Continuing the Conversation:

How Communication Technology Impacts Traditional Roles

Chandra Jenkins

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CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

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Notes:

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I love authors. They have been the focus of much of my scholarly studies, along with the writing I have shared on my blog (web log). I talk about them so much because they hold a fascinating place in the history of English studies. They also seem to suffer from the inability to stop talking. I read much of what authors say because I find their views on their work as well as the field an interesting way to interact with texts. My favorite authors also tend to be literary critics. Like T.S. Eliot; I love him. Yes, he tended to act in a manner reminiscent of a jerk, but not only was he a great poet, he was an excellent theorist. Decades before Roland Barthes declared the author dead, Eliot advocated for the lives of authors to be disregarded while reading a work. Eliot begins this conversation toward the end of "Tradition and the Individual Talent" when he argues that an author's experience "may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates . . ." (40). In his elitist way, Eliot is arguing for the audience to ignore the fact that the work they read originated with a person. Eliot in this instance would much rather people ignore the many-headed monster that is an author of a work. And while I think that he does this as a defense of his privacy, those who adhere to New Criticism frameworks uphold this tenant vigorously.

I do not fall into the New Criticism camp because I love to learn things, anything, and when it comes to authors, I really enjoy learning about them and their time. While I understand Barthes' point about a text becoming apparently final and complete through assigning an author, I disagree with the stance that knowledge of an author's life inherently closes the text to further interpretation and understanding (279). It is at this point that I go back to another part of the argument of "Tradition and the Individual Talent" where Eliot claims that "No poet, no artist of

any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists" (37). Here Eliot argues that a true or good or excellent poet will need to be viewed within a context that accounts for the history of poetry. Eliot even argues later that this same poet must create with this history in mind (39).This part of his argument makes sense to me. Michel Foucault takes up this contextual idea of the author and explains the role of the author within the power structure of meaning. He ultimately concludes that the authorial construct we are most familiar with began when money could be made by those who held the title of author (285). Foucault concludes toward the end of his article "What is an Author?" that we constantly force authors to work with others to fulfill their role, despite the preconception of an "author as a genius, as a perpetual surging of invention" (290). These understandings of 'the author' also dovetail nicely with Jack Stillinger's premise for his book, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*. In this book, he claims that texts are created not only by the originator, but also by any editors (official or not), anyone who manipulates the text for print, and even scholarly editors after the author's death (22). Lawrence Lessig, a prominent current cultural critic, claims in his last talk on the idea free-culture[1] that all creative works are in conversation with those that have come before and that this conversation is necessary because culture would die without it. Taking this perspective on text creation, the knowledge of authors' lives and historical contexts opens up numerous venues through which I can interact with their work. When I learned that Marianne Moore, a contemporary of Eliot,

[1] The free-culture movement is most concerned with the impact of restrictive copyright laws on the creation of culture. In the preface to his book *Free Culture*, Lessig explains: "A free culture supports and protects creators and innovators. It does this directly by granting intellectual property rights. But it does so indirectly by limiting the reach of those rights, to guarantee that follow-on creators and innovators remain *as free as possible* from the control of the past" (xiv). Lessig has moved the conversation to the United States' government by focusing on cleaning up corruption inherent in the current lobby system in Congress.

thought of herself as a prose writer, her poems began to make sense to me on a level that had previously been blocked.

The argument against the framework of broader contextual criticism is that learning the context automatically traps the reader's understanding. But I do not get bound by either by the authors or their lives. I do not completely discount them, but authors are not God. As much as some would like to think they are omniscient, especially concerning their works, I have to disagree. I think it is impossible. Even in a later re-reading of this introduction, a relatively non-creative work, I will see ideas, insights, flashes of stories, brief reflections of brilliance, and much more that I am not intending in this moment as I write. So when authors, such as Ray Bradbury or J.K. Rowling attempt to control the way readers understand their works, I take their opinions into consideration as I would any other reader, but I refuse to let the authors control my understanding of what I read. When Bradbury claimed in May, 2007, that his novel *Fahrenheit 451* had nothing to do with McCarthy-era government censorship but was instead about the danger of allowing television to think for us, I looked into the drafts of the text. I found that this understanding had been more prominent in the early drafts, but not to the extent he claimed. The dangers of television remain one of many themes in the novel. Not long after Bradbury's claims, Rowling, in a reading at Carnegie Hall in New York, claimed to have always viewed Dumbledore as homosexual (Smith[2]). While Rowling may have thought of Dumbledore in this way, and while that may fit the text, I think there is room for readers to see Dumbledore in whatever light fits with their understanding of the text. Numerous interpretations hold under

[2] This is the author of the easiest to access article online at http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/oct/21/film.books The actual revelation happened during her reading from book seven at Carnegie Hall in October 2007. There are still numerous articles and blog posts about this. The Leaky Cauldron, a fan site, has a complete transcript of the event.

scrutiny of what is written on the page, and no one person could possibly ever hope to understand or see them all.

But I made a statement earlier that raises some serious questions. If I am the author of this work, why do I not know everything in it? Well, partly because I am not smart enough to keep track of all of my thoughts and influences consciously, but also partly because language is malleable and mutable. The words I have written on this page might not mean the same thing to me tomorrow that they do now. Think about these questions: What did September 11 mean in 2000? What did it mean in 2002? What does it mean today? What will it mean in 3001? Language, even seemingly static language stuck on a page, changes. Foucault discusses this malleability in the beginning of "What is an Author?" by explaining that "writing is identified with its own unfolded exteriority. This means that it is an interplay of signs arranged less according to its signified content than according to the very nature of the signifier" (281). We know what a book says because we see what is on the page and understand those markings to carry specific meanings. These meanings, however, are in constant play as we add new experiences and understandings. Until the recent technological developments, only authors and those connected to the text production process could modify the signs. The expansion of who can move what we see on the page brings new dimensions to the interplay Foucault discusses.

This constitutes part of my discussion of Marianne Moore's poem "Poetry." The technology of Moore's time limited the number of people who could change the letters of her poem on the page. The post was the fastest way to transmit documents but cost limited the group who would receive a draft of any poems. Moore was very conscious of the historical conversation of poetry that Eliot referenced in "Tradition and the Individual Talent." Her poetry

came from this contextual understanding, and pulled generously on what had come before, while still making its own points about the genre. “Poetry,” originally published in 1919, discusses the genre in response to the cultural conversation. Existing in three significantly different versions, Moore changed this poem throughout her life in response to what she saw as the needed perspective in the conversation. Though the poem was collected by others, she was the only one to ever make dramatic changes in the words readers saw on the page. This type of revision is clearest in the poem’s final three line version that argues that poetry, and particularly Modernist poetry, does provide a place for that which is genuine. This interpretation is only clear within the conversation that happened throughout Moore’s life. And despite what can be seen as a demeaning of those who attempt to join the conversation, the context also shows that it is an argument for the inclusion of poets and poetry that is genuine, regardless of the time or person, into the conversation.

The technology that allowed Moore to limit who could change the placement of the signs embodied in “Poetry” has developed in such a way that anyone with a computer and some spare time can modify the presentation of a text. Though these technological changes pose problems for some authors and scholars, a number of authors are embracing the mutability of their texts. Cory Doctorow is a newer science fiction writer and cultural essayist who gives away everything he writes in an electronic format from his website. He even releases his texts under a less restrictive Creative Commons copyright license and encourages his fans to not only share his work but to change it. On the day in 2003, that he released his first novel, *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*, Doctorow also posted the electronic files of the text on his website with a less restrictive copyright allowing people to download and share the novel for free. By transmitting

his texts over the internet, he engaged in the free-culture conversation by inviting readers to remix his text. Doctorow admittedly does not share drafts of his work, but he freely shares what he is done with so that others can incorporate it into the cultural conversation. Many of his short stories, including his first, called "Craphound," have been adapted, remixed, and developed under the less restrictive copyright. What made *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom* a great place to begin entering his major work into the less restrictive copyright license is found in the title. This work took some of the cultural elements of the conversation, such as Disneyland and George Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London*, and used them to discuss what was happening in 2003. The novel also converses well with many of the themes that appear consistently in the science fiction genre. In order to understand some of the novel, readers would need to have a working knowledge of the science fiction genre.

One of the newer additions to the internet communication technology is the ability to record and share the audio files known as podcasting. Because of the newness of podcast technology, authors are just beginning to learn how to use it, but they are building on several old conversations. They are building on the traditional/tribal conversation of telling stories, but they have modified this tradition so that, rather like a radio program, you can get episodes of podcasts. Scott Sigler, a new horror author, does this with all of his novels and short stories. He has taken what computers do extraordinarily well, their copying and transmitting capabilities, and adapted it to share the audio files of his stories over the internet. He shares his drafts with readers while they are still unfinished, and he uses a less restrictive copyright that allows and encourages sharing. The most recent example of this is with his podcast only novel, *Nocturnal*, throughout which Sigler was very communicative with his audience. This encouraged his

readers, which number in the thousands, to join the conversation and comment on the development of the text, placing them in a position of creating the signs. Moore's readers could not have had this impact on her texts because the technology could not accommodate this level of conversation. Even with Doctorow's first novel, this level of conversation could not have been attained as easily. Sigler's readers not only contact him through email and comments on forums, they can contact him through any number of social networking sites, such as Facebook or Twitter.

As technology has changed, the level of communication between readers and authors has increased. But it is not just the ease with which readers can contact authors that makes technology notable. It is the ease of access to the text itself in a mutable form that makes the technological developments important. As the technology that used to interact with a text changes, the comfortable divisions between reader and author become fluid. When it takes seconds to talk with an author in the process of creating a new work, many readers will take those seconds. When it takes minutes to reshape a beloved text, readers will also take these minutes. This more fluid understanding of the author/reader dynamic fits most comfortably as an extension of Umberto Eco's understanding as presented in *The Role of the Reader*. In this book, Eco argues for a framework where "[t]he reader as an active principal of interpretation is a part of the picture of the generative process of the text" (41). Today, many authors talk to readers through a number of different venues provided by the internet, which makes the reader a very real, and very undeniable, "part of the picture." Communication technology, like blog comments and tweets, also move readers from "an active principal of interpretation" to a partial creator of

the text. The ease with which real people talk to authors further complicates the idea of authority because the hierarchical roles have moved to a more parallel level.

Maybe I feel most comfortable discussing literature from this fluid platform because I like to read and edit and analyze and enjoy literature. I think the editing is particularly responsible for my understanding of texts as a communal conversation. I edit with my understanding of the author's perspective in mind, as well as the conversation the work will enter into. I am very comfortable reading a text from several perspectives at once, and I easily see the story as a palimpsest of all the versions. But does that make me a co-author? So far, in another's work, I have offered a few suggestions on specific words to replace. Other than that, the text has changed and shifted because I provided my questions/thoughts/reactions/associations/opinions for the author to consider. Any changes stemming from that are completely authorized. And yet, they still reflect me. Certainly they reflect more my imitation of the author, but they still reflect me. I also see our culture of today with all the hopes/fears/pains/loves/concerns/joys/lives reflected in the work. There are phrases that if I were not living today I would never read as allusions, which might never be recognized in future footnotes. I see the political environment, the economic environment, the world precariously balanced in the stories of today. The hope for a better tomorrow also shines in many of the new stories. But these allusions are so slight as to be easily overlooked should these stories be read in 30 years. This demonstrates that authors reflect the times they live in without conscious effort, and that if I read through some of these works further down the road, I will probably miss those allusions because they will also have faded. And I will, more likely than not, never be known in association with the texts I edit, so my

reflections will go unnoticed and understood differently. This leads me to another question--would I still be an author, if I ever was one, when my fingerprints are smudged by time?

These are questions I think about often, not only because I enjoy editing, but because I am an English academic with an emphasis in textual criticism and authorship theory. The questions do not get any easier when applied to dead authors. But the complexity is fun. I will probably be thinking of answers to these questions, and I am quite content with that, which is why I have written this project.

Within this project, I have used many of these questions as a starting point. I noticed in my research that these questions have become more pronounced and interesting as authors utilize computers and the internet to create and share their works. Computers, the internet, social media programs, and the proliferation of audio books for portable music players bring their own complications to the conversation. What authors do with these technologies impacts and informs their works. This, in turn, affects how scholars understand the works of these authors. Where all of this meets creates intriguing paths that I have attempted to follow here by looking at the work of Moore, Doctorow, and Sigler. As each author joins the conversation by building on the past, each author leaves their mark and changes the way we understand the roles that are traditionally separate. When technology made it more difficult for more people to join the conversation, authors could more easily be categorized. As technology makes it easier for anyone to join the conversation, the way we talk about the different roles is changing. By following the ways Moore, Doctorow, and Sigler joined the larger conversation, and the impact that has had on the roles of reader, author, and editor, the changes in the way these roles are discussed begins to show.

Reading Omissions: Marianne Moore's Ever Changing "Poetry"

When communication technology still took numerous people and a significant time commitment, Marianne Moore began writing her poetry. The community and the conversation she was part of was no less deep than the current conversation, but the breadth was somewhat narrower because the cost of sharing texts with a large number of people made it difficult for everyone to join in. This smaller community necessarily limited the potential influence of all readers on the text because when fewer people can connect, controlling what people can access becomes easier. Where authors today interact with each other on a broad scale due to the ease of communication across the internet, contemporaries of Moore did not comment as often on those beyond their immediate community. The exceptions are the authors that we now study in literature courses. Eliot commented on numerous authors, as did Ezra Pound, which leaves records of authors who may otherwise have been completely overlooked. And though Moore commented on a fairly broad range, especially as an editor, there are those she did not comment on in much depth. This more limited communication range does not say that Moore's works were less creative, but rather makes tracking the changes and influences is in some respects an easier task than a similar endeavor for current authors. The more restricted conversation amongst the authors of Moore's time also has fewer challenges to keeping the categories in line. When authors take on other roles, the switch between each role is more pronounced.

Moore's contemporaries have left their stamp on numerous art forms, but they have left an indelible mark on poetry. With the constant refrain to "Make it new" coming from Pound and others, most of the poetry of this time is marked by the attempts to recreate what had been a very established form by breaking much of what was considered the standard. One poet that stands

strong in this group of rebels is Moore. Born just before the turn of the twentieth century, Moore soon began expressing her views on the world through boundary challenging poetry. Originally wanting to be a novelist, she found acceptance instead as a poet and critic. Her first publications came while she was at school, but were picked up by the little magazines not long after her graduation. Moore was published in the prominent little magazines *Others*, *The Egoist*, *The Lantern*, and *Poetry* as early as 1915 (Molesworth 113). Through these publications Moore met H.D., Eliot, Pound, Stevens and many of the other central figures in Modernist poetry, beginning what would become her writing community.

The first people to see Moore's poems were her mother and brother, and close family friend Mary Norcross, whose opinions she valued. Throughout their lives, Moore relied on her mother's and brother's insight into what she was attempting to communicate. They communicated through letters that were sent in a circle from one to the next so that each of them would know what was happening with the others; it was the precursor to hitting the "reply all" on an email. This close connection not only provided Moore with a ready reading group, it also provided material for her poems as she incorporated family nicknames and events in some of her poems. As she began sending her poems further out for publication, she developed friendships with other poets. Among the first of these important friendships were with poet H.D. and sometimes patron Bryher, which resulted in professional feedback on her poems and occasional reciprocated publication assistance (Molesworth 123). Early in her career, Moore also developed a publication relationship with Eliot and Pound, who both offered to edit and produce collections of her work early in her career. Eliot actually did collect her work in 1935, and it was partially because of her connection with him that she was able to help other friends with their

publications. One of the most noted connections Moore had was her friendship with the poet Wallace Stevens. Robin G. Shulze details the growth and follows the course of their friendship in her 1995 book *Web of Friendship*. Moore also developed an important relationship with younger poet Elizabeth Bishop. This relationship provided Moore with an opportunity to mentor another female poet as she began her career (Molesworth 359).

Moore connected and interacted with other authors beyond this circle, such as William Carlos Williams, Mina Loy, E.E. Cummings, Langston Hughes, Sylvia Plath, among others. These other interactions were not as personal, or they were not as long lasting, or they fell in a professional association. Some were very important for Moore's career, or they were very important for the other poet's career. Each member of the group(s) that Moore communicated with becomes important because they provide context and history for Moore's work. Since she valued the conversation, as evidenced by the number of letters she wrote and saved and her prolific collection of mementos from people she communicated with, tracing the conversation her poems fit within provides pathways for readers today to join the conversation.

Following one of her most changed poems, "Poetry," the impact of those Moore trusted with her work becomes apparent. Published early in her career, "Poetry" is the work of a poet on the cusp of a brilliant writing career. First published in the July 1919, edition of *Others*, "Poetry" was later collected by H.D. and Bryher (Winifred Ellerman) in her first book, the 1921, *Poems*. In 1924, Moore edited her own collection of poems, *Observations*, and then published a second edition in 1925, both of which contained a version of "Poetry." T.S. Eliot re-collected Moore's "Poetry" in 1935's *Selected Poems*, to which Moore added other poems in 1951's *Collected Poems*. Moore's final collection of poems in her lifetime, *Complete Poems*, arrived in 1967. By

the end of her career, and through today, "Poetry" became the focus of some debate. "Poetry" does not stand as the focus of critical discussion because Moore published it in seven different books, but because those seven books house three significantly different versions of the same poem. Originally a thirty line poem that Moore submitted to *Others*, she cut "Poetry" to thirteen lines for the second edition of *Observations* in 1925. When Eliot collected it for *Selected Poems*, he went back to the 1919, version, and Moore kept that version for her *Collected Poems*. Her most drastic revision of the poem stands in her final publication, *Complete Poems*, in which she cuts the poem down to three lines. The variations in the poem are not apparent to readers who only know Moore's work from anthologies, since the 1919, version is the one most often anthologized, and the 1925, version is rarely published making it quite difficult to find. What these changes demonstrate are not Moore's changing feelings about poetry itself, but her feelings about her place in the medium as her work became the focus of critical discussion.

Originally published in the July 1919, edition of *Others*, "Poetry" ran thirty lines in its discussion of the form and those who use it. This prose-style poem was then collected by H.D. and Bryher in 1921's *Poems* and reads:

> I too, dislike it: there are things that are important beyond all this fiddle.
> Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one discovers that there is in it after all, a place for the genuine.
> Hands that can grasp, eyes
> that can dilate, hair that can rise
> if it must, these things are important not because a
>
> high sounding interpretation can be put upon them but because they are useful; when they become so derivative as to become unintelligible, the same thing may be said for all of us – that we
> do not admire what
> we cannot understand. The bat,

holding on upside down or in quest of something to

eat, elephants pushing, a wild horse taking a roll, a tireless wolf under
a tree, the immovable critic twinkling his skin like a horse that feels a flea, the
base -
ball fan, the statistician – case after case
could be cited did
one wish it; nor is it valid
to discriminate against “business documents and

school-books”; all these phenomena are important. One must make a distinction
however: when dragged into prominence by half poets, the result is not poetry,
nor till autocrats among us can be
“literalists of
the imagination” – above
insolence and triviality and can present

for inspection, imaginary gardens with real toads in them, shall we have
it. In the meantime, if you demand on one hand, in defiance of their opinion -
the raw material of poetry in
all its rawness and
that which is, on the other hand,
genuine then you are interested in poetry. (*Poems* 1921)

Here Moore discusses the way people without passion for poetry destroy it. This version of the poem often finds its way into anthologies because it is the first, and the one that was collected most often in Moore’s lifetime, placing it in an authorized status. The second version of the poem occurs in the 1924 edition of *Observations*, Moore’s own collection of her work. Taking out “case after case / could be cited / one wish it” (15-17) and replacing “autocrats” with “poets” in line twenty-one, Moore’s minor changes barely hint at the significant changes that appear in later versions of the poem.

In 1925, Moore published a second edition of *Observations* that contains an often overlooked version of "Poetry." Running only thirteen lines, Moore cuts her poem down to the bare essentials:

> I too dislike it:
> there are things that are important beyond all this fiddle.
> The bat, upside down; the elephant pushing,
> a tireless wolf under a tree,
> the base-ball fan, the statistician –
> "business documents and schoolbooks" –
> these phenomena are pleasing,
> but when they have been fashioned
> into that which is unknowable,
> we are not entertained.
> It may be said of all of us
> that we do not admire what we cannot understand;
> enigmas are not poetry. (*Observations* 1925)

A more formal poem, Moore's revision cuts out her prose sound and look. When T.S. Eliot collected her work yet again in 1935, he used the 1924 version of the poem. This version stood in Moore's collections until her *Complete Poems* of 1967. With an opening note reading "Omissions are not accidents," Moore's most striking revision is found. Cut down to three lines, "Poetry" now reads:

> I, too, dislike it.
> Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one discovers in
> it, after all, a place for the genuine. (*Complete* 1967)

This final version, published by Moore before her death, reduces the poem that spanned most of her career, and stands as one of her most famous, down to what could be seen as her final feelings. The imagery that filled the center section has been completely wiped out.

When Moore first published "Poetry" in the July 1919, *Others*, she was answering William Carlos Williams' request for a new piece (*Becoming* 475). Begun by Alfred Kreymborg as a forum for American poetry that pushed the conventional boundaries in 1915, *Others* provided a place for Moore's work to spread to a wider audience in America (*Becoming* 472). By the time "Poetry" graced its pages, *Others*' vision of experimental expression had faltered to the point of being a joke to many of its first, and most influential, poets (*Becoming* 474). Williams, in particular, viewed the little magazine as having run its course. He took the opportunity of being guest editor to end, once and for all, the publication of *Others* and wrote about how the movement it embodied was stagnating (*Becoming* 474-5). Williams made the executive decision that the July 1919, edition would mark the end of *Others'* monthly publication. He did not share his plan with any of the contributors that he requested work from, but he was very specific in his desire for new work that embodied the rebelliousness of the movement *Others* supposedly stood for.

It is within this combative venue that "Poetry" first makes its appearance. Williams began the issue with his prose piece, "Gloria!", where he attacked the lack of the defiance *Others* once embodied. "It has grown inevitably to be a lie, like everything else that has been a truth at one time. I object to its puling 4 x 6 dimension. I object to its yellow cover, its stale legend. Everything we have ever done or can do under these conditions is being done now by any number of other MAGAZINES OF POETRY!" (Quoted in *Becoming* 475). Striking at the physical traits of the little magazine that had set it apart from the others, Williams builds up to the point that *Others* had fallen from the height it had started at to the level of everyone else. In Williams' eyes, the little magazine had committed a mortal sin by living long enough to become

a museum to the ideals that had initially served as the driving force of all of the artists' work. It had become like the other magazines that had refused Kreymborg, and Moore, and many of the authors *Others* featured. To emphasize his point, Williams placed Moore's "Poetry" directly after his opening rant about the faults of the publication.

Due to this placement, "Poetry" takes on additional contextual information concerning the state of poetic criticism in 1919. During this time much of what is held as the standard for Modernist poetry was being written or would soon be published. What the works held in common were the various ways in which they took what had been standard about poetry and made it new. Most often this was by breaking the conventions of the time, and Moore broke the definite line between poetry and prose. "Poetry" is an excellent example of her fluid boundaries between the genre she loved and the one she excelled in. The poem, as published in the earliest versions, looks and scans as though Moore originally wrote it as a prose piece. The lines spill over into each other and fill the whole page. Even the language of the poem reflects more of a prose construction than that of a poem. The second sentence of the poem reads, and even looks, as though Moore lifted it from one of her critical essays. The clauses are clearly separated with commas, and they build to the point that poetry provides a place for genuine sentiment regardless of the reader's feelings for poetry as a whole. Moore uses this beginning point as an integral element of the ending of the argument, where she finishes out with her contempt of half poets, or those who cannot "present for inspection, imaginary gardens with real toads in them" (25-26). Moore argues that these imaginary gardens are genuine, as evidenced by the real toads, and half poets cannot present them because, for all its invention, poetry is a craft that takes the whole of the poet. Such a poem, critical of those who attempted to handle the rawness of poetry, and yet

were incapable of handling it, seemed to emphasize Williams' own criticism of what *Others* embodied at this time. It Moore's writing of the poem must have appeared as intentionally supporting Williams' stance on the status of *Others* to those who read the final issue of the little magazine.

Such a reading gains ground with a surface knowledge of Moore's writing community. Through the relationship that Moore had with *Others,* Moore and Williams became friends who would write one another fairly consistently with feedback on whatever work was current at the time. Their relationship developed even more when Moore later became the editor of *The Dial*. Williams actually had written Moore and specifically requested new work from her for this issue. Though there is no published record of him informing her before hand of what the issue would look like, that was not common knowledge at the time, which led some people to think that Moore had been part of Williams' plan. The published collection of her letters, and her biography by Charles Molesworth do not provide the contextual documents in their selections because print necessarily limits what can be reproduced. Her manuscripts and other documents are collected in Philadelphia's Rosenbach Museum and Library, but time and cost prohibited a trip there before completion of this project. *Becoming Marianne* provided what context I found for the 1924, publication of "Poetry." Even this context was slim and required me to hunt for some of the information I needed, such as what the 1925, version of "Poetry" looked like in the second edition. The contextual documents that were most accessible, even in this age of information stored and shared on the internet, were some of the critical responses from Moore's time.

Criticism of Moore's poetry varied from praise to condemnation. With poets and editors such as H.D., Bryher, T.S. Eliot, and Ezra Pound supporting and pushing Moore to publish, numerous doors were opened for her work. There were other editors, such as Harriet Monroe, who were uncertain about the quality of her work, and these editors made it more difficult for her to publish. The most frequent criticism of Moore's poetry was that it was too dense and complicated to understand. Beginning in her college days, and continuing with her mother's view of her poetry, Moore faced this criticism. Her letters present an author attempting to come to terms with a potentially crippling view of her work. Throughout *The Selected Letters of Marianne Moore*, Moore writes of critics, friendly and adversarial, commenting on the use of language and metaphors creating uncertainty in her poems. Pound was her most prominent and vocal supporter to speak out in defense of her complicated arrangements and metaphors. In the March 1918 *Little Review*, Pound praises Moore, as well as Mina Loy, as producing "interesting and readable" poems for an earlier collection of *Others* (Gregory 23). Mark Van Doren's comments in the magazine *The Nation* on Moore's *Poems* offers little support. Claiming that Moore would be one of the current women poets better suited for writing in the seventeenth century, Van Doren states: "Marianne Moore, one admits right away, must be taken for worse. She wedded wit, but after divorces from beauty and sense." (Gregory 33). After explaining how a quote exemplifies her wordiness, Doren says, "There will be other Marianne Moores, perhaps, as there were other Cowleys and Crashaws and Cartwrights in the century of Jonson and Donne. Then can and will be endured." (Gregory 34). This kind of negative commentary on her poems was common amongst critics. This made the praise for her work counterbalance the negative

reviews of other influential editors, especially after the publication of her first lone collection *Poems*.

In a letter to Bryher, dated July 7, 1921, Moore says she "had considered the matter from every point and was sure … that to publish anything now would not be to my literary advantage" (*SL* 164). From this letter, and letters written in this same time to H.D. and Robert McAlmon, it is accepted that the 1921, publication of *Poems* by the Egoist Press was unsanctioned by Moore. A book of her poems was advocated by both Eliot and Pound in 1919, but she had declined both offers to help bring it out. She gave the reason for not publishing at the time as a lack of material worth publishing. She wanted to write more poems, as well as work on the poems she had published, before collecting them into a book of their own. The gesture of her friends prevented her immediate revision of several of her poems, including "Poetry." *Selected Letters* did not contain any direct communication between Moore and those who collected her poems concerning their placement of the poem. This would be one of the many questions that could possibly be answered by a trip to the Rosenbach and other libraries with Moore letters. Close to the time of *Poems*' publication, Harriet Monroe published a symposium on Moore's work. The collection contained praises from Bryher, H.D., and Yvor Winters, as well as Marion Strobel, and Pearl Anderson as specifically against Moore's poetry, and Monroe's own review, which incorporates her own bias against Moore (Molesworth 175-6). It is this collection, more than any other criticism to this point in Moore's career, that defines what made up, or was lacking in, Moore's poetry. The criticisms against Moore's *Poems* focus primarily on the blurred line between prose and verse in her poetry, as well as annoyance with the presence of her knowledge

in her poems (Gregory 36-7). Monroe's symposium presents a picture of the division among critics about Moore's poetry.

In the midst of this debate about her poems, Moore continues to write, and eventually revisits her *Poems*. In 1924, Moore publishes a new collection – *Observations*. In a brief note before the contents, Moore acknowledges that this collection is essentially *Poems* with a few poems taken out and several poems added to the collection. Moore is the catalyst for this collection and acts as editor by revising a few of the poems and painstakingly arranging the order of the poems included. In the 1924 edition, "Poetry" is placed between "To Statecraft Embalmed" and "The Past Is The Present." Moore, however, was not finished with *Observations*, and she republished the book in 1925. This second edition contains the first major revision of "Poetry," as well as a change in its placement in the book. For the second edition of *Observations*, Moore cut most of the lines in "Poetry." Originally a 30 line poem, the 1925, version has only 13 lines. Not only are there dramatic and severe cuts, the structure of the poem is drastically altered. Until 1925, "Poetry" had multiple stanzas breaking in the midst of sentences. The break in the lines at the untraditional place created a tension between the critic who twitches when annoyed by something as small as a flea and the poet (or person) in search of genuine, raw material – poetry (1924). The thirteen line revision cuts much of the tension by reverting to a more formal structure with clearer word choice and fewer metaphors.

Although the *Selected Letters* again do not provide any clear communication from Moore concerning the rationale behind the dramatic cut, there are some clues in the criticism of the time. Looking at what critics of the times said, it becomes clear that Moore's edits could stem from her response to her critics. Frequently she was told, even by those who were close to her,

that people could not understand her poetry. Eliot references this in his 1935 introduction to *Selected Poems*, when he tells readers that it takes a quick wit to follow all that Moore is saying (Gregory 107). The new end to the poem most clearly addresses these critics when it states:

> these phenomena are pleasing,
> but when they have been fashioned
> into that which is unknowable,
> we are not entertained.
> It may be said of all of us
> that we do not admire what we cannot understand;
> enigmas are not poetry. (7-13)

The "phenomena" were listed in lines three through six, and were common events such as a bat hanging upside down, a "base-ball fan", even the everyday types of writing found in businesses and schools. Each phenomenon listed in the 1925, "Poetry" was listed in the 1919, edition, the 1921, edition and the 1924, edition. The difference between the lists has to do with how the list is presented. In the earlier editions of the poems there are more descriptors of each phenomenon which allows for broader interpretations in the meaning of each one. The 1924, "Poetry" has "a wild horse taking a roll" (13) and "the immovable critic twitching his skin like a horse that feels a flea" (14). In 1925, all mention of horses is cut from the poem. The wild horse can be the poet set against the tame horse of the critic, or the wild horse is the same horse that is annoyed by the flea, or the horse can be both the poet and the critic (especially since many poets were critics as well) in the different roles a single person could play, or some other interpretation. This avenue of understanding is cut from the 1925, version, and makes the poem less rich. The more formal treatment of the matter in 1925, does clarify the ideas "Poetry" contains, but only by sacrificing both style and meanings.

Ten years after Moore reduced "Poetry" to thirteen lines, Eliot collected her poems in *Selected Poems* and brought back the longer 1919, version. Moore was not very involved in this new collection of her poetry. After her time as the editor of *The Dial*, Moore had faded a bit from public view. She had not published any new poems until the early thirties and it was only because Eliot insisted on collecting her poetry that another book of her poems was published (Molesworth 267). Eliot not only brought back the longer, more aesthetically focused poem, but reordered the poems, which furthers the aesthetic emphasis of Moore's poetry. By rearranging the poems, Eliot recast Moore as an aesthetic giant. In 1935, Eliot's collection solidified Moore's continued standing at the forefront of the Modernist crowd, especially with his introduction that focused the reader on Moore's poetic aesthetic successes (Molesworth 269). Moore seemed to know that Eliot would be the person to present her poems in the most appropriate manner for the times and let him have free rein. This view is solidified when looking at her 1951 *Collected Poems* where she leaves the 1935 *Selected Poems* as Eliot had edited them, including his title for the first part of her collection. The 1951 *Collected Poems* was published during a similar time of renewed poetical production for Moore after a fallow period. The major difference of the 1951 period was the number and type of awards Moore received for her contributions to the field of literature and letters. Her life-time career of challenging conventions was being recognized and applauded (Molesworth 357-8). Letting her *Selected Poems* stand as Eliot had collected them affirmed the aesthetic slant of her work and pointed to the important influence she had. The criticism had been shifted over the years from the publication of *Poems*, and it embraced her blurred and overlapping line between prose and verse. While she was still

championed as being difficult to completely understand, the merits of her poetry stood on their own by 1951, and no longer had to be valiantly defended.

Moore continued to write poetry and was very active in the literary society of New York. During the 1960's, Moore bid farewell to quite a number of her closest literary companions, including H.D. (Molesworth 414). She had also suffered several small strokes in the first part of the decade (Molesworth 422). Alert until her death in 1972, Moore kept tabs on what was happening in the literary world around her (Molesworth 425). She continued working with new poets on their craft and used her literary influence to suggest their work to the various poetry editors she knew. Toward the end of the decade, Moore published her final collection of her poetry. 1967, saw her *Complete Poems* published, with "Poetry" undergoing the final revision to three lines. With an epigraph reading "Omissions are not accidents," Moore's *Complete Poems* version of "Poetry" presents numerous opportunities for discussion concerning Moore's omissions. Everything else about *Complete Poems* mirrors the 1935 *Selected Poems*, except that Moore has cut even more lines from her memorable poem. This new version of "Poetry" again, without any definite corroboration from her published letters or biography, is published at the beginning of the scholarly backlash against Modernism's preoccupation with pure aesthetic. Because Moore kept up on literary discussions, her changes reflect a defense for not only her own poetry, but also the poetry of her contemporaries. Moore's deletions put the emphasis on what had always been in her poem, which could also be the only genuine elements of the poem. This is published as the Modernists who created and shaped the literature of the first part of the century are dying. Moore stands as one of the last, and this poem outlives her as a final testament to the power and heart that drove the poets we call Modernists. What Moore cut out in her final

version was not accidental, and finally, after a lifetime of being criticized for being too difficult, her poem focused on her medium of choice clearly states what pushed her to write.

Moore's revisionary tendencies open the meaning of her poems by presenting readers with choices about which version of the poem they are going to focus on and use as her last will and testament. I think Moore herself would publish all of her poems together and see them as independent, occasional poems for the time they were written or published in. While the long, *Selected Poems* version of "Poetry" is the one most often anthologized and used by scholars, to limit the poem to this one version takes away the varying meanings of the poems in their differing publication situations. A more comprehensive view of this poem, and her other poetry, is necessary, particularly when the reader knows that Moore was constantly revising all the work that passed through her hands. The editor in her could not leave the poems she read stand as they were when she could see what they could be. The revisions in her own poetry and those of others were all in an effort to communicate the meaning of the poem at the time and in the situation of publication. So reading her poetry, even with contempt for it, one truly can see the genuine heart and response to her times.

Following Moore's "Poetry" demonstrates the capacity that she had to continue the conversation, even with herself, with each new version of the poem. The poem originally becomes a significant point in the conversation concerning the fate and direction of the little magazines. With each incarnation, another set of hands take on the formation of the text, but the hands do not belong to common readers. The only people that Moore would allow, or at least tolerate, manipulating her work were the people she considered peers and who had recognized status within the community. H.D., Bryher, Eliot, and Pound were not simply readers of the

literature of the day – they were the formers; they had control over the shape of literature itself. These co-authors held positions of control, generally in the form of editors, but also in patronage, which made their modifications acceptable in the culture of the community. Never would simple subscribers, with no writing experience of their own, have their ideas taken seriously. They would first have to prove that on some level they had enough talent and understanding to write acceptable work. Only once they had been adopted into the community would their comments carry any weight.

As technology changed to make fast communication amongst a larger group of people, the capability of authors to control who could access their work would move further out of their hands. Moore could not have retained the kind of control she held over "Poetry" in an age where anyone could scan or type it. These unauthorized copies would more than likely have appeared on the internet, and Moore would have had to decide how she would interact with readers and fans.

Given Away: Readers Remixing Cory Doctorow's "Craphound"

Technology has changed considerably since Marianne Moore penned "Poetry" and mailed it around the world. Authors writing today use technology that makes it easier and cheaper to communicate with editors, publishers, and readers. Computers provide a new way of writing stories and poems, but their significance comes from their ability to create a plethora of copies that can then be sent around the world nearly instantaneously. Some authors find this copying and sharing technology a barrier to their work and livelihood, but the number of authors using the capabilities to their advantage is growing. Cory Doctorow, a contemporary writer, embraces the flexibility and sharing capabilities of the internet through his own website, craphound.com, and the blog that he co-edits, boingboing.net. His short stories exist in numerous forms online, and, unlike Moore and many authors, he willingly relinquishes his control over the material upon its publication by using Creative Commons licenses, which renders most of the textual variants as the work of readers and fans.

The extent of his belief in this free-culture concept is clear in his first professional publication – a short story called "Craphound" The story takes place in a time where the only difference from today is the benevolent extraterrestrials that live on Earth. "Craphound" follows a human, Jerry, who loves to buy junk from rummage sales and garage sales, which he then sells to thrift and antique stores to pay the bills. At the beginning of the story, Jerry is working with an exoskeleton clad alien he calls Craphound searching for the treasures in other people's trash. Both of them hold to the code of craphounds–don't bid against another craphound, and don't buy something another craphound would want just to sell it to him for a profit. In the very first encounter, Jerry bids against Craphound for a miniature steamer-trunk filled with little-kid

cowboy gear, breaking their friendship. The story sticks with Jerry as he continues his life and watches Craphound from a distance, longing to mend his relationship with his friend but unsure of how to make amends to an alien. Craphound eventually reaches out to Jerry on the eve of his races' exodus from earth, and, in a gesture of friendship, Craphound gives Jerry all of the cowboy stuff and keeps a set of glasses that will remind him of Jerry.

I first read this story in its most recent incarnation of a comic, which I found out about through Doctorow's blog. It only took a little research through his website and Google to find the other versions of the story. Originally published in a science fiction magazine, *Science Fiction Age*, in 1998, "Craphound," was then collected in 1999's *Year's Best Science Fiction XVI*. A revised version of the story was published the same year in an anthology of Canadian science fiction writers, *Northern Suns*. The next time it appeared in print, the story had traveled to Japan's *Hayakawa Science Fiction Magazine* in September, 2001. After that Doctorow collected it in his first short story publication, *A Place So Foreign and Eight More*, in 2003, which also placed the story permanently online through his simultaneous release of the electronic text. The next time the story surfaced in a formal venue, it had shifted into the newest form of story-telling for online–a podcast. In January 2006, *Escape Pod*, a weekly online science-fiction podcast magazine, released its recording of "Craphound." Each *Escape Pod* releases begins with the editor's presentation of the story and ends with a brief discussion of what the editor saw in the story. Another shift in format arrived in the form of a comic adaptation in 2007, which was later collected in a hardbound trade paperback with five other comic adaptations of Doctorow stories in 2008. 2008, also saw two new podcast recordings by different artists. Literal Systems, a group dedicated to producing quality audio literature for free, produced a reading in July, while fan

Roy Trumbull put his recording of the story up on the "Open Source Audio" page of *Internet Archive* in September. Each version of this story presents a new perspective, which is particularly clear in each of the fan creations.

In the story's first appearance in the sixteenth collection of *The Year's Best Science Fiction*, "Craphound" delved deeper into Jerry's character through a prolonged flashback. Just before Jerry and Craphound's final conversation before the aliens leave Earth, Jerry has a flashback to the time he spent at his grandmother's house looking through her artifacts and creating stories for some of them. This extended flashback takes a page and a half of the entire story space in the earlier *Year's Best*. In the later *Northern Suns* collection, the flashback is divided and interspersed with the rest of the story. Intermingling the current story of Jerry's estrangement from Craphound also connects the emotion of Jerry's flashbacks more intimately with the immediate concerns of the story.

The electronic version of the 2003 collection *A Place so Foreign and Eight More* serves as the base text for all later variations. In this collection by Doctorow, the flashback is limited to a general look back to Jerry's childhood and his encounters with family artifacts that he is only vaguely familiar with. This more general flashback focuses primarily on Jerry's developing sense of the ephemeral stories connected with the tangible objects of his parents' past. In this instance, the revision to a narrower focus serves the ending of the story where Craphound leaves Jerry with the cowboy gear that initiated their rift so that Jerry would not forget the story of their friendship.

The electronic version of "Craphound" that Doctorow provides on his website does not exist as the final version of the text, despite its scholarly status as final authorized version. This

version exists as the last one Doctorow directly controlled. With the publication of his short story collection *A Place So Foreign and Eight More,* Doctorow placed the text of the story online with a Creative Commons license to release readers to distribute and modify his work as long as they attribute him, do not make money off the work derived from his, and do not attempt to prevent others from using his work. Once he had completed fulfilling the role of the author in creating the text, Doctorow released his work so that readers could take up the role and continue the development of the text. Doctorow used what computers and the internet do best, copying and sharing, to get his work out to where people could find it and share it. He explains this as a marketing device in his essay, "Giving it Away." "The thing about an ebook is that it's a social object. It wants to be copied from friend to friend, beamed from a Palm device, pasted into a mailing list. . . . It is so fluid and intangible that it can spread itself over your whole life. Nothing sells books like a personal recommendation. . . .In an age of online friendship, ebooks trump dead trees for word of mouth" (71-2). This quote exemplifies what computers and the internet excel at – copying and sharing information. Doctorow has embraced the technology so that people will know his work. But what has really helped him become an author people know is his ability to carry on the type of conversation he describes in another essay, "Science Fiction Is the Only Literature People Care Enough About to Steal on the Internet." In his description of the artist that does well on the internet, he claims that it is those who can carry on a conversation with their audience via technology (80-81). By releasing his works into the world of remixable infinity, Doctorow carries on the conversation. Since "Craphound" lives as an electronic text online, it is fitting that the next format is one that only exists because of the internet.

In 2004, the term "podcast" entered the language as the name of audio files developed to be transmitted over the internet to play on MP3 devices, such as iPods (Wikipedia[3]). Podcasts are still relatively new, especially when compared to written texts, and for this reason little scholarly study or discussion concerning the format exists. With this in mind, I find that taking a moment to discuss podcasts will provide important context for the rest of the conversation. To start with, I need to clarify that for the purposes of this paper I am defining a podcast narrowly so that it contains only audio files of previously written text, though not necessarily published. This eliminates most talk-show style podcasts, as well as video podcasts, and professional programming podcasts. Some of what I assert here may apply to these forms, but for the sake of this conversation, I am not dealing specifically with these other forms.

In podcasts, speakers talk directly to listeners who may have no idea what the speaker looks like. The disembodied voice (or occasionally voices) comes through the speakers of the computer/car/iPod and hits the listener's ears. The only context for the sound comes from the listener's own knowledge of the podcast and any included introduction. Since many podcasts are limited to fit within a thirty to forty-five minute time-frame, these introductions and contextualizing elements are necessarily short. According to Rachel Swirsky, editor of *PodCastle*, a short-story podcast magazine similar to *Escape Pod*, this time frame works best because it fits within the commute time for most people. This understanding of listeners' interaction with podcasts is important for scholars. The people who produce these types of podcasts expect their listeners to divide their attention between at least two tasks, or at the very least the producers and editors expect a distracted audience. Due to this uncaptive audience, the

[3] Though Wikipedia is not always the most reliable information source, in this instance it was the best resource I could use. Podcasting is still new enough that there has yet to be a book on it that I could reference here printed.

narrator of the story presented must be as engaging, if not more, as the story. The narrator, or person who actually reads the story, must now work with the story to keep the reader's attention, and in doing so, the narrator takes on great responsibility.

Since we follow stories told aloud through the tone, the narrator now conveys the tone of the story, which may or may not mesh with a reader's understanding of the written text. But since those who engage with the story through a podcast may never see the text written, their understanding of the story is directly shaped by the presentation of the speaker. To this end, many podcasters take on voices or personalities for the different characters in an effort to more easily identify them. Not all podcasters do this, but it seems that many narrators will change tone for the different characters. Also, because the listener may never interact with the text in a written format, the information provided by the speaker becomes the facts of the story. If the speaker changes elements, or leaves out parts, or stumbles over their reading, the listener must search out the written text to discover any variations in the story. Since many listeners take these stories as time fillers, it would seem that most listeners would not search for this information. Many of these changes may occur within the mind of readers, but by using podcasts the text of the story comes to the listener in a mediated form with more noticeable expectations. And as podcasts continue to develop, the narrator becomes more important to listeners, in the same way comic illustrators became important to comics readers. In comics the storytelling is equally shared by the illustrator and writer. The comments on the blogs of podcasts such as *Escape Pod* and *PodCastle* demonstrate that the storyteller is moving into an equally important role. Listeners seem to implicitly understand that the person who tells them a story is as important to their understanding the meaning of the story as the person who actually writes the words when

they make comments that start "I loved the way ____ read the story" Much like scribes of the Medieval period, the narrator holds the truth of the story in their hands, and listeners respect those who treat them and the stories with respect.

With some background in the current podcasting practices, it is time to look at the podcast adaptations of "Craphound." Each of the current podcasts of "Craphound" uses the printed text from *A Place So Foreign and Eight More* as their source rather than the earlier print versions. The first version, released by *Escape Pod*, features the reading of Jesse Thorn, the host of a public radio show. Despite the ambiguous name, Thorn is male, and keeps his reading to the text that Doctorow provides on his website. Thorn sounds as though he is edging in on middle-age because he lacks the gravel undertone that seems to come with maturity. His tone gives the impression of a younger man telling the story of the time he was friends with an alien to another friend. Thorn's reading of the text begins with a light-hearted feel and ends with an almost overwhelming sense of emotion as the story closes, seeming to express and embody the emotion Thorn feels in the story. The end nearly disappears beneath the weight of his voice as he reads Craphound's farewell to Jerry, which reflects the weight of a human saying goodbye forever to an alien that he grew to understand and respect. The *Escape Pod* issue of "Craphound" is forty-six minutes exactly, and it contains three minutes and nineteen seconds of introductory material along with four minutes of ending material. This makes Thorn's reading rather quick at just under thirty-nine minutes long.

Trumbull, also a male, keeps his reading consistent with the text published in Doctorow's short-story collection. His voice sounds like a mix of Garrison Keillor and Jimmy Stewart, which makes his reading sound as though the story is being told by a grandfather. This tone emphasizes

the nostalgic feeling of the story because Trumbull's voice sounds like a man closer to the end of his life who is looking back on a highlight. Trumbull's reading, taking a track different from Thorn's, strives to convey the performative aspects of Jerry's interaction with a true space cowboy, Craphound. The characters each have significant differences in their voices, and the set up at the beginning of the podcast alludes to theater conventions of making the argument for the audience's attention. This performance aspect to Trumbull's reading works to emphasize the grandfatherly tone, as it seems that grandfathers in movies commonly make full use of character voices to convey the stories they tell. Trumbull's more nostalgic tone is also conveyed in the pace of the reading. The total recording time is forty-five minutes and thirty-five seconds, with a mere twenty-five seconds for introductory information, and no end material. This extra time gives the listener the feel that the person telling the story not only deeply cares about this event, but also that they have a lot of time on their hands.

Each of the podcasts discussed so far have differed in tone and time only. While these are significant differences since they change the listener's understanding of the story, the variations do not modify the written text. These differences stem from the fact that each version is read by a different person, neither of whom are the author. The differences are numerous and reflect not only the personality of the narrator, but also their understanding of the text. These differences in tone are still significant as they work to interpret the meaning of the story for the reader. Listeners of *Escape Pod* would probably view the story as one of a man telling a story about his friend, where listeners of Trumbull's version might see the story as one focused on appreciating the value of stories we never know. These readings can easily exist in the written text, as there is no definite time given for the telling of the story, which makes these readings fairly consistent.

The last podcast version provides interesting modifications to the text along with the variations in narrator tone.

Read by Rosalia Triana, a woman who seems to have been hired by Literal Systems specifically to read this piece in July, 2008, "Craphound" undergoes some significant changes. In the published version from 2003, the main character, Jerry, is identified as a male, yet in this audio version of the story Jerry's gender has switched to female. Toward the beginning of all of the printed versions of the story, a subtle mention is made to point to a male protagonist in commenting that the alien, Craphound, could move so fast that no time existed for Jerry to make "sure I've switched off the headlights and that I've got my wallet." (e-text 10). At 3:25 of the Literal Systems' production, Triana changes "wallet" for "bag." The subtlety of the print story becomes explicit on page fifteen of the electronic text when Jerry introduces himself as "Mr[.] Jerry Abington," which Triana drops completely from the story at 16:58. At the end of the written text, when Jerry realizes that Craphound has emphasized the story of their friendship through the cowboy gear, Jerry says, "I understood that an alien wearing a cowboy hat and sixguns and giving them away was a poem and a story, and a thirtyish bachelor trying to spend half a month's rent on four glasses so that he could remember his Grandma's kitchen was a story and a poem" (e-text 26). Forty-three minutes and ten seconds into Triana's recording "bachelor" is exchanged for "bachelorette" and the following male pronouns are swapped for the female pronouns "she" and "her."

Jerry functions as the narrator in all versions of "Craphound" and tells the entire story using the personal pronouns indicative of a first-person, limited narrator. This technique means that the primary pronouns are "I" and "me," which obscures the gender of the speaker. The first

change is subtle and easily overlooked, but the second stands out as more obvious to the audience. The only explicit indication of gender, through the claiming of a gendered titles "Mr." and "bachelor," along with the use of a gendered pronouns, "his" and "he," occur in places where simple changes are easiest. The final changes of "bachelor" to "bachelorette" and "his" to "her" make the female transformation of Jerry complete in Triana's reading.

Since the changes consist of ones dealing with the gender of the first-person narrator, it seems logical that the change stems from a desire to reflect the gender of the reader, Triana. Had the narrator fallen into another category, third-person omniscient for example, the change may not have occurred. Triana's changes also fit with the inattentive audience expectation. If the speaker expects the listener to work on several tasks simultaneously, then telling the whole first-person story with the sound of the female voice only to reveal at the end that Jerry is a man would probably throw the listeners out of the story. Listening to the story after reading the text several times, I was thrown out of the story and had to listen to the end again when Triana said "bachelorette." I was multi-tasking at the time and missed the cues early on in the story, so the end was quite a surprise. I have listened to other podcasts where the podcast narrator did not change the gender of the written text narrator to match, and I found those times disconcerting as well. The podcast producers must assume that on some level readers expect the podcast narrator to be the same as the narrator of the written text. That readers could expect, and receive, such changes in texts speaks not only about reader expectation, but also to the changing role readers are playing in textual variation.

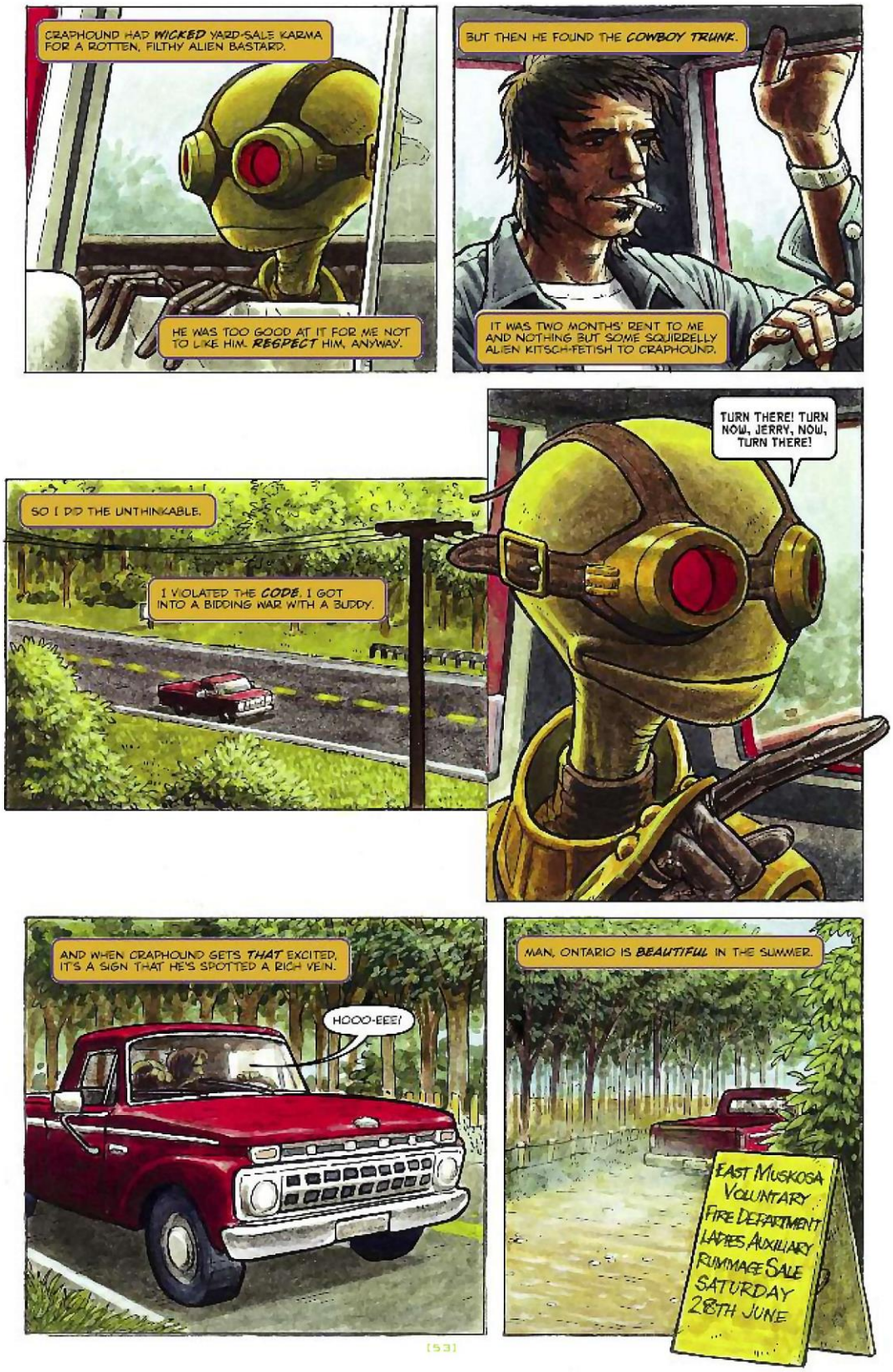
Triana's reading, though emphasizing Jerry's emotional development, does not seem to collapse so much under the weight of the farewell at the end of the story as it seems to rise

through the acknowledgement of growth through a trying relationship. Her deeper tone, for a woman, gives the feeling of a confident and self-assured woman. This works subconsciously to put Triana's character of Jerry on an equal level with the alien, Craphound. Since women in science fiction stories have traditionally been portrayed as incapable and more useful as food for whatever creature attacks, to have a confident female narrator unsettles the genre conventions and conceptions along with unsettling the written text. Due to Doctorow's use of the Creative Commons license, Jerry's change in gender was not authorized. On top of this variant text falling into traditionally suspect territory, Doctorow incorporates this variant text into his own podcast feed, which means that his fans will more than likely hear this version from an authoritative source–his feed–and may construe the change as one that he condones. While the more permissive right that he releases his work with implies that this type of change is one that he accepts, his explicit thoughts and feelings do not accompany the audio, so any inference stands primarily on assumption. The reasons for the change also can only really stand on inferred assumptions.

Making use of the Creative Commons license, each version of the reading of this short-story embodies an interpreted interaction with the text as a whole, even when the text presented is consistent. And each interpretation comes from a reader with little direction from Doctorow, making most of the versions of the texts unauthorized as textual criticism understands it currently. In a phone interview in December, 2008, Doctorow explained that once he had published a work he preferred to allow fans the freedom to create without much input from him. He pointed out that many people defer to authors as absolute authorities, so, in an effort to avoid stifling reader creativity, he says little beyond thanks and acceptance of fan created works. While

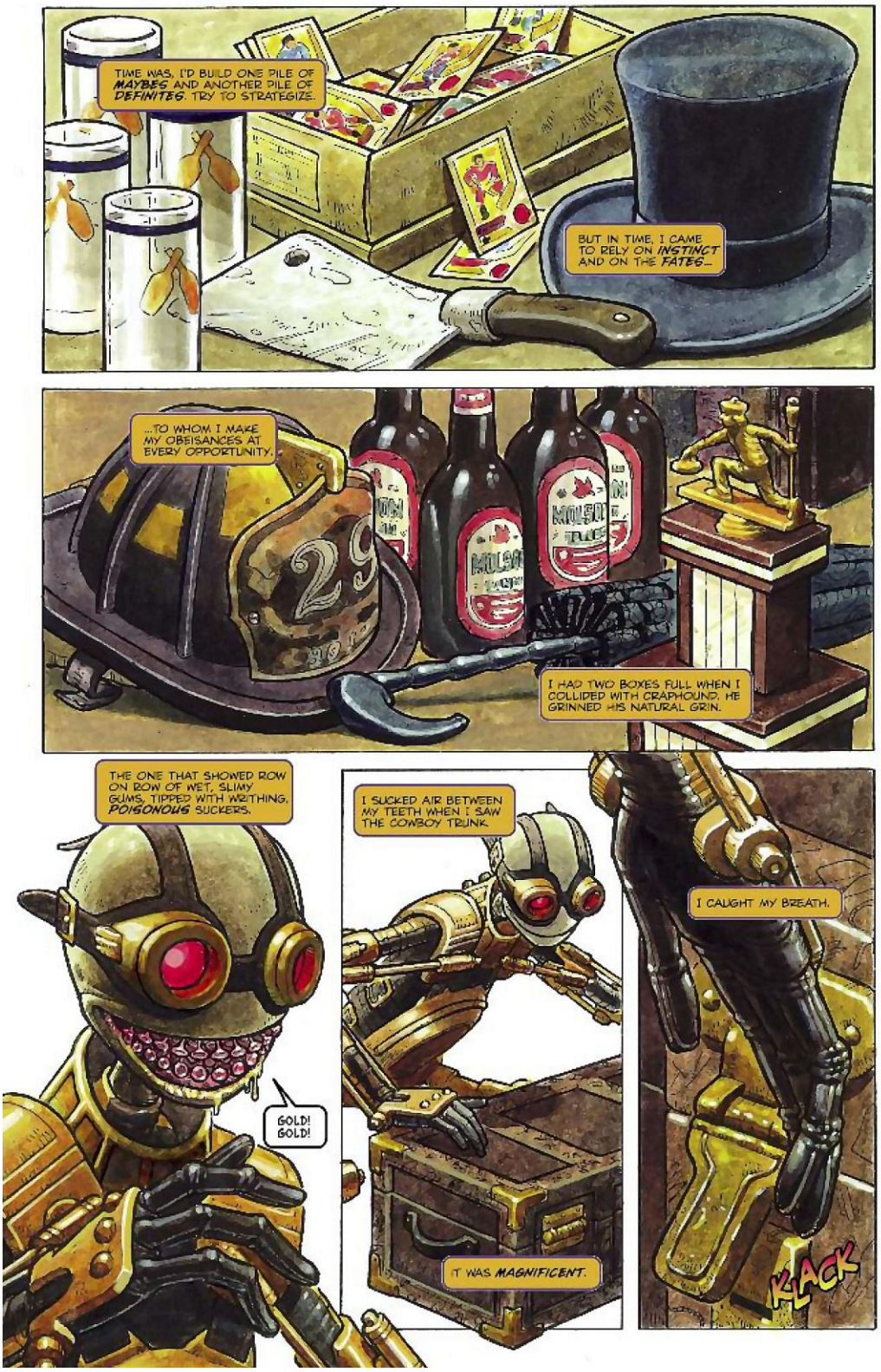
the existence of fan fiction has a long history in science fiction, only with the advent of the internet could the prolific sharing of the different mediums occur as easily as it does today.

The final shift, at this time, in the presentation of "Craphound" comes from its reworking into a printed comic adapted by Dara Naraghi, drawn by Paul McCaffrey, and lettered by Robbie Robbins. In the introduction to *Cory Doctorow's Futuristic Tales of the Here and Now*, Doctorow states that, though his name is on the spine, most of the writing and adapting was done by those listed in the roles with minimal input from him (3). This comic necessarily shifts the bulk of the meaning from the written text to the drawn text, which presents the story in another interpreted medium that Doctorow did not directly control. Beyond simply emphasizing the illustrations, the comic emphasizes the nostalgia of this story, while still portraying Jerry's youth. Though Jerry tells us the story of Craphound as the first person narrator, he tells us this story as a recollection. Reading the comic adaptation makes this completed understanding of the story obvious through the use of text boxes over the images.


CRAPHOUND HAD WICKED YARD-SALE KARMA FOR A ROTTEN, FILTHY ALIEN BASTARD.
HE WAS TOO GOOD AT IT FOR ME NOT TO LIKE HIM. RESPECT HIM, ANYWAY.
BUT THEN HE FOUND THE COWBOY TRUNK.
IT WAS TWO MONTHS' RENT TO ME AND NOTHING BUT SOME SQUIRRELLY ALIEN KITSCH-FETISH TO CRAPHOUND.
SO I DID THE UNTHINKABLE.
I VIOLATED THE CODE. I GOT INTO A BIDDING WAR WITH A BUDDY.
TURN THERE! TURN NOW, JERRY, NOW, TURN THERE!
AND WHEN CRAPHOUND GETS THAT EXCITED, IT'S A SIGN THAT HE'S SPOTTED A RICH VEIN.
HOOO-EEE!
MAN, ONTARIO IS BEAUTIFUL IN THE SUMMER.
EAST MUSKOSA VOLUNTARY FIRE DEPARTMENT LADIES AUXILIARY RUMMAGE SALE SATURDAY 28TH JUNE

Text boxes commonly indicate the speaking of a narrator not found in the frame, or of a person relating their story from a time beyond the frame. The comic opens with the text box narration over the images of Jerry and Craphound on their way to the rummage sale that held the steamer trunk and cowboy gear. Much of the description of events and people within the story moves from the text boxes to the drawings of the characters and settings, or disappears in a dramatic fashion.

This type of setup is particularly helpful in conveying a large portion of the story in the fewest number of frames possible. It also relies on the reader to fill in much of the information and story with the least amount of direction. Page fifty-five relies on the reader to understand that the glass set, trading cards, top hat, trophy and all the other images are items Jerry is looking through and deciding on. Most of these are included in the text published in 2003, along with Jerry's commentary on their quality, market value, and other aspects he was looking for as he sifted through the items. The text boxes laid over the images explain Jerry's process of sifting, but leave the association to the reader as to Jerry's estimation of each item's worth. By eliminating the description of Jerry's finds, the comic depends on the reader being able to decode each of the images. If the reader cannot decipher what the images mean, or pays attention only to the written words, the detail is diminished. When reading the print text, these sorts of details fill in the white spaces between major plot points and present a more complete understanding of the world of the story. This does not mean that readers automatically see the importance of each of these "minor" details, and moving them to a background visual makes them the equivalent to their textual counterpart.


TIME WAS, I'D BUILD ONE PILE OF MAYBES AND ANOTHER PILE OF DEFINITES. TRY TO STRATEGIZE.
BUT IN TIME, I CAME TO RELY ON INSTINCT AND ON THE FATES...
...TO WHOM I MAKE MY OBEISANCES AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY.
I HAD TWO BOXES FULL WHEN I COLLIDED WITH CRAPHOUND. HE GRINNED HIS NATURAL GRIN.
THE ONE THAT SHOWED ROW ON ROW OF WET, SLIMY GUMS, TIPPED WITH WRITHING, POISONOUS SUCKERS.
GOLD! GOLD!
I SUCKED AIR BETWEEN MY TEETH WHEN I SAW THE COWBOY TRUNK.
IT WAS MAGNIFICENT.
I CAUGHT MY BREATH.
KACK

(55)

The comic version still has changes and cuts from the print text. Doctorow may have had oversight, but he admits that he exercised this authority rarely. Even with a professional adaptation, Doctorow seems hesitant to interfere with others' creativity. In the interview, I learned that Doctorow writes in a manner reminiscent of the Romantic ideal of the solitary genius. He writes on his own and creates without sharing his work until he feels it is complete. This has long been the view of the way authors create, so it would make sense that Doctorow would fit this. But, where the Romantic ideal has the author spouting genius solely from their own brains with no influence from others, Doctorow acknowledges how his work is in the same conversation with all of the culture that has come before and surrounds it. He is also a copyright activist and releases his work under a Creative Commons license for a reason – to put his work into the conversation as early as possible. He may write his work on his own, but he knows that his ideas are built upon those of the people who have come before. This is most apparent in the titles for his works. Included in the same trade paperback collection with "Craphound" are comic adaptations of his stories "Anda's Game," whose title plays with Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game*, and "I, Robot," the title of Isaac Asimov's famous work. Even his newest novel acknowledges the larger conversation of government control it joins with the title *Little Brother*. And, by positioning each of his works in the conversation in such a way that encourages people to join, Doctorow elicits numerous, technically unauthorized, versions of his works.

Each of the changes to "Craphound" comes from numerous places. Some of the changes may have been enforced by editors for publishing, but many of the changes, particularly with the later modifications, come from outside Doctorow's influence. The audio recordings, while completely legal, come from fans who have no real contact with Doctorow, or are done with no

direct input from him. The tone, the recording, the changes all exist in the files that the readers email to Doctorow. Doctorow then turns around and posts these recordings into a podcast for fans to pick up. Those who subscribe to this feed may assume that Doctorow, due to the legitimacy that he provides through linking to the post, was involved in the recording process or in some other way authorized the changes that occur. These readers and fans who post recordings of Doctorow's work have become part of the conversation surrounding his work; they have added their two-cents to the body of Doctorow's work. This community exists because Doctorow places his work in a form and place where readers can access it, and these fans use the available technology to modify the text on the page in new ways that once could only occur if the author chose. Because of the community's interconnectivity, readers have created a space for them to interact with Doctorow's work in order to serve what they see as the larger picture. In this way, these semi-anonymous authors are on the path to becoming the new type of writing community.

"Hi there, Junkies": The Conversational Impact of Scott Sigler's Readers

What I have discovered in my research is that there are a number of authors, particularly newer authors, who have embraced the new way of interacting with the world and their fans. They have embraced the new technology that moves their readers into more of a writing community/editorial board/publicity/friend community. Some authors use the technology in a way that invites readers to join the conversation while still maintaining traditional distance. Neil Gaiman, a Newberry Award winner, tweets[4] about his books and responds to fans besides posting blogs, but he does so in a way that keeps readers as fans without moving into the other realms. There are others who at the same time are inviting readers to join the conversation in a way that blurs the lines between the generally separate roles. Horror podcast novelist Scott Sigler does this. He uses Twitter to research minutiae, his blog to illicit comments from readers, and forums on his website for editorial suggestions. Because Sigler drafts most of his work while carrying on this conversation with readers, any of his readers have the potential to impact the text that appears in audio or print versions.

In a 30 March 2008 interview on National Public Radio, podcast author Scott Sigler describes a podcast novel. "The first release of the book tends to be as ... a weekly, serialized podcast. So [the author] puts out thirty to forty-five minutes of the book ... that runs twenty to twenty-five weeks depending on how long the book is." Most podcast stories, either novel length or short story length, fit into the thirty to forty-five minute range. There is a community of authors who create their novels specifically for a podcast audience. There are a few hundred

[4] "Tweets" are the action for someone posting an update on the microblogging service Twitter. Much like blogs, these posts can cover any topic the author chooses and is generally considered extra noise in the world with little significance. The fact that established authors use Twitter to communicate with their readers lends credibility to the service. The fact that at the time of this writing most news organizations and many journalists and businesses use it for promotion also lends credibility to the service.

authors who podcast their own, original work online, and who have fans that have no other way to interact with the text. Most of these authors are relatively unknown, but there are a few whose work gained large listening audiences. A very small number of them, perhaps five, have since gone on to publish books on paper and sell these books at brick and mortar, along with online, stores. The first of these podcast only authors is Scott Sigler, now a *New York Times* bestseller with his most recent book, *Contagious*.

After writing his first novel, *Earthcore*, Sigler attempted to find a traditional publishing contract. Finding nothing but dead-ends, he decided to use the fledgling podcast technology to release his work. This resulted in numerous people hearing his story and becoming fans of his work. In creating a conversation with his readers, he created an abrasive persona of the FDO (Future Dark Overlord) who not only talks down to all of the junkies (the name used by all of the fans), but who will one day rule the world and slaughter everyone. It is obvious in his tone that this is a self-mocking play on the idea of what makes a great horror author, but it has worked to create a strong connection between him and his fans. From time to time, Sigler will put together a podcast of junkie phone calls to a voicemail line known as the Goreline because part of the phone number spells out "gore." The podcast consists of the original call with Sigler responding to the voicemail as he would a conversation occurring in real time. The Goreline call-in episode from March 2, 2009, opens with Sigler contextualizing the calls in terms of his recent release of *Contagious* and subsequent book tour around the U.S. The episode then moves onto the first call. While slightly more violent than other Goreline calls, the first two and a half minutes provide a fairly common representation of the types of calls this charismatic horror author receives.

"Junkies, I been checking my files and I just realized it has been three months since the last Goreline call-in. And as such, we got a shitload of call-ins. So some of these are quite old, in fact some of them are way before the tour with people saying they're looking forward to seeing me on tour. I could go through, I could sort those out, I could parse them, try and make them timely, but that would be cheating the junkies. So for the calls that I do have, I'm gonna just roll right on through. You can hear your fellow junkies praising the Sigler, griping at the Sigler, insulting the Sigler. There's many facets of junkies and there's many facets of Siglerism and we're gonna get to them all right about now. Here we go.

"Sigler, it's Jesse, your OJ in New York City.

"What up Jesse.

"Just picked up my first two copies of *Contagious* this morning."

"Yesss.

"Stoked. Only problem is goddamn Wall Street Borders didn't have the frickin' CDs!!

"What!?

"So now my plan of listening to the CDs while I toil at my worthless job is ruined!

"Well, it's misery. There you go.

"So, uh, once again, screwed by Wall Street. And I'm a little ticked off. Good thing I was shooting some guns off over Christmas getting ready to run with the

> plaid tanks to take over the goddamn world. Good luck with the *New York Times* brother. And I'll see you on the 20th in New York.
>
> "That's what I often say, Jesse, 'Hey, at Christmas it's a good thing I was out shooting some guns at Christmas. It's a good thing.'"

This call exemplifies the extent to which Sigler's fans completely buy into the community and persona Sigler creates. This community does not exist simply because he threatens to squash the world under plaid tanks, but because he respects the junkies. In this call, Sigler acknowledges the frustration of the fan who could not pick up the audio recordings of the novel when he wanted. At the end of the call when the junkie took on the persona of devoted follower preparing for actual military service, Sigler did not dismiss him, but rather sarcastically responded in a way that showed the action was more than desired. But his dismissal is within his character and in response to the character the caller takes on. He does this because he respects his readers. It is only the tremendous respect that he demonstrates toward his readers that can mobilize the junkies for the tasks he asks them to take on.

Because the technology allows for this close connection within the community, Sigler is able to call on the junkies to assist him in his writing and publication of novels. He asks junkies on Twitter to retweet news about his novels and podcasts and he asks all junkies to post novel promotional posters available for download on his website where ever they have access. As the release date for *Contagious* approached, Sigler asked all the junkies to buy the book the first weekend to help improve his initial numbers. But the most significant request he makes of the junkies occurs at the end of the novel when he asks junkies to weigh in on what he has written.

He even put to a junkie vote what his next business step should be when he talked to his publisher about the next book to print.

What makes Sigler's podcast unique is his podcasting novels while he writes them and he asks readers to speak up and tell him what they think. This has changed a little recently because his book deal that requires him to revise and polish works that he's already written. He recently finished a typical Sigler novel, *Nocturnal*, which he wrote with a significant amount of reader conversation. *Nocturnal* followed his format where he would write, revise, and record each weekly episode within one to two weeks. I know this because I was following him on Twitter at the end of the novel and he would post about how he had just written so many words, or revised, or just finished recording the different chapters. He also shared at a reading in Los Angeles, California, in March, 2009, that he would receive emails from readers concerning characters and plot points. He stated that when he was deciding whether to kill a character he liked named Pookie Chang, he would receive emails from fans that only read "Don't kill Pookie." He said that was when he knew he had created a solid character and saw how Pookie would need to live through the story.

In some ways, Sigler's conversation with his readers resembles Charles Dickens' interaction with his readers. With the publication of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, Dickens engaged readers to the point where people were on edge for the ending of the story. And while there are some elements of the conversation that appear to be the same, such as the feedback on loved characters before the completion of the story, Sigler's conversation fits more in Doctorow's claim that successful authors must communicate with their readers. In his article "Science Fiction Is the Only Literature People Care Enough to Steal on the Internet," Doctorow states:

> "[Authors] who can establish a personal relationship with their readers . . .. These conversational artists come from all fields, and they combine the best aspects of charisma and virtuosity with charm – the ability to conduct their online selves as part of a friendly salon that establishes a non-substitutable relationship with their audiences. You might find a film, a game, and a book to be equally useful diversions on a slow afternoon, but if the novel's author is a pal of yours, that's the one you'll pick." (80).

What matters with the technology today is the ability to communicate with thousands of people is the ability to actually carry on a conversation. Doctorow references Neil Gaiman's blog, but Gaiman has become more engaged in the conversation with his adaptation of new technologies like Twitter. But the conversation with Gaiman focuses mostly on what his influences are, what he finds interesting, and what his next project is. And though Sigler engages in this type conversation, he also extends it into a realm few authors enter. He does this by inviting readers to comment on works in progress and then offer editorial comments on recently completed podcast novel.

As soon as *Nocturnal* was done, he created a new forum where the junkies could post and discuss what they liked about the novel, what they thought he had lost track of, inconsistencies, what they didn't like, basically whatever their thoughts were. And while there were a lot of "I loved it" comments, there were also comments that actually dealt with substance or helped catch the errors. Kevin's comment, under the junkie name schwagcast, reads more like notes from an editor. Posted on January 2, 2009, he says:

Scott,

The wife and I listened to the whole book on the drive from Binghamton to Chicago and back. 24 hours of driving; 24 hours of Siggy....

- The story arc about Zoe and her family and even the part played by the twins can be a whole lot less complicated. It's nice detail and back story, but does little to propel the story. Although Pierre biting off her hubby's head is AWESOME. You have to leave that. Oh, and does Pierre have to die? Really? He's the Pooks to Sly's Ninja. He's dreamy.
- The extraneous detail about the gang wars and most of Lanza can be trimmed without losing too much in the content arena, even though it creates a nice counter-point to Tricky Dick.
- Where are all of the girl monsters? Chicks can be scary, too. I'm married, remember? I know just how scary they can be. Can the Zeds procreate without Marie? How are Erickson and his father related to Marie?
- The whole BoyCo boys breaking Rex's arm is much too violent. It must remain in the final draft AS IS. My wife was literally wriggling in her seat knowing it was coming and you just took your good ole time working up to the ultimate broken bone. Simply genius. She was so wanting you to hurry up and "just get it over with." You are a mastermind.
- Claudio's role is well-done. "Cockaty Twat" is classic Sigler. It may just have to be my new safety word.

- If you're going to have so many seemingly unrelated looking monsters with very few common attributes, you should create some linkage in the Zed that allows for such diversity to make the whole monster thing more believable. Yes, I just said that. Why is one hairy and one scaly and one has volatile burps and one has 6 arms?
- You used the phrase "Nothing at all" three times too close together there in episode 34 and 35-ish. Couldn't help but think of that Simpson's episode: "It's like I'm wearing nothing at all. Nothing at all. Nothing at all." At least you didn't use it as much as Dan Brown used "incredulous" and "stopped short" in his Code story.... erg.

  Thanks for continuing to kick ass and take names.

  More, please.

  --kevin

Kevin's comments are offered in a sincere tone of one wanting the best of the work. Only the love of the story, and the desire for it to excel, motivates this post. This is clearest in the closing where Kevin thanks Sigler and asks for more of what Sigler produces. There is no mention of payment or even acknowledgement, just a fan of excellent work offering his perspective as a reader and fulfilling the role of an editor. This level and type of interaction of readers with the text they are reading has little precedent and could not have occurred when Moore published "Poetry" because the technology did not exist.

The readers do this free editing service because they love the story, but also because as much as Sigler curses at them, or threatens to kill them all slowly and painfully in the manner of a horror author, he still deeply respects his audience's opinions. He recently asked the junkies to vote for the next novel between *Pandemic*, the third novel in the *Infected* series, *Ancestor*, a book he published in 2007, and the recently completed *Nocturnal*. The readers voted for a revised *Ancestor*, which also made the most sense for him business wise. He announced the choice to readers through a video episode of his podcast. In it he presented the results of the poll, and he explained how the next few years of his print schedule would work out. *Nocturnal* received the second most votes, which puts its print incarnation a few years away. The fact that *Nocturnal* will not be printed until late in 2010, or 2011, means that the specific changes offered by readers will need to be researched later. This immediate conversation about what books to print does concede that the readers will be the ones who buy his books and pay for him to be a writer, but the tone is not condescending. What Sigler excels at is treating the audience with a respect and engaging in the type of conversation advocated by Doctorow. This conversation is what encourages readers to make that extra effort to use the technology available to make his book better and promote his work across the world.

Though the passionate conversation Sigler has initiated is interesting, what is even more fascinating to me is the extent to which the line has blurred between author and audience in Sigler's case. The readers essentially edit the novel that they read, and they offer ways to tell the story better, so they write pieces of it. And yet, there is no effective way, yet, to track all of the comments. They come into his email, on the forums, in the comments on his blog, in messages on Twitter, and in conversations at his book tours. The line between what comes from him and

what comes from others becomes even more difficult to define in this situation precisely because there are so many paths the ideas can travel, and because it can be difficult to follow the names of these commenters. The other authors who have a similar set-up to Sigler, though each have their own take, have begun to blog about how it is difficult to track the comments they receive. The play between author and reader and the binary represented is becoming more obvious and transparent as technology makes it easier for us to contact and communicate with the authors we love.

I'm not entirely sure what to do with these observations. Part of my hesitation stems from my personal preference to avoid creating solid lines that cannot be crossed. But most of my hesitation comes from the ever-changing nature of the technology and the ways that everyone is becoming more connected. I think that perhaps we need to look more at the role of the reader and the kind of influence a reader can have on an author. The author has definite discussion surrounding it, but many of the readers' ideas consist of entities that absorb a text without exerting much besides meaning on the physical marks left by the author. A new look at readers would require taking into account the fact that they now have the ability to change the signifiers. When it comes to Scott Sigler Junkies, I see readers who actively interact with the text's signs in ways that have previously been difficult to the point of practical impossibility. As podcast literature becomes more prolific, this discussion will no doubt pick up.

Continuing the Conversation

In this project I have looked at authors across the writing spectrum. Marianne Moore embraced her writing community while she composed, sending drafts of her work around the world through the fastest technological medium for file-sharing of the day – the post. Yet once her work was printed, she kept control of the content. Decades later, Cory Doctorow shares the work that he writes in a manner akin to a solitary genius with the world over the currently fastest technology – the internet. And as Doctorow gives his work away, Scott Sigler uses the same technology to create with and give his work to the world. Each author has used, and some are still using, the technology available to create and publish her or his work. And with each new advance in technology, the reader's role has shifted.

With Moore's publications, readers were consumers and potential sales people. Readers were limited, however, to the text on the page they purchased. Though readers could have cut out the letters and words that create Moore's "Poetry," this probably would have been impractical. It definitely would have taken more time than rearranging the poem on a computer. Remixing Moore's work was more about taking the ideas presented and developing them further. This is the first step to the remixing that happens with Doctorow's work, and even to some extent, Sigler's. The type of changes Doctorow's and Sigler's readers make occurred within "Poetry," but instead of coming from the readers, it came from the author. This was almost necessary because the technology was cost-prohibitive in supporting the type of changes occurring today in reader re-workings.

As technology has developed and made copying and manipulating text on the page easier for all readers, the role of the reader shifted. With the advent of computers, technology made it

easier for readers to copy their favorite text and change it from an ink on paper form to one of light on screens. This made the readers into sales people who had the text on hand and could share copies. While the discussion surrounding the legality of sharing is intense, the aspect that becomes important to the discussion here is the ease with which readers are able to manipulate the text. When Doctorow took out the chore of having to copy his texts into electronic forms and provided his readers with electronic files of his work, his readers responded not only with sharing his work, but also with creative manipulations of the text. Even with adaptations that left the text in English, the works took on new meanings simply because the presentation of the text had changed. The shift in the meaning because the medium had changed, even slightly, worked to blend the roles of authors and readers even further.

But only when technology had developed enough to allow authors and readers to talk nearly instantaneously would the blending occur on a level that would make discussion of authorship a tricky legal question. Sigler's work most clearly illustrates this significant blending between the roles of reader and author and editor. Though he has the title and control of an author, revisions in his text come from readers – they change not just the shape of the text on the page, but what text actually hits the page. Sigler encourages the conversation with his readers by providing numerous venues for communicating during times when the readers can actually impact the development of the story. The forums he opens on his website with the start of new novels impacts the story that develops. He also reads emails from readers that can shape the story's development. The forum that he opens when he completes a novel intentionally brings in readers to offer comments on the work in a manner of an editor and a reader and an author. Sigler acknowledges the impact of these comments on his editing of the novel, which moves

these comments offered by readers with the anonymity of screen names into a category even more blended with author and editor.

As the technology develops and makes it easier for readers to interact with the authors of works they love, the roles that have been distinctly separate have begun to blend. With each new author that adopts technology that makes it easier for readers to communicate about a work, especially works in progress, the less distinct the categories become. This discussion primarily concerns those who are interested in assigning the role of the author. Some scholars might be particularly concerned about authors when looking at meaning or authorized texts. For those who look at texts within a broader context, the current blending of roles may pose less of a concern. The parties most interested in this discussion currently may be those with economic ties to the defined author role. Doctorow and Sigler appear to have adjusted to the more fluid role as they both live off their writing.

As we continue to study works, the standard definitions and critical frameworks will have to change. The rigid distinctions between reader and author are becoming more permeable. And as the distinctions become more difficult to categorize, scholars will have to change the way that we think about each role. In writing this paper, I have found that my view of authors and readers has shifted to understand each as actively participating in a conversation that happens over minutes to build the culture of today. The authors may be paid or not and may easily switch to readers in the same conversation. The governing principle seems to be the topic of the conversation. In less formal settings, such as Twitter conversations or conversations in bars after a reading, those who fit more comfortably into the print definition of author will comment on whatever they read in a way similar to those who fit more comfortably into a print understanding

of reader. No matter the role each would fit in, authors and readers are people, and the current technology allows for people to shed their roles whenever they choose without losing their voice. And as those who are often defined as reader begin to use their voice in modifying the text that appears on the page, this highlights an underlying question: Does it matter who the author is of a work we love?

This question highlights not only the fluidity of the world we live in it highlights the interconnectedness of stories, and perhaps all art. The more a story-teller is connected to the world at large, the more influences scholars can find. And as authors are constantly taking what they see in life, mixing it with what they know, and then telling their stories in a way that places them in context of the larger conversation of stories, the question also points out that all stories build on what has come before them. This makes each story new in the sense that no one else, by virtue of individuality, has told a particular story in a particular way. The internet and computer technology has not created the uncertainty surrounding who an author is, but rather has highlighted a question that has always been. What these newer technologies bring to the discussion is acknowledgement, even on a small scale, that each participant in the creation of a story impacts it in their own way. This then pushes us to decide if this uncertain story creation process is worth the struggle against a system that forgets its own past. I have discovered that this creative process is.

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