humanities has recently taken hold. For a useful overview of this trend, see Matthew Jockers' *Macroanalysis: Digital Methods and Literary History* (2013).

have an unconscious aspect to their style, an aspect which cannot consciously be manipulated but which possesses features which are quantifiable and which may be distinctive" (Holmes 111). The field of stylometry is primarily concerned with extracting and analyzing nuanced stylistic data – such as word frequency and punctuation – that is seemingly beneath the surface of the text so that likely authorship can be implied.

This is not to say that traditional close reading methods have not attempted to parse out the stylistic difference between Roth and Zuckerman. For example, Benjamin Ogden claims that Zuckerman himself is entirely a formal effect of language:

> Zuckerman is—grammatically, formally, and thematically—the result of putting into language the schisms between life and art, narration and memoir, invention and literary history. The schisms only exist in the form Roth gives to them, which is the voice of Nathan Zuckerman. Nathan puts his life into language, and the form in which he does so creates him. (Ogden, "Formal" 90)

It is these schisms that Ogden identifies that support the notion that though Roth and Zuckerman are both novelists, they are very different novelists. In his close reading of *The Ghost Writer* (1979), Ogden largely attributes the syntactical existence of Zuckerman to the halted use of punctuation, which intentionally interrupts the flow of narration. The act of narration reveals more about the character of Zuckerman than any pat description: "That Nathan creates himself in the language he does tells us exactly who he is and will be in the novel" (Ogden, "Formal" 90). In contrast, Arnaud Schmitt contends that the stylistic differences between these two figures are ultimately illusions, claiming that "Roth's voice is actually, most of the time, Zuckerman's. Roth's style is an imitation of what Roth thinks Zuckerman's should be" (Schmitt 5). Aside from the conflict between these two premises, the evidence these scholars use to make these claims are based on the close reading of isolated scraps of text. What's missing in this assessment is the ability to

look at Roth's oeuvre more globally. Therefore, I contend that a qualitative analysis of the novels separately attributed to Zuckerman and "Roth" has the potential to reveal the degree to which the authors propagate distinct authorial styles.

But, what exactly constitutes authorial *style*? In a recent retrospective on the various uses and meanings of this term in light of new approaches and computational methods, the following definition is proposed as a means of synthesis: "Style is a property of texts constituted by an ensemble of formal features which can be observed quantitatively or qualitatively" (Hermann, Dalen-Oskam, and Schöch 44). What this definition reveals is the imperative to think on both a macro and a micro scale when it comes to style. Essentially, stylometric data has little meaning outside of a broader analytical context. Harold Love reinforces the need to find analytical balance using this methodology:

> [M]ost of all stylometry needs to question the widespread assumption that it is a science in its own right, or at least an aspirant towards scientific status, and accept the more challenging possibility that it is an academic cyborg, only half of which is computational and the other part interpretive, and that its full potential will only be reached when . . . it comes to an understanding of its double nature. (Love 161)

Given that style is something that must be understood both qualitatively and quantitatively, stylometric analysis helps reveal pieces of the picture that have been previously obscured – in this case, the degree to which "Roth" and Zuckerman share stylistic markers.

To complete my comparison of "Roth's" and Zuckerman's stylistic ownership over their specific narratives, I used a programming platform called RStudio and a software package called "stylo." This package has been specifically designed to compute a variety of computational stylistic algorithms and graphically display them using

distance measures. Much of my analysis follows the successful framework laid out first

by John Burrows[38] and expanded upon by D. L. Hoover and Maciej Eder and Jan

Rybicki.[39] This method is in line with cases of stylometric analysis that use statistical

algorithms to calculate and visualize the frequencies of words or characters (typically

referred to as *n-grams*)[40] in order to determine probable authorship. Essentially, while

Ogden's close reading was able to parse Roth from Zuckerman based on a close reading

of punctuation, word n-grams offer a more accurate and sophisticated probability

estimates for authorship attribution.[41]

Since the issue of authorial ownership primarily concerns the connection between

Roth and his most prolific doppelgänger-author, Zuckerman, I organized my corpus

around these two categories and performed a cluster analysis – meaning that the texts in

each classified corpus were compared based on the 800 most frequent word n-grams and

plotted into a dendogram in order to measure probable similarity. Each leaf of the

dendogram in Figure 4 represents a singular text and then the leaves are grouped into

clades according to their similarity. The Zuckerman texts include the nine novels where

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[38] See J. F Burrows in "'Delta': A Measure of Stylistic Difference and a Guide to Likely Authorship"

[39] For descriptions of other stylometry projects using R-stylo see "Papers and Articles - Computational Stylistics." Accessed August 2, 2015. <https://sites.google.com/site/computationalstylistics/papers-and-articles>. Web.

[40] N-grams are numeric sets of characters or words used to measure probability; for my analysis I used word tri-grams. A sample string of word tri-grams from the first sentence of Roth's *The Counterlife* would be: "ever since the" "since the family" "the family doctor" "family doctor during" "doctor during a" "during a routine". . .

[41] This assessment is based on Burrows' Delta method, the most conventional and standardized method for authorship attribution. The use of n-grams at 800 Most Frequent Words (MFWs) is supported by Burrows and word trigrams (3-grams) are considered the most accurate measure according to the Delta method.

Zuckerman is the protagonist or narrator[42] whereas the Roth texts constitute the semi-autobiographical texts as well as those that involve a character named "Roth" as a protagonist or narrator.[43] I also included Roth's nonfictional collection of essays, *Reading Myself and Others* (1976) as a representative of a strictly nonfictional text among this collection of generically hybridized novels.

ROTH ETEXT
Cluster Analysis

Roth_Reading Myself and Others_1976
'roth'_The Facts_ A Novelist's Autobio_1988
zuckerman_The Human Stain_2000
zuckerman_American Pastoral_1997
zuckerman_Exit Ghost_2007
zuckerman_I Married a Communist_1998
'roth'_The Plot Against America_2004
zuckerman_The Counterlife_1986
'roth'_Operation Shylock_1993
zuckerman_The Ghost Writer_1979
zuckerman_Zuckerman Unbound_1981
zuckerman_The Anatomy Lesson_1983
'roth'_Patrimony_ 1996
zuckerman_The Prague Orgy_1985
'roth'_Deception_1990

2.0   1.5   1.0   0.5   0.0

800 MFW 3-grams Culled @ 0%
delta

Figure 4. Cluster analysis of Roth corpus, MFWs 800, classic Delta distance

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[42] *Zuckerman Unbound* (1981); *The Anatomy Lesson* (1983); *The Prague Orgy* (1985); *The Counterlife* (1986); *American Pastoral* (1997), *I Married a Communist* (1998), and *Exit Ghost* (2007).

[43] *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* (1988); *Deception: A Novel* (1990); *Operation Shylock: A Confession* (1993); and *Patrimony: A True Story* (1996)

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A few notable observations can be pulled from the dendogram in Figure 4. First, there is a strong connection between Roth's collection of nonfiction essays *Reading Myself and Others* (1976) and *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography*, suggesting that both texts share elements of a nonfictional style. This conclusion is not immediately surprising, since *The Facts* is marketed as an autobiography and, aside from the paratextual letters that bookend the text, contains a traditional chronological narrative of Roth's life spanning from his childhood in Newark, his college life, and his first marriage before publishing *Portnoy's Complaint*. Additionally, *Reading Myself and Others* consists of essayistic prose, letters, and interviews. This combination of multiple nonfictional genres is more consistent with the hybridized style of *The Facts* than the monologic narrative of *Patrimony*, perhaps Roth's most starkly biographical and confessional text, since it details the illness and death of his father.
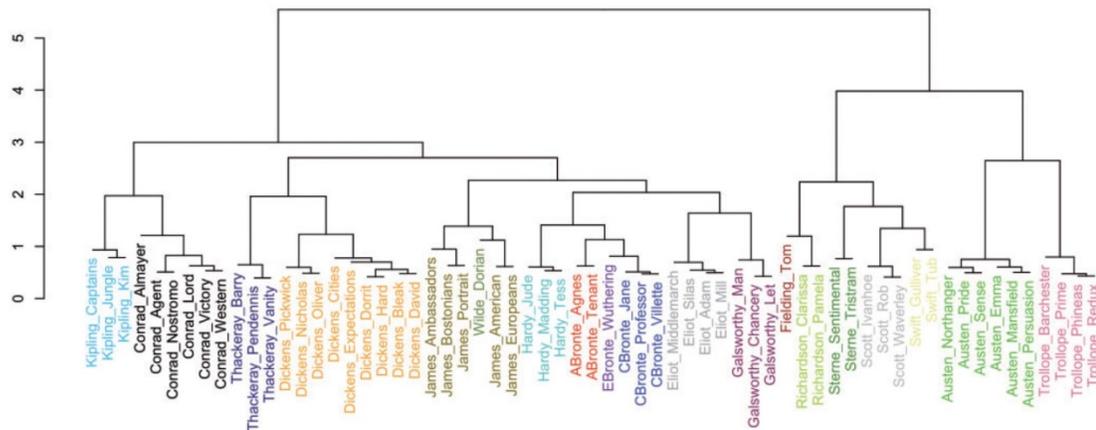

Figure 5. Maciej Eder's Cluster analysis of 66 English novels, 300 MFWs, classic Delta distance

But what is most compelling about this dendogram is how the division between the "Roth" and Zuckerman books promoted by Roth's publisher is quantitatively inaccurate on the macro scale of the "Roth"/Zuckerman oeuvre. As a means of reference, Maciej Eder's traditional cluster analysis of 66 English novels in Figure 5 shows mostly clear divisions between the 19 separate authors within his corpus (Eder 5). However, the dendogram in Figure 4 fails to consistently plot the texts according to either "Roth" or Zuckerman, or even fictional or nonfictional genres, revealing the arbitrary nature of these divisions. Thus, what we glean from this kind of quantitative analysis is the license to look beyond the division between Zuckerman and "Roth" and of genre in order to tease out the ways in which these two figures toggle between different positions of narrative ownership.

This perceived blending of narrative ownership between multiple authorship positions is aptly demonstrated in the narrative framing of both *The Counterlife* and *The Facts*. The question of who has the right to a story, or how writing fiction can blur the lines of personal ownership claims is indeed central to both of these texts' structures. Though Zuckerman avers that autobiography is "the most manipulative of literary forms" (*TF* 173), it is the overt play with fictional frames in *The Facts* that is the more egregiously manipulative assertion of authorial control. In combining and remixing the genres of fiction and autobiography in these two texts, Roth capitalizes on his previous success establishing Zuckerman as a false placeholder for his authorship.

Though the Zuckerman texts prior to *The Counterlife* and *The Facts* appear to represent a stable corpus upon which to extract a singular iteration of Roth's implied author, the narrative structure and the metafictional techniques in these novels function to

significantly destabilize this author figure. *The Counterlife*, for instance, plots a number

of narrative scenarios and then immediately subverts them in a way that dramatically

challenges the myth of a linear or cohesive narrative. Similarly, the autobiographical

section of *The Facts* is flanked by a set of letters – to Zuckerman, from "Roth" and to

"Roth," from Zuckerman, respectively – calling into question the boundaries between

fiction and autobiography and creating a stark divide between character and author. By

infusing dialogism and revision into the narrative structure of these texts, Roth

demonstrates the futility of any attempts to definitively pin down a life story. It is exactly

this dialogic process of re-reading and re-considering the "facts" alongside the

"counterfacts" that allows the interstitial figure of the doppelgänger-author to thrive.

This poses the question: Who can lay claim to a personal story when it is

constantly retold and remixed during the diegesis? I argue that for Roth, authorship is a

constant, and often fraught, negotiation of ownership claims on personal histories and

stories, as demonstrated by the recursive structure of *The Counterlife*. The five individual

chapters in *The Counterlife* disrupt a linear reading process because each subsequent

chapter revises or remixes the plotted events and characters of the preceding chapter. In

chapter one, "Basel", for instance, Nathan attends the funeral and eulogizes his brother

Henry who has died from an elective surgery to correct his impotence caused by his heart

medication. The next chapter, "Judea", immediately revives Henry, who had survived the

surgery, only to have Nathan follow him to Israel as he abandons his family to join a

Zionist movement. Chapter three, "Aloft", has Nathan traveling back to the states, only to

be mistaken as a radical Zionist himself by aerial authorities. "Gloucestershire" then

completely reverses the premise of the first two chapters by having Nathan become the

one who suffers and dies from an elective heart surgery that would cure his sexual

problems, as Henry attempts to retrieve copies of Nathan's notes that would implicate

him in the extramarital affair with his mistress Maria as described in "Basel." In the final

chapter, "Christendom," Nathan is now the brother in a romantic relationship with Maria.

While the chapters all contain the same elements in regards to character and plot, the

constant remixing of these components between chapters results in a tumultuous reading

experience where the reader struggles to find footing within a narrative arc that refuses to

coalesce. And this failure of cohesion in the novel's structure disrupts a singular concept

of narrative ownership.

Just as one chapter in *The Counterlife* proposes to usurp the next, narrative

ownership is constantly in flux. This is best demonstrated in Henry's reaction to his

brother's death in "Gloucestershire." On his way to Nathan's funeral, the narrator

recounts Henry's struggle to exist outside of his author-brother's writerly purview: "So

long as Nathan was alive, Henry couldn't write anything unself-consciously, not even a

letter to a friend . . . when Nathan began publishing those stories that hardly went

unnoticed, and after them the books, it was as though Henry had been condemned to

silence" (*CL* 205). Henry's silence is due to his awareness of the extent that his life

narrative has been co-opted by his brother. When Nathan's stories became known

through publication, Henry's personal narrative goes unnoticed. This conflict represents

the central problem of narrative ownership that Roth grapples with in *The Counterlife*

through both theme and structure. Though there may be differing or competing narratives

in autobiographical writing, the only version that anyone gives power to is the version

that is published. Publication suggests a kind of finality to the constant circulation of

discourses and perspectives that make up the narrative of a self. While Henry would prefer to retain his own version of events, once Nathan's narrative is accepted, edited, and published, Nathan's version is intrinsically more powerful due to the consecration from the literary marketplace, not to mention the degree of circulation. In short, once Nathan's narrative is disseminated and read within the public, Henry's personal narrative loses rhetorical power.

Thus, Henry attempts to reclaim ownership over his public narrative of self and conceal his extra-marital affair by destroying his brother Zuckerman's notebooks.[44] Henry knows that the notebooks are at risk of scrutiny or even publication since Nathan's literary fame makes them valuable as primary documents of his celebrity brother's life. However, after finding the unfinished and unpublished manuscript of Zuckerman's latest book, Draft #2, Henry unfortunately finds the details of his affair already fictionalized. Though Henry was quick to jump at the chance to finally take control of the Zuckerman family's narrative at the level of censoring a few pages from Nathan's notebooks, the discovery of the draft of a novel challenges his impulse. Fiction is Nathan's main commodity; to destroy the in-progress novel would no longer be a victimless crime since Nathan's works belong to a global audience of his followers. Part of what this conflict of narrative ownership suggests is the consequences of claiming or eschewing ownership over a story or idea. For Henry to take control of his narrative, Nathan's would have to be destroyed – a stark reversal of the brothers' relationship prior to Nathan's death.

However, after reading the contents of Draft #2, Henry becomes enraged at what he finds the most "irresponsible exaggeration" in the "Basel" chapter, which, from

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[44] This premise is supported by the opening of *The Prague Orgy* which expressly begins with the qualifier: "…from Zuckerman's notebooks"

Henry's description, appears to be a copy of the first chapter of *The Counterlife* depicting Henry's adultery, impotence, and death from elective bypass surgery. This recursive and metafictional effect – of referencing other chapters of the novel at the level of the story – paradoxically shuttles Henry to at least partially occupy a similar narratological level as the reader. Henry is simultaneously outside the telling of the "Basel" narrative while continuing to occupy "Gloucestershire." In this position, Henry reacts to what he sees as his brother's willful fictionalization of events in order to conceal his own faults: "His Henry is, if anyone, *him* – it's Nathan, using me to conceal himself while simultaneously disguising himself *as* himself, as *responsible*, as *sane*, disguising himself as a reasonable man while I am revealed as the absolute dope. The son of a bitch seemingly abandons the disguise *at the very moment he's lying most*!" (*CL* 226-7, emphasis in original). This passage skillfully dramatizes how easily readers of Roth's autobiographic-metafictions can fall into the trap of equating character with author. Placing Henry in the reader's position makes him a catalyst for these critiques at both a personal intradiegetic level and critical extradiegetic level. Henry, himself a character constructed and narrated by Zuckerman, is outraged at the supposedly thin veil of recognition that places Zuckerman's personal and biological failings upon his brother.

Though Henry resents his brother for including unsavory details of his family's lives in his earlier fiction, these events were previously shrouded by masks and fictionalized characters. In "Basel" Zuckerman crosses the line between using Henry's life as inspiration to intentionally falsifying, then publicizing, personal details. As Henry says, "It wasn't the 'using,' it was the distortion, the deliberate distortion—couldn't these people understand that?" (*CL* 215). It is the intentional and seemingly malicious nature of

Nathan's act of remixing unsavory details from his life with his brother's and the premise of truthfulness that pushes Henry over the edge:

> *He* must have been made impotent by heart medication and then chosen, like "Henry," to have an operation that killed him. *He*, not me, would never accept the limits—*he*, not me, was the fool who died for a fuck. Not the dopey dentist but the all-seeing artist was the ridiculous Zuckerman who died the idiotic death of a fifteen-year-old, trying to get laid. *Dying* to get laid. There's his eulogy, shmuck: *Carnovsky* wasn't fiction, it was *never* fiction—the fiction and the man were one! Calling it fiction was the biggest fiction of all! (*CL* 227, emphasis in original)

It's almost too easy to read Henry's incredulity in this passage as the chorus of frustrated readers of Roth's postmodernist techniques. But it is exactly this impulse that Roth wants his readers to challenge; by being so brazen and direct in his engagement with metafiction in *The Counterlife*, Roth pushes his readers to see, like Henry, the fiction of ever achieving authorial recognition in fiction. Just as Zuckerman allowed Roth to lean in to his readers' tendencies to equate him with his characters, Roth uses metafiction as a means to reveal how he, too, is in on the joke.

The metafictional play within "Gloucestershire" does not end with Henry. Rather, the narrative shifts once more to reveal where Henry's efforts to conceal his indiscretions by removing incriminating sections from Draft #2 leave off. Having removed everything prior to page 255 in Draft #2, only the "Christendom" chapter is left behind for Maria, Zuckerman's mistress, to find (*CL* 229). What follows is an interview between Maria and supposedly the ghost of Zuckerman, detailing her impressions of the last chapter. Just as Henry's reading of "Basel" challenges the reader's initial impression of the narrative, Maria's response to "Christendom" primes the reader to already distrust the narrative that follows. Henry refers to this last chapter as a "dream of escape" since it outlines a version of life where Zuckerman marries his mistress, Maria, and they go to live in England (*CL*

228). However, within the storyworld of "Gloucestershire" Maria is still married to her

current husband, meaning that the publication of Draft #2 would significantly threaten

her marriage. However, unlike Henry who censors the manuscript to save himself, Maria

views Zuckerman's appropriation of her life as an opportunity:

> If I want to disguise myself, the only chance I have is to go to his editor and to say, "Look, I know, because he showed it to me, what he was writing. I know that he used characters very close to me and my family. He used our names. But he had said to me that this is only a draft, and if the book is published I'm going to change the names.". . . I don't think he'll do it, I don't think he can do it, but it's probably what I shall do.
> *But its publication won't destroy your life.*
> No, no, it won't—it *is* my way out. (*CL* 245-6, emphasis in original)

Though the contents of "Christendom" are Zuckerman's fantasy, Maria still recognizes

how the publication of her relationship with the deceased author would significantly alter

her life. Publication holds more power than fact or fiction; once the narrative spreads the

characters contained within it, including the figure of the author, lose control. The only

way to stave off this loss of authorial ownership is to intentionally poison the legibility of

the narrative by infusing it with doubt. Essentially, what the narrative structure of *The

Counterlife* emphasizes is that there will always be another text, another countertext, to

challenge the narrative individuals construct for themselves – a point that is further

emphasized in *The Facts*.

Negotiating Narrative Ownership between Genres

As we have seen, even though *The Counterlife* is a fictional novel, the problem of

authorial agency and ownership loomed large for Zuckerman, Henry, and Maria. *The

Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography* adds an additional turn to this problem in regards to

genre. Autobiography introduces a number of readerly assumptions about authorship,

truthfulness, and ethics. Whereas previously Zuckerman functioned as a medium to

conceal, or at least displace, Roth's authorship, the claim of nonfictional autobiography

on the cover of *The Facts* supposedly signals the dropping of the veil. However, Pia

Masiero rightly asks, "...what kind of unmasking is this?" (Masiero 121). Because,

though "Roth" is now a narrating figure in the text, the fallacy of authorial recognition

remains. The "Roth" that composes the autobiographical passages in *The Facts* cannot be

equated with the Philip Roth found in the authorial signature on the text's cover.[45] While

it may be easy and convenient to make this assumption, the subtitle of the text further

challenges this premise – *A Novelist's Autobiography* is not the same as *Philip Roth's*

Autobiography. In addition, the bookended letters between "Roth" and Zuckerman that

frame the autobiographical portion of the text call into question the purity of this

autobiographical act. By inserting a canonically fictional character into the basic structure

of the autobiography, these framing devices demonstrate how the authorial agency of the

text must shift between the two registers of fact and fiction.

Just as the metafictional strategies in "Glouchestershire" inform a reading strategy

dependent on looking both backwards and forward in *The Counterlife*, the paratexual

letters in *The Facts* prime the reader to question the stability of the autobiographical act.

Therefore, the real obstacle that "Roth" must take on in *The Facts* is distinguishing the

autobiography from the pseudo-autobiographical impulses that critics have observed in

his fiction. Echoing his critics, "Roth" questions this tactic in his letter to Zuckerman:

"Why? To prove that there is a significant gap between the autobiographical writer that I

am thought to be and the autobiographical writer that I am? To prove that the information

that I drew from my life was, in the fiction, incomplete?" (*TF* 3). These questions reveal

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[45] I will refer to the narrator of *The Facts* as "Roth" to make this distinction clearer.

that "Roth" is not only aware of how his writing is critically assessed, but that he has integrated this knowledge into the content of his works. In posing these critiques himself, "Roth" wrests them away from the critic, but the aura of self-doubt remains as he goes on to question his impulse to write autobiography: "Nor was there any call for this book; no one ordered it, no one sent down for an autobiography from Roth" (*TF* 3). Here, autobiography is an unstoppable and personal impulse – a panacea – rather than the fulfillment of a request or contract. "Roth" minimizes the autobiographical impulse by emphasizing autobiography as an ultimately selfish project, with no outside purpose.

But, part of what makes "Roth's" doubts about the "need" for his autobiographical act so ironic is that the self-reflexive nature of his other novels have ultimately led his readers to seek out a verified autobiography in order to discern the facts from fiction. At this point in his career, Roth was not only a well-known and published author, but a worldwide celebrity figure. And, the rise of autobiographical writing that took place in the early twenty-first century across England and America demonstrates that Roth's project is not only marketable, but on the cusp of the popular.[46] Additionally, celebrity autobiographies within the literary marketplace have become stronger since the 1990s, especially for an author like Roth with a recognizable brand (Couser 5). Regardless of these real conditions of the literary marketplace, "Roth" prefers to think there is no audience for what he considers a completely selfish act so he introduces a reader who shares, or can at least understand, his impulse: Nathan Zuckerman.

As a reader of "Roth's" autobiography, Zuckerman challenges assumptions of authorial ownership by integrating the theory of the countertext into the text of the

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[46] See Julie Rak's *Boom! Manufacturing Memoir for the Popular Market* (2015).

autobiography. In an interview with Mervyn Rothstein for the *New York Times* soon after

the text's publication, Roth emphasizes this as an intentional technique: "There should be

a tension between the body of the book and Zuckerman's reaction, just as the chapters of

"The Counterlife" exist in a state of tension with each other. It's similar to what I did in

"The Counterlife" – doubt is cast on what came before. This is a counterbook – it's my

counterlife" (Rothstein). The "tension" Roth wishes to recover from *The Counterlife*

hinges on the process of layering personal narratives without privileging one over the

other. Essentially, in the absence of a stable or definitive account of his life, Roth prefers

an excess and incongruity of narrative, and Zuckerman is the perfect conduit.

And it is here where the difference between Roth and the "Roth" of *The Facts*

becomes most apparent. While Roth sees the value and necessity of narrative ambiguity

when it comes to autobiographical writing, "Roth" approaches the act of autobiography

as a way to lay down the facts, recovering an essential version of the self untainted by his

fictionalized oeuvre: "If while writing I couldn't see exactly what I was up to, I do now:

this manuscript embodies my counterlife, the antidote and answer to all those fictions that

culminated in the fiction of you. If in one way *The Counterlife* can be read as fiction

about structure, then this is the bare bones, the structure of a life without the fiction" (*TF*

6). "Roth" asserts that the autobiographical act will function as an "antidote" to the

damaging fictionalizations that obscured his sense of a stable subjectivity and that

Zuckerman is the cohesive "culmination" of these efforts. But this assertion is itself a

careful fiction, an observation that Zuckerman is quick to point out in his own letter:

> . . . we get this fictional autobiographical projection of a partial you. Even if it's
> no more than one percent that you've edited out, that's the one percent that
> counts—the one percent that's saved for your imagination and that changes
> everything. But this isn't unusual, really. With autobiography there's always

another text, a countertext, if you will, to the one presented. It's probably the most manipulative of all literary forms. (*TF* 173)

Zuckerman echoes what numerous scholars of autobiography have already theorized – that the autobiographical act is ultimately a construction. Though it may be rooted in actual facts or lived experiences, the act of telling is not immune from the process of selection. The "Roth" in the autobiography can only ever be a partial projection and the truthfulness associated with the genre masks this fact. Ironically, when Zuckerman insists that even in autobiography "there's always another text, a countertext" (*TF* 173), he becomes the closer doppelgänger-author to Roth's own assertions in the Rothstein interview (if we are to believe them), leaving the "Roth" of *The Facts* to ultimately function as a false signifier.

It is this conflict between "Roth" and Zuckerman that truly demonstrates how Roth's doppelgänger-authors continually move between different registers of authorial control across genre. This kind of uncertainty is represented within the tone of "Roth's" letter as he wavers between being overly explanatory of his authorial motivations while also revealing profound doubt, mimicking the veil of silence that engulfs Henry in response to Zuckerman's prolific authorship in *The Counterlife*. In the shadow of Zuckerman's writing, Henry was unable to write anything "unself-consciously" (*CL* 205). Similarly, "Roth" claims that *The Facts* is the first text he has written "*unconsciously*" – seemingly free from the restrictions of conscious expectations or goals – but the presence of the self-reflexive letter itself reveals an underlying self-consciousness (*TF* 9). The veil of doubt within "Roth's" letter is epitomized in the request for Zuckerman to approve of his narrative and see value in its marketability. Roth writes to Zuckerman: ". . . sending this manuscript to you—and asking you, as I do, to tell me whether you think I should

publish it—prompts me to explain what may have led to my presenting myself in prose like this, undisguised" (*TF* 3). In asking his mask, Zuckerman, to weigh in on the ramifications of publication "undisguised," the implicitly fictional "Roth" shifts the authorial agency of the text over to the explicitly fictional Zuckerman. Though the mask supposedly recedes, it is still imbued with authoritative power. In positioning Zuckerman as a gatekeeper to the autobiography's publication, "Roth" imposes a limit upon his own agency over the text and defers to his most successful fictional counterpart. Essentially, by the end of "Roth's" letter preceding the autobiographical section of *The Facts*, the narrative ownership over the text has shifted to Zuckerman.

However, this premise swiftly changes once Zuckerman composes his letter in response. Zuckerman observes that the loss of narrative ownership that "Roth's" letter presumes is merely a fiction. He writes:

> For me to speak of "my" anything would be ridiculous, however much there has been established in me the illusion of an independent existence. I owe everything to you, while you, however, owe me nothing less than the freedom to write freely. I am your permission, your indiscretion, the key to disclosure. I understand that now as I never did before. (*TF* 161)

The language of ownership is appropriated here to emphasize that "Roth's" ability to write freely – unconsciously – is necessitated by Zuckerman's lack of ownership over his personal narrative. The reminder that Zuckerman's independence is merely an "illusion" put into practice to provide "Roth" with the appropriate permissions to write and publish whatever his imagination desires places "Roth's" earlier request for Zuckerman to censor him in stark contrast.

And yet, even though the letters dramatize a power struggle between two of Roth's doppelgänger-authors, there are also moments of symmetry. As I said earlier,

"Roth" looks to Zuckerman out of a desire to share his anxieties over the prospect of autobiographical writing in lieu of the comforts of fiction, introducing once again, the issue of style. Zuckerman, like "Roth," is also a fiction writer, but in a different way, as he implies in his letter: "Am I inventing? I share the tic with you—but then my fiction, if it is fiction, is still perhaps less of a fiction than yours" (*TF* 177). This statement reveals the double-edged quality of authorial agency between Roth and Zuckerman. While they both "share" the tic of writing fiction, this equanimity is destroyed as Roth's fiction is given more power in relation to Zuckerman's "lesser" inventions. This line contains the true paradox of the doppelgänger-author; it gestures on mimesis, but then immediately shatters the illusion.

The illusion of shared authorship between Zuckerman and Roth can also been visualized quantitatively. In light of "Roth's" appeal to Zuckerman for writerly advice in his prefatory letter to *The Facts: A Novelist's Autobiography*, I used the machine-learning classification rolling.classify within R-stylo – a program typically used to determine authorship in collaborative texts – to determine the degree of stylistic difference between Zuckerman and "Roth" within a singular text. This kind of analysis is adaptive in that the program reads through a selected corpus of texts and learns to classify sequential samples according to probable author. Specifically in the case of "Roth' and Zuckerman, the machine read through the same corpus of Zuckerman and "Roth" text used in the Cluster Analysis above in order to measure the most frequent words according to each authorial corpus.[47] Then the program plotted out a linear representation of the entirety of *The Facts* and tagged stylistic changes across the body of the text. The bottom stripe indicates the

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[47] See notes 42 and 43 for a complete list of novels within the two corpora.

most probable candidate of attribution and the second and third lines demonstrate the

next suggested classifications.[48]
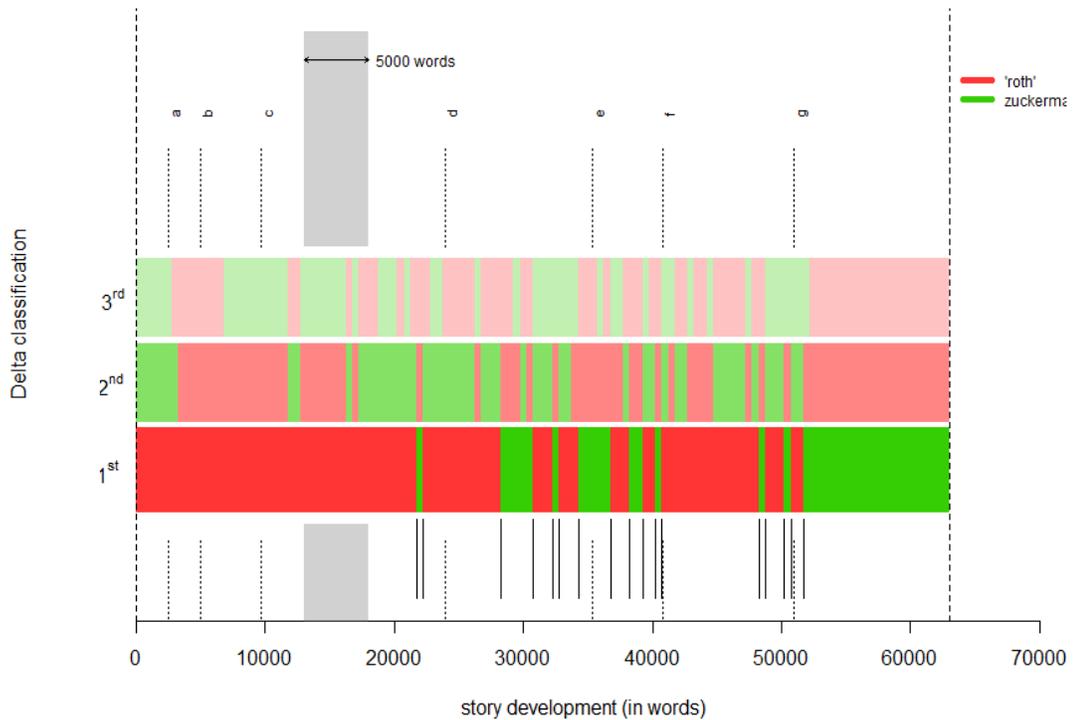
Figure 6. rolling.classify analysis of *The Facts: An Novelist's Autobiography*, MFWs 800

Overall, the resulting graph in Figure 6 supports the major structure of the

collaboratively authored text, with "Roth" (in red) occupying the first half of the story

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[48] The multiple stripes in the graph are ultimately generated to assist in attribution for texts with more than two collaborative authors where there may be more nuanced attribution. Since my corpora are structured around a binary between "Roth" and Zuckerman, I will therefore rely on the 1st and most probable stripe for my analysis.

and Zuckerman (in green) appearing at the end when the Zuckerman letter begins. This result approximately demonstrates 84 percent accuracy within the Roth section and 88.5 percent accuracy in the Zuckerman section when it comes to dividing the text according to "Roth" and Zuckerman's respective narratives. Though there appears to be an anomalous section around Milestones d and e where Zuckerman registers within the Roth half of the novel, this reading can be explained by the overall repetitiously autobiographical nature of Roth's novels. This anomalous section roughly equates to the "Girl of my Dreams" chapter which details the beginnings of "Roth's" traumatic relationship with his first wife, so named "Josie" in this version of events. The fact that Roth has fictionalized versions of this story within his other Zuckerman novels clarifies this result.

However, the most striking conclusion that can be drawn from this visualization is the simple fact that "Roth" can indeed by separated from Zuckerman based on stylistic markers – at least within a singular text like *The Facts*. While the dendogram in Figure 4 suggested the indistinguishability of Roth and his doppelgänger-author on the macro-level of his oeuvre, this micro-level analysis of a single text demonstrates minute stylistical difference between these two authorship positions. Thus, the narrative ownership of the text as a whole cannot be definitively attributed to a singular iteration; rather, the shift between these two registers of authorial attribution demonstrates the significance of the doppelgänger-author's ability to unify the split between these two positions.

The Ethics of the Doppelgänger-Effect

It is this essential slippage of narrative ownership between fiction and nonfiction that haunts "Roth" and Zuckerman in *The Facts*. But what is at stake for Roth's use of his doppelgänger-authors is more than the possibility of authorial recognition, but how this failure of recognition openly disrupts the ethical stakes of narration. In *The Counterlife*, Zuckerman's editor – reading a posthumous eulogy Zuckerman wrote for himself – recounts this struggle as follows:

> "Why, reading *Carnovsky*, did so many people keep wanting to know, 'Is it fiction?' I have my hunches, and let me run them past you.
> "First, as I've said, because he camouflages his writerliness and the style reproduces accurately the emotional distress. Second, he breaks fresh ground in the territory of transgression by writing so explicitly about the sexuality of family life; the illicit erotic affair that we all are born to get enmeshed in is not elevated to another sphere, it is undisguised and has the shocking impact of confession. Not only that—it reads as though the confessor's having fun . . . (*CL* 209-10)

The notion of playfulness and complicity suggested by Zuckerman posthumously, via his editor, locates the root of the problem to a malicious joy in exposing the private lives of others. Fiction becomes the "territory of transgression" that willfully conceals the negative effects of autobiographical confession. As David Gooblar contends: "Roth's investigation into autobiography in [these novels] is not a solipsistic exercise of self-absorption, but instead evidence of a renewed concern with the responsibilities of writing about others and with the differing, and often conflicting, claims that aesthetics and ethics can exert upon the writer" (Gooblar 112). Fictional narration under the guise of nonfiction often threatens individual ownership claims, but authorial ownership is truly at stake in this case. This power struggle is taken to new complexities in *Operation Shylock: A Confession* (1993) in regards to the punitive implications of authorship in the face of extreme ideas.

The theme of doubles takes on an explicitly Dostoyevsky-like quality in *Operation Shylock* where the fictional "Roth" travels to Israel only to encounter a Philip Roth impersonator (later dubbed "Pipik")[49] who's using the author's global recognition and acclaim to proselytize a religious crusade of European Diasporism. What results is what even "Roth" himself refers to as a "freakishly" plotted turn of events, ending with "Roth" being employed alongside a Mossad intelligence agent – though the details of this operation are intentionally omitted from the novel to supposedly protect national interests (*OS* 245).[50] Thus, following in the legacy of the pseudo-autobiographical *The Facts*, and Roth's next two projects, *Deception: A Novel* (1990) and *Patrimony: A True Story* (1991), *Operation Shylock* is the fourth in a series of texts that strain the division between fiction and nonfiction in an attempt to highlight the ethical stakes at play within this kind of experimental autobiographical writing.

The subtitles to each of these works supposedly provide guidance for readers to determine where these texts fall within the binary of fiction and nonfiction. But as we have already seen in *The Facts* these titles are not definitive evidence; rather, these classifications do more to disrupt the reader's initial impression of the text. So, when it comes to the subtitle of *Operation Shylock: A Confession* (1993), the premise that the text contains the kind of autobiographical confession readers thought they received from *Portnoy's Complaint* and expected to see in *The Facts* should certainly be questioned. "Confession" also brings with it a connotation of guilt or prosecution and alludes to a

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[49] Following the convention of other Roth scholars, I will continue to use "Roth" to designate the main protagonist of *Operation Shylock* and Pipik to refer to his double.

[50] For instance, Roth has confessed to the veracity of the novel's events in interviews. See Esther B. Fein's "Philip Roth Sees Double. And Maybe Triple, Too" (1993).

narrative willfully concealed and in this context a reconsideration of Foucault's author-function becomes viable.

As I've already claimed, the emergence of the doppelgänger-author, for many of the figures in this study, coincides with the popularity of poststructuralist reading practices in the late 1960s and 1970s. Within this framework, authorship was viewed as a function of discourse, rather than a position of individual autonomy and power. For Foucault the author is a function of text rather than an autonomous and mythic font of meaning. He outlines various functions of authorship related to how the position of authorship is used within society. Within Foucault's framework, authorship can be a means to attribute legal blame or culpability, a short-hand to organize or classify a collective field of knowledge, or genre (Marxism, Dickensian, even Rothian etc.), or, a non-individualized position, where the text is a result of the circulation of multiple discourses that cannot be attributable to a single individual. Foucault's last point is most relevant to Roth's use of the doppelgänger-author because in recognizing that his authorship has become the collective product of the many discourses surrounding his works, Roth seeks to reclaim some of the lost power of autonomy in writing the consequences of his author-function into the text.

By inscribing versions of himself into the text through metafiction and pseudo-autobiographical techniques, Roth imagines a text that both eschews and requires the author for its interpretation. Though Roth includes characters in *Operation Shylock* that share a connection to historical figures, such as Roth's wife Claire Bloom, Israeli author Aharon Appelfeld, and the notoriously accused Nazi war criminal John Demjanjuk, it is the inclusion of imaginative fiction that puts the concerns of the historical world in a new

context. This characterization is similar to E.H. Jones' description of autofiction as an opportunity where "the realms of the impossible, of the more than possible, are entered into…" (Jones 179). This stance is best reflected in *Operation Shylock* when the chance of encountering a double of himself – a conventional and eponymous doppelgänger – causes the narrator "Roth" to reflect on literature's ability to account for this kind of impossibility:

> Although the idea probably originated in Aharon's remark that he felt that he was reading to me out of a story I'd written, it was nonetheless another ridiculously subjective attempt to convert into a mental event of the kind I was professionally all too familiar with what had once again been established as all too objectively real. It's Zuckerman, I thought, whimsically, stupidly, escapistly, it's Kepesh, it's Tarnopol and Portnoy — it's all of them in one, broken free of print and mockingly reconstituted as a single satirical facsimile of me. In other words, if it's not Halcion and it's no dream, then it's got to be literature — as though there cannot be a life-without ten thousand times more unimaginable than the life-within. (*OS* 34)

The years of Roth's fictionalization of the events and people in his life via Kepesh, Tarnopol, Portnoy, and Zuckerman results in them "breaking free" only to be collapsed within "a single satirical facsimile" in Roth's initial impressions of Pipik. This passage is best explained via Booth's definition of the Career-Author,[51] a figure who functions as a common denominator for the various personas, assumptions, and rhetorical positions that are thrust upon an author within literary discourse (Booth 431). While Roth is a historical and biographical figure, he is also "a mediated figure that we construct out of a diverse body of sometimes incompatible textual sources . . . and subject to different rules of reception" (Richardson, *Unnatural* 126). In listing his various characters, all figures who

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[51] Wayne Booth's concept of the "Career-Author" has been given little critical attention since it was buried in the Afterword to the Second Edition of *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1983). Booth came up with the classification by retrospectively revisiting his original concept of the implied author and opening up his theory to account for a variety of different authorial positions. For a recent revival of the term in relation to the evolution of narrative voice across a novelist's career, see Brian Richardson's *Unnatural Voices* (2006).

readers and critics conflate with elements of his subjectivity, "Roth" recognizes the

collapsing effects of his literary celebrity where each of these fictional characters have

become "reconstituted" upon his life. The life-within literature successfully permeates the

life-without; Roth can no longer separate these two spheres of existence and is forced to

consider their clash head-on. And it is within the interstitial space of this crash where the

doppelgänger-author emerges, demonstrating how the impossibility of this position can

only be articulated within the realm of imaginative fiction. Thus, Roth's doppelgänger-

author is a paradoxical literary effect that represents an author's desire to reclaim agency

over the unstable and fragmented terrain of language and discourse that seeks to displace

him. Seán Burke concisely predicts this phenomenon in his extensive study of authorship

after poststructuralism: "Thus the author will reappear as a desire of the reader's, a

spectre spirited back into existence by the critic himself" (Burke 30). And it is just this

kind of "spectre" that Roth offers up to his readers in *Operation Shylock*.

So far I have argued in this chapter that the doppelgänger-authors Roth creates are

manifestations of readerly assumption and misreading. What makes Pipik especially

intriguing within this context is that he not only shares "Roth's" likeness and name, but

he is also an admitted fan and reader of "Roth's" works. When "Roth" asks Pipik just

who he is, he responds as follows: "The person in the world who has read and loved your

books like no one else. Not just once, not just twice — so many times I'm embarrassed to

say . . . You look at me as though I'm fawning, but it's the truth — I know your books

inside out. I know your life inside out. I could be your biographer. I am your biographer"

(*OS* 73). Positioning himself as the ultimate reader of "Roth's" works, to the extent that

he claims the authority associated with a biographer, Pipik epitomizes the extremes of

readerly ownership over not only "Roth's" texts, but his person. In a way, the premise underlying Pipik's claim here insinuates that the reader can know the author more than he even knows himself. As we saw in Chapter 2, Andrew Field's loss of control over Nabokov's biography in the face of its subject is certainly evidence of this fact. And it is just this kind of readerly control that reviles and enrages "Roth" in *Operation Shylock*, especially in light of how Pipik intends to use his knowledge and control to push his own agenda.

"Roth" first learns of Pipik's presence in Israel through a news report that Philip Roth was touring Jerusalem for the Demjanjuk trial and lecturing about the benefits of Diasporism – the movement to resettle Europe with Israeli Jews of European background. At first bemused by this news, "Roth" then takes the violation more seriously when he learns the extent of Pipik's intentions in taking on his name and his legacy. Pipik explains, "I took your achievement as my own; if you like, all right, I stole your books. But for what purpose? Once again the Jewish people are at a terrible crossroad. Because of Israel. Because of Israel and the way that Israel endangers us all" (*OS* 81). Pipik's crusade in favor of Diasporism suggests an extreme scenario where Jews preemptively escape Israel before it is destroyed by the Arab conflict. In many ways, Diasporism in *Operation Shylock* functions as the counterlife or "anti-myth" to Henry's call to Zionism in *The Counterlife*, allowing Roth the opportunity to decry both of these ideological extremes by dramatizing how his doppelgängers are falsely implicated within these movements by acts of dangerous misreading.

As a literary celebrity, Roth is a public intellectual in the sense that he is a globally recognized public figure who speaks, or writes, in politically engaged ways.[52] According to Pipik, "Roth's" global celebrity status will provide momentum and support for this cause and he has taken it on his self to fulfil this need:

> Your prestige has been a little wasted on you. There's a lot you haven't done with it that you could have done — a lot of good. That is not a criticism, just a statement of fact. It's enough for you to write — God knows a writer like you doesn't owe anyone any more than that. Of course not every writer is equipped to be a public figure" (*OS* 78).

Roth is already a public figure within popular literary circles but Pipik wants "Roth" to stake a claim outside of the guide of fictional representation and take an active engagement in politics.

At stake for "Roth" if Pipik succeeds in his mission to spread the doctrine of Diasporism is not only his literary reputation but the threat of prosecution or punishment for the extremity of these ideas. By threatening to falsely politicizing his image via his own agenda, Pipik puts the narrative of "Roth's" authorship at risk. According to Foucault, the Author-function describes the impulse to assign ownership to specific narratives and ideas to an individual person within the context of assigning blame. Foucault explains, "Texts, books, and discourses really began to have authors . . . to the extent that authors became subject to punishment, that is, to the extent that discourses could be transgressive" (Foucault 108). Pipik's ideas are certainly transgressive and under the direct investigation of the Israeli Mossad. In attaching "Roth's" name to these extreme ideas in an effort to widen his political platform, he also implicates "Roth" in the offense. Thus, Pipik turns the tables on "Roth" by ruining his legacy and reputation a

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[52] For more on Roth as a public intellectual, see Claudia Franziska Brühwiler's essay "A Reluctant Public Intellectual: Philip Roth in the German-speaking Media" (2014).

similar way to how Henry objects to Zuckerman's false fictionalizations about his life in *The Counterlife*.

Regardless of whether the discourse is presented as a fictionalization (as in *The Counterlife*), as an autobiography (as in *The Facts*), or made under the guise of an impostor (as in *Operation Shylock*) the act of narrativizing historical figures always comes with ethical and juridical implications. The undercover Mossad agent Smilesburger stakes this claim quite directly in the finale of *Operation Shylock*. After advising "Roth" to self-censor his manuscript describing his encounter with Pipik, Smilesburger outlines the extent to which the Mossad will tarnish his legacy if the details of the intelligence operation are published:

> Ruining reputations is no less serious an intelligence operation than destroying nuclear reactors. When they are out to silence a voice they don't like, they know how to accomplish it without the blundering of our Islamic brothers. They don't issue a stupid, barbaric *fatwa* that makes a martyred hero out of the author of a book that nobody can read — they quietly go to work on the reputation instead. (*OS* 396-7)

The allusion to Salman Rushdie here puts into stark perspective two versions of the "death of the author" narrative at stake for "Roth" if he were to publish the complete manuscript. The author's literal death, via a decree like Rushdie's fatwa,[53] only functions to increase the aura of the author's literary capital. Rather, the destruction of "Roth's" image, through "slanderous stories to belittle [his] professional qualifications, derisive reports of [his] business deceptions and [his] perverse aberrations, outraged polemics denouncing [his] moral failings, misdeeds, and faulty character traits" (*OS* 397) and so on, is much more drastic.

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[53] This issue will emerge again in more detail in my account of Rushdie's Verses Affair in Chapter 5.

The rhetoric behind Smilesburger's threat reiterates how the discursive power of public perception can silently poison an author's reputation over time. While Smilesburger's threat is a more direct and intentional consequence, the danger of misreading an author for his characters remains a problem. But, what Roth accomplishes with the exaggerated narrative of Pipik is to decry this method of reading as a fallacy. As John McGill explains, "Roth's metafiction models but also outmaneuvers biographical desire, showing it to itself over and over as if to force its collapse under the burden of its own reflection. Roth's novels suggest that only when readers have given up hope of sorting out fact from invention can they properly join him in his games of improvisation" (McGill 74). By constructing narratives that shift between multiple positions of narrative ownership, Roth's doppelgänger-authors are strategic placeholders for readers to challenge their presumptions about his brand of authorship and reconsider the ethical implications of this kind of misreading.

Conclusion

Early in this chapter I introduced the implied author as an inadequate signifier for Roth's brand of postmodern authorship because it operates on a premise of binary perspectives; the ambiguity of the traditional version of the implied author is rooted in the fact that the figure is an alter-ego generated by either the author's or the reader's implicit narrative authority. Rather than emphasizing either of these positions, I argue that the ambiguity that the implied author provokes presents an opportunity to consider a way of viewing the text that toggles between these two positions dialogically – a conclusion supported by the two different stylometric readings of Roth's and Zuckerman's textual

similarity. As the interstitial figure of the doppelgänger-author shows us, narrative ownership for Roth moves between multiple authorship positions – both real and constructed. And it is exactly this need to shift between multiple theories, registers, and critical lenses that illuminate Roth's theory of the counterlife supports alongside the emergence of his doppelgänger-author.

Whereas Nabokov's use of metalepsis in *Look at the Harlequins!* mimicked the ghastly return of the author as a godlike and controlling figure, Roth's choice to embrace the theory of the counterlife through the formal structure of his works allows him to tow line between the author's complete narrative authority and the effacement of his image within a literary marketplace seeking to make claims upon his image. In many ways, both Roth's and Nabokov's strategic use of their doppelgänger-authors were brazen reactions against what they perceived as false narratives of their authorship. By inserting authorized – but fictionalized – versions of themselves into the body of their works, they are able to control the story. However, as we will see in the next chapter, J.M. Coetzee will willingly embrace this kind of authorial effacement via a creative and sustained treatment of postmodernist allegory.

CHAPTER 4

DUCK OR DUCKOY?:

ALLEGORIES OF AUTHORSHIP IN J.M. COETZEE'S LATE FICTION

Introduction

As a genre, the Nobel prize acceptance speech is autobiographical, topical, and self-reflexive on the institutions of writing and awards. However, while elements of these themes are certainly present within J.M. Coetzee's 2003 acceptance speech (more commonly titled "He and His Man"), they are couched within a fictional third-person narrative. This story starkly reverses the role of authorship between the fictional character Robinson Crusoe and his eighteenth-century author, Daniel Defoe. In this alternative retelling, it is Robin who puts pen to paper and invents a man who travels across England, sending reports on the ducks of Lincolnshire, an execution machine in Halifax, and the plague in London. Ostensibly, Robin's man is the historical Defoe, who worked as a journalist for years and who has written on these precise topics. As a complex allegory of authorship, the story of Robin and "his man" reimagines the boundaries between fictional representation and history. However, for a speech supposedly meant to provide personal insight, reflection, and appreciation for the award bestowed upon him, Coetzee essentially removes himself from the podium. Posing the question, what purpose does Coetzee serve by telling this particular story, in this specific way, and in this exact historical moment?

There are a number of factors at stake in answering this question, such as the distinction between history and fiction, the ambiguous connection between author and

character, and the atmosphere of deception underlying these concerns. In this chapter, I will use a model of allegorical narration to tie these conflicts together and clarify how Coetzee constructs a variety of doppelgängers of his authorship in order to express his uneasy relationship with an international literary network fragmented by awards, strategic marketing, and fame.

Certainly allegory is not a novel concept to apply to Coetzee since many prominent scholars have also used allegory to expand their individual studies of the author. The first book length work of criticism on Coetzee, Theresa Dovey's *The Novels of J.M. Coetzee: Lacanian Allegories* (1988), uses allegory as its dominant critical lens, claiming that Coetzee allegorizes critical theories from poststructuralism to psychoanalysis into the content of his fiction. This model has since inspired a number of articles that read allegories of the body, postcolonial politics, and philosophical constructs in Coetzee's individual works.[54] However, in contrast, Derek Attridge decries the overwhelming tendency of readers to locate theoretical, political, or ethical positions within Coetzee's fiction via allegory. Attridge views allegory as too reductive for a mode of reading since it leaves interpretation stagnant in the realm of the "already known," failing to allow for an engaged reading of Coetzee's literary works (Attridge, *Ethics* 64).

Clearly, there is something about Coetzee and his works that directs his critics to grapple with his use of figurative narration. And yet this assessment is also surprising because, overall, Coetzee writes in fairly stark and detached prose – certainly a far cry

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[54] See Rebecca Saunders' "The Agony and the Allegory: The Concept of the Foreign, the Language of Apartheid, and the Fiction of J. M. Coetzee" (2001). Shadi Neimneh's "The Visceral Allegory of Waiting for the Barbarians: A Postmodern Re-Reading of J. M. Coetzee's Apartheid Novels" (2014), and Stuart Murray's "Allegories of the Bioethical: Reading J.M. Coetzee's Diary of a Bad Year." (2014).

from Nabokov's or Rushdie's lyrical wordplay.[55] Yet it is the complexity seemingly hidden beneath the simplicity of Coetzee's narratives that continually prompts readers to look beyond the pages of his novels. Allegory – the use of figurative symbols or signs to conceal a hidden meaning – therefore functions as an ideal mode for this sort of duality when it comes to reading. Though Attridge has claimed that "[a]llegory cannot handle perhapses" (Attridge, "Against" 76), I argue that the kind of postmodernist allegory in Coetzee's later works revels in this indeterminate space. It is a mode that depends on the literal and realistic world, but allows for the kind of inventive variation characteristic of fictional narration.

This kind of interpretive duality, what Brian McHale calls "hesitation" in relation to postmodernist allegory, is essential to my analysis of Coetzee's various doppelgänger-authors. McHale explains, "All metaphor hesitates between a literal function (in a secondary frame of reference) and a metaphorical function (in a 'real' frame of reference); postmodernist texts often prolong this hesitation as a means of foregrounding ontological structure" (McHale 134). For Coetzee, the prolonged hesitation, what McHale later refers to as a "slow flicker" is characterized by the indeterminacy between Coetzee and his allegorized author-figures (McHale 142). Thus, Coetzee's series of doppelgänger-authors – such as Robin and "His Man" in the Nobel prize speech – revel in the hesitation between the real and the fictional, ultimately calling into question the stability between these boundaries. By expanding localized considerations of allegory to look at Coetzee's oeuvre more globally this chapter, will trace how Coetzee uses doppelgänger-authors to evolve his play with allegory in an effort to negotiate both intra- and extra-textual representations of his own authorship at key stages of his career.

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[55] See Jarad Zimbler's *J. M. Coetzee and the Politics of Style* (2014).

Thus, I return to "He and His Man" since it demonstrates how Coetzee adopts

allegory in response to his uncomfortable position as a consecrated author. Within the

story of Robin and his man is an embedded allegory of trained decoy ducks (or duckoys)

used to lure ducks from other lands to their capture and death:

> And while they are so occupied the decoy-men, the masters of the decoy-ducks, creep into covers or coverts they have built of reeds upon the fens, and all unseen toss handfuls of corn upon the water; and the decoy ducks or duckoys follow them, bringing their foreign guests behind. And so over two or three days they lead their guests up narrower and narrower waterways, calling to them all the time to see how well we live in England, to a place where nets have been spanned. (Coetzee, "He and His Man") [56]

Here, the ducks are a desired product and the duckoys are the mechanisms that collude

with the decoy-men with nets who seek to profit; but allegory allows us to recognize how

a similar kind of system is at play in the literary marketplace. Like the ducks, an author

like Coetzee is a desired product and the act of performing this kind of authorship is

ultimately implicated in economically driven systems of value. Thus, Mark Sanders

categorizes the story of the ducks and duckoys as "striking" since it implicates a number

of problematic conflicts related to literature and literary production, notably "fiction as

deception and betrayal, genocidal betrayal, the beguiling in droves of fellow living

creatures with a view, judging from Defoe's figures, to highly profitable commercial

slaughter" (Sanders 46-7). These are real material questions associated with the demands

of the literary market and the institutions of value that accompany it. Authors are both

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[56] This account is almost a verbatim reenactment of *Daniel Defoe's A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain* (1724-7) but Coetzee structures the retelling of this story not through the author Defoe, but through Robinson Crusoe, the character that Defoe ostensibly created with the publication of his novel in 1719. Coetzee's use of Robinson Crusoe is apropos for a speech that addresses questions of authenticity, authority, and genre, since the initial publication of Robinson Crusoe in the eighteenth-century was similarly clouded with these questions, with early readers attributing the events of the novel to an autobiographical account belonging to Crusoe, a concern that Coetzee revisits meticulously in *Foe* (1986).

desired products and complicit participants within the commercialization of the literary marketplace.

And it is within this economic component in the allegory of the ducks that the problem of Coetzee's uneasy relationship with his brand of authorship becomes palpable. This narrative of commercialization shifts the focus of the acceptance speech away from Coetzee as an individual person to center on the economics surrounding Coetzee's status as an award winning author. The economic value of the Nobel Prize is both explicit and implicit. While the base cost of the gold accompanying the Nobel medal and the monetary award make an immediate impact on an author's economic capital, the symbolic cultural capital as a prizewinner results in increased publication and sales over a lifetime. In winning the Nobel, Coetzee's authorship achieves a new global cultural capital and with it comes the authority and power to reach a broader audience. Here, fiction is aligned with malicious deceit and commercial profit, certainly a jarring assertion for a fabulist like Coetzee to make at a moment when all of these components unite under the ritual of the prize. And so this chapter asks, is Coetzee a duck or a duckoy – or both?

The following sections will address this question by tracing how Coetzee has evolved his use of allegory across his oeuvre as the conditions of his authorship shift within an international public sphere characterized by the opposing demands and assumptions of his various readerships. At stake is a consideration of how Coetzee uses his skills of fictional narration to evade the authority bestowed upon him via celebrity and canonicity while maintaining his cultural capital as a consecrated author. I contend that there is a pattern in Coetzee's use of allegory: while the early novels address questions of

allegorical style and content in relation to Coetzee's strained relationship with his South African readers, the later works introduce the meta-narration of his authorship via allegory in response to the author's increasingly global notoriety and fame. Essentially, allegory becomes a narratological response to the pressures and assumptions about Coetzee's authorship as it evolved from a product in the postcolonial literary marketplace with *Waiting for the Barbarians* and then on a much larger, global, scale with *Disgrace*. I argue that the evolution of Coetzee's various doppelgänger-authors demonstrate how he uses allegory to grapple with the hidden anxieties of these conflicting iterations of his authorship in plain sight.

Postcolonial Allegories: The Specter of Coetzee within South African Letters

Coetzee's complex use of allegory begins with his early novels and their clash with established models of allegory in postcolonial literature. According to Frederic Jameson, postcolonial novels (what he terms "Third-world novels") often "project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society" (Jameson 69).[57] Jameson's assertions represent one of the key reading models of postcolonial studies of the late twentieth-century, namely "the 'national' or regional mode[l] [that] emphasize[s] the distinctive features of a particular national or regional culture" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 15). In other words, effective postcolonial allegory is dependent on the reader being able to discern a specificity of

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[57] For a critique of Jameson's framework, see Aijaz Ahmad's essay, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory'" (1987).

place and history so that the margins can write back to the center in a powerful and effective way.

However, this framework breaks down in Coetzee's early novels since they tend to reflect a non-localized and broader allegory of a postcolonial ideology, eschewing a starkly South African context. For example, in his first novels, *Dusklands* (1974) and *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), Coetzee focuses on a colonial past, beginning with Jacobus Coetzee's travels in then unexplored eighteenth-century South Africa and moving into the uncertain temporality of Magda's life on a Karoo farm, which shifts from the mid-nineteenth-century to the early twentieth-century. The technique of juxtaposing eighteenth-century South Africa with the Vietnam conflict of the 1970s in *Dusklands*, resulted in readers looking outside of the South African nation, or even the African continent, towards a broader interpretation. In her review of Coetzee's *Dusklands*, Ursula A. Barnett claims that this "widening of scope" led readers "to explore the guilt and duty of the individual in the Western world" (Barnett 460). Barnett's assessment here supports Jameson's claims about the "Third-world novel's" inherent allegory but dislocates it from the specifics of South African culture and society. This use of allegory to service a broader colonial context is extended to his next novel, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), where the particulars of the novel's landscape and time period are intentionally obscured.[58] The general ambiguity of Coetzee's early colonial narratives makes it difficult to restrict interpretations to singular events or locations, leaving these texts open to a wide range of interpretations and calling his authority as a postcolonial author into question.

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[58] Though the scenes of physical torture, authoritative abuse, and moral ambiguity of the magistrate in the novel are intentionally situated in an ahistorical country, it is not a far cry to collapse the novel's meaning around the arrest, interrogation, and eventual death of ANC activist Steve Biko in 1977.

It is the more universalized version of postcolonial allegory present within these early works that led some South African reviewers and readers to deride Coetzee's ahistorical settings and anti-realist tendencies as a failure of an engaged and ethical South African authorship. As Sarah Brouillette explains, "the postcolonial author has emerged as a profoundly complicit and compromised figure whose authority rests, however uncomfortably, in the nature of his connection to the specificity of a given political location" (Brouillette 3-4). Coetzee arrived on the South African literary scene in the midst of the already established success of Nadine Gordimer's and André Brink's social realism, where the dramatization of South Africa's racial policies and sordid history motivated political change in the country.[59] In contrast to the unapologetic realism of Gordimer and Brink who authoritatively used fiction to inspire direct action and political change, Coetzee's novels remained tied to the abstract, opening up Coetzee up to criticism from his readers at home.

For example, though *The Life & Times of Michael K* (1983) takes place in a recognizable – but ultimately speculative – future South African landscape where strained racial dynamics have ravaged the landscape of the country, it was infamously derided for relying too much on the allegorical by Nadine Gordimer. In her review-essay of the novel, Gordimer directly critiques the allegorical style of the novel as evidence of a loss of Coetzee's authorial agency over the text. She writes,

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[59] In his Jerusalem Prize Acceptance Speech from 1987, Coetzee laments what he perceives as limitations in South African literature during the apartheid years. He writes, "South African literature is a literature in bondage, as it reveals in even its highest moments, shot through as they are with feelings of homelessness and yearnings for a nameless liberation. It is a less than fully human literature, unnaturally preoccupied with power and the torsions of power, unable to move from elementary relations of contestation, domination, and subjugation to the vast and complex human world that lies beyond them. It is exactly the kind of literature you would expect people to write in prison . . . What prevents the South African writer . . . from writing his way out of a situation in which his art, no matter how well-intentioned, is - and here we must be honest - too slow, too old-fashioned, too indirect to have any but the slightest and most belated effect on the life of the community or the course of history? (Attwell 98-9)

But I believe there is a distinction between the writer's conscious choice of [allegory], and its choice of him/her. In the first instance, loosened by time from ancient sources of myth, magic, and morality, allegory is sometimes snatched from the air to bear aloft a pedestrian imagination or to distance the writer, for reasons of his own, from his subject. In the second instance, allegory is a discovered dimension, the emergence of a meaning not aimed for by the writer but present once the book is written . . . (Gordimer)

Gordimer's view of allegory wavers between two poles of authorial responsibility. First, allegory can be employed as an intentional device to either conceal the author's active engagement with his subject matter or, second, allegory is an organic effect of literary writing that emerges retroactively during the reader's act of interpretation. In this dichotomy, the conscious construction of allegory by an author is less revered than the kind of powerful allegory that emerges despite authorial intention. When it comes to Coetzee's use of allegory in *Michael K*, Gordimer is quick to slate the author into the former camp:

J.M. Coetzee, a writer with an imagination that soars like a lark and sees from up there like an eagle, chose allegory for his first few novels. It seemed he did so out of a kind of opposing desire to hold himself clear of events and their daily, grubby, tragic consequences in which, like everyone else living in South Africa, he is up to the neck, and about which he had an inner compulsion to write. So here was allegory as a stately fastidiousness; or a state of shock. (Gordimer)

Gordimer perceives the lack of direct political engagement in Coetzee's early novels as evidence of his desire to "hold himself clear" of the fray caused by the pressing racial tensions of apartheid era South Africa.

This kind of harsh assessment of Coetzee's intentional abstraction via allegory is understandable within the history of South African letters. Following a largely Marxist political agenda, social realism from the likes of Gordimer, Brink, and their contemporaries, was the dominant mode of literary production within South Africa during the apartheid era. Many have argued that fictional representation, perhaps even

more so than other nonfictional discourses, has had a profound effect on societal change, global feeling, and ethical concerns. The underlying concern for Gordimer, and other localized South African readers, is a question of authorial responsibility. For instance, a fleeting review of *Waiting for the Barbarians* in *The African Communist* refers to the novel as "a bleak and intense piece of writing, devoid of any militant message" (105). Allegory was not embraced by Coetzee's South African readers because it was unable to do the social work of realistic representation within a contemporary postcolonial conflict.

But, elsewhere, Coetzee was lauded for his skills of abstraction. David Attwell argues that Coetzee's brand of authorship is intrinsically linked with his strained position between these two poles of readers: "those registering claims of political resistance and historical representation . . . and those responsive to postmodernism and poststructuralism" (Attwell 2). Case and point, Paul Abelman in *The Spectator* praises *Waiting for the Barbarians* for its "varying levels of abstraction" and the novel's ability to "communicate to the Russian field commanders in Afghanistan just as it would have carried a message for British proconsuls, Roman provincial governors or American cavalrymen subjugating the Indians" (21). Essentially, abstraction via allegorical form allows Coetzee to be read outside of a strictly South African context – a desirable outcome for an author who, from the beginning of his career as a writer was especially cognizant of the cultural capital offered by publication outside of his home nation. Coetzee did not "wan[t] to be branded as a writer from the colonies" (Kannemeyer 234).[60] As Salman Rushdie has argued most persuasively, the label of "commonwealth

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[60] Coetzee's placement within the realm of South African letters has been periodically contested after the author's emigration to Australia in 2002. This event "set off an open-ended argument on the role South African authors play in the global cultural imaginary" (Popescu). Despite the critiques of South African nationalists who attempt to reject what they perceive as Coetzee's noncommittal attitude toward

literature" at the time Coetzee broke into the literary market was fraught with pejorative connotations. Furthermore, while the anti-apartheid South African press Ravan initially depicted Coetzee as a literary spokesperson for the nation, moving *Dusklands* to British publisher Secker & Warburg "allowed him to present himself as a novelist 'pure and simple'" (Kannemeyer 290). It seems that Coetzee always wanted to view himself as a *novelist*, rather than a South African novelist.

And yet, there is nothing simple about Coetzee's representation of himself as a novelist – either in South Africa or abroad. Aware of the critical division between "his hostile local public and a more sympathetic global audience" Coetzee widened the scope of his allegory in order to address the inherent contradictions within his brand of authorship (Brouillette 113). In allegorizing the public perception of his authorship in his series of memoir-novels, Coetzee challenges traditional conceptions of autobiographical self-narration and strains the division between fiction and history.

<center>Autobiographical Allegories: Scenes from Provincial Life</center>

The fine line between the autobiographical construction and fictional representation has been addressed explicitly in Coetzee's three memoir-novels, *Boyhood* (1997), *Youth* (2002), and *Summertime* (2009). [61] This series was published as a completed set by Penguin in 2011 under the title *Scenes from Provincial Life* (Coetzee's

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the nation of his birth, according to the Anglo-American literary and scholarly community, Coetzee continues to be referred to, introduced, and taught as a South African novelist.

[61] I have decided to refer to the works contained with *Scenes from Provincial Life* as "memoir-novels" because I feel it most accurately describes the troubled division within the novel and memoir categories, which I take up at length in this section. As a point of support, Penguin has marketed the collection under "Fiction/Memoir" whereas the Library of Congress subject heading lists it as "Autobiographical Fiction." Coetzee himself prefers "autrebiography". As a means of simplification, all quotations will derive from the collected edition.

original subtitles for *Boyhood* and *Youth*), indicating the alleged completeness of the collection and likely dovetailing off the commercial success of the memoir genre overall. Each of these memoir-novels fictionalize specific stages in Coetzee's life, beginning with his upbringing and early schooling in Worcester, his stint in London working for IBM, and finally his return to South Africa while seeking teaching employment after the publication of his first novel. While it is clear that the kernels of the events and characters in these works derive from Coetzee's own life and experiences, the novels that make up *Scenes from Provincial Life* are far from traditional autobiographies or memoirs. Rather, Coetzee has taken explicit care to obscure the reader's ability to make definitive truth claims about his life. Therefore, it is my contention that the memoir-novels contained within *Scenes from Provincial Life* offer a symbolic narrative of Coetzee's life in response to the conditions and constraints put on his authorship, from the demands of the literary market, the canon, and his own burgeoning celebrity.

What regales the memoir-novels to the realm of figurative narration is their unconventional narrative technique. Whereas the traditional memoir or autobiography is often characterized by use of a strong first-person voice and past tense, *Boyhood* and *Youth* are instead drafted in the third-person and present tense. While Coetzee is not the first to pen a memoir devoid of I-narration,[62] the uncomfortable ambiguity of present tense truly invites allegory into the act of life writing. If "[h]ermeneutic anxiety and interpretive play are allegory's primary aesthetic effects" then the ambiguous narration of the memoir-novels certainly meet these requirements (Teskey 37). By using a distinct third-person narrator to filter the experiences of "John," Coetzee maintains a significant

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[62] In fact, Salman Rushdie also uses third-person in his memoir, but to a different effect, as I will describe in Chapter 5.

distance between himself and his doppelgänger-author without completely eschewing this connection. In contrast, this distance is shattered by the use of present tense, which creates both immediacy and intimacy. Monica Fludernick points out that present tense has become "particularly popular in figural narrative situations" (Fludernick 51), which accounts for why Coetzee returns to this mode in the memoir-novels. This combination of narrational techniques – what I call autobiographical allegorical narration – both works within an autobiographical tradition while also challenging its boundaries.

The question is, what rhetorical purpose does Coetzee fulfill by composing his memoirs in the third-person? According to Coetzee, this mode of ambiguous narration is an intentional act, claiming that to write in the first-person would alter the works completely: "I can only say that to rewrite *Boyhood* or *Youth* with *I* substituted for *he* throughout would leave you with two books only remotely related to their originals. This is an astonishing fact, yet any reader can confirm it within a few pages" (Coetzee, "Autre-biography" 216). In another interview with David Attwell, Coetzee also admits to feeling restricted by the "impasse of [his] own monologue" (Attwell 19). And finally, Coetzee's coinage of the category of "autre-biography" relies on the failure of traditional autobiography to "not usually give [authors] room to reflect on themselves" (Attwell 18). Thus, Coetzee prefers to cultivate a version of autobiographical authorship that highlights other voices in addition to his own. The use of third-person in the memoirs allows Coetzee to evade the restrictiveness of monologic authorship via literary narration and to position himself within the already established community of his readers. Benjamin Ogden sees this mode of narration as a means for Coetzee to "include himself in a group of readers he would otherwise be excluded from" (Ogden, "Coming" 471). This hyper-

awareness for the problem of extra-textual authorial reception in Coetzee's memoir-novels is perpetuated by the role of public response to his authorship within the literary marketplace.

For example, in the final installment of the memoir series, *Summertime*, Coetzee uses metafiction in order to explicitly interrogate these anxieties. As the most explicitly fictionalized of the memoir-novels collection, *Summertime* follows a biographer, Vincent, as he sifts through the author's notebooks and interviews people close to the deceased John Coetzee. However, while the premise of *Summertime* revels in the poststructuralist victory of the literal death of the author, the notebooks reveal the author's continued, or at least intended, project of self-fashioning. Initially the italicized notes accompanying notebook entries appear to be the ongoing work of the biographer, containing instructions such as: "*To be expanded on: his readiness to throw himself into half-baked projects; the alacrity with which he retreats from creative work into mindless industry*" (*SPL* 290). However, it is later revealed that these notes were the work of the character John Coetzee himself, perhaps as placeholders for his next project. Vincent explains: "*No, Coetzee wrote them himself. They are memos addressed to himself. He wrote them in 1999 or 2000, when he was thinking of reworking his diaries as a book. He later dropped the idea*" (*SPL* 299). This kind of allegorical autobiographical representation calls attention to the various ways the self is constructed by forces and phenomena outside of the author's control. The metafictional gesture of referring to the process of compiling a book (whether it was intended to be fiction or a memoir, we have no way of knowing) out of these individual journal entries represents how Coetzee's project of authorial self-

fashioning is intrinsically committed to the desires, expectations, and procedures of the literary marketplace.

For instance, the strategic marketing of the memoir-novels demonstrate how the pressures and demands of the literary marketplace contributed to the fictionalization of Coetzee's authorship. Though *Boyhood* was originally released with the subtitle *A Memoir*, once Coetzee's novels began to constitute a certain level of artistry, the explicitly autobiographical paratextual information was softened. Shifting the generic label of *Youth* toward fiction results in the expansion of Coetzee's cultural capital across two separate readership groups within the literary marketplace. Even though memoir may have grown in prestige, the novel continues to top the literary market, at least in relation to how experts determine canonicity within the university and other elite circles. Novels, due to their use of figurative and literary language, invite more academic scholarship, cultivating a more refined readership compared to traditional forms of life writing that tend to favor middle-brow or casual readers.[63] Dominic Head points out that the publication of *Youth* (2002) under the label of novel was likely an effect of "opportunistic marketing" in order to capitalize on the international success of *Disgrace* (1999) (Head 9). After *Disgrace* Coetzee was catapulted into a new tier of canonical authorship – his novels were quickly added to university syllabi across the world and he won his second Booker prize in 1999. Essentially, after *Disgrace* Coetzee's cultural capital and influence as an author dramatically increased, so the branding of his works needed to perpetuate a similar level of prestige. Writing ambiguously hybridized autobiographical novels over

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[63] Of course, this assumption has since been challenged by the growing field of life writing studies during the past few decades.

straightforward memoir helped facilitate this image since it fulfills the kind of epistemological and ontological instability favored by the postmodernist elite.

Thus, both the narrational style and the marketing of the memoir-novels demonstrate how Coetzee uses allegory as a tool to negotiate his cultural capital within the literary marketplace. David Herman claims that "in autobiographical contexts, an allegory is a specific kind of self-construction; it is the construction of a self chosen over other selves and in response to conditions and constraints that those other (possible) selves would be incapable, or less capable, of negotiating" (Herman 352). An implicit assumption behind Herman's claim here is that autobiographical self-construction is a reactionary response to the multiplicity of possible selves that proliferate from different sociohistorical contexts and conditions. The doppelgänger-author John Coetzee is not J.M. Coetzee – but the allegorization of autobiographical narration means that he could be. Allegory, in this sense, requires interpretive flexibility, as Michael Titlestad explains:

> Rather than an ossified system of mechanical correspondences, allegory is potentially an ongoing dialogue between individual authors and the history of meaning and difference they inherit. Since . . . allegorical formations reflect imbedded power relations, these appropriations and revisions can be considered political. (Titlestad 229)

What is politically at stake for Coetzee is the sense that the brand of celebrity authorship thrust upon him after *Disgrace* begins to challenge his individual sense of control over this narrative. In the next section, I will address how Coetzee's late fiction pushes back against the political and economic trappings associated with his burgeoning brand of his authorship by allegorizing the anxieties of literary fame and prestige.

Allegories of Anxiety: *Elizabeth Costello*

While Coetzee has used writer-figures within his various fictions and introduced

doppelgänger-authors into his series of memoir-novels, it was not until *Elizabeth Costello*

(2008) that his characters became so directly embroiled with his own performance of

authorship. This may be surprising, since on the surface, the fictional author Elizabeth

Costello maintains few significant autobiographical markers with Coetzee since she is an

aging Australian novelist (Coetzee's chosen nation of residence at the time of the novel's

publication) who has achieved international fame. However, while the lines of

demarcation between Costello and Coetzee seem bare in regards to gender, biographical

history, and specific publication details,[64] Coetzee's unique method of staging Costello is

allegorical of a brand of celebrity authorship that performs across genres and disciplines

in order to entice and intrigue international reading communities.

On the surface *Elizabeth Costello* appears to be a literal representation of an

author negotiating the very real conditions of the literary marketplace. In the first chapter

"On Realism," Costello visits the fictional Altona College in Pennsylvania to receive an

award for being a "major world writer" (*EC* 2). Sarah Brouillette argues that speaking

tours and other promotional activities, such as Costello's, contribute to the

commercialization of the literary field and the growing need to trace "interconnected

spheres of authorial anxiety and self-articulation" (Brouillette 62). One of the most

significant spheres of influence appropriating Costello is the field of academic criticism:

"In the past decade there has grown up around her a small critical industry; there is even

an Elizabeth Costello Society, based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, which puts out a

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[64] Costello is well known for her retelling of James Joyce's *Ulysses* from Molly Bloom's
perspective in *The House on Eccles Street*. Similarly, Coetzee retells Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*
through his female protagonist Susan Barton, in *Foe* (1986).

quarterly Elizabeth Costello Newsletter" (*EC* 2). What these details reveal are the

trappings of literary celebrity and canonical authorship for Costello – unfettered

recognition, obligation, and the inability to fully detach herself from the frame of her

previous work. To Costello, this is an exhausting and ultimately meaningless enterprise,

though her son John attempts to reassure her: "'It is the only way they have,' he says as

gently as he can. 'They admire you, they want to honor you. It is the best ways they can

think of doing that. Giving you money. Broadcasting your name. Using the one to do the

other'" (*EC* 3). The implication of the cycle between monetary awards and fame is

significant here because it highlights the capitalistic motivations of the literary

marketplace and the need to market, proliferate, and praise authors, not simply for the

ethics, influence, or merit of their ideas, but for the image they produce.

But what shifts this literal account of Costello maneuvering the trappings of the

commercialized literary marketplace toward the figurative realm is the way that this

narrative is referentially dependent on an already existent text. Gary Johnson categorizes

Elizabeth Costello as an *interdependent embedded allegory*:

> an intertextual figural narrative, one that an author borrows from another author
> and embeds in his or her own story. These embedded allegories are changed and
> often reinvigorated in their new narrative surroundings, but they also remain tied
> to - and to some extent defined by - their original context. (Johnson 81)

Rather than borrowing from another author, Coetzee borrows from his nonfictional

oeuvre. The Elizabeth Costello narrative exists across multiple genres: first with the

publication of some of Coetzee's nonfictional essays, the repetition of selections from

these essays using Elizabeth Costello in the flesh-and-blood performance of the Tanner

lectures (1997) at Princeton University, the publication of this performance with the

addition of expert commentary in *The Lives of Animals* (1999) collection, and finally, the

2008 novel, *Elizabeth Costello*. On its own, this recapitulation of the various stages

Elizabeth Costello took on its path to publication forms a narrative of the winding

pathway between inspiration, conception, and publication that a writer endures.

But, it also demonstrates how *Elizabeth Costello* functions as a narrativized

allegory of the trappings of Coetzee's brand of celebrity and canonical authorship.

Johnson claims that manifestations of allegory in contemporary fiction "metamorphoses a

real (possibly historical) phenomenon into a narrative structure" (Johnson 10). The

"phenomenon" which Johnson refers to is a placeholder for "nearly anything – an idea, a

historical event, a lesson or moral, a situation or predicament, or even a previous

narrative" (Johnson 10). The key for Johnson is that allegory signals a kind of

transformation and repackaging of subject via narrative. Contemporary allegory relies on

the diegetic act. This kind of model works exceptionally well for *Elizabeth Costello* since

the various retellings and repackagings of the Costello narrative demonstrate how an

allegory of authorship can transform within 'different contexts and generic conditions.

So, as the text of "Elizabeth Costello" travels, from the spoken lectures, to the

nonfictional collection of essays contained in *Lives of Animals*, and finally to its fictional

narrativization in the novel, so too does the reader's ability to follow these various

iterations. Derek Attridge favors this model as one that embraces the "event" of reading:

"I treat [the text] as something that comes into being only in the process of understanding

and responding that I, as an individual reading in a specific time and place, conditioned

by a specific history, go though" (Attridge, *Ethics* 39). In other words, the meaning of the

Elizabeth Costello narrative shifts as the text is performed within different situations,

locations, and times. The rehearsed aspect of the "oral speech" is disrupted by the

composed fictionality of the Elizabeth Costello frame. Each reader's individual situation

changes as the text of Elizabeth Costello is engendered in different genres and contexts.

And as the Costello text moves through different events of reading, so too does

J.M. Coetzee. As a doppelgänger-author, Costello engenders a profound moment of

postmodernist "hesitation." Barbara Dancygier refers to this as a moment of interpretive

"blending":

> What the text invites us to do is merge the two spaces, so that authorship is now
> attributed to the blended identity of someone sharing Coetzee's and (so to speak)
> Costello's roles. The blend profiles an identity which is neither the real author nor
> the fictitious author, but has crucial characteristics of both of them. (Dancygier
> 236)

The novelization of the character was the final step in Coetzee's process of framing, and

re-framing, his brand celebrity authorship as it is conceived within the public sphere.

And so, since Elizabeth Costello is an allegory for the kind of interpretive process

authors, and readers, must negotiate as they attempt to lay claim to Coetzee as an author,

what is revealed in the novel is a profoundly bleak narrative of authorial erasure. As

Attridge contends, Elizabeth Costello's authorship becomes much more than a literary

device, but

> a means toward a profound self-examination on the part of Coetzee, a testing of,
> and by, the obligations and temptations faced by the literary writer. The reader,
> moreover, is not a spectator of this process, but a participant, since the event of
> reading cannot be separated from the event of writing. (Attridge, *Ethics* 200)

Essentially, once authors such as Elizabeth Costello achieve fame and global recognition

with a public sphere, the image of that author enters into a feedback-loop cultivated by

the public's reception and assumptions about the author and her works – and, ironically,

the author herself begins to lose discursive power. The Elizabeth Costello Society in

Albuquerque, for instance, is one example of how the "small critical industry" around

Costello begins to eclipse the author. So, while the culture of awards and speaking appearances which Costello participates in appear like pocket industries, Michael Köchin expands on the implications of creating such an audience on a global scale:

> An author of world stature, that is to say one with significant international sales, is authorized by this success at creating a world audience to address the condition of that audience, the human condition. . . . Nevertheless, we should not think of such an author as one who is beyond or has outgrown national cultural institutions, but simply as writing within international or globalized cultural institutions. (Köchin 81)

In speaking publically about humanistic concerns, such as the rights of animals and the ethical implications of representation of atrocious acts in literature, and with the loci of her fame being based in a feminist and revisionist history of a global modernist classic – Costello's *The House on Eccles Street* for Joyce's *Ulysses* – Costello's works and public appearances invite academic criticism and intellectual discussion on a global stage.

Thus, much of the emotional and intellectual conflict in *Elizabeth Costello* revolves around the author's various struggles to satisfy the expectations and desires of the audiences she is thrust upon, a sentiment perhaps more saliently reflected in Costello's allegorical reading of Kafka's Red Peter at Altona College:

> 'This is the situation in which I appear before you. I am not, I hope, abusing the privilege of this platform to make idle, nihilistic jokes about what I am, ape or woman, and what you are, my auditors. That is not the point of the story, say I, who am, however, in no position to dictate what the point of the story is. There used to be a time, we believe, when we could say who we were. Now we are just performers speaking our parts. The bottom has dropped out. . . .[I]t is hard to have respect for whatever was the bottom that dropped out – it looks to us like an illusion now, one of those illusions sustained only by the concentrated gaze of everyone in the room. Remove your gaze for but an instant, and the mirror falls to the floor and shatters.' (*EC* 19-20)

Costello's appeal here brashly reveals how the "concentrated gaze" of a growing, and ultimately global, set of "auditors" contribute to the gradual loss of her authority. The

illusion that is so easily shattered becomes the simple admission that Costello, though she has been on a platform of fame and authority, is essentially "in no position to dictate the point of the story" in response to the collective discursive power of a global audience. Essentially, the authorial audience has usurped the discursive power of the author.

Costello is able to wax poetic on the shattered mirror of the author's discursive agency because the long course of her career has allowed her to see the forest for the trees. The tone of many of the various essays, dialogues, and reflections contained within the later chapters of *Elizabeth Costello* project a pessimistic view of authorship, the novel, and the role of the humanities in general. As Derek Attridge points out, "It is important . . . that Costello is an elderly, successful writer: a writer at the stage of her life at which the big questions, set aside in the rush of an early career, come to haunt her" (Attridge, *Ethics* 200). Attridge's observation demonstrates how the continued cultivation of Costello's, and likewise Coetzee's, authority is primarily an effect of the constantly evolving process of canon formation. Costello is hyper-aware of the importance of canonicity in regards to her own visibility and legacy of a writer, so much so that the novel that found her fame was situated in dialogue with one of the masterpieces of modernist literature. However, while the power of the humanities helped introduce a younger Costello to a larger and more elite global audience, she has since begun to doubt the influence of these supposedly established institutions. Essentially, Costello's various speeches gradually become revised allegories of the postmodernist "death-of-the-author" conceit, a concern that is more explicitly taken up in the novel's final pages.

During the Kafkaesque finale of the novel, Elizabeth Costello finds herself in a kind of third-space between the living world and what appears to be some kind of

afterlife. Such a setting is especially significant in that it reinvigorates the problem of genre categorization in light of the layered text of *Elizabeth Costello*. "At the Gate" was not previously performed by Coetzee in a nonfictional context; however, since the majority of the essays that precede this chapter were, the finale of the novel retains a veil of "hesitation" between fiction and nonfiction. While these two categories are often thought to be in opposition to each other, Coetzee's framing of *Elizabeth Costello* forces us to starkly reconsider the relationship between these genres.

The fraught nature of the dichotomy between fiction and nonfiction is embodied by Costello's misguided attempts to pass through the gate. She struggles to make an acceptable statement of belief; her decision to frame her response solely in relation to her profession becomes an obstacle: "'I cannot afford to believe.' 'For professional reasons'" (*EC* 201). Costello claims that her profession as a writer makes her merely "a secretary of the invisible" (*EC* 199), a conduit through which the voices and beliefs of others are recorded. This assertion recalls Costello's loss of authority in response to the discursive power of her readers and followers, but it also insinuates what many critics claim to be Coetzee's motivations in using Costello as a placeholder, or voice, for his own beliefs. This assumption is part of the fallacy of the doppelgänger-author caused by Coetzee's allegory of *Elizabeth Costello*. In creating a fictional allegory of the conditions of contemporary global authorship through Costello, Coetzee defamiliarizes the fraught and largely "invisible" relationship between authorship, the genre of fiction, and the act of reading.

Costello's description of herself as "a secretary of the invisible" becomes a way for Coetzee to articulate that narrative authority in fiction is always mediated. This

mediation comes from the conventions of genre, the predisposed desires and assumptions of readers within an establish coterie, and is even, at times, built into the text at the sentence level, a sentiment perhaps best represented by Costello's jarring transition to thinking of herself in the third-person narration:

> Her books teach nothing, preach nothing; they merely spell out, as clearly as they can, how people lived in a certain time and place. More modestly put, they spell out how one person lived, one among billions: the person whom she, to herself, calls *she*, and whom others call *Elizabeth Costello*. If, in the end, she believes in her books themselves more than she believes in that person, it is belief only in the sense that a carpenter believes in a sturdy table or a cooper in a stout barrel. Her books are, she believes, better put together than she is (*EC* 207-8)

Like the memoir-novels that came before, the narrative slips into an extended free-indirect discourse, a voice that is difficult to distinguish from either character, narrator, or author, and what Ann Banfield has designated as style that most disrupts the communicative function of language. The effect of this narrative technique is coupled with the sentiment that Costello's books are more cohesive and believable than her personal identity. And so, the final pages of *Elizabeth Costello* underscore, both thematically and narratively, how narrative authority is ultimately determined by the proliferation of interpretive authority beyond what can be controlled by a singular author – a consequence that is dramatized explicitly in the formal presentation of Coetzee's *Diary of a Bad Year* (2008).

Allegories of Authority: *Diary of a Bad Year*

The kind of allegorical intertextuality characterized by *Elizabeth Costello* is taken

to new extremes in the formal presentation of *Diary of a Bad Year*. Following JC,[65] an

ex-patriot South African novelist living in Australia seemingly at the end of his career

and life, *Diary* introduces another one of Coetzee's doppelgänger-authors with only slight

ties to his biography. Commissioned to write a collection of reflective essays on the state

of the world for a German publisher, JC's manuscript of "Strong Opinions" inhabits the

first half of the page. Following these essays (on such topics as democracy, avian

influenza, Guantanamo Bay, etc.), the page is divided to reveal what is assumed to be

JC's internal thoughts on an attractive woman in his building, later revealed to be named

Anya. Next, once this arrangement is initiated, the page is further divided to reveal

Anya's point of view on both JC and his writings. This tripartite division is at first

explained by a simple plot: JC is intrigued by Anya and eventually commissions her to

type the manuscript of his short essays and the divisions record two separate personal

reflections on this relationship. However, I contend that the stylistic effect of the

divisions is a larger allegory for the problem of discursive authority as it is fragmented

across multiple readership positions.

The tripartite division of the pages of *Diary of a Bad Year* mimics various

discursive levels in order to allegorize the back-and-forth dialogue negotiated between

text, author, and authorial audience. Though these discursive positions exist on different

levels, the reader's attempt to grapple with these three positions simultaneously reflects

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[65] While this character is addressed by a number of names throughout the novel, for instance Anya's predominant use of Senor C, I've chosen to use "JC" since this is the form of address the character uses to address himself (*DBY* 123).

the kind of contradiction and variation in interpretation that results from the experience of celebrity and canonical authorship, such as Coetzee's, within the larger literary marketplace.

The influence of the literary marketplace is best represented in how *Diary of a Bad Year* challenges conventional methods of consuming literary narrative. This tripartite division positions the reader in a tentative position where they must decide on what narrative frame to consider first. Reading top to bottom allows for the juxtaposition of each distinct section, from JC's exegesis, to his reflections on Anya, to Anya's thoughts on JC and his writings. Alternatively, the reader may prefer a more linear narrative, choosing to read each section individually, and postponing consideration of the other sections until the completion of one whole. In this way, the reader is tasked with breaking down the mechanical representation of the three separate narratives in an attempt to forge a sense of unity. In focusing on the reader's ability to create unity and meaning out of the text, rather than relying on the assumptions or pronouncements of an author, the stylistic structure of *Diary of a Bad Year* similarly prompts a reconsideration of the relationship between author and reader.

This concern is grappled with explicitly in the thirteenth essay of JC's Strong Opinions: "On Authority in Fiction." JC writes: "in the novel, the voice that speaks the first sentence, then the second, and so onward – call it the voice of the narrator – has, to begin with, no authority at all. Authority must be earned; on the novelist author lies the onus to build up, out of nothing, such authority" (*DBY* 149). JC goes on to cite Tolstoy as an exemplary master of this kind of discursive power, one of the nineteenth-century masters of realism on which Barthes and other poststructuralists focused their efforts to

dismantle the authority of authorship. However, JC's definition is rooted in the assumption that narrative authority is housed in the voice of the narrator. While the "novelist author" is tasked with the ability to construct a credible narratological position of authority, through rhetorical methods (likely inspired by nineteenth-century realism such as Tolstoy's), this kind of definition does not satisfy the unique textual style of *Diary of a Bad Year*. Rather, since Coetzee's novel utilizes three separate narrating voices, it therefore contains three separate instances of narrative authority. Thus, the novel allegorizes the myth of narrative authority by fostering a reading condition that acknowledges various socio-historical readerly positions within an already established system of value and consecration.

Each individual narrative contained within *Diary of a Bad Year* constructs diverse narratological subject positions by way of different genre forms. These positions represent separate levels of narrative authority: the authoritative "author" presented in JC's manuscript of "Strong Opinions"; JC's non-professional diary reflections; Anya's reflections as an outside "reader" of JC and his text. As opposed to the nineteenth-century convention employed by Tolstoy, there is no overarching narrator or author-figure in the text to make meaning out of these disparate texts; rather, it is the task of the reader to consider how each division acts as both a response and an independent text, revealing the interconnectedness of the feedback loop of communication that exists between readers, authors, and the physical text within Coetzee's fictional representation. Thus, the stylistic design of *Diary of a Bad Year*'s narrative allegorizes how narrative authority operates on a continuum formed by the dialogic relationship between an author's various public statements (fictional, autobiographical, or academic) discourses and the public response

(Dawson 236). The textual layout of the page creates clear divisions between separate

reading events – from the event of composition, reader response, and revision – into the

novel. By tracing moments of intersection between these different discourses, we can see

how each of these subject positions ultimately challenge each other's authority.

The first narratological position of authority constructed within *Diary of a Bad*

Year is the professional discourse of JC's manuscript of the essays that make up the

"Strong Opinions" collection. As we have already seen via the allegory of Elizabeth

Costello, celebrity authorship, such as JC's, depends upon the proliferation of literary

value influenced by multiple institutional factors including the communication circuit that

exists between literary producers, readers, the market, and academic institutions. JC's

specific brand of literary authorship has been influenced and affected by his ability to

recognize the importance of these multiple fields of literary influence and production. JC

has already built up authority as a literary celebrity through publishing and gaining

international recognition for *Waiting for the Barbarians*.[66] Furthermore, as a published

author and critic, JC is entitled to the credibility and authority attached to the academic

literary institution.

Both of these positions of authority function to reinforce JC as a contemporary

canonical figure as well as broaden the scope of his influence across a variety of reading

communities, both within the academy, the institution, and the wider public sphere. As

we have already seen, Coetzee recognized the importance of marketing his authorship

outside of the restricted local field of South African writing from the very beginnings of

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[66] The authorial audience aware of Coetzee's extra-textual presence as an author will immediately
perk up their ears at this reference to the novel that first propelled Coetzee onto the international literary
scene. This referential detail, though minor and presented off-hand, fosters the kind of "hesitation" between
ontological levels that Brian McHale refers to in postmodernist allegory (McHale 134).

his literary career. Similarly, by publishing his thoughts internationally, JC's writings participate in constructing a specific kind of global intellectual authority. Though some of his essays touch on issues local to Australia, such as political asylum and anti-terrorist legislation in the country (*DBY* 111, 19), JC also ruminates on federal elections in Canada (*DBY* 121), the historical relevance of Tony Blair (*DBY* 125), and the legacy of raiding in South Africa (*DBY* 103). His status as a published and award winning novelist and the authority of his cosmopolitan status as a South African ex-patriate living in Australia make JC's thoughts on the world, his Nabokovian "Strong Opinions," valued enough by his German publisher to be marketed to not only an intelligent audience, but a global one. JC supports a dominant capitalistic ideological system that assigns value to those that can produce profitable commodity. Therefore, within this context, though there is no primary narrator to top the hierarchy of voices in the novel, the authoritative voice becomes the one associated with consecration and publication within the literary marketplace.

However, JC's established authority is challenged by the fact that the larger "Strong Opinions" collection is not the organic creation of JC himself, but merely a contribution to a commissioned multi-authored work. JC explains: "The book itself is the brainchild of a publisher in Germany. Its title will be *Strong Opinions*. The plan is for six contributors from various countries to say their say on any subjects they choose, the more contentious the better. Six eminent writers pronounce on what is wrong with today's world" (*DBY* 21). This background on the project disrupts the unity of JC's authorship as well as his authority in a number of circuitous ways. For instance, the origin of the volume's idea is located in the German publisher, not JC or the other "eminent writers." This imbues Bruno Geistler, a publisher at the publishing house Mittwoch Verlag, with a

certain level of authority for generating the collection's "brainchild." However, failing to have the authority of the canon or of international celebrity himself, the German publisher's real "brainchild" in regards to this project is the attempt to consolidate already consecrated agents of literary authority in one location – one work – in order to validate the authority of the publication house, meet the demands of global literary readership who make up this market, and assure profits. The somewhat contrived nature of the collection situates it within a marketplace that perpetuates a cyclical system of value by banking on the capitalistic profit of already established conventions, recognizable names, and swift marketability.

Essentially, the "Strong Opinions" collection is constructed to easily satisfy the assumptions and demands of an already predisposed international audience of public intellectuals. The co-authored and overly designed nature of the collection make it a literary product rather than a valued contribution to literature; JC at one point differentiates the collection as a "miscellany . . . not like a novel, with a beginning and a middle and an end" (*DBY* 54), an act that significantly reduces the literary heft of the work. This strategic layering of authority in the premise behind the "Strong Opinions" volume satirizes the kind of layering within the tripartite division in *Diary of a Bad Year*, where reader, author, and product vie for narratological authority.

The second division of the novel that contains JC's informal diary reflections reveals that he is self-reflexively aware of the privilege of his authorial position, and wary of the tentative nature of authorial prestige, not just for himself, but also the other contributors to the volume. In this way, the instability of authority suggested by both the premise of the collection and the overall stylistic form of the novel is problematized

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further by the co-authored nature of the "Strong Opinions" collection. JC reflects on the constructed "onus" of the contributors' authority: "Here we are, six *éminences grises* who have clawed our way up the highest peak, and now that we have reached the summit what do we find? Is this all?" (*DBY* 22). By referring to himself and his fellow authors as "*éminences grises*," JC undermines his authority and his text by revealing the tenuous nature of his subject position. The power and influence of a "grey eminence" – or, to use Alan's (Anya's partner's) derogatory invocation of "guru" from later in the novel (*DBY* 208) – is ultimately imaginary, solely constructed to assign arbitrary value to mature members of intellectual society. Having reached the "summit" of his authority, JC wonders if such an effort resulted in any true personal satisfaction or notable change in the world. Essentially, he recognizes that his authorial relationship with his readers is ultimately based on an imaginary construction.

The fantasy of a relationship with his readers is reflected further in JC's attempts to forge a connection with his neighbor Anya. JC's thoughts on Anya are at first superficial commentary on her physical appearance and the "ache, a metaphysical ache" that her presence evokes (*DBY* 7). The layering of these pseudo-voyeuristic comments below an essay on the rebirth of the German state after World War II is startling to say the least. Jane Poyner claims that the divided narratives and contradictory generic modes ultimately threaten the ethical imperative of JC's authority as a public intellectual: "[JC]'s lascivious fantasies about Anya….inserted directly below his thoughts 'on the origins of the state', on the questions of citizenry and subjecthood, certainly threaten to test the moral high-ground he takes in his public interventions, or at least mark a clear division between them" (Poyner 172). This division between the "high-ground" of JC's

essayistic prose contrasted with the private, largely uncensored, articulation of the male gaze in his diary reflections demonstrates how an author such as JC is inevitably divided between multiple fields of authorial identification. These fields may be divided by genre – the public essay versus the private diary – but they are also contingent on how the author also constructs various states of selfhood in regards to authorship.

JC's concern about his effect on his readers is substantiated in the final division of *Diary of a Bad Year* that contains Anya's, and later Alan's, perspective. Tasked to type up a manuscript of JC's recorded dictations and handwritten notes, Anya's narrative symbolizes the event of reading JC's "Strong Opinions" and suggests the variety of ways the text could be interpreted across multiple audiences. While it is impossible to record or imagine all of the reactions or experiences of a global readership, Anya's narrative level functions as an allegory for the kind of dialogic interchange that accompanies the spectrum of reader response. While Mittwoch Verlag will likely approve of and distribute JC's opinions without much criticism due to the system of literary value that already consecrated him as an authoritative author, in contrast, Anya and Alan openly offer their separate critiques.

In one of Anya's reflections, for example, Anya reiterates the issues of JC's authority as a writer: "His credentials? His diploma? The license that allows him to practice? I didn't know you needed a license to practice as a writer. I thought it was just something you did if you had the knack" (*DBY* 47). This comment revisits the anxieties associated with the cultivation of authority where the apparatus, or "credentials," of his esteem are ultimately hollow or symbolic. Anya's position outside of the literary institution allows her to critique the systems that hold such institutions in place. Anya

does not recognize the value of diplomas or licenses; rather she bases her understanding of authorship on the presence of an inherent and organic "knack." Of course, JC does not require a formal "license" for his authorship; rather, the document that ushers him into the coterie of international literary authority is his (and Coetzee's) bestseller, *Waiting for the Barbarians.*

While Anya views the authority of authorship as something organically grown, her partner Alan focuses much more on the economic aspect of JC's authorship – especially when it comes to JC's right to profit from his bestseller. It is this component of authority – JC's economic success – that fans the flames of the betrayal plot in the novel, providing much needed action and structure to the reflections and events contained within the diary sections. The idea that JC is financially at risk due to his notoriety as author introduces a counterpoint to Costello's version of literary celebrity, where the system of monetary awards and paid speaking engagements are part of the pact of literary consecration. Alan's plot to infect JC's computer with spyware and filter a portion of his savings and accrue interest into a Caymen Islands bank account is certainly unethical to both the reader and to Anya. But it's Alan's assurances regarding his plan that truly discredits JC's authority, "He is an incompetent, Anya, a financial incompetent . . . He has a will, dating back to September 1990, unrevised, in terms of which all his assets like copyrights – go to his sister. *But his sister has been dead for seven years*" (*DBY* 121). JC's inability to adequately manage his finances shouldn't affect the authority of his authorship, but if part of the prestige of celebrity and canonical authorship is located in financial and capitalistic gain, as suggested by both the allegory of the duckoys in "He and His Man" and the "critical industry" supported by Costello's public appearances,

JC's inability to manage the legacy of his celebrity authorship casts a partial – financial – shadow on his authority.

While Alan's disdain for JC and his authority is at first contained behind Anya's apartment doors, the tripartite division eventually reveals a dialogue between the three central characters. At one point Anya offers her critique of JC's authoritative tone:

> Seriously, can I tell you what I think about your opinions? . . . There is a tone – I don't know the best word to describe it – a tone that really turns people off. A know-it-all tone. Everything is cut and dried: I am the one with all the answers, here is how it is, don't argue, it won't get you anywhere . . . I know that isn't how you are in real life, but that is how you come across, and it is not what you want. (*DBY* 69-70)

While the "know-it-all tone" is a convention of academic rhetorical style, Anya is skeptical of its constructed and inauthentic nature in light of her personal observation of JC as an individual. Anya insightfully reveals how the gap between JC's split position of authority: as a consecrated author and as a fallible human being.

Anya highlights the contradiction between JC's public authority (represented by the subject and rhetoric of the "Strong Opinions" essays) and the solitary human being with bad teeth and failing eyesight in front of her. Anya's suggestions that JC choose to write on more pleasing and palatable topics, such as the game of cricket or birds, do not hold the critical heft for the genre of essays in the Strong Opinions collection. Nevertheless, these comments and suggestions begin to influence JC in more subtle ways. He reflects:

> Was Anya from 2514 in any but the more far-fetched sense the natural mother of the miscellany of opinions I was putting down on paper on commission from Mittwoch Verlag of Herderstrasse, Berlin? No the passion and the prejudices out of which my opinions grew were laid down long before I first set eyes on Anya, and were by now so strong – that is to say, so settled, so rigid – that aside from the odd word here and there there was no chance that refraction through her gaze could alter their angle. (*DBY* 124-5)

JC adamantly declares that the ideologies portrayed in his "opinions" have been fixed over time and that Anya's influence does not affect their content. But then later JC admits the following:

> What has begun to change since I moved into the orbit of Anya is not my opinions themselves so much as my opinion of my opinions. As I read through what mere hours before she translated from a record of my speaking voice into 14-point type, there are flickering moments when I can see these hard opinions of mine through her eyes – see how alien and antiquated they may seem" (*DBY* 136-7).

The transference of JC's initial utterance through Anya perspective as a reader shows how the form and the content of JC's "hard opinions" begin to "hesitate" through the guise of Anya's response.

While it is true that "Strong Opinions" goes to publication largely unaffected by Anya's influence, the more salient evidence of JC's changing ideology emerges shortly before he composes his "Second Diary." [67] As the only chapter in the novel that does not employ divisions, the striking final chapter in "Strong Opinions" echoes Elizabeth Costello's struggle at the gate. Titled "On the afterlife," this unbroken chapter signals a transition for the novel at large and a shift in JC's subject position. The essays in "Strong Opinions" portray what JC calls "the bones of some odd extinct creature, half bird, half reptile, on the point of turning into stone" (*DBY* 136-7). "On the afterlife" extends this allegory to once again signal the Barthian "death" of the authoritative author before the "Second Diary" begins anew. JC writes:

> One way of dividing up the world's religions is into those that regard the soul as an enduring entity and those that do not. In the former, the soul, that which the I calls "I," continues to exist as itself after the body dies. In the latter, the "I" ceases to exist as itself and is absorbed into some greater soul" (*DBY* 153).

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[67] Rebecca Walkowitz's essay "Comparison Literature" argues that it is unclear whether the previous essays are also the result to Anya's influence, claiming that there is no way to know for sure whether the essays represent the result of Anya's typing or C's original, unedited, thoughts (579).

Similar to how the mirror of Costello's authority cracks in the face of her "auditors," JC's identity is lost and "absorbed into some greater soul" – a more powerful body supported by the readers and institutional apparatuses that continue to appropriate JC as an author for the ethical, political, instructional, or canonical purposes. However, while JC as a doppelgänger-author fails to retain control and authority over his self or reputation, Coetzee, in allegorizing this conflict, ironically reasserts his authority over the text.

Conclusion

Derrick Attridge once observed that Coetzee "hones a fictional style that, whatever the mode of narration, offers no hint of a personal authorial presence" (Attridge, *Ethics* 138). However, as this survey of Coetzee's oeuvre has shown, it is the process of looking for Coetzee by engaging with the various allegories of his authorship that truly makes his presence known. In this way, Coetzee's embrace of his doppelgänger-authors represents the rhetorical power of figurative narration when it comes to authorial self-fashioning. These hybridized narratives force the reader to "hesitate" between interpretations of Coetzee as an author so that he becomes a controlled figurative construction. From Coetzee's earliest experiments with allegorical form in his early works, to his innovative use of figurative narration in his autobiographical-metafiction, it is clear that Coetzee has always been in command of his narrative of authorship – even when he attempts to recede from the spotlight.

In the next chapter, Salman Rushdie offers a counterpoint to Coetzee's narrative of empowered evasion. Rushdie's embrace of the literary spotlight – through a careful use of conventional memoir alongside other digital forms of self-fashioning – reveal how

these explicit and direct means of constructing authorship continue to confound a

straightforward interpretive practice for readers.

CHAPTER 5

JOSEPH ANTON'S DIGITAL DOPPELGÄNGER:

SALMAN RUSHDIE AND THE RHETORIC OF SELF-FASHIONING

Introduction

In September of 2015, Salman Rushdie sat for an interview on PBS Newshour to discuss his latest novel, *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights* (2015). However, though the author discussed a myriad of laudable topics, such as fiction's relationship to history, the need to preserve cultural artifacts, and the decline of political engagement in the face of atrocity, the online article accompanying the interview displayed the following headline: "Why Salman Rushdie is probably quitting Twitter" (Carlson). Why do the two versions of Rushdie – the respected novelist and the online celebrity – presented here seem so skewed? The discrepancy between the actual interview and the headline demonstrates how the stakes of the kind of contemporary celebrity authorship I've already described in this project have shifted in line with the emergence of new forms of digital self-fashioning.

Nabokov's published interviews in *Strong Opinions* (1973), Roth's essay collection *Reading Myself and Others* (1975), and Coetzee's extensive interviews with David Attwell in *Doubling the Point* (1992) provide important paratextual insight into the various ways these authors conceive of writing, literature, and authorship. However, these types of materials are also carefully crafted, edited, and curated by and for an intellectual marketplace – especially in the case of Nabokov who took painstaking measures to receive interview questions ahead of time in order to carefully compose

written responses. While Rushdie's two essay collections *Imaginary Homelands* (1991) and *Step Across this Line* (2002) also function in this manner, he also participates in a contemporaneous form of authorial self-fashioning online that is pointedly less unilaterally controlled. Matthew Kirschenbaum's essay in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, "What is an @uthor?" (2015) provides insight into how this kind of engagement with social media provides contemporary authors like Rushdie with "a qualitatively different opportunity to confront their public selves" (Kirschenbaum). As such, the key difference in looking at social media as a new landscape for authorial self-fashioning is that while "previously the authorial encounter has been an elaborately staged-managed event . . . social media channels [have made] such [authorial] encounters . . . commonplace" outside of the restricted field of contemporary literary study (Kirschenbaum). Essentially, these forms of digital self-fashioning provide insight into the ways diverse readership communities and networks have become active accomplices in the way contemporary authorship has evolved in line with new technologies of writing the self. Thus, at stake in this final chapter is how the scale of authorial self-reflexivity that I have already described in this project reaches new frontiers in relation to how the legacy of Rushdie's postcolonial brand of authorship post-fatwa is challenged by his engagement with literary celebrity online.

While Coetzee's engagements with autobiographical-metafiction represented a struggle to situate himself between his postcolonial roots and his mainstream success for prizewinning intellectual fiction, Rushdie's authorial identity is arguably the most closely associated with the legacy and field of postcolonial writing. According to Sandra Ponzanesi, Rushdie "represents the first instance of a new case of an explicit 'brand'

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author for Indian literature" (Ponzanesi 76). Rushdie's brand then expanded to become synonymous with the field of postcolonial literature during the 1980s and 1990s, since *Midnight's Children* is often cited as the representative text of the then emerging field due to its magical realism, playful portmanteau language, and the thematic integration of hybridity, colonial history, and postmodernist style. His works were not only integral subjects for postcolonial scholarship, but Rushdie himself contributed to this early theorization, speaking passionately against the "literary ghetto" of categories such as Commonwealth Literature in the 1980s, the myth of cultural authenticity, and the need to read and study literature more globally (Rushdie, *Imaginary* 67-70). It is for this reason and more that Timothy Brennan characterizes Rushdie as the representative figure of literary celebrities he calls "Third-World cosmopolitans," a group of writers consecrated by Western publishers and reviewers for their ability to depict "authentic public voices of the Third World" (Brennan viii).[68] Essentially, in the 1980s Rushdie's authorship became a symbol for cultural hybridity, creativity, and free speech due to his ability to provide an aesthetic voice for the voiceless.

One of the ways through which Rushdie fostered this kind of perspective is through his use of intrusive narration in his novels. For instance, the Rushdie-like narrator in *Shame* (1983) intermittently breaks through the story of the Shakil family in an allegorical fourteenth-century Pakistan in order to comment on and synthesize the story with tragic news events of racially motivated violence in modern day East London. *The Satanic Verses* also employs a perplexing narrator whose interjections at times invite

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[68] See Wenche Ommundsen's essay "Salman Rushdie: The Postcolonial Writer as Global Brand" in *Celebrity Colonialism: Fame, Power and Representation in Colonial and Postcolonial Cultures* (2009) for a more in-depth consideration of the how Rushdie's "brand" continues to be troubled by these categories.

the reader to align the devilish origins of the satanic verses with the novel's act of narration itself.[69] These examples demonstrate how Rushdie uses a devilish or tongue-in-cheek approach to narration to destabilize master narratives and add new context to controversial ideas.

However, the scandal that sprung from *The Satanic Verses* seems to have permanently shadowed the playful and activist aspects of this kind of devilish narration. When Rushdie was charged with blasphemy by Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini on Valentine's Day of 1989 for *The Satanic Verses*, he became much more than the Booker prize winning author of *Midnight's Children* (1981) – he became a scandal. James F. English and John Frow point out that scandal has become an integral part of contemporary literary celebrity in that this kind of "cultural impurity" fosters an author's brand to be read across multiple "regimes of value" (English and Frow 48). However, in contrast to the minor moral outrage and back pedaling associated with either *Lolita* or *Portnoy's Complaint*, the long standing effects of Rushdie's fatwa contained much more palpable threats to Rushdie – his life.

While the "death of the author" conceit has recurred in various ways throughout the fictional works within this study,[70] the fatwa against Rushdie demonstrates how the anxieties associated with contemporary celebrity authorship can become all too real. Literary celebrity became an actual liability for Rushdie once the structural apparatus of the publishing, marketing, and distribution industry surrounding him was unable to

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[69] For more on Rushdie's penchant for Satanic narration, see Marlena G Corcoran's "Salman Rushdie's Satanic Narration" (1990).

[70] See Coetzee's vignettes of Elizabeth Costello at the gate in Chapter 4 and Vadim's self-voiding narration in Nabokov's *Look at the Harlequins!* in Chapter 2.

protect him. Rather, the British state stepped in to quell the fervor and Rushdie spent ten years of his life living under special police protection. Essentially, Rushdie the celebrated author became a blasphemer, a liability, and a taxpayer burden seemingly overnight. And it is just this moment of upheaval that *Joseph Anton: A Memoir* attempts to reframe.

 Joseph Anton, detailing the ten years Rushdie spent in hiding under the fatwa, provides a new context for my study of the doppelgänger-author. While the other authors in this study couch the representations of their authorship under the guise of fiction, Rushdie embraces the rhetorical impact of nonfiction in an explicit attempt to set his sordid record straight. And yet, though Rushdie's doppelgänger-author in *Joseph Anton* may be born on the side of nonfiction, as a professional fabulist, the memoir contains noteworthy metafictional moments that call attention to the constructed nature of the text at hand and emphasize how the act of autobiographical writing for Rushdie is motivated by a strained desire to control the narrative without appearing in control. It is this division of rhetorical motives – between didactic reframing and a tone of playful self-deprecation that makes "Joseph Anton" a significant doppelgänger figure.

 However, while *Joseph Anton* exists as a formal and controlled text to revise the tainted narrative of Rushdie's authorship, Rushdie also cultivated a digital doppelgänger-author online. I contend that the conflicted narrative voice of the memoir can be read in conjunction with Rushdie's embrace of digital forms of self-fashioning on Twitter. Focusing on a digital doppelgänger-author figure takes this investigation into Rushdie's methods of self-fashioning into provocative new directions and raises the possibility that the saturation of his authorial presence online may threaten the legacy of his literary achievements. In order to complete this comparison, this chapter will analyze how *Joseph*

Anton attempts to rhetorically revise the narrative and legacy of Rushdie's authorship post-fatwa and then perform an empirical textual analysis of Rushdie's Twitter network in order to compare how this project of self-fashioning is challenged online. Ultimately, I argue that Rushdie's digital-doppelgänger is not a doubling of Rushdie's overall prestige and relevance post-fatwa, but a diminishment of this legacy.

The Rhetoric of *Joseph Anton*'s Self-fashioning

> Well, everyone had heard *that* story and didn't want to hear it anymore. *Tell us a new story,* that was the general opinion*, or else please go away.*
> – Salman Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*

Hayden White has argued that the historian narrativizes specific historical events in order to make meaning out of not only the past, but to further shape cultural systems.[71] Similarly, as I've already described, autobiographical forms attempt to collect and narrativize a selection of the events, impressions, and experiences that make up an individual life within a specific cultural and historical context. For *Joseph Anton,* this context is predominately the Verses Affair and how the optics of this global news event ultimately shadowed the legacy of Rushdie's brand of authorship. While there have been countless think-pieces, academic articles, and books detailing the various political, religious, and national debates surrounding the Verses Affair,[72] Rushdie uses a rhetorically motivated form of self-fashioning in his memoir in order to present a painstakingly researched and authorized version of the events in order to cut through this chatter. Describing the memoir as more of an "archive" rather than a traditional

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[71] See Hayden White's essay "The value of narrativity in the representation of reality" (1980).

[72] For a detailed catalogue of Rushdie criticism surrounding the fatwa, see Joel Kuortti's *The Salman Rushdie Bibliography* (1997). See also, Bridget Fowler's "A Sociological Analysis of the Satanic Verses Affair." *Theory, Culture & Society* 17.1 (February 1, 2000): 39–61.

autobiography due to its extensive detail and its attempt at an "objective" narrative stance, Robert Eaglestone claims that this kind of connection to the historical record makes it even more "important to 'set the record straight'" for Rushdie (Eaglestone 120). Essentially, if the rhetorical purpose of *Joseph Anton* is to reassert a specific identity claim about Rushdie's authorship and insert it into the historical record, the key to this project's success relies on the reader's ability to be influenced. Thomas Couser argues that memoir operates differently in regards to reader response: "[M]emoir engages readers differently. Because memoir stands in a particular relation to the world, it may seek to enlist—to conscript— the reader in that stance . . . memoir seeks to exert leverage (force) on reality in a way that fiction typically does not. It has, or aspires to have, more traction (pulling power) than fiction" (Couser 170). Within this context, memoir has a much stronger rhetorical purpose than fiction and is therefore a better choice of genre for an author who seeks to "leverage" control over the reality within which he exists.

Taking Couser's assumptions to heart, it is therefore likely that Rushdie's choice to compose a memoir as opposed to a novel is a tremendously deliberate rhetorical act since it allows him to wrest control over the historical record of the Verses Affair in a way that his fatwa-era fiction could only do abstractly. For instance, Rushdie's first novel published while under the fatwa was a novel for his son Zafar called *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. The overarching moral of *Haroun* simplifies the complexities of Rushdie's ideological conflict with Islamic fundamentalists by repeatedly asking, "What's the point of stories that aren't even true?" This query hits to the center of the debate over the Verses Affair: "How does a fictional novel cause so much unrest, and eventually death, in the real world?" However, while the novel specifically touched upon issues of free

speech, the importance of fiction, and contained oppressive ideologues as characters, *Haroun* is often regarded as a children's book and not given the rhetorical heft of his more explicitly politically engaged works like *Shame* or *Midnight's Children*.

Thus, memoir – especially a hefty 656 page memoir like *Joseph Anton* – is able to move these themes from the abstract realm to make them immediately relevant and historically important. As Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson contend, "When life narrators write to chronicle an event . . . they are making 'history' in a sense. But they are also performing several rhetorical acts: justifying their own perceptions, upholding their reputations, disputing the accounts of others, settling scores, conveying cultural information, and inventing desirable futures among others" (Smith and Watson, *Reading* 10). *Joseph Anton* fulfills many of these rhetorical purposes since the desire to reclaim the story about his life is personally significant for Rushdie since his life and liberty were in the control of larger and more powerful institutions, like the finances and protection of the British state and the discrediting voices from Islamic fundamentalist ideology. However, the specific way Rushdie frames this narrative contributes to how his method of authorial-self fashioning in the memoir struggles against the desire to uphold his reputation as a respected author without falling into the trap of egocentrism.

Essentially, the way Rushdie attempts to maintain his reputation as an author in response to the numerous, often misguided, discourses that seek to discredit his character has much to do with his choice of narration. Mimicking the playful narrative style characteristic of his fictional works, *Joseph Anton* is peppered with noteworthy metafictional asides that emphasize the rhetorical impetus of memoir discussed above. For instance, the narrator-Rushdie speculates as to how the character-Rushdie intends to

write a memoir depicting this time in his life: "And if the time came when the story was ready to be told, he wanted to be the once to do it. One day . . . it's going to be me" (*JA* 250). This passage collapses the boundaries between two levels of the memoir in order to reveal the space they come together – the level of the story events where character-Rushdie (or the titular doppelgänger-author *Joseph Anton*) experiences and reacts to the fatwa and the heterodiegetic level where narrator-Rushdie reflects on the story. This distinction between levels is supported by Rushdie's decision to compose the memoir in the third-person, like Coetzee's collection of memoir-novels in Chapter 4. However, while Coetzee's use of third-person was an attempt to bridge the gap between the author and his community of readers, Rushdie's tack takes a pointedly more exceptionalist turn.

As such, the rhetorical crux of *Joseph Anton* relies on what the narrator-Rushdie perceives as his unique authorial function:

> At the heart of the dispute over *The Satanic Verses*, he said, behind all the accusations and abuse, was a question of profound importance: Who shall have control over the story? Who has, who should have, the power not only to tell the stories with which, and within which, we all lived, but also to say in what manner those stories may be told? For everyone lived by and inside stories, the so-called grand narratives. The nation was a story, and the family was another, and religion was a third. (*JA* 360)

At first, the question of "who shall have control over the story" is reminiscent of some of the foundational claims of postcolonial theorists who argue that the social work of postcolonial novels hinged on the impetus to "write back" to the discursive power of imperialist forces and oppressive ideological structures.[73] However, Rushdie's invocation of this rhetoric is used for a different and much more personal purpose. He continues:

> As a creative artist he knew that the only answer to the question was: Everyone and anyone has, or should have the power. We should all be free to take the grand

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[73] See Ashcroft's, Griffiths' and Tiffin's *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (2002).

narratives to task, to argue with them, satirize them, and insist that they change to reflect the changing times. We should speak of them reverently, irreverently, passionately, caustically, or however we chose. What was our right as members of an open society. In fact, one could say that our ability to re-tell and re-make the story of our culture was the best proof that our societies were indeed free. (*JA* 360)

As in the case of Coetzee's third-person, the movement between the singular third-person pronoun "he" to represent character-Rushdie's authorship to collective pronouns like "we" and "our" is perhaps meant to lessen the space between the author and his audience. However, while he explicitly underscores how "[e]veryone and anyone" can challenge narratives of culture, the underlying implication of this assertion is that only a "creative artist" is uniquely positioned to satisfy this impulse. As a "creative artist" Rushdie is especially attuned to the importance of narrative and writing back; he can see the stakes where others cannot. Furthermore, the repeated use of "should" as an epistemic modal verb to describe the actions of this collective creates further distance between Rushdie and his audience. We all *should* take the grand narratives to task; Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* already has.

By circling back to *The Satanic Verses* in this way, Rushdie situates his memoir in response to another kind of grand narrative that has proliferated ever since the initiation of the fatwa in 1989 – the claim of Rushdie's intentional complicity in the unrest, death, and discord caused by his fictional novel. *Joseph Anton* attempts to recast Rushdie's personal scandal within a larger narrative about the stakes of free speech. One of the major ways in which he accomplishes this is to frame his individual experiences surrounding the Verses Affair with a much larger historical narrative of religious extremism:

...his story is a sort of prologue: the tale of the moment when the first blackbird lands. When it begins it's just about him; it's individual, particular, specific. Nobody feels inclined to draw any conclusions from it. It will be a dozen years and more before the story grows until it fills the sky, like the Archangel Gabriel standing upon the horizon, like a pair of planes flying into tall buildings, like the plague of murderous birds in Alfred Hitchcock's great film. (*JA* 4)

Rushdie illuminates how the fatwa is just a small, albeit, globally recognized, example of the kind of violence propagated by religious extremism. The reference to 9/11 here, an event that closes the final pages of the memoir, shows how the overarching narrative comes full circle. Essentially, Rushdie argues that the fatwa scandal was not an isolated event, but intimately situated as a "prologue" within a grander history. By composing *Joseph Anton*, Rushdie seeks out a form of narratological closure on the Verses Affair *in toto*. However, as we will see in the next sections, this conclusiveness is in direct and stark contrast to the ongoing discourse about Rushdie and his life post-fatwa that remains out of the author's control.

Doppelgänger Authors: *Joseph Anton* and @salmanrushdie

What makes Rushdie's doppelgänger-authors different from the other figures in this study is the real world applicability and functionality of these kinds of self-narrations. "Joseph Anton" was created out at the behest of the special branch officers concealing Rushdie while he was under fatwa. The rationale was that the officers needed a stable and repeatable alias for Rushdie so that the risk of one of the officers accidentally using Rushdie's name (and therefore revealing his location) while out in public dramatically decreased (*JA* 162-3). In contrast to the act of concealment and reclamation represented by the doppelgänger-author of "Joseph Anton," @salmanrushdie has become a newly adopted moniker in order for Rushdie to cultivate, and verify, his online presence

on Twitter's social media platform in his life post-fatwa.[74] In this section, I argue that these two versions of Rushdie's doppelgänger-author have significantly different rhetorical effects – while "Joseph Anton" exists to reclaim a respected and vindicated narrative of authorship post-fatwa, @salmanrushdie problematizes this effect.

At the heart of the difference between the doppelgänger-authors of "Joseph Anton" and @salmanrushdie is one of both genre and medium. As I've already alluded to, one of the most jarring and problematic qualities of the memoir has to do with the split between the narrating voice and the subject of the memoir since *Joseph Anton* is narrated in the third-person. Rushdie's own explanation for using this stance supports this function, since writing in third-person – or "novelistically" allowed him the freedom and distance to consider the years he was in hiding objectively (Kenny). Philippe Lejeune reasons that though this kind of stance is uncommon in autobiographical forms, it does have precedence where the use of third-person narration functions as a "figure of enunciation within a text that [the reader] continue[s] to read as discourse in the first person" (Lejeune, *Autobiography* 32). In other words, this stance is just another way of representing what Lejeune accounts for as "the inescapable duality of the grammatical 'person'" such that the use of third-person does little to dissuade the reader from equating the subject of the narrative with Rushdie (Lejeune, *Autobiograph*y 33).

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[74] Rushdie is an exemplary figure in regards to the cultivation of technological and digital identity because the very nature of the fatwa caused Rushdie to quickly adapt and learn new technologies much earlier than others. *Joseph Anton*, for example, chronicles how developments in technology greatly improved Rushdie's quality of life while in hiding. While initially Rushdie used on a household answering machine to communicate with family and friends, and relied on a daily 7:00pm call to his son Zafar, the development of the mobile phone allowed him the freedom of movement while also adhering to the strict anonymity required of his position. Furthermore, in their excellent account of how Rushdie's personal computers have been adopted into one of the first "born digital" archives, Laura Carroll et al. describe how Rushdie became "increasingly dependent on his computers and emerging digital technologies that facilitated portability and nearly instantaneous communication, particularly faxing and later, email" (Carroll et al. 64).

And yet, the third-person stance within Rushdie's memoir also provides "contrast and tension" to the text that both the reader and the author continually struggle against as "unnatural" (Lejeune, *Autobiography* 33). Such a conclusion accounts for Amy Kenny's sense of unease in her description of how the narratological perspective of *Joseph Anton* "fosters a feeling of unreality" across the body of the memoir (Kenny). Geetha Ganapathy-Dore agrees that the text fosters formal uncertainties, claiming that the memoir "constitutes a fuzzy, hybrid and postmodern variety of writing that combines elements of autobiography, autofiction, detective fiction and metafiction and blurs the borderline between fact and fiction" (Ganapathy-Dore 13). This kind of cross-generic play is of course not uncommon in Rushdie's fictional works, but including them within a nonfictional memoir suggests a different kind of rhetorical ambiguity and allows *Joseph Anton* to be characterized within my definition of autobiographical-metafiction. And it is within this third space, between the author-Rushdie and the narrator-Rushdie, where "Joseph Anton" functions as a doppelgänger-author since this position simultaneously allows Rushdie the critical distance upon which to tell his personal story while also inviting the reader in to commiserate on the function and effect of this act of concealment.

Creating "Joseph Anton" as a new name, while certainly unsettling, may have at least assuaged some of the fragmentation Rushdie described between the "Salman" of his personal life and the tainted author-figure of "Rushdie":

> He was aware that the splitting in him was getting worse, the divide between what "Rushdie" needed to do and how "Salman" wanted to live. He was "Joe" to his protectors, and entity to be kept alive; and in his friend's eyes, when he was able to seek them, he read their alarm, their fear that "Salman" might be crushed under the weight of what had happened. "Rushdie" was another matter entirely. "Rushdie" was a dog. "Rushdie," according to the private comments of many

eminent persons, including the Prince of Wales, who made these comments over lunch to his friends Martin Amis and Clive James, deserved little sympathy. "Rushdie" deserved everything he got, and needed to do something to undo the great harm that he had done. "Rushdie" needed to stop insisting on paperbacks and principles and literature and being in the right. "Rushdie" was much hated and little loved. He was an effigy, an absence, something less than human. He - it - needed only to expire. (*JA* 252)

At stake here is Rushdie's struggle to retain, or recreate a new identity in response to the

false authorial identity proliferating within the literary marketplace. As we saw with

Roth, this disconnect has much to do with the division between Rushdie's authorship and

his "author-function." [75] According to Foucault, the imperative of authorship emerged in

response to already existing economic and juridical discursive institutions, such that texts

were historically assigned to authors in order to both establish property rights and,

practically, to have someone to assign blame to if the discourse was considered

transgressive (Foucault 108). Within the context of the Verses Affair, the transgressive

qualities of the author-function for Rushdie become quite salient and powerful for his

construction of self. In fact, Rushdie's account of the immediate aftermath of the fatwa

describes how his specific "author-function" seems to completely subsume other versions

of his self:

> Again, his old self wanted to argue [with the fatwa], this time with the word "sentence." . . . But he knew that his old self's habits were of no use anymore. He was a new self now. He was the person in the eye of the storm, no longer the Salman his friends knew but the Rushdie who was the author of the *Satanic Verses*, a title subtly distorted by the omission of the initial *The*. *The Satanic Verses* was a novel. *Satanic Verses* were verses that were satanic, and he was their satanic author, "Satan Rushdy," the horned creature on the placards carried by demonstrators down the streets of a faraway city, the hanged man with protruding red tongue in the crude cartoons they bore. *Hang Satan Rushdy*. How easy it was to erase a man's past and to construct a new version of him, an overwhelming version, against which it seemed impossible to fight. (*JA* 5)

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[75] See Chapter 3 for an extended explanation of Foucault's author-function in regard to ethics and Roth's *Operation Shylock*.

Here, Rushdie's discourse is taken to an extreme, and the object upon which his authorship is bestowed, *The Satanic Verses*, becomes distorted in both name and signification to the degree that his sense of self is not only compromised, but replaced by a burning effigy.

To move away from this narrative caused by the *The Satanic Verses,* Rushdie appropriates the names of two of his most admired authors in order to reassert himself within the consecrated realm of respected literary authorship and creates "Joseph Anton." For Rushdie to choose this portmanteau of Joseph Conrad's and Anton Chekov's names as the title of his memoir speaks to how he negotiates his own sense of self-effacement under fatwa: "He was trying to get used to what he had invented. He had spent his life naming fictional characters. Now by naming himself he had turned himself into a sort of fictional character as well" (*JA* 165). The recasting of the "Satan Rushdy" caricature into the aspirational fiction of "Joseph Anton" in this way elevates Rushdie's cultural capital while simultaneously clouding the hateful discourse surrounding the Verses Affair. Furthermore, these moments of inventive creativity alongside the rhetorical impact of memoir demonstrates how "Joseph Anton" functions as a doppelgänger-author between the two generic poles of fiction and nonfiction.

While "Joseph Anton" functions at the level of genre, @salmanrushdie demonstrates how the doppelgänger-author takes on new signification in digital mediums. In his approach to the ways new forms of digital media have affected autobiographical life writing, Philippe Lejeune emphasizes how communication tools within the digital age ultimately foster different creations of the self: "There is no set 'I' that remains identical throughout the history of humankind and simply expresses itself

differently depending on the tools at hand . . . it is the tool that shapes the craftsman"

(Lejeune, "Autobiography" 248). Extending Lejeune's premise, I contend that the

specific tools of life writing that Rushdie uses, such as microblogging on digital social

media like Twitter, alter the overall rhetorical effect of his self-fashioning in *Joseph*

Anton.

While personal diaries have been considered in relation to the memoir form,

microblogging and other forms of self-narration on social media have yet to be

adequately considered in studies of life writing.[76] As a global micro-blogging platform,

Twitter harnesses the responses, activism, and impressions of millions of users across the

globe. Not only does Twitter offer new ways to collect and analyze global public

reception, the 140 character format of the tweet as a genre has changed how online

narratives are both constructed and disseminated.[77] Paul John Eakin argues that digital

forms of narrative such as these are "transforming the ways people talk about themselves

… [so that] at least one of the twin enabling conditions sustaining the practice of

autobiography, a certain idea of the person, may be radically changing" (Eakin 29). And

it is within this context of a radically changing idea of digital self that furthers my

paratextual comparison of Rushdie's dueling mediums of self-narration.

If the overall purpose of the paratext is to "ensure for the text a destiny consistent

with the author's purpose" (Genette, *Paratexts* 407), then Rushdie's Twitter feed – a

constantly evolving archive of Rushdie's life and the discourse surrounding his

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[76] The essays collected in *Identity Technologies: Constructing the Self Online* (2014) edited by Anna Poletti and Julie Rak are a notable exception.

[77] In regards to how Twitter has changed narrative practices, see William Nelles' essay "Microfiction: What Makes a Very Short Story Very Short?" (2012).

authorship – operates as a paratext to both *Joseph Anton* and an overarching public

narrative of Rushdie's authorship as it exists within online social media. In order to

consider both the possibilities and limitations in reading Rushdie's Twitter feed as an

appropriate paratext to the *Joseph Anton* memoir, a key distinction must be made

between the function of the public epitext versus intertextual peritexts since each

connotes different degrees of paratextual function. Genette writes, "the epitext - in

contrast to the peritext - consists of a group of discourses whose function is not always

basically paratextual (that is, to present and comment on the text), whereas the more or

less unchanging regime of the peritext is constitutively and exclusively inseparable from

its paratextual function" (Genette, *Paratexts* 345). In Chapter 2 I described how

Nabokov's strategic use of peritexts, such as the book jacket, publication information,

and the dedication, are used as interpretive tools for the immediate reader of a text like

Look at the Harlequins! In contrast, a public epitext, like published or televised authorial

interviews, circulated book reviews, and, of course online Twitter profiles and networks,

are directed at a general public and not necessarily just the immediate readers.

Accordingly, to Genette the peritext's close proximity to the original text is more

paratextually important to the original text and information contained within various

epitexts may not always be applicable. This distinction revolves around the problem of

pertinence:

> Many a[n] [epitextual] conversation bears less on the author's world than on his
> life, his origins, his habits, the people he encounters and frequents . . . indeed,
> bears on any other external subject explicitly put forth as a topic of conversation:
> the political situation, music, money, sports, women, cats, or dogs; and a writer's
> correspondence or journal is sometimes very sparing of comments on his work.
> Instead, therefore, we must look on these various [epitextual] exercises as
> occasions capable of furnishing us with paratexual scraps . . ., though they must
> often be sought with a magnifying glass or caught with rod and line: here and

again, we are dealing with a paratextual effect (rather than function). (Genette, *Paratexts* 345)

Essentially, epitextual information gleaned about an author's life, interactions, or beliefs, have little interpretive merit the further away they are from the content of the textual object itself. In other words, an anecdote or interview with Nabokov about his preference for cats or dogs would have little bearing on an interpretation of *Lolita*. However, what Genette neglects to consider here is that when the content of the original text is autobiographical, the "paratextual scraps" of conversations, journals, or diaries become much more substantial (Genette, *Paratexts* 345-6). Thus, since Rushdie's Twitter presence is contained within a "virtually limitless physical and social space" this kind of constantly evolving archive of Rushdie's life and the discourse surrounding his activities becomes useful fodder for autobiographical analysis – especially in relation to how Rushdie cultivates his authorship on social media (Genette, *Paratexts* 344).

As such, @salmanrushdie functions as a digital doppelgänger-author figure in that Rushdie's social media presence represents an alternative rhetoric of self-fashioning from Rushdie's strained self-narration in *Joseph Anton*. As an archive, Twitter provides insight into Rushdie's social life, which consists of "a tangled web of readers' expectations, sanction or disapproval by the critical industry, publishing houses' marketing agendas, the author's media aura, intertextual relations with other books, among other aspects" (Mendes 13). Essentially, Twitter and other forms of online social media provide "a landscape of social documentation and medial interaction" that more traditional forms of scholarship cannot match (Kirschenbaum).

In their study of social function of Twitter, Gillen and Merchant outline the most dominant rhetorical practices of the platform as "citizen journalism, political activism,

maintaining a fan-base, event back-channel, corporate advertising, service marketing, crowd-sourcing, informal social-networking and ambient sociability" (Gillen and Merchant 55-6). Rushdie's Twitter feed shows that he participates in almost all of these Twitter practices in varying degrees, but the most dominant and relevant categories for my analysis are the ways Rushdie maintains and cultivates and polices his fan-base online while simultaneously working to advertise his current projects. In the next sections, I will analyze the rhetorical differences between the *Joseph Anton* as a memoir alongside the Rushdie's digital self-fashioning on Twitter by focusing on how the digital-doppelgänger of @salmanrushdie is stratified between the performance of online celebrity and the cultivation of literary cultural capital**.**

@salmanrushdie between Celebrity and Canon

> They didn't come easily . . . but they represented his first awkward steps back toward himself, away from Rushdie and back toward Salman, toward literature again and away from the bleak, defeated idea of becoming not a writer.
> – Salman Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*

While "Joseph Anton" attempts to assuage, if not subsume, Rushdie's fragmented sense of self caused by the kind of forced concealment and misreadings of his identity during the Verses Affair, questions of authenticity and false identity also loomed early and often for Rushdie online. His earliest tweets concern the "imposter" already occupying the @salmanrushdie handle, where Rushdie himself was left to register with what was next available: @salmanrushdie1.[78] This resulted in a number of Rushdie's early online followers pelting him with various questions in order to verify the veracity of

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[78] Rushdie, Salman. (salmanrushdie1). "@salmanrushdie -- who are you? why are you pretending to be me? Release this username. you are a phoney. all followers please note." 15 Sept. 2011, 5:50 p.m. Tweet.

the account.[79] Twitter eventually corrected this error, but the problem of internet identity

continued to follow Rushdie as his Facebook page was suspended in November of 2011

over a discrepancy with the author's name. Rushdie has used "Salman" (his middle

name) as a first name for the majority of his personal and professional life. Instead,

Facebook set forth a desire for the prizewinning author to use the name listed on the

passport photo Rushdie submitted to the site for the sake of verifying his identity: Ahmed

Rushdie (Sengupta). Like Nabokov's Vadim in Chapter 2, the passport once again

functions as a double-edged document. While Rushdie's passport allowed the online

account to be officially verified, the inherent bureaucracy of social media corporations

ended up distorting the authorial moniker. In a moment of peak social media synergy,

Rushdie soon after took to Twitter to complain and publicize this personal affront to his

identity, tweeting, "Have been trying to get somebody at Facebook to respond. No luck.

Am now hoping that ridicule by the Twitterverse will achieve what I can't."[80] Since the

nature of social media collapses the distance between individual users, products, and

corporate entities, this kind of public shaming of a corporate entity was effective and

Rushdie's rightful name was returned to the top of his Facebook page (Gillen and

Merchant 56).

But more significantly, Ankhi Mukherjee has noted that these kinds of online

interactions "tragic-comically question the ontology of 'the real Salman Rushdie'.

Maverick trickster or long-suffering artist? High priest of the freedom of expression or

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[79] Burns, Kimberly. (kimberlyburnspr). "@SalmanRushdie1 Testing to see if it's really you. Name the 2 musical performers who played @ the NYC launch party for LUKA." 16 Sept. 2011, 5:38 a.m. Tweet.

[80] Rushdie, Salman. (salmanrushdie). "Have been trying to get somebody at Facebook to respond. No luck. Am now hoping that ridicule by the Twitterverse will achieve what I can't." 14 Nov. 2011, 5:28 p.m. Tweet.

incorrigible attention seeker? Visionary revisionist or troublemongerer?" (Mukherjee 10).

This series of contradictions surrounding Rushdie's identity recall his struggle to come to

terms with his "new self" and "old self" in the memoir but places this conflict within a

new context (*JA* 5). @salmanrushdie's ability to tow the line between mass appeal and

literary cultural capital on social media becomes just another medium for how Rushdie

actively participates in

> the strategic negotiation of his celebrity status, particularly to the ways he strives, not only through constant media appearances (motivated, for instance, by the fatwa, the knighthood for his services to literature, or the celebrity wedding to Padma Lakshmi, soon followed by divorce), but also in his practice as a writer exposing, intervening, and manipulating the machinery of celebrity to meet his own ends. (Mendes 65)

While the rhetorical function of *Joseph Anton* is rooted in the desire to recast Rushdie's

authorship as a laudable and vital instrument in favor of egalitarian free-speech, the

author's engagement with celebrity forms of self-fashioning online weaken this effort.

While I have already discussed how Rushdie is situated as a key brand within the

field of postcolonial writing and how his celebrity post-fatwa fragmented his cultural

capital as a respected literary figure, Rushdie's online social media presence further

complicates both of these narratives. At stake is how @salmanrushdie – as a digital

doppelgänger-author – negotiates the collapsing boundaries of authority between Rushdie

and his readers. John Hartley argues that digital audiences have become integral to a

reconceptualization of the anxieties associated with contemporary authorship:

> [N]ow, for the first time, everyone linked to digital media, including all those who were previously confined to the status of readers or consumers, are endowed with the agency of publishers for every single utterance they make online, from phatic chatter to elaborate artifice. In this context, authorship–as the sign for one who is responsible for published writing–expands to the point of meaninglessness. The accumulated assumptions associated with the modern socio-economic institution

of authorship are set at naught when, in principle, everyone is an author. (Hartley 38)

While Rushdie's position as a published and prize winning author initially places him at the top of the authoritative hierarchy when it comes consuming his work, online publication in the form of opinions and reviews effectively collapse the traditional boundaries between authors, publishers, corporations, and readers. Essentially, digital forms of self-publication even the playing field such that Rushdie's readers achieve similar, if not the same, authority as the author himself.

One of the major ways in which digital platforms weaken the distance between author and reader is through the performance of celebrity. Social media presence on Facebook and via @salmanrushdie on Twitter allows Rushdie, as an online celebrity, to "provide a detailed, intentional and controlled post to their audience, while appearing casual and conversational at the same time" (Johns and English 71). Accordingly, "celebrity practice [on Twitter] involves presenting a seemingly authentic, intimate image of self while meeting fan expectations and maintaining important relationships" (Marwick and Boyd 140). By providing the "illusion of 'backstage,'" Rushdie's Twitter feed collapses the traditional boundary between authors and readers since it seemingly allows his followers access to personal insights and epitextual autobiographical material (Marwick and Boyd 140).

While Chapter 4 demonstrated how Coetzee's various doppelgänger-authors intentionally sully his reader's ability to construct a stable authorial brand, Rushdie leans in to the "imperative of branding" on social media in order to cultivate an idealized image of the self (Smith and Watson, "Virtually" 79). An important method of Rushdie's cultivation of an idealized image on Twitter is related to how he positions himself at the

center of professional literary networks and brands himself as a certain kind of author. As Ommundsen points out, "Celebrity writers are branded in ways not incommensurate with the marketing of consumer goods at the same time as branded consumer items are personalized to produce a signature effect" (Ommundsen 168). Extending this sentiment to the performance of literary authorship online is Raechel Johns' and Rebecca English's study of how Elizabeth Gilbert used social media resources in order to "reposition her personal brand from that of memoir writer back to that of novelist" (Johns and English 65). Gilbert curated her social media presence in an effort to broaden her celebrity beyond the success of her memoir *Eat, Pray, Love* (2006) and reposition her status as a novelist before the launch of her 2013 novel, *The Signature of All Things*. The Elizabeth Gilbert case adds context for Rushdie's version of self-fashioning online since it represents a reversal of the kind of rebranding I describe in regards to the value of genre. I contend that Rushdie's decision to join Twitter in September of 2011 was likely motivated by his desire to publicize the creation and release of *Joseph Anton* a year later in 2012.

In this sense, the cultivation of Rushdie's celebrity on Twitter is intimately related to using his fame as a means to market his literary works within already established networks of readers and systems of literary value. While there is a tendency to gesture broadly about audience when it comes to analyzing readers of most postcolonial writing, so much so that there has been a "historical neglect of this area" (Benwell, Proctor, Robinson 7-8), one way to counteract this kind of gap in scholarship on audience is to glean data from online social media platforms. Twitter offers a way to look at smaller, specific, readership and audience networks surrounding a celebrity author like Rushdie.

In their study of online autobiographical self-presentation, Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson point out that "[o]nline venues assume, invite, and depend on audiences, sometimes intimate, sometimes not" (Smith and Watson, "Virtually" 74).

It is this distinction between "intimate" and more public online audiences that becomes most apparent when visualizing Rushdie's Twitter network during the years he composed and marketed *Joseph Anton*. In order to obtain data concerning Rushdie's online audience, I scraped @salmanrushdie's Twitter feed from the beginning of the author's appearance on the platform on September 15, 2011 to December 8, 2013. This collection of 2,627 tweets was then analyzed on a macro-scale in relation to Rushdie's follower network using NodeXL and then more traditionally on a micro-scale using textual analysis frequency methods from Voyant Tools. I contend that digital visualizations of @salmanrushdie's network can more accurately analyze the kind of code-switching Rushdie participates in while interacting with very different networks of his followers and readers.

Inputting the scraped archive of @salmanrushdie tweets into a network visualization program called NodeXL and manually tagging each tweet according to nine selected topic results in the image in Figure 7. Rushdie's Twitter network is visualized using a Fruchterman-Reingold Algorithm which is a model that plots the strength of forces between two individual nodes. Each node represents a specific Tweet and the force directed edges represent the relationships by connecting users who have replied to or mentioned other users. In Figure 7 we can see how the attractive force between Rushdie and those users within the inner circle is much stronger while the users within the outer

circle are repelled (Figure 7).[81] This is referred to as an egocentric network by network analysts, since it "only include[s] individuals who are connected to a specified ego", in this case, @salmanrushdie (Hansen, Shneiderman, Smith 36).

The qualitative topic tags in this egocentric network reveal some interesting trends in relation to how Rushdie cultivates his position as an author. First, the topic tag "Writing" is clustered closest to the center of the network, indicating that Rushdie discussed his writing with those he was closest to in his network, specifically other authors and influencers within the literary marketplace like Judith Kinghorn (@judithkinghorn), Susan Hill (@susanhillwriter), Gary Shteyngart (@Shteyngart), and the Asian American Writers' Workshop (@aaww) – to name a few users located near the center of the network. These tweets represent Rushdie's active engagement with the work of literary writing with a community of his peers, supporting the premise that the closest users within his network are both friends and colleagues already located within the inner circle of Rushdie's celebrity online.

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[81] In order to help me recognize specific trends and patterns in Rushdie's network on Twitter, I have used NodeXL to graph the tweets, replies, and conversations. I have also extended and simplified Gillen and Merchant's categories of online rhetorical practices to tag each tweet according to various topics I have identified as significant for Rushdie's Twitter network: Marketing, Personal, Literature, Trolls, Politics, Humor, News, Culture, Writing and Unknown. I manually tagged each tweet according to my subjective reading of its content.
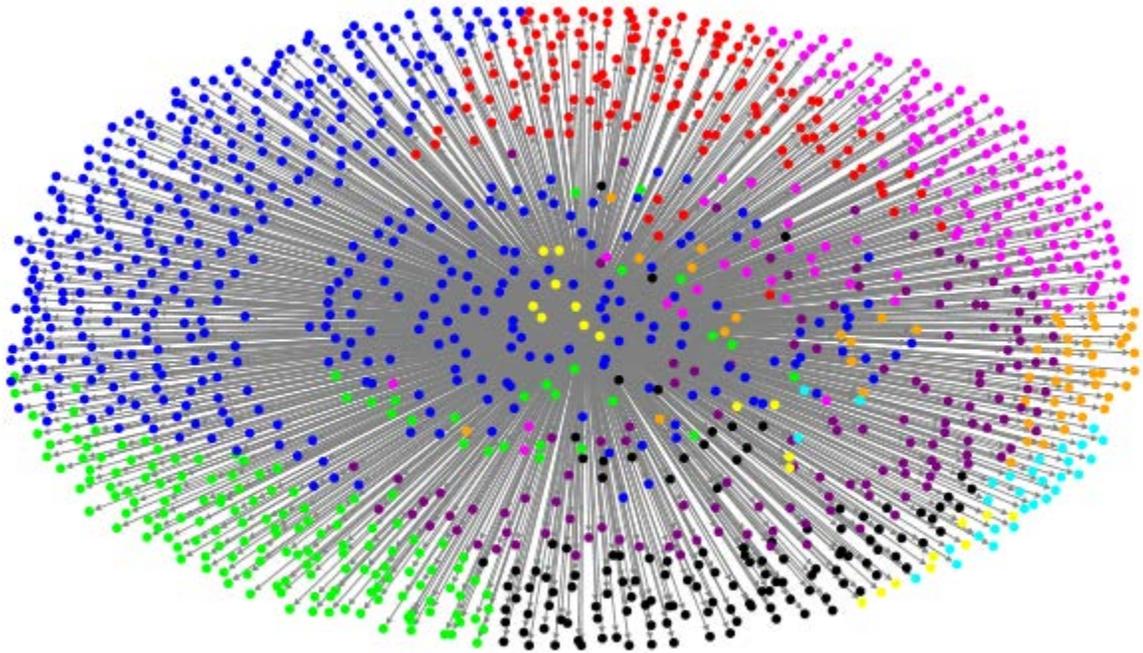
Figure 7. Fruchterman-Reingold Visualization of @salmanrushdie Twitter feed 2011-2013

Graph Key
Culture
Literature
Trolls
Writing
Humor
Politics
Marketing
Personal
Unknown

However, perhaps the most intriguing finding in regards to Rushdie's stratified position as literary celebrity is how the tag for "literature" (in purple) is primarily located alongside the internal border of the outer network. The topic tag for the "literature" category contains tweets primarily dealing with literary topics and questions but the liminal position of the tag reinforces the critical assessment of Rushdie as being an authorial figure divided between the restricted field of literary culture while also cultivating mass appeal. Essentially, these types of tweets derive from users on the cusp of Rushdie's outer network (Figure 7). Rushdie's ability to cultivate a position between high and low culture has much to do with what Ana Christina Mendes identifies as his "magpie" tendencies such that he operates as "power brand" within the

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global literary marketplace by appealing to a broad range of readers of not only literary culture but popular culture (Mendes 7).

One of the ways through which Rushdie uses his social media presence to actively participate in this balance is through his self-promoted and curated online game of #literarysmackdowns. In this game, @salmanrushdie provokes his followers to choose between two canonical and well-known authors using the hashtag #literarysmackdowns and then tallies these results and posts them on Twitter. #literarysmackdowns actively operates to position Rushdie as a gatekeeper of online literary communities by imbuing him with authority to make value judgements when it comes to pairing canonical writers. Furthermore his publication of the survey results position him as a respected moderator of the masses. While this game at first appears as a means of egalitarian free speech in regards to literary merit, it also reveals Rushdie's own limitations, such that only a few of the pairings feature women (Austen versus Bronte, naturally). So, while this assessment may appear glib, such that at one point Rushdie contends that "#LiterarySmackdowns [sic] fun but, I confess, nonsense"[82], the ultimate popularity of the hashtag demonstrates how his Twitter network provides a snapshot into the restricted field of literary value, with Rushdie acting as a key arbiter.

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[82] Rushdie, Salman (SalmanRushdie). "@HaworthCalendar Not really.Different days, different moods:we don't really rank writers. #LiterarySmackdowns fun but, I confess, nonsense.". 05 Nov 2011, 13:47 UTC. Tweet
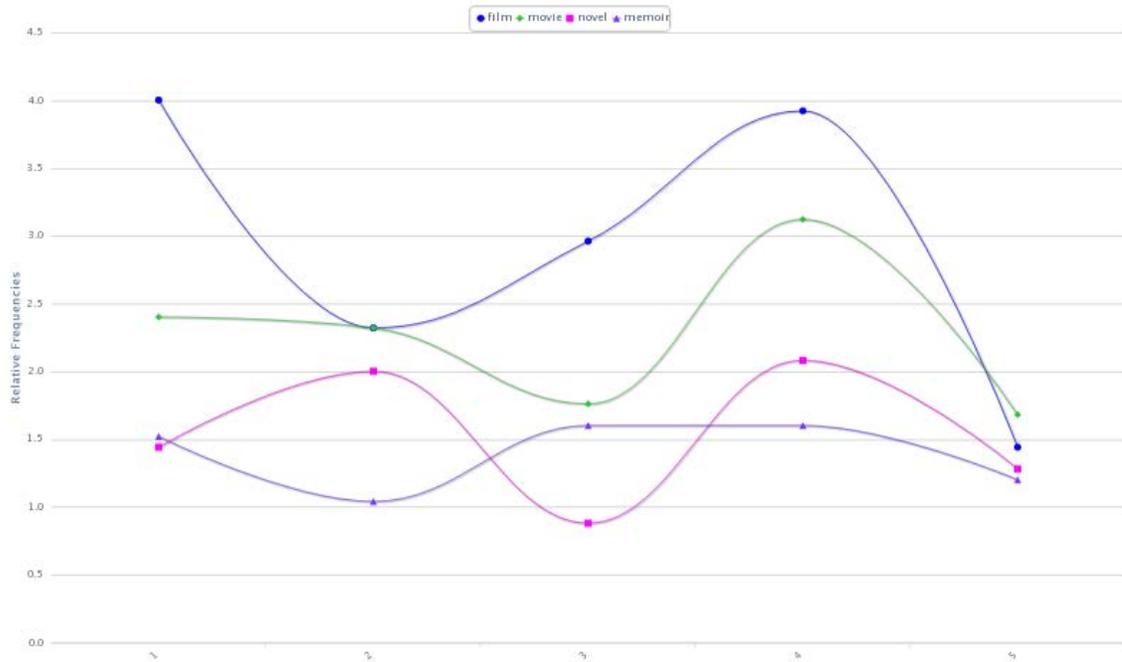
Figure 8. Voyant Visualization of Term Frequencies Chart of @salmanrushdie feed 2011-2013

Delving into more specific trends in relation to Rushdie's Twitter feed further complicates how Rushdie situates his authorship on the cusp of literary culture and mass celebrity in relation to genre. Inputting the content of @salmanrushdie's Twitter feed into a Voyant tools Word Trend graph, for instance, reveals how Rushdie's brand of authorship online has become increasingly more concerned with culture and media outside of the traditional novel. In Figure 8, the peaks and valleys associated with the novel, for instance, show how Rushdie's concern for the genre that made him famous waxes and wanes. Alternatively, memoir appears to be a more stable, though less saturated, enterprise. Rushdie specifically addressed the economic stability of memoir during a round of #literarysmackdowns, posing the query, "#LiterarySmackdowns Somebody made a good suggestion, so here's 1 more. Is fiction back? Does nonfic still

rule? #Fiction vs #Nonfiction. Go!"[83] When announcing the result, Rushdie's added

commentary calls attention to the discrepancy between reader desire and economic

success when it comes to the difference between these two genres:

"#LiterarySmackdowns RESULT. Fiction beat Nonfiction easily. (Unlike in

bookstores!)."[84] This off-hand comment is telling of the value conflict between high and

low culture; while the novel tops the hierarchy of value within Rushdie's restricted field

of followers, memoir and nonfiction still wield the power of economic capital in the

wider literary marketplace.

Furthering this move towards more economically inclined endeavors is the

generic preference given to visual media over strictly textual forms. Figure 8 shows a

clear distinction between visual forms of media authorship ("film" and "movie")[85] over

more traditional textual forms such as the novel or the recently published memoir (Figure

8). This correlation is also supported by a more global assessment of word frequency

trends on Rushdie's Twitter feed, as indicated by the Word Cloud in Figure 9. At first

glance the appearance of #midnightschildren as a dominant term in Rushdie's feed is not

surprising; *Midnight's Children* is an award winning novel and was the catalyst for

Rushdie achieving literary fame and acclaim pre-fatwa. However, a closer examination of

the individual tweets reveal that the hashtag was not in reference to Rushdie's most

popular novel, but rather, its 2012 film adaptation. Converting the title of the film into a

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[83] Rushdie, Salman (SalmanRushdie). "#LiterarySmackdowns Somebody made a good suggestion, so here's 1 more. Is fiction back? Does nonfic still rule? #Fiction vs #Nonfiction. Go!". 28 Oct 2011, 00:54 UTC. Tweet.

[84] Rushdie, Salman (SalmanRushdie). "#LiterarySmackdowns RESULT. Fiction beat Nonfiction easily. (Unlike in bookstores!)". 28 Oct 2011, 15:48 UTC. Tweet.

[85] Though "film" and "movie" connote similar media objects, "film" is the more dominant term overall. This distinction may be due to a number of factors, such as the overall cultural preference of "film" rather than "movie" in the UK.

hashtag supports the kind of popular branding characteristic of Twitter such that the

hashtag both supports the film as an economic commodity and functions as a digital

touchstone for cultural discussion and collaboration. Along with the British-Canadian

director of the film version of *Midnight's Children*, Deepa Mehta (@iamdeepamehta)

being another strong showing in the Word Cloud, it is clear from these trends that visual

media has been a passionate project for Rushdie post-fatwa, perhaps even more so than

his memoir project.

Figure 9. Voyant Visualization of Word Cloud of @salmanrushdie feed 2011-2013

It appears that in an effort to redirect attention away from the scandal of the fatwa

and the Verses Affair, Rushdie uses his digital-doppelgänger on social media to further

embrace a version of celebrity outside the restricted field of literary esteem. During the

fall of 2012, Rushdie's attention was split between his *Joseph Anton* memoir project and

the release of the film version of *Midnight's Children*. The film had been a long running,

and often stalled, project, since during the fatwa years there were a number of filming restrictions. The initial BBC miniseries project was initially stalled when the Indian government refused to allow filming on Indian soil – a significant and personal blow for Rushdie since "his love letter to India . . . [was] deemed unfit to be filmed anywhere in that country (*JA* 516). Next, after the project was moved to Sri Lanka, the country's ambassador was colluded into denying filming rights by Iran (*JA* 525). But eventually, Rushdie and Mehta were able to complete the project, much to Rushdie's relief and hopeful acclaim: "…thirty years after the publication of the novel, fourteen years after the collapse of the BBC TV series, the film was finally made. On the day principle photography was completed in Colombo he felt as if a curse had been lifted. Another mountain had been climbed" (*JA* 526). Having written the screenplay and offered his voice to the film's narration, Rushdie's commitment to the project was surely significant, as the close network of filmmakers, actors, and Hollywood figures located within his inner network connote.

However, not surprisingly, some critics have taken a harsh approach to Rushdie's deliberate embrace of popular celebrity networks such as these. While Rushdie attempts to characterize his inner-network of friends and followers as saviors in *Joseph Anton*, other critics have suggested that this kind of reportage is indicative of the author's tendency toward shameless celebrity name-dropping.[86] These types of critiques reveal an evolution in terms of the negative criticism surrounding Rushdie. While the religious and political fervor around *The Satanic Verses* initially resulted in the majority of the harsh critiques of the author, as time wore on, Rushdie began to suffer from a different kind of

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[86] See Isaac Chotiner's essay "How the Mullahs Won" (2012).

public criticism due to his prolonged moment in the spotlight. Zoë Heller's review of *Joseph Anton* for *the New York Review of Books*, for instance, is a notable example of how this kind of negative criticism has saturated influencers within the literary marketplace.

Heller's review takes issue with an overwhelming tone of self-entitlement throughout the memoir, specifically citing Rushdie's "lordly nonchalance" in aligning himself and his works with the literary merits of Lawrence, Joyce, and Nabokov – the titular portmanteau of Conrad and Chekov notwithstanding (Heller). Heller also swoops in to defend what she perceives as Rushdie's overtly negative treatment of two of his ex-wives (Marianne Wiggins and Padma Lakshmi), citing Rushdie's "failure to ever be quite as tough on himself as he is on others" (Heller). This kind of celebrity takedown quickly caught the eye of cultural gatekeepers online, such as popular New York culture blog *Gawker* whose columnist then nominated it for the literary blog The Omnivore's annual Hatchet Job of the Year for 2012 (Ortberg). This award praises those book reviews and journalists who "have the courage to overturn received opinion, and who do so with style."[87] The dissemination of the review on *Gawker*, a cultural powerhouse that maintains a readership of over 120.7 unique visits a month globally, [88] effectively spread Heller's criticism of Rushdie virally, such that the rhetorical purpose of "writing back" via online social media became more significant for Rushdie as he attempted to maintain his literary cultural capital following the memoir's publication. Essentially, as the next section will describe, Rushdie's self-fashioning via his digital-doppelgänger is an attempt

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[87] "Hatchet Job of the Year: Manifesto." *The Omnivore*. 2014. Web. 09 Feb. 2015.

[88] "Gawker.com's Audience Profile on Quantcast." *Gawker.com Traffic and Demographic Statistics by Quantcast*. N.p., n.d. Web. 17 Feb. 2015

to harnesses the rhetorical power and vitriol of viral dissemination in a similar way to how the original Verses Affair became a global phenomenon.

The Shadow of Virality

> If this Google had existed in 1989 the attack on him would have spread so much faster and wider that he would not have stood a chance. He had been lucky to be attacked just before the dawn of the information age.
> – Salman Rushdie, *Joseph Anton*

While, as Rushdie says, "[t]he magnificence of the invention of the hypertext transfer protocol, the http:// that would change the world, was not immediately evident" during the time of the Verses Affair, similar methods of what we now understand as virality were slowly taking hold (*JA* 217). In *Going Viral* (2013)*,* Karine Nahon and Jeff Hemsley define this phenomenon as such: "*Virality is a social information flow process where many people simultaneously forward a specific information item, over a short period of time, within their social networks, and where the message spreads beyond their own [social] networks to different, often distant networks, resulting in a sharp acceleration in the number of people who are exposed to the message*" (Nahon and Hemsley 16, emphasis in original). Virality operates by mass repetition, a sentiment reflected in Rushdie's assessment: "Like many false propositions that flourished in the incipient Age of Information (or disinformation), it became true by repetition. Tell a lie about a man once and many people will not believe you. Tell it a million times and it is the man himself who will no longer be believed" (*JA* 112). Tracing the beginnings of the lie, or the misconception, is often difficult, Rushdie uses the distance and perspective of the memoir form to attempt to trace the movement's origins in *Joseph Anton*.

One of the major misconceptions of the Verses Affair is the notion that

Khomeini's decree in 1989 was the spark that lit the flame of the Islamic world against

Rushdie and his novel. Rather, Rushdie's novel had already gained some negative

traction, and India has already banned the novel prior to the official fatwa from Iran.

During his extensive research for *Joseph Anton*, Rushdie is able to review and categorize

the beginnings of his novel's distortion to a review by Madhu Jain from *India Today* and

the headline: "AN UNEQUIVOCAL ATTACK ON RELIGIOUS

FUNDAMENTALISM" (*JA* 112). Rushdie further reflects on the performative power of

language contained within the contents of the review's last sentence: "'*The Satanic*

Verses is bound to trigger an avalanche of protests…'" was an open invitation for those

protests to begin" (*JA* 112). And on October 6, 1988 – months before the fatwa from Iran,

Rushdie's home country of India banned his new novel. South Africa soon after followed

suit, and it was suggested that Rushdie not attend the ANC conference in Johannesburg

since his presence would likely inflame South African Muslims and threaten the

antiapartheid movement.

What these early indicators of anti-Rushdie sentiments reveal is that virality

ultimately operates within an already established network led by certain network

gatekeepers. Whereas traditional gatekeepers operate on a principle of exclusion, network

gatekeepers work to link multiple networks together and easily spread information and

ideas (Nahon and Hemsley 43). In this way, the *India Today* review of the novel, by

virtue of its wide circulation across the subcontinent was likely very influential in

affecting public opinion. Once this public opinion becomes consecrated by official

government authorities, such as India and South Africa's bans, the spread becomes more

widespread. Khomeini in Iran became the most influential and recognizable network

gatekeeper in regards to the Verses Affair, not because the idea of Rushdie's blasphemy

was new, but by extreme nature of the fatwa's message.

This account of Rushdie's struggle to understand the large sweeping effects of

virality in *Joseph Anton* demonstrates how within the power of the network, the author

loses a significant portion of his discursive power. Rushdie describes this phenomenon as

follows:

> When a book leaves its author's desk it changes. Even before anyone had read it,
> before eyes other than its creator's have looked upon a single phrase, it is
> irretrievably altered. It has become a book that can be read, that no longer belongs
> to its maker. It has acquired, in a sense, free will. It will make its journey through
> the world and there is no longer anything the author can do about it. Even he, as
> he looks at its sentences, reads them differently now that they can be read by
> others. They look like different sentences. The book has gone out into the world
> and the world has remade it. (*JA* 90)

This passage aptly describes the overwhelming power of the reader when it comes to the

wide circulation of texts within the traditional literary marketplace. While publishers,

distributers, and peritexts in the form of introductions, prefaces, or notes from the author

may on the surface function to curate the impressions of readers, these efforts are largely

wasted in an attempt to cater to a largely unknown and generalized reading audience.

Instead, as I've already explained, online forms of self-fashioning *rely on* an

engagement with audience as a means of self-promotion. For example, as a medium

@salmanrushdie functions to promote Rushdie's authorship in various ways, including:

1) the announcement of various speaking engagements, tours, publication dates and other

news related to promotional material surrounding Rushdie's literary works; 2)

highlighting and responding to positive reviews and responses to his novels and literary

works; and 3) cultivating dialogue and interest in literary and culture communities. Each

of these methods harness the positive viral power of social media since they situate

Rushdie as a culturally relevant literary figure and public intellectual within an online

network of cultural and literary elites.

However, there are, of course, negative consequences to online virality in the

form of online users and readers colloquially referred to as "internet trolls." While the

type of vitriol across the Islamic world was initially spread by specific gatekeepers who

hold cultural and global importance, internet trolls harness the kind of anonymity and

ease of access that the internet supplies as a means to inflame online. According to the

authors of *Going Viral*, the internet operates within a "highly linked social infrastructure"

where the sharing of information with others is not only easy to accomplish, but

deliberately encouraged (Nahon and Hemsley 20). The Oxford English dictionary has

defined "troll" within computing slang as "[a] person who posts deliberately erroneous or

antagonistic messages to a newsgroup or similar forum with the intention of eliciting a

hostile or corrective response" ("troll"). Rushdie curates his Twitter presence in regards

to trolls in two ways. First, he is open about blocking certain online followers if they

openly defy his views without room for discourse or if they blindlessly adhere to the

pejorative narrative of his complicity with the fatwa against his life. Secondly, Rushdie is

not above openly arguing with his detractors, as seen in one such encounter. After a

promotional tweet publicizing the availability the film version of *Midnight's Children* on

iTunes,[89] one user replies to this announcement with an all too common criticism:

"@SalmanRushdie when u write Satanic verses no one was intrusted to read, when

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[89] Rushdie, Salman. (salmanrushdie). "The #MidnightsChildren film (@midnightsmovie by @Iamdeepamehta) can be downloaded from iTunes from Nov. 5th. Just FYI, folks." 30 Oct. 2013, 8:07 a.m. Tweet.

Kausar niazi highlight it in Pakistan. then u became famous."[90] Only a few minutes later,

Rushdie returns with the following rebuttal: "Dear @wazdanpakhton, learn to write

grammatically, with correct spelling, and a little actual knowledge. It's more effective.

Just a tip."[91] It is worth noting that Rushdie's personal response to his troll received 66

retweets and 88 favorites, indicating that not only are Rushdie's fans and followers on

Twitter quick to come to the author's defense themselves, but the author's personal

engagement with this kind of online sparring is encouraged virally.

This approach is replicated with a difference in *Joseph Anton* via the interstitial

inclusion of various "unsent" letters peppered throughout the body of the memoir. These

letters are some of the only places where the third-person voice breaks down and the

traditional "I" narration of memoir takes over. One such letter is addressed to an

"*Anonymous Profile Writer*" who published a profile of Peter Mayer (CEO at Penguin

from 1978-1996) which insinuated Rushdie's knowing complicity that the Mahound

chapter of *The Satanic Verses* would likely inflame readers. The letter mimics much of

the sarcastic and caustic style Rushdie uses to respond to his critics on Twitter:

> *If I pay you the compliment of assuming you understand the meaning of your
> sentences, then I must assume you meant to imply that the "religious time-bomb"
> in my novel is the "soul" that Peter Mayer missed. The rest of this passage
> clearly suggests that I placed the time-bomb there intentionally and then
> intentionally misled Penguin about it. This is not only a lie, dear Anonymous, it is
> a defamatory lie . . .* (JA 204)

The key difference between these two versions is that the memoir's "unsent" letter is

more carefully crafted and pointed in the direction of critiquing the journalist's lack of

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[90] Wazdan. (wazdanpakhton) "@SalmanRushdie when u write Satanic verses no one was intrusted to read, when Kausar niazi highlight it in Pakistan. then u became famous" 30 Oct. 2013, 10:43 a.m. Tweet.

[91] Rushdie, Salman. (salmanrushdie). "Dear @wazdanpakhton, learn to write grammatically, with correct spelling, and a little actual knowledge. It's more effective. Just a tip." 30 Oct. 2013, 10:51 a.m. Tweet.

empirical evidence and obvious political bias in writing an article implying that Rushdie intentionally misled his publishers about the importance of the Mahound chapter. In both encounters, Rushdie's main avenue of defense is to discredit his detractors by insulting their overall literacy. Significantly, this tact echoes one of the major difficulties Rushdie struggled with during the Verses Affair, notably, attempting to use the power of free speech and the merits of literacy to turn what was overwhelmingly seen as an insult back into a novel (*JA* 115).

But what is perhaps most troubling about this comparison is that it shows how far removed @salmanrushdie is from the kind of playful language associated with *Midnight's Children* or the satirical questioning of devilish narration found in *Shame* or even *The Satanic Verses*. For an author who has made his career on bringing often silenced and majority voices to the public spotlight, and has been lauded for his innovative use of nontraditional language, Rushdie's twitter presence in response to his trolls reveals an alternative, and disappointingly elitist stance. And this begs the questions, has Rushdie changed as an author? Or, has our access to digital paratexts of Rushdie's authorship altered how we as readers, and scholars, perceive him and his legacy?

Conclusion

I do intend to suggest an answer to these questions, but first, I must pause for an unlikely anecdote. Near the end of my research for this project, I presented a portion of this chapter during a Digital Humanities presentation at Temple University. As is the tendency in digital humanities conferences and meetings, audience participants live

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tweeted the presentations,[92] and @salmanrushdie was tagged in the process. Rushdie

himself has admitted that he uses Twitter "very intermittently"[93] but my presentation

must have caught him in just one of these sporadic impulses because I received the

following response: ".@angelacirucci @jaclynpartyka Researching my twitter feed?

That's straaange. I'm just having fun here, darlings, not 'self-fashioning.'[94] Rushdie's

characteristic cheekiness is certainly on display in this response. And it is just this kind of

playfulness that functions to undercut his retort. His tweet acts as a knowing wink, a nod,

and an acknowledgement that identity performance online is something that is constantly

curated. And, of course, we cannot ignore the irony of Rushdie using a digital platform to

deny this kind of curation online.

To return to Matthew Kirschenbaum's similar experience when William Gibson

tweeted his rebuttal to an entire MLA panel in January of 2015, these kinds of encounters

are not only increasingly common, but indicative of the collapsing boundaries between

the critic and her object: "Nowadays . . . authors' statements about their work are laid

alongside those of critics and fans, all commingling via the same web services and

streams, the same platforms and feeds, all discoverable by means of a common interface,

the search bar at the top of the browser" (Kirschenbaum). Social media is a new and

exciting terrain for authors and readers to form an immediate and direct dialogue about

literary works. The ending of the story does not necessarily conclude with the final page

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[92] Cirucci, Angela. (angelacirucci). .@jaclynpartyka presents her fascinating research re: @SalmanRushdie's twitter self-fashioning. #tudsc #dh #nodexl 17 Apr. 2015, 12:48 p.m. Tweet.

[93] See Frank Carlson's and Corinne Segal's article "Why Salman Rushdie Is Probably Quitting Twitter" (2015).

[94] Rushdie, Salman. (salmanrushdie). ".@angelacirucci @jaclynpartyka Researching my twitter feed? That's straaange. I'm just having fun here, darlings, not "self-fashioning.'"17 Apr. 2015, 3:34 p.m. Tweet.

of the work; rather, new media represents an opening up of our existing storyworlds as consumers of stories seek out more and more content across conventional genre lines.

So, to return to the questions I posed above, yes, looking to digital paratexts does change Rushdie's legacy as an author because it declares how authorship is not solely determined by the author, but it is made up of a wider narrative that includes reader response. In this way the Rushdie narrative constitutes a type of participatory storyworld building, where "creators and fans alike constantly expand, revise, and parody" these landscapes (Ryan and Thon 1). In many ways, though *Joseph Anton*'s cohesive and authoritative narrative to the Verses Affair seeks to stave off the public's voracious participation in this storyworld, the response to the memoir online only reveals the scope of Rushdie's critics. The legacy of the Verses Affair alongside Rushdie's efforts to divert this narrative via his presence on social media only acts to further serialize the persistent narrative of censorship, blasphemy, and public outrage that makes up the storyworld of Rushdie's life within the public sphere. Thus, while alone *Joseph Anton* may not be a traditional multi-modal narrative, my reading of Rushdie's Twitter presence as a parallel archive of his project of self-fashioning in the memoir suggests a palpable connection between the voracious community of global readers online and various strategies of authorial response. By expanding the archive that we use in determining authorship, by looking at the ways authors engage with their readers beyond the pages of the original text, we can see how contemporary authorship, especially in the digital age, is ultimately a collaborative and often antagonistic project.

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