The Return of the Author
Ethos and Identity Politics

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"What Matter Who's Speaking?"
(Samuel Beckett, *Texts for Nothing*)

Fraught Authorship and its Ethical Implications

Binjamin Wilkomirski's 1995 novel *Fragments* proclaims itself a survivor account depicting the author's fragmented and recovered memories of his early childhood in Nazi concentration camps. Initially hailed as one of the great Holocaust accounts, critics compared Wilkomirski's memoir to Elie Wiesel, Anne Frank, and Paul Celan and awarded the novel a variety of literary prizes. Only three years later, however, Wilkomirski was exposed as a fraud, the recovered memories shown to be the fictional appropriation of a horrific traumatic experience not his own. While many supporters initially defended Wilkomirski on the account that Holocaust survivors often could not prove or confirm their stories, further inquiries weakened Wilkomirski's staunch defense of his account. Critics changed their judgment of his novel from praising it for its simplistically brutal honesty to criticizing its lack of technique. The novel moved from being a "small masterpiece,"[1] a "wonderful witness,"[2] and a "powerful novel"[3] to being stuttering and no great work,[4] stale with blunt prose and a cloying pathos.[5] Finally, in 1999, all copies of the novel were removed by the publisher from bookstores and now the text is available only in conjunction with Stefan Mächler's study commissioned by Wilkomirski's publishing house, a study which concludes that Binjamin Wilkomirski's story is a fraud.[6]

What is most interesting in the entire debate is the overwhelming criticism of the novel that had been repressed or ignored when the text was thought to be autobiographical. Suddenly, critics discover the writing, which they previously had described as immediate, poetic, innocent, and magical, to be dilettantish and

simplistic with overwrought imagery. Here then the concept of the author has returned with a vengeance as the author's persona, background, and credibility become the ultimate measuring stick for any critical approach. I suggest in the following that while Wilkomirski's case is extreme in both its subject matter and its critical response, the ethical resonance of authorial identity is indeed a strong one. Looking at the historical development of conceptions of authorship, I argue that far from having dismissed authors and their intentions, current reading practices require authorial identities for their interpretive processes.

Within literary theory, the late 1960s experienced a paradigm shift with regard to the role of the author. Whereas before, authors and the texts they created were at the center of literary analysis, (post)structuralist philosophers such as Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes began to focus on the process of interpretive reading. This shift from authorial intent to readerly interpretation was often hailed as ''the death of the author,'' after Barthes' influential 1968 essay by the same name,[7] even as Michel Foucault reconceptualized the author-as-person by focusing on the ''author function.''[8] Yet while the death of the author has remained a theoretical truism for the past forty years, the practice of reading fiction quite often looks very different: from author interviews, where their intent quite clearly has remained a focus, to literary scandals that tie aesthetic qualities to authorial identities, the author is far from dismissed in conversations about art and its meanings; moreover, the author becomes central when these issues move into ethical territories. In this chapter I suggest that the academy may indeed protest too much, for authors and their intents have indeed been reincorporated and become central to various modes of discourse. The old question of *What does the author mean?*, however, has been replaced with an identity question as to *Who is this author?* In other words, a focus on authorial intention and how thoughts and beliefs create meaning has shifted to a focus on authorial identity and how cultural situatedness shapes meaning. From discussions of hipster racism in contemporary shows to appropriate (and effective) use of irony, from authorial false identity scandals to fannish social justice debates, the role of the author as not only a textual construct but also a social subject remains embattled.

In the following, I will bring together not only several centuries of concepts of the author but also a range of disciplinary approaches in order to trace the conflicted position of authorial responsibilities and privileges, writerly authority and identity, changing modes of literary interpretations and meaning production, as well as the role of the reader and the contextual surroundings in all of these questions. Beginning with the construction of the author as a legal, social, and ideological construct in the eighteenth century and the embattled role of authorial intentionality in literary criticism through large parts of the twentieth century, I suggest that today's idea of the author is a contested site where poststructuralist author functions meet reader-driven need for authorial ethos.

Authorial identity has become a central focus through which we analyze texts and interpret meaning, both fictional and critical. Drawing from politics, popular

culture, and fan works, I offer examples that show how contemporary readers may dismiss authorial intentions but nevertheless rely on authorial identity in their readings of public utterances. This collectively demanded and constructed ethos exists even when the identity of the author remains hidden, as is the case for many online pseudonymous creators. I conclude by looking at the specific case of fan authorship. At once the most postmodern of nameless writerly readers and the most personally accountable of authors, fan creators embody the dilemma of the author and the way authority, ownership of ideas, and accountability converge. Fan communities, in fact, present an exemplar of the way meaning production is negotiated among readers and writers and the way authorial ethos remains central to textual interpretations. By concluding this essay on authorship with fan authorship, I do not want to suggest that fandom has replaced traditional creative outlets but rather that many of the rifts and contradictions inherent in discourses of authorship are most evident and play themselves out especially clearly in fan authorship. As a result, fans, with their often dual role of reader and writer and their particular awareness of the interpretive communities in which their texts are written, read, and interpreted, can demonstrate how our understanding of the author has shifted from a seemingly unified entity to a more complex and shifting entity. Moreover, the often pseudonymous nature of both authors and readers within fan communities offers insight into the complicated role of authorial ethos within the public sphere.

Birth of the Author

Even though the eighteenth century is conventionally accepted as the historical moment when the Western author became a legal, social, and ideological entity,[9] convincing arguments have been made for earlier dates: some critics situate the birth of the author with Sidney,[10] Shakespeare,[11] or Milton,[12] while others see it as a consequence of the printing press[13] or as a result of the loss of authority of the *auctor* and the rise of the individual, especially in the face of new discoveries in the late Middle Ages.[14] The reasons I follow Woodmansee and others in situating the author as fully developing in the eighteenth century is the particular coming together of legal, economic, and cultural circumstances at that time that needed and thus created a myth of originality. In fact, building on a popularized version of Wordsworth and the Romantics, most aesthetic theories of modernity have been vested in the myth of originality, and it is from this mindset that we have inherited the popular belief that continues to value originality even as we have long entered an age of mechanical reproduction where creativity often takes quite different guises.

Certainly not all writing before the eighteenth century was collective or anonymous, but the particular relationship between an Author and his work underwent substantial changes during that time.[15] Much of this is directly

correlated to the shifting economic situation of artists and a need to legally protect one's creations. In a world of patronage, artists were supported by their patron and, in turn, could create and share their creations. In literature especially, the origins of the words were not directly correlated to patronage. Support was more general and not an essay by essay, word by word reimbursement. However, with changing market economies and a rapidly rising middle-class readership, the eighteenth-century writer increasingly started living off his works and thus demanded legal protection of his writing. Meanwhile, the idea of copyright, which had started to come into being in the early eighteenth century, offered writers a way to establish ownership over their words and the possibility for a livelihood. Before, copyright simply did not exist or, where it did, it lay with the printers rather than the authors. The 1709 Statute of Anne (the first authorial copyright law in the Anglo-American context), with its 14-year exclusive ownership rights, clearly reconceptualized the role of the creator of a work of art. Here lay the beginnings of a copyright theory that regarded the author as the sole owner of his work.[16]

It is not surprising then that copyright *embraced* and in a way *needed* an aesthetic theory that emphasized the individual creation. Nor is it surprising that in an era that foregrounded the individual and his rights and abilities, these two ideas – original genius and intellectual copyright – came to the fore. In order to theoretically justify the ownership of his literary creations, this new concept of the Author made him the sole creator and owner of the words in his book and established the law of author's rights as a natural law. Martha Woodmansee in her central work on this topic, *The Author, Art, and the Market*, describes how moments of inspiration at this point are ''increasingly credited to the writer's own genius'' and thus ''transform the writer into a unique individual.''[17] This is indeed a great shift from the medieval auctor, whose central role was not innovation but preservation and who ''established the founding rules and principles for these different disciplines and sanctioned the moral and political authority of medieval culture more generally.''[18] The new author was considered not only autonomous from higher powers but also from his socio-political environment and, specifically, his readers: art proper relied and depended on nothing and no-one in the creative process.

In English letters, one of the most notorious representatives of the exceptional status of the Author is no doubt famous Romantic poet William Wordsworth. Egotistically sublime (as his colleague John Keats called him), Wordsworth created a Romantic aesthetic theory that focused on imagination and originality. Even where he acknowledges external stimuli and inspiration, the poetic genius remains central in creating and shaping the artistic work.[19] In the 1815 supplement to his seminal Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth defines genius as ''the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe.''[20] As such, he defines as most valuable a thinking and writing that is radically new and different, that is original rather than transformative of older ideas. And he clearly needs such a definition in order to establish authors as owners of ideas – ideas as commodities that can be owned and sold.

In a strange alliance, Wordsworth had actually worked with Member of Parliament Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd in the early 1800s to extend copyright protection after the author's death. Talfourd used Wordsworth as a prime example of "true original genius."[21] Meanwhile, Wordsworth supported Talfourd's attempts to provide authors with lasting copyright protection, all the while assuring himself increased monetary security. Wordsworth as copyright extension advocate thus interestingly welded together a legal concern with a particular aesthetic approach often connected to the concepts of the true artist as original genius. More generally, this shift in the aesthetic and legal status of the individual work was also undoubtedly tied in with the "circulation of works of art as commodities rather than as displays of aristocratic magnificence."[22] Juxtaposing Romantic ideology with earlier artistic practices where material was more readily repurposed, Frankfurt School philosopher Theodor W. Adorno emphasizes the historical element of the concept of originality and its socio-economic connections insofar as originality is "enmeshed in historical injustices, in the predominance of bourgeois commodities that must touch up the ever-same as the ever-new in order to win customers."[23] Here the concept of the new is intricately bound up with economic concerns in the same way copyright laws establish aesthetic criteria for the purposes of settling economically relevant issues.[24]

Death of the Author

Literary criticism throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century continued to question, discuss, and evaluate this newly established author concept and closely tied questions of interpretation and aesthetic values to the named and specific creator of the work of art: the author. So while the legal and economic position of authorial rights increased with the continuing extension of copyright laws,[25] theoretical models of authorship became contested throughout twentieth-century literary theory: most critical approaches – from Russian formalism and new criticism to poststructuralism and deconstruction to reception aesthetics and cultural studies – focused on texts and readers, on contexts of production and reception, but rarely on the identity of the author, on his intended meaning or purpose in writing. Trying to establish more objective interpretations through formalist frameworks, the *New Critics* shifted primary meaning production from author and/or reader to close readings of the text itself, even as the meaning continued to reside in the text rather than in the interpretive process. An early formulation can be found in T.S. Eliot's 1910 "Traditional and the Individual Talent," where he describes the poet as a catalyst and aims to "divert interest from the poet to the poetry."[26] Nevertheless, he also quite clearly regards poetry as existing in an abstract sphere and always already containing all its possible meanings; in fact, he claims an abstract aesthetic order among all existing poetry when he describes how the "existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves."[27]

The central text giving this theoretical approach its name, however, comes in William K. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley's 1954 "The Intentional Fallacy," which removed the author from poetic analysis entirely by arguing that "the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art."[28] And the theory remains an enticing one: authors may be readers of their own texts, but in the power struggle over meaning, they tend to lose ground somewhere between releasing control over their creation and the introduction of cultural and psychological influences. Within literature departments, this truism of the authorial fallacy not only has continued through various text-focused literary theories but remains thoroughly embedded in secondary and post-secondary literary curricula, in turn teaching every new generation of readers that authors and their intentions are all but irrelevant when interpreting their textual artifacts.

Ironically, then, the great postmodern dismissals of the author by Roland Barthes and, to a degree, Michel Foucault were in fact preceded by the dominant literary theory in Anglo-American criticism. On another level, however, the so-called death of the author as proclaimed by Barthes and challenged yet continued by Foucault has indeed become the touchstone of all authorial debates and, as such, must figure centrally in any discussion of the role of the author in the humanities. Barthes' tone-setting and name-giving 1968 essay "The Death of the Author" describes and declares a new form of writing that creates texts that are author-less in the way they continually resituate and redefine themselves. He celebrates these open texts as the writing of the future that is not contained by singular author-gods declaring their intention but a rather more democratic reader-oriented text whose meaning is multiple and gets reinscribed with every new reader. He says, "Once the Author is removed, the claim to decipher a text becomes quite futile. To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing."[29]

Likewise, in his 1971 "From Work to Text," Barthes distinguishes between readerly and writerly texts, the former describing works that are closed and only need to be interpreted by readers as opposed to the latter texts, which are constructed with every reading process.[30] In a similar vein, Julia Kristeva distinguishes bounded and unbounded texts, again making this quality not a function of the critic or reader but one of the text itself.[31] In other words, unlike reader response criticism or audience studies, which foregrounded the process of reading and viewing regardless of the text, these theories were ultimately textual theories where the role of the author was inscribed into the texts themselves.

In contrast, Foucault refocuses on the role of the author, though he clearly redefines that role from the actual person to something more abstract he calls the author persona. In fact, he ventures into metaphysical territory by interrogating the author as proper name and his relationship to specific works,[32] a problem he solves by defining the author as a "function of discourse," called the author function.[33] In this theory of the author as a product of discursive practices, Foucault retains the role of author yet redefines his role and his functions vis-à-vis the text.

What is important about the author function is that it is neither immutable nor well defined, thus existing always within a specific relation to its surrounding culture. Interestingly, it is Foucault who defines the authorial debate within ethical terms when he suggests that the ''fundamental ethical principle of contemporary writing . . . dominates writing as an ongoing practice and slights our customary attention to the finished product.''[34] As such, it is too simple to only see the author as a function of discourse – Foucault recognizes that there remains a responsibility of the writer to the text, the audience, and himself.

In the years following Barthes' and Foucault's essays, the ''death of the author'' as well as the ''intentional fallacy'' became all but commonplace in the studies of popular culture, not necessarily mirroring how most of us were reading but rather how we ought to read. After all, author readings, author interviews, and author research continued to be extremely popular and well received within popular media, and autobiographical novels – including those of literary authors – have always been likely bestsellers. Oprah's Book Club would invite authors to guide readers through their texts, and book club editions with Q&As with the author remain popular for many middlebrow bestsellers. Literature all but bifurcated, with one segment being author driven and climbing the various bestseller lists, and another one renouncing the author yet finding little traction beyond secondary and post-secondary schools. Not quite parallel, film studies' auteur theory followed literary theory in first praising and then dismissing the original creator only to rediscover film authorship as a central driving creative force in the 1990s. Thus film and television, which much more visibly depends on collaborative authorship, seemed overall less invested in killing its auteurs even as poststructuralism affected its conceptualization of filmic creators.[35]

Postmodern Subjects and Why Identities Matter

Yet our focus here should be less about the author cult we sometimes find surrounding bestselling authors than about the roles intentionality and authority play in theoretical debates surrounding authorship. To do so, I want to look at the way Foucault's questions continue to be central to our literary and cultural analyses. Foucault endorses Barthes' death of the author while at the same time modifying its impact: it is not all authorial actions that get destroyed within this postmodern challenge to authority and authorship, but only certain types of authors, certain forms of authored texts. By acknowledging the author as part of the knowledge construction within the author-text-reader model (all functioning as discourses within a cultural framework, of course), Foucault allows the questions to shift from ''What has [the author] revealed of his most profound self in his language?'' to ''Where does it come from; how is it circulated; who controls it?'' Or, as I started this essay, from ''What did the author mean?'' to ''Who is the author?''

Authorial identity remains a central concern for marginal subjects, that is, those that do not occupy upper middle class, white, male, straight, able-bodied, cisgendered, Western positions. In fact, much of literary criticism of the 1980s and 1990s grappled with the question of how to combine identity politics with the theoretical insights of postmodernism and deconstruction. After all, at the very moment when women and other minorities finally began to enter the canon, the concept of canonicity came under attack and the privileged position of the author got dismantled. Or, as Nancy K. Miller describes bluntly, ''the postmodernist decision that the Author is Dead and the subject along with him does not . . . necessarily hold for women, and prematurely forecloses the question of agency for them.''[36] Critics of color, queer scholars, postcolonial academics, and feminists among others continued to frame this question again and again, trying to connect a much-needed critique of modernity and its centralist tenets with a political need to establish identities and speak with voices that had mostly been silenced throughout Western culture.

It is here that I want to locate the return of the author, not as authorial intent maker but instead as the position of ethos, the place where the authorial identity gives the writing an ethical impetus, a moral authorial character. Aristotle develops in the *Nicomachean Ethics* the concept of stable character and conscious choices, the ethos. In his study of rhetoric, he establishes ethos as one of the central three elements, the other two being pathos and logos. Effectively, this matches Kinneavy's author-text-reader triad model with ethos placed with the author.[37] Ethos then is the author's identity, both in terms of who they are but also in terms of the choices they make, the collection of their writings and utterances and their overall character. If we ignore ethos, Wilkomirski's novel is effective regardless of whether he experienced Auschwitz as a child and we should read ''The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House'' without taking into account Audre Lorde's racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual identity.[38] If we ignore ethos, Martin Heidegger's Nazi past is irrelevant when reading *Sein und Zeit* and *Rosemary's Baby*, *Chinatown*, and *The Ghost Writer* can be enjoyed without remembering Roman Polanski raping a thirteen-year-old.

Hipster Racism and ''Other Asians''

I'd suggest that authors have returned to the forefront of interpreting texts not via interpretive privilege or singular access to the meaning of their writing but via their identity and how that identity affects reading and writing practices. The same racist expression, joke, or story functions very differently in the hands of a white writer than it does when a person of color uses it. This is fairly obvious in general conversation but carries over into film and audiovisual texts as well. In internet parlance, many of these incidents fall under what Carmen Van Kerckhove from the anti-racism blog *Racialicious* has termed ''hipster racism.''[39] Hipster racism defines

an ironic position where someone in a race-privileged position believes themselves nonracist and enlightened enough to be allowed to make racist jokes ironically. Blogger s.e. smith describes its supposed intent and actual effect as follows: ''Using language which is viewed as inflammatory or not appropriate is supposed to push the boundaries and make someone look edgy, but it only really comes across that way to people who buy into that system. To everyone else, it's just racist.''[40]

What is interesting in hipster racism is that the identity of the author/creator is central yet their intent unimportant. What takes its place in meaning production is audience reception and perception of the author's positionality and ethos, an issue that gets addressed directly in the divergent responses to the July 2008 *New Yorker* Obama cover. On it, the Obamas are presented against a backdrop of a burning American flag and a Bin Laden image, with Barack Obama wearing middle-eastern clothes and Michelle Obama sporting an Afro and carrying a machine gun. The creators clearly intended this cover to mock stereotypes of the Obamas, positioning themselves as colorblind and antiracist enough to be able to jokingly employ racist ideas, only to be surprised and offended when their audiences' reactions were less than positive.

When interviewed on the issue by PBS, sociologist Michael Eric Dyson suggested: ''I'm sure the Obamas have no doubt that David Remnick, one of the princes of American publishing, has all great intentions . . . But the line here is crossed, I think, when the intent of the mockery is obscured by the busyness of the interpretation that surrounds the art, and not in an edifying, uplifting fashion.''[41] What Dyson articulates is not only the irrelevance of authorial intent but, at the same time, the culpability of the creators. Even as he invokes ethos when referencing *New Yorker* editor Remnick's stellar reputation, he nevertheless shows how that gets obscured by actual reception and the author retroactively created by and with the artwork in a particular context.

That is ultimately what Foucault's author function achieves: the author becomes important again, not in a vacuum but as a historical, political, national, social, gendered, and sexed being who writes and is read within particular contexts and against specific historico-political and socio-economic events. The same images or events play out quite differently depending on who is saying them and where and when and to whom they are being said. Ethos, the background, reputation, and identity of the author are important and affect reader responses. *The Washington Post*'s Philip Kennicott makes this very point when he argues that ''its humor is intended for a relatively insular, like-minded readership: subscribers to the *New Yorker*, a presumably urbane audience with strong Obama tendencies.''[42] What Kennicott clearly ignores in his argument is race, however. The cover is specifically offensive to African-Americans, drawing on quite specific symbols and references in Michelle's portrayal. Where Obama's outfit merely references the repeated right-winged accusations of his supposed Muslim religion and non-US birth certificate, Michelle's Afro, camo, and machine gun recall more specific moments in black US history. By overlooking these racial markers, the cover fails

to acknowledge the potential readership of African-Americans, a failure that may indeed be shared by its creators and Kennicott alike.

Describing a quite different event, *The Atlantic*'s senior editor Ta-Nehisi Coates explains why the repeated demand of Obama's birth certificate read differently to African-American audiences than it did to most of those demanding supposed proof of citizenship: "the tradition of attacking the citizenship rights of African-Americans extends from slave codes to state-wide bans on black residence to black codes to debt peonage to literacy tests, to felon disenfranchisement. You literally can trace attacks on black citizenship from the very origins of American citizenship itself, up into the present day."[43]

The failure of authorial intent continues to plague public conversations surrounding popular media. *Glee*, for example, is in turn praised for its attempts at and critiqued for its execution of representations of race, sexuality, and ability. The show clearly sees itself as showcasing diversity with its quite purposefully chosen cast, "featur[ing] an array of students in an uncool high school glee club, including a boy in a wheelchair, a geeky girl, a gay student, an Asian and an overweight African-American girl," as Reuters described the show when announcing it had received the 2009 Multicultural Motion Picture Association Diversity Award.[44] Yet the show has been criticized at the same time for its problematic engagement with diversity ranging from the lack of storylines for characters of color and their constant dismissal (Asian-American Mike Chang was repeatedly referred to as "other Asian" within the show and paratextual material all through the first season) to the transphobic sentiments and slurs, especially in the *Rocky Horror* adaptation, and the problematic depiction of the wheelchair-using Artie, both in using an able-bodied actor and in the often ableist storylines.[45] What this essay ultimately argues, then, is that authors remain central even within a reader-focused framework.

"Woman's Work" and Squaring Up

In fact, even though this is an essay about authors, intentions, and identities, it is ultimately as much an essay about readers and the way readers filter texts through their concepts of the author. One of the most useful concepts of reception studies is the idea of interpretive communities. Interestingly, reader response theorist Stanley Fish defines interpretive communities as "made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions."[46] Just like Barthes and many poststructuralists, Fish re-defines the reading as a (collective) writing process, shifting focus from author to reader but also, more importantly, pointing out that texts only ever mean when they get read and that this reading process is never only passive or directed by author and text alone.

Unlike Fish, for whom interpretive communities denote a collection of interpretive strategies rather than actual readers, fan fiction readers and writers create *actual* communities. It is interesting how Fish chooses terms that come to life within the fan community, that is, fan writers read texts by *writing* within an actual *community*, thus literalizing Fish's metaphors. Authors writing within fan communities regularly make use of implicit underlying expectations and rely on ethos in ways published writers often cannot. In fact, within fandom we can often see the reverse of what I've described above, that is, there are texts that read contextless could be considered offensive yet the authorial identity and stance drives a more positive interpretation.

One exemplary fan text that may be read differently depending on awareness of authorial identity and the community in which it was created is Luminosity and Sisabet's ''Women's Work,'' a *Supernatural* fanvid set to Hole's ''Violet.''[47] The TV show *Supernatural* about two brothers hunting supernatural creatures has often been taken to task for its misogynist representations, and any fans familiar and agreeing with this reading of the show can see ''Women's Work'' as effectively that criticism writ large. The vid screams at us violently through the careful editing of image after image of assaulted woman, often dying gruesome and slow deaths, the camera lingering erotically on their dying bodies. Within the fan community, this vid doesn't need squaring up. ''Women's Work'' is a vid whose production, dissemination, and reception lie within fandom, and as such it is clearly comprehensible to fans.

For another audience, the song and lyrics might not be enough to signal that this is meant as a clear critique of these images. The aesthetic selection and presentation may indeed suggest a male gaze enjoying these half-dressed, anonymous, suffering women. However, within the largely feminist media fandom community that has repeatedly debated misogyny of genre shows in general and *Supernatural* in particular, no more explanations are needed. Moreover, it is important that the source text is a fannish show – and one the creators both explicitly love – rather than a text that is only disliked and criticized. In so doing, the community itself performs a form of framing, effectively offering the proper interpretive framework, a sort of square-up.

Square-ups were popular in 1940s and 1950s exploitation films, where a reel would precede the film declaring the issues that were to be addressed.[48] In this way, the ''proper'' interpretation would be offered alongside the problematic text. On the one hand, that allowed problematic films to be shown without the danger of misunderstanding them. On the other, it allowed the audience effectively to get to see the sex and violence and not feel too guilty about it; they could feel virtuous in being aware of the problems, but they continued to have access to the problematic text.[49] I would suggest that authorial identity can often function as a form of square-up or interpretive framework that allows us to read a text properly.

This is particularly true of irony, parody, and satire, all texts that require the reader to purposefully read against the seeming intention of the text. Any

composition teacher who has taught Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal" may have encountered the student who reads the essay in earnest, who believes that Swift honestly suggests killing and eating babies might be the solution to the Irish famine. Then again, we might have been amused by anyone reading *Mein Kampf* when it was published in 1925 and not reading Hitler's genocidal scenario as anything but metaphor. We often ask in literature that the text carry its own interpretive directions with it, but sometimes paratextual frameworks are necessary, whether in explicit squaring-up, in shared community assumptions, or in authorial ethos.

There is then a clear difficulty in reading ambivalent texts that use citational practices to criticize (or not) when the authorial and paratextual framework is missing. Julie Levin Russo describes how pulling slash vids out of their original context can evoke responses that are in direct opposition to their subcultural reading (and authorial intent):

> Although both fake *Brokeback Mountain* trailers and slash vids edit appropriated sources to foreground gay subtext, they do so with very different orientations: parodic and public versus sincere and subcultural. I would go so far as to say that *Brokeback* parodies often embody a homophobic response to homoerotic outbreaks. A fanvid thrust into this milieu is likely to be read according to these prevailing conventions, falling into step with values hostile to those of its indigenous community.[50]

In the case of both "Women's Work" and the *Brokeback Mountain* trailers, authors matter, not so much in terms of what they want to do (because, as we've seen before, authors don't necessarily control the entire meanings of their texts let alone potential receptions) but in terms of who they are – or rather, who they are meaningfully read to be. I'd even go further than Russo and suggest that there are *Brokeback Mountain* trailers that may indeed be queer appropriations of mainstream texts, critically foregrounding the homosocial if not homoerotic relationship in popular films and television shows from *Star Trek* and *Top Gun* to *Saved By the Bell* and *The Office*. And without textual clues that clearly signpost the vid's meaning, the author's identity is a central interpretive clue for the reader, one that often tends to be missing entirely on YouTube.

Pseudonyms and Online Identities

One problem with most online fan material is the anonymous or pseudonymous nature of the writing. And yet once we move from spaces that encourage anonymity in order to allow offensiveness without accountability, writers and readers soon begin creating identities. Whether in chat rooms or mailing lists, on blogs or bulletin boards, consistent identities are valued and important. Pseudonyms, in fact, tend to function as authorial identifiers in the same way names do. After all, most of us know Mark Twain or George Eliot or James Tiptree, Jr. as well if not

better than Samuel L. Clemens, Mary Anne Evans, or Alice Sheldon. The author function assigns an identity to and through the text, and the name attached to that authorial identity is less important than consistency. In fact, while early internet theory celebrated the free play of identities online,[51] reality turned out to be much less exciting: establishing a consistent identity takes time and effort and even if the medium is purely text based, ultimately we rarely leave our bodies and their effects on our minds behind.

The difficulty, of course, is that writers can pretend to be something they may not be in real life, with the fraud examples in literature I began this essay with suggesting that this is not limited to cyberspace. Moreover, if author function ultimately is a continued co-creation, then the continuous identity online paired with reader responses creates further identities. As James J. Brown, Jr. suggests in his study of Wikipedia authorship, "A discussion of ethos is not a discussion of stable origins but is rather a discussion of a continuous process of becoming author, becoming speaker, becoming writer."[52] Indeed, given the prevalence of continuous pseudonyms, online discourse very clearly functions with an authorial ethos. In his discussion of "Anonymity, Authorship, and Blogging Ethics," Amardeep Singh suggests that "Though blogging certainly does little to restore the old image, widely attacked by poststructuralist theory, of the 'Author-God,' here I will argue that the strong emphasis on originality, collective ethics, and the authorial persona, all of which are prevalent in the blog culture, reinforces the ethical association of writing with authorial 'signature.' "[53] It is this authorial ethos that is at stake every time one uses one's pseudonym to post or comment, and it is the collection of these posts and comments (easily retrievable and, unless explicitly blocked, even searchable) that creates the entirety of a pseudonym's writings, thus establishing their online identity and ethos.

And yet, it is the offline markers that are zealously guarded and ever important given my discussions above. After all, if identity matters, then that should inflect online authorship as well. At the same time, there is empowerment in online writers' abilities to choose to foreground one identity marker and ignore another. These choices offer a form of agency for the author often missing in real life, where certain identities (race and gender) are often considered primary while others (ability, sexuality) may be invisible even as they may be the driving identity marker for a given text.[54] If authorship is in fact about authority and control, then choosing to not reveal information may be as important as revealing it. Online pseudonyms allow authors to create the ethos they choose for themselves and force them to continually re-establish it.[55]

Authority and Gender in Fan Texts

The question of authorship is intimately tied to issues of control and, even more importantly, ownership over one's intellectual property, and this is where I want

to conclude as well. Brown argues that ''discussions about intellectual property stem from this question: What is the origin of a text? Often, this question of origin ultimately leads us to questions of identity as we attempt to link a text with an author.''[56] I'd suggest the inverse is also true: questions of identity lead to questions of intellectual property. Or, said differently, who we are often affects how likely it is that we own our words and ideas. Ethos, in fact, is as much a function of one's class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, etc., as it is a function of one's individual achievements and accomplishments. Even where ethos is a personal and individual decision for a pseudonymous author, there nevertheless have developed collective differences in how various communities engage with pseudonyms. This is especially noticeable when looking at predominantly female fan writing communities where there exist multiple reasons for pseudonymous cultures. Women collectively constitute a more vulnerable group online and are often more prone to be singled out for harassment, which is one central reason for using pseudonyms.[57] Moreover, fan fiction communities follow within a tradition of writing women who de-emphasize their role of authorship in favor of regarding writing as a collective and domestic pastime.

To return briefly to the 1700s: it is a truth universally acknowledged that the novel was not invented by Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding but that there was a much longer history of women writing. These ''scribbling women'' (as Nathaniel Hawthorne later called women writers dismissively), however, were not considered to produce art.[58] It wasn't until men began to write novels that the *domestic* hobby became a *public* profession. Woodmansee describes the aspects of female authorship that made it antithetical to the newly created author as original genius: ''In its amateur origins and rather narrowly defined utilitarian purpose the novel would seem to lack the earmarks of literary 'art.' The product of idle hours, it is intended not for sale to a reading public but strictly for domestic use.''[59] In other words, the way women created art was wrong on several counts: they didn't do it for money or to share in the public space and the emphasis was on craft and amateur status rather than any sense of original genius. Their work effectively had to be ignored because the ideological context in which it was created spoke directly against the aesthetic models men needed to create, in order to justify owning and selling their words.

This is not all that dissimilar from the situation fan writers (often predominantly female) find themselves in today. The rejection of potential commercialization of fan production has a strong history within media fandom, one based on media property rights as much as on a sense of subcultural semi-private community. At the same time, the commercial viability of remixes such as rap and hip hop and of user-generated content such as Machinima and fan films has raised the question of whether (female) fans may indeed be closing themselves off from economic opportunities. Fan Cupidsbow argues in an essay provocatively entitled ''How Fanfiction Makes Us Poor'' that ''part of why fanfiction can so easily be written off is because we so carefully police it, keeping our work in the (often unpaid or

underpaid) ghetto along with other women's crafts.''[60] Likewise, Karen Hellekson argues that ''Fans insist on a gift economy, not a commercial one, but it goes beyond self-protective attempts to fly under the radar of large corporations, their lawyers, and their cease-and-desist letters,''[61] Abigail DeKosnik suggests that ''fan fiction may not be monetized at all, in which case no-one, particularly women authors, will earn the financial rewards of fanfic's growing popularity.'' She further fears that ''women writing fanfic for free today risk institutionalizing a lack of compensation for all women that practice this art in the future.''[62]

The central reason usually given for fandom only functioning as a non-profit gift economy is ownership and copyright, that is, who is the author of a given fan fiction and who has authority over the characters used. But at the same time, its more idealistic proponents view it as an escape from the constraints imposed by copyright laws and ideological ownership of ideas. As we discussed above, these ideas gained prevalence in the eighteenth century, but copyright owners are continuing their power grab through ever expanding extensions in copyright laws. As such, fan creators are but a small group caught in the contested field of authorship and its rights. I consider them an insightful if not exemplary case that showcases the complexities of current authorship ideas and the way ethos is intimately tied up with social, legal, and economic status. Gender influences not only the pseudonyms fan authors choose to hide their female identities but also affects their general reputation as authors. Fan writers, in fact, are the immediate descendants of the nineteenth century's scribbling women as well as Virginia Woolf's woman writers, still neither getting paid nor gaining much respect beyond their immediate fan communities.

Fan Reader/Writer Interaction

This essay has looked at the changing role of ethos and authorship, in particular how the pseudonymous and collective reading and writing fan community challenges traditional definitions and delineations. In particular, Brown's definition of authorship as the ''process of becoming author''[63] plays out in the shifting relationships between readers and writers within fan fiction communities as well as the active roles fan readers take toward published texts. Fan authors are postmodern as they – often pseudonymously – commit the most aggressive form of reading: with their Barthesian way of literally making any text a writerly text, they become writers of that text, scribbling into the margins, and taking the characters and worlds and plots for a spin. At the same time, the often close-knit community of fans allows readers and writers to interact, creating an environment of often shared ideas and collective creation but also one in which writers are accessible and can be held accountable for their words and ideas. Fans continually challenge if not diminish clear boundaries of authorship as they negotiate reader and writer identities and collectively create interpretations and transform texts. Moreover, when engaging with media products, fans display a similarly conflicted

relationship to authorial control. When we look at the film and television industry, authority and ownership are ever more present and fans continue to defer, disclaiming ownership in front of every story and referencing showrunners and writers as singular authorities, to be celebrated or blamed for all aspects of the texts. And yet, it is these texts that get adopted and adapted, shared and subverted in fan creations, thus ultimately refuting the authority of "The Powers That Be" over their creations.

In fact, readers and writers engage in power negotiations in a variety of ways, not only in terms of competing interpretations but also in the actual process of presenting, reading, and feedbacking stories. Feedback, the reader's comment to the author describing the positive and negative aspects of the story as well as its affective qualities, is often the only currency writers have in fandom. Writers can control feedback to some degree, be it through begging or blackmail as they hold parts of their stories hostage to a certain number of feedbacks. Posting in parts not only may force the readers to enter a dialogue with the writer; it also allows the writer to control reading practices.

Fan authors also control readers by controlling access through friends locking journals, password-protecting web sites, or posting to private mailing lists. And yet, even though readers may be seen as less powerful, subject to the writer's whim, on another level, the readers have ultimate control: the stories can be saved, printed out, edited, passed on, sold, or plagiarized, and nothing but community conventions protect the writer. Writers always expose themselves to a degree when writing and posting, whereas readers may lurk for years without ever engaging in any dialogue. Fans often tend to be critical of their own roles as readers and writers, not in spite of but because they know that they have wrenched away power from the authorial control of the original author. Fans constantly negotiate interpretive power away from authors and one another, thus subverting and reinforcing authorial authority and continuously shifting the conflicted site of meaning production. In so doing, fans acknowledge, challenge, and renegotiate the role ethos plays for readers and writers in online interactions and the way ethos gets used to establish as well as constantly redefine authorial authority.

Authorial Ethos

When we look at fans we get a glimpse at the current state of the author, encompassing the question of ownership of texts; authorial control over ideas; shared world-building; and readerly collaboration. More importantly, we get continuous and direct engagement with questions of the overall ethos of the author. Whether fans discuss problematic representations in the source texts and question the underlying ideology of commercial texts such as *Glee* or whether writers and readers discuss fan productions such as "Women's Work" and contemplate the ideological imagery that may be replicated therein – the rhetorical author position is always central to any disagreement. Even while using pseudonyms and even

when disembodied online, fan conversations reflect larger cultural conceptual shifts about authorship, such as questions of ownership of ideas, the values of remixing, and the potentials of collective creations.

Authorship has always been a conflicted category and textual creations have always been a balance between difference and repetition, between referencing and drawing from existing works and creating and imagining things anew. In current culture, transformation becomes ever easier and ever more accepted even as copyrights counterbalance that creative free-for-all with ever more restrictive intellectual property laws. In such a culture, authors must always be actual people whose experiences and identities shape their works as well as author functions created among authorial paratexts, industry marketing, and audience reception. So while the author clearly isn't dead, ethos and identity politics surrounding authors in the end can only ever be the effect of an author function that is collectively created by writers and readers, producers and viewers alike.

Notes

1   Daniel Goldhagen quoted in Stefan Mächler, *The Wilkomirski Affair: A Study in Biographical Truth* (New York: Schocken, 2001), 116.
2   James E. Young quoted in Mächler, *Wilkomirski Affair*, 117.
3   Lawrence L. Langer quoted in Mächler, *Wilkomirski Affair*, 117.
4   Leon De Winter, ''Die Erfundene Hölle,'' *Der Spiegel*, September 28, 1998.
5   Daniel Ganzfried, ''Die Geliehene Holocaust-Biographie,'' *Weltwoche*, August 27, 1998.
6   More current examples include James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* (New York: Doubleday, 2003) and Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin's *Three Cups of Tea* (New York: Viking, 2006). Both fictional accounts of supposed autobiographical events were initially hailed for their authenticity and moral lesson, yet became embroiled in scandal when their factuality was called into question.
7   Roland Barthes, ''The Death of the Author,'' in *Image/Music/Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 142–7.
8   Michel Foucault, ''What is an Author?'' in *Language, Countermemory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 116.
9   See Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Donald E. Pease, ''Author,'' in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990),105–117; Andrew Bennett, *The Author* (New York: Routledge, 2005).
10 Andrew Fleck, ''The Father's Living Monument: Textual Progeny and the Birth of the Author in Sidney's Arcadias,'' *Studies in Philology* 107.4 (2010): 520–47.
11 Richard Dutton, *Licensing, Censorship, and Authorship in Early Modern England* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000).
12 Stephen B. Dobranski, *Readers and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Atlanta: Georgia State University, 2005).

13   Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

14   In *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*, 2nd edn (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), Alastair Minnis describes the role of the *auctor*, who occupies a place different from the *scriptor*, whose role is the mere copying of important texts. The *auctor*, on the other hand, holds a form of authority that allows him to expand upon the existing texts and make declarative statements. Minnis supports this argument etymologically, stating: ''the term derives its meaning from four main sources: auctor was supposed to be related to the Latin terms agere 'to act or perform,' augere, 'to grow,' and auieo 'to tie,' and to the Greek noun autentim 'authority' '' (10).

15   I purposefully use the male pronoun here, not only because the male author was clearly considered the default for much of the aesthetic tradition I am describing here, but also because there are marked gender differences in conceptions of authorship that I will address below.

16   For details on the Statute of Anne and consequent copyright legislation, see Lionel Bentley, Uma Suthersanen, and Paul Torremans, eds, *Global Copyright: Three Hundred Years Since the Statute of Anne, From 1709 to Cyberspace* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2010).

17   Woodmansee, *Author*, 38.

18   Pease, ''Author,'' 106.

19   M.H. Abrams describes this shift in dominant aesthetics in *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Literary Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), where he opposes the mirror held up to nature favored by pre-Romantics with the lamp lit from the genius of Romantic writers.

20   William Wordsworth, ''Essay, Supplementary to the Preface'' (1815), in *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth in Ten Volumes*, Vol. 10 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1911), 104.

21   Thomas Noon Talfourd, quoted in Richard Swartz, ''Wordsworth, Copyright, and the Commodities of Genius,'' *Modern Philology* 89.4 (1992), 482.

22   Mark Rose, ''Nine-Tenths of the Law: The English Copyright Debates and the Rhetoric of the Public Domain,'' *Law and Contemporary Problems* 66 (2003), 76.

23   Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Christian Lenhardt (London: Routledge, 1984), 226.

24   In fact, there are clear parallels between the public commons that were moved into private ownership with the enclosure movements of the eighteenth century and an intellectual commons that suddenly ascribed ownership to ideas previously commonly shared. Law professor and Creative Commons advocate James Boyle describes current copyright expansions as a second enclosure movement (James Boyle, *The Public Domain: Enclosing the Commons of the Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008)). In so doing, he supports a view wherein shared intellectual thought creates and supports a public commons that is threatened by legal protection of individual ownership.

25   See, for example, Lawrence Lessig, *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity* (New York: Penguin, 2004); James Boyle, *The Public Domain: Enclosing the Commons of the Mind* (New Haven: Yale

University Press, 2008); and Mario Biagioli, Martha Woodmansee, and Peter Jaszi, eds, *Making and Unmaking Intellectual Property: Creative Production in Legal and Cultural Perspective* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

26 T.S. Eliot, ''Tradition and the Individual Talent,'' in *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 44.

27 T.S. Eliot, ''Tradition and the Individual Talent,'' 38.

28 W.K. Wimsatt, Jr. and C. Monroe Beardsley, ''The Intentional Fallacy,'' in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), 3.

29 Barthes, ''Death,'' 147.

30 Roland Barthes, ''From Work to Text,'' in *Image/Music/Text*, 155–64.

31 Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora *et al.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980).

32 In so doing, he addresses the ontological inquiry into proper names, often exemplified in philosophical texts through authors.

33 One important observation in Foucault's essay is the historical emphasis on authorial weight in terms of the sciences and the humanities. He suggests that whereas the sciences used to place emphasis on authority at a time when most literary texts were anonymous, nowadays scientific texts all but stand on their own while the authorial persona is of vital importance in the humanities.

34 Foucault, ''What is an Author?'', 116.

35 See, for example, David A. Gerstner, ''The Practices of Authorship,'' in *Authorship and Film*, ed. David A. Gerstner and Janet Staiger (New York: Routledge, 2003), 4–25 and Janet Staiger, ''Authorship Approaches,'' in the same volume, 27–57.

36 Nancy K. Miller, ''Changing the Subject: Authorship, Writing, and the Reader,'' in *Subject to Change: Reading Feminist Writing* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988), 106.

37 James L. Kinneavy, *Theory of Discourse* (New York: Norton, 1980).

38 Audre Lorde, ''The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House,'' in *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984), 110–13.

39 Carmen Van Kerckhove, ''The 10 biggest race and pop culture trends of 2006,'' *Racalicious*, January 1, 2007, http://www.racialicious.com/2007/01/15/the-10-biggest-race-and-pop-culture-trends-of-2006-part-1-of-3.

40 s.e. smith, ''Hipster Racism,'' *This Ain't Livin*, July 16, 2009, http://meloukhia.net/2009/07/hipster_racism.html.

41 Michael Eric Dyson and Eric Bates, ''New Yorker Cover Satirizing Obama Raises Controversy,'' *PBS Newshour*, July 14, 2008, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/politics/july-dec08/obamacover_07-14.html.

42 Philip Kennicott, ''It's Funny How Humor Is So Ticklish,'' *The Washington Post*, July 15, 2008, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/07/14/AR2008071402445.html.

43 Ta-Nehisi Coates, ''The Longest War,'' *The Atlantic*, May 4, 2011, http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2011/05/the-longest-war/238334.

44 ''Glee Cast to get Hollywood Diversity Award,'' *Reuters*, October 31, 2009, http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/10/31/us-glee-idUSTRE59U1SV20091031.

45 Examples include fan and blogger ciderpress's critique of a *NY Magazine* interview on its use of the term ''other Asian'' (''interesting. no, wait, the other thing: tedious,'' *Dreamwidth*, April 21, 2010, http://ciderpress.dreamwidth.org/225684.html); David

Kociemba's essay ''This Isn't Something I can Fake'' (*Transformative Works and Cultures* 5 (2010) http://journal.transformativeworks.org/index.php/twc/article/view/225/185); and Alex Blaze's article ''Glee Neuters Rocky: 'Tranny' Is OK but 'Transsexual' Isn't'' (*The Huffington Post* October 28, 2010, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alex-blaze/glee-neuters-rocky-tranny_b_775227.html).

46   Stanley Fish, ''Interpreting the Variorum,'' in *Is There a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 171.

47   The vid can be found at http://www.viddler.com/explore/Luminosity/videos/2/. For an in-depth discussion of the fanvid and some of the conversations surrounding it, see Micole, ''Women's Art and 'Women's Work','' *Ambling Along the Aqueduct*, August 29, 2007, http://aqueductpress.blogspot.com/2007/08/womens-art-and-womens-work.html.

48   Eric Schaefer, *Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!: A History of Exploitation Films, 1919–1959* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999) and Kathleen Karr, ''The Long Square-up: Exploitation Trends in the Silent Film,'' *Journal of Popular Film* 3 (1974): 107–29.

49   A version of this occurs in the classroom when reading problematic texts, like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Heart of Darkness*. Coupling these texts with their critiques, such as Chinua Achebe's postcolonial critique ''An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness' '' in *Heart of Darkness, An Authoritative Text, Background and Sources Criticism*, 3rd edn, ed. Robert Kimbrough (London: Norton, 1988), 251–61, allows teachers to maintain the canonical status quo yet feel like they're providing proper critical race theory as well.

50   Julie Levin Russo, ''User-Penetrated Content: Fan Videos in the Age of Convergence,'' *Cinema Journal* 48.4 (2009), 129.

51   See, for example, Howard Rheingold, *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1993); Sherry Turkle, *Life On the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995); and Mark Poster, *The Second Media Age* (New York: Blackwell, 1995).

52   J.J. Brown, Jr., ''Essjay's Ethos: Rethinking Textual Origins and Intellectual Property,'' *College Composition and Communication* 61.1 (2009), 241.

53   Amardeep Singh, ''Anonymity, Authorship, and Blogger Ethics,'' *symplokē* 16.1–2 (2008), 21–2.

54   And while there's clearly boundary policing such as I have discussed in ''My Life is a WIP on My LJ: Slashing the Slasher and the Reality of Celebrity and Internet Performances'' (*Fan Fiction and Fan Communities in the Age of the Internet*, ed. Karen Hellekson and Kristina Busse (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006), 207–24) in terms of queer identity, I'd argue that it is the consistency of identity, one's ethos, that must be considered most important.

55   Of course, just as with the examples with which I started, there is the continuing danger of co-optation. This ''identity tourism,'' as Lisa Nakamura has coined it, may have been most blatantly recently exposed when the blog supposedly written by the Syrian lesbian ''Amina Abdallah Arraf'' was in face written by white US male Tom McMaster. For more details, see Lisa Nakamura, ''Syrian Lesbian Bloggers, Fake Geishas, and the Attractions of Identity Tourism,'' *Hyphen Magazine*, July 15, 2011, http://www.hyphenmagazine.com/blog/archive/2011/07/syrian-lesbian-bloggers-fake-geishas-and-attractions-identity-tourism.

56   Brown, ''Essjay's Ethos,'' 240–1.

57   For a discussion of the role of gender and the importance of pseudonyms, see Susan C. Herring, ''Gender and Power in Online Communication,'' *Center for Social Informatics Working Papers*, WP-01-05 (2001), https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/bitstream /handle/2022/1024/WP01-05B.html. More recently, the conflicts surrounding pseudonymous cultures were thrown into stark relief with Google+'s prohibition of anything but legal names for account creation. For an overview of the issues raised in these ''nym wars,'' see danah boyd, '' 'real Names' Policies are an Abuse of Power,'' *apophenia*, August 4, 2011, http://www.zephoria.org/thoughts/archives /2011/08/04/real-names.html.

58   Hawthorne, of course, was actually speaking of his nineteenth-century paid women colleagues, which further emphasizes the point that women writers remain marginalized even when being reimbursed for their work. In fact, in literary criticism, women's texts were all but overlooked and excluded from any literary canon which tended to evaluate with a strong bias toward ''male'' topics, or, as Nina Baym so aptly puts it, ''in favor of, say, a whaling ship, rather than a sewing circle as a symbol of the human community'' (*Women's Fiction: A Guide to Novels By and About Women in America, 1820–70* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 14).

59   Woodmansee, *Author*, 106.

60   Cupidsbow, ''How Fanfiction Makes Us Poor,'' *LiveJournal*, April 26, 2007, http://cupidsbow.livejournal.com/239587.html.

61   Karen Hellekson, ''A Fannish Field of Value: Online Fan Gift Culture,'' *Cinema Journal* 48.4 (2009), 114.

62   Abigail DeKosnik, ''Should Fan Fiction Be Free?'' *Cinema Journal* 48.4 (2009), 124.

63   Brown, ''Essjay's Ethos,'' 241.